



## Improving the quality of life in rural areas

Principals call West River Head Start every year, asking, "Who do you have coming up?" They are excited about the kids coming from Head Start. They can see a difference in the kids who have had that structured environment. These energetic and enthusiastic students attend the Mandan location.



PHOTO BY CARMEN DEVNEY

## What's inside:

*It's a challenge for businesses to remain open in small towns across North Dakota. West River Head Start continues to operate in Carson, New Salem, Hazen and Mandan, preparing children for kindergarten so they are starting at the same level, if not above, the level of their peers. In this month's local pages, learn how this business supports the local communities it serves — and why families who live in the Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Service area appreciate its structure and support.*

- **WRHS helps parents 'see what more is'**
- **Plan to attend your annual meeting**
- **Bylaw and Resolutions meeting set**
- **Plan your field safety and more**



# West River Head Start: ‘We can help’

BY CARMEN DEVNEY

**H**ailey Brunelle was a stay-at-home mom who wanted her daughter to learn more than she felt she could teach her at home. After seeing an advertisement for West River Head Start (WRHS), a day care and preschool that serves low-income families, she called and enrolled her in the Mandan facility.

“It was a place where we could get free childcare, and Kambree could learn in a safe environment,” she says.

When it came time for Kambree to start kindergarten, she had the social skills, structure and desire to succeed in a local public school.

In the meantime, Hailey had gone back to work. After she and her husband, Kevin, welcomed a son, Hailey says she felt anxious returning to work.

“I was attached to my son, and going back to work was a scary thing,” she says.

Hailey found peace in knowing he would have the same quality care, structure and learning opportunities as his sister, who had thrived at WRHS.

He did — and he has. Kaeto, now in preschool, loves to paint, build blocks and play outside. If Hailey is missing him and wants to see him during the day, she says the school welcomes her to visit any time.

Just as North Dakota’s local Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives are committed to improving the quality of life in rural areas, so is WRHS, with locations in Mandan, New Salem, Carson and Hazen. In addition to providing a vital service in a more sparsely populated community, WRHS tries to keep things local.

“We buy things at the grocery stores. We participate in the parades



PHOTO BY CARMEN DEVNEY

**Samantha Gregerson**, director of West River Head Start, says staff track kids and families constantly. How are they doing when they start? How are they doing throughout the year? Are they making gains and will they be ready for kindergarten? “That’s really what Head Start is here for: To get kids ready for kindergarten, so they are starting at the same level, if not above, the level of their peers.”

and fairs. We do as much as we can, so the community feels us when we are there,” says Samantha Gregerson, director of WRHS in Mandan. “They see us out and about. We try to stay out there and be visible as much as we can, so people don’t forget about us.”

## Breaking cycles and helping parents ‘see what more is’

The Head Start program accepts children from 3 to 5 years old from families that are below the poverty guideline. Governed by HIT, Inc., the day care and preschool gives children an opportunity to grow, thrive and develop a passion for learning. With age-appropriate curriculum

and lessons, WRHS provides a foundation for academic success and school readiness that scaffolds children on a path of critical thinking and strong social emotional health.

Federally funded to serve “the neediest of the needy,” WRHS has a significant waiting list in the Mandan and Hazen locations, and is challenged to fill spaces in New Salem and Carson. To qualify for the program in Mandan and Hazen, 90 percent of the children have to be at or below 130 percent of the poverty guidelines; in New Salem and Carson, it is 50 percent. The guidelines and qualifications vary based on rural towns needing to fill enrollment — and ultimately keep their doors open.



WRHS currently serves 118 children. There are four classrooms in Mandan, and one each in New Salem, Hazen and Carson within the public school. Each classroom has two adults who can work with up to 18 children.

The teacher requirements are as stringent as those in the public schools. Each holds a two- or four-year degree in education, and assistants must also hold a degree or be enrolled in a child development associate credential.

Gregerson says the staff works to foster the tremendous amount of learning that occurs in a child's early years.

"The brain development that happens from ages 0 to 3 is huge. It's one of the largest gains they will make in their entire lives," she says. "From ages 3 to 5, they are still making huge gains. The things they learn and the connections that are happening in the brain are pretty unbelievable."

In addition to providing care and education, WRHS has social workers on staff who meet with families and provide parenting skills.

"If we have a mom and dad who are living paycheck to paycheck and worrying about where their next meal will come from, we can help. Or, if they need help getting their parenting skills under control so their kids are learning a better way, or different way, of growing up; when parents say, 'I want more for my kids, and how do I do this,' we're able to help them see what more is," Gregerson says.

WRHS also has qualified personnel stay on top of vaccinations, dental exams, physicals and behavior screenings to ensure the children's basic needs are being met. Staff can also start children on an Individualized Education Plan that can be finished by the time they start kindergarten.

"That saves the public schools



*West River Head Start provides services to low-income families first. Director Samantha Gregerson encourages interested parents to submit an application regardless of economic situation, as enrollment fluctuates; especially in smaller communities. This photo features students who attend the Carson WRHS.*

money because they don't have to invest that extra time and effort because we already did," Gregerson says.

It also helps public school teachers teach, rather than focus on a handful of students who require more time and attention due to adverse behaviors, or who are behind in academics.

"That's why we are here," Gregerson says. "We get calls from principals every year, asking, 'Who do you have coming up?' They are excited about the kids coming from Head Start. They can see a difference in the kids who have had that structured environment. It's good to hear those kinds of things."

Moms who have had children go through the program have good things to say about WRHS, too. A single mom in New Salem, April Morgenstern's son attended WRHS for two years. She says she was thankful her son was able to get in, because it is the only preschool in the area, and the few day cares are usually at capacity.

Her goal in sending him was to teach him social skills. She was pleased when he adapted well to the structure and routine, so she

implemented the same expectations at home.

"He loved the teachers, the environment, and learning and being around the other kids," Morgenstern says. "Head Start gave him the background experience of a school environment, before he had the pressures that come with school. When it was time for kindergarten, he was ready."

For information on West River Head Start, visit [www.hitinc.org/](http://www.hitinc.org/) and click Services and West River Head Start. Or, call Director Samantha Gregerson at 888-327-4670 or 701-663-9507 to see if your family qualifies for enrollment. ■



*West River Head Start replicates the public school-system calendar, due to federal funding. It is closed from May to August. These students attend the Carson location.*



# Annual Meeting 2017

**JULY 21, 2017**

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



**Mor-Gran-Sou  
Electric Cooperative**

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# You've planned every acre **HAVE YOU PLANNED FOR YOUR SAFETY?**

As spring planting nears, Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative reminds hardworking farmers and ranchers to stay safe. Overhead power lines are necessary to deliver electricity, but those same power lines can also be deadly if not treated with respect. While you need to focus on the field and your machinery, Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative urges you to also watch for electrical hazards around the farm or ranch.



## Be aware

Farmers and their equipment should always be 10 feet away from power lines on all sides. Field cultivators and sprayers can often reach as high as 12 feet in the air. Practice extreme caution and use a spotter to make sure you stay far away from power lines when you use tall equipment.

If you have purchased new equipment, be aware of antennas or other attachments that may pose new hazards. A newer, bigger piece of equipment may no longer clear a line. In addition, shifting soil may also affect whether or not machinery avoids power lines from year-to-year.

Power lines also may sag over the years. If power lines on your property are sagging, contact Mor-Gran-Sou Electric to repair the lines. Never try to move a power line on your own.

Overhead power lines are not the only electric hazard on the farm. 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 to fix it. Don't do it yourself.

## Follow these other tips:

- Look over work areas carefully for overhead power lines and utility poles. Make sure you, your family and employees know the location of overhead power lines, and use routes to avoid the lines when moving equipment. Do this every year, as equipment sizes and soil conditions may change.
- Be aware of increased heights of equipment; especially new equipment with higher antennas.
- Avoid moving large equipment alone. Have someone watch as you move equipment to ensure you are clear of power lines.
- Be extra careful when working around trees and brush; they often make it difficult to see power lines.

## What if you contact a power line?

Imagine that you are driving a tractor to the field when things come to a screeching halt. You look back to see what's stopping you, only to discover that you're tangled in an overhead power line! What do you do?

- First, DON'T climb out. If your equipment does contact a power line, stay in the cab and call for help. Warn others to stay away and wait until someone from Mor-Gran-Sou arrives. Most utility lines are uninsulated, bare wires. Do not let your body become a direct link between the power line and the ground.
- If you must leave the tractor due to immediate danger, such as a fire, jump as far away as you can, making sure that no part of your body touches the tractor and the ground at the same time. Land with both feet together and shuffle with your feet a few inches at a time, making sure to never break contact with the ground or cause separation between your feet.
- Once you're off the tractor, do not go back until Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative disconnects the power line.



## Saving with a programmable thermostat

You can save as much as 10 percent a year on heating and cooling costs by simply turning your thermostat back 7-10 degrees for eight hours a day from its normal setting. You can do this automatically by using a programmable thermostat and scheduling the times you turn on the heating or air conditioning. As a result, the equipment doesn't operate as much when you are asleep or not at home.

Programmable thermostats can store multiple daily settings (six or more temperature settings a day) that you can manually override without affecting the rest of the daily or weekly program.

## 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 the following meeting of the Nominating Committee:

### 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 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. ■

# SPRING INTO ENERGY SAVINGS

March brings the beginning of spring and the start of a new season.  
And spring cleaning can bring a fresh opportunity to find ways to save energy and money.

Here are just a few simple ideas from Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative to improve the energy efficiency and comfort of your home as warmer temperatures arrive:

- 1. Service your air conditioner.** Easy maintenance such as routinely replacing or cleaning air filters can lower your cooling system's energy consumption by up to 15 percent. Also, the first day of spring could serve as a reminder to check your air conditioner's evaporator coil, which should be cleaned annually to ensure the system is performing at optimal levels.
- 2. Use ceiling fans.** Cooling your home with ceiling fans will allow you to raise your thermostat four degrees. This can help lower your electricity bills without sacrificing overall comfort. In the winter months, ceiling fans should go clockwise to push rising warm air downward. In the summer, however, the fans should circulate counterclockwise for the opposite effect.
- 3. Caulk air leaks.** Using low-cost caulk to seal cracks and openings in your home keeps warm air out – and cash in your wallet.
- 4. Seal ducts.** Air loss through ducts can lead to high electricity costs, accounting for nearly 30 percent of a cooling system's energy consumption. Sealing and insulating ducts can go a long way toward lowering your electricity bills.
- 5. Dust off electronics, light bulbs and vents for efficient use of energy.**
- 6. Open windows.** Creating a breeze allows you to naturally cool your home without using air conditioners. This is an ideal tactic in spring when temperatures are mild. If it's warmer during the day, open the windows in the evening and close them during the day.
- 7. Cook outside.** On warmer spring days, keep the heat out of your home by using an outdoor grill instead of the indoor oven.
- 8. Set the thermostat.** On warm days, setting a programmable thermostat to a higher setting when you are not at home can help reduce your energy costs by approximately 10 percent.
- 9. Switch on bathroom fans.** Bathroom fans suck out heat and humidity from your home, improving comfort.
- 10. Clean out your fridge.** It's one of the biggest energy hogs in your whole home, with the average fridge using nearly 14 percent of a household's energy. By properly cleaning out your fridge, you can reduce its energy consumption and cut down your electricity bill. Start by rolling your refrigerator away from the wall and using a duster or vacuum hose to clear the dirt and dust from the coils. Remove unneeded and old food from your fridge to allow air to circulate and increase efficiency.



**MOR-GRAN-SOU ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**  
*board meeting highlights*



**Meeting date: Jan. 25, 2017**

- Approved the Dec. 20, 2016 regular Board meeting minutes
- Approved three work order inventories and a special equipment inventory
- Approved capital credit refunds to estates and those age 80 and over
- Met with Brady, Martz & Assoc., PC
- Held Executive Session with Brady Martz & Associates, P.C. representative
- Per policy, heard annual Red Flag Rule report
- Approved physical inventory adjustment for 2016
- Heard report of first Nominating Committee meeting
- 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 December
- Reviewed department reports
- Held Executive Session

**Upcoming regular board meeting date:**

*March 29 in the NDAREC board room at 10:30 a.m. CT*

*April 27 in the NDAREC board room 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](http://www.morgransou.com), or call the office for a copy.

**SPRING  
AHEAD!**

On Sunday, March 12 at 2 a.m.,  
Daylight Saving time begins.



**MOR-GRAN-SOU  
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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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