



# NEWSLINE



January 2020

## Nevis Community Education School Age Care wins Touchstone Energy Community Award

Itasca-Mantrap has named Nevis Community Education School Age Care the winner of the 2019 Touchstone Energy Community Award. In appreciation of its community service, the organization received an engraved plaque and a \$500 check that will be used for its community cause.

Nevis Community Education formed a school age care program that provides care to children before school, after school, and in the summer. This program offers a safe area for school age children to play and learn after school, while providing a leadership experience for the high school students who work with the younger children as their after school jobs.

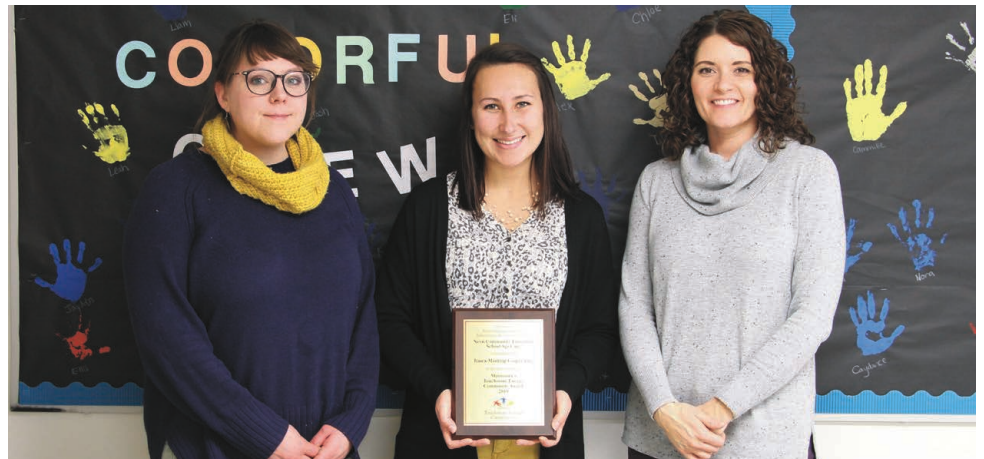
There are about 30 children participating in this program in addition to the handful of high school staff that supervise. School Age Care has been an asset to the district for over a decade. When asked about the lasting impact of the organization, Katie Rittgers said, "The healthy environment of the School Age Care program leads to children making stronger, positive choices as they age. This leads to positive, contributing adults in the community."

Itasca-Mantrap sought candidates during the month of October for the Touchstone Energy Community Award, which recognizes organizations for outstanding contributions to the local community.

The Nevis Community Education School Age Care award application will be submitted for consideration in the statewide Minnesota Touchstone Energy Community Award. The statewide award recipient will be selected from award

winners around Minnesota. The winning organization will receive \$1,000 to go toward its community cause. The Minnesota Touchstone Energy Community Award will be presented to the award recipient in March during the Minnesota Rural Electric Association annual meeting in St. Paul.

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



**L-R: Hannah Spry-School Age Care Coordinator, Katie Rittgers-Community Education Coordinator, Nikki Torkelson-Itasca-Mantrap Marketing/Member Services Manager**

## Directors recognized for achievements

Terry Cook, Al Czezok, and Pat Roehl earned the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Credentialed Cooperative Director Certificate.

The NRECA Director Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) program is specifically designed to help electric cooperative directors understand their roles and responsibilities, stay up to date on the key issues and trends in the industry and prepare them to meet the challenges facing electric cooperatives now and in the future.

Curriculum for the CCD consists of five courses on the topics of director duties and liabilities, understanding the electric business, board operations and process, strategic planning and financial decision-making.



**L-R: Al Czezok, Board Chair Nancy Utke, and Terry Cook. Not pictured Pat Roehl.**



## CEO Update - By Christine Fox, President-CEO

Happy New Year!! I love the new year. It's a great time to reflect on the past and to look forward to the future. It has been said that "Those who do not remember the

past are doomed to repeat it". Yet, I think that sometimes remembering our history with the goal of repeating it can be a good thing. Looking back will oftentimes make the path forward clearer.

Take the history of our electric cooperative. Itasca-Mantrap was founded when neighbors worked together to bring electricity to our rural community. Big investor-owned power companies thought they couldn't generate enough profit, so they bypassed rural areas. Back then, there were frequent meetings

among neighbors to discuss the formation of the cooperative. Once established, annual meetings were the "must attend" event of the year. The co-op, on behalf of the member-owners, committed to provide the community with electricity.

Currently Itasca-Mantrap serves 10,010 members. We will host our 80th Annual Meeting in 2020. Not many organizations can claim such a feat. Almost every year we return money in the form of a capital credit check to our members. Our board of directors authorizes retirement of capital credits to members when it is financially feasible. In fact, we have returned \$13,120,545 to our members since 1963.

We understand that the spirit that helped create this co-op in the first place must be continually nurtured. It is that spirit that is the key to our future. Times and technology

will continue to change, but our commitment to you, our members, will not.

As we continue to look toward the future, you can be confident that Itasca-Mantrap will commit to explore new ways to help our members and our community. We are aware that we need to keep pace as technology and consumer tastes evolve. We welcome your participation as we plan for the future.

So, our past, our current, and our future is and will be "by the members, for the members". I wish you all a fantastic 2020.

Thank you for allowing me to serve you,

*Chris*

## Operation Round Up® Board



Operation Round Up deadline for spring applications is Monday, March 16.

Pictured (L-R, Back row): Richard Magaard, Alan Judson, Rhonda Lageson, Ron Ahmann

Pictured (L-R, Front row): Christine Longfors, Trudy Maninga

Not Pictured: Carol Winskowski

## NATIONAL CUT YOUR ENERGY COSTS DAY

By sealing uncontrolled air leaks in your home, you can save **10%-20%** on heating and cooling bills.

**January 10, 2020**



## Member Appreciation Open House

Nearly 200 Itasca-Mantrap members and guests attended our Member Appreciation Open House December 5 and 6. They enjoyed cookies, coffee and cider while visiting with Itasca-Mantrap employees.

Congratulations to our door prize winners Marilyn DeCrans, Yvonne Goodmonson, Shirley Green, Donald Kerwin, Lana Lynde, Chuck Marquarot, John Poncelet, Ken Smith, Karen VanDeVenter, and Ruth Wattenhofer.

Many members brought in non-perishable food items to donate to the Hubbard County Food Shelf. We collected more than 118 pounds of food. Thank you for your donations!

This event is held to show our appreciation to you for your patronage and support. Thank you for attending.



## Itasca-Mantrap and Minnesota Power work together to light up Park Rapids

Itasca-Mantrap and Minnesota Power crews worked together to string lights and decorate the community Christmas tree in downtown Park Rapids for the holidays. Chris Bungert, Jerry Byer, Dan Cox, Randy George and Chad Grande from Itasca-Mantrap helped decorate the tree.



## Team Member Spotlight

### DARIN OVA

**Job Title:** Field Technician

**Started at Itasca-Mantrap:** May 2000

**Where I live:** New York Mills, MN

**Hometown:** Jamestown, ND

**Education/ Training:** North Dakota State University

**Prior Experience:** Worked with MN Valley Irrigation

**Why I like working at Itasca-Mantrap:** I enjoy my job and the people I work with each day.

**Family:** One daughter

**Community Involvement:** Assist with Sunday School at Church

**Hobbies:** Fishing, Golfing, and going to my daughter's activities

**Fun Fact:** I enjoy playing Madden online on my Xbox One.



### RANDY GEORGE

**Job Title:** Journeyman Lead Lineworker

**How I serve the Co-op:** New Service Installation

**Started at Itasca-Mantrap:** January 1987

**Where I live:** Park Rapids, MN

**Hometown:** Park Rapids, MN

**Education/ Training:** Vo Tech M State, Wadena

**Why I like working at Itasca-Mantrap:** I enjoy having many different job duties.

**Family:** Married with two children - one boy and one girl.

**Hobbies:** Fishing and Hunting



## Seeking Applications for the 2020 Youth Tour



Itasca-Mantrap is sponsoring one area high school student to attend this unforgettable all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C. June 20-25, 2020. The contest is open to sophomores and juniors who live in the Itasca-Mantrap service area.

Hundreds of youth from across the United States will gather in Washington, D.C. to learn more about our nation's history, see American government in action and tour famous historical monuments. Students will also get a chance to meet and ask questions of their legislators and learn more about the importance of electric cooperatives. Students who attended this trip in the past said it was a wonderful experience and one of the best things they ever did.



To be eligible for a chance to win, students must complete an application. Finalists will then be interviewed before a selection is made. Applications are available at [www.itsasca-mantrap.com](http://www.itsasca-mantrap.com), at our office, or from your high school counselor. Call the Itasca-Mantrap office for more information.

Applications must be received by March 16.

## Extreme weather highlights importance of reliable electricity

The 2019 polar vortex demonstrated that members have the right people and power plants ready for extreme weather.

On a normal day, having reliable electricity means you can charge your phone, watch TV and cook dinner.

During extreme cold weather, however, reliable electricity means so much more. Electricity is essential for almost any home heating, whether through all-electric heating systems or for powering the components of a furnace.

The importance of electricity was on display a year ago when a polar vortex sent temperatures well below zero and stressed the electric system for several days.

Itasca-Mantrap technicians took the trucks out in the cold weather to work on our members' equipment. At the same time, our wholesale electricity provider Great River Energy carefully operated and monitored the electric system to ensure energy continued to reach Itasca-Mantrap and the 27 other cooperatives it serves.

### Extreme weather brings new focus

When winter weather turns dangerous, power line crews suspend normal maintenance in order to closely monitor the grid and fix issues that arise due to cold temperatures, ice and wind.

"When our system is stressed or damaged, our crews work around the

clock to keep the grid operating for our member-consumers," said Priti Patel, Great River Energy's vice president and chief transmission officer.

### Region-wide collaboration

Great River Energy works with the regional grid operator, known as the Midcontinent Independent System Operator or MISO, and neighboring utilities to prepare for possible scenarios. During events like the polar vortex, MISO can issue cold weather alerts, which direct utilities to prepare all power plants to be dispatched on short notice.

### During extreme weather, you need options

Wind energy now represents a hefty portion of the energy on the Midwest electric grid. When temperatures dip below -20 degrees Fahrenheit, however, wind turbines can shut down entirely to protect vital components.

That's where Great River Energy's "peaking" power plants come in. When demand for electricity is high (times of "peak" demand), these plants provide additional energy



typically fueled by natural gas. During extreme cold, when natural gas is also needed to heat homes and schools, those same plants can operate dependably with fuel oil.

"The handful of coldest days of winter demonstrate the value of a diverse portfolio of generation resources," said Great River Energy Vice President and Chief Power Supply Officer Jon Brekke. "It requires a variety of fuels and technologies to ensure our members are warm and comfortable in every season and in any weather."

## Powerful Education at Resource Rendezvous

Itasca-Mantrap team members, Nikki Torkelson and Rachel Hillukka, gave a presentation to 4th graders at Park Rapids Area Century Elementary during their Resource Rendezvous event. The 4th graders especially enjoyed the light demonstrations and learning more about how their electricity is made with both renewable and nonrenewable resources.



## Director nominations open in districts 1, 2 and 3

Directors will be elected at the Itasca-Mantrap Annual Membership Meeting on June 11. Nominations are open for director candidates who live in districts 1, 2 and 3. Board directors serve three-year terms and represent all co-op Members. Nominees must meet eligibility requirements as specified in the Itasca-Mantrap Bylaws. For a full-text version of the bylaws, visit [www.itsca-mantrap.com](http://www.itsca-mantrap.com) or pick up a copy at our office.

Please call our office and request a director candidate packet if you are interested in becoming a candidate. The packet contains the nomination petition, forms and other information.

DISTRICT 1 – includes Clay, Hendrickson, Lake Emma, Lake George, Schoolcraft and Thorpe Townships in Hubbard County.

DISTRICT 2 – includes Akeley, Mantrap, Nevis and White Oak Townships in Hubbard County.

DISTRICT 3 – includes Birch Lake, Deerfield, Hiram, Shingobee and the north 6 sections of Bull Moose Townships in Cass County; Badoura and the east 30 sections of Crow Wing Lake Townships in Hubbard County; and the NE 15 sections of Huntersville Township in Wadena County.

**Completed petitions and forms must be received in the Itasca-Mantrap office by 4:30 p.m. Monday, April 6.**

### Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



Let the sunshine in! For additional warmth, open drapes over windows that receive sunlight during the day. Close them at night, which can reduce heat loss from a warm room up to 10%.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy

### 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

Email: [itasca@itasca-mantrap.com](mailto:itasca@itasca-mantrap.com)  
[www.itsca-mantrap.com](http://www.itsca-mantrap.com)



#### GOPHER STATE ONE CALL

1-800-252-1166  
[www.gopherstateonecall.org](http://www.gopherstateonecall.org)

#### OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

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

## Enhanced Smarthub App

Itasca-Mantrap's SmartHub online and mobile app provides many features that help you manage your account, from billing and payment information to detailed usage reports.

Upgrade your SmartHub app today to experience the fresh, new look and feel. When you open the app, you will notice that the usage reports and contact us buttons are right on the home screen. Outage and billing alerts will also be on the home screen, allowing us to communicate important information easily.

We hope this refreshed look will provide a more user-friendly experience to you. **Pay your bill, check your electricity use, report an outage and more!**

