



CURRENT

Serving Morton, Grant and Sioux counties

MARCH 2018

NEWS

Showing support for farmers and ranchers



PHOTO BY CARMEN DEVNEY

Area Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives including Mor-Gran-Sou Electric participated in KFJR Radio's 41st-annual Agri-International in Bismarck in February, to acknowledge the importance of agriculture in our economy. Because so many of our cooperative members attend this event, we sponsor a booth so member services representatives including **Julie Armijo** can visit and answer questions about innovative electric heat products and services. We also sponsor the Living Ag Classroom, where hundreds of students learn how their food is planted, grown and harvested. From the variety of booths and seminars to the toy show, Mor-Gran-Sou thanks all those who make this educational event possible.

What's inside:

- Operations outlook for 2018
- Mor-Gran-Sou earns Safety Award
- Save the date for the annual meeting
- Opt into Operation Round Up
- Meetings minutes, and more



If you think North Dakota has changed over the past five to 10 years, you're right. There's been a noticeable increase in drug use and crime. But is it still a relatively safe place to live? Lori Flaten thinks so.

Flaten, the first female deputy chief for the Mandan Police Department, doesn't blink twice when she receives a call in the middle of the night, telling her there's been another homicide in Morton County. It's become another fact of life.

"When I first started, most people dealt with differences with fist fights. Now it is guns and knives. Our officers are dealing with dangerous, armed people all the time now that they didn't to this degree several years ago," she says. "Most of the people who move here are good people. But crime is a business, in many ways, and criminals follow the money. It's become a very different place — but it's still a pretty good place to live."

Lori Flaten, deputy chief for the Mandan Police Department, has been breaking ground for women for 40 years. With a petite stature and strong command presence, Flaten was the department's first female sergeant, first female lieutenant and first female deputy chief. She says she is grateful to have had the opportunity to influence other female police officers who are following in her footsteps.

LORI FLATEN: Making history and taking care of things

STORY AND PHOTO BY CARMEN DEVNEY

Groundbreaking firsts

A Mayville-Portland native, Flaten learned early on what it was like to protect and serve from her father, who was a police officer. The family moved for various jobs in law enforcement and with the N.D. Game and Fish Department to Bowman and Linton, before settling in Mandan.

After graduating from high school, Flaten earned an associate's degree from Bismarck Junior College. Still undecided about what she wanted to do for a job and career, she was urged by a neighbor who worked for the Mandan Police Department to apply for a civilian dispatcher position. She agreed and filled out a job application, and was asked to start the next day. The Mandan Police Department would be her first — and



only — employer. She started in 1977.

After working dispatch for a year, and having many opportunities to ride along with officers and see a variety of situations, Flaten wanted to do more. Encouraged by the former police chief, who thought women had an important role to play in law enforcement, Flaten applied for a patrol position. She received it, and worked in patrol until 1984, when a position opened in investigations. She held that job for one year until 1985, when she was promoted to sergeant back in the patrol division. She continued until 1995, when she was again promoted to lieutenant within the same department. She worked there until 2009, when she accepted a lieutenant position in the investigations department. She ran that division until 2016, when the current police chief reorganized the department. Flaten left investigations to run a patrol platoon, and in November 2017, she was promoted to her current position of deputy chief.

Within the Mandan Police Department, Flaten was the first female sergeant, the first female lieutenant and the first female deputy chief. She is happy to see another officer, Sergeant April Bowman, following in her footsteps.

“I’ve always seen that women have a little different approach to dealing with things than men. There are some inherent differences. Most women who come in are not the 6’4” body-builder; we tend to be average-size people who learn to talk very well,” she says. “If you know how to talk, you can deal with any situation by talking and not have to resort to physical violence. Some people are going to physically challenge you, due to their nature, or drugs and alcohol use. But most situations can be dealt with by talking. I think women are pretty good at that, and people over the years have seen that.”

Tough stuff

The job is not for everyone, regardless of gender and age. Some people are not

cut out to be a police officer, and to see the things they see and do the things they do.

“We always talk about command presence. You either have it or you don’t. You can learn it to a degree, but some people just don’t have that authority,” she says. “If I tell you that this is what’s going to happen and this is what you’re going to do, then that’s what we’re going to do and you have to know that I mean it. If I tell you I’m going to do something, I’m going to do it.”

Flaten, who is a Mor-Gran-Sou member from north of Mandan, says she has great respect for first-responders because they get to help people. But she wouldn’t want to be a firefighter and go into a burning home, and she wouldn’t want to be a lineman because she couldn’t climb a pole to restore electric service following a power outage.

“We all have one thing in common: We all work different hours, in crappy weather, doing things that people expect but don’t want to do themselves, and don’t appreciate a lot of the time,” she says. “What would people do without essential-type services? Most don’t think about it until they need them.”

Flaten says one of the most current community needs is for Narcan® nasal spray, which is an emergency treatment used for a known or suspected opioid overdose.

“Right now we’re seeing overdose after overdose after overdose of heroin and fentanyl-laced heroin. We go repeatedly to overdose calls. A year ago we weren’t carrying Narcan. Now we do,” Flaten says. “People don’t have a clue what they are putting in their bodies. They don’t know who made it, how it’s made or even where it came from. They don’t know how dangerous it is, and they don’t care because they know emergency responders are carrying Narcan, and the chances of them being revived are pretty good. It’s a serious issue.”

Flaten confesses that she has some awful images in her head of real-life scenes she wishes weren’t there, and that

it’s hard to watch bad things happen to good people who have made poor choices. And yet, the “adrenaline junky” within her is called to those very scenes, to “go and take care of things.”

“Yes, we see horrible things, and we talk about it amongst ourselves. People also have their own support systems as well, like their faith and friends. That’s how we deal with it,” she says. “There has to be someone to take care of this kind of stuff. Not everyone can. Those of us who can, that’s what we do.”

Common sense still rules

This month, Flaten is celebrating 41 years of serving the Mandan Police Department. After reflecting on some of her challenges and milestones, she noted how many things have changed over the years, including self-defense tools and how they are worn.

“The equipment we had in 1977 and what we have today is worlds apart. In those days, you had your gun and probably a night stick. That was it. Then we got into stun guns and tasers, and other less-than-lethal things.” Officers used to carry pounds of gear in belts around their waists, resulting in lasting lower back pain. Now, they wear bullet-proof vests with pockets, and their shoulders absorb the weight.

One thing that hasn’t changed in 40 years is how people should still be using common sense to stay safe.

“Lock your doors and don’t leave your purse in your car. We’ve been saying that for years,” Flaten says. “So many bad things happen because people don’t use common sense.”

Mor-Gran-Sou congratulates Deputy Chief Lori Flaten on her groundbreaking career accomplishments, and thanks her for sharing her perspective on essential services and community needs. ■



Operations outlook for 2018

BY RANDY RESSLER, MANAGER OF OPERATIONS

Every day, our linemen are working in the field to keep the electric system in as good of condition as possible. A few of the jobs they take on as part of this mission are replacing sections of aging, faulting underground cable, converting some overhead lines to underground, and replacing poles that have been tested out as rejects.

Last year, Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative hired RAM Utilities, a company based in Moorhead, Minn., to test transmission poles. Inspection and maintenance are important steps in maintaining system reliability. Members read about the pole-testing process in the July 2017 local pages of the *North Dakota Living* magazine. About 4,500 poles were tested and approximately 100 have been replaced.

Continuing this year, a line contractor is following through with transmission system inspection and maintenance. These folks will climb every transmission structure on our system, looking for loose or broken parts, and making repairs as needed. We patrol these lines twice annually, but this process is much more thorough.

We will also have RAM Utilities inspect about one-fifth of our distribution system. That will result in about 10,000 poles being evaluated, with an anticipated reject rate of 1.5 to 2 percent. We expect to be replacing 150 to 200 poles this summer.

Your electric cooperative continues to grow very slowly. On average, we've grown about one to two percent annually since the 1980s. Last year, we installed 126 new services; about 90 of those were in the Mandan area and most were new residential services.

As always, we will continue to install new services as requested, and to perform regular system-wide maintenance that will help prevent power outages and ultimately strengthen the system. ■



Randy Ressler

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric earns Safety Award



PHOTO BY NDAREC/LIZAKESSEL

Mor-Gran-Sou Leadman **Gary Fitterer** (second from right) accepted the Safety Award on behalf of the cooperative from NDAREC safety instructors including, from left: **James Neether**, **Steve Homes** and **Jeff Tweten**.

The North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC) hosted the 54th annual REC Apprenticeship Training and Safety (AT&S) Conference Jan. 10-12 at the Ramkota Hotel in Bismarck. The conference is sponsored by the NDAREC AT&S program, with cooperation from the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship.

The conference drew representatives of NDAREC

member-cooperatives, students of the Bismarck State College lineworker program and the electric industry for classroom sessions, equipment evaluations and awards ceremonies. Training topics included trenching and shoring, rubber-glove testing, underground cable splicing and safety, communication and leadership, and more.

Christina Roemmich, director of safety services for NDAREC, says the AT&S conference provides an opportunity to reflect on current issues in the industry and to recognize the accomplishments the students have made in training and safety throughout the year.

Mor-Gran-Sou employees who attended this year's conference included Engineering Technician Jesse Kuhn, Lead Men Gary Fitterer and Cody Maher, and Journeyman Linemen Lance Brown Otter, Blake Reis and Brady Zachmann.

At the awards banquet, Mor-Gran-Sou was one of five distribution cooperatives in North Dakota, as well as 3C Construction, LLC, to be presented with a Safety Award. They were recognized for having zero OSHA-recordable injuries for one year, between the dates of Dec. 1, 2016, to Nov. 30, 2017.

This was the eighth year in a row Mor-Gran-Sou has received the award. ■



Annual Meeting 2018

JULY 20, 2018

Fort Yates, N.D.
Prairie Knights Casino & Resort

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



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Electric Cooperative**

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Visit 811.com for more information.

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 20, 2018. The board of directors has 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 14, and/or they can be

presented in-person at the following meeting of the Nominating Committee:

- **March 14, 2018 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 14. Thank you.



Do YOU wish participate in the Operation Round Up program? **Opt in today!**

Although in its infancy stage, Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative is now offering Operation Round Up to its members. Operation Round Up is a program in which Mor-Gran-Sou members can voluntarily choose to round up their monthly utility bills to the next dollar and donate their pennies to the newly formed Mor-Gran-Sou Charitable Foundation, Inc.

The Foundation Board, who are also Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative members, include: Linda Mindt, Linda Urlacher, Serena Weinhandl, Chad Wild and Cherie Zenker. They will meet throughout the year and disburse funds in the form of grants to non-profit corporations, organizations or agencies. All of the money raised by members stays in their local communities. Mor-Gran-Sou is making this request on behalf of the Mor-Gran-Sou Charitable Foundation, and all funds gathered will be donated to the Mor-Gran-Sou Charitable Foundation, Inc., which will be the sole beneficiary of the funds. The board will disburse the funds equitably throughout the Mor-Gran-Sou service area as practical.

On average, participating members donate about \$6 a year. For example, if a member wishes to participate in Operation Round Up and his or her monthly electric

bill is \$89.64, the amount would be “rounded up” to the next whole dollar, \$90. In this example, the member would contribute an extra 36 cents to Operation Round Up. The most a member would ever contribute a month is 99 cents. The donation will be tax-deductible, and members who participate will receive a summary on their last billing statement of the year.

Mor-Gran-Sou does not receive monetary or in-kind reimbursement from the Operation Round Up Charitable Foundation. All rounded-up funds flow directly into the Mor-Gran-Sou Charitable Foundation, Inc., and are overseen by the board of directors. Mor-Gran-Sou personnel will administer the program as a complimentary service to the foundation.

We understand it will take some time to grow this charitable program, and we are excited to get started. Members, if you have any questions, please call the office at 701-663-0297, 701-597-3301 or 1-800-750-8212. To opt in, fill out the form below and return to the cooperative to participate in the Operation Round Up program. Every member’s small donation adds up to make a big difference.

I wish to participate in Operation Round Up at Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Yes, I agree that Mor-Gran-Sou, through the Operation Round Up program, has my permission to round up my monthly electric bill to the nearest dollar. I understand I have the option to opt out with a 30-day written notice to the cooperative.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Account Number(s): _____

If you wish, you can email the form to jarmijo@morgransou.com or jlmler@morgransou.com, or mail the form to:

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative, Inc.
P.O. Box 297
Flasher, ND 58535

Signature



Mor-Gran-Sou promotes employees

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative, Inc., has promoted two employees, effective Jan. 1.

Jolene Jochim, formerly the accountant/bookkeeper, has been promoted to business manager. She has worked for the cooperative for 39 years.



Jolene Jochim

Julie Armijo, who was hired as member services clerk and promoted to member services representative II, has been promoted to member services manager. She has worked for the cooperative for 6 years.



Julie Armijo

Both employees work out of cooperative headquarters in Flasher. Mor-Gran-Sou congratulates Jolene and Julie on this career milestone. ■



NDAREC General Manager and Vice President **Josh Kramer** (left) and Mor-Gran-Sou Board Chairman **Leland Barth** (right) presented a check to **Ron Walters** (center), Great Plains Food Bank.

Co-ops support local food bank

The North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC) and Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative, Inc., presented checks to the Great Plains Food Bank to help support its work in North Dakota.

In partnership with Basin Electric Power Cooperative, NDAREC's contribution will help establish a regional service center and expand hunger relief services to children, seniors and rural families. Mor-Gran-Sou's contribution will help provide meals for citizens in our service area.

For every dollar donated, Great Plains Food Bank is able to provide three meals. ■

EMPOWER YOUTH

GROWING COOPERATIVE LEADERS

- ✦ Build on individual strengths
- ✦ Help recognize leadership potential
- ✦ Improve scholarship/college/job applications

The **Empower Youth Leadership Program**, for students in grades 9-12, is based on Cooperative Principles that promote ideals such as community service and teamwork.

Interested? Learn more and apply at empoweryouth.coop. Applications are due **April 18, 2018**.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Kristie Ching, program director

☎ 605-542-7416

📘 Empower Youth Leadership Program

✉ empoweryouth@becp.com

🌐 www.empoweryouth.coop

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MOR-GRAN-SOU ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

board meeting highlights



Meeting date: Jan. 31, 2018

- Approved the Dec. 19, 2017, 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
- Reviewed the December financial report; acceptance will be made after the annual audit
- Approved physical inventory adjustment for 2017
- Heard a presentation from the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperative's Rural Development department
- Presented a donation of matching funds from Basin Electric Power Cooperative and Mor-Gran-Sou to Great Plains Food Bank
- Heard the first Nominating Committee meeting report
- Board held Executive Session with Auditor
- Approved Engagement Letter with Brady Martz & Associates, P.C. for audit of 2017 records
- Reaffirmed the Mutual Aid Agreement
- Accepted the annual Red Flag Rule report
- Approved donation to Mor-Gran-Sou Charitable Foundation
- Approved authorization of incumbency certificate for CoBank
- Directors renewed individual memberships in REPAC and ACRE
- Appointed/confirmed director attendance and voting delegates and alternates for various meetings
- Heard the Co-General Managers/CEOs' update, and reports on several meetings attended
- Heard reports from various meetings/training the Directors attended
- Reviewed and accepted the directors' expense report for December

Upcoming regular board meeting date:

March 21 in the NDAREC board room in Mandan at 10:30 a.m. CT
 April 25 in the NDAREC board room in Mandan at 9 a.m. CT
 May 30 in the Mor-Gran-Sou Board room in Flasher 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 call the office for a copy.

A phone survey may await you

Members: Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative will be completing a random residential telephone Member Satisfaction Survey. Performed by Odney Advertising, this survey will take place March 26 to 29, and possibly April 2.

If you receive a call from Odney

Advertising at 701-892-7420 on behalf of Mor-Gran-Sou, please take time to answer the questionnaire. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes. By participating in the 2018 Member Satisfaction Survey, Mor-Gran-Sou receives better insight into how we can better serve you, the member-owner. ■



IN OBSERVANCE OF THE EASTER HOLIDAY, MOR-GRAN-SOU ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE WILL BE CLOSED ON FRIDAY, MARCH 30.

Line crews will be available in case of an emergency outage.



SPRING AHEAD!

On Sunday, March 11, daylight saving time begins.



MOR-GRAN-SOU ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE INC.

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 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
 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-GM/CEO..... Donald A. Franklund
 Co-GM/CEO..... Travis Kupper

www.morgransou.com

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