



MOR-GRAN-SOU ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE INC.

# CURRENT NEWS

Serving Morton, Grant and Sioux counties

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

## 8 seconds, 1 chance

*Jesse Kuhn, leadman for Mor-Gran-Sou, practices extinguishing a simulated fire, as Clint Begger, journeyman lineman, watches. In this month's local pages, read about the co-op's fire safety meeting, and learn how YOU can protect yourself and your property in the event of a fire.*



### MARCH ISSUE:

- Fight fire with knowledge
- Welcome new employees
- Attend your annual meeting
- Meeting minutes ... and more!



After the safety presentation, Paul Davis, director of safety for the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives, gave the Mor-Gran-Sou line and plant personnel an opportunity to practice extinguishing a simulated fire.

## FIGHT FIRE with KNOWLEDGE

Story and photos by Carmen Devney

**E**ight seconds might feel like an eternity when riding a bull. But it might feel like a fraction of a second when standing in front of a fire, gripping an extinguisher. And eight seconds might be generous, if the extinguisher is small.

Cigarettes, candles and fireplaces can turn a smoldering spark into licking flames in seconds. Grease fires can also spread and devastate quickly. Unattended cooking is the leading cause of home fires, which are particularly difficult to smother because using a portable extinguisher on grease is not recommended.

In the event of a fire, do you have the knowledge and proper tools to protect yourself and your property? Do you know when to fight a fire — and when to call for help?

Those questions were posed to the Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative line and plant personnel on Jan. 24, during a fire safety and prevention meeting at the co-op's Mandan service center. Paul Davis, director of safety for the



*Davis demonstrated the PASS system steps to extinguish a fire, which included pulling the pin, aiming the nozzle, squeezing the handle, and sweeping the fire from side to side.*

North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives, gave the presentation and answered those questions and more.

Every year, 3,000 people die in house fires across the United States. Most die at night while they are sleeping; not from burns, but from smoke inhalation. A fire can decrease the oxygen level quickly, which makes thinking — and escaping — much more difficult.

During the presentation, Davis stated that if a fire was in its beginning stages, a

portable extinguisher may help to smother the fire if used correctly — with the disclaimer that it should not be used on a grease fire. He explained different “classes” of fires require different, specific extinguishers. The classes of fire include ordinary combustibles, flammable liquids and gases, electrical fires, combustible metals, and cooking oil or fat. Extinguishers have a tag with symbols indicating the type of fire it can smother.

In the event of a fire, Davis told the

employees to identify what was burning, and assess the fire's heat and smoke. Then he advised them to determine if they have the correct type of extinguisher, and to look for other explosive hazards such as gas or ammunition.

"Even the proper extinguisher can make the fire worse if it's not used properly," he warned.

The sizes of the extinguisher and the fire should help a person determine whether or not to fight the fire. Davis emphasized a small extinguisher may only blast for five seconds. A larger one might discharge for 10 seconds. If the fire is too large to put out in five or 10 seconds, Davis reminded the employees they can still use the extinguisher to beat the fire down and clear a path to safety.

To correctly use a portable fire extinguisher, Davis advised them to follow these steps of the **PASS System**:

- Pull the pin;
- Aim the nozzle;
- Squeeze the handle; and
- Sweep the fire from side to side, starting at the base. Stand six to eight feet away from the fire, and move closer as the extinguisher smothers the fire.

As Davis emphasized at the beginning of the presentation, extinguishers should not be used on cooking fires, because the blast of the extinguisher can spread the burning grease on walls, ceilings or body.

He also warned them not move the pan, because this could lead to spilling and spreading the fire. To most effectively extinguish a grease fire, slide the lid over the pan and turn off the burner. The fire may also be covered with a wet (not dripping) towel.

"This puts a barrier between you and the fire," he explained.

Once the grease has been covered, then an all-purpose portable extinguisher may be used.

Keeping a box of baking soda next to the stove is prudent, as it is the active ingredient in some extinguishers. The soda can be dumped over the pan if the fire is small, and smother the flames like a wet towel.

While the different classes of fires and extinguishers may seem overwhelming to the average person, Davis simplified what every household member needs to know about fire:

- Buy and keep a high-quality, ABC extinguisher on every level of the home



*As linemen travel the countryside, it's possible to encounter a prairie fire, a pole fire due to faulty electric equipment, a vehicle fire or other. Clint Begger, journeyman lineman, practices with the understanding that a fire can occur anywhere at any time.*



*Mor-Gran-Sou's pick-up trucks carry one ABC, all-purpose fire extinguisher. The digger trucks carry two based on their size; one on each side of the truck for immediate access.*

*Jerry Nielsen, safety instructor for NDAREC, refills an extinguisher with water so another Mor-Gran-Sou employee can practice.*

and in the garage. The size depends on the storage space available. Inspect the extinguisher monthly.

- Install smoke detectors in every bedroom, outside all sleeping areas and on every level of the home. Industry professionals suggest testing them monthly and replacing batteries two times a year, around New Year's Day and the Fourth of July. Replace detectors every 10 years or follow manufacturer recommendation.

**In the event of a fire:**

- Crawl on the ground if there is a lot of smoke and heat.
- Stop, drop and roll if you catch on fire.

At the end of the presentation,

Davis reminded the employees that they are not trained fire fighters. If they assess the situation and can't extinguish a fire in five or 10 seconds, "Know when to call for help — and always put safety first," he emphasized.



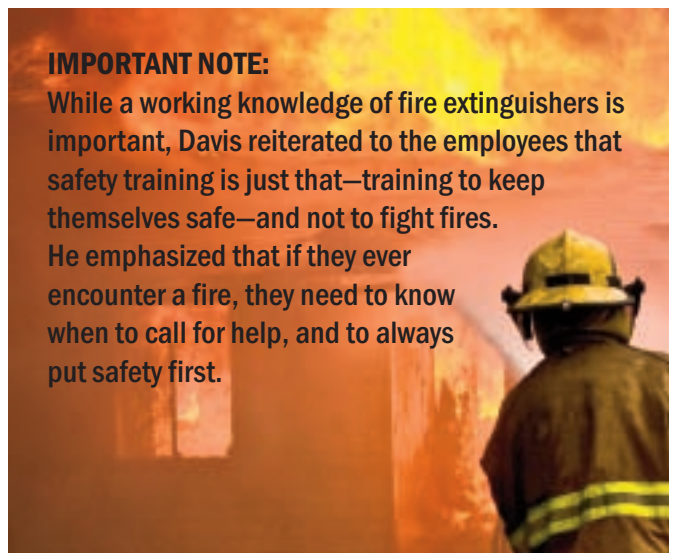
## PREVENTING HOME FIRES

- Practice a home escape plan frequently with your family. Establish a meeting place to account for all persons.
- Install smoke detectors in every bedroom, outside all sleeping areas and on every level of the home. Test monthly and replace batteries two times a year. Replace detectors every 10 years or follow the manufacturer's recommendation.
- Check electrical cords and wiring routinely for frays or cracks, and replace when damaged.
- Use arc fault circuit breakers, which detect arcs and trip, eliminating the possibility of an electrical arc causing a fire.
- Replace any electrical tool if it causes even small electrical shocks, overheats, shorts out, or gives off smoke or sparks.
- Keep electrical appliances away from wet floors and counters; pay special care to electrical appliances in the bathroom and kitchen.
- Use a three-slot outlet with a three-prong appliance. Never force it to fit a two-slot outlet or extension cord.
- Don't allow children to play with or around electrical appliances like space heaters, irons and hair dryers.
- Use safety closures to child-proof electrical outlets.
- Use electrical extension cords wisely. Never overload extension cords or wall sockets.
- Immediately shut off, then professionally replace, light switches that are hot to the touch and lights that flicker.
- Service central heating equipment yearly.
- Clean and inspect the chimney before each heating season.
- Keep clothes, curtains and anything that will burn at least three feet from all heaters.
- Turn off space heaters when you leave the room or go to bed.
- Buy a carbon monoxide detector and check it frequently.
- Attend the stove while in use at all times.
- Keep matches and lighters in a locked cabinet out of the reach of children.
- Smoke outside the home.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:**

While a working knowledge of fire extinguishers is important, Davis reiterated to the employees that safety training is just that—training to keep themselves safe—and not to fight fires.

He emphasized that if they ever encounter a fire, they need to know when to call for help, and to always put safety first.



## Save the date!

**WHAT:** Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative's annual meeting

**WHEN:** Friday, July 20

**WHERE:** Prairie Knights Casino and Resort, Fort Yates

**WHY:** To learn about co-op issues; to cast your vote and elect three members to serve on the board of directors; and eat a hearty meal.



## BYLAW/RESOLUTION MEETING SET

A bylaw/resolution meeting will be held in conjunction with the regular board meeting scheduled to start at 10:30 a.m. CT (9:30 a.m. MT) on Wednesday, March 28. The meeting will be held in the board room of the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives, located at 3201 Nygren Dr. N.W., Mandan.

If you have a bylaw/resolution to propose at the 2012 cooperative's annual meeting in July, but cannot make the scheduled meeting on March 28, please submit your information in writing to Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative before March 27. Thank you.

ALWAYS  
CALL  
BEFORE YOU  
DIG



## Gonna Dig? CALL 811 FIRST!

Construction projects sometimes continue into the winter. Be sure to dial 811 before you begin any digging project. A federally mandated national telephone number, 811, was created to help protect you from unintentionally hitting underground utility lines while working on digging projects. Make the call and you'll be notified of any dangers lurking underground.

**CALL 811 EVERY TIME.**

# STRENGTHENING the system

Story and photos by Carmen Devney

Just as the snow and ice storms of January and April 2010 will be recorded and remembered in the Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative history book, this winter will also be one to remember because of the mostly mild, nearly balmy temperatures we experienced through February.

The weather has allowed Mor-Gran-

Sou's line crews to continue working and maintaining the 3,793 miles of line across the counties of Morton, Grant and Sioux. The co-op employs 16 line and plant personnel who strive to keep the power flowing reliably to you, our member-owners.

Jason Bentz, line superintendent for Mor-Gran-Sou, says line crews in Flasher, Fort Yates and Mandan are staying busy this winter resagging line, replacing poles, reconductering line, and working

on projects related to the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Three of the co-op's newest linemen are apprentices who started as temporary help and were hired full-time by Mor-Gran-Sou. The co-op introduces Wayde Eckroth, Cody Graetz and Joseph Michael to the membership, and asks that you make them feel welcome as they travel across our extensive service area.



## WAYDE ECKROTH

Wayde Eckroth knows high voltage can be highly dangerous, and he takes his job — and safety — very seriously. As an apprentice lineman, he knows there is a lot to learn and remember on the job, so he relies on his seasoned co-workers to teach and guide him. He says he likes the teamwork atmosphere at Mor-Gran-Sou and appreciates how his co-workers look out for one another.

Wayde grew up on a farm and ranch north of Flasher, and says he always knew he wanted to work outside. Not deterred by the job's physical requirements or occasionally extreme weather conditions, Wayde chose the career because it didn't require years of time and expense before he could get a respectable job.

After he graduated from the Bismarck State College (BSC) lineworker program in Bismarck, Mor-Gran-Sou hired Wayde to work out of the co-op's Flasher headquarters. He also helps his parents on the farm, and says he was fortunate to find work so close to home.

On the job, Wayde says he likes climbing poles and getting up in the air. After hours, Eckroth can be found hunting and fishing, or working at the farm.

## CODY GRAETZ

When Cody was a young boy, his step-dad received a call from his employer, Nodak Electric Cooperative in Grand Forks, to fix a power outage after-hours. The restoration effort was supposed to take a couple hours. Instead, his father worked late into the night.

Like his step-dad, who still works as a lineman for Nodak, his father also works occasional late hours in the railroad industry. While the men's schedules varied, the random hours never deterred Cody, who wanted a career outdoors.

"I've always enjoyed being hands-on, and seeing what I did at the end of the day," he shares.

After graduating from BSC's lineworker program, Cody worked for Avenia for half a summer and then moved back to Grand Forks. But he liked the Bismarck-Mandan area, so when a job opened at Mor-Gran-Sou Electric, he pursued the opportunity.

Because of the mild weather, Cody hasn't experienced an after-hours outage on the job yet, although he says he learns something new every day from the Mandan service center line crews.

"All the guys I work with are eager to teach and let me do some things hands-on," he describes.

Outside of work, Cody is looking forward to marrying his fiancé, and spending more time hunting and fishing.





## JOSEPH MICHAEL

Growing up on a farm in Clearwater, Neb., Joseph Michael says he always liked working outside. When he took a job in steel construction, he worked “up in the air” for the first time. He liked it — and wanted a job that provided ample opportunity.

“Linemen work outside, up in the air. And it’s a job where you have a large impact on the community,” he shares. “It gives you a good feeling that you’re helping.”

Joe enrolled in a line school in Nebraska. After he graduated, he learned Mor-Gran-Sou Electric had an opening. Joe says he had no qualms about moving to North Dakota for a job.

“The way things are today, if you can find a good job, take it where you can get it,” he advises. “I’m pretty happy with where it ended up being.”

Joe works out of co-op headquarters in Flasher. He credits his co-workers with being good mentors, and says his challenge is to learn the extensive service area. He also says he likes to learn something new every day, and to improve himself as a person.

After hours, Joe spends time with his girlfriend and hones his archery skills for deer season.

## Armijo breaks down energy efficiency and lifestyle choices



*Julie Armijo, member services clerk for Mor-Gran-Sou, grew up on a dairy farm. She says electricity played a big role on the farm; specifically in cooling the milk.*

Julie Armijo finds floor plans fascinating. She can spend hours evaluating square footage, insulation values, doors and windows, and calculate a home’s heat loss.

“This is where my true love is — the whole building envelope,” she shares.

While Julie dreams of someday building “super” energy-efficient houses, for now she is helping consumers use energy wisely. As Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative’s member services clerk, Julie has a solid understanding of how lifestyle choices and a home’s energy efficiency can affect a utility bill.

For the past 18 years, Julie worked for Carbon Power and Light in Saratoga, Wyo., doing energy audits and sizing homes for electric heat products. The co-op also branched into Internet products, so part of her job was advising members on DIRECTV services, dial-up and WildBlue Internet.

Born and raised on a dairy farm south of New Leipzig, Julie was looking for an opportunity to move closer to home with her husband, Quejay. She watched electric cooperative job listings online, and visited with her parents about what was happening around Mor-Gran-Sou’s service territory. When a job opened in the member services department, Julie applied and interviewed using Skype.

Mor-Gran-Sou hired Julie in January. She helps answer members’ questions about their home’s electric usage, educates kids about electrical safety, and promotes electric heat products and services at community trade shows. With a “go-with-the-flow” attitude, Julie says she looks forward to working with various departments and duties.

“Like most electric co-ops, the staff here is lean and efficient. So far it’s been really busy, and I’m glad I was able to step right in and get to work,” she describes. “I’m excited to learn more about Mor-Gran-Sou and this particular membership, and contribute in any way I can.”

Typically it takes a new employee weeks — if not months — to learn the cooperative business philosophy, partners in the electric cooperative network, industry terminology and more. But because of her extensive history with Carbon Power and Light, on her first day with Mor-Gran-Sou Julie was visiting with members and answering questions.

“Julie is a perfect fit,” summarizes Jackie Miller, manager of member services.

# MOR-GRAN-SOU ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

## board meeting highlights



**Meeting date: Jan. 20**

- Approved the Dec. 28, 2011 Board meeting minutes
- Approved one special equipment and one work order inventory
- Approved retirement applications for capital credits to estates and those age 80 and over
- Heard update on 3C Construction, LLC
- Heard update on IEA, LLC (Alliance)
- Appointed voting delegate and alternate for upcoming meeting
- Had auditor give overview presentation on upcoming audit
- Heard update on loan refinance options
- Completed documentation for loan refinance with CoBank
- Heard information on utilizing new NISC software that will integrate with present software
- Approved resolution for the Long-Range Engineering Plan approved in December
- Approved rescinding Basin's rate for renewable energy credit, per Basin's request
- Heard report from first 2012 Nominating Committee meeting
- Heard department updates
- Heard reports on meetings attended
- Held Executive Session

*Upcoming regular board meeting dates:*

March 28 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 NDAREC Board Room in Mandan at 9 a.m. CT

Members are welcome to attend board meetings at any time. Please contact Mor-Gran-Sou at [cternes@morgransou.com](mailto: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 Chairman Dave Archambault II or Alliance Co-Manager 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.



## HOLIDAY CLOSING

In observance of the Easter holiday, Mor-Gran-Sou will be closed on Friday, April 6. Mor-Gran-Sou line crews will be available in case of an emergency outage.

## Co-op thanks members for participating in telephone survey

If you received a phone call regarding the Member Satisfaction Survey during the week of Feb. 13-17 and you took the time to answer, Mor-Gran-Sou thanks you for participating. With your input, Mor-Gran-Sou receives better insight into how we can better serve you.



## Spring ahead!

On Sunday, March 11  
at 2 a.m., Daylight Savings  
time begins.

### MOR-GRAN-SOU ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE INC.

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(701) 663-0297 - Mandan

Toll-free: (800) 750-8212 Fax: (701) 597-3915  
UNDERGROUND LINE LOCATES  
1 (800) 795-0555 OR 811

#### OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

Chairman .....Dave Archambault II  
Vice Chairman.....Leland "Judge" Barth  
Secretary-Treasurer .....Pam Geiger  
Directors .....Mark Doll, Joe Dunn,  
Bernard Frederick, Robert Gaebe,  
Bob J. Leingang, Casey Wells

#### MANAGEMENT

Alliance Co-Mgr. ....Donald A. Franklund  
Alliance Co-Mgr. ....Clayton O. Hoffman  
Mgr. of Admin. Serv.....Cindy G. Ternes  
Mgr. of Member Serv.....Jackie Miller  
Mgr. of Operations.....Randy Ressler  
Chief of Staff/Line Supt.....Jason Bentz  
Alliance Chief Info. Officer .....Charlie Dunbar  
Alliance Chief Fin. Officer .....Travis Kupper  
Alliance Human Res. Mgr.....Sienna Sailer  
Alliance Mgr. of Engr. Services. ....Rob Kelly

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

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