



## Happy New Year, from Mor-Gran-Sou!

**We thank you, our member-owners,  
for the opportunity to serve you in  
2014 — and hope simple pleasures fill  
you with love and laughter in 2015.**



*Cooper Sattler loves to go to grandma and papa's farm to see all their "moo-moos" and feed them with his pail. He is the son of Mallory and Anton Sattler and grandson of Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative members Lynn and Cindy Gustin. Mallory submitted the photo.*

## In this issue:

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- **Co-op seeks candidates for board of directors**
- **Maher helps traveling clinic get back on the road**
- **Mor-Gran-Sou offers youth opportunities**
- **Meeting minutes ... and much more!**



Cody Graetz



Joe Michael

PHOTOS BY CARMEN DEVNEY

# Lineman Graetz and Lineman Michael earn journeyman status

BY CARMEN DEVNEY

The 51st annual REC Apprenticeship Training and Safety (AT&S) Conference will be held Jan. 14 to 16 at the Ramkota Hotel in Bismarck. The conference is sponsored by the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC) AT&S program, with cooperation from the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship.

During the conference, linemen from across the state will attend workshops on systems grounding, electric breakers, electrical contact injuries, metering safety, slings and rigging, and “tech talk” sessions. They will also attend a banquet on Jan. 15, to honor the graduating apprentices. This year, 26 men graduated as journeyman lineworkers and one graduated as journeyman meter technician. Mor-

Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative Linemen Cody Graetz and Joseph Michael were among the 26 graduating apprentice lineworkers.

Apprentices must have 8,000 hours of supervised training on poles, tower and construction; line hardware and framing; overhead conductors; tools and equipment; transformers; oil circuit reclosers, regulators and capacitors; metering and instrument transformers; rolling stock; engineering; records; safety meetings; hot-line maintenance; troubleshooting; underground; substations; lighting; and service. All apprentices are required to take and pass a series of tests throughout their coursework.

Hired by Mor-Gran-Sou in May 2011, Graetz works out of the Mandan Service Center. Since he earned journeyman status in November, he

says his job duties haven’t changed, although his senior co-workers have given him more responsibility.

Climbing poles and working on high-voltage power lines can be dangerous, but Graetz says he performs every task with safety in mind.

“Some people make it seem like there are a lot of dangers and sacrifices when it comes to being a lineman. For me, at the end of the day, it’s just another job. There are sacrifices at every job, and every job can be dangerous. You make it as dangerous as you want to make it, or make it as safe as you want to make it,” he shares. “It’s all about personal choice. If you want to be a safe worker, you can be as safe as you want to be.”

Based out of Flasher headquarters, Michael joined Mor-Gran-Sou in September 2011. He says his formal education as an apprentice may have ended, but the longer he works as a lineman, the more he realizes there is much more to learn.

“I feel like I’ve come a long way from where I was. ... But there is still a lot to learn. I’m always learning something new,” he says.

Michael encourages high school students to think about choosing line work as a career, if they love spending time outdoors. While fixing power outages on the coldest, windiest days is something he never gets used to, Michael says he bundles up and thinks about the warmer days ahead.

“All those really nice days, when I’m way up in the air in a bucket truck looking around, and I’ve got an awesome view — those moments make it worth it,” he shares. Michael says it’s also rewarding to know that the work he does as a lineman has an impact on a large amount of people.

“I get a very accomplished feeling at the end of the day,” he concludes.

Mor-Gran-Sou congratulates Linemen Graetz and Michael for earning journeyman lineworker status. ■



# SAFETY CULTURE



**SAFETY EXCELLENCE:**  
“IT’S HOW WE DO THINGS  
AROUND HERE.”



(Foreground) Cody Graetz, journeyman lineman  
(Background) Brady Zachmann, apprentice lineman



# Storm surcharge will cease to be billed Jan. 1, 2015

BY JACKIE MILLER

The Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative board of directors and management staff have some good news to share. As announced in the member letter you should have received in mid-December, the storm surcharge that you have been paying with your monthly bill since January of 2011 will cease to be billed on Jan. 1, 2015; one full year earlier than anticipated. This adjustment will be reflected on the bill members will receive on or around Feb. 4, 2015.

How did we get here? You may remember the *Current News* headline in the March 2010 issue of *North Dakota Living* that read, "Taking on Mother Nature." In April, the headline read, "Starting Over." The structural and financial impact of the January and April storms challenged your cooperative. The financial impact was more than \$33 million. After receiving assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the state of North Dakota, Mor-Gran-Sou needed to pay \$5 million in eligible storm costs. In addition, we needed to recoup about \$1 million in additional costs that were not covered by FEMA or the state, bringing the cooperative's total to approximately \$6 million.

In August 2010, we polled you, the member-owners, on how your cooperative should pay off the additional storm costs. The message received from the majority of the members was to pay off the cost of the storm in as short of a timeframe as possible, and to cut costs without impacting the service we provide.

After we heard from you, the board of directors and management staff weighed the financial issues and how they would impact you. Following some in-depth and often-passionate discussions, a decision was made to implement the storm surcharge in January 2011.

Your board of directors and management staff have continually monitored this charge and have been aware that this commitment may be met earlier than anticipated. In fact, at this year's annual meeting, Chief Financial Officer Travis Kupper mentioned this point in his presentation to the membership.

What factors led to the early fulfillment of the storm surcharge obligation? Two factors stand out among all the efforts to recovering financially: The unanticipated membership growth in the Mor-Gran-Sou service area, and the strong internal cost-cutting efforts put forth by Mor-Gran-Sou.

Please understand that your cooperative has always endeavored to operate in a fiscally responsible manner. But as we faced the financial magnitude of the storm, management and employees looked at every avenue to "tighten their belts." Some of the cost-cutting efforts implemented included placing a moratorium on capital credit retirements except for estates and over age 80, reducing the annual capital budget, reducing capital improvement projects for the next 10 years, reducing annual meeting costs, extending the life of vehicles, placing a moratorium on donations

and member assistance programs, reducing the workforce through retirements, and placing a limit on out-of-state travel and meeting attendance.

Although the debt that has been paid by the storm surcharge has been met, we continue to work with FEMA. As we reported in May 2013, we received notice from FEMA informing us they would be reviewing approximately \$2,000,000 in reimbursements. These reimbursements were made to us as a result of expenses incurred during our response to the April 2010 storm. An appeal was filed by Mor-Gran-Sou, and we are currently waiting for a final ruling. We will keep you up-to-date as we learn more.

As we reflect over what has transpired since those devastating storms, we want you to know how grateful we are to serve the member-owners of Mor-Gran-Sou. Together, we pulled up our bootstraps and took on the task of storm recovery. From the day the power lines went down, you assisted in ways you could. Whether it was pulling trucks out of the snow and mud, bringing baked goods out to the lineworkers, communicating with us, paying the storm surcharge every month ... you were there every step of the way. You are a shining example of what it means to be a member of a cooperative, and we are honored to serve you. Once again, thank you, members, for your support. ■

## STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative, Inc. is an equal opportunity provider and employer. If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), or at any USDA office, or call 866-632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested on the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at USDA, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax at 202-690-7442 or by email at [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).



## Mor-Gran-Sou's annual meeting scheduled for July 17, 2015

Are you looking for a way to serve the people of central southwestern North Dakota? Look no further, as Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative can help you fulfill that desire. Why not serve as a board director for the cooperative? The initial commitment is a three-year term, with provisions in the bylaws limiting a director to serving six consecutive three-year terms, after which time the director is not eligible for another six consecutive three-year terms until one year has elapsed.

At the annual meeting, the following three board positions will be elected:

- The At-Large position presently held by Mark Doll;
- The Morton County position presently held by Robert Gaebe; and
- The Sioux County position presently held by Chad Harrison.

Under the bylaws and due to the use of a mail-in ballot, no nominations are accepted from the floor at the annual meeting. Instead, the bylaws require the board of directors to appoint a Nominating Committee of five to nine members who geographically represent the cooperative. These members will provide a list of

qualified and willing candidates to the board for approval and inclusion on the ballot at the board of directors' meeting scheduled for March 25, 2015. This date has been set so there is adequate time for each candidate's biographical information to be included with the notice of meeting sent to the members in June, along with the mail-in ballot for those who are unable to attend the annual meeting in person.

The Nominating Committee has been appointed by the board and will meet for the first time, set for Jan. 15, 2015. The members of the Nominating Committee include Leslie Dirk, Mandan; Cheryl Hettich, Solen; Kathy Hoff, Leith; Jim Hopfauf, Flasher; Andrew Holle, Mandan; Lisa McLaughlin, Fort Yates; Rodney Nelson, Almont; Jim Neubauer, Mandan; and Travis Wilkens, New Salem.

For a person to be nominated, the member vying for a board seat must submit the completed declaration of candidacy form to Mor-Gran-Sou by 4 p.m. CT (3 p.m. MT) on March 5, 2015. The completed form must be mailed to Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative, Attn: Jackie Miller, P.O. Box 297, Flasher, ND 58535-0297.

If you or someone you know is interested in being nominated, please contact one of the Nominating Committee members or Jackie at Mor-Gran-Sou by calling 800-750-8212, 701-663-0297 or 701-597-3301 or emailing [jlmliller@morgransou.com](mailto:jlmliller@morgransou.com).

The Nominating Committee members or Jackie can provide you or the potential candidate with the declaration of candidacy form. It is also located on Mor-Gran-Sou's website at [www.morgransou.com](http://www.morgransou.com). To download the form electronically, click on the link entitled Find the Declaration of Candidacy form on the home page. Candidate qualifications can be found on the website under Home/Cooperative/Articles and Bylaws/Board of Directors/402 Director Qualification or on the declaration of candidacy form.

If you have questions about the process, give Jackie a call. All qualified and willing candidates who have completed and forwarded the written declaration of candidacy form to the Mor-Gran-Sou office by the March 5 deadline will be included in the list the Nominating Committee will provide to the board. ■

## ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE YOUTH TOUR

HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS & SENIORS

Write a winning essay and win a FREE trip to Washington, D.C., courtesy of Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative!

If you will be a junior or senior in high school in the fall of 2015, and your parents or guardians are members of Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative, you qualify for the essay-writing contest!

Here's the topic: **If you were asked to influence other students your age to become more actively involved in their electric cooperative, including attendance at the electric cooperative annual meeting, what would you tell them, and why?**

For the contest rules and deadline, visit [www.morgransou.com](http://www.morgransou.com) and click on "Community" and "Education" and "Youth to DC". Or, call Jackie at 800-750-8212 or email [jlmliller@morgransou.com](mailto:jlmliller@morgransou.com). **If you want to go on a trip-of-a-lifetime, NOW'S the time to apply!**



**The deadline to apply is Jan. 30, 2015.**



## COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY

# Leadman Maher helps the Ronald McDonald Care Mobile get back on the road safely

BY CARMEN DEVNEY

One of the greatest unmet needs of low-income families is dental care. Our mouths hold a treasured resource, but for some children, those beautiful teeth will erode and decay without care and intervention. Dental conditions left untreated result in pain and infection, and make it difficult to chew and eat. This difficulty interferes with the ability to focus and makes learning hard.

“More than one-half of North Dakota children have tooth decay. Sadly, for more than one in five of those children, that decay goes untreated,” explained Kathy Keiser, executive director of the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Bismarck.

The Ronald McDonald Care Mobile, a self-contained mobile dental office, is giving children in the western and central portions of North Dakota including the Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative service area bigger, brighter smiles, by providing X-rays, cleanings, fluoride treatments, sealants, fillings, pulpotomies, simple extractions, stainless steel crowns and oral health education. The Care Mobile is owned and operated by Ronald McDonald House Charities of Bismarck in partnership with Bridging the Dental Gap Inc. of Bismarck, to staff the traveling clinic with a three-person dental team and a driver. It is sponsored by several Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives in North Dakota, with assistance from the Tom and Frances Leach Foundation.

On Nov. 14, the clinic had finished serving students at St. Bernard’s Mission in Fort Yates. When preparing to leave, the staff discovered a low tire. Al Wangler, driver/intake coordinator, said they drove to a couple local garages for



**Cody Maher**, leadman for Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative, assisted the traveling clinic staff so they could get back on the road safely.

assistance, but it was late in the day and the businesses were closed. The clinic’s staff became concerned, because the Care Mobile carries water, equipment and drugs that cannot freeze. They needed to find help, soon.

Driving north of Sitting Bull College, they spotted the Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative service center and pulled into the lot. Even though the co-op was closed and the door was locked, Leadman Cody Maher was still at work. He came out and asked what they needed.

Wangler explained the low tire, and Maher offered to help. He instructed the driver to move the Care Mobile to the pad in the front of the shop. Maher checked the tire, got an air compressor and filled the tire. At that point, the vehicle could be driven safely to Bismarck.

In a thank-you note Wangler sent to Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative, he wrote, “Had Mr. Maher not been so gracious and helpful, the Care Mobile would have had to bring out a ‘rescue truck’ from a tire center, costing a lot of time and money. On a Friday

night, it would have been a tough call, but we would not have had a choice.

“Mr. Maher was very kind and considerate in giving his time to help us out,” Wangler continued. “The Ronald McDonald Care Mobile wanted to let you know how much we appreciate his time and efforts. This reflects highly on your company, and we want you to know you have someone to be proud of. Mr. Maher is a real gem.”

As a Touchstone Energy® Cooperative, Mor-Gran-Sou is committed to the core values of integrity, accountability, innovation and commitment to community. Those values are more than just words — they are the actions of our employees, who go above and beyond, and do the right thing. Thank you, Cody, for helping get those folks back on the road safely. We are proud to have you and all of the Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative employees shine as one. ■

*Mor-Gran-Sou thanks Slope Electric Cooperative for contributing to the story.*



## Co-op scholarships available for high school graduates

**M**or-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative takes pride in assisting with the development of rural leadership through our scholarship program. We feel it's important to help finance our local students' educational journeys by offering four \$500 scholarships to qualifying seniors.

The scholarship program, sponsored by Mor-Gran-Sou and Basin Electric Power Cooperative, is designed to encourage and recognize the achievements of the children of cooperative members. To qualify, students must be enrolled or plan to enroll in a full-time undergraduate or graduate course of study at an accredited two-year or four-year college, university

or vocational/technical school. They must be U.S. citizens and dependents of Mor-Gran-Sou members.

As in past years, Mor-Gran-Sou will offer four scholarships. Two of the four are designated for qualified applicants who plan to attend a certified vocational or technical school. We ask that the applicant specify which scholarship award he or she is requesting.

Recipients will be chosen on a combination of SAT/ACT scores and overall grade point average; activities, achievements and honors; work experience; a personal statement of career goals; an essay question centered on local cooperatives and how they serve the area; and an appraisal from a high



school or college counselor or adviser, instructor or a work supervisor who knows the student well.

The scholarship will be awarded during the 2014-2015 school year. Applications are available at area schools, co-op headquarters in Flasher, or online at [www.morgransou.com](http://www.morgransou.com).

Applications are due no later than 4:30 p.m. CT (3:30 p.m., MT) on **Tuesday, Feb. 17, 2015**. Please deliver or mail all necessary information to Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative at P.O. Box 297, Flasher, ND 58535-0297.

If you have questions or would like further information, please call Julie or Jackie at 701-597-3301, 701-663-0297 or 800-750-8212. ■

## Mor-Gran-Sou announces annual safety poster contest



**K**ids, we need your help! Grab your art supplies and draw a poster that tells our readers how you play and work safely around electricity. This poster should display a clear, creative picture of this year's theme: "*How do you stay safe at your home or farm when around electricity?*" All posters should display the Touchstone Energy® logo on their entries. No matter what you draw, have fun! We can't wait to hear from you. Cash prizes will be awarded in each division.

### DIVISIONS:

Preschool to kindergarten  
First grade to third grade  
Fourth grade to sixth grade

### DEADLINE:

Posters must be received at the Flasher office no later than 4:30 p.m. CT (3:30 p.m., MT) on **Monday, Feb. 23, 2015**.

### RULES:

- Posters must be on white, 8.5- by 11-inch paper.
- Posters must depict the theme, "How do you stay safe at your home or farm when around electricity?" and display the Touchstone Energy logo. Be creative!
- Print the child's name, address, age and parent's names on the back of the posters.
- Only dependents of current Mor-Gran-Sou members are eligible for this contest.

### WINNERS:

Winning posters will be featured in the Mor-Gran-Sou local pages of the *North Dakota Living* magazine.

### PRIZES:

Each division will be awarded three prizes (nine prizes total): three first-place prizes of \$15; three, second-place prizes of \$10; and three, third-place prizes of \$5. ■

## STAYING CONNECTED

### Drawing held - iPad Recipients Listed

By Jackie Miller

In the past two months, Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative has asked members to update their contact information. In doing so, those members who participated were entered into a drawing for a chance to win one of three iPad minis. The drawing was held Dec. 16, 2014. We congratulate our lucky winners, including:

- \* **Joseph P. Schaff, Mandan**
- \* **Loron Skretteberg, Carson**
- \* **Claude Ulrich, Carson**

In today's world, communication is very important and keeping connected with you, the member-owner, is a top priority at Mor-Gran-Sou. In order to keep you informed, we need to know the best ways to stay connected with you. Thank you, members, for taking the time to update your contact information. In the future, please keep us in mind when you have any contact information changes.

### Remember: You can update your information in a number of ways:

- Visit our website at [www.morgransou.com](http://www.morgransou.com) and click the Contact Us link;
- Visit SmartHub at <https://morgransou.smarthub.coop/> Contact us – Update my Contact Information;
- Call us at 1-800-750-8212, 701-663-0297 or 701-597-3301.

# MOR-GRAN-SOU ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

## board meeting highlights



**Meeting date: Nov. 24, 2014**

- Approved the Oct. 29, 2014 regular Board meeting minutes
- Approved two work order inventories and a special equipment inventory
- Heard Co-General Managers'/Chief Executive Officers' update
- Heard update on Innovative Energy Alliance, LLC (IEA)
- Reviewed IEA Board Meeting Summary from 11-06-14
- Heard updates on all entities of WDUS Holdings LLC
- Approved applications for refund of capital credits to those age 80 and over
- Approved additional funding for refund of 2014 capital credits to estates and those age 80 and over
- Approved donation over a five-year period to Quentin Burdick Center for Cooperatives endowment fund
- Approved a Western Area Power Administration/Mor-Gran-Sou revision to contract
- Approved a 2014 revenue deferral
- Approved ceasing the storm adder effective Jan. 1, 2015
- Reviewed the preliminary Mor-Gran-Sou 2015 Budget
- Reviewed updated 2015 IEA member dues breakdown
- Approved Mor-Gran-Sou lobbyists for upcoming legislative session
- Approved lunch/discussion invitation to 2015 Nominating Committee for January
- Board meeting
- Completed annual evaluation of Mor-Gran-Sou legal counsel services
- Approved Collective Bargaining Agreement for 2014-2017
- Completed RSVPs for various upcoming meetings
- Accepted financial report from Chief Financial Officer
- Heard senior staff department updates
- Heard reports and held discussion on meetings attended
- Held Executive Session

**Upcoming regular board meeting date:**

*Jan. 28 in the NDAREC board room, Mandan, at 10:30 a.m. CT*

Members are welcome to attend the board meetings at any time. Please contact Mor-Gran-Sou at cternes@morgransou.com, or call 1-800-750-8212 or 597-3301, to confirm the meeting date and location if you wish to attend.

To place an item on the agenda, please contact Board Chair Judge Barth or Co-General Manager/Chief Executive Officer Donald Franklund at least one week in advance.

Members may obtain a copy of approved Board minutes by completing and returning the "Request for Information or Data" form. You can find this form at

[www.morgransou.com](http://www.morgransou.com) or call the office for a copy.



### Latest scam targets Mor-Gran-Sou service area

*In the latest effort to steal money from electric cooperative members, scammers are demanding that members meet them away from the co-op office and pay overdue bills in person. A consumer who lives in the Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative service area recently informed co-op staff that scammers were claiming that their utility service would be disconnected unless the bill was paid immediately. Please be on the lookout for this and other scams, and avoid these types of traps.*

*The safety of our members and employees is our top priority. Unless a member requests an off-site visit, Mor-Gran-Sou would never ask a member to meet away from the office to make a payment for any service.*

*Mor-Gran-Sou's collection procedure for delinquent accounts includes standard messages on the front and back of utility bills. Our goal is to help the member with payment agreements and avoid an electrical disconnect.*

*If you think you are being scammed, hang up and call Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative at 800-750-8212, 701-597-3301 or 701-663-0297.*



### MOR-GRAN-SOU ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE INC.

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Email us: [info@morgransou.com](mailto:info@morgransou.com)  
UNDERGROUND LINE LOCATES  
800-795-0555 OR 811

#### OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

Chair..... Leland "Judge" Barth  
Vice Chair..... Casey Wells  
Secretary-Treasurer..... Pam Geiger  
Directors ..... Mark Doll,  
Vernard Frederick, Lance Froelich,  
Robert Gaebe, Chad Harrison,  
Bob J. Leingang

#### MANAGEMENT

Co-General Mgr./CEO..... Chris Baumgartner  
Co-General Mgr./CEO..... Donald A. Franklund

[www.morgransou.com](http://www.morgransou.com)

Your Touchstone Energy\*Cooperative