



# MOR-GRAN-SOU ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Serving Morton, Grant and Sioux counties

## THIS ISSUE:

- Operation Round Up deadline
- Annual meeting June 13
- Celebrating our lineworkers
- Call before you dig

APRIL  
2024

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

## LIGHTING THE WAY: Recognizing our lineworkers

National studies consistently rank lineworkers among the most hazardous occupations in the nation, and with good reason. Laboring above the ground, wearing heavy equipment and working directly with high voltage creates the perfect storm of a dangerous and unforgiving profession. Nonetheless, electric lineworkers rise to the challenge.

These courageous individuals are unwavering in their commitment to safety and the demands of their trade. Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative's lineworkers bear the responsibility of ensuring a continuous flow of power, regardless of holidays, vacations or family milestones. Beyond the extensive

training and apprenticeships, success as a lineworker demands inner strength and a steadfast dedication to the mission. Certainly, lineworkers epitomize stewardship, placing the welfare and maintenance of their service area as an important priority.

"I've witnessed firsthand the dedication of our lineworkers, who serve as the cooperative's first responders. Their unwavering commitment, hard work and sacrifices are unparalleled," says Manager of Operations Gary Fitterer. "After a long day, away from their family, tired and dirty from working endless hours on storm outages, a smile and a thank you is enough to make it all worthwhile." 

### Get to know our dedicated lineworkers:

*"I appreciate our members' patience during outages and bad weather."*



**LANCE BROWN OTTER**, journeyman lineworker, 17 years

**The job of a lineworker is...** to build and maintain our overhead and underground power lines

**What do you like most about working for an electric cooperative?**

The small-town values

**Hobbies:** Shooting pool and camping

**What is your go-to gas station snack or drink?** Energy drink

*"I enjoy the co-workers I work with, as well as the variety of tasks we perform on the job."*



**WAYDE ECKROTH**, journeyman lineworker, 12 years

**The job of a lineworker is...** to build and maintain power lines that deliver electricity to our service area

**What do you appreciate about Mor-Gran-Sou Electric's members?** Their patience and willingness to help move snow and pull out stuck line trucks during storm restorations

**Hobbies:** Hunting, fishing and spending time with family

**What is your go-to gas station snack and drink?** Mello Yello and sunflower seeds

*"Something I like about working for an electric cooperative is the ability to provide a service to someone I've met or have not met and know I'm helping make their lives easier every day."*



**BRETT FLECK**, journeyman lineworker, 6 years

**The job of a lineworker is...** to be reliable and dependable to the guys you work with every day

**What do you enjoy most about being a lineworker?** The ability to work outside every day and have a vast variety of jobs we do daily, as each day is always something new

**Hobbies:** Spending time with family, helping friends work cattle and farm

**What is your go-to gas station snack or drink:** A Coke



*“Our membership is always willing to help out, especially where needed during storms and outages.”*



**CODY GRAETZ**, journeyman lineworker, 13 years  
**The job of a lineworker is...** keeping the lights on  
**What do you like most about working for an electric cooperative?** Being a part of the local community  
**Hobbies:** Fishing, hunting and spending time with friends and family  
**What is your go-to gas station snack and drink?** Coca-Cola and breakfast sandwich

*“As a lineworker, we get to work outside and we work as a team to provide reliable services to our members.”*



**JASON JAHNER**, area foreman, 17 years  
**The job of a lineworker is...** to help provide a valuable service to our members in a safe and efficient manner  
**What do you appreciate about Mor-Gran-Sou Electric's members?** The help and support we get from the membership  
**Hobbies:** Spending time with family and relaxing  
**What is your go-to gas station snack and drink?** Mountain Dew and a candy bar

*“As a lineworker, I get to work outside every day, which I enjoy, as well as visiting with our members.”*



**LAYTON KASPER**, apprentice lineworker, 2 years  
**The job of a lineworker is...** to provide affordable and dependable electricity to our members  
**What do you like most about working for an electric cooperative?** The family feel of the workplace  
**Hobbies:** Spending time outside, hunting, fishing and being with family  
**What is your go-to gas station snack and drink?** Butcher Block jerky sticks and Reign energy drink

*“Mor-Gran-Sou Electric covers a vast service area, and I enjoy getting to explore the area and meeting members on the job and at events, such as the annual meeting.”*



**TROY KUBALL**, apprentice lineworker, 1 year  
**The job of a lineworker is...** difficult and risky, but enjoyable.  
**What do you enjoy most about being a lineworker?** I enjoy being outside for my job and building relationships with my co-workers  
**Hobbies:** I play softball in the summer and spend time with my dog and girlfriend. In the winter, I like downhill skiing and watching movies.  
**What is your go-to gas station snack and drink?** Garden Salsa SunChips and lemonade

*“An aspect I enjoy about being a lineworker and working for a rural electric cooperative is providing our service area with reliable power.”*



**CHANCE MAGILKE**, apprentice lineworker, 3 years  
**The job of a lineworker is...** working outdoors, installing poles, underground cable and setting transformers  
**What do you like most about working for an electric cooperative?** It is family-oriented  
**Hobbies:** Hunting or fishing  
**What is your go-to gas station snack and drink?** Sandwich and Powerade

*“I enjoy getting to know the members I serve in the area, and it is nice that they get to know us as well.”*



**CODY MAHER**, area foreman, 21 years

**The job of a lineworker is...** to build and maintain the cooperative’s distribution and transmission systems

**What do you enjoy most about being a lineworker?** Being outdoors in the spring, summer and fall

**Hobbies:** Attending my kids’ activities

**What is your go-to gas station snack and drink?** Coca-Cola and pizza

*“The cooperative is like a big family, even when it comes to members. Our members are always willing to help out.”*



**KALE OHLHAUSER**, journeyman lineworker, 6 years

**The job of a lineworker is...** to provide power and maintain the style of living we depend on

**What do you like most about working for an electric cooperative?** I enjoy the co-workers who I get to work with every day

**Hobbies:** Hunting, fishing and spending time with friends and family

**What is your go-to gas station snack and drink?** Reese’s and Rockstar

*“Our members are patient and understanding during storms. I appreciate that.”*



**C.J. PESICKA**, journeyman lineworker, 5 years

**The job of a lineworker is...** difficult, but rewarding

**What do you enjoy most about being a lineworker?** I like to be outdoors and helping the community

**Hobbies:** Being with my family

**What is your go-to gas station snack and drink?** Jerky and energy drinks

## Operation Round Up deadline approaching

Operation Round Up stands as a beacon of goodwill in the Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative service area. This voluntary program is where members can make a significant impact by simply rounding up their utility bills. Through this program, the Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Charitable Foundation Inc. receives vital support to enhance and uplift our local communities.

The Foundation directors, who are also Mor-Gran-Sou Electric members, meet and disburse funds in the form of grants to nonprofit corporations, organizations or agencies. All the money raised by members stays in our local area. The next Operation Round Up application deadline is May 3.

To complete an application or for more information, visit our website at [www.morgransou.com/operation-round](http://www.morgransou.com/operation-round) or call the office at 701-597-3301, 800-750-8212 or 701-663-0297. 





## MANAGER'S MESSAGE: Celebrating our lineworkers



Jason Bentz

When picturing our electric cooperative, the image of a dedicated lineworker typically springs to mind. These individuals embody our commitment to serving our members, working tirelessly day and night to ensure our community receives uninterrupted power. However, their role goes beyond maintenance. They are the unsung heroes who

exemplify dedication, bravery and a profound sense of service.

On April 8, let's take a moment to express our heartfelt gratitude to our lineworkers for their exceptional service, as we celebrate National Lineworker Appreciation Day. When you see lineworkers in action, I encourage you to join me in thanking them for their dedication and bravery.

**A lineworker's job:** Ranked among the top 10 most dangerous jobs in the United States, a lineworker's responsibilities are far from easy. Working in close proximity to high-voltage power lines, they must perform intricate tasks in all weather conditions, often scaling heights of 40 feet while carrying heavy equipment. Despite the inherent risks and discomfort, they stay unwavering in their commitment to their duty and the members.

And behind every dedicated lineworker is a supportive family who plays an integral role in enabling their loved ones to serve the community. While lineworkers are in the field, sometimes working all night to restore power, their families take care of the home front, providing support and understanding during challenging times.

**The heart of service and dedication:** Becoming a lineworker is not merely a profession. It's a calling that requires years of specialized training, ongoing education and a deep sense of service. It's about leaving the comfort of home to tackle challenging tasks when most are sheltering indoors. This dedication and sense of service to the community define the essence of our lineworkers and their indispensable role in our cooperative.

**Recognizing the team behind the scenes:** While lineworkers are the most visible faces of our cooperative, it's essential to acknowledge the team of highly skilled professionals working tirelessly behind the scenes. From engineers providing invaluable expertise, to member service representatives fielding inquiries and information technology experts safeguarding sensitive data, each member of our cooperative family plays a vital role in ensuring the reliability of our services.

**Expressing gratitude:** To our lineworkers and the entire cooperative family, we extend our deepest appreciation for your tireless dedication and invaluable contributions. Your unwavering commitment to keeping our local service area powered and your willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty do not go unnoticed. We are grateful for your service and sacrifice.

As we celebrate Lineworker Appreciation Day, let's honor our lineworkers for their unwavering commitment to service and sacrifice. Let's express our gratitude not only to them, but also to the entire cooperative family for their efforts in ensuring service reliability. 

# CELEBRATE

## the Power Behind Your Power.

Lineworker Appreciation Day | April 8



## POWERING THE FUTURE: **Luck-of-the-draw scholarships**

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative believes in investing in the future of the students in our service area. This year at the annual meeting, Mor-Gran-Sou Electric will award two \$500 luck-of-the-draw scholarships. All high school seniors who are dependents of members and have not previously been chosen for a cooperative scholarship are eligible.

We ask participants to RSVP and attend the annual meeting with a parent or guardian. Students can RSVP by scanning the QR code with your smart phone camera, visiting our website at <https://morgransou.com/scholarships> or by calling the office at 701-597-3301, 800-750-8212 or 701-663-0297. .



## ENSURING SAFE, RELIABLE POWER: **Co-op continues line patrol**

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative's dedicated line crews are actively patrolling the power lines and poles across our entire service territory. This year's focus has been on the Cannonball, Cedar, Glen Ullin, Grant and Solen substations.

Depending on weather and road conditions, members may see lineworkers patrolling line in a cooperative-marked truck, all-terrain vehicles or snowmobiles.

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric continues to ensure power lines and poles are in working order to prevent unplanned outages and is committed to providing safe, affordable and reliable electric service. Preventative maintenance, including line patrol, is one of many proactive ways we are strengthening our power system. .

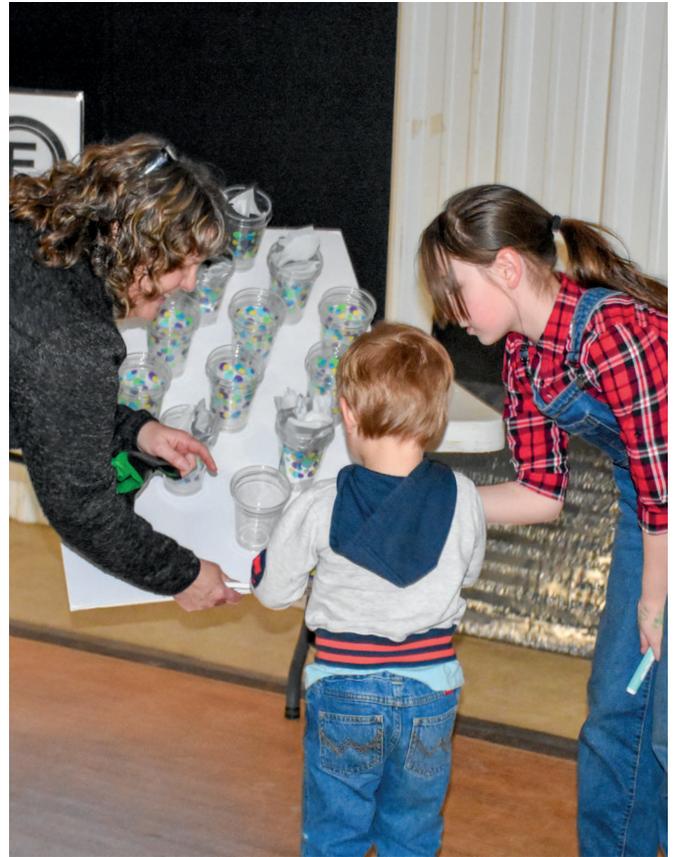
## INVESTING IN MEMBERSHIP: **RDFC grants program announced**

The Rural Development Finance Corporation (RDFC) is a North Dakota nonprofit finance and development corporation whose member-owners are North Dakota electric cooperatives, nine of the North Dakota telecommunications cooperatives and the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives.

Members can apply for RDFC grants through

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric. Grant funds are available for community-owned entities, nonprofits and community-based projects.

Grant applications are now being accepted through Dec. 31. To acquire a grant application or for more information, please call the office at 701-597-3301, 800-750-8212 or 701-663-0297. .



## YOU'RE INVITED: **Mor-Gran-Sou Electric hosts member appreciation events**

Join us April 18 at Lake Tschida's Welcome Center from 5 to 7 p.m. MT for an unforgettable evening dedicated to celebrating the heart of our service area – our valued members. At our upcoming fry bread taco frenzy and bingo event, we hope to express our heartfelt gratitude for your membership. Delight your tastebuds with mouthwatering fry bread tacos and enjoy friendly competition with rounds of bingo.

There will also be the opportunity to visit with our dedicated board of directors,

CEOs and staff.

Your presence at this event is not only appreciated, but essential in highlighting the integral role members play at your electric cooperative. As stewards of our cooperative principles, your active participation and support fuel our mission to provide reliable energy services while fostering a strong sense of community.

We ask you to RSVP by April 11. To RSVP, scan the QR code with your smart phone camera, visit our website at [www.morgransou.com](http://www.morgransou.com) or call the office at 701-597-3301, 800-

750-8212 or 701-663-0297. We eagerly anticipate your presence at this event. 



## SAFETY STARTS WITH ME: Call before you dig

As the weather warms and spring begins to appear, you may be planning your to-do list for the upcoming months. If those projects require digging, don't forget to call 811 before you start. Projects ranging from planting trees, building a house or installing a fence require a call.

"Underground utilities, such as electric, telephone, gas and water lines, can be a shovel thrust away from turning a project into a disaster," says Jason Helgeson, senior engineering technician.

Even simple tasks, such as installing a new mailbox post, can damage utility lines and disrupt service to an entire neighborhood, harm diggers and potentially result in fines and repair costs.

Play it safe by dialing 811 or visiting [www.ndonecall.com](http://www.ndonecall.com) to find out where utility lines are located on your property.

Be prepared to share the following information about the project property to North Dakota One Call:

- Name and contact information
- Proposed digging date and time
- Legal description
- County, city and street address
- Nearest intersecting street
- The owner of the property
- Type of work planned and extent of work and depth

Within a few days, a locator will arrive to designate the approximate location of any underground lines, pipes and cables. These areas will be marked with flags or paint, so you'll know



what's below. That is when the safe digging can begin.

"Never assume the location or depth of underground utility lines," Helgeson says. "There's no need to assume, as the 811 service is free, prevents the inconvenience of having utilities interrupted and can help you avoid serious injury."

For more information about local services, visit [www.ndonecall.com](http://www.ndonecall.com). 

## PLANNING TO BUILD OR UPGRADE? Give us a call

Whether you are looking to build a new structure or make changes to an existing structure, it is important to contact Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative in the early planning stages.

"Each year, we help our members with their construction upgrades and new builds," says Operations Manager Gary Fitterer.

"Projects can range from pasture wells to grain storage, new outbuildings, houses and businesses," Fitterer notes. "For projects of all sizes, it is important to contact your local cooperative."

By doing so, you will be able to confirm the

viability of your project.

"Our engineering department can verify whether we can serve additional load in your area and the availability and cost of equipment and materials," Fitterer says.

Information you will need to share with the cooperative includes the type of upgrade or new build, location, timeline and power requirements.

"If you are unsure of this information, work with an electrician that can contact us," Fitterer says.

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric wants to ensure your building project or upgrade goes as smoothly as possible, so it is important to call in the early stages of planning. 



## MOR-GRAN-SOU ELECTRIC BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS Jan. 24

The January meeting of the board of directors of Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative was held on Jan. 24 at the Mandan Service Center in Mandan. Chair Steve Tomac called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. Executive Assistant Connie Hill was designated as the recording secretary. A quorum was present. Also present were Mor-Gran-Sou Electric co-General Managers/CEOs Travis Kupper and Jason Bentz, Chief Financial Officer Alex Craigmile, Chief Information Officer Charlie Dunbar, Interim General Counsel Andrew Fergel, Operations Manager Gary Fitterer and Member Services Manager Julie Armijo. The meeting commenced with the Pledge of Allegiance and invocation led by Steve Tomac.

**Consent agenda:** There were proposed additions to the consent agenda. The consent agenda was approved as presented.

**Strategic/action:** Bentz and Kupper presented the co-general managers' report, which included updates about recent storms, rate changes and various meetings attended. They also

reviewed the Basin Electric Power Cooperative, 3C Construction and West Dakota Utility Services updates.

**Action items:** The board appointed a National Rural Electric Cooperative Association voting delegate and reviewed the 2024 mutual aid agreement.

**Department reports:** Craigmile reviewed the financial report for December 2023. Fitterer presented an operations report, which included what the line crews are working on and the December ice storm. Armijo provided a report and reviewed upcoming events and meeting dates. Dunbar reported on cyber training for the board. Fergel provided a report and updated the board on his work with the policy review group.

The meeting concluded with the adjournment and Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Secretary-Treasurer Pam Geiger certified the accuracy of the minutes.

**Next meeting date:** The next board meeting is set for 10 a.m. CT Feb. 28 at the Mandan Service Center.

# SAVE THE DATE

## Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Annual Meeting

### June 13

Mandan Service Center  
2719 34th St. NW, Mandan



MOR-GRAN-SOU  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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Email us: info@morgransou.com  
UNDERGROUND LINE LOCATES  
800-795-0555 OR 811

### OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

Chair.....Steve Tomac  
Vice Chair.....Chad Harrison  
Secretary-Treasurer..... Pam Geiger  
Directors.....Mark Doll, Rodney Froelich,  
Bob J. Leingang, Ryan Petrick,  
Kathy Tokach, Casey Wells

### MANAGEMENT

Co-GM/CEO .....Travis Kupper  
Co-GM/CEO ..... Jason Bentz

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

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