

# NEWSLINE

## You're Invited to attend: Member Appreciation Open House

Friday, December 5, 1 to 3 p.m.

  
Come enjoy  
some cookies  
and warm  
beverages!

  
Register to win  
door prizes and  
receive an  
attendance gift!

Featuring:



Debbie Center  
playing holiday  
favorites on  
piano

 **ITASCA-MANTRAP**  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



### Powering Up: A Smarter, Faster Meter System for Itasca-Mantrap Members

In May 2021, Itasca-Mantrap began upgrading its metering system to the Tantalus Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) platform. Over the past few years our crews have replaced more than 17,000 meters across our service area to improve service, reliability and efficiency for our members.

Our previous metering system transmitted data through power lines back to our office. While it worked well for years, parts became difficult to find and costly to replace. With the new AMI system, data that once took a full day to reach us now updates every 15 minutes. Voltage fluctuations or outages are detected immediately, often before members even call, allowing us to pinpoint and fix problems faster and keep your power stable and reliable.

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# CEO UPDATE

BY STEVE JOHNSON,  
PRESIDENT & CEO

## Working Together Through Rising Energy Costs

This month marks my first year as CEO of Itasca-Mantrap Electric Cooperative. Over the past year, I've spent a great deal of time learning about our company, system infrastructure and fleet assets, our financial position and overall finances, and the people who make up our internal teams and of course our membership. I've seen firsthand the pride our board of directors and employees take in serving you and the dedication they bring to keeping the lights on, no matter what the circumstances may be.

One of the more challenging parts of my role is ensuring the cooperative remains financially sound while keeping rates as stable as possible. Like many of you, I don't like to see rates go up—but the reality is that we have not had a significant rate adjustment since 2018 for most residential tariff classes. During that time, we've worked hard to manage expenses, delay projects, and stretch every dollar as far as we could.

As your CEO, my mission has always been to deliver safe, reliable, and affordable power to our members. It's a responsibility I take seriously, and one that guides every financial and operational decision that is made. With continued inflation, rising material and equipment prices, and increasing wholesale power costs, a rate adjustment has become unavoidable to maintain the reliability and service you depend on. The completion of our 2026 Class Cost of Service Study confirms that an update to rates will be needed next year to keep pace with these rising costs.

### Why Rates Are Changing

Our largest expense each year is the cost of power purchased from our Generation and Transmission (G&T) supplier, Great River Energy, which makes up approximately 66% of our total annual costs. Our G&T provides the majority of the electricity we purchase and deliver to you, each and every day. These wholesale rates are set to increase by 3% again this year. Looking back, we have had similar increases since 2018 but held rates stable for our residential customers. While some of our commercial and industrial members have seen periodic adjustments to reflect those rising

wholesale power costs, residential rates have remained unchanged for more than seven years.

At the same time, the cost of nearly everything it takes to keep your cooperative running—poles, transformers, trucks, safety equipment, and technology—has risen significantly. By making an adjustment now, we're ensuring the cooperative can continue delivering reliable service, investing in future infrastructure, and making smaller, more manageable adjustments in the years ahead rather than large, infrequent ones.

### Our Commitment to You

We understand that any rate increase affects our members and their families. That's why we're taking several steps to help ease the impact.

- **Budget Billing Options:** Levelized billing and payment arrangements are available to help manage seasonal fluctuations and unexpected costs.
- **Load Management and Energy Efficiency:** Members can save on monthly bills by participating in our load management programs—such as water heater and air conditioning control—or by taking advantage of energy efficiency rebates and tools to reduce usage.
- **Energy Assistance Programs:** We partner with state and local agencies to connect qualifying households with financial assistance programs such as weatherization benefits and other community-based resources.

### Looking Ahead

Rate adjustments are never easy, and as your new CEO, this is not the message I hoped to deliver in my first year. But my commitment to you—and to our employees and communities—is to be open, transparent, and proactive in addressing challenges before they become emergencies. We are still finalizing the details, so watch our newsletter and social media for more information on the timing and impact of the rate adjustments.

The changes we're making today are based on careful study and designed to ensure that each rate class pays its fair share for the cost of providing electric service – nothing more, nothing less.

As always, we remain focused on keeping costs as low as possible while continuing to invest in the reliable, modernizing of our electric system, and serving our communities with dependability. I appreciate your understanding, your support, and most of all, your membership. Together, we'll continue to power our communities forward.

**Powering Up Continued:** “We hope these changes make Itasca-Mantrap even more efficient at providing safe and reliable service,” said Justin Hill, AMI/AMR Technician.

The new system also helps us identify power quality issues early so we can make improvements before they impact service. Remote capabilities reduce truck rolls for tasks like disconnects and reconnects, saving time and money.



Tom Wisuri, Energy Services Representative said the upgrade reflects Itasca-Mantrap’s ongoing commitment to innovation. “This system gives us

better tools to serve our members and continue improving reliability across our network.”

As part of the AMI project we also replaced nearly 5,000 load control receivers and inspected each meter socket to ensure it was in working order. The new meters are built to last about 20 years and can receive software updates remotely, keeping the system current and dependable well into the future.



## APPS & AMPS

### *Skol On Over To Zorbaz*

Our latest Apps & Amps event was held at Zorbaz on the Lake in Park Rapids on October 23 and brought together 45 members for an evening of food and conversation.

The focus of the night was on water heaters and rebates, but there was no formal presentation. Many attendees came ready with questions, expecting a session, but the goal of these events is simply to connect, chat, and share ideas in a casual setting.

As always, the “apps” were a highlight. Pizza and quesadillas kept everyone happy while “electric” conversations took place and members shared experiences.

The night wrapped up with plenty of laughs and good company. To join the next Apps & Amps, keep an eye out on our Facebook page and newsletter for updates.





# Fall 2025 Operation Round Up Grant Recipients!



Akeley Lions's Club.....	\$200	7th & 8th Grade Classroom Library.....	200
Century PTA--Helping Hands.....	500	Cooking In The Classroom - Life Skills.....	150
Family Safety Network.....	1,500	Special Olympics - Recreation & Leisure Skills.....	300
Hackensack Area Fire & Rescue.....	750	Community Education Scholarship Program.....	200
Heartland Concert Association.....	500	<b>Park Rapids Area School District 309</b>	
Hubbard County Historical Society.....	200	Sky Zone Field Trip.....	500
Kinship of the Park Rapids Area.....	500	Photography.....	1,200
Lutheran Social Service of MN/LSS Meals.....	1,500	Cooking for Life.....	250
Mantrap Valley Conservation Club.....	250	Tuba replacement.....	2,000
Nevis Tigers PTA.....	700	New Middle School PE Department.....	1,000
Park Rapids Amateur Hockey Association.....	500	BPA Leadership Conferences & Competitions.....	500
Park Rapids Firemens Relief Association.....	1,000	Hungry Minds Not Hungry Students.....	500
Park Rapids Volleyball Program.....	500	Community Garden planting bed repair.....	200
Pine Point Community Council.....	1,000	New Cross Country Uniforms.....	500
United Way of Bemidji Area.....	1,000	Dress For Success - FFA Chapter.....	1,000
Walker Adult Day Services.....	1,000	PE Class Trip.....	500
Youth Emergency Shelter & Supports (YESS).....	500	Mobile Hot Spots for Students.....	1,000
<b>Heartland Lakes Community School</b>		Writing Center.....	220
Classroom Tools for the 2/3 Crew.....	150	Room to Read!.....	300
Technology that Supports our Classrooms!.....	200	Inside Recess Toys and Prize Grab Bag Goodies.....	150
Making Big use of Small Space!.....	500	4th Grade STEAM supplies.....	300
Launch into Outer Space!.....	420	ASD K-2 Sped Room sensory supplies.....	200
Supporting Neurodivergent Learners.....	150	Spread Kindness 2.5.....	500
Publishing Poetry with the 4/5 Crew.....	150	Inspiring Panther Pride for All.....	175
Indoor and Outdoor Classroom Tools.....	300	2D/3D - Elementary Adaptive Art.....	500
<b>Nevis District 308</b>		Supporting Native Americans Students.....	500
Lego Robotics Classroom Kits Accessibility.....	350	Snowshoe Adventures.....	320
Themed Speech Therapy Activities.....	300	Flexible Seating.....	500
Ag club competitions.....	500	Growth and Achievement in Students with Autism.....	250
Concrete Manipulatives and Storage.....	750	Sensory Integration.....	360
K-5 Community Building Activities & Events.....	350	Monster Graphic Novel Unit.....	285.45
Hands on STEM (In the 5th Grade Classroom).....	350	PE equipment renewal/replenish.....	750
Sensory Integration Items.....	1,090	PAES Lab Incentive Store.....	500
Flexible Seating (In the 3rd Grade Classroom).....	500	Books for Basic.....	475
AR Flexible Seating.....	200	Park Rapids Senior Slam.....	700
Itasca Fishing - 5th Grade.....	250	<b>Pine Point Public School</b>	
HOPE Squad -Uplifting Students.....	500	Sensory Path for students.....	400
Indigenous Student Art/Music Club.....	250	Decodable Readers.....	750
Nevis Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports.....	150	Success in Social Behavior Skills.....	320
K-4th Rollerskating Lessons in Physical Education.....	500	Multi Sensory.....	450
Middle School Book Club.....	400	<b>Total:</b> .....	<b>\$39,315.45</b>

## Operation Round Up Update!

Operation Round Up (ORU) is a charitable program unique to electric cooperatives. It provides financial support to local non-profit and community-based organizations that make a difference right here in the Itasca-Mantrap area.

Recently, the Operation Round Up® Trust Board awarded more than \$39,000 in grants to 77 civic projects across our region. While many deserving applications were received, limited funds meant not all projects could be granted this cycle.

Since launching in 2006, Operation Round Up has given back nearly \$1.4 million, made possible by

the generosity of Itasca-Mantrap members who choose to round up their monthly electric bills.

Operation Round Up is not managed solely by Itasca-Mantrap. The program is overseen by an independent Trust Board made up of appointed directors, ensuring the funds are distributed fairly and transparently within the community.

The Trust Board meets twice a year to review applications and award funds. The next application deadline is Monday, March 16, 2026. To apply, visit [itasca-mantrap.com](https://itasca-mantrap.com) to download the latest form.



**TIP OF THE MONTH:**  
**ENERGY**  
**EFFICIENCY**

Is your home heating system ready for the winter chill? One of the easiest ways to keep your system running efficiently is to regularly replace filters. If your central air system has a furnace filter, it should be replaced about every 90 days.

If your home is heated through warm air registers, baseboard heaters or radiators, remember to clean them regularly to boost efficiency.

Source: [energy.gov](https://energy.gov)





## ITASCA-MANTRAP ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

### ITASCA-MANTRAP ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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www.itasca-mantrap.com



#### OFFICE HOURS

Monday – Friday: 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

#### GOPHER STATE ONE CALL

(800) 252-1166  
www.gopherstateonecall.org

#### OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

##### DISTRICT 1

Brian Behrens, Chair

##### DISTRICT 2

Patricia Roehl, Treasurer

##### DISTRICT 3

Terrence Cook, Vice Chair

##### DISTRICT 4

Al Czczok, Assistant Secretary-  
Treasurer

##### DISTRICT 5

Nancy M. Utke, Director\*

##### DISTRICT 6

Tim Kivi, Secretary

##### DISTRICT 7

Dan Breitbach, Director

#### PRESIDENT & CEO

Steve Johnson

\*Great River Energy Director Representative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

*Itasca-Mantrap Electric Cooperative is an  
equal opportunity provider and employer.*

# Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

Our office will be closed  
Wednesday, Dec. 24 | Noon–4:30 P.M.

Thursday, Dec. 25 | All Day

Wednesday, Dec. 31 | Noon–4:30 P.M.

Thursday, Jan. 1 | All Day

## BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS:

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors for Itasca-Mantrap Co-op. Electrical Ass'n. was held on Thursday, September 25, 9:00 a.m. at the Itasca-Mantrap office.

A quorum of directors was present.

#### Approved:

- Consent agenda
- August financials, subject to audit
- Adoption of Board Policy 2.15, Legal Counsel
- Distribution of Unclaimed Capital Credits

#### Reports heard:

- Operations and Safety
- Financial
- Marketing and Member Services
- CEO
- Summaries of meetings attended

#### Reviewed:

- Changes to Itasca-Mantrap's membership
- GRE Power Cost Adjustment detail for August 2025
- Board Expenses to Budget YTD
- Scrap Material Disposition
- RESCO Capital Credit Certificate
- Class Cost of Service Study, CCOSS update
- Changes to Administrative Policy 2 & Miscellaneous Charges

#### NEXT BOARD MEETING:

The next regular meeting of the Board of Directors is Thursday, December 18, 2025, at 9:00 a.m.