



## Food and Drug Administration declares youth e-cigarette use an epidemic; Local efforts underway to educate on dangers.

### What's inside:

*In this month's local pages, learn how tobacco companies are disguising electronic cigarette products and reaching our kids — and how Brady Weaver, tobacco prevention coordinator for Custer Health, is working to raise awareness on the addiction and dangers associated with vaping.*

- **Mor-Gran-Sou seeks board director candidates**
- **Deadlines approaching for scholarships and coloring contest**
- **Line patrol underway**
- **Meetings minutes and more**





### Safety is the culture of Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative

As our members have learned through our support of the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour program and student scholarships, Mor-Gran-Sou cares about the kids and families in our service area! Safety is the culture of your local Touchstone Energy® Cooperative.

One of the many vaping kits on the market.

# Vaping escalates in schools; local efforts underway to educate families on dangers

BY CARMEN DEVNEY

In December, *CBS News* published the findings of a large annual survey on teen smoking, drinking and drug use. It revealed twice as many high school students used nicotine-tinged electronic cigarettes in 2018 compared with 2017. It was the largest single-year increase in the survey's 44-year history.

The Food and Drug Administration has declared that student use of electronic cigarettes, also known as e-cigarettes, has reached "epidemic proportions."

Parents, are you doing your homework?

Brady Weaver, tobacco prevention coordinator for Custer Health in Morton, Grant and Sioux Counties, says your child may be using nicotine and you may not even know it — because

Big Tobacco has gotten creative in disguising its products.

E-cigarettes are a battery-powered device that converts liquid nicotine into a mist, or vapor, that the user inhales. There's no fire, ash or smoke.

Both the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and American Lung Association (ALA) report "vaping" is the most popular form of nicotine use among teenagers in the United States. E-cigarette use rose by 900 percent among high school students from 2011 to 2015.

In 2016, more than 2 million middle- and high-school students reported they had tried e-cigarettes.

Closer to home, the Tobacco-Free Kids website reports 20 percent of North Dakota's high school students are using e-cigarettes.

Use has become difficult to

identify, in part, because some of the product designs resemble flash drives, markers, inhalers and oversize lipstick tubes. Would you be able to recognize the product and if your child is using?

Maybe not, says Weaver, who explains the device that looks like a flash drive actually plugs into a computer and charges so the student can get a fix. These products are also harder to identify because the e-liquid they inhale might smell like gummy bears, cotton candy, peppermint, chocolate, or pretty much any scent that could be mistaken for a dessert.

Some convenience stores actually sell the e-liquid near the candy section. While the law states a person must be 18 years or older to purchase the device and liquid, Weaver says it is easy to access;



both in-store and online.

“I’ve worked in public health for many years, and tobacco use has always been an issue,” he says. “We’ve passed a lot of policies and made great strides in going smoke-free in workplaces including bars and truck stops. It wasn’t an easy feat. The tobacco companies keep coming in and finding ways to get youth to use their products.”

Initially promoted as a cessation device for tobacco users, e-cigarettes don’t have the carbon monoxide and tar associated with traditional cigarettes. But they still contain nicotine, and this highly addictive drug can trigger changes in the adolescent brain.

“Really, it’s another drug-delivery system,” Weaver says. “We don’t know all the consequences yet, but nicotine is still a drug. I’m scared for our kids.”

The CDC and ALA agree. Their research shows that those who use or who have used e-cigarettes are less likely to stop smoking altogether. And teens who use e-cigarette products are more likely to start using regular tobacco, as well.

Weaver works with school counselors, administrators and teachers in Mor-Gran-Sou’s service area to give presentations on the dangers of these products, and visit with students; some of whom believe they are vaping water and doing no harm.

“Kids are vulnerable. They are at the age where they are defiant, experimental and gullible, and they’ve got peer pressure. All those things make them the perfect target,” he says.

Big Tobacco knows there is big money in vaping, so they are advertising and reaching one of their target audiences — kids — on social media and in the movies. With product placement of the

e-liquid next to candy in stores, and sleek device designs that make inhaling seem cool, Weaver says he can understand why kids might be tempted.

But as an adult, common sense tells him if the tobacco industry has to disguise an e-cigarette to look like a flash drive or marker, it’s dangerous.

Unfortunately, most kids don’t have the education or experience to realize they are being tricked.

Nicotine addiction isn’t the only concern. The e-liquid, which can have the nicotine equivalent of up to a pack of cigarettes, can be toxic. If spilled, it can cause reactions ranging from burns and heart palpitations to seizures and more. This could be a disaster for a younger sibling or pet.

The aerosol can also be dangerous. It contains solvents, flavorings and toxicants that the Surgeon General has described as either “harmful” or “potentially harmful.” Flavorings that may be safe to eat are not necessarily safe to inhale.

“There always seems to be another addictive tobacco product to educate the public on,” says Weaver, who stays busy by continuing to inform healthcare providers and educators, hosting community events and writing news releases to share new information to the public — all in an effort to help people quit using these products and prevent them from starting.

His biggest message for kids who are considering vaping is don’t start, because it’s highly addictive and hard to quit.

His biggest message for parents is keep doing your homework.

“Be alert; ask questions; be on the lookout for vaping devices; have regular conversations about the dangers; and don’t get sucked into

the notion that vaping is harmless,” he says.

“It used to be that tobacco was the gateway drug. It’s actually the nicotine, which travels to the brain’s dopamine center where feelings of pleasure and calm are released. With continued use, those receptors can burn out so nothing is good in life anymore. Those feelings of pleasure when kids do well on a test or run a race, they are gone. Nothing feels good anymore, and it opens kids up to further addictions down the road,” he continues.

“Let them know that once you are hooked, you are hooked, and quitting is difficult.” ■



COURTESY PHOTO

*Brady Weaver, tobacco prevention coordinator for Custer Health, says his biggest message for kids who are considering vaping is don’t start, because it’s highly addictive and hard to quit.*

**For assistance with nicotine prevention and cessation across the Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative service area, contact:**

**Morton, Grant and Sioux Counties:**

Brady Weaver at 701-667-3370

**ND State Department of Health:**

Neil Charvat at 328-3344 or

Abby Erickson at 328-3337

**Tobacco-Free North Dakota:**

Heather Austin at 527-2811



## Mor-Gran-Sou's annual meeting scheduled for July 19, 2019

**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 four board positions will be elected:

- The Grant County position presently held by Vern Frederick;
- The Mandan-Area position presently held by Leland "Judge" Barth;
- The Morton County position presently held by Jay Larson; and
- The Morton County position presently held by Bonnie Tomac.\*

*\*This position is to serve the remaining two-years of Bonnie Tomac's three-year term, as Ms. Tomac resigned effective Dec. 31.*

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 27, 2019. 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 met for the first time on Jan. 9. The members of the Nominating Committee include Bryce Allen, Mandan; Glenda Gross, Selfridge; Andrew Holle, Mandan; Rhonda Leingang, Solen; Alan Malm, Flasher; Garek Murphy, Fort Yates; Jim Neubauer, Mandan; Shari Striegel, Carson; 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 7, 2019. 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; 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 7 deadline will be included in the list the Nominating Committee will provide to the board. ■

## 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 19, 2019. 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 21, and/or they can be presented in-person at the following meeting of the Nominating Committee:

- March 21, 2019, 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 21. Thank you.





# COOPERATIVE OFFERS SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

**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 scholarships to qualifying seniors. With this in mind, we are happy to announce that we have updated our program to include more scholarship opportunities to our graduating seniors. The applicants must be U.S. citizens and dependents of Mor-Gran-Sou members. All scholarships will be awarded during the 2018-2019 school year.

The co-op will award nine, \$500 scholarships to qualified applicants whose parent(s) or guardian(s) are members of the co-op. School representatives from Elgin-New Leipzig Public School, Flasher Public School, Glen Ullin Public School, Hebron Public School, Mandan Public School, New Salem-Almont Public School, Selfridge Public School, Standing Rock Community School, and Solen Public School will select one graduating senior to receive the funds. Interested in applying? Students should contact their school counselor for deadline information. The schools will then forward each recipient's name to Mor-Gran-Sou.

The co-op will also award one \$500

scholarship to a graduating senior from a school outside of our service area. Please contact our office if interested.

**Mor-Gran-Sou Electric continues to award a \$1,000 scholarship sponsored by Basin Electric Power Cooperative.**

We award this scholarship to a student already enrolled or planning to enroll in a full-time graduate or undergraduate program. The student must attend an accredited, two-year or four-year college, university or vocational/technical school. 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. All post-secondary students who have parents that are members of Mor-Gran-Sou Electric are eligible to apply. Applications are available at area schools, co-op headquarters in Flasher, or online at [www.morgransou.com](http://www.morgransou.com).

**Mor-Gran-Sou Electric is awarding one \$500 scholarship sponsored by 3C Construction.**

Eligible applicants are high school seniors who are enrolled or planning to enroll in a certified vocational or technical school pursuing a career as

a lineworker. The scholarship will be awarded during the 2018-2019 school year. Applications are available at area schools, co-op headquarters in Flasher, or online at [www.morgransou.com](http://www.morgransou.com).

**Mor-Gran-Sou is also awarding one \$500 scholarship sponsored by West Dakota Utility Services.**

Eligible applicants are high school seniors who are enrolled or planning to enroll in a certified vocational or technical school pursuing a career as a mechanic. Applications are available at area schools, co-op headquarters in Flasher, or online at [www.morgransou.com](http://www.morgransou.com).

**Luck of the Draw scholarships**

Mor-Gran-Sou will award two \$500 Luck of the Draw scholarships to be drawn at our annual meeting on July 19. All high school seniors, who are dependent of Mor-Gran-Sou members and are a graduate of the class of 2019, are eligible for this scholarship. Students must attend our annual meeting and be accompanied with at least one parent or guardian, and will be required to RSVP before the meeting.

Applications are due no later than 4:30 p.m. CT (3:30 p.m., MT) on Wednesday, Feb. 20, 2019. 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. ■



# *An inspiration to many ...* **Mor-Gran-Sou remembers Bob Tomac**

BY JACKIE MILLER



In 2018 we also lost past director Robert (Bob) Tomac, who passed away July 14, 2018. Bob served in the At-Large position as Mor-Gran-Sou board director from 1992 to 1998.

Bob was born on Aug. 1, 1925, at his parents' homestead 20 miles south of Morristown, S.D. He attended area grade schools and graduated eighth grade at the Locken School. He

then attended high school in McIntosh, S.D., graduating in 1943. In 1945 he joined the Navy and after an honorable discharge, returned to the Tomac homestead. On July 25, 1951, Bob married Betty Schmidt. In 1959 the couple moved onto the Silent Butte Ranch in North Dakota north of Watauga, S.D., where they raised their 18 children.

Bob was well-known for his community leadership and had a voice in many local decisions. Besides serving on the Mor-Gran-Sou board, he was one of the original board of directors of the Watauga Elevator. He also served on the Cedar Soil Conservation Board, the Lemmon Dakota Propane Board, and as a Sioux County Commissioner. He was an active member of the Thunder Hawk American Legion and a trustee at St. Michael's Catholic Church.

Card playing was his favorite pastime.

Vern Frederick, current board director for Mor-Gran-Sou, served with Bob during his first term as a Mor-Gran-Sou director in the early '90s. Vern offered this memory of Bob.

"He was a very dedicated board member who brought a strong insight of what life was like living in a very remote part of the cooperative's service territory. He brought to the board a kind and gentle voice, always reminding us of our promise – that all members are to be treated equally regardless of geographic location," he says.

His dedication to family was unprecedented," Vern continues. "I remember one story he told during where, because of blocked roads during a winter storm, he took his children to school with a snowmobile. He pulled an old metal car hood for a sled, and behind it a toboggan, because not everyone would fit!"

Bob was very proud of his children – and his wonderful legacy, and his passion for life and leadership, will live on through them.

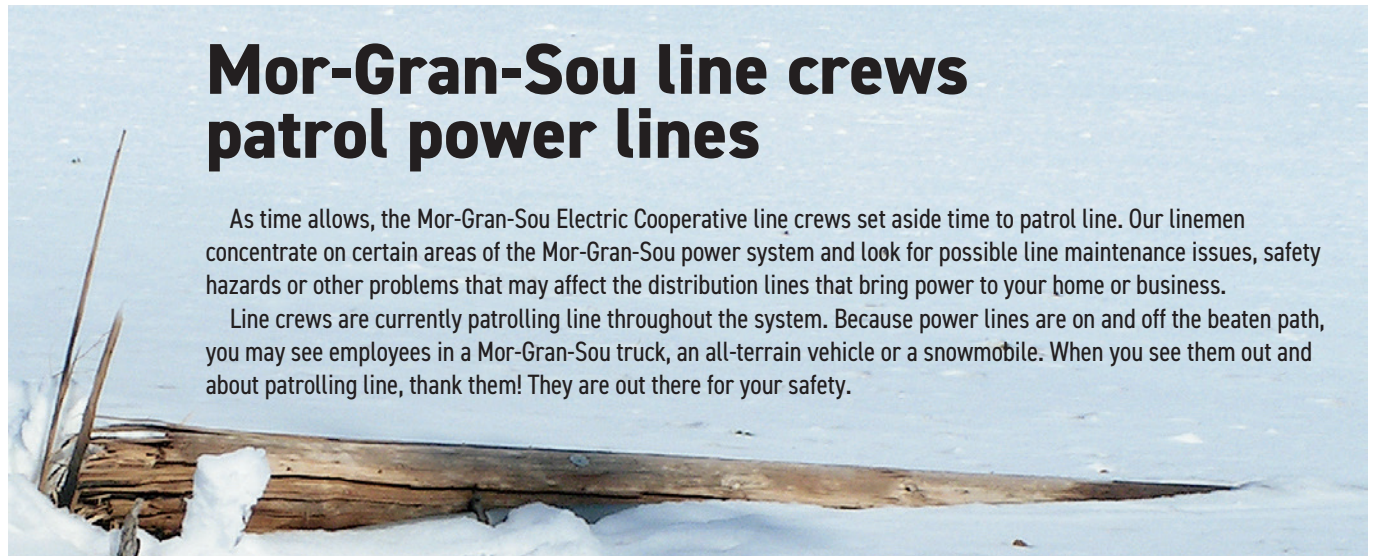
Bob and Betty were true pillars in their community, and an inspiration to many whom they came into contact with throughout their lives.

Mor-Gran-Sou was blessed to have been a part of Bob's life journey. To his family and friends, please know how much we appreciated his shared time and talent, and that the board of directors and staff express our heartfelt condolences. ■

## **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.





# 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® Cooperative 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 Thursday, Feb. 21, 2019.

### 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 Cooperative 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.

# SAFETY@MORGRANSOU.COM

Mor-Gran-Sou is an advocate of working safely. In fact, it is our way of life; the culture of your cooperative. We look out for the safety of ourselves and others — before, during and after work.

Did you know that members also play a key role in keeping our system safe? At times, you are our eyes in the sky and on the ground. Should you see a power line issue that may need Mor-Gran-Sou's attention, please call the office or send us an email at [safety@morgransouelectric.com](mailto:safety@morgransouelectric.com) with your concern. This correspondence should include the description of the location, your name and complete contact information, and a photo if possible. Working together helps ensure the safety of all!



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



## Meeting date: Dec. 19, 2018

- Approved the Nov. 28, 2018, regular Board meeting minutes
- Approved two work order inventories and a special equipment inventory
- Reviewed and accepted the November financial report
- Reviewed and accepted the director and attorney expense reports for November
- Approved a director election to the Innovative Energy Alliance Cooperative Board of Directors for three-year term; and named first and second alternates
- Elected a new Secretary-Treasurer
- Assigned Trustee and Alternate to ND REC Benefit Trust Board
- Approved auditor's engagement letter for audit of 2018 records
- Designated various Board representatives as voting delegates and alternates for upcoming meetings
- Approved attendance at various training and meetings
- Reviewed Mor-Gran-Sou senior staff department reports
- Heard the Co-General Managers/CEOs update, and reports on meetings attended
- Heard reports from various meetings the directors attended
- Held Executive Session

## Upcoming regular board meeting date:

*Feb. 27, 2019, at Mor-Gran-Sou in Flasher 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 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 701-597-3301 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 Flasher office to request a copy.

## 2-1-1 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.

**Text your zipcode to 898-211** or **Dial 2-1-1** or **701-235-7335** to get connected to help & hope.

[MYFIRSTLINK.ORG](http://MYFIRSTLINK.ORG)



## 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](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..... Lance Froelich  
Directors..... Mark Doll,  
Vernard Frederick, Chad Harrison,  
Jay Larson, Bob J. Leingang

### MANAGEMENT

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

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

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



## Holiday closing for Presidents Day: Monday, Feb. 18

In observance of Presidents Day, Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative will be closed Monday, Feb 18. Line crews will be available in case of an emergency outage.