



NEWSLINE



January 2022

Member Appreciation Open House Drive Thru



Many cars pulled through the parking lot at Itasca-Mantrap on December 10 for the Member Appreciation Open House Drive Thru. Members enjoyed treats, warm drinks, an appreciation gift, and a friendly visit with the Itasca-Mantrap team members.

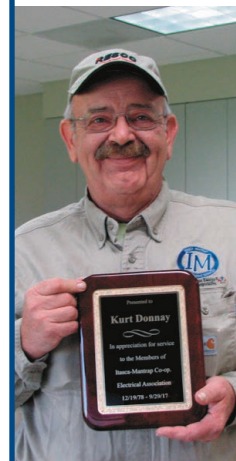
The generous donations from members helped the Salvation Army raise nearly \$1,400 during our event. Many thanks for your contributions toward a good cause.



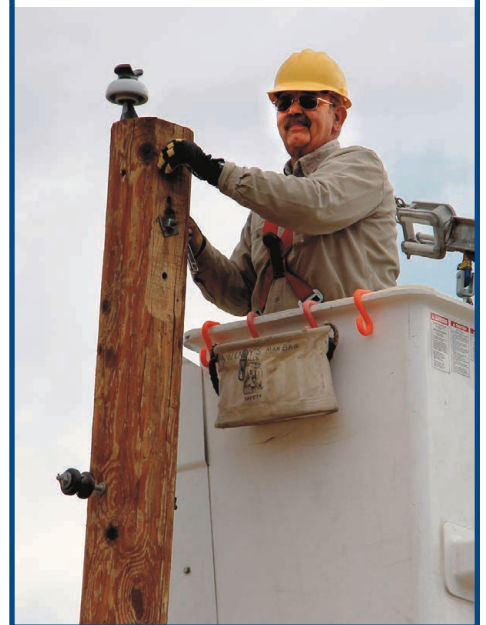
The Drive Thru provided an avenue for us to safely engage with our members. Thank you to the more than 300 members who swung by Itasca-Mantrap to visit. We appreciate our members and enjoyed visiting with you!



Kurt Donnay 1956-2021



Itasca-Mantrap mourns the passing of Kurt Michael Donnay, a former Team Member at Itasca-Mantrap. Kurt began his career with us in 1978. In 1984, he entered the Apprentice Lineman program and attained Journeyman Lineman in 1987. He was promoted to Lead Lineman in 2006 and retired from Itasca-Mantrap in 2017, after nearly 39 years of service. Itasca-Mantrap extends our deepest condolences to Kurt's family and friends who cherish his memory.





CEO Update - By Christine Fox, President-CEO

I am happy! I am sitting down to write what is likely to be my favorite newsletter article. This is the one where I let you know that despite rising

prices on everything, despite other companies announcing large energy price increases (in the double digits), and despite a large investment in infrastructure, Itasca-Mantrap will not be increasing rates at this time. We have completed the budgeting process and are pleased to report that our budget can be supported with the rates we currently have in place. There are several reasons for this:

- **Growth** – Through October 2021, Itasca-Mantrap experienced 5% revenue growth over the same period in 2020. This significant increase is a result of many factors, including weather fluctuations from year to year, new and expanded services, and innovative programs. We are expecting this growth to continue at an even greater pace in 2022.
- **Wholesale power costs** – 60-65 percent of our costs are for wholesale power. On November 4, 2021, Great River Energy (GRE), our wholesale power supplier, announced that “At a time when prices are rising on many products and services, Great River Energy is holding its wholesale electricity rates relatively flat into 2022 and projecting stability into the future”.

GRE’s President and Chief Executive Officer David Saggau was quoted as saying “We spent over a decade transitioning to a portfolio of power supply and transmission resources to efficiently serve our member-owner cooperatives. The benefits of those decisions are now evident. Wholesale rate stability is incredibly important to our member systems in greater Minnesota that are seeing sharp increases in other costs.” Vice President and Chief Financial Officer Michelle Strobel said, “We are coming off a decade of prudent investments as well as some difficult decisions that have us firmly on a path of stable rates.”

- **Strategic focus on costs and efficiencies** – Itasca-Mantrap has cultivated a culture of efficiency and cost awareness. We are constantly thinking about our members and delivering to them cost effective electricity. Among other things, our teams have stream-lined procedures, made conscious decisions to outsource when it makes sense to outsource and to “do it ourselves” when it doesn’t, and, we have “right-sized” the organization.
- **Board insight on excess margins** – The Itasca-Mantrap Board made forward-thinking decisions when they deferred excess margins in recent years to offset expenses they knew we would incur with

our significant investment in the Advanced Grid Infrastructure (AGI) project.

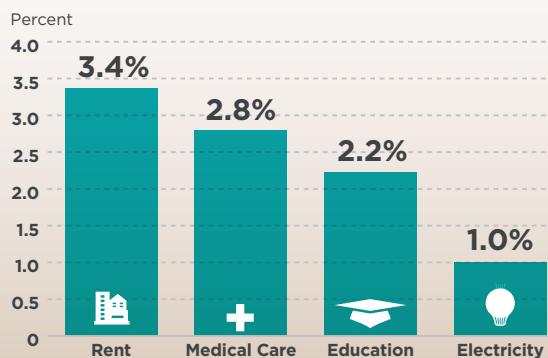
So, it appears that the stars have aligned for Itasca-Mantrap members. The Cooperative will see significant price increases from our suppliers (other than the wholesale power cost) but can weather these inflated costs without a rate increase to our members at this time. But seriously, it is not the stars, we would not be in this position but for the arduous work and good decisions made by all. I appreciate GRE, the Itasca-Mantrap Board, and my fellow Itasca-Mantrap team members for all the work they have done to allow me to deliver this good news to you.

Chris

ELECTRICITY REMAINS A GOOD VALUE

The cost of powering your home rises slowly when compared to other common expenses. Looking at price increases over the last five years, it's easy to see electricity remains a good value!

Average Annual Price Increase 2015-2020



Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
Consumer Price Index



THE OPERATION ROUND UP PROGRAM IS ONE WAY ITASCA-MANTRAP MEMBERS WORK TOGETHER TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.



Are Portable Space Heaters Efficient for My Home?

Small space heaters are meant to do exactly as their name says: heat a small space. But unfortunately, many people use portable space heaters to heat their entire home, which can really take a toll on your energy bills. Whether you should use space heaters really depends on your home's efficiency and energy needs.

If you're using a space heater to compensate for problems in your home, like inadequate insulation, drafty windows and exterior doors, or an inefficient heating system, space heaters are not a practical solution. Your best bet is to improve the overall efficiency of your home. If you're on a tight budget, caulking and weatherstripping around windows and exterior doors is a low-cost, easy way to save energy. Depending on the size of your home, adding insulation can be a great next step. Loose fill insulation typically costs \$1 to \$1.50 per square foot. Taking these proactive energy-saving measures rather than relying on space heaters for supplemental warmth can reduce your heating and cooling bills for years to come.

Perhaps your home is energy efficient but you're cold-natured and want a specific room to be cozier than the rest. In this case, a space heater may work for your needs. A good comparison is ceiling fans; we use ceiling fans in the summer to cool people, not rooms. A space heater can be used in a similar way during winter months. Only use a space heater in small spaces that you're occupying and, if possible, try to shut off other rooms to contain the warmth provided



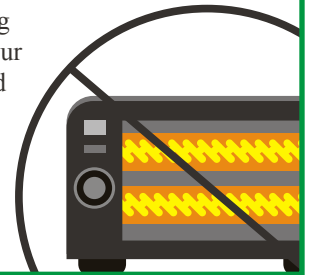
by the space heater. If you decide to use a space heater to heat a small area in your home, make sure the heater is properly sized for the space; most heaters include a general sizing table.

A word about safety: the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates more than 25,000 residential fires are associated with the use of space heaters every year, resulting in more than 300 deaths. If you must use a space heater, purchase a newer model that includes the most current safety features and make sure it carries the Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) label. Choose a thermostatically controlled heater to avoid energy waste and overheating, and place the heater on a level surface away from foot traffic when in use. Always keep

TIPS TO DITCH THE SPACE HEATER

Space heaters are energy hogs, and older models can be extremely dangerous. This winter, ditch the space heater and try these alternative solutions to stay cozy.

- Use an electric blanket to keep warm during the night.
- Caulk and weatherstrip around all windows and doors to prevent heat loss.
- Consider adding insulation to your attic and around duct work.



children and pets away from space heaters.

Consider alternative ways to stay warm like extra layers of clothing or UL-approved electric blankets. If you have hardwood or tile floors, lay down area rugs to provide additional insulation (and appeal!) and maintain warmth.

We know it's cold out there, but remember in addition to safety concerns, space heaters can greatly increase your energy bills if used improperly.

If you're looking for alternative ways to save energy and increase comfort in your home, contact Itasca-Mantrap at 218-732-3377. We're here to help you manage your energy use.

AGI UPDATE

Itasca-Mantrap crews will be out in the field installing new meters as part of our advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) system. The new meters will improve reliability and give you more tools and opportunities to manage and save energy.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

(218) 732-3377 | (888) 713-3377 | www.itsasca-mantrap.com

Itasca-Mantrap and Minnesota Power Help Light Up Park Rapids For the Holidays

Itasca-Mantrap and Minnesota Power crews worked together to string lights and decorate the community Christmas tree in downtown Park Rapids. Pictured below are Itasca-Mantrap team members: Jeff Weiss, Chad Grande, and Chris Bungert along with Minnesota Power crew members.



STAY TOASTY AND WARM WHILE

TURNING DOWN THE THERMOSTAT



When the winter winds blow, it is tempting to adjust the thermostat up a few degrees to stay toasty and warm. However, turning to other (**FREE!**) ways to help keep you warm could help reduce your energy bills.



Each degree you reduce your thermostat saves 1% on your heating bill. No one home during the day? Adjust your thermostat 7 to 10 degrees from its normal setting to save up to 10% annually.

Source: Department of Energy

Here are ways to help you stay warm when it is cold outside:



Bundle up by wearing layers and heavy socks

Get your body moving and stay active

Use blankets while sitting still

Caulk windows and door frames that leak air



Replace or update old or ineffective door seals



Make sure your home's heating system is working properly

Keep your furnace clean and change the filter monthly



Let the sun shine in during the day and close window coverings at night



Reduce how long you use ventilation fans (they transfer warm air outside)



Keep a fireplace damper closed when not in use

Humidify your home to make the air feel warmer



If you use a portable space heater, use it safely and for short amounts of time. Using one for extended periods can cause your energy bill to spike since it draws a lot of power.

Learn more at:

Safe Electricity.org®

Board Report: Meeting Highlights

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors for Itasca-Mantrap Co-op. Electrical Ass'n. was held on Thursday, October 28, 2021, at 9:00 a.m. at the Itasca-Mantrap office.

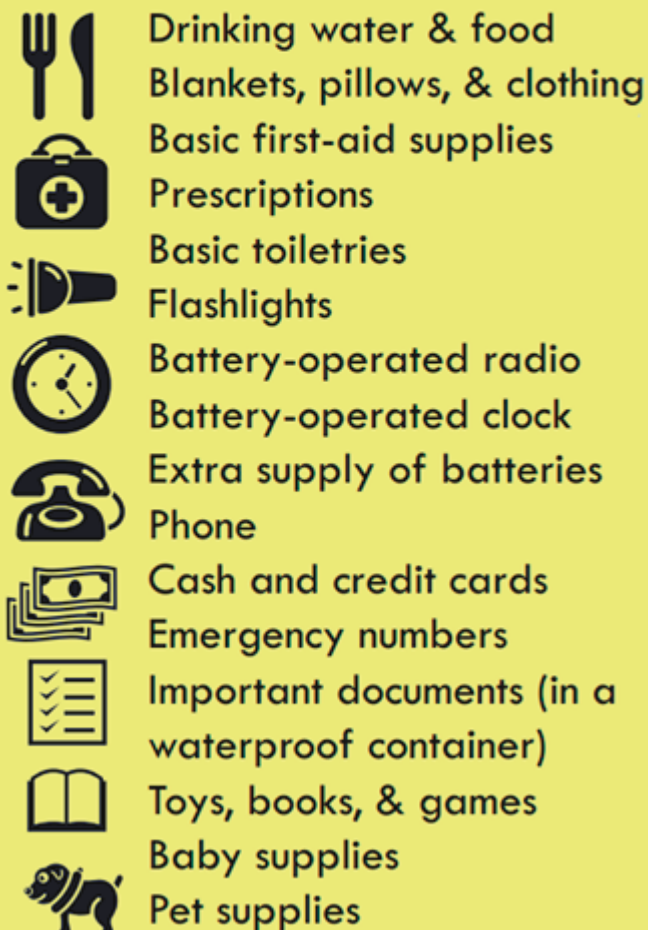
A quorum of directors was present.

Items discussed or Board action taken:

- Approved the consent agenda.
- Heard the Operations and Safety report and the Marketing and Member Services report.
- September financials were received and filed subject to audit.
- Reviewed the 2020 Form 990, 990-T and Minnesota Unrelated Business Income Tax returns.
- CEO Christine Fox gave her monthly CEO report.
- Heard quarterly reports for Board Expenses, Strategic Plan, Safety Incidents, Financial Ratios and Vegetation Management.
- Approved the 2022 budget for Board expenditures.
- Reviewed work orders from August 2020-June 2021.
- Approved revisions to Board Policy 8.10 – Vegetation Management.
- Reviewed grants awarded by the Operation Round Up Trust Board for Fall 2021.
- Approved extending an invitation to Connexus Energy and Great River Energy to attend an upcoming Board meeting.
- Directors and CEO Christine Fox reported on meetings attended on behalf of the Cooperative.

The January meeting of the Board of Directors is Thursday, January 27, 2022, at 9:00 a.m.

Safe Electricity® Storm Safety Kit



Winter Load Control

One question we are frequently asked is, "How often will Great River Energy/Itasca-Mantrap control my dual fuel heating this winter?" The short answer is "it depends."

Itasca-Mantrap may control electric heat of dual fuel participants for up to 400 hours per heating season. Controlling the electric portion of your heating system during peak energy times helps Itasca-Mantrap reduce demand charges and more effectively utilize existing generation capacity. This helps keep overall electricity costs for Members as low as possible. In return, Members in the dual fuel program receive a special reduced rate.



In order to participate in this program, members are required to have an adequate back-up heating system that will heat their entire home. Make sure your back-up heating system is working properly.

Itasca-Mantrap's dual fuel program is a reasonable way to enjoy the comfort of electric heat. The main advantage of participating in this program is the cost savings; heating at Itasca-Mantrap's dual fuel rate is a little more than half the general service rate.

Daily load control notifications are available to members by checking our website, social media, or your email on weekdays with control. If you have any questions regarding the load management program, please call Itasca-Mantrap.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Maximize your heating system's performance by inspecting, cleaning or replacing air filters once a month or as needed to reduce energy costs and prevent potential damage to your system.

Make sure radiators, baseboard heaters and warm-air registers aren't blocked so air can flow freely.

Source: Dept. of
Energy



Source: energy.gov

Director Nominations Open

Nominations are open for director candidates who live in district 4 and district 5. Nominees must meet eligibility requirements as specified in the Itasca-Mantrap Bylaws. Copies of the bylaws are available at www.itsca-mantrap.com and at our office.

If you are interested in becoming a candidate, call our office to request a director candidate packet. The packet contains the nomination petition form and other information.

District 4 - includes Henrietta, Hubbard, and west 6 sections of Crow Wing Lake Township in Hubbard County; and Shell River and sections 6, 7 and 18 of Huntersville Township in Wadena Counties.

District 5 - includes Straight River, Arago and Todd Townships in Hubbard County, Green Valley Township in Becker County; and Blueberry Township in Wadena County.

Completed petitions and forms must be received in the Itasca-Mantrap office by 4:30 p.m. on Monday, April 11.



- Manage your account from the comfort and safety of your home, or on-the-go.
- It offers an efficient way to report a power outage.
- It is quick and easy to pay your bills, or set up auto-pay each month.

ITASCA-MANTRAP COOPERATIVE

16930 County 6, PO Box 192
Park Rapids, MN 56470

OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Friday: 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM
Phone: 218-732-3377 or 888-713-3377
Fax: 218-732-5890
E-mail: itasca@itasca-mantrap.com
www.itasca-mantrap.com



GOPHER STATE ONE CALL

1-800-252-1166
www.gopherstateonecall.org

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Dist. 2 – Patricia Roehl, Director
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Dist. 4 – Al Czczok, Asst Sec-Treas
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Dist. 6 – Tim Kivi, Secretary
Dist. 7 – Dan Breitbach, Vice Chair
President-CEO – Christine Fox