



MOR-GRAN-SOU ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE INC.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

# CURRENT

Serving Morton, Grant and Sioux counties

FEBRUARY 2015

## NEWS



## The Heart River Church

*The Heart River Church closed its doors to the Morton County community in the 1950s, but it lives on in the hearts of neighbors and friends who remember this spiritual place of historical significance. In this month's local pages, learn the history of the Heart River Church, and read the memories of some families who treasured the activities, food and fellowship.*

PHOTO BY CARMEN DEVNEY

## In this issue:

- Line crews patrol service area
- Consider serving as a board director!
- Bylaw/resolution meeting set
- Employees earn recognition
- Meeting minutes ... and much more!



*Precious years of memories / Oh, what joy they bring to me / How I long once more to be / With my friends at the old country church. — written by J.D. Sumner and James W. Vaughn*

## Remembering the food and fellowship found at the “Old Country Church”

In the Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative December local pages of *North Dakota Living*, we featured a pristine photo of an “Old Country Church.” Carol Larson Ford, now of Greeley, Colo., owns the land the Heart River Church is seated on. She graciously allowed us to enter what is now private property, and tour the church and take some photos. In January she wrote to us and said, “You certainly captured a pleasant view of our Old Country Church! ... That photo was the perfect tribute, and it brought back fond memories and smiles to all readers who enjoyed its various activities.”

Carol was right! We received several calls and emails from people in the community, stating they remembered the church and wanted to learn more. So we decided to share the church’s history and publish some photos that capture the beauty and spiritual presence of the place.

“My sister and I see our little country church as a landmark that continues to remind us of the love, strength and fellowship among our families, friends and neighbors in our Heart River community,” she wrote.

We thank Carol for helping people to remember the friendship and faith of the Heart River Church.

### **The realization of prayers and hopes**

*Shared by church neighbor Kathleen Risch; history written by Freida Larson, Carol’s mother.*

The very First Lutheran Church in Mandan was begun in 1891. It separated in 1907 to form the Stone Church with six members and the Heart River Church with 15 members.

A group met with a number of ladies to consider becoming a branch of the Mandan Lutheran Ladies Aid. Others soon joined this small group,

which later became known as the Heart River Circle, and they became active in sewing and fancy work sales, picnics and socials to raise the necessary money to build.

Plans for building the Heart River Church were laid in 1911. A tract of land, centrally located near the Heart River, was donated by Axel Larson.

The building was completed in 1912 at a cost of \$1,100. The labor was almost entirely volunteered by the men. The altar, communion silver, pews, furnace, baptismal font and other furnishings were installed as funds provided. The building of the church was the realization of their prayers and hopes.

The church was dedicated with Pastors Larson, Thorpe and Belsheim officiating. They served three congregations: Mandan, Stone and Heart River.

It was customary that the women were seated on the left side of the





**Kathi (Ellisen) Risch** with her husband John now own her family's farm near the Heart River Church. The church is a special place for Kathi and her two sisters, Crystal Zander and Siri Eisenmann, because the Heart River picnic was a highlight of their summers growing up. The Risches organized volunteers to paint the church's exterior.

church and the men on the right; women also wore hats to church.

Started with a prayer, the service was held in the Norwegian language until the later years.

In the horse and buggy days, there was generally no problem crossing the Heart River to attend church services and Ladies Aid meetings. If the river was too high, they would cross by boat.

When horse and buggy days became a thing of the past, country road conditions sometimes caused inconvenience for the pastor who drove a car, as well as members who attended services. In September 1950, members of the Heart River Church became affiliated with the First Lutheran Church in Mandan. This also made it more convenient for children to attend Sunday school and sing in the choir.

### **Memories of the well-loved and anticipated picnic**

When the Heart River Church

closed, members of the congregation and community still came to the church until the 1990s to enjoy a short service and attend the annual chicken dinner picnic put on by the circle.

Kathleen (Ellisen) Risch and her husband John bought her family's farm adjacent to the Heart River Church in 1997. Kathi's father, Ernest, was born in 1912 and was baptized in the church in 1913.

Kathi's mother, Bette (Ohm), became a member of the Heart River Circle when she married. Since the church's early beginnings, the circle held fundraisers; one of which was hosting the annual picnic, the third Sunday in July.

"As a farmer's daughter, we didn't go on vacations. There was the Rural Fire Department picnic, the Farmer's Union picnic and the Heart River picnic," Kathi remembers.

"The circle members made all the food served at the picnic, which was brought from their homes. Each of them fried six chickens that morning



COURTESY PHOTOS

**Hilma and Ernest Blaich** were the only couple to marry in the church when it was operating in September 1937. The church actually paid them to marry there, to inspire others to do the same.

and also brought potato salad, rolls, baked beans and cake. The picnic was held outside at about noon. At 3 o'clock," she continues, "someone would ring the bell, calling everyone inside to church. A pastor from First Lutheran Church would conduct a short service. Someone would try to play the organ and we'd sing. It was pretty neat. Coffee, bars and 'nectar' (Kool-aid) were served after church."

In 1980, the Heart River Circle paid for the carpentry and remodeling of the Heart River Church windows and doors. The church was also re-shingled by volunteers. In more recent years, Kathi and John organized volunteers to paint the exterior and replace broken windows.

Because it was such a sacred place that meant so much to her and her family, Kathi hopes the church continues to be preserved — and a new tradition of a smaller potluck picnic will be organized among the neighbors. ■



## Mor-Gran-Sou's annual meeting scheduled for July 17, 2015

Are you looking for a way to serve the people of central southwestern North Dakota? Look no further, as Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative can help you fulfill that desire. Why not serve as a board director for the cooperative? The initial commitment is a three-year term, with provisions in the bylaws limiting a director to serving six consecutive three-year terms, after which time the director is not eligible for another six consecutive three-year terms until one year has elapsed.

At the annual meeting, the following three board positions will be elected:

- The At-Large position presently held by Mark Doll;
- The Morton County position presently held by Robert Gaebe; and
- The Sioux County position presently held by Chad Harrison.

Under the bylaws and due to the use of a mail-in ballot, no nominations are accepted from the floor at the annual meeting. Instead, the bylaws require the board of directors to appoint a Nominating Committee of five to nine members who geographically represent the cooperative. These members will provide a list of qualified and willing candidates to the

board for approval and inclusion on the ballot at the board of directors' meeting scheduled for March 25, 2015. This date has been set so there is adequate time for each candidate's biographical information to be included with the notice of meeting sent to the members in June, along with the mail-in ballot for those who are unable to attend the annual meeting in person.

The Nominating Committee has been appointed by the board and met for the first time on Jan. 15. The members of the Nominating Committee include Leslie Dirk, Mandan; Cheryl Hettich, Solen; Kathy Hoff, Leith; Jim Hopfauf, Flasher; Andrew Holle, Mandan; Lisa McLaughlin, Fort Yates; Rodney Nelson, Almont; Jim Neubauer, Mandan; and Travis Wilkens, New Salem.

For a person to be nominated, the member vying for a board seat must submit the completed declaration of candidacy form to Mor-Gran-Sou by 4 p.m. CT (3 p.m. MT) on March 5. The completed form must be mailed to Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative, Attn: Jackie Miller, P.O. Box 297, Flasher, ND 58535-0297.

If you or someone you know is interested in being nominated, please contact one of the Nominating Committee members or Jackie at Mor-Gran-Sou by calling 800-750-8212, 701-663-0297 or 701-597-3301 or emailing [jlmler@morgransou.com](mailto:jlmler@morgransou.com).

The Nominating Committee members or Jackie can provide you or the potential candidate with the declaration of candidacy form. It is also located on Mor-Gran-Sou's website at [www.morgransou.com](http://www.morgransou.com). To download the form electronically, click on the link entitled Find the Declaration of Candidacy form on the home page. Candidate qualifications can be found on the website under Home/Cooperative/Articles and Bylaws/ Board of Directors/402 Director Qualification or on the declaration of candidacy form.

If you have questions about the process, give Jackie a call. All qualified and willing candidates who have completed and forwarded the written declaration of candidacy form to the Mor-Gran-Sou office by the March 5 deadline will be included in the list the Nominating Committee will provide to the board. ■

## 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 25. 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 2015 cooperative's annual meeting in July, but cannot make the scheduled meeting on March 25, please submit your information in writing to Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative before March 24. Thank you.



**DIAL THE HELPLINE**

DISABILITY  
UTILITY ASSISTANCE  
RENTAL ASSISTANCE  
PASS IT ON  
2-1-1  
MILITARY  
SHELTER  
EMERGENCY  
COUNSELING  
MENTAL  
HEALTH

DO IT  
SOMETHING  
TRANSFORMATION  
RELATIONSHIPS  
ADDITION  
PHYSICAL  
EMERGENCY  
SHELTER  
COUNSELING  
MENTAL  
HEALTH

WE ARE  
STANDING  
BY  
24 HOURS  
A DAY  
7 DAYS A WEEK  
HERE  
WE'LL BE  
HERE  
SUBSTANCE ABUSE

FOOD  
HOUSING  
GRIEF  
ABUSE  
HEALTH  
CARE  
VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES  
GAMBLING  
EMPLOYMENT  
UNITED WAY  
FRIEND  
SUICIDE  
YOUTH

FirstLink's 2-1-1 helpline is a free phone service available 24/7 to the public. Call specialists offer supportive, non-judgmental listening ears and information about community programs statewide. To reach the helpline dial 2-1-1 or 701-235-7335.

**In 2014, First Link handled almost 49,000 calls, and 5 percent of those calls were suicide-related.**

**FirstLink**  
Hope Begins Here



[www.myfirstlink.org](http://www.myfirstlink.org)

Helpline: 2-1-1 OR 701-235-7335(SEEK)

Suicide Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255(TALK)

**areavoices**





## Power monitors available

**H**ave you ever wondered what the electrical usage was for the freezer that has been in your basement forever — or any other electrical appliance for that matter? Mor-Gran-Sou can help answer those questions by selling to members the Kill A Watt™ electricity power monitor.

The Kill A Watt™ electricity power monitor is an economical and simple tool members can use to assess the efficiency of their electric appliances. Just plug any 115-volt AC (maximum 15 amp) electric appliance into the Kill A Watt™ meter and the large LCD display shows the power consumption of the appliance by kilowatt-hours. The power monitor can calculate the electricity cost of the appliance by the day, week, month or year. It can also check the quality of your power by monitoring voltage, line frequency and power factor.

If you are interested in what makes up your electric bills, the Kill A Watt™ power meter can help you discover what your electric appliances are consuming. To assist you in acquiring a power monitor today, please call the Mor-Gran-Sou office and ask for Jackie or Julie.

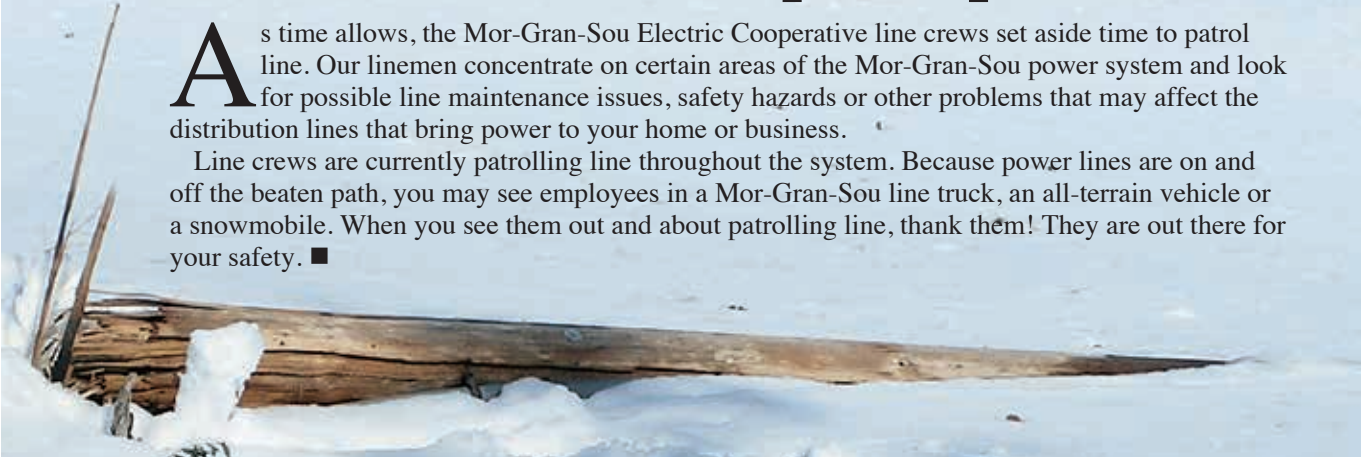


*Mor-Gran-Sou can sell to members a Kill A Watt™ electricity power monitor. This equipment can help them determine the power consumption of an appliance.*

## Mor-Gran-Sou line crews patrol power lines

**A**s time allows, the Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative line crews set aside time to patrol line. Our linemen concentrate on certain areas of the Mor-Gran-Sou power system and look for possible line maintenance issues, safety hazards or other problems that may affect the distribution lines that bring power to your home or business.

Line crews are currently patrolling line throughout the system. Because power lines are on and off the beaten path, you may see employees in a Mor-Gran-Sou line truck, an all-terrain vehicle or a snowmobile. When you see them out and about patrolling line, thank them! They are out there for your safety. ■



## Keeping our electric system as reliable as possible

**T**ree trimming is a regular part of your electric cooperative's operations.

Mor-Gran-Sou, like all electric utilities, is required to maintain appropriate clearance between trees and electric transmission and distribution lines. Trees need to be trimmed, and in some cases removed, to minimize potential power outages and to eliminate fire and safety hazards due to trees contacting energized electric lines.

Mor-Gran-Sou typically uses local contract tree-trimming crews to perform this task. Bullinger Tree Trimming will have crews operating within our service area again this year.

Please know that they are working on your cooperative's behalf to help keep our electric system as reliable and safe as possible. ■





## EMPLOYEES RECEIVE RECOGNITION



*The Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative employees who attended the AT&S conference accepted the five-year safety award, on behalf of the cooperative. Standing with the NDAREC safety team are, back row from left: Lineman **Joe Michael**, NDAREC Safety Instructor **Jeff Tweten**, NDAREC Director of Safety Services **Christina Roemmich**, General Foreman **Doug Nagel** and NDAREC safety instructor **Jason Smith**; and front row from left: Lineman **Jason Jahner**, Lineman **Cody Graetz**, Staking Engineer **Jason Helgeson** and NDAREC safety instructor **Jerry Nielson**.*

## Mor-Gran-Sou earns prestigious 5-year safety award

BY CARMEN DEVNEY

**T**he North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC) hosted the 51st annual REC Apprenticeship Training and Safety (AT&S) Conference Jan. 14-16 at the Ramkota Hotel in Bismarck. The conference is sponsored by the NDAREC AT&S program, with cooperation from the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship.

The conference drew about 200 representatives of NDAREC member-cooperatives, students of the Bismarck State College lineworker program and the electric industry for classroom sessions, equipment evaluations and awards ceremonies. Training topics included fall protection, electric breakers, metering safety, slings and rigging, supervisory and leadership, and more.

A record-number of apprentices graduated from the skilled improvement program in 2014, including Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative Linemen Cody Graetz and Joseph Michael. There were 101 participants enrolled, and 28 apprentice lineworkers graduated and one apprentice meter technician graduated. In comparison, 11

individuals graduated in 2013. Christina Roemmich, director of safety services for NDAREC, says the significant increase in people enrolling and graduating from the apprentice program is a direct result of the growth member-cooperatives are experiencing, and retirements of the seasoned workforce.

"The annual AT&S conference gives us an opportunity to reflect what is going on in the industry, and to recognize the accomplishments the students have made in training and safety throughout the year," she says.

At the conference awards banquet, two safety awards were presented:

■ **Safety Award:** Five cooperatives were recognized for having zero OSHA-recordable injuries for one year, between the dates of Dec. 1, 2013, to Nov. 30, 2014. Co-ops receiving the safety award included Cavalier Electric Cooperative, Langdon; McKenzie Electric Cooperative, Watford City; Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative, Flasher; Slope Electric Cooperative, New England; and Verendrye Electric Cooperative, Velva.

■ **Outstanding Safety Performance Award:** This award

recognized outstanding performance in safety. To achieve this award, a cooperative must have not had a lost-time case accident for five consecutive years. The only cooperative to receive this award was Mor-Gran-Sou.

Roemmich says OSHA, or the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, requires electric cooperatives to track work incidents through record-keeping. "To not have had an injury that resulted in time away from work for five years is remarkable," she says. "I commend the five co-ops that went one full year without an incident that resulted in time away from work. Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative, in particular, has had some serious trials in their service area over the past five years, thanks to Mother Nature doling out four major ice and snow storms that downed more than 14,000 poles. Their employees logged just under 300,000 hours on the job — restoring outages and meeting the needs of the members — while following safety protocols and preventing injuries. That, to me, says their co-op has a culture of safety. Congratulations, Mor-Gran-Sou employees, on a job well-done."



## Communications efforts honored



**Carmen Devney**, communications specialist (left), and **Jackie Miller**, chief of staff/manager of member services, work on the co-op's local pages of the *North Dakota Living* magazine. The pages earned an award from Statewide in January for communicating interesting information to the co-op's member-owners in an effective manner.

*Dakota Living* magazine. Fourteen of the state's 16 distribution cooperatives custom-create local pages that relay information that's relevant to their service area.

Dennis Hill, general manager of NDAREC, said impartial judges praised Mor-Gran-Sou for publishing a variety of interesting stories, including articles about their member-owners and their Electric Cooperative Youth Tour recipient. Jackie Miller, chief of staff/manager of member services, and Carmen Devney, communications specialist, primarily work on the local pages. Devney accepted the award on behalf of the cooperative.

"The judges declared these local pages as a shining example of a job well-done," Hill said.

Miller had this to say about her partner: "Carmen's passion is bringing the cooperative to the membership through words and photographs. She is always looking for new and innovative ways to bring a cooperative story to life, and has a gift in doing so. I also value her opinion, and know that I can depend on her for everyday tasks. It is a privilege to work with her."

In addition to the Statewide Local Pages award, Mor-Gran-Sou also received national recognition when the co-op was selected as a finalist in a Safe Electricity photo contest, sponsored by the Energy Educational Council (EEC). More than 150 photos were submitted by EEC Safe Electricity members. Three photos submitted by Devney made it into the top 10. The linemen featured in the photos included Area Foreman Brent Alkire, Leadman Cody Maher, General Foreman Doug Nagel, Engineering Technician Jesse Kuhn and Journeyman Lineman Cody Graetz. ■

**A**t the NDAREC annual meeting in January, Mor-Gran-Sou was also recognized for its communications efforts. The co-op received the *North Dakota Living* "Local Pages" award, for planning and putting together the content, copy, photography and design to communicate with members in the community pages of the *North*

## Co-op scholarships available for high school graduates

**M**or-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative takes pride in assisting with the development of rural leadership through our scholarship program. We feel it's important to help finance our local students' educational journeys by offering four \$500 scholarships to qualifying seniors.

The scholarship program, sponsored by Mor-Gran-Sou and Basin Electric Power Cooperative, is designed to encourage and recognize the achievements of the children of cooperative members. To qualify, students must be enrolled or plan to enroll in a full-time undergraduate or graduate course of study at an accredited two-year or four-year college, university

or vocational/technical school. They must be U.S. citizens and dependents of Mor-Gran-Sou members.

As in past years, Mor-Gran-Sou will offer four scholarships. Two of the four are designated for qualified applicants who plan to attend a certified vocational or technical school. We ask that the applicant specify which scholarship award he or she is requesting.

Recipients will be chosen on a combination of SAT/ACT scores and overall grade point average; activities, achievements and honors; work experience; a personal statement of career goals; an essay question centered on local cooperatives and how they serve the area; and an appraisal from a high



school or college counselor or adviser, instructor or a work supervisor who knows the student well.

The scholarship will be awarded during the 2014-2015 school year. Applications are available at area schools, co-op headquarters in Flasher, or online at [www.morgransou.com](http://www.morgransou.com).

Applications are due no later than 4:30 p.m. CT (3:30 p.m., MT) on **Tuesday, Feb. 17, 2015**. Please deliver or mail all necessary information to Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative at P.O. Box 297, Flasher, ND 58535-0297.

If you have questions or would like further information, please call Julie or Jackie at 701-597-3301, 701-663-0297 or 800-750-8212. ■

# MOR-GRAN-SOU ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

## board meeting highlights



### Meeting date: Dec. 18, 2014

- Approved the Nov. 24, 2014 regular Board meeting minutes
- Approved two work order inventories and a special equipment inventory
- Heard Co-General Managers'/Chief Executive Officers' update
- Heard update on Innovative Energy Alliance, LLC (IEA)
- Heard updates on all entities of WDUS Holdings, LLC
- Approved applications for refund of capital credits to estates and those age 80 and over
- Authorized voting delegates for various upcoming meetings
- Approved Amendment to Attorney Retainer Agreement
- Approved a Resolution for the 2014 revenue deferral
- Approved the Mor-Gran-Sou 2015 Budget
- Completed RSVPs for various upcoming meetings
- Accepted financial report from Chief Financial Officer
- Heard senior staff department updates
- Heard reports and held discussion on meetings attended
- Held Executive Session

### Upcoming regular board meeting date:

Feb. 20, 2015 in the NDAREC board room in Mandan at 10:30 a.m. CT

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 Board Chair Judge Barth or Co-General Manager/Chief Executive Officer 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. You can find this form at

[www.morgransou.com](http://www.morgransou.com) or call the office for a copy.

## HOLIDAY CLOSING

### Presidents Day

### Monday, Feb. 16

In observance of Presidents Day, Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative will be closed Monday, Feb. 16. Line crews will be available in case of an emergency outage.

**Happy**  
**Valentine's Day**  
**Saturday, Feb. 14**

## Mor-Gran-Sou announces annual safety poster contest



**K**ids, we need your help! Grab your art supplies and draw a poster that tells our readers how you play and work safely around electricity. This poster should display a clear, creative picture of this year's theme: "*How do you stay safe at your home or farm when around electricity?*" All posters should display the Touchstone Energy® logo on their entries. No matter what you draw, have fun! We can't wait to hear from you. Cash prizes will be awarded in each division.

### DIVISIONS:

Preschool to kindergarten  
First grade to third grade  
Fourth grade to sixth grade

### DEADLINE:

Posters must be received at the Flasher office no later than 4:30 p.m. CT (3:30 p.m., MT) on **Monday, Feb. 23, 2015.**

### RULES:

- Posters must be on white, 8.5- by 11-inch paper.
- Posters must depict the theme, "How do you stay safe at your home or farm when around electricity?" and display the Touchstone Energy logo. Be creative!
- Print the child's name, address, age and parent's names on the back of the posters.
- Only dependents of current Mor-Gran-Sou members are eligible for this contest.

### WINNERS:

Winning posters will be featured in the Mor-Gran-Sou local pages of the *North Dakota Living* magazine.

### PRIZES:

Each division will be awarded three prizes (nine prizes total): three first-place prizes of \$15; three, second-place prizes of \$10; and three, third-place prizes of \$5. ■



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

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Flasher, ND 58535-0297  
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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..... Pam Geiger  
Directors ..... Mark Doll,  
Vernard Frederick, Lance Froelich,  
Robert Gaebe, Chad Harrison,  
Bob J. Leingang

### MANAGEMENT

Co-General Mgr./CEO..... Chris Baumgartner  
Co-General Mgr./CEO..... Donald A. Franklund

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

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative