



CURRENT

Serving Morton, Grant and Sioux counties

APRIL 2016

NEWS



CAITLYN BECKER

Preparing for a trip-of-a-lifetime

In this month's local pages, meet Caitlyn Becker, the student who will represent Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative on this summer's Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, and learn why she supports — and even embodies — some Touchstone Energy® Cooperative core values.

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- Meet the 2016 Youth Tour winner
- Call 811 and Know What's Below
- Annual meeting notification
- Mor-Gran-Sou remembers Emil Riehl
- Meeting minutes ... and more

PHOTO BY CARMEN DEVENEY



Becker's next step in making a difference

BY CARMEN DEVNEY



PHOTO BY CARMEN DEVNEY

Six years ago when the April 2010 snow and ice storm devastated the Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative power system, Caitlyn Becker and her family went without power for two-and-a-half weeks. What she remembers most about that time wasn't the lack of heat, lights, or the ability to charge her cell phone and other electronic devices. It was the moment she and her mother were driving away from their home and they saw some Mor-Gran-Sou linemen eating lunch in their truck on the side of the road. Despite the inconveniences the Becker family had been experiencing on their farm, her mother insisted on stopping to thank the men for their continued efforts. That kindness and understanding left a lasting impression.

Prior to the storm, Caitlyn, a junior at Flasher Public School, didn't know much about electric cooperatives, other than one provided power to her home north of Flasher. But from that moment forward, she learned the benefits (and sometimes challenges) of being a member-owner — and that accountability and commitment to community are more than words spoken at Mor-Gran-Sou. These Touchstone Energy® Cooperative values can be seen every day in the actions of the employees who work together to provide safe, affordable and reliable electric service every day.

Caitlyn has since learned a lot about her family's electric cooperative. The daughter of members Joe and Jackie Becker, Caitlyn entered the annual Electric Cooperative Youth

Caitlyn Becker earned this year's Electric Cooperative Youth Tour trip to Washington, D.C. The daughter of Mor-Gran-Sou members Joe and Jackie Becker, Caitlyn is a junior at Flasher Public School. She is active in speech, drama and band, piano lessons and church activities. She works at Fitterer Gas and Oil in Flasher, and enjoys spending time with brothers Caleb and Christopher. She also likes to ride horses with her dad.



Tour essay-writing contest and earned a trip to Washington, D.C. She answered the question, “Pick one of the four Touchstone Energy core values — innovation, integrity, accountability or commitment to community — and describe how you see this in action at Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative.”

First, Caitlyn says she researched the cooperative’s website to learn facts about the cooperative business model, programs, and electric heat products and services. Next, she wrote her essay to include some personal experiences, including memories of the 2010 storm and how the linemen worked 14- to 16-hour days until power was restored across the system. She also noted the linemen’s care in driving heavy trucks on private property, and doing their best not to disturb pastures and yards while working on power lines.

“Their goal is to have a low impact on the land they work on, to ensure that North Dakota remains a beautiful place,” she wrote.

Caitlyn wrote that having a presence in each of the counties Mor-Gran-Sou serves, and holding an annual meeting and serving a free meal, show the cooperative’s commitment to its members. She also wrote she appreciates how Mor-Gran-Sou supports its communities by giving scholarships to graduating seniors, starting an Operation Round Up program, and

donating to area projects like Flasher’s Mardi Gras.

Jackie Miller, chief of staff and manager of member services for Mor-Gran-Sou, says the cooperative received a record number of applications this year, and the judges commented the competition was fierce. Caitlyn was awarded the trip because her essay was well-researched, organized and composed, and she is able to take the trip.

From June 11 to 17, Caitlyn will tour Washington, D.C. with 1,500 peers from across the state and nation who are representing their family’s electric cooperative on the 2016 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. Her all-expense-paid trip is taken care of by the Mor-Gran-Sou membership.

On the tour, Caitlyn will see the grand architecture, meaningful monuments and fast-paced people. In addition to touring attractions including the U.S. Capitol, Arlington Cemetery, Mount Vernon, and the Smithsonian museum and research complex, Caitlyn will learn about the cooperative business model, U.S. history and American government. The North Dakota students will also meet our state’s congressional delegation.

While she’s never flown before, Caitlyn has traveled to Nebraska for two summers to help a family friend on her ranch for a couple weeks. She’s also attended Youth and Theology

Ministry seminars at Saint John’s University in Minnesota, where she has learned theology and ministry, bonded with students and learned from their experiences, focused on world problems — and is now trying to make a difference.

Caitlyn says she is “super excited” to spend a week in Washington, D.C. on the Youth Tour.

“I like new experiences and meeting new people,” she says. “I think it will be really cool!”

From removing flowers at the local cemetery so it can be mowed, to caring for a family friend who had cancer, to giving speeches about her Christian faith to peers through SEARCH, Caitlyn stays busy in her community. She also embodies the Touchstone Energy Cooperative value of commitment to community. With common sense and a caring heart, Caitlyn is a mature young woman who will represent Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative well while on the Youth Tour.

We congratulate Caitlyn for writing a thoughtful essay about how Mor-Gran-Sou employees work together to show the four Touchstone Energy Cooperative values, and for earning the opportunity to go on the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour trip. After she returns from Washington, D.C., we’ll visit with her again and learn the trip’s highlights. ■

Keeping our electric system as reliable as possible

Tree trimming is a regular part of your electric cooperative’s operations.

Mor-Gran-Sou, like all electric utilities, is required to maintain appropriate clearance between trees and electric transmission and distribution lines. Trees need to be trimmed, and in some cases removed, to minimize potential power outages and to eliminate fire and safety

hazards due to trees contacting energized electric lines.

Mor-Gran-Sou typically uses local contract tree-trimming crews to perform this task.

Please know that they are working on your cooperative’s behalf to help keep our electric system as reliable and safe as possible. ■



Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative
Your Touchstone Energy Cooperative

Annual Meeting

2016

**FORT YATES, ND
PRAIRIE KNIGHTS
CASINO & RESORT**

JULY 15, 2016

*Learn about co-op issues;
cast your vote and elect three members
to serve on the board of directors;
and enjoy a hearty meal.*

Former Mor-Gran-Sou director passes away

BY JACKIE MILLER

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative was saddened to learn of the death of former board director Emil Riehl, who passed away on Feb. 27. Emil served as a Grant County director on the Mor-Gran-Sou board from 1963 to 1981, serving eight years as president.

Emil was born Jan. 1, 1925, to Melchoir and Emma (Wagner) Riehl in Raleigh and was raised and educated in the Raleigh area, graduating from Raleigh High School. Emil married Irene Gustin on June 24, 1946, in Flasher. They took over the family farm with his brother, Ted. They farmed and ranched while raising a family, until retiring and moving to Mandan and eventually Bismarck.

In 2007, as Mor-Gran-Sou celebrated its 60th anniversary, we sat down with former employees and directors, and asked them to share some wisdom and insight — about their former jobs, retirement and the future. At that time,



Emil Riehl

we had a chance to visit with Emil and Irene. In true director spirit, this is what we learned from Emil that day: Inspired by Helge Nygren, who was a former board president of Mor-Gran-Sou, Emil said he strongly believed in cooperatives and the philosophy of serving the person at the end of the line who pays the bills. If Emil could give one piece of advice to current and future directors, he always goes back to the words of his mentor, Mr. Nygren: “Believe in that guy at the end of the line.”

Robert Gipp, who served as a Mor-Gran-Sou board director representing Sioux County during Emil’s tenure, offers his insight. “I remember Emil as someone who was

always respectful of everyone inside and outside of the board room. I really never saw him lose his temper,” says Gipp. “He was committed to being a good board chairman when he served in that position. I also held the chairman position, and I built on what I had learned from watching him. He set a great example for me and fellow board members. During social board gatherings, I remember him being so considerate of his wife. I was fortunate to know him.”

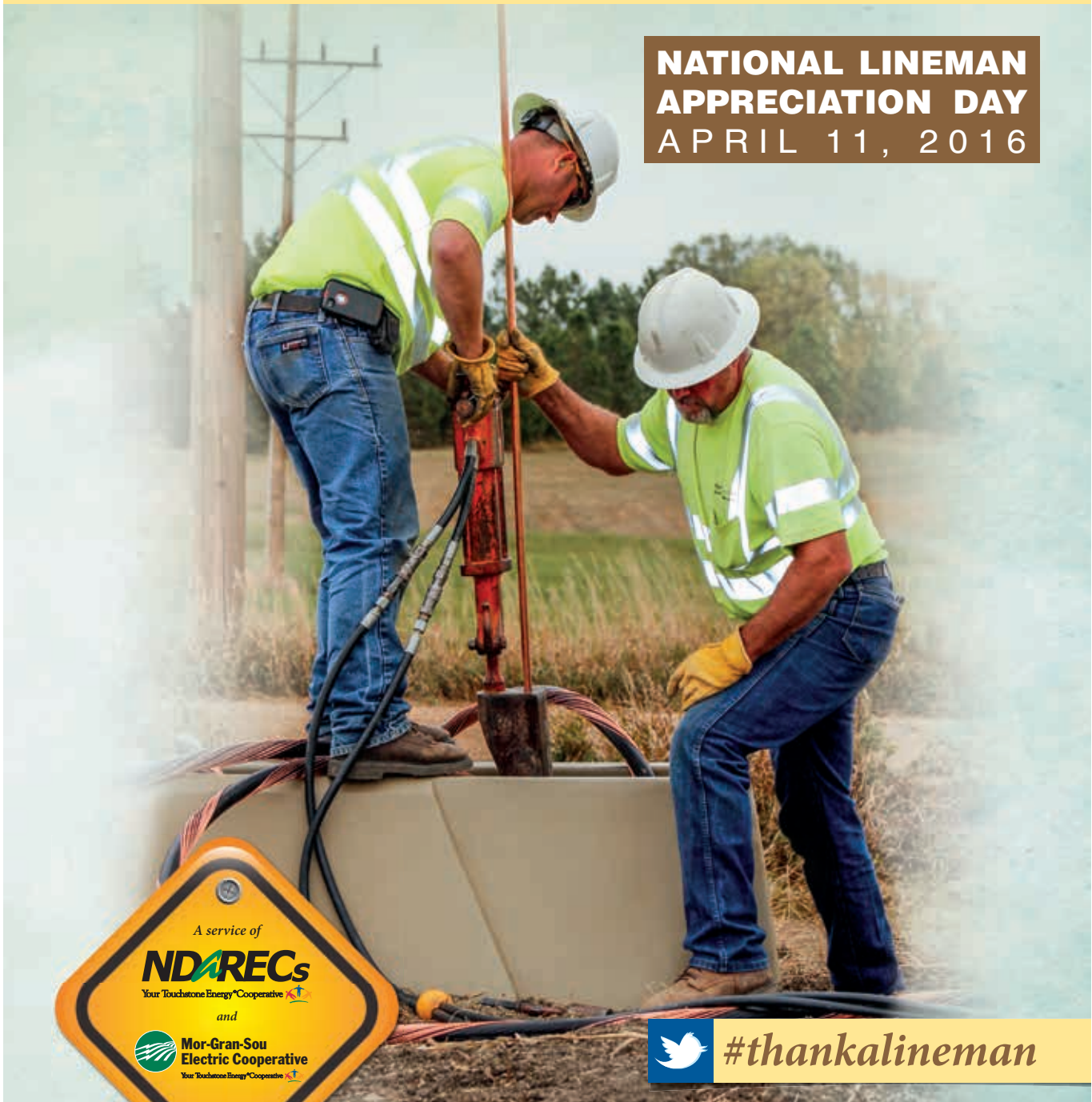
Those who knew Emil best described him as community-minded. Emil served as a North Dakota Representative from District 35 for 12 years and was active in other organizations including hospice and right-to-life organizations. He and Irene also enjoyed traveling and spending time with family.

The board of directors and staff of Mor-Gran-Sou extend their condolences to the family and friends of Emil Riehl. ■



PLAN TOGETHER. STAY SAFE TOGETHER.

**NATIONAL LINEMAN
APPRECIATION DAY
APRIL 11, 2016**



#thankalinetman

(L-R): Jason Jahner, leadman; Doug Nagel, general foreman



*Brandy Richau, Locating Manager,
Summit Utility Services*



Mor-Gran-Sou Electric partners with Summit Utility Services for locates

STORY AND PHOTOS BY CARMEN DEVNEY

No job is too small for North Dakota One Call.

Calling North Dakota One Call is free, easy — and it's the law — prior to digging or excavating on your property. By contacting 811, you request a locate of the underground utility lines.

Mor-Gran-Sou has begun partnering with Summit. Randy Ressler, manager of operations at Mor-Gran-Sou, says it makes sense to outsource this seasonal job.

“In the wintertime we could have one or two locates in a day; in the summer we could have 50 or more in a day. It makes sense



If you are planning a project that requires digging or excavating, and you've placed a call to 811, North Dakota One Call, an employee with Summit Utility Services will be on-site within two business days to perform a locate, on behalf of Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative.

to outsource this job and partner with Summit,” Ressler explains.

Underground utility lines including electric, gas, telephone, Internet and more, need to be marked — or staked — before a consumer or contractor digs. Some of the many projects that require a call to 811, or One Call, would include planting a tree, installing a fence, or building or adding onto a home. Regardless of the project size, if you plan to dig or excavate, you must call One Call first. It can take up to 48 hours, or two business days, for every utility company to mark the underground lines.

The process of locating goes like this: A consumer or contractor calls 811 and generates an electronic locate request among all area utilities. Summit Utility Services receives the request on behalf of Mor-Gran-Sou Electric. An employee for Summit is dispatched to the site. This person



Brandy Richau, locating manager, is one of Summit Utility Services' employees who performs locates for Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative.

will have maps of the Mor-Gran-Sou Electric service area that identify consumers and power lines. Using a locator, which is a transmitter with two clips, the employee sticks a probe in the ground for grounding purposes, and then clips onto

utility infrastructure such as an area transformer. The probe then sends a signal down the wire. Using a handheld receiver, the employee can identify the underground line, and mark it with paint and flags. The employee takes photos of the completed locate, which is good for 21 days.

Troy Holzworth, president of Summit Utility Services, started in the industry about 25 years ago. He says in the “old days,” people didn’t give much thought to digging without placing a call. “There weren’t nearly as many miles of underground utility lines,” he says. “Now, it may not be safe to put a shovel in your own yard. Quite a bit has changed.”

The process, which has become quite a bit more extensive over the years, is not just important — it’s necessary. “If you were to hit a utility line that is not marked or is improperly marked, it could cause a power outage or injury. If you’ve been watching the national news, there have been several gas explosions where people were killed, as a result of not having called 811 and followed through with the process,” Holzworth says. “At the end of the day, One Call is all about public safety and keeping plant intact.”

Holzworth says Summit Utility Services partners with many utility companies including electric cooperatives to perform locates, and notes that all of the co-ops in North Dakota have, “great people to be business partners with in damage prevention.”

For information on Summit Utility Services, visit www.summitutility.com. To request a locate, call North Dakota One Call at 811 or visit www.ndonecall.com. ■

MOR-GRAN-SOU ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

board meeting highlights



Meeting date: Feb. 24, 2016

- Approved the Jan. 27, 2016 regular Board meeting minutes
- Approved two work order inventories and a special equipment inventory
- Approved capital credit refunds to estates and those age 80 and over
- Heard the Nominating Committee report to date
- Reviewed the January financial report
- Appointed attendees for various upcoming meetings
- Heard Co-General Managers/Chief Executive Officers update and reports from events attended
- Heard update on Innovative Energy Alliance, LLC (IEA)
- Heard updates on all entities of WDUS Holdings LLC
- Reviewed and discussed senior staff department updates
- Reviewed safety report and monthly incident report
- Reviewed and accepted director's and attorney's financial report for January
- Heard director reports and held discussion on meetings attended
- Held Executive Session

Upcoming regular board meeting dates:

April 27 in the NDAREC board room in Mandan at 9 a.m. CT

May 25 in the Flasher office at 9 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 800-750-8212 or 701-597-3301 to confirm the meeting date and location if you wish to attend.

To place an item on the agenda, please contact Board Chair Leland "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, or contact the office for a copy.

Watch for hazards in the field this spring

Many farmers are busy preparing tillage equipment, sprayers and planters for spring fieldwork. Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative urges farmers to look for electric hazards around the farm as they prepare for planting.

The most common cause of contact with overhead power lines is operating machinery such as large tractors with front loaders, portable grain augers, fold-up cultivators, grain elevators and any equipment with an antenna. Handling long items such as irrigation pipe, ladders and rods also poses the risk of contact with power lines.

Overhead power lines are necessary to deliver electricity to farmsteads and rural homes, but the electricity can be deadly if wires are touched by large equipment. Farmers should be aware of power lines while using large equipment for spring tillage.

Farmers and their equipment should always be 10 feet away from power lines on all sides. Practice extreme caution and use a spotter to make sure you stay far away from power lines when you use tall equipment.

According to the National Electrical Safety Code, the minimum height of a primary distribution power line, neutral conductor (bottom wire) to the ground, needs to be 18.5 feet over cultivated areas. High-profile vehicles, including augers, crop sprayer booms, etc., are a concern to Mor-Gran-Sou as they pass under the cooperative's primary power lines. If you have farm equipment higher than 14 feet, please contact our line department at 701-597-3301, 701-663-0297 or 800-750-8212 so the co-op can ensure there is adequate clearance.

Overhead power lines are not the only electric hazard on the farm. Pole guy wires, used to stabilize utility poles, are grounded. However, when one of the guy wires is broken it can become charged with electricity. If you break a guy wire, call the cooperative. ■



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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,
Chad Harrison, Bob J. Leingang,
Bonnie Tomac

MANAGEMENT

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

www.morgransou.com

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 