



**MOR-GRAN-SOU**  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Serving Morton, Grant and Sioux counties

## THIS ISSUE:

- Overhead vs. underground
- Power supplier report
- Enjoy the state fair
- A night at the ballpark

**JULY**  
**2024**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

## Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative members gather in Mandan for the annual meeting

*Mor-Gran-Sou Electric members enjoyed a complimentary meal prepared by the Mandan Rural Fire Department and Border States Electric.*







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*Mor-Gran-Sou Electric members gathered to elect board directors at the annual meeting in Mandan.*

## Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative members gather for annual meeting


Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative members gathered on a new date at a new location for the cooperative's annual meeting. Members gathered June 13 in Mandan at Mor-Gran-Sou Electric's Mandan Service Center. Before the business meeting, members enjoyed a complimentary meal, various activities and booths. Entertainment included The Bluestems from Elgin and the Bismarck Larks mascots.

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Chairman Steve Tomac welcomed and thanked members for attending the annual meeting. The membership voted to fill the board positions with Steve Tomac, St. Anthony, At-Large; Kathy Tokach, St. Anthony, Morton County; and Chad Harrison, Fort Yates, Sioux County.

Members listened to cooperative updates from co-managers, Travis Kupper and Jason Bentz

as well as chief financial officer Alex Craigmile. Manager of operations, Gary Fitterer and member service manager, Julie Armijo addressed the membership as well with various updates. The 2023 Charitable Foundation report was also provided.

Students were recognized for receiving scholarships, and the Youth Tour winner was also acknowledged. Mor-Gran-Sou Electric also awarded luck-of-the-draw scholarships to: Logan Miller, Elizabeth Taylor, Stran Ressler, and Lane Teddick.

The board of directors, co-general managers and staff at Mor-Gran-Sou Electric wish to thank our members for participating in the annual meeting of the membership and look forward to meeting your electrical needs in the future. 

## MANAGER'S MESSAGE:

# Overhead and underground lines



Travis Kupper

When it comes to the transmission and distribution of electricity, we often get questions about the two primary methods: overhead power lines and underground power lines. Each method has its own set of advantages and disadvantages, which influence cost, reliability, aesthetics and environmental impact. Let's

delve into the differences between overhead and underground power lines to better understand their respective strengths and limitations.

## Overhead power lines

### Pros

- **Cost-effectiveness:** One of the most significant advantages of overhead power lines is their lower initial installation cost compared to underground lines. The materials used for overhead lines, such as poles, conductors and insulators, are typically less expensive than those required for underground installation.
- **Accessibility and maintenance:** Overhead power lines are more accessible for maintenance and repairs, as they are visible and easily reachable. This accessibility translates to faster response times and lower maintenance costs, contributing to overall reliability.
- **Scalability:** Overhead power lines offer greater flexibility for expansion and upgrades. Additional wires can be added to existing poles or new poles can be erected without the need for extensive excavation work, making it easier to accommodate growing energy demands.

### Cons

- **Susceptibility to weather:** Overhead power lines are exposed to the elements and are susceptible to damage from severe weather events, such as storms, high winds and lightning strikes. This vulnerability can lead to power outages and safety hazards for both utility workers and the public.
- **Height clearance concerns:** Despite their visibility, overhead power lines pose a risk of accidental contact, particularly when moving tall equipment or large machinery. Farmers must remain vigilant and adhere to recommended height clearance guidelines to avoid striking

power lines, which can result in serious injury, equipment damage and power outages.

## Underground power lines


### Pros

- **Enhanced reliability:** Underground power lines are less susceptible to weather-related outages and external interference, as they are protected from elements, such as wind, ice and falling debris.

### Cons

- **Higher initial cost:** The primary drawback of underground power lines is their significantly higher upfront installation cost compared to overhead lines. Excavation, trenching and cable-laying processes are labor-intensive and require specialized equipment, increasing project expenses.
- **Limited accessibility for maintenance:** Underground power lines are more challenging to access for maintenance and repairs, as they are buried beneath the ground. Locating and accessing faults or damaged cables can be time-consuming and costly, leading to longer outage durations and increased operational challenges.
- **Technical challenges:** Underground power lines are subject to technical limitations, such as heat dissipation, cable capacity and voltage regulation. These factors can impact system performance and may require additional engineering considerations during design and installation.

The choice between overhead and underground power lines involves weighing various factors, such as cost and reliability. While overhead lines offer cost-effectiveness and scalability, underground lines provide enhanced reliability, aesthetic improvement and reduced environmental impact.

Ultimately, the selection of the most suitable transmission and distribution method depends on the specific requirements and priorities of each project, community or cooperative. By carefully evaluating these factors and considering long-term implications, stakeholders can make informed decisions to ensure the efficient and sustainable delivery of electricity for generations to come. 





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SAFETY STARTS WITH ME:

## Protecting members against utility scams

In today's interconnected world, millions of Americans face the persistent threat of utility scams, which manifest through various channels, such as phone calls, emails and text messages. Remaining vigilant against these evolving tactics is crucial for safeguarding oneself and one's community from financial harm and identity theft.

"Staying informed and cautious is the best defense against utility scams," says Patty Kluge, member services representative II. Here is how you can be better prepared:

- **Awareness is key:** Stay updated on the latest scam reports from local and national news outlets and utility companies to recognize potential threats.
- **Watch for red flags:** Be wary of common scam tactics, such as overpayment tricks and smishing (SMS phishing) attempts and question any suspicious communications.
- **Take control:** Take time to assess the situation, being suspicious of unusual requests, and verify the legitimacy of any communication with the utility company directly.

"If the request seems strange or urgent, you're likely being targeted by a scammer," Kluge says. "If someone calls you on behalf of Mor-Gran-Sou Electric and it sounds like a scam, hang up and call the office immediately."

As we navigate the digital landscape, it's imperative to remain vigilant and proactive in protecting ourselves and our communities from



utility scams. By staying informed, exercising caution and reporting suspicious activities, we can collectively work toward a safer environment, shielding our friends and neighbors from falling victim to fraudulent schemes.

## HAVEN'T CASHED YOUR CAPITAL CREDIT CHECK?



## PLEASE CALL THE OFFICE BEFORE DOING SO!

A FULL LIST OF UNCLAIMED CAPITAL CREDITS WILL BE PUBLISHED IN THE AUGUST ISSUE OF NORTH DAKOTA LIVING.



# Message from Basin Electric Power Cooperative

BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER AND GENERAL MANAGER TODD BRICKHOUSE AND BOARD PRESIDENT WAYNE PELTIER

***Editor's note: Basin Electric Power Cooperative supplies much of the power distributed to Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative members throughout the tri-county area. We asked Todd Brickhouse and Wayne Peltier to update our members on what is happening at Basin Electric.***

In 2023, Basin Electric Power Cooperative continued to provide reliable and affordable power to our members. We understand the quality of life of our members depends on our efforts, and we value the trust our members place in us to provide electric service.

Today's reliability and affordability is the result of careful planning and prudent investments that occurred years and even decades ago. We are striving to continue this tradition of stewardship. Over the next five years, we expect to invest as much as \$4 billion in our utility system. This is in addition to the \$470 million we invested in 2023, which was our highest single year of capital expenditures since 2015.

These investments are required due to the robust growth of Basin Electric's members. In 2023, Basin Electric's megawatt-hour sales to members increased 7.5%, which is on top of 7.8% growth in 2022. We expect strong growth to continue over the next decade, driven by healthy agricultural, petroleum and technology sectors of the economy.

Growth presents both opportunities and risks. The biggest opportunity is for our members to experience higher standards of living from economic growth. With respect to risks, many of these loads can materialize faster than Basin Electric can build generation, which impacts both reliability and affordability. To mitigate some of the risks, we work with our members throughout the year to develop innovative rates for cryptocurrency and large loads.

Our 2023 consolidated margins were consistent with our targeted margin of \$150 million, although we achieved these margins by utilizing a portion of our rate stability fund. Our utility margins were well above what was budgeted. However, results at Dakota Gasification Company, our for-profit subsidiary, were below budget due to weak commodity prices and lower-than-budgeted plant capacity factors.


Dakota Gasification's results will always be impacted by commodity prices, but we made



**Wayne Peltier and Todd Brickhouse**

great progress toward de-risking a portion of this volatility in 2023. By the end of the year, construction related to Dakota Gasification's carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) sequestration project was largely complete, and CO<sub>2</sub> sequestration commenced in mid-February 2024.

During 2023, our senior leadership team and board updated Basin Electric's strategic plan. This included a new mission statement: We are a safe, environmentally responsible cooperative that provides reliable, affordable power, products and services to sustain the quality of life for our member-owners across rural America. This mission statement provides us with a unifying sense of purpose and is supported by eight strategic objectives designed to increase the value we provide to our members. While achieving all of our strategic objectives is important, we put particular emphasis on safety, reliability and affordability by making them cooperative-wide goals.

In closing, we offer our thanks to our members and stakeholders for your trust and support. 



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## KX/Co-op Day at the North Dakota State Fair

**Wednesday, July 24**  
**10 a.m. - 3 p.m.**

Drawings for cash & prizes throughout the day

Sponsored by:

- North Dakota Coordinating Council of Cooperatives (NDCCC)
- KX News
- North Dakota State Fair

Discounts available by calling

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative:

- \$1 off daily admission
- \$5 off unlimited ride wristband
- \$1 off Ranch Rodeo


**Free breakfast 7:30 - 9:30 a.m.**  
**Ice cream social 1:30 - 2:30 p.m.**

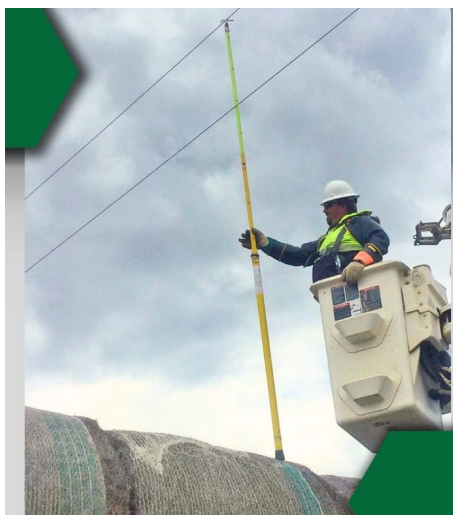
## Mark your calendar for Co-op Day at the State Fair!

Experience KX/Co-op Day at the N.D. State Fair on July 24 in Minot. As a valued member, we are pleased to extend exclusive benefits to enhance your experience.

By attending the North Dakota State Fair on July 24, you gain access to a special offer on gate admission, where you can save \$1 off the regular price. Additionally, maximize the thrills of the carnival rides with a \$5 discount on daily unlimited-ride wristbands and \$1 off admission to the ranch rodeo.

You're also invited to join us for a free pancake breakfast from 7:30 to 9:30 a.m. and ice cream social under the KX/Co-op tent from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.

To secure your tickets and take advantage of these offers, simply reach out to our dedicated team at the office. Give us a call today at 701-597-3301, 701-663-0297 or 1-800-750-8212 and allow us to facilitate a memorable experience for you at the N.D. State Fair. 



## SAFETY TIP

**DON'T STACK HAY BALES  
UNDER POWER LINES. STAY 10  
FEET CLEAR OF POWER LINES.**





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BISMARCK LARKS

# GROUP OUTING

TOUCHSTONE ENERGY MEMBER APPRECIATION DAY



## JOIN US FOR A NIGHT OUT AT THE BALLPARK

**DATE:** MONDAY, JULY 8TH

**TIME:** 6:35 PM (GATES OPEN AT 5:35 PM)

**LOCATION:** BISMARCK MUNICIPAL BALLPARK



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative  
*The power of human connections®*

### TICKET OPTIONS

Ticket options are on a first come, first serve basis.  
Secure your ticket today!



BLEACHER  
SEAT

+



LARKS HAT

**YOUR TICKET IS ONLY \$5 AS  
A THANK YOU FOR BEING A  
TOUCHSTONE MEMBER!**

### HOW TO PURCHASE TICKETS

Scan the QR code to the right  
to claim your \$5 ticket!



### MONDAY, JULY 8TH

Get ready to hit the jackpot with your group outing.  
Come out to the Larks game and enjoy a night of  
baseball, entertainment and FUN, courtesy of  
Touchstone Energy Cooperative!

The Larks will host the Badlands Big Sticks on July  
8th in a brand new rivalry... This game will be  
jammed packed with so much FUN, you won't want  
to miss it.

### YOUR VIEW!



(701) 557 - 7600 | LARKSBASEBALL.COM | 201 W FRONT AVE. BISMARCK, ND



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## MOR-GRAN-SOU ELECTRIC BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS May 1

The board of directors meeting of Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative was held on May 1 at the Mandan Service Center in Mandan. Chair Steve Tomac called the meeting to order at 9:31 a.m. 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, Manager of Operations Gary Fitterer, Member Services Manager Julie Armijo, Interim General Counsel Andrew Fergel, Executive Assistant Connie Hill and Member Support Manager Anne Hansen.

**Consent agenda:** The consent agenda was approved as presented.

**Strategic/action:** Bentz and Kupper presented the co-general managers' report, which included updates on the Basin Electric Power Cooperative district managers meeting, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Legislative Conference, program and grant applications. Basin Electric's CEO report, West Dakota Utility Services and 3C Construction updates were available for review.


**Action items:** Action items were resolved.

**Department reports:** Craigmile provided a financial report. Fitterer reviewed the operations report with the board, which included seasonal help interviews. Armijo reviewed her member service report with the board, which included a 2023 annual report and annual meeting details. Chief Information Officer Charlie Dunbar provided a written report for the board. Fergel provided a general counsel report on projects.

**Discussion/general information:** Hansen presented the board with Mor-Gran-Sou Electric's 2024 member survey results. The board discussed details of the upcoming Basin Electric annual meeting.

**Executive session:** The board entered an executive session.

The meeting concluded with the adjournment. Secretary-Treasurer Pam Geiger certified the accuracy of the minutes.

**Next meeting date:** The next meeting is at 9:30 a.m. July 31 in Mandan. 



## Operation Round Up application deadline is approaching, September 13.

Contact the Mor-Gran-Sou Electric office or  
visit [morgransou.com](http://morgransou.com) for more information.



MOR-GRAN-SOU  
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Email us: [info@morgransou.com](mailto: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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