



MOR-GRAN-SOU ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Serving Morton, Grant and Sioux counties

THIS ISSUE:

- Scholarships awarded
- Make your voice heard
- Poster contest winners
- Tree trimming

MAY
2024

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

EMPOWERING RURAL YOUTH: Blend selected for Youth Tour

BY ISABELLA FILIPI



Lucy Blend

Each year, Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative looks forward to announcing the high school sophomore or junior who has been selected to attend the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C. This opportunity provides these blossoming students with the chance to explore our nation's capital and build relationships with fellow

students from across the United States.

Sen. Lyndon Johnson inspired the Youth Tour when he addressed the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Annual Meeting in 1957. He envisioned the trip as a chance to broaden the horizons of high school students living in rural areas and further educate them about America's system of government.

Now, this weeklong trip awards students with firsthand exposure to some of the best historical monuments in Washington, D.C., and a better understanding of the structure and importance of electric cooperatives, all while establishing new and lasting friendships.

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric is proud to sponsor one of the 1,800 participating students from across rural America on this all-expense-paid trip annually.

Congratulations to Lucy Blend for being named the Youth Tour winner this year for Mor-Gran-Sou Electric. Read her winning essay here and on Mor-Gran-Sou's Electric's website. A feature story in the August issue of *North Dakota Living* will delve into her unforgettable journey.

Meet Lucy

Blend, the daughter of Mor-Gran-Sou Electric members, Justin and Jessica Blend, is a homeschooled high school junior from New Salem. She has several hobbies, but she especially loves artistic, hands-on projects, such as whittling and sketching. This is not only Lucy's first trip to Washington, D.C., but it is her first time traveling

by airplane. Lucy looks forward to seeing any sites related to President Calvin Coolidge, her favorite president who was an inspiration for her essay.

"I am excited to learn more about our history, because I really started to love history once I started digging into it. It is really by God's sovereignty that I get to go on this trip," she says.

Lucy's mom first told her about the Youth Tour, and the thought of visiting our nation's capital compelled her to apply. Lucy's passion for economics sparked the theme of her essay.

"Learning about the 1920s, one of the most prosperous times, and learning about what our government did really interested me. The main reason I wrote my essay as a journal entry is because lots of our American history that we know was written down in journals, and that is why we have that information," she says.

Lucy's winning essay

History is a series of events that have happened in the past. We cannot change our past, nor should we be stuck in it. The only beneficial thing we can do is learn from our history. We can learn from stories passed on to each generation, from our history books or from journals written by those who lived long ago. If I had the chance to exist in our history, I would keep a journal full of the events I've lived through and the things I've done in my life. I can imagine my older self writing down my life story, and the lessons I've learned in a journal entry such as this one.

Jan. 19, 1960

Calvin Coolidge once said, "Unless the people through unified action, arise and take charge of their government they will find that their government has taken charge of them." This statement is the epitome of my life. When I was the age of 13, our country was in an economic crisis. The Depression of 1920 wreaked havoc on the lives of our people. During this time, the stock market crashed, taxes escalated from virtually nothing to a

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height of 77%. Friends and family were bedridden as the Spanish flu was making its deliveries to death's door. People loathed the fact of having to inform their families they lost their jobs, and for some, their homes.

My own family lost our farm. As a result, we needed to move to New York so our father could get a job from Uncle Tobias. Despite this, the Depression didn't last as long as we expected. By the next summer, the economy was stabilizing itself, product production was back on track and the Spanish flu was scarce. I have great inclination the reason for this is the government didn't and couldn't do anything. It left our country in the state of *laissez-faire* by accident. With the government unable to step in, it gave the people the incentives to stabilize themselves, and this is what made the Depression short-lived. I've stored this knowledge in the subconscious part of my thoughts, unsuspecting how useful it will become when dealing with problems in the future.

After the Depression of 1920, the people of America had a season of saturnalia, "The Roaring Twenties" people were calling it. Under the guidance of President Coolidge, our country was in prosperity. His government approach was hands-off, and he did so very little that he had time to sleep until 11 a.m. and still took naps every day. I don't know about you, but I wouldn't mind being president if I could sleep all day. But while he was napping, I was growing my influence on Wall Street. From the age of 12 to the age of 20, I've realized my passion for economics and the role investing has in it. So, I worked hard learning everything about all things that impact the market. I took the jobs no one wanted, so I could learn more and invest more.

By the age of 21, I'd made a name for myself, and everyone on Wall Street knew Lucy Blindt as a person to reckon with, since I knew how the markets would perform as well as I knew the back of my hand. If I invested in railroads, the next day everyone would want their own share in railroads. If I sold, they would sell. I could make or break a business with just one action. January 1929 just started with an ominous feeling. It was nothing big, but it started with little things, a steady decline in vehicle and appliance sales, and people were buying more on credit, especially when it came to stocks.


I knew, if not used wisely, credit would become damaging. If you couldn't pay it back, whatever you had as collateral was taken from you. The collateral to support a stock loan was the stock itself. If the stock didn't seem to perform well, the bankers would call in the loan so they could liquidate the stock and have some sort of security. On the other hand, the consumer that took out the

loan still had to pay it back, even though their stock was liquidated. This would leave them in a spot of insecurity and their homes could possibly be taken from them.

If the market continued this downward trail, the possibility of many people losing security was high. This, I understood, would cripple the economy. So, I devised a plan. I saved most of my paychecks, and I liquidated a few of my big stock shares to prepare for the crisis. On Oct. 22, 1929, when the market seemed it would fall any day, I started buying shares. I bought shares of everything, small businesses, big ones, new ones and dinosaurs. A part of almost every stock holding company was in my possession. I believe Oct. 24 was the day I had anticipated. The Dow's average had fallen 11% before midday, despite the fact I continued to purchase, giving hope to the others. As I stated before, if I bought, everyone else would buy. I continued to buy until Nov. 2, when I finally thought the coast was clear. From this continuous act of buying stocks, I believe the economy was saved that day from a crisis that could have left the country in poverty.

I also believe if I didn't step in when I did, the government would have tried to salvage the aftermath and the next couple years of drought in the 1930s would have escalated to a point that would have scared our country much, much worse than just a famine. Though, from what we have seen from the Depression of 1920, we know the people can do a far greater job of fixing their problems than what the government could ever provide for us. The government cannot become our escape when problems arise, and we must stick through and figure it out ourselves and help our neighbor along the way. So, for the people who are reading this, do you think the future of America has a chance?

Farewell for now,
Lucy Blindt

My life back then would have been like a rollercoaster ride. Starting with the Depression of 1920, I would have learned just how qualified the people were to find a solution for themselves without the help of the government. Bringing that lesson with me as I learned about economy and the stock market, I would have helped relieve the nation from the devastating stock market crash of 1929 whose effects fueled the flames of the Great Depression. Instead, it could have become known as the "Famine of the 1930s," with no "Great" in front of it. This is what I would have contributed to our history if I had the chance. Lastly, I ask do you think the future of America has a chance? 

EMPOWERING MINDS: Co-op awards high school scholarships

Each year, Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative awards outstanding high school seniors with scholarships toward their post-secondary education. This is just one of the many ways Mor-Gran-Sou Electric embodies the commitment to giving back to our cooperative family and service area.

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric recognizes the personal and academic achievements of these students are made possible by their hard work, sacrifices and dedication to their goals. We believe these accomplishments deserve to be commended and encouraged.

Basin Electric/ Mor-Gran-Sou Electric scholarship

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric is pleased to announce the winner of the \$1,000 Basin Electric Power Cooperative/ Mor-Gran-Sou Electric scholarship award, **Elijah Gietzen** of Glen Ullin. He plans to attend North Dakota State University (NDSU) in pursuit of a degree in chemistry. Elijah's parents are Peter and Cindy Gietzen.

3C Construction/WDUS Scholarship

Two \$500 scholarships were made available on behalf of West Dakota Utility Services (WDUS) and 3C Construction to applicants who plan to attend a certified vocational or technical school. **Braden Schlatter** of Glen Ullin was awarded the WDUS scholarship. He plans to attend North Dakota State College of Science in pursuit of a degree in diesel technology. Braden's parents are Terry and Torri Schlatter.

No applications were received for the 3C Construction scholarship.

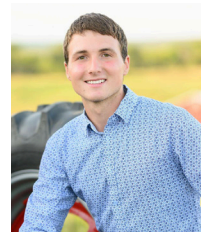
High school scholarships

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric offered one \$500 scholarship to a graduating senior from each of the high schools within our service area. The students receiving \$500 in the fall of 2024 are:

- *Elgin-New Leipzig Public School* – **Ameerah Rosin** plans to attend Dickinson State University (DSU) in pursuit of a degree in nursing. Parents/members are Andy and Cassie Rosin.
- *Flasher Public School* – **Javin Friesz** plans to attend DSU in pursuit of a degree in engineering. Parents/members are Jade and Sonya Friesz.
- *Hebron Public School* – **Chezney Erickson** plans to attend Bismarck State College in pursuit of a degree in nursing. Parents/members are RaeAnn and Jason Erickson.



Gietzen



Schlatter



Rosin



Friesz



Erickson



Landeis



Olin




Plenty Chief



Hatlestad

- *Mandan Public School* – **Ellie Landeis** plans to attend NDSU in pursuit of a degree in psychology. Parents/members are Sheldon and Karri Landeis.
- *New Salem-Almont Public School* – **Grace Olin** plans to attend NDSU in pursuit of an agribusiness degree. Parents/members are Toby and Kimberly Olin.
- *Solen Public School* – **Leora Plenty Chief** plans to attend Northern State University. Parent/member is Deborah Plenty Chief.
- *Home school or outside service territory* – **Edyth Hatlestad** plans to attend the University of St. Thomas in pursuit of a business degree. Parents/members are Melissa and D.J. Hatlestad.
- No applicants were received from Glen Ullin Public School, Selfridge Public School or Standing Rock Community/Fort Yates Public School.

Two \$500 Luck-of-the-Draw Scholarships awards will also be drawn during Mor-Gran-Sou Electric's Annual Meeting June 13 in Mandan. 

MANAGER'S MESSAGE:

Make your voice heard at the 2024 Annual Meeting



Travis Kupper

At Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative we are excited to extend an invitation to our upcoming Annual Meeting, a cornerstone event that highlights the essence of our cooperative model and the impact of member engagement on our community. Each year, we look forward to Mor-Gran-Sou Electric's Annual Meeting. You, the members we serve,

always bring value to the discussion, and I know our cooperative team is energized by these interactions.

We are not just an ordinary utility company. We are a cooperative deeply rooted in serving our members and the communities we call home. Our core purpose is to provide safe, reliable and affordable electric service, but our mission goes beyond electricity.

We are driven by a commitment to our members. If you've never attended the Annual Meeting, I'd encourage you to participate. Why? Because input from members like you matters and helps drive the direction of the cooperative. At the Annual Meeting, we report on current initiatives and discuss the financial health and priorities for the coming years. And, equally important, this is an opportunity for Mor-Gran-Sou Electric to hear from you.

You have the power

This is also a time to vote for new directors who will represent you and our community's interests on the cooperative's board. As a member of Mor-Gran-Sou Electric, you have the power to help shape our community's energy future.

Electric cooperatives are democratically controlled by the members we serve, which means you have a say in who governs our cooperative. By voting in the annual director election, you can select the leaders who will make important decisions about the future of the cooperative and our local energy needs.

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric's Board of Directors includes community-minded individuals with different skillsets. We rely on them to help us make more informed decisions on long-term priorities and investments. Mor-Gran-Sou Electric has nine directors who live in the cooperative's service area. We consider them the eyes and ears of the community, because they provide their unique perspective on various local issues.

2024 candidates:

The following Mor-Gran-Sou Electric members are candidates for the 2024 director election. The names are listed in the order they will appear on the ballot.

At-Large Area:

Steve Tomac, St. Anthony

Morton County:

Jonathan Marohl, Solen

Kathy Tokach, St. Anthony


Sioux County:

Chad Harrison, Fort Yates

For further information on the candidates, you can view their video on our website: www.morgransou.com.

We want to make voting as convenient as possible for our members, so we offer a variety of ways for you to participate. We hope you'll join us at the Annual Meeting on June 13 where you can cast your vote in person. If you're unable to attend, you can vote online or by mail.

If you've never been to an Annual Meeting or it's been a while, we invite you to stop by. There will be fun for the whole family. Join us for food, fun, door prizes and more. All members who attend the event will receive an appreciation gift.

Your Mor-Gran-Sou Electric team will be ready to answer any energy-related questions you may have, such as ways to manage your home energy use. We look forward to seeing you at the Annual Meeting at 5 p.m. Thursday, June 13, at our Mandan Service Center. 





Planning on attending the Annual Meeting in Mandan? We kindly ask you RSVP by calling the office or scanning the QR code below.



HOW TO VOTE:

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric's Annual Meeting

It's that time of year again! Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative is gearing up for the 2024 Annual Meeting. Check out our new date and new location – June 13 in Mandan at our Mandan Service Center.

At this year's Annual Meeting, not only will you have a blast (and maybe win a prize!), but you will feel good knowing you had a voice in an important decision that impacts one of our most vital resources, electricity.

Ways to vote

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric will continue to offer the opportunity to vote by mail-in ballot, online

or in person at the Annual Meeting. If a member casts a timely vote prior to the meeting by mail or online, the member will not receive a ballot at the Annual Meeting.

Online or electronic voting will be offered through SmartHub. For those of you who have not used SmartHub and wish to use this free resource, please visit www.morgransou.com and click on SmartHub and login to register to use SmartHub.

Members will receive a 2023 annual report packet around mid-May with voting instructions for all three options. Please watch for it and vote by mail or online, unless you know you will be attending the Annual Meeting.

Discounts offered for Medora vacation

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative is able to offer its members a discount by being a Touchstone Energy® member. Simply call 1-800-MEDORA-1 and give the discount code of "TOUCH2024" for a 15% discount on all of the following during any night of the season.

- Medora Musical
- Pitchfork steak fondue
- Bully Pulpit Golf Course
- Gospel Bruch tickets
- Old Town Theater shows

LODGING AT ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Elkhorn Quarters
- Badlands Motel
- Rough Riders Hotel

The code is good for reservations over the phone, website or in person. A green fees discount will be applied at check-in for a tee time at the golf course.





MOR-GRAN-SOU
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Preschool to kindergarten



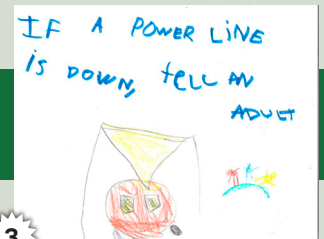
1

Bridget Petersen



2

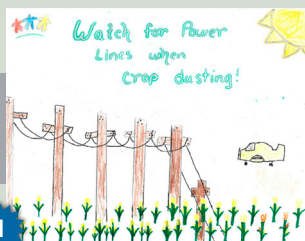
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3

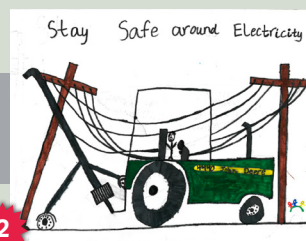
Ellis Heinle

Grades 1-3



1

Bernard Petersen



2

Tate Eckroth



3

Lillian Blend

Grades 4-6



1

Callie Deichert



2

Jaeger Boldt



3

Harper Meyer

Annual poster contest winners announced

Children in the Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative area grabbed their art supplies and blew us away with how they displayed staying safe at home or on the farm when around electricity. Over 100 posters were submitted.

"Each year, we are in awe of the artistic abilities and thoughtfulness of the posters submitted by

some of our youngest members," said Member Services Representative II, Beth Kroh. "Thank you to everyone who submitted theirs, and congratulations to those who were awarded."

The posters were judged by Mor-Gran-Sou Electric employees, and the winners include:

Preschool to kindergarten

First – Bridget Petersen, child of Andrew and Hayle Petersen, Mandan

Second – Emerentiana Petersen, child of Andrew and Hayle Petersen, Mandan

Third – Ellis Heinle, child of Matt and April Heinle, Mandan

First to third grade

First – Bernard Petersen, child of Andrew and Hayle Petersen, Mandan

Second – Tate Eckroth, child of Jill and Travis Eckroth, Flasher

Third – Lillian Blend, child of Jessica and Justin Blend, New Salem

Fourth to sixth grade

First – Callie Deichert, child of Corey and Michelle Deichert, Raleigh

Second – Jaeger Boldt, child of C.J. Boldt and Heidi Ostrem, Flasher

Third – Harper Meyer, child of Joshua and TaSheena Meyer, Flasher

SAFETY STARTS WITH ME: Tree trimming

Overgrown trees and branches pose a significant risk to the reliability of our power supply and can often result in unplanned outages. Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative strives to balance maintaining natural beauty with ensuring a reliable power supply. Through clearing of power lines in rights of way, our proactive vegetation management serves to safeguard safety, reliability and affordability for our cooperative members.

Safety

Overgrown vegetation and trees present a significant risk to power lines. If trees are touching power lines in our members' yards, they can pose grave danger to families. For instance, if children have access to these trees, they may inadvertently enter a danger zone by climbing them. This situation can be very dangerous, because electricity can arc or jump from a power line to nearby conductors like trees, heightening the risk of accidents and injuries.

Reliability

Of course, one of the biggest benefits of a smart vegetation management program is reliability. Strategic tree trimming reduces the frequency of downed lines causing power outages. Generally, healthy trees don't fall on power lines, and clear lines don't cause problems. Proactive trimming and pruning keep lines clear to promote reliability.

"At Mor-Gran-Sou Electric, we take a proactive approach to tree trimming, which also helps us diminish the chances of fallen branches or trees during severe weather events that make it more complicated and dangerous for lineworkers to restore power," said Tony Stegmiller, warehouse technician.

Affordability

Mor-Gran-Sou Electric is a not-for-profit cooperative, which means we strive to control our costs to keep our rates affordable. This extends to our approach to vegetation management. If trees grow too close to power lines, the potential for expensive repairs also increases. Effective tree trimming and other vegetation management efforts keep costs lower for everyone.



Here is what YOU can do

There are ways you can help Mor-Gran-Sou Electric limit tree trimming.

By planting trees in the right place from the start based on their expected height, you can help reduce the need to trim trees near overhead power lines. If you're planting shrubs, bushes or other vegetation near transformers, remember to plant at least 4 feet away from the transformer sides and at least 10 feet away from the transformer door.

Our community is a special place. We appreciate the beauty trees afford, but we also know our community depends on us to provide reliable energy. If you spot an overgrown tree or branch dangerously close to power lines, let us know by calling us at 701-597-3301, 800-750-8212 or 701-663-0297.

Through vegetation management, we are better able to keep the power lines clear, prepare for future weather events and help ensure reliability. 



MOR-GRAN-SOU
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MOR-GRAN-SOU ELECTRIC BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS Feb. 28

The Board of Directors meeting of Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative was held on Feb. 28 at the Mandan Service Center in Mandan. Chair Steve Tomac called the meeting to order at 10 a.m. CT. A quorum was present. Also present were Mor-Gran-Sou Electric's 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 and Administrative Assistant Samantha Fischer.

Consent agenda: There were a few proposed amendments to the consent agenda. The board approved the agenda as amended.

Strategic/action: Bentz and Kupper presented the co-general managers' report, which included updates about a substation request, the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives Annual Meeting, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) International Program, the North Dakota winter managers meeting, Basin Electric Power Cooperative managers meeting and Southwest Power Pool. The Basin Electric CEO, West Dakota Utility Services and 3C Construction updates were available for review.

Action items: The wildfire mitigation plan was reviewed. Bentz provided information on the Cooperative Family Fund and the NRECA International Fund.

Department reports: Craigmile reviewed the

financial report. Fitterer presented the operations report. Armijo provided member service updates. A motion was made, seconded and carried that the board accept the 2024 Nominating Committee's list of board of director candidates to be included on the 2024 ballot. Fergel provided the general counsel report.

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

Next meeting date: The next meeting is at 9:30 a.m. CT May 29 at the Mandan Service Center. 

LUCK-OF-THE-DRAW SCHOLARSHIPS

TWO \$500 scholarships will be awarded at the Annual Meeting on June 13 in Mandan. For more information and to RSVP visit our website or scan the QR code.



MOR-GRAN-SOU
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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/CEOTravis Kupper
Co-GM/CEOJason Bentz

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