

## Andrew M. Serri 2012 speech excerpts



Andrew M. Serri, CEO/General Manager

"Basin Electric and its membership have a rich history, one built on a solid foundation of commitment to community and a deep obligation to what drives this great nation – and the world: electricity. Within our value system is a profound commitment to deliver low cost electricity and services across rural America, bringing light, ingenuity and efficiencies throughout our vast membership."

### **Safety, growth and workforce planning mark Basin Electric's next 50 years**

Andrew M. Serri, Basin Electric CEO and general manager, ushered in the start of the next 50 years for Basin Electric with updates to Basin Electric's "lights on the tree," and how Basin Electric is indeed up to the challenge of addressing key issues.

"There's no doubt that there are challenges ahead," Serri said. "You may have heard of me speak about the "lights on the tree." These bright lights call for our focus and attention. As we look toward the next era of Basin Electric, we face difficult questions. ... How do we build on a great safety record, but transform it into a system-wide safety culture? Do we join an RTO? How do we compensate for the tremendous workforce we're losing to retirement? How are we going to serve the needs of a growing membership – both within the Bakken and out of it? How do we maintain low rates while building for our future and planning for risk?"

#### **Safety**

Serri described safety as the top light, "shedding light on everything we do." He applauded the Dry Fork Station, near Gillette, WY, for reaching 500,000 hours without a DART (days away, restricted or transferred) incident, and the Leland Olds Station, Stanton, ND, for 1.75 million safe work-hours since 2006.

"This is incredible," Serri said. "But, until we hit zero across the board, we still can do more. We may have generators to turn the turbines, but without the people to operate them – everything else that is involved in running an organization of this size, we would have nothing."

#### **Workforce planning**

Serri discussed what Basin Electric is doing to address the many current and pending retirements. "Last year we lost 62 to retirement. This year, we're expecting more than 80 retirements. In the next five years, this number will grow to more than 200." He said Basin Electric is engaged in a strategic initiative aimed at identifying key positions and cross training, along with focus on the next generation through education and youth development, and lastly, with employee retention.

Serri showed the following video, highlighting three Basin Electric employees who represent the cooperative's current workforce. [Video: A transitioning workforce](#)

### **Growth**

Serri also highlighted the tremendous growth Basin Electric is seeing within the Williston Basin and throughout other areas of the membership. "We are projecting a need of an additional 1,650 MW of power for our system by 2025," he said. Serri described plans under way to build additional natural gas turbines in the Williston and Watford City areas. Additionally, "We're currently engaged in siting efforts for a 345 kV transmission line that would enhance reliability throughout our region and facilitate delivery of much-needed power to northwestern North Dakota and beyond."

Serri provided a video snapshot of some of the growth Basin Electric is experiencing in addition to the Williston Basin Growth. [Video: Electrical load growth in South Dakota cooperatives](#)

### **Community support**

Serri closed his presentation focusing on filling another need: community support. Serri announced Basin Electric's increased support for the United Way agencies serving the cooperative's membership, and said between employee pledges and the cooperative's donation, Basin Electric has collectively raised more than \$240,000 during its United Way campaign.

"One of my first questions when I came on board at Basin Electric was about our community presence. If we don't take care of the communities that take such good care of us, we're not doing our job as cooperative citizens," Serri said. "North Dakota is experiencing explosive growth. Bismarck is feeling it too. In fact, it's being felt throughout many areas of our membership. With growth comes need. We have a homeless population like never before. Winter is around the corner. Providing shelter for these folks is paramount."