



MOR-GRAN-SOU ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE INC.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

# CURRENT

Serving Morton, Grant and Sioux counties

JANUARY 2017

NEWS

**HAPPY NEW YEAR,  
FROM MOR-GRAN-SOU ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**

## What's inside:

- Laverne Seehafer retires
- Keep snow and ice away from electric meters
- Student opportunities: scholarships, safety poster coloring contest, Youth Tour
- Meeting minutes ... and more!



PHOTO BY CARMEN DEVNEY

*From the linemen to her bosses, to the person who scrubbed the toilets, Laverne says each person is important at Mor-Gran-Sou. "When you work for a cooperative family, you can't beat it. It's a whole other family," she says. "We need every one of us in order to make the world go around. The group we have, everybody pitches in, regardless of whether or not it's in their job description. I feel everyone gives 110 percent." Pictured here from left, Cashier/Receptionist **Laverne Seehafer**, Account/Bookkeeper **Jolene Jochim** and Chief of Staff/Manager of Member Services **Jackie Miller** worked to ensure the 2016 annual meeting ran smoothly.*

# A 'good lady'

## Laverne Seehafer retires

BY CARMEN DEVNEY

Everyone's favorite buddy is retiring from Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative. Laverne Seehafer, cashier/receptionist, is friends with everyone she meets — and those she has never met. Whether she stopped at your home to check a water heater, kibitzed with you at a trade show or answered your phone call at the co-op, Laverne treats everyone with kindness and respect. An employee with Mor-Gran-Sou for more than 36 years, her last day at headquarters in Flasher is Jan. 31.

A Hebron High School "Brickmaker," Laverne Bertsch graduated and attended Dickinson State University with her twin sister, Lavonne. To help each other study and save money by sharing books, the sisters majored in business and minored in German, earning degrees in secondary education and as medical secretaries. Then, they moved to Bismarck to look for work.

Laverne was hired as an administrative secretary by Bismarck Hospital. She was initially told she was

*Laverne's last day at Mor-Gran-Sou is Jan. 31. She says it is time for her to gracefully say thank you and move on, and see what God has in store. She plans to volunteer and wants to make a difference. She also wants to hit some casinos with her twin sister and friends, and bake goodies to share.*

overqualified and had to downplay her education and qualifications.

"I said, 'Trust me. I'm not as qualified as you think I am,'" she remembers with a laugh. Needing a job, she had to pay her school loans and rent.

Laverne met Steve Seehafer and they married in 1978. Steve had sons Mike and Darren from a previous marriage, and Laverne loved them the same as she would have her own sons. The couple moved to Flasher to manage the bar, café and bowling alley. She also worked at a cooperative grocery store on Main Street.

"I was paying for a four-year degree bagging chickens," she says.

Mor-Gran-Sou opened the job position of general office clerk in 1980, and Laverne applied and was hired. She worked part-time doing payroll until she was hired full-time to work in the billing department. Over the years, Laverne has worked positions including member services clerk and now as cashier/receptionist. Regardless of the work she did, Laverne says the highlight was visiting with the cooperative's member-owners and getting to know her co-workers.

There were many laughs along the way. On a road trip with Communications Specialist Carmen Devney, the two traveled the service area and took photos of members on bridges for an annual report. Carmen climbed down ditches and stood in tall grass to take many of the photos.

When visiting with one of the families after a photoshoot, Laverne nearly gasped and choked when a member looked down Carmen's shirt, reached in and pulled out a tick. The member never stopped talking, even when her hand disappeared momentarily in the fabric. The situation felt familiar and comfortable, and served as a reminder that a cooperative is often thought of as an extended family.

On another road trip, this time to Prairie West Golf Course in Mandan, Laverne and Carmen represented Mor-Gran-Sou at a Bismarck-Mandan Chamber of Commerce event. They greeted the golfers and handed out small gifts with the cooperative logo.

Like many days in early June, it was cold and windy. The only protection from the weather was a Spiffy Biff near the hole. To warm up, Carmen and Laverne would walk to the green box and stand on the south side for brief stretches. As the day wore on, Carmen started disappearing more and more — into the box. Laverne, who always has a warm body and heart, still laughs when she remembers Carmen in the Spiffy Biff. You know it's a cold day in North Dakota when a person prefers the odor of an outhouse to a blustery wind.



Jackie Miller, chief of staff and manager of member services, remembers how she and Laverne had to share a phone as customer service representatives in the early years. “Warehouseman Roger Mahrer made a stand for our phone so we could whirl the phone back and forth between each other,” Jackie describes. “We had some good laughs when, in a rush to get the phone, with a good spin, that receiver whirled right out of its cradle.” They eventually each got their own phones.

Thank goodness for the laughter, because there were tears, too. Steve passed away in 2003, and in 2015, the unimaginable happened — Laverne and Steve’s daughter, Erin, was killed in a car accident. It was a loss no parent should ever experience, and it affected everyone at the cooperative.

Laverne says Mor-Gran-Sou’s employees and members helped her cope, and she kept her head and hands busy and as she tried to come to terms with death and loss.

“One night the lights finally came on and I thought, ‘That’s the road we all go alone.’ If you have your faith, you’ll see your loved ones again,” she shares. “I don’t fear death like I used to. I’d like to do a few good things on earth before I leave. If God’s plan is that it’s not meant to be, I’ll try to go with the feeling that whatever God has planned is what will be. That’s it.”

Laverne says she is excited to start the next chapter in her life. After she retires, she plans to stay close to home and relax for a couple of weeks. Then she wants to make some calls and volunteer — and find a way to make people smile and laugh.

“I want to make a difference, for myself and for the ones I volunteer for at hospitals and nursing homes,” she says. Laverne also wants to volunteer in Fort Yates, working alongside many of the cooperative’s members she has come to know and affectionately refer to as buddies.

She will be greatly missed at Mor-Gran-Sou. Engineering Technician Jesse Kuhn worked with Laverne for years in Flasher, and says he appreciated how friendly she was and how hard she worked — and that she was truly dedicated to the cooperative and its member-owners.

“She is just a good lady,” he says.

Senior Engineering Technician Jason Helgeson agrees and says, “She truly cares about her fellow human beings, and it shows.”

Member Services Representative II Julie Armijo worked alongside Laverne for five years, and says Laverne shared many of the changes she has seen and been a part of at Mor-Gran-Sou over the years. Julie says their five years as colleagues wasn’t nearly long enough.

“I wish so badly I could work with her longer. Laverne is forever asking about everyone around her including the employees and members of Mor-Gran-Sou. She has a sympathetic ear for all,” she says. “Laverne’s dreams and plans for retirement may be small to some, but match up to



**Laverne Seehafer** started at Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative in 1980 to help in payroll. She thought she’d hold the job for 20 years — tops. More than 36 years later she says, “It’s gone that fast.”

the warm, loving heart beating inside her.”

Perhaps no one worked more closely with Laverne than Jackie Miller, and Laverne says that even though Jackie was her supervisor, she loved her like a sister.

“She is one who gives more than 110 percent. If anyone stays back, she does. She’ll go above and beyond for anybody. You don’t find too many people like that anymore,” Laverne says.

Jackie says Laverne has been a part of her life since the day she started at Mor-Gran-Sou, and she considers that quite a gift.

“Over the years, I watched and learned from Laverne. She has many of the qualities you look for in an employee, co-worker and friend. One quality that stood out to me is her genuine friendliness and concern for each and every member of Mor-Gran-Sou. If a member’s concern was entrusted to her, she would make sure the concern was addressed,” Jackie says. “Like many of us, Laverne has had a number of personal difficulties in her life, but she tried her best to leave them at home and hit the ground running when she got to work. She can tell a story like no other, and her sense of humor will warm your heart. I wish her well in her new journey and will miss seeing her every day.”

If she still wants to come to the cooperative every day — not to work, but to bring homemade buns and caramel rolls, and visit — well, that would be just fine. Nothing would mean more to Laverne than staying in touch with all the co-workers and members she has met over the years. If you knew Laverne — and even if you didn’t but you were one of her “buddies” — she truly hopes you will keep in touch.

Laverne, it has truly been a pleasure working with you and getting to know you. As you help make people laugh and smile as you volunteer, we wish the very same and more for you. Thank you, buddy. ■



# Mor-Gran-Sou's annual meeting scheduled for July 21, 2017

**A**re 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 Casey Wells;
- The Mandan Area position presently held by Robert Leingang; and
- The Sioux County position presently held by Lance Froelich.

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 29, 2017. 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. 11, 2017.

The members of the Nominating Committee include Leslie Dirk, Mandan; Glenda Gross, Selfridge; Kathy Hoff, Leith; Jim Hopfauf, Flasher; Andrew Holle, Mandan; Rhonda Leingang, Solen; Garek Murphy, Fort Yates; 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 Wednesday, March 8, 2017. 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 [jlmiller@morgransou.com](mailto:jlmiller@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; to download the form electronically, visit our website at [www.morgransou.com](http://www.morgransou.com) and click Home/Your Power in Membership/Forms and Applications/Declaration of Candidacy Form. Candidate qualifications can be found at [www.morgransou.com](http://www.morgransou.com) and click Your 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 8 deadline will be included in the list the Nominating Committee will provide to the board. ■

## Need Help with Heating Costs? LIHEAP can help.

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) helps eligible low-income households with home heating costs.

- Heating assistance
- Weatherization services (insulation, weather stripping, etc.)
- Furnace and chimney cleaning
- Furnace repair and replacement
- Emergency assistance

Applications are accepted from October 1 through May 31 for each heating season. For help filling out and submitting the LIHEAP application, call 1-800-823-2417 ext: 158.





PHOTO BY CARMEN DEVENEY

## Keep snow and ice away from electric meters

BY JACKIE MILLER

**W**e're full swing into the winter season and snow is piling up. Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative, Inc. reminds our members to inspect their electric meter on a regular basis; especially

after a heavy snowfall like the blizzard experienced across much of North Dakota the first week of December. Heavy snow drifts can settle on your electric meter. It is important for you to carefully clear snow and ice away from the meter and surrounding area for these reasons:

- Accumulated snow places stress on your meter and wiring, and may harm the meter or cause an unnecessary power outage.
- The weight of the snow can pull the meter off its mount.
- Mor-Gran-Sou Electric line crews may need you to clear access to your meter during an outage. This action alone lengthens the response time of an outage.

Meters are designed to withstand extreme weather conditions, but we must remain vigilant in protecting them from snow and ice buildup. The next time you bundle up to go outside, take a close look at the electric meter. If there is snow or ice on the meter, gently brush it off with your hands or a broom.

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric shares these tips for safely removing snow and ice from your meter.

- Do not strike the meter with snow blades or shovels.
- Do not kick your meter to break or clear the ice.
- Remove overhead icicles and snow from eaves and gutters, to ensure they do not cause damage as they fall.

Thank you, members, for your attention to this matter. ■

## STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative, Inc., is a recipient of federal assistance from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at 800-877-8339. Additionally, program

information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call 866-632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: 202-690-7442; or
- (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

JUNE 10 to 16, 2017

North Dakota Electric Cooperative

# YOUTH TOUR

HIGH SCHOOL  
SOPHOMORES & JUNIORS

**WRITE A WINNING ESSAY AND WIN A TRIP OF A LIFETIME!**  
**An all-expense-paid trip to WASHINGTON, D.C.**

- To enter the essay-writing contest, you must be a sophomore or junior in high school.
- You and your parents or guardian must be served by Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative.
- If you have a question, contact Jackie Miller, Mor-Gran-Sou Electric, at the address listed below, or call 701-597-3301 during regular business hours.
- The deadline is Jan. 31. Email entries to [jlmliller@morgransou.com](mailto:jlmliller@morgransou.com) or mail to: Youth Tour Essay Contest, Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 297, Flasher, ND 58535-0297.



## **ESSAY QUESTION:**

*Democracy is the foundation of our American way of life and of cooperative enterprise. The fundamentals of democracy include voter participation, political party affiliation, and public debate of issues. Describe what you think makes our current democracy strong, and provide suggestions for ways our democracy can be made stronger and more effective.*

## **TOP 3 REASONS TO ENTER THE ESSAY-WRITING CONTEST**

1. All-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., compliments of Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative.
2. A whole week to visit unforgettable historic monuments, museums and the U.S. Capitol.
3. A learning experience you'll never forget.

CHECK OUT THE ESSAY-CONTEST GUIDELINES AT

**[www.ndyouthtour.com](http://www.ndyouthtour.com) and [www.youthtour.coop](http://www.youthtour.coop)**



## 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 2016-2017 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 Friday, Feb. 17, 2017. 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

Kids, 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 Tuesday, Feb. 28, 2017.

### 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.

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

# MOR-GRAN-SOU ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

## board meeting highlights



### Meeting date: Nov. 30, 2016

- Approved the Oct. 26, 2016, regular Board meeting minutes
- Approved a work order inventory and a special equipment inventory
- Approved capital credit refunds to estates and those age 80 and over
- Approved the Mor-Gran-Sou 2017 Budget
- Approved Agreement to Form Innovative Energy Alliance Cooperative and IEAC Bylaws
- Elected director, and 1st and 2nd alternates to serve on the Innovative Energy Alliance Board of Directors
- Voted CoBank proxy ballot
- Approved revision to policy for Nominating Committee responsibilities
- Approved annual renewal of Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Business License
- Approved lobbyists for Mor-Gran-Sou for 2017 legislative session
- Approved auditors Engagement Letter for audit services of 2016 records
- Reviewed RESCO common stock revisions
- Approved attendance at upcoming meetings and selection of voting delegates/alternates
- Heard Co-General Managers/Chief Executive Officers' update
- Reviewed and accepted director's expense report for October
- Reviewed department reports

### Upcoming regular board meeting date:

Jan. 25 in the NDAREC Board room 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 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](http://www.morgransou.com), or call the office for a copy.

## Bylaws and resolutions for the annual meeting

Under the bylaws, any bylaw amendments or resolutions must be presented to the members in writing in advance of the annual meeting scheduled for July 21, 2017. The board of directors has now charged the Nominating Committee with reviewing and advising the board of any proposed bylaw amendments and resolutions. Therefore, any proposed bylaw amendments and resolutions should be submitted in writing no later than March 16, 2017, and/or they can be presented in-person at one of the following in-person meetings of the Nominating Committee:

**Jan. 11 in the Mor-Gran-Sou office board room in Flasher at 7 p.m. CT**

**March 16 in the Mor-Gran-Sou office board room in Flasher at 7 p.m. CT**

If you do wish to submit a bylaw amendment or resolution in writing, please forward it to Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative, Inc., Attn: Nominating Committee, P.O. Box 297, Flasher, ND, 58535-0297, before March 16. Thank you.



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

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UNDERGROUND LINE LOCATES  
800-795-0555 OR 811

#### OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

Chair..... Leland "Judge" Barth  
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

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

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