



# CURRENT

Serving Morton, Grant and Sioux counties

SEPTEMBER 2019

NEWS

*Faith Geiger shows the contents of the safety kit that was given away at the cooperative's annual meeting in July. She came with her dad, Wes Geiger, who is a member of Mor-Gran-Sou. She is also the granddaughter of members Warren and Pam Geiger.*



PHOTO BY CARMEN DEVENEY

## Youth welcome — and wanted — at your annual meeting

Mor-Gran-Sou made the annual meeting a family friendly event, offering several youth opportunities and gifts. Children were given crayons and coloring pages with electrical safety messages to pass the time, and older students learned about scholarships and the Youth Tour trip to Washington, D.C.

Five students earned a career boost at the meeting, during the Luck of the Draw scholarship drawing. Members, this is your cooperative, and we thank you for bringing your family to the meeting! In this month's local pages, read a complete recap of the event. ■

## What's inside:

- **SmartHub upgrades may require an Internet browser update**
- **Mor-Gran-Sou launches prepaid billing**
- **Phone scam hits area cooperatives**
- **Meeting minutes and more**



PHOTOS BY CARMEN DENNEY

Standing Rock Chairman **Mike Faith** welcomed guests.

## Mor-Gran-Sou holds annual meeting

Members of Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative, Inc., met at the Pavilion of Prairie Knights Casino and Resort north of Fort Yates on July 19 to conduct their business at the cooperative's 72nd annual meeting. This year's theme was, "Inspired by innovation. Driven by service."

The afternoon began with registration from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. CT. Prior to a delicious banquet served at 6 p.m., a solemn prayer was offered by Reverend Dennis R. Schafer, St. Gertrude Catholic Church, Raleigh; St. Lawrence Catholic Church, Flasher; St. Theresa Catholic Church, Carson. Standing Rock Chairman Mike Faith welcomed members.

Chairman Leland "Judge" Barth dropped the gavel at approximately 5:30 p.m. CT and the business meeting was underway. The membership fulfilled Cooperative Principle #2, democratic member control, by voting to fill four board director positions: one for the Grant County position, one for the Mandan-Area position, and two for the Morton County positions. Incumbent Vernard Frederick from Flasher retained the Grant County

position. Pam Geiger from Mandan was elected to fill the Mandan-Area position. Kathy Tokach from St. Anthony was elected to serve the two-year Morton County position, and Jay Larson from Almont was re-elected to fill the three-year Morton County position.

Mor-Gran-Sou thanks Cody Hatzenbuhler and Bonnie Tomac from Mandan, Eric Schultz from Almont, and Travis Wilkens from New Salem for campaigning to serve their electric cooperative.

The reorganization meeting was held at the next scheduled board meeting on Aug. 28. Results were not available before the local pages were published.

Mor-Gran-Sou was honored to have a number of guests attend the meeting, including Sean Cleary, representative for Senator John Hoeven, and Jody Link, representative for Senator Kevin Cramer. They read statements provided on behalf of our congressional delegates.

After the greetings, Co-General Managers/Chief Executive Officers Donald Franklund and Travis Kupper captured this year's theme in their interesting and informative report to the membership. Franklund noted



the value of electricity is what it helps people accomplish.

From the electric meter and transformer outside a consumer's home, to the distribution lines that lead to substations and the extensive transmission system beyond, the electric service network is needed to ensure the lights turn on at the end of the day.

"Yes, a true network of poles and wire are needed — but more importantly — it is the network of people," Franklund said. "Line trucks don't fix power lines; people do. And linemen don't just fix power lines; the network of people do." From our billing department to warehousing ... from engineering to communications ... each step is important in providing members with reliable electric service."

As noted regularly in Mor-Gran-Sou's many communications mediums, safety is the culture of the cooperative. Mor-Gran-Sou has an aggressive safety program to keep employees and the general public safe. Franklund noted the cooperative is seeing more equipment damage due to being struck by farm equipment.

"We ask everyone to please look around. Make sure you are operating in a safe manner. We don't want anyone getting hurt," he said.

Franklund thanked the employees for providing high-quality services. He also thanked partners in the audience who represented the electric cooperative network, including Basin Electric Power Cooperative, National Information Solutions Cooperative, Innovative Energy Alliance Cooperative and the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives.

"Each provides critical skills and knowledge needed to provide reliable electric service. Without them, we would struggle to maintain the level of service we provide today," he said.

One change for Mor-Gran-Sou

this year is receiving payments for its transmission system. Franklund noted utility companies have been using each other's transmission systems since the 1970s. Following the lead of another electric cooperative in North Dakota, and due to Mor-Gran-Sou's interconnection with Basin Electric Power Cooperative, Mor-Gran-Sou joined the Southwest Power Pool (SPP). It consists of transmission organizations ranging in location from Oklahoma to north of Canada. After going through an approval process with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission earlier this year, Mor-Gran-Sou has started receiving payments.

"We are estimating our annual revenue, by allowing others to use our transmission system, to be just over \$600,000 a year. This is new revenue to you, the members, that we have not had before," Franklund said.

Franklund introduced Co-General Manager Kupper, who provided legislative updates. On a national level, electric cooperative representatives traveled to Washington, D.C., this spring to meet with U.S. senators, members of Congress and federal policymakers to discuss a safe, secure and reliable power supply, and policies that support carbon capture and storage investment. They advocated to protect against proposals that aim to sell the Power Marketing Administrations' hydroelectric power and transmission assets. They also educated policymakers on the unique benefits of the local control, advocating for continued tax protection of electric cooperatives, and calling on lawmakers for continued support of investments in rural infrastructure.

On the state level, the state's electric cooperatives monitored 69 bills that could have an impact on members during the 66th regular North Dakota Legislative Assembly

in January.

"Some of the bills we opposed included a net-metering bill, unrecorded easements and wind turbine setbacks. Some of the bills we supported included an electric vehicle infrastructure study, the protection of critical infrastructure and records related to it, the allocation of a wind generation tax revenue, and the use of carbon dioxide in enhanced oil recovery," Kupper said. "While the Assembly adjourned in April, we continue to advocate on behalf of our members, and will keep you informed as we learn more."

Linda Urlacher, president of the Mor-Gran-Sou Charitable Foundation, Inc., shared an update on the Operation Round Up 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. The foundation board members will meet and disburse funds in the form of grants to non-profit corporations, organizations or agencies in the Mor-Gran-Sou service area for charitable causes and crucial needs such as food, shelter, clothing, health care, emergency services and education.



At the safety table, kids were given crayons and coloring pages with electrical safety messages. **Colt** and **Molly** seemed excited to take the art to their tables. They are the grandchildren of Mor-Gran-Sou members Jim and Kathy Kohler.



The Foundation had a surprise for those who signed up for Operation Round Up at last year’s annual meeting. Those members were eligible for a drawing to win one of two \$50 bill credits, just for signing up for the program. Mor-Gran-Sou will draw again at the 2020 annual meeting, which means members who signed up at this year’s annual meeting will be eligible for the bill credit drawing in 2020.

Dedicated to the development of young leaders in its service area, Mor-Gran-Sou awarded one \$500 scholarship to a graduating senior from each of the high schools within its service area. Students recognized at the meeting included Nathan Roth from Elgin-New Leipzig Public School; Anna Muggli from Flasher Public School; Kristin Schaaf from Glen Ullin Public School; Chase McCone from Hebron Public School; Jayme Cepek from Mandan Public School; Ivy Klusmann from New Salem-Almont Public School; and Regan Dunn from Standing Rock Community/Fort Yates Public School. Kathryn Goettle also received a scholarship; she attends a school outside the Mor-Gran-Sou service area, and her parents are members. The \$1,000 Basin Electric Power Cooperative/Mor-Gran-Sou scholarship was awarded to Alexius Gietzen from Glen Ullin. Chance Magilke earned the 3C Construction scholarship, and Wyatt Hoger earned the West Dakota Utility Services scholarship. All the students with the exception of Chase, Jayme and Chance were able to attend the meeting, and thank the membership for the assistance in furthering their education and careers.

Mor-Gran-Sou also awarded two “Luck of the Draw” scholarships to students who had registered for the meeting and attended with a parent or guardian. The goal of these scholarships is to encourage the younger generation to attend, and



PHOTO BY CLARICE KESLER

*Thank you, members, for taking part in the director election, both at the meeting, and for those who submitted a mail-in ballot.*

learn about the cooperative business model of one member, one vote — and to show how their voices and votes will count. Recipients included Kendra Miller and Alyssa Thompson. The board then thanked all the students who entered for running, and in a surprise declaration, conferred \$100 to each of the other three students who registered for the contest. Those recipients were Hunter Frederick, Claire Graner and Emily Tweten.

This past June, Madalynn Sauter of Carson participated in the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour trip to Washington, D.C. She and other delegates from across the state and nation learned firsthand about our nation’s rich history, U.S. government, the cooperative business model and rural electrification. During the annual meeting, Sauter showed photos of some trip highlights, and thanked the membership for sponsoring the tour and giving her the opportunity to go and learn.

Chief Financial Officer Alex Craigmile presented the financial report to the membership. He said Brady, Martz & Associates, P.C. audited the 2018 financial statements of Mor-Gran-Sou, and presented their report to the board of directors with an “unmodified opinion,” the

highest opinion they can give.

Every member who registered and stayed for the duration of the meeting was a winner! At the close of the meeting, members remitted their registration stub to earn a \$20 bill credit on their next utility bill.

The board of directors and staff of Mor-Gran-Sou wish to thank our members for participating in the 72nd annual meeting of the membership, and look forward to meeting your electrical needs in the future. ■

## Drawing for \$25 bill credit

**Mail-in ballot recipients:** Marshall Flagg, Bismarck Roger Gisinger, Mandan Thomas D. Hunter, Solen Ron Jochim, Mandan Hattie Johnson, Mandan Vicki Lippert, Mandan Marvin Miller, Mandan Ben Schmidt, Flasher

### **Annual Meeting attendees:**

Robert Gipp, Fort Yates Ron Gross, Selfridge Jerry Mitchell, Mandan Dennis Renner, Mandan Cleo Richter, Flasher Beverly Sauter, Carson Steve Tomac, St. Anthony



## SmartHub upgrades may require an Internet browser update

To provide even greater protection for our members from cyber threats, SmartHub has undergone some upgrades.

Developed through our partnership with National Information Solutions Cooperative (NISC), SmartHub is an information system you can use to log into a secure site online, and view your account information using a personal computer or cell phone. At your convenience, you can make a payment, change an address, and request a new service. You can even track electrical usage from

month to month. By noting trends based on electrical usage, you can make informed decisions on your monthly power consumption.

Recently, NISC has increased the encryption security for SmartHub web and mobile solutions. To access SmartHub, our members will need to use the latest version of a preferred web browser, such as Google Chrome, Microsoft Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox or Apple's Safari. Upgrading to the latest version of your web browser is a fast, easy and free process.

Please make sure your browser is updated so you can continue taking advantage of all the information being made available to you, our member-owners. ■

## Operation Round Up grant applications are now being accepted

Do you have a specific need and could use a boost?

Operation Round Up is a voluntary, charitable program that allows our members to round up their monthly electric bills to the nearest dollar. The pennies, dimes, nickels and quarters accumulate in the Mor-Gran-Sou Charitable Foundation, Inc., and a board of directors will meet regularly to review applications and disburse funds in the form of grants.

Grants may be awarded to any non-profit corporation, organization or agency for charitable causes and crucial

needs such as food, shelter, clothing, health care, emergency services and education. All of the money raised by members stays in our local communities.

Any person or group in the Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative service area, or providing a service to the area, may apply to receive an Operation Round Up grant. Funds are disbursed in the general service area of Mor-Gran-Sou solely for charitable, educational, scientific, health or safety purposes.

To request an application, contact Jackie Miller or Julie Armijo by calling Mor-Gran-Sou at 663-0297, 597-3301 or 800-750-8212, or email [jlmliller@morgransou.com](mailto:jlmliller@morgransou.com) or [jarmijo@morgransou.com](mailto:jarmijo@morgransou.com). If you have questions, you may also contact any of the board members directly. ■

## Opt into Operation Round Up

On average, participating members donate about \$6 a year. The most a member would 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.

Please show your support and opt into the program. ALL the money raised by our member-owners stays in our local communities. To opt in, please fill out and return the following form:

### 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 co-op.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Account #(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Email the form to [jarmijo@morgransou.com](mailto:jarmijo@morgransou.com); or mail to: Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative, Inc. / P.O. Box 297 / Flasher, ND 58535

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature



# Mor-Gran-Sou is offering Pre-Pay Your Way

## *Simplify with prepaid billing*

*Say goodbye to deposits*

*No more monthly bills*

*Monitor your electrical usage*

*Customize a payment schedule that works for you*

As you may have heard at this year's annual meeting, Mor-Gran-Sou is rolling out a prepayment option called "Pre-Pay Your Way," which allows residential members to pay their utility bills in advance. It puts you in the driver's seat for purchasing electricity. It can be compared to buying electricity like buying gas, before you use it. You monitor the "fuel" level and decide when you should re-fill. You can purchase small amounts every few days, or "fill up" the tank and not worry about it for several weeks. When supply is low, simply purchase more.

### **What is Pre-Pay Your Way?**

With pre-pay, you pay for electricity how and when you choose. Purchasing electricity before you use it allows you to manage your budget and pay how much you want, when you want. In order to minimize transaction costs in the Pre-Pay Your Way program, each payment must be a minimum of \$25.

### **How does it work?**

You purchase your electricity before you use it. Payments can be made when you want; either online at [www.morgransou.com](http://www.morgransou.com), click on "My Account" Login," through the SmartHub mobile app; over the phone by calling 1-877-853-5865; or in person at Mor-Gran-Sou's office during normal business hours (Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. CT (7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. MT), excluding holidays and other office closures without any written notification from the cooperative to the member. When the account balance runs low, participants will get an alert by email or text letting them know it is time to reload (fill up that gas tank) the account.

### **Will I receive a monthly bill?**

No. Instead of receiving a monthly billing statement, your usage and balance are calculated daily. Track your bill and usage by visiting your account online at [www.morgransou.com](http://www.morgransou.com) or upload the SmartHub App when using your mobile devices.



*Mor-Gran-Sou members can now pre-pay for electric service, like they do for gas.*

### **How do I sign up?**

Mor-Gran-Sou would like to visit with members in-person during the initial sign-up. We have one simple form for members to fill out. Please contact us at 1-800-750-8212, 701-663-0297 or 701-597-3301.

### **How much will it cost to set up a prepaid billing account?**

There is no enrollment fee to set up a prepaid account. Simply get started with a \$50 payment on your account. To obtain a \$50 credit balance, existing accounts must also pay for the current usage as of the prepaid start date. Your account must be at a zero balance to participate.

### **What about a deposit?**

No deposit is required. New customers wishing to participate in the Pre-Pay Your Way program are not required to pay a deposit. Only a \$50 minimum credit balance is required at the time service is requested, in addition to the standard account establishment fee. Any existing deposit that a Mor-Gran-Sou member has will be used to pay the past-due balance on their account, and the rest will be applied to their prepaid account.

### **How much money should I keep in my prepaid account?**

It is up to you! Purchase enough energy to last until payday, or you can buy enough to last several months. Remember a \$25 minimum is required when you make a payment.



## How do I make payments?

Payments can be made at our office between the hours of 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. CT (7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. MT), Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Online payments can be made 24 hours a day at [www.morgransou.com](http://www.morgransou.com) or when using your mobile devices download the SmartHub app. Discover, VISA and MasterCard credit and debit cards, and electronic check payments can also be made over the phone 24 hours a day by calling 1-877-853-5865. Access information will be provided when your account is established.

## How can I check my balance?

Go to [www.morgransou.com](http://www.morgransou.com) and click on the My Account login to get your daily account balance or when using your mobile devices download the SmartHub App. You can also call the office between the hours of 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. CT (7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. MT), Monday through Friday, excluding holidays, or call 1-877-853-5865 to receive automated information regarding your prepaid account. Access information is provided when your account is established.

## How will I know if my balance is low?

Your meter is read daily and the previous day's usage is deducted from the available balance. As a prepaid member participant, you will choose how you wish to be notified of your current balance. You may choose email, text message, or keep track of your information using our mobile app or customer portal. Once you have chosen how you wish to be notified, you will receive a low-balance notice by email or text, or both, based on the number of days of usage you have remaining. This will give you time to purchase energy before the meter actually stops. Email accounts are mandatory to participate.

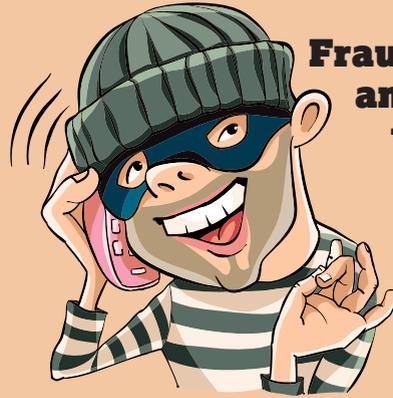
If you do not purchase more power and your balance reaches zero, the meter will turn off. Once a payment is made (the unpaid balance, plus \$25), your power will reconnect automatically. Weather conditions will not postpone disconnection of service. Mor-Gran-Sou shall be held harmless from any damages due to loss of energy service, or during the reconnection of service, as a result of participating in the prepay program.

## If I switch to prepay, do I lose my capital credits?

No. Members accumulate Capital Credits based on bylaws set forth by the board of directors. The prepaid plan does not change this.

If interested, contact us today at 1-800-750-8212, 701-663-0297, or 701-597-3301.

# IT'S A SCAM!



**Fraudulent callers and false claims target electric consumers**

Scammers will do and say anything to make money, and some of their recent targets have occurred in neighboring co-op service areas. In July, one electric cooperative in North Dakota received a call from a consumer — who was not a member — who said she received a call from the local co-op stating she needed to provide her social security number or her account would be suspended. She didn't have an account.

When the threatening call ended, the woman called the number that appeared on her caller ID, and it was routed to the co-op, even though cooperative employees would never ask members for credit card numbers or personal information over the phone. Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative offers a variety of methods for payments, and those methods should be used by our members.

Scammers are getting smarter, and preying on the good intentions of good people.

"We ask that members be aware of scams, and do not pay a bill until you've contacted our office at 663-0297, 597-3301 or 800-750-8212," says Manager of Member Services Julie Armijo.

Armijo notes the best thing members can do is hang up and call the cooperative.

"If you receive a call from someone claiming to be from Mor-Gran-Sou, don't give them any personal or financial information. Instead, hang up and call us right away," she concludes.

There are many ways a scam artist will try to con you out of your money. The North Dakota attorney general's office lists a few of the scams circulating in North Dakota on its website at <https://attorneygeneral.nd.gov/consumer-resources/common-scams>. ■

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



## Meeting date: July 19, 2019

- Approved the June 24, 2019, regular Board meeting minutes
- Reviewed and accepted the financial report
- Approved a special equipment and two work order inventories
- Reviewed and accepted the director and attorney expense reports
- Heard update on Southwest Power Pool and 2019 Mor-Gran-Sou SPP Annual Meeting
- 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
- Thanked Judge Barth and Robert Gaebe for their service as directors
- Held Executive Session

## Upcoming regular board meeting date:

Sept. 25 at the Mor-Gran-Sou Fort Yates Service Center

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 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.



## LOOK UP AND LOOK AROUND

### POWER LINES AND POLES MAY BE CLOSER THAN YOU THINK

For your safety, make sure you have at least 10 feet of clearance between power lines and your combines, grain augers, balers and front-end loaders.

Farming equipment is vulnerable to hitting power lines because of its large size, height and extensions. Newer, larger equipment is especially at risk.

Look for low-hanging lines when you enter and leave a field.

Keep in mind that uneven ground and shifting soil conditions can put you in harm's way.

If your equipment does make contact with a power line, do not leave the cab. Call 911, tell others to stay away, and wait for help.

If you are a Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative member and you see a power line issue that may need attention, call MGS at 800-750-8212 or email [safety@morgransou.com](mailto:safety@morgransou.com).

Your safety matters. Working together helps ensure the safety of all!



### 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,  
Pam Geiger, Chad Harrison, Jay Larson,  
Bob J. Leingang, Kathy Tokach

#### MANAGEMENT

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

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

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