



# Basin Electric receives five star recognition

By Andrea Blowers

Going “above and beyond the call of duty,” Basin Electric has exemplified continued support for its military employees and, in turn, has obtained the highest accolade an employer can achieve from the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) committee – Five-Star Recognition.

On Aug. 10, the ESGR committee recognized Basin Electric for achieving the five distinct levels of support of its employees who serve in the National Guard and U.S. Army Reserve. “The Five-Star level is a relatively new degree of recognition,” says Vern Fetch, executive director of ESGR. He says Basin Electric is the first organization in western North Dakota to receive it.

“Basin Electric has taken a lead we hope other employers will follow,” Fetch says.

Fetch; Maj. Gen. Mike Haugen, adjutant general of the North Dakota National Guard, Dr. Curt Juhala, ambassador to the U.S. Army Reserve; and Wayne Child, president of the Basin Electric board of directors, looked on as Ron Harper, Basin Electric CEO and general manager, signed the statement of support for the Five-Star Recognition. The other members of the Basin Electric board were also in the audience during the ceremony.

“It is a very humbling experience to lead an organization that has the policies . . . and the people committed to our nation’s security,” Harper says.

Basin Electric and Dakota Gasification Company (DGC) had four employees who served on active duty. Dan Job, building superintendent, and Darrell Schulz, general mechanic II, both at Basin Electric’s Headquarters; Lowell Rader, equipment attendant at Leland Olds Station; and Doran Link, DGC field technician, were dressed in their military attire and were asked



**(Inset photo)** Dr. Curt Juhala, Basin Electric President Wayne Child, Maj. Gen. Mike Haugen, and Vern Fetch, look on as Basin Electric CEO and General Manager Ron Harper signs a statement of support of its military employees. Those military employees were also present and include (in larger photo in front, from left) Dan Job, Lowell Rader, Darrell Schulz and Doran Link. Maj. Gen. Mike Haugen, Ron Harper and Wayne Child are in the back row.

to step forward as the crowd gave them a standing ovation. “Let us all recognize them for what they have done for this country, for this nation,” Harper says.

Others in attendance representing ESGR, the National Guard and U.S. Army Reserve were Lt. Col. Scott Boespflug, troop command, North Dakota National Guard, Lt. Col. Maria Jensen, commander, 439th engineer battalion, U.S. Army Reserve; Glen Hoffer, ESGR public relations officer; and Don Huber, Bismarck area ESGR chair.

Basin Electric earned its Five-Star Recognition by:

- signing a statement of support and demonstrating to the community that it stands behind its employees; for example, the banner at the entrance of Headquarters that reads, “We are proud of our military personnel for their service at home and abroad,”
- promising to safeguard job positions, continuing benefits, granting leaves of absence for military service and reviewing

human resource policies to ensure the company complies with the provisions of the Uniformed Services Employment Rights and Reemployment Act,

- training its managers and supervisors to effectively manage their Guard and Reserve employees,
- adopting “Over and Above” policies that provide Guard and Reserve member employees more support than is required by law; for example, voluntary contributions of care packages and letters for the troops from company employees, and
- supporting ESGR with its time, energy, effort and contributions.

ESGR was established in 1972 as a volunteer organization within the U.S. Department of Defense. Its mission is to gain and maintain support of the National Guard and Reserve from both public and private employers. The organization provides education, consultation and, if necessary, mediation for employers of Guard and Reserve members.