



NEWSLINE



September 2021

Automated Phone Payments Change

Beginning November 2021, members who call Itasca-Mantrap to make a payment over the phone will be required to do so through an automated system. Itasca-Mantrap is making this change as part of its commitment to become 100 percent compliant with Payment Card Industry security standards for the protection of consumers' data during credit/debit card transactions.

Itasca-Mantrap offers several different options for members to pay their electric bill:



SmartHub – Pay online or through the SmartHub app! Also view detailed information on energy use and manage your account while you're on the go.



Drop Box – Drop boxes are located in the Itasca-Mantrap parking lot or behind the Park Rapids Post Office. Drop boxes are checked daily during business hours.



Auto Pay – Payments can be made automatically through a checking or savings account, or debited from a Visa, Mastercard or Discover card. Contact our office to sign up today.



Mailbox – Mail payment to: Itasca-Mantrap, PO Box 192, Park Rapids, MN 56470.



Office – Pay in person at 16930 County 6, Park Rapids, MN.



Pay Now – Pay online without creating an account. Click the blue 'Pay Now' button at the top of our website, enter your account number and name and quickly pay your bill online.

Youth Baseball Clinic was a Grand Slam!



It was a sunny day for baseball on July 16. Nearly 140 children ages 6 to 12 attended the Play Ball! Minnesota Twins baseball youth clinic at the Park Rapids Century School baseball fields.

The children worked with the Twins Association trainers Donny Geng, Pat Collins, & Erik Lovedahl on throwing, fielding and hitting. The young baseball players had a great time learning more about this interactive sport. This event was made possible through a partnership with Great River Energy.





CEO Update - By Christine Fox, President-CEO

When I got up this morning and flipped on the light switch, I started thinking about how much we rely on electricity and how much we take it for granted. I

can't think of a moment when we are not using electricity – even when we camp, we use a camper with electricity. (I know some of you enjoy roughing it and do experience periods without electricity – but in the scheme of things, these are very short periods of time). Even when people go “off the grid,” they seek ways to generate electricity.

According to the Energy Information Agency (EIA), the typical U.S. household now uses more air conditioning, appliances, and consumer electronics than ever before. The average home also contains ten or more internet-connected devices. Considering everything that is powered by electricity, it's no wonder we occasionally might wince at our monthly bill. But keep in mind, it's no longer just the “light bill”.

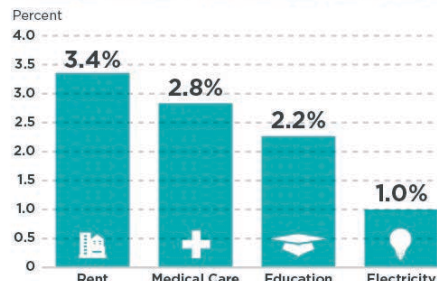
Electricity powers our quality of life. In fact, it has been said that readily available, reliable, electricity is directly correlated with the wealth of a nation. From the infrastructure of your home (appliances, water heater and HVAC system) to charging your smart phones, to powering your computers, TV and Wi-Fi router, your energy bill covers so much more than lighting.

Today, there is more demand for electricity than ever before. And as we all work to de-carbonize the world – moving from carbon-based energy to carbon-free electricity – the demand will surely increase at a greater rate. Economics tells us that when demand goes up, so too does the price. However, that has not been true with electricity. Over the last five years, the cost of rent increased 3.4%; medical care by 2.8%; and education 2.2%. But the cost of electricity only increased 1% nationwide. Here, at Itasca-Mantrap, we have not increased rates since 2018.

As we are currently facing inflationary prices for goods and services, we, and our Generation and Transmission partner, Great River Energy (GRE), are working hard to keep our rates flat. Both Itasca-Mantrap and GRE have strategic objectives to keep costs competitive. We each have completed many business improvement initiatives. GRE has entered into an agreement to sell Coal Creek Station, our largest coal plant. They will replace the costly coal-generated electricity with less expensive wind generation. GRE has also invested in a Research & Development project seeking an inexpensive way to store electricity for long periods of time – we're talking days not hours. At Itasca-Mantrap, we have found more efficient ways to use our labor force and have made wise capital investments. These are just some examples of the dedication shown by GRE and Itasca-Mantrap in keeping electricity affordable and reliable while being environmentally conscious.

ELECTRICITY REMAINS A GOOD VALUE

Average Annual Price Increase 2015-2020



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

So, the next time you're enjoying your favorite podcast, TV series or movie, consider the value of electricity and how it enhances your quality of life. Reflecting on all the ways we depend on electricity; it's not hard to see that it is a great value.

We care about you, the members we serve, and understand that electricity is more than a commodity – it is a necessity. That is why GRE and Itasca-Mantrap will continue working hard to power your life – reliably and affordably.

Thank you for allowing me to serve you.

Military Assistance

Utility payment arrangements

When a household member has been ordered into active duty, deployment, or for a change of duty station, some members may find it hard to pay their utility bills. Minnesota law protects these military personnel from shut-off if they cannot pay their utility bills in full.

How to apply

Contact Itasca-Mantrap to obtain an application and make a payment plan, which you must keep to qualify for protection.

Payment plans

- If your household income is below the state median household income, pay ten percent of your household's gross monthly income toward your electric bill; or
- If you receive energy assistance, pay ten percent of your household's gross monthly income toward your electric bill; or
- If your household income is above the state median household income, make and keep a payment plan.

Tips for a Safe Harvest



Agriculture is the backbone of our country, and our livelihood greatly depends on the crops provided by American farmers. In addition to being one of the most labor-intensive professions, farming is also considered one of the most dangerous jobs in the U.S.

The hard work and exhaustive labor are tough but rushing the job to save time can be extremely dangerous—even deadly—when farming near electrical equipment.

Every year, we see collisions where tractors and other farming equipment accidentally collide with utility poles and power lines, causing injuries and power outages. These dangerous accidents can be avoided by looking up and around your surroundings when operating large farm machinery. If you're preparing for harvest season, please keep the following safety tips in mind:

- Maintain a 10-foot clearance around all utility equipment in all directions.
- Use a spotter and deployed flags

to maintain safe distances from power lines and other electrical equipment when working in the field.

- If your equipment makes contact with an energized or downed power line, contact 911 immediately and remain inside the vehicle until the power line is de-energized. In case of smoke or fire, exit the cab by making a solid jump out of the cab (without touching it), and hop away to safety.
- Consider equipment and cargo extensions of your vehicle. Lumber, hay, tree limbs, irrigation pipes and even bulk materials can conduct electricity, so keep them out of contact with electrical equipment.

September 19-25 is National Farm Health and Safety Week but practicing safety on the farm year-round yields positive results. We hope you never find yourself in a situation where farming equipment contacts power lines or poles, but if you do, we hope you'll remember these safety tips.

Board Report: Meeting Highlights

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors for Itasca-Mantrap Co-op. Electrical Ass'n. was held on Thursday, June 24, 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
- May financials were received and filed subject to audit.
- CEO Christine Fox gave her monthly CEO report.
- Approved the draft minutes of the 2021 Annual Meeting for publication in the 2022 Annual Meeting Notice.
- Set the date for the 2022 Annual Meeting for June 9, 2022.
- Approved the adoption of Board Policy 7.70, Member Opt-Out of Radio Frequency (RF) Meter.
- Reviewed the 2020 Reliability Report.
- Appointed Director Cook to attend the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Regional meeting for Districts 5 and 6.
- Directors and CEO Christine Fox reported on meetings attended on behalf of the Cooperative.

The September meeting of the Board of Directors is Thursday, September 30, 2021 at 9:00 a.m.

Seeking Applications for the Touchstone Energy Community Award

Apply today if your organization has a positive impact on our community!

Itasca-Mantrap is seeking applicants for the Touchstone Energy Community Award, which recognizes community groups or businesses that have demonstrated a strong commitment to the community. The winning organization that has helped make the Itasca-Mantrap Cooperative service area a better place to live and work will receive a plaque and a \$500 cash award for its cause.

Community members may nominate an organization, association or business by completing an application form, available at our office or online at www.itsca-mantrap.com. The application requires a description of the project, program, or event and the positive impact it brought to the community. Completed applications must be received at Itasca-Mantrap's office by Oct. 31, 2021.

The award recipient will be announced in November and will then contend for the statewide Touchstone Energy Community Award, which has a cash prize of



2020 Touchstone Energy Award winner: Akeley Regional Community Center (ARCC).

\$1,000. The statewide award winner will be recognized at the Minnesota Rural Electric Association annual meeting in 2022.

The Minnesota Touchstone Energy cooperatives are part of a national alliance of more than 700 electric cooperatives in 46 states that adhere

to the values of integrity, accountability, innovation and commitment to community.

The Touchstone Energy Community Award highlights the Seventh Cooperative Principle - *Concern for the Community*.



The SmartHub online and mobile app help you manage your account by providing many features including, but not limited to:

- Billing & Payment Information
- Outage Reporting
- Quick, Easy Communication
- Billing Alerts
- Detailed Usage Reports

Let's Beat the Peak Together

As a member of Itasca-Mantrap, you know how to make smart energy choices that help you save money. But did you know that when you use electricity can be just as important as how much you use?

Throughout the day, energy use fluctuates based on consumer demand. Typically, most households use larger amounts of electricity in the morning when most people are getting ready for their day, and in the evenings when people return from work, cook dinner, wash clothes and watch television.



These times when people in our community are using more electricity at the same time are called "peak" hours. During these peak times, wholesale electricity prices spike. Shifting energy consumption from times when demand is the highest will help keep wholesale power costs low and stable.

Here are a few easy ways you can shift energy use to off-peak hours:

- Adjust your thermostat. During summer months, raise the thermostat a few degrees during peak hours.
- Wash full loads of clothes in cold water during off-peak hours.
- Run the dishwasher right before you go to bed, or air-dry dishes by opening the dishwasher instead of using the heated dry cycle.
- Turn off lights and electronics when not in use. (Try to make this a daily



habit, whether during peak or off-peak hours.)

There are many ways to save energy and money by making a few minor adjustments to your daily routine.

We're here to help. Contact us if you have questions about your energy bill or for additional energy-saving tips.

Co-op Connections Business Partner: Tim Parker Family Glass



Bring your co-op connections card with you when you visit Tim Parker Family Glass to receive 10% off all windshields.

Co-op Connections* Card



Itasca-Mantrap

Your Touchstone Energy* Cooperative



<https://www.timparkerfamilyglass.com/>



TIM PARKER FAMILY GLASS

AUTO.COMMERCIAL.RESIDENTIAL



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Energy used for cooling and heating your home makes up the largest portion of your monthly energy bills.

By combining regular equipment maintenance and upgrades with recommended insulation, air sealing and thermostat settings, you can save about 30% on your energy bills while helping our environment.

Source: energy.gov



Electrical Inspections

Generally, Minnesota requires all electrical work to be performed by licensed, bonded and insured electrical contractors and their employees. Homeowners, with strict limitations, are exempt from licensing, but not from inspection. A separate request for electrical inspection form with the required fees must be submitted to the Department of Labor and Industry at or before the commencement of any electrical installation. If you have had electrical circuits added, extended or altered, you should have also had a visit from your local electrical inspector. To find out more about the requirements for electrical inspections, how to file a request for electrical inspection, or to find your local electrical inspector, visit: www.dli.mn.gov.

Electrical Inspectors in your area:

- **Becker County:**
 - Terry Lane - 218-237-8467
- **Hubbard and Cass Counties:**
 - Anthony Kohrs - 218-255-1046
- **Bull Moose Township in Cass County:**
 - Michael Wenzel - 218-270-2265
- **Wadena County:**
 - Adam Sorensen - 320-304-3927

Electrical inspectors can be reached by phone Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m.

Follow us to stay updated on the latest!



Application Deadline Wednesday, Sept. 15

To be considered at the October Trust Board Meeting, grant applications must be received in the Itasca-Mantrap office by September 15.

Download the application form at www.itasca-mantrap.com or pick one up at our office.

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

OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

Dist. 1 – Brian Behrens, Director
Dist. 2 – Patricia Roehl, Director
Dist. 3 – Terrence Cook, Treasurer
Dist. 4 – Al Czczok, Asst Sec-Treas
Dist. 5 – Nancy M. Utke, Chair
Dist. 6 – Tim Kivi, Secretary
Dist. 7 – Dan Breitbach, Vice Chair
President-CEO – Christine Fox