



PHOTO BY JULIE ARMILJO

In October, cooperatives and communities celebrate National Co-op Month

Participating in parades is one way Mor-Gran-Sou maintains a close connection to community. During the Grant County Fair parade in Carson, Member Services Manager Julie Armijo was joined by Youth Tour delegate **Madalynn Sauter** and Miss Rodeo Prairie Rose **Landry Schmidt**, who represented Mor-Gran-Sou and Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives. Madalynn is the daughter of Mor-Gran-Sou members Jack and Bethany Sauter and Landry is the daughter of Mor-Gran-Sou members Brad Schmidt and Sherry Schmidt. In this month's local pages, learn why Co-op Month is all about you, our member-owners.

What's inside:

- **Youth Tour recap and 2020 essay contest**
- **Community support drives the purchase of Flasher fire truck**
- **Keep poles free of attachments**
- **Meeting minutes and more**



Journeymen Linemen **Brett Fleck**
(left) and **Lance Brown Otter**



‘BY THE COMMUNITY, FOR THE COMMUNITY’

October is National Co-op Month ... a time when cooperatives across the state and nation celebrate who we are and who we serve — our member-owners.

PHOTOS BY CARMEN DEVNEY



Leadman **Cody Maher**



We are Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative

With headquarters in Flasher and service centers in Mandan and Fort Yates, Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative is one of 16 distribution cooperatives in North Dakota that delivers retail electricity to about 250,000 North Dakotans through 196,000 meters. We also have transmission responsibilities.

Mor-Gran-Sou provides safe, reliable and affordable electric service to members in Morton, Grant and Sioux Counties. We currently serve about 6,150 members and provide electricity to 9,916 meters. That power is supplied by Basin Electric Power Cooperative and Western Area Power Administration.

Your electric cooperative was started by folks who pooled their \$5 investments to help bring power to more sparsely populated areas ... not to make a profit, but to provide a vital service.

Decades ago, members needed electricity to heat their homes, light their barns, pump water, make farm and household chores less labor-intensive — and ultimately make living in North Dakota a bit easier.

Today, most of us don't think about the conveniences our ancestors only dreamed could make their lives easier. Unless Mother Nature damages the power system with a strong wind or wet snow, for the most part, our members can flip a switch and expect to have lights and heat.

Members' expectations and needs continue to evolve, and Mor-Gran-Sou is just as relevant today as we were 72 years ago. From powering fans in grain bins and home security systems, to smart thermostats, TVs, tablets and more, electricity is just as important today in how we use it to make our lives easier.

When you use energy, you are a consumer. When you pay your bill to a cooperative, you are a member because you are an owner. Do you understand the significance?

- **Members have voting rights; one member, one vote.** Mor-Gran-Sou is governed by nine members who serve as directors of the cooperative. They make decisions locally that best serve our area. They set the rates, approve construction plans, analyze future electric demand and power supply, research trends and technology, and evaluate the ever-changing needs of the membership and how Mor-Gran-Sou can continue meeting those needs. Each year during the annual meeting, members can campaign for a seat on the board, or vote for fellow members seeking a seat on the board.
- **Members earn capital credits.** Mor-Gran-Sou is a nonprofit business that is designed to operate at cost. We annually "allocate" to each member the operating revenue remaining at the end of the year, based upon the member's amount of electricity purchased. Later, at the discretion of the board and as financial conditions permit, these allocated amounts — capital credits — are retired. Capital credits reflect the ownership in, and contribution of capital to, the cooperative.
- **Members can take advantage of programs the cooperative**

offers to enrich the lives of those who live in our service area. Mor-Gran-Sou members may qualify for grants through the Rural Development Finance Corporation, to be used for community-based projects. And starting this summer, if they have a one-time need, they may now apply for an Operation Round Up grant. Mor-Gran-Sou also takes pride in assisting with youth development, and offers student scholarships and the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour to the dependents of our member-owners.

Another feature that sets our co-op apart from a traditional utility is one of our core principles, "Commitment to Community." We participate in community parades, the Aide Incorporated Care and Share program and Salvation Army bell-ringing, to name a few. We also give several donations; one recent one supported Annie's project, which strengthens women's roles in agriculture.

Our close connection to the community ensures we get a firsthand perspective on local priorities. This enables us to make more informed decisions on long-term investments.

Our employees live and work in the communities we serve, and we share some of the same hardships and goals.

Now that you better understand your membership and the cooperative difference, we hope you will think of Mor-Gran-Sou as more than your energy provider.

We are Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative, and we were built by the community, for the community.

Let's celebrate National Co-op Month together! We are proud to work alongside our members to support our community, power economic development and foster prosperity for the people we serve. ■



YOUTH TOUR

Madalynn Sauter shares firsthand lessons in politics and history

BY CARMEN DEVNEY

If you could meet with our state's congressional delegates and convey a few issues of great importance, what would they be?

During this year's Electric Cooperative Youth Tour trip to Washington, D.C., North Dakota's 16 co-op representatives including Madalynn Sauter had the opportunity to meet Congressman Kelly Armstrong and Senator John Hoeven, as well as an aide for Senator Kevin Cramer. They visited at length with Congressman Armstrong, and he listened.

Madalynn, Mor-Gran-Sou's representative on the tour, says the students voiced concerns about self-preservation: how can we reduce trash and pollution, and preserve the planet ... and what are you, our representative, doing to help?

Madalynn asked if North Dakota would ban plastic straws like California, or start charging consumers to use plastic bags and promote the use of canvas. While it likely won't happen any time soon, he knows preserving the planet means something to this generation of future decision-makers.

The Youth Tour is a firsthand lesson in politics, and the importance of making your voice heard and casting your vote. Madalynn learned ... and would like to tell the Mor-Gran-Sou membership: Your investment in the program is worthwhile, and she is grateful.

The daughter of Mor-Gran-Sou members Jack and Bethany Sauter, Madalynn joined 1,800 students from across the nation to participate in this year's Youth Tour, held June 15 to 21. They visited the nation's capital for a fast-paced week of learning about history, government and cooperatives, and toured museums, monuments and memorials. Sponsored by their family's electric cooperative, the students also develop leadership skills and a national network of peers.

To earn a seat on the tour, the North Dakota students entered an essay-writing contest and addressed the following topic: "As a possible future member-owner of your cooperative, describe ways that smart technologies and social media might be used to communicate with young adults. How might they be used to increase



*Clearly enjoying her time touring and learning, seen here at the U.S. Capitol, **Madalynn Sauter** says the Youth Tour strengthened her desire to travel and meet people. She says it took courage and social skills to start a conversation with the other students on the trip. "Even the shy people connected with others on the tour, and made friends. This trip helped us learn how to network."*

awareness and interest in the many career opportunities with electric cooperatives?"

In her essay, Madalynn stated she might be plugged into technology for nine hours each day. That might seem like a lot, but the Internet and the cloud are where she and her peers are learning the news, listening to music, connecting with friends, sharing photos and videos, and much more.

While she greatly reduced the time she spends using technology while on the tour, she did use her mobile phone to post photos to Instagram, send photos to her family on Facebook, and use an app called Cluster to share photos with friends.

Madalynn says one of the greatest surprises of the trip was her ability to make new friends — and she looks forward to maintaining those friendships through social media now that the tour is over.

"They told us over and over again at orientation that we would make lifelong friends there. I didn't believe them at first," she says. "I really connected with the people I met, and made some really good friends."

Mor-Gran-Sou sponsors the Youth Tour annually to help students develop leadership skills including



networking that may be used to help improve the quality of life in rural communities in this great state. Brad Quenette, member services manager for neighboring co-op Roughrider Electric, was one of two North Dakota chaperones. He noted some of the teens start the week as somewhat shy, and by the end of the week have come out of their shells.

“From not knowing anyone at the beginning of the week, to making new friends and interacting with one another, at the end of the week some are really close. For some of these students, they develop social skills that can really change them for the better,” he says.

Quenette says the tour is an eye-opener for students, who learn firsthand what our country is all about.

“When they get to see some of these historical sites, they have already learned a lot of information in school, but maybe they didn’t realize the significance to our country until they saw the memorials and monuments in person,” he says. “They don’t realize what it’s all about until they are actually there.”

Madalynn says some of her favorite stops on the tour included the National Aquarium in Baltimore and some of the Smithsonian museums in Washington, D.C. She says her only regret was not having more time to tour and learn.

“It’s been said you could spend a week there and not see everything. That is true!” she says.

The Newseum, one of the world’s most interactive museums that highlights news, the role of the free press and major events in history, was also a fascinating stop for Madalynn. In the April local pages, she said she is interested in becoming a robotics engineer or going into cyber security. The Newseum had glass walls where the students could see computers and servers, and Madalynn says she would like to return and learn more from a cyber-security perspective. The day she returned to North

Dakota from the Youth Tour, she unpacked her bags and repacked for a weeklong class at the South Dakota School of Mines on cyber security.

Reflecting on her Youth Tour experience, Madalynn highly recommends the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour to the next batch of qualifying students.

“This tour really is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and it’s all expenses paid! There is no reason not to apply,” she says. “It was the best part of my summer.”

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative is currently looking for its next Youth Tour delegate for the 2020 trip. See C6 to learn this year’s essay contest question and how students can apply. For additional information visit www.ndyouthtour.com or www.youthtour.coop, or call Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative. ■



PHOTOS BY BRAD QUENETTE

When North Dakota’s Youth Tour group met Congressman **Kelly Armstrong**, one student asked what he feels is the biggest problem affecting the state. His response was the opioid crisis. **Madalynn Sauter** (next to him, far right) said the conversation exposed her to a lot of issues and events occurring beyond Carson, N.D. The students also briefly met Senator John Hoeven and an aide for Senator Kevin Cramer.

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative needs **YOUR HELP**

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative works hard to provide safe, reliable and affordable electric service for you and your family. We also provide programs to help you use energy more efficiently.

To help us plan for the future and determine what programs will benefit you most, we need your help.

This fall, we will mail a random survey to some of our residential members. If you receive a survey, please take a few minutes to complete it. Your answers are important, so please respond as best as possible and return it promptly. A postage-paid return envelope will be included for your convenience. The survey will also be available to complete online. Thank you, in advance, for being active and involved co-op members.



JUNE 20 TO 26, 2020

HIGH SCHOOL SOPHOMORES & JUNIORS

Win the 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 Julie Armijo at Mor-Gran-Sou at 701-597-3301, 701-663-0297 or 800-750-8212 during regular business hours.
- The deadline is Jan. 31, 2020. You can e-mail entries to Julie Armijo at jarmijo@morgransou.com or mail a hard copy to: Youth Tour Essay Contest, Mor-Gran Sou Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 297, Flasher, ND 58535-0297.

ESSAY QUESTION:

If chosen as a Youth Tour delegate, you will travel to Washington, D.C. to experience and learn about America's rich history. What moment in American history do you wish you had been a part of and what would you have contributed?

CHECK OUT THE ESSAY CONTEST GUIDELINES AT
www.ndyouthtour.com

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





Community support drives the purchase of Flasher fire truck

BY CARMEN DEVNEY



PHOTO BY JACKIE MILLER

“If at first you don’t succeed, try, try again.”

~ Willian Edward Hickson

One “no” turned into a multitude of “yesses,” and now the Flasher Rural Fire Protection District has a state-of-the-art fire truck that provides a valuable service to the community, thanks to the perseverance of Fire Chief Shannon Gerhardt.

Gerhardt applied for a grant from the North Dakota Forest Service, on behalf of the district, to purchase new hoses, Wildland firefighter gear and foam to fight prairie fires. There is great need across North Dakota for similar supplies – and great competition. At the time, the answer was no.

In December, Gerhardt received a call from the Forest Service, asking him to stop by for a visit. They gave the Flasher Rural Fire Protection District 200 feet of new hose and some Wildland gear, which is used to fight fires in high temperatures and perform vehicle extrications. This lighter-weight gear allows for more flexibility and mobility, allowing the firefighters to resist fatigue and dehydration.

Also in the process of tearing apart a truck, they asked Gerhardt if the district could use a free box. All they needed to buy was a truck to put underneath.

“The box alone must have cost about \$68,000,” says Gerhardt.

He contacted Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative, and inquired about a donation that would solely be put toward the purchase of a new vehicle. Jackie Miller, chief of staff for Mor-Gran-Sou, asked him to fill out the paperwork. In the meantime, she contacted the charitable giving department at Basin Electric Power Cooperative, one of Mor-Gran-Sou’s power suppliers, and Basin Electric agreed to match Mor-Gran-Sou’s donation.

That first, resounding, “Yes!” motivated Gerhardt to seek

additional funds.

One evening he was visiting with Flasher residents Cindy and Farley Ternes. Cindy, the manager of administrative services for Mor-Gran-Sou, knew about the donation request. She and Farley learned more about the fire district’s need, and instantly gave him a check to put toward the truck.

“From there I thought, ‘I should go around to people and businesses in the community. If word gets out, people will wonder why no one else was asked,’” Gerhardt says. So he went around town and asked for donations, and he heard yes after yes after yes.

In July, when Flasher held its SummerFest, Dale Pahlke with Dakota Community Bank reached out to him. He had already given a donation, and wanted to expand on it and hold a steak fry fundraiser.

“He bought the whole meal, and we raised a good amount of money from that,” Gerhardt says. “I’ve known him from bull ridings. It was nice that he offered to help.”

The American Legion Post 69 in Flasher gave a donation. Then the fire district sold raffle tickets for the North Dakota Country Fest, and Action Motorsports in Mandan donated two items for the raffle. Six fire departments in Morton County sold a total of about \$45,000 in raffle ticket sales, and split the proceeds. Flasher received a portion equaling \$12,000, and all of it went toward the purchase of the fire truck.

With so much community support, the Flasher Rural Fire Protection District approved the purchase of the truck. The project went out on bids in area cities, and Nelson Motors in Fergus Falls, Minn., earned the bid and ordered it. Great Plains Fire in Fergus Falls built the truck. Through another grant from the North Dakota Forest Service, some of the installation fees were paid.

The truck, now back in Flasher, features some newer and higher-end technology that will allow Gerhardt and the volunteers who work for the fire district to be more efficient and safe when responding to fires and other emergencies.

Gerhardt says he’d like to thank community members for their support.

“It’s the community’s truck. It’s something they can see and know where their money went,” he says.

The truck was dedicated to the American Legion in Flasher, as a thank-you for their donation and to show the department’s support. The volunteer firefighters put a decal on it that says, “All gave some; some gave all.” It honors those who served from Post 69 in Flasher.

Gerhardt says the fire truck is an integral part of the community, and he hopes in its own way, it will bring more people back to the community. He also hopes it will attract those who have an interest in volunteering and fighting fires to step forward and serve.

Gerhardt thanks Mor-Gran-Sou for being the first yes, and sparking a domino effect of charitable giving that enabled the department to raise enough funds to purchase the truck.

Mor-Gran-Sou is proud to have said yes, on behalf of our member-owners. ■

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



Meeting date: Aug. 28, 2019

- Held Reorganization, elected officers for the Board
- Approved the July 19, 2019, regular Board meeting minutes
- Reviewed and accepted the financial report
- Approved a special equipment and two work order inventories
- Approved capital credit refunds to estates and those age 80 and over
- Reviewed and accepted the director and attorney expense reports
- Heard update on Southwest Power Pool
- Reviewed update on WDUS Holdings, LLC
- Reviewed senior staff department reports
- Heard the Co-General Managers/CEOs update, and reports on meetings they attended
- Heard reports from various meetings and events the directors had attended
- Confirmed director attendance at upcoming meetings
- Appointed voting delegates and alternates for upcoming meetings
- Reviewed 2019 Annual Meeting statistics, expenses and cost comparisons
- Set the 2020 Annual Meeting date and location
- Set dates for the 2020 Board meetings
- Approved proposal for Mandan property purchase
- Reconfirmed Acting Secretary for the Board of Directors
- Approved General Safety & Health governance policy new section regarding weapons
- Reviewed and accepted the Innovative Energy Alliance (IEA) Cooperative 2020 Budget as presented
- Discussed capital credit refund options for past patrons
- Appointed alternates from Mor-Gran-Sou for the IEA and Maintenance Solutions Cooperative Boards of Director
- Held Executive Session

Upcoming regular board meeting date:

Oct. 30 at the Flasher office

Members are welcome to attend the board meetings at any time. Please contact Mor-Gran-Sou at 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 Chair Casey Wells 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, or contact the Flasher office to request a copy.



What a difference a day, month and year make

Cousins **Brayden Hatzenbuhler**, age 8, and **Wren Gartner**, 8 months, compared these flowers to their height, and it was determined the kids are growing like weeds. Brayden is the son of Chris and LeAnn Hatzenbuhler, and grandson of Donald and Carol Hatzenbuhler and Clifford and Connie Rossow. Wren is the daughter of Lacey and John Gartner, and the granddaughter of John Gartner Sr. and Myra Gartner, and Clifford and Connie Rossow. Connie submitted the photo.

KEEP POLES FREE OF ATTACHMENTS!

Put yourself in their boots. It's windy, raining and dark. And lineworkers have to climb a power pole with nails imbedded into it. Or a birdhouse or another obstacle hangs from the pole, creating another hazard for a lineworker.

Signs, satellite dishes, flags, deer stands or other attachments to power poles create serious safety hazards for lineworkers. Attached objects make the poles extremely hazardous – and sometimes impossible – for lineworkers to climb to restore power or to perform routine maintenance.

Staples, nails and tacks used to hang items pose dangers to lineworkers, too. Sharp objects like nails, tacks, staples or barbed wire can puncture rubber gloves and other safety equipment, making lineworkers vulnerable to electrocution.

It only takes a nail partially driven into a pole to cause serious injury to a lineworker. Nail holes also allow moisture to enter wooden poles, causing premature decay and the expense of early replacement.

Lineworkers climb utility poles at all hours of the day and night, in the worst of conditions. Signs, posters, basketball rims, birdhouses or deer stands attached to utility poles can create serious hazards for our line personnel.

Step into the lineworker's boots! Please be respectful of co-op equipment and property. ■



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UNDERGROUND LINE LOCATES
800-795-0555 OR 811

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

Chair..... Casey Wells
Vice Chair..... Chad Harrison
Secretary-Treasurer Lance Froelich
Directors Mark Doll, Vernard Frederick,
Pam Geiger, Jay Larson,
Bob J. Leingang, Kathy Tokach

MANAGEMENT

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

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