



CURRENT

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SEPTEMBER 2016

NEWS

Thanks, members, for attending YOUR annual meeting

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative held its annual meeting July 15 at Prairie Knights Casino and Resort. In this month's local pages, learn some of your cooperative's accomplishments and challenges — and how the teamwork among employees, directors and managers makes this large member event a success.



PHOTO BY CARMEN DEVNEY

What's inside:

- Annual meeting recap
- Linemen receive training on hotline work and grounding
- Youth Tour highlights
- Mor-Gran-Sou remembers Roger Mahrer
- Meeting minutes and more

Jesse Kuhn, engineering technician, and Chris Zeller, office support, assisted members with registration.



During Mor-Gran-Sou's annual meeting in July, the Pavilion at Prairie Knights Casino and Resort north of Fort Yates was full, as interested members listened to the manager's report and learned about the cooperative's accomplishments and challenges.

PHOTOS BY CARMEN DEVENEY

Mor-Gran-Sou holds annual meeting

BY JACKIE MILLER

Members of Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative, Inc., met at the Pavilion of Prairie Knights Casino and Resort north of Fort Yates on July 15 to conduct their business at the cooperative's 69th annual meeting. This year's theme was, "Reliability – Regulations – Resources – Ready to Serve You."

The afternoon began with registration from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. CT. Prior to a delicious banquet served at 6 p.m., a solemn prayer was offered by Reverend John Paul Gardner, pastor to St. Elizabeth, Cannon Ball; St. Peter in Chains, Fort Yates; St. James, Porcupine; St. Philomena, Selfridge; and Sacred Heart, Solen. Mor-Gran-Sou was also honored to have Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Councilman Chad Harrison provide a warm welcome to the members.

Chairman Leland "Judge" Barth dropped the gavel at approximately 5:30 p.m. CT and the business meeting was underway. This year, Mor-Gran-Sou members were asked to vote for three board directors: one for the Grant County position, one for the Mandan area position, and one for the Morton County position. Incumbents Vernard Frederick, Flasher, and Barth, Mandan, retained their positions on the board. Frederick is the Grant County representative and Barth is the Mandan area representative. New to the board is Jay Larson, who will serve his first three-year board term as representative for Morton County. He fills the position previously held by Pam Geiger, who reached her term limit of six 3-year terms. Mor-Gran-Sou thanks Dennis Dutke, Mandan; Cody Hatzenbuhler, Mandan; Clyde Howe, Mandan;

Delwin Petrick, Elgin; and Travis Wolf, Mandan; for campaigning to serve their electric cooperative.

Mor-Gran-Sou was honored to have a number of guests join the meeting. Senator John Hoeven, Congressman Kevin Cramer, and Jane Opdahl and Joanne Beckman from Senator Heidi Heitkamp's office took time to share their thoughts with the audience.

After the guests' greetings, Co-General Managers/Chief Executive Officers Donald Franklund and Chris Baumgartner captured this year's theme in their interesting and informative report to the membership. Baumgartner discussed Mor-Gran-Sou's dedication to safety and how employees work together toward creating a safe work environment. Baumgartner also discussed changes brought about by higher rates, current legislation and



N.D. Congressman **Kevin Cramer**

regional transmission organization changes. Franklund then presented a number of updates including what he hopes to be his final one on the 2010 ice storm. Franklund reminded members about the value of electricity, and what it can do and how it can save time. The managers' presentation closed with addressing how the recent member satisfaction survey has shown that of all the qualities people look for in their electric cooperative, reliability is the most important. Mor-Gran-Sou is working tirelessly toward the goal of being as reliable and cost-effective as possible.

Dedicated to the development of young leaders in the area, Mor-Gran-Sou recognized four scholarship winners during the business meeting including Krysten Doll, New Salem; Mikayla Lennie, New Salem; Leslie Miller, St. Anthony; and Amber Morrell, Mandan. The teenagers competed for and received a Basin Electric Power Cooperative/Mor-Gran-Sou scholarship award in the



Laverne Seehafer (right), cashier/receptionist, counted ballots with Elections Committee member **Gloria Steckler**.

amount of \$500 to further their education as they attend college this fall. In spite of their busy summer, three of the scholarship recipients were able to attend the meeting and thank the membership for the scholarships.

This past June, Caitlyn Becker of Flasher participated in the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. Director Geiger recognized Becker at this year's annual meeting and thanked her for representing Mor-Gran-Sou and the state of North Dakota. Becker and other delegates from across the state and nation learned from and about each other while participating in events that showcase our nation's rich history, U.S. government, the cooperative business model and rural electrification.

Finally, Chief Financial Officer Travis Kupper presented the financial report to the membership.

Directly following the annual meeting, the board of directors held its reorganization meeting. Two officers were elected to the offices they had previously held. Barth will continue to serve as the board chair

and Casey Wells as the vice chair. Bonnie Tomac was elected to the position of secretary-treasurer. These officers will serve a one-year term.

The board of directors and staff of Mor-Gran-Sou wish to thank the members for participating in the 69th annual meeting of the membership, and look forward to meeting its members' electrical needs in the future. ■



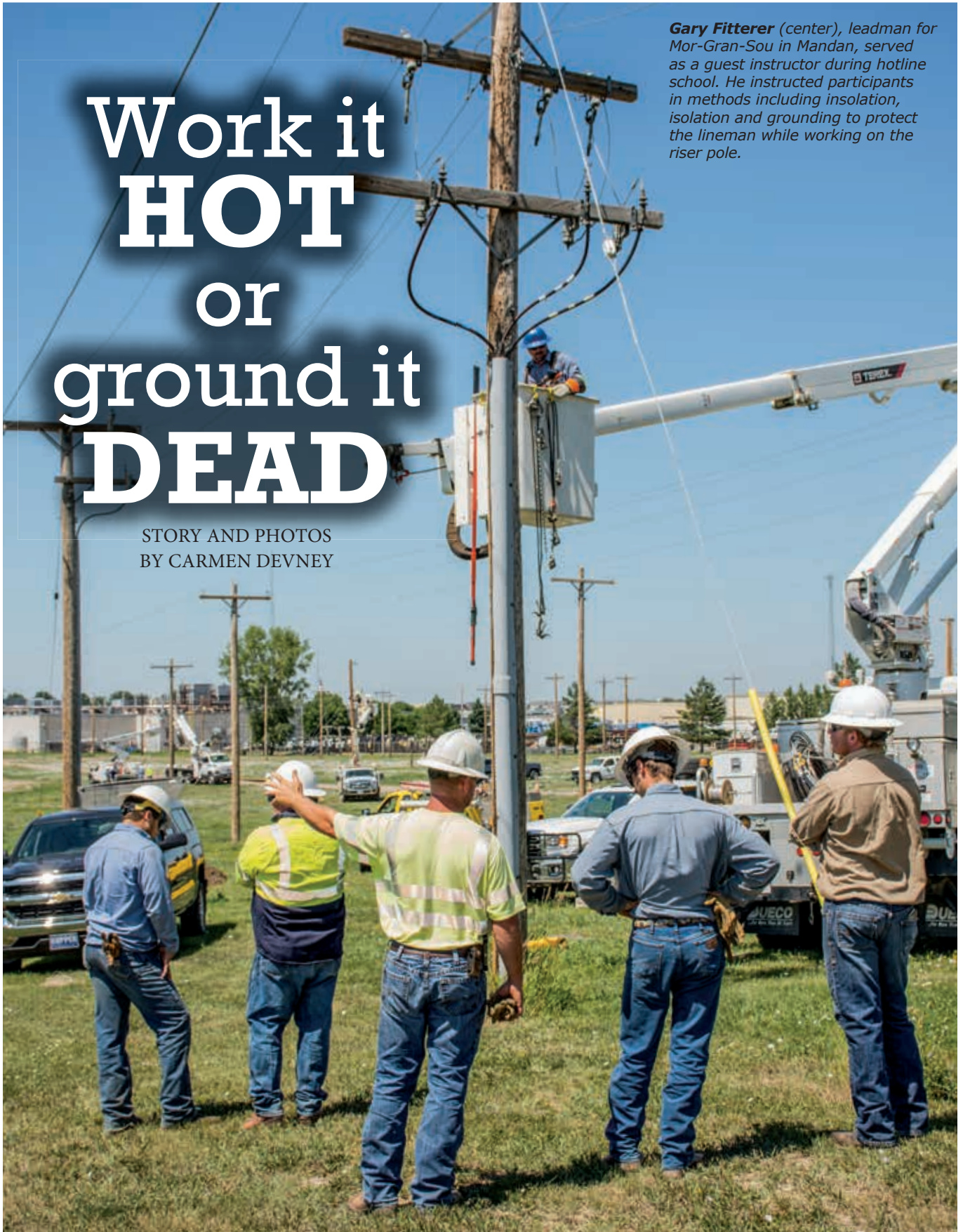
N.D. Senator **John Hoeven**



Work it **HOT** or ground it **DEAD**

STORY AND PHOTOS
BY CARMEN DEVNEY

Gary Fitterer (center), leadman for Mor-Gran-Sou in Mandan, served as a guest instructor during hotline school. He instructed participants in methods including insolation, isolation and grounding to protect the lineman while working on the riser pole.





Journeyman Lineman **Wayde Eckroth** (left), Flasher, and Leadman **Gary Fitterer**, Mandan

The job of an electric cooperative lineworker is to help build, maintain and repair the electric distribution system without disrupting the flow of power to its member-owners when possible. During the week of July 25 to 29, nearly 100 lineworkers from North Dakota's 16 electric distribution cooperatives including Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative went back to school to get a refresher course in the application of rubber goods and gloves to work on energized high-voltage power lines. They also practiced using personal protective grounds as part of the process of de-energizing a power line to allow repairs to be completed safely. While on the job, linemen have the option to work a power line hot or ground it dead.

Hotline School is hosted annually by the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives in Mandan, with support from vendors and manufacturers. The objectives



From left: Leadman **Clint Begger**, Mandan, and **Lance Diebold**, a journeyman lineman for Capital Electric Cooperative in Bismarck, worked together to apply personal protective grounds on the pole and lines to protect themselves from the hazards of voltage.

are to network best practices amongst North Dakota lineworkers from apprentices to skilled leaders in the field; to learn practical skills and safe work procedures with hands-on instruction and demonstrations from experienced lineworkers; and to apply skills learned throughout six work stations under the guidance of skilled mentors. Education starts in the classroom and ends in the field with hands-on training and practice.

Four of the six stations required participants to practice various grounding scenarios to protect the lineworker. The other two stations included traditional hotline work situations that require the use of rubber gloves and cover-up to insulate energized lines and apparatuses.

Christina Roemmich, director of safety services for NDAREC, says linemen partake in safety and

technical training throughout the year. Field training, in a controlled environment like hotline school, is the best time for linemen to apply the skills they have learned. "When an outage occurs or storm restoration is required, the linemen have practiced the skills needed to complete the job safely," she says.

Mor-Gran-Sou employees participating in this year's hotline school included Leadmen Clint Begger, Gary Fitterer and Cody Maher, and Journeyman Linemen Wayde Eckroth, Blake Reis and Brady Zachmann.

Fitterer served as a guest instructor at one of the stations in the first session. He says he offered to teach this year, to pass some of his knowledge and experience to some of the more inexperienced linemen. "I even learn from some of them, too," he says. ■



In June, **Caitlyn Becker** represented Mor-Gran-Sou on the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C. The weeklong tour was packed with opportunities to learn about historical events, cooperatives and leadership skills. Becker says she tried to live in the moment and cherish everything she did.



PHOTO BY CARMEN DEVNEY

At Mor-Gran-Sou's annual meeting in July, **Caitlyn Becker** thanked the membership for sponsoring her trip and sending her to a place where history is always being made.



PHOTOS BY KATIE RYAN-ANDERSON

YOUTH TOUR RECAP

'Make history happen within your own life'

BY CARMEN DEVNEY

The annual Electric Cooperative Youth Tour essay-writing contest and trip to Washington, D.C., gives students in the Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative service area the opportunity to meet peers from across the state and nation, and expand their independence, interests — and ultimately, help them grow into thoughtful adults who will change the world.

This year Caitlyn Becker, a senior at Flasher Public School, won the contest and earned Mor-Gran-Sou's sponsorship on the Youth Tour. From June 11 to 17, she joined 1,500

students from across the state and nation to witness American history firsthand and visit what can only be described as some of the saddest places on earth.

When touring the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, she was prepared to see photos and exhibits depicting the persecution and "sacrifice by fire" of 6 million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators. What she couldn't have prepared for was the extreme emotion she would feel when she read the stories of sobbing mothers who begged for their children's lives to be spared.

Or how she would feel when she walked among the benches at the Pentagon Memorial, that represent the 184 lives lost when terrorists flew an airplane into the Pentagon on Sept. 11, 2001.

Or how she would feel when she visited the Newseum, an interactive museum of news and journalism, and learned the news of the day was that someone committed a hate crime at the Orlando night club Pulse. In the deadliest mass shooting by a single shooter, 49 people were killed and 53 were wounded.

The Youth Tour is designed to



While on the trip, North Dakota's Youth Tour delegates met Congressman **Kevin Cramer**.

develop student leaders. When Becker reflected on her overall experience and take-home message as a future leader, she associated it with one of the signs hanging on the wall at the Holocaust museum. It read, "Why should we remember? So it doesn't happen again."

Don't let history repeat.

The Youth Tour pushed Becker out of her comfort zone. Finding herself in a big city where a terrorist attack could happen at any time, she

and many peers felt somber while touring the various monuments and museums. To try to come to terms with topics that could never make sense, like genocide, the students — who were strangers hours and days before — quickly became friends while holding some deep discussions.

"It was a life-changing experience," Becker reflects. "I journaled every night and took lots of pictures, so I can look back on all those memories, and remember and cherish."

From learning about one family's challenges as they opened and managed Ben's Chili Bowl, to riding a ferry boat, eating at a fish market and sharing a room with a student who had a disability, Becker says the trip opened her eyes and changed her perspective in so many ways.

In October, Mor-Gran-Sou will share the dates of the 2017 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour and details of this fall's essay-writing contest.

Becker encourages students to apply for the youth leadership opportunity; even those who might feel out of their comfort zones, in traveling so far from home and learning about some devastating events.

"Go for it!" she says with enthusiasm. "It's an amazing experience to grow with others and see new things, and to see history. History is always being made. To go see what has made our country, it inspires you to go out and do more, and try to make history happen within your own life. It does change you, for sure. You have to be open and willing to see new things, and experience them and make the most of it."

The daughter of Mor-Gran-Sou members Joe and Jackie Becker, Caitlyn thanks her family's electric cooperative for sponsoring her trip and giving her amazing experiences — and most importantly, for investing in tomorrow's leaders. ■

Former Mor-Gran-Sou employee passes away

BY JACKIE MILLER

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative was saddened to learn of the death of former employee Roger Mahrer, who passed away on July 25. Roger started as Mor-Gran-Sou's warehouse clerk in December 1977. He semi-retired in December 1997, but worked for two more years training replacement personnel.

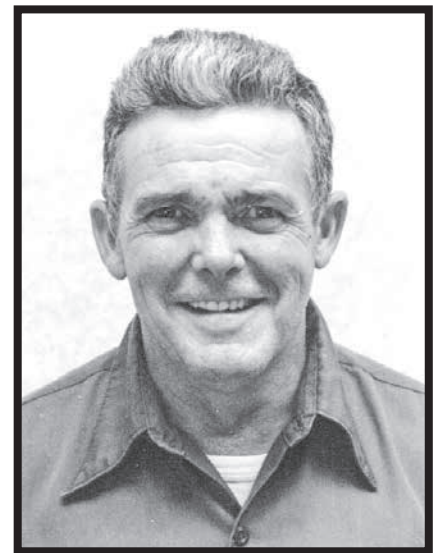
Roger was born on May 12, 1928 to Richard A. and Adela (Banning) Mahrer in Flasher, and was raised and educated in the Flasher area, graduating from Flasher High School. Roger married Isabelle Gustin on Oct. 3, 1950 in Flasher, where they made their home and raised their family, until retiring and eventually moving to Mandan.

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, we had a chance to visit with Roger and Isabelle. True to the cooperative spirit, Roger described how he had implemented an innovative tracking system for parts, and how the technology streamlined operations and saved the cooperative time and money.

Mor-Gran-Sou Manager of Operations Randy Ressler appreciated Roger's work ethic. "Roger was a true friend to all and was one of the most hard-working, motivated individuals I've ever had the pleasure to work with," he says.

Roger had a heart of gold and a mind like a steel trap. An example of his mind for numbers was apparent to co-workers who would assist Roger with inventory. As you would go from a parts bin to writing the number on paper, you might forget the long serial number. Well, Roger could repeat it for you — all 12 numbers with a few alpha



Roger Mahrer

characters. You would look at him with that, "How did you do that?" look. He would give you his famous mischievous smile and say, "What?" And then laugh right along with you as you wrote that number down.

Manager of Administrative Services Cindy Ternes explains there was never a dull moment when working with Roger.

MOR-GRAN-SOU ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

board meeting highlights



Meeting date: July 15, 2016

- Approved the June 29, 2016 regular Board meeting minutes
- Approved two work order inventories and a special equipment inventory
- Approved corrected capital credit refund to estates from June
- Discussed Basin Electric Power Cooperative rate increase
- Approved Mor-Gran-Sou/Western Area Power Administration/Western Heart River Irrigation District contract revision
- Heard Co-General Managers/Chief Executive Officers' update and reports from meetings attended
- Heard update on Innovative Energy Alliance, LLC (IEA)
- Heard updates on all entities of WDUS Holdings LLC
- Reviewed director's expense report for June
- Heard director reports and held discussion on meetings attended
- Reviewed department reports
- Held Executive Session

Upcoming regular board meeting dates:

Sept. 28 at the Fort Yates Service Center at 9 a.m. CT

Oct. 26 at Prairie Learning Center, D&E building, Raleigh, at 10:30 a.m. CT

Members are welcome to attend the board meetings at any time. Please contact Mor-Gran-Sou at ctermes@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 call the office for a copy.

"He always had a story to relate to an issue, or a relevant saying to share with you. His love of people and willingness to help anyone who needed it showed through at all times," she says. "We sure hated to see him retire from Mor-Gran-Sou."

Roger spent a lifetime with the community of Flasher. Prior to working at Mor-Gran-Sou, Roger worked as a parts manager at the family owned John Deere business in Flasher. He also, for many years, served as the Maytag repairman for the local area. Roger was very community-minded; he was a Flasher volunteer fireman and ambulance driver, and belonged to many civic organizations.

Mor-Gran-Sou Cashier/Receptionist Laverne Seehafer remembers how Roger always had a smile on his face. "He was truly one of a kind," she says.

Connie Rossow, former assistant general manager of Mor-Gran-Sou, agrees Roger was a great person to work with, and that he was always happy and grateful for having a job with Mor-Gran-Sou.

"He was well-known for his morning hugs – not only at work, but wherever you seen him out and about – you always got a hug. He had lot of funny stories to tell," Rossow recalls. "He had a great passion for Flasher High School sports events; especially basketball.

After his grandchildren graduated, he continued to come to the games, and was always happy to see Flasher people."

If Roger and Isabelle had spare time, you could find them on the golf course. While living in Flasher, Roger assisted in keeping the golf course green and clipped. After Roger moved to Mandan he worked full time for the Mandan Municipal Golf Course mowing each hole, tee box and fairway.

One of Roger and Isabelle's daughters, Jeannie (Mahrer) Fitterer, says to honor her father, the Mandan Municipal Golf Course planted a tree in Roger's memory by tee box number one.

"We can see it right when we come into town, just like we would look for dad's pickup when we came into town," she shares.

Jeannie also notes that her dad had a special handshake for his grandkids and the young people he worked with in various capacities.

Her brother James also shares that Roger was an early riser who always told him, "If you're not up by 5 a.m., you're missing the best part of the day." So it was no surprise to the family when Roger was up at 4:45 a.m. the morning he passed.

The board of directors and staff at Mor-Gran-Sou extend their condolences to the family and friends of Roger Mahrer. ■



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Vice Chair..... Casey Wells
Secretary-Treasurer..... Bonnie Tomac
Directors Mark Doll,
Vernard Frederick, Lance Froelich,
Chad Harrison, Jay Larson, Bob J. Leingang

MANAGEMENT

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

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