



# CURRENT

Serving Morton, Grant and Sioux counties

FEBRUARY 2016

NEWS

## Rime Ice Stunning scenery, significant outages

*In this month's local pages, find out how rime ice (commonly mistaken for surface hoar frost), has been causing power outages across the Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative service area, and what factors help determine the restoration process.*

*Mor-Gran-Sou Lineman  
Blake Reis*

### In this issue:

- El Niño's mild weather pattern contributes to power outages
- Mor-Gran-Sou offers student scholarships; holds safety poster coloring contest
- Serve your cooperative as a board director
- Meeting minutes and more

PHOTO BY CARMEN DEVNEY



*The Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative service area experienced heavy frost in December, as a result of El Niño — a climate cycle in the Pacific Ocean that has a global impact on weather patterns. When mild temperatures, high humidity and freezing fog form rime ice on power lines, it can provide stunning scenery — and a significant amount of power outages.*



## **WHEN THE ENEMY ATTACKS ... 'Doing the most amount of good for the most people in the shortest amount of time'**

STORY AND PHOTOS BY CARMEN DEVNEY

In December, Kevin Lawrence noted North Dakota's mild temperatures on Facebook, stating they were common during an El Niño pattern. Lawrence, KFYZ-TV's chief meteorologist in Bismarck, said residents may experience outbreaks of cold in the coming months, but will likely continue to see above-average temperatures in February as a whole.

Randy Ressler isn't an expert on weather patterns, but he knows firsthand what can happen when mild temperatures, high humidity and freezing fog form a heavy layer on power lines and poles. Ressler, the manager of operations for Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative, says the cooperative has experienced

several power outages this winter caused by rime ice, which forms when liquid water droplets in the air freeze onto a surface, growing into combs, needles or feathery forms.

Clint Begger, lead man with Mor-Gran-Sou in Mandan, says outages related to rime ice can occur when the weight causes tree branches above the power lines to break and fall, snapping the wire. Outages can also happen when the heat from the ground causes the rime ice to fall from the bottom wire. With the weight removed, the wire may bounce into the line above, which still has the ice.

"When the wires come together, it can either kick out the breaker because it's a dead short, or it can arc together

and burn the line down. If that happens and there is ice on the other spans, then the poles have so much tension they just start breaking," Begger describes. "There are a lot of factors, including the direction and speed of the wind, that can cause power outages in these types of conditions."

Ressler says there isn't anything the cooperative's linemen can do to prevent ice build-up on the lines. While they can attempt to remove the rime ice if it hasn't frozen and adhered to the power lines, the cooperative has 4,800 square miles in its service territory.

"It's not humanly possible to go out and knock the ice off every span," Ressler says. "It's a battle similar to a military operation. Where the enemy is



Mor-Gran-Sou Leadmen **Gary Fitterer** (left) and **Clint Begger** replaced a broken anchor that was damaged by rime ice and no longer holding a pole. Within minutes, they removed the broken anchor, spun a new one in and jacked the pole back so the distribution lines were no longer sagging.



While a lineman can attempt to remove the rime ice if it hasn't frozen and adhered to the power lines, the cooperative has 4,800 square miles in its service territory. It's not possible to knock the ice off every span. When a Mor-Gran-Sou line crew repaired a broken anchor north of Glen Ullin, Lineman **Blake Reiss** used his hot stick to remove ice from a distribution line that was sagging. In this instance, the ice fell like snow.

attacking us the most, that's where we send our linemen — to where they can do the most good for the most people in the shortest amount of time. It's a judgement call."

When an outage occurs, the restoration process begins immediately. Mor-Gran-Sou works with its power providers, Basin Electric Power Cooperative and the Western Area Power Administration, to reconfigure the system by identifying and isolating transmission line sections that have been affected.

"To figure out where the problem is, we break the system down into pieces. We try a breaker. If it holds, it's not that piece. We close a switch and open another, and try again. If it

doesn't hold, we have a good idea of where the problem is," Ressler explains. "We can isolate that piece and reroute power from another direction to feed that portion, and re-energize the other portion. Once we've narrowed down the area, we have to physically go out and look for it — and that can take some time."

Thankfully, the outages caused by rime ice this winter haven't been nearly as bad as they were in 2010 — when snow and ice storms hit the Mor-Gran-Sou service area in January and April, causing severe and widespread damage to the electrical system.

Ressler says this year's weather patterns remind him of what was experienced in 2010, and that concerns

him. El Niño, which originates in the Pacific Ocean, typically occurs every five to seven years. A KXMB-TV news story reported this is the second-strongest El Niño on record, according to Michael Mathews, meteorologist at the National Weather Service in Bismarck.

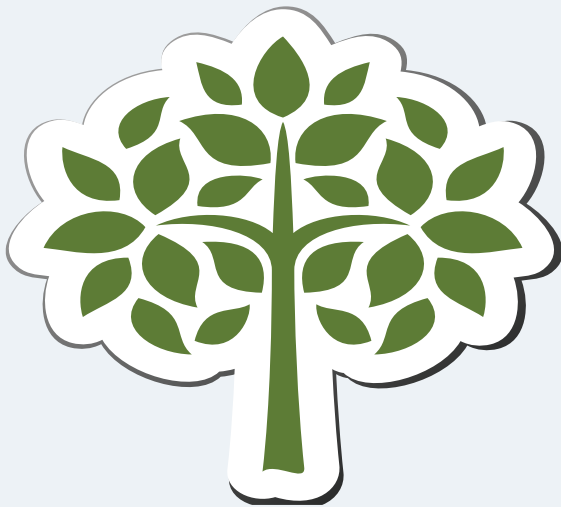
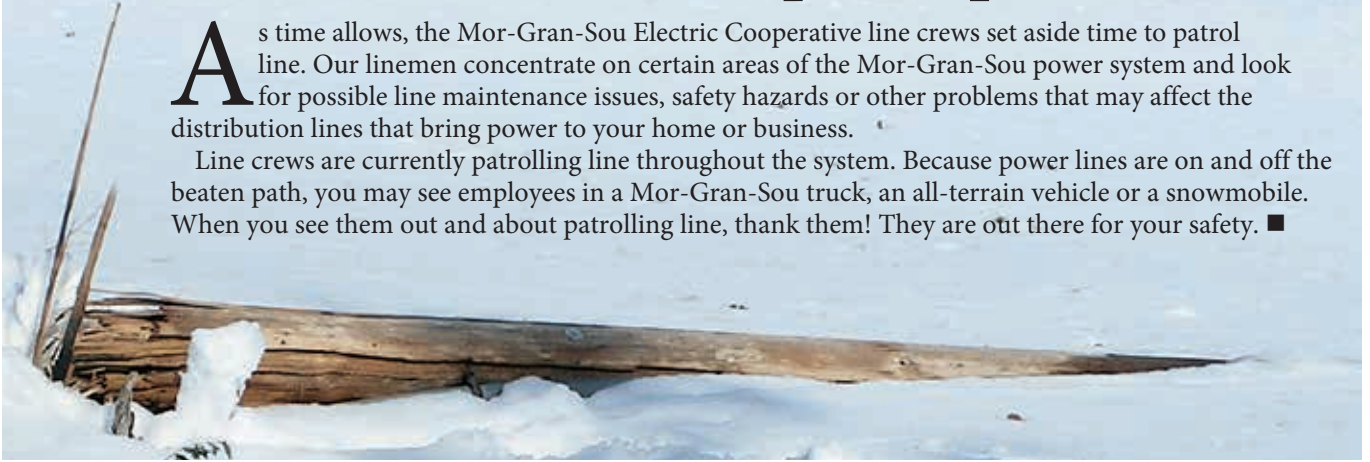
So, like any military operation, Mor-Gran-Sou prepares for the worst — and counters the ice with all of our available resources and outside resources when necessary. We thank our member-owners for their patience, as lineworkers repaired power lines and poles that have been damaged by rime ice. And we hope El Niño has mercy, and we don't experience the system damage that occurred in 2010. ■



# Mor-Gran-Sou line crews patrol power lines

As time allows, the Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative line crews set aside time to patrol line. Our linemen concentrate on certain areas of the Mor-Gran-Sou power system and look for possible line maintenance issues, safety hazards or other problems that may affect the distribution lines that bring power to your home or business.

Line crews are currently patrolling line throughout the system. Because power lines are on and off the beaten path, you may see employees in a Mor-Gran-Sou truck, an all-terrain vehicle or a snowmobile. When you see them out and about patrolling line, thank them! They are out there for your safety. ■



## 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. Bullinger Tree Trimming will have crews operating within our service area again this year.

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



## DIAL THE

DISABILITY  
UTILITY ASSISTANCE  
RENTAL ASSISTANCE  
PASS IT ON  
211  
MILITARY  
SUPPORT  
TRANSITION  
ADDITION  
FRANKLIN COUNTY  
SHELTER  
COUNSELING  
MENTAL  
HEALTH

WE ARE  
STANDING  
A DAY  
24 HOURS  
7 DAYS A  
WEEK  
HERE  
BE

FOOD  
INSECURE  
GRIEF  
ASSAULT  
ABUSE  
GAMBLING  
EMPLOYMENT  
UNITED WAY  
MEDICAL  
FRIEND  
DISASTER  
SUICIDE  
YOUTH

DO NOT  
HELP  
HERE  
SUPPORT  
RELATIONSHIPS  
ADDICTION  
FRANKLIN COUNTY  
SHELTER  
COUNSELING  
MENTAL  
HEALTH

WHEN TIMES  
ARE ROUGH  
DURING TIMES  
OF CRISIS

WE'LL BE  
HERE

HEALTH  
CARE  
MEDICAL  
ASSISTANCE

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

## HELPLINE

FirstLink's 2-1-1 helpline is a free phone service available 24/7 to the public. Call specialists offer supportive, non-judgmental listening ears and information about community programs statewide. To reach the helpline dial 2-1-1 or 701-235-7335.

**In 2015, First Link handled almost 53,748 calls, and 3.5 percent of those calls were suicide-related.**



[www.myfirstlink.org](http://www.myfirstlink.org)

Helpline: 2-1-1 OR 701-235-7335(SEEK)

Suicide Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255(TALK)





BAUMGARTNER



FRANKLUND

## Managers' Message

BY CHRIS BAUMGARTNER AND DON FRANKLUND,  
CO-GENERAL MANAGERS

### Mor-Gran-Sou's power suppliers joined a Regional Transmission Organization. What does that mean for the member-owner?

After many years of discussion and analysis, Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative's power suppliers, Basin Electric Power Cooperative, Inc. and the Western Area Power Administration (Western), have joined and successfully integrated into the Southwest Power Pool (SPP), a Regional Transmission Organization (RTO) based out of Little Rock, Ark.

The SPP is charged with ensuring a reliable supply of electric generation, transmission infrastructure and competitive wholesale electricity prices to their members, throughout the Upper Great Plains, on behalf of utilities and transmission companies in 14 states, which now include Basin Electric and Western. The SPP is one of several other RTOs that blanket the country and operate under the oversight of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, of which Tony Clark, a North Dakota native and former Public Service Commissioner, is a member.

#### So how does this affect our business?

When participating in an RTO, Basin Electric and Western can more economically purchase power from other regional utilities in time of need and sell power in time of excess. It also allows them to adopt standardized rules and tariffs that

apply to wheeling power across the high-voltage transmission system.

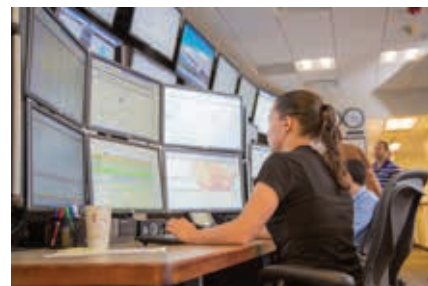
Even though we are considered a distribution cooperative, interestingly enough, Mor-Gran-Sou also provides transmission service to other utilities such as Montana-Dakota Utilities (MDU). While Basin Electric will operate its transmission facilities under SPP guidelines, we are also considering operating our transmission facilities in the same manner. Your board of directors and management are currently weighing the possibility of this commitment.

In addition, Mor-Gran-Sou receives some of its power over transmission lines we do not own. This sharing of lines is known as wheeling and a wheeling fee is charged. We understand this fee may increase and are currently preparing for this possible escalation. Of course, that affects the bottom line at your cooperative.

Although a complicated and philosophical change, the Mor-Gran-Sou board of directors and management believe that Basin Electric and Western have made the right move to join the SPP. We will keep you informed as we learn more about the evolving electric generation and transmission environment.

Please understand, no matter what issues your cooperative will face in

2016, the member-owner is front-and-center in our decision-making. You can expect that Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative will continue to provide safe, reliable and affordable electric service. We have — and will continue — to work hard to accomplish that goal. ■



Basin Electric marketing room

### FAST FACTS

A Regional Transmission Organization (RTO) operates bulk electric power systems across much of North America. RTOs are independent, non-profit and membership-based, that ensure reliability and optimize supply and demand bids for wholesale electric power. Southwest Power Pool is one of seven such organizations. RTOs first developed in the 1990s to accommodate the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's (FERC) policy.

FERC is the U.S. federal agency with jurisdiction over interstate electricity sales, wholesale electric rates, hydroelectric licensing, natural gas pricing and oil pipeline rates. FERC also reviews and authorizes liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminals, interstate natural gas pipelines and non-federal hydropower projects.

<http://www.spp.org/>  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/>



## The deadline for college scholarships is approaching!



**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 2015-2016 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 **Wednesday, Feb. 17**. 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. 29**.

### 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.
- Enclose a photograph of the child for publishing purposes.
- Only dependents of current Mor-Gran-Sou members are eligible for this contest.

### 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.

### WINNERS:

Winning posters, along with the child's photograph, will be featured in the Mor-Gran-Sou local pages of the *North Dakota Living* magazine. ■



## Mor-Gran-Sou's annual meeting scheduled for July 15, 2016

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 Grant County position presently held by Vern Frederick;
- The Mandan Area position presently held by Leland "Judge" Barth; and
- The Morton County position presently held by Pam Geiger.

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 30. 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 has met, on Jan. 13. The members of the Nominating Committee include Leslie Dirk, Mandan; Glenda Gross, Selfridge; 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 Thursday, March 10. 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. You can also email Jackie at [jlmler@morgransou.com](mailto:jlmler@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 10 deadline will be included in the list the Nominating Committee will provide to the board. ■

### 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 ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

## board meeting highlights



### Meeting date: Dec. 21, 2015

- Approved the Nov. 23, 2015 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
- Approved increase to 2015 funding for capital credit refunds for estates and age 80 and over
- Heard update on the Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Power Plan
- Approved 2015 revenue deferral
- Approved Mor-Gran-Sou application for Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Business License
- Approved legal counsel retainer agreement
- Approved rate adjustment for rural and town residential accounts effective April 1, 2016
- Appointed voting delegates and alternates for various upcoming meetings
- Heard results of Innovative Energy Alliance, LLC (IEA) Board of Directors election
- Heard Co-General Managers/Chief Executive Officers' update and reports from events attended
- Heard update on IEA
- Heard updates on all entities of WDUS Holdings, LLC
- Reviewed and discussed senior staff department updates
- Reviewed safety meeting minutes and safety reports
- Reviewed and accepted director's and attorney's financial report for November
- Heard director reports and held discussion on meetings attended
- Held Executive Session

### Upcoming regular board meeting dates:

Feb. 24 at Mor-Gran-Sou in Flasher at 10:30 a.m. CT

March 30 in the board room at NDAREC in 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](mailto:cternes@morgransou.com), or call 1-800-750-8212 or 597-3301, to confirm the meeting date and location 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](http://www.morgransou.com), or contact the office for a copy.

## BYLAW/RESOLUTION MEETING SET

A bylaw/resolution meeting will be held in conjunction with the regular board meeting scheduled to start at 10:30 a.m. CT (9:30 a.m. MT) on Wednesday, March 30. The meeting will be held in the board room of the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives, located at 3201 Nygren Dr. N.W., Mandan.

If you have a bylaw/resolution to propose at the 2016 cooperative's annual meeting in July, but cannot make the scheduled meeting on March 30, please submit your information in writing to Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative before March 30. Thank you.



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

202 6th Ave. W. - PO Box 297  
Flasher, ND 58535-0297  
Phone: 701- 597-3301 Flasher  
701- 663-0297 Mandan

Toll-free: 800-750-8212 Fax: 701-597-3915  
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,  
Chad Harrison, Bob J. Leingang,  
Bonnie Tomac

#### MANAGEMENT

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

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

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

## HOLIDAY CLOSING

Presidents Day:  
Monday, Feb. 15

In observance of Presidents Day, Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative will be closed Monday, Feb 16. Line crews will be available in case of an emergency outage.

HAPPY  
Valentine's day!

Sunday,  
Feb. 14