



# NEWSLINE



July 2020

## 2020 Voting Results

Although Itasca-Mantrap's 80th Annual Meeting was canceled, the voting proceeded utilizing mail-in ballots. The ballots were counted on Thursday, June 11, 2020.

Director elections were held for a three-year term in three districts. In District 1,

incumbent Brian Behrens received 482 votes, Peter Tuomisto received 181 votes. In District 2, incumbent Patricia Roehl received 370 votes, Marvin Vredenburg received 319 votes.

Incumbent Terrence Cook was uncontested in his bid for re-election in District 3 and was re-elected by acclamation.

The revisions to the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws passed with 573 votes for and 56 votes against.

The board held a reorganization meeting and elected officers:

- Chair – Nancy M. Utke
- Vice Chair – Dan Breitbach
- Secretary – Tim Kivi
- Treasurer – Terrence Cook
- Assistant Secretary-Treasurer – Al Czczok



District 1



District 2



District 3

## WHETHER TEMPS RISE OR FALL, YOUR ENERGY BILL WILL STAY COOL.

**OFFER AVAILABLE  
JULY 1 - AUGUST 31**



Air source heat pumps provide home cooling and supplemental heating, using 72% less electricity than conventional air conditioners and furnaces.

Ducted Air Source Heat Pump	Promo Rebate
≥ 8.2 HSPF	\$1,000
≥ 9.0 HSPF	\$2,000
Ductless Air Source Heat Pump	Promo Rebate
≥ 9.0 HSPF	\$450

Limited funds are available and awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. Rebate amounts and programs are subject to change without notice. Installed centrally ducted ASHPs must be separately metered & controlled and must be installed by a participating quality installation contractor to qualify for rebate.



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

Although our work has been limited by the pandemic (team members working from home for six weeks, teams of 10 or more unable to work together in person, virtual meetings,

limited face-to-face conversations), we have still accomplished a great deal at Itasca-Mantrap.

Our operations team was off and running shortly after the frost was out of the ground. New service requests have inundated our linecrews. It does not seem that fears of a recession have scared any of us Northerners. We have also developed and are implementing a new five-year work plan. Every five years, our operations and engineering teams identify improvements to our system and implement construction projects.

Throughout all of this, we have not forgotten about communications with our members. Although we are not able to host any member events because of the pandemic, we are working to improve our communication efforts. Many of you have received your first text message(s) from Itasca-Mantrap. We invested in new technology that allows us to push messages to our members via text messaging and more importantly, allows our members to report an outage by text and/or request an update on a reported

outage via text. The initial "welcome" text was sent to all members with a cell phone number on file at Itasca-Mantrap. We have elected an opt-out approach, so if you do not want to receive or send messages via text, you will need to respond that you would like to opt-out. If you do not have a cell phone number on file with us and you would like to enroll in this program, please contact Member Services at 218-732-3377.

While still compliant with Governor Walz's Executive Order limiting meeting occupancy to no more than 10 persons, we have recently kicked off two teams focused on a cybersecurity assessment and the Advanced Grid Infrastructure (AGI) project.

### Cybersecurity Assessment

The cybersecurity assessment entails using a tool developed by Axio, licensed to us through Great River Energy (GRE) by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), to answer in-depth questions regarding security at the cooperative. The purpose of the tool is to identify any weaknesses we may have and the correlating improvements. It also provides recommendations for enhanced security measures in areas where we are already doing well. Now, I am the first to admit that this is not a strong point of mine, but I am looking forward to learning from our experts at Itasca-Mantrap, GRE and NRECA. This is a great illustration of a small-town cooperative ingrained in a small-town community but having access to "big company" resources through a

membership in a National organization. I believe being part of a large cooperative network has enabled us to access tools (as in this case) and rely upon top-notch experts to keep us informed.

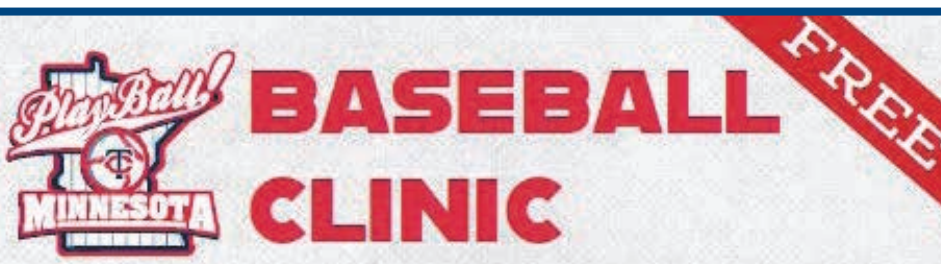
### Advanced Grid Infrastructure (AGI) Project

As I have mentioned in previous articles and at previous annual meetings, our current metering and load management systems have aged and are no longer being supported. Our strategic plan calls for the replacement of these systems by the end of 2024. We are currently working with a contracted engineering firm to create a list of wants and needs. These will be encompassed in a Request for Proposal package that will be sent to manufacturers and distributors. Responses will be evaluated against a scale developed in conjunction with our wants/needs assessment. Our intent with this systematic approach is to ensure we choose the best option for our members.

So, although we have been limited in our methods of approaching projects, I feel good about what we have been able to accomplish. The team members here at Itasca-Mantrap are all dedicated to you, our members, and continue to find new ways to accomplish our objectives.

Thank you for allowing me to serve you.

*Chris*



We will be hosting a FREE baseball clinic Friday, July 10 for boys & girls ages 6-13 years old at Century Middle School Baseball Fields. Learn basic fundamentals of hitting, fielding and throwing from former players, coaches, scouts and teachers! Just bring a glove!

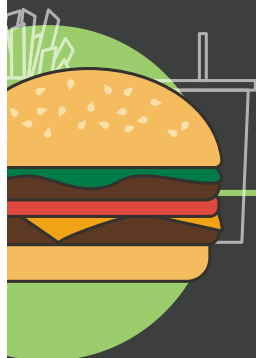
6-9 year olds: 3:00 PM

10-13 year olds: 4:30 PM

Register at [www.playballmn.com](http://www.playballmn.com). Clinic will be moved to Century School Gym if inclement weather. Follow Itasca-Mantrap on Facebook, Twitter, and our website to view the latest updates regarding this event.



# THE VALUE OF ELECTRICITY

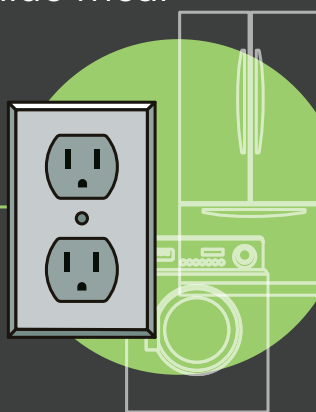


## \$5.30

average cost  
of a Big Mac®  
value meal

## \$3.87

average daily  
cost of power



Electricity is expressed on a daily basis using EIA 2018 Average U.S. Monthly Residential Bill of \$117. Big Mac® is a registered trademark of McDonald's Corporation. McDonald's Corporation does not endorse or sponsor this material.

**Sources:** Economist.com and EIA, 2018 data.

## Board Report: Meeting Highlights

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors for Itasca-Mantrap Co-op Electrical Ass'n was held on Thursday, April 23, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. via video conference due to meeting restrictions enacted by Minnesota Governor Tim Walz's Executive Order #20-20, encouraging telework and issuing stay-at-home requirements due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

A quorum of directors was present.

Items discussed or Board action taken:

- Approved the consent agenda.
- Heard the Operations, Safety and Engineering report and the Marketing & Member Services report.
- March Financials were received and filed subject to audit.
- CEO Christine Fox gave her monthly CEO report and provided an update on the Cooperative's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Matt Laughlin, Brady Martz & Associates, P.C., reviewed the Cooperative's Independent Audit Report for years ended December 31, 2019 and 2018. The report was accepted as presented.
- Approved revisions to the Minnesota Rural Electric Association's bylaws and resolutions.
- Discussed options for holding the Annual Meeting and ultimately canceled the meeting in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Certified Director Candidates for the 2020 Election.
- Called for the appointment of Election Judges to tabulate the Member votes for the annual election.
- Called for the appointment of Operation Round Up Trust Board directors whose terms are expiring.
- Heard quarterly reports for Board Expenses, Strategic Plan and Safety Incidents.
- Directors and CEO Christine Fox reported on meetings attended on behalf of the Cooperative.

The July meeting of the Board of Directors is Thursday, July 30, 2020 at 9:00 a.m.

## Team Member News

**Tom Wisuri** joined the Itasca-Mantrap team as Energy Service Representative. Tom has more than 10 years of experience in the electrical field.

Itasca-Mantrap is proud to welcome Tom to our team!





## Team Member Spotlight

### NANCY UTKE

**Job Title:**

Director

**How I serve the**

**Co-op:** As a  
Director

**Started at**

**Itasca-Mantrap:**  
July 2011

**Where I live:**

Park Rapids, MN

**Hometown:** Detroit Lakes, MN

**Education/ Training:** Bachelor of Science in  
Administrative Business - graduated Summa Cum Laude,  
CCD Certification and Board Leadership Certification

**Prior Experience:** Worked at a law firm in probate, real  
estate, estate planning, fiduciary income tax and federal  
estate tax returns, Co-Owned Utke's Country Pine  
Furnishings, Substitute Teacher at Park Rapids Schools

**Why I like working at Itasca-Mantrap:** I love the 7 Co-op  
Principles and the friendly team members.

**Family:** Married with two sons

**Community Involvement:** PTA, Bingo for Books, Church  
Education Committee & Scholarship Chair, GreenTouch  
Clean-Up, Senior Slam Chair at PRHS

**Hobbies:** Reading, Step Aerobics, Walking our dog

**Fun Fact:** I love kids.



### JERRY BYER

**Job Title:**

Journeyman

Lead

Lineworker

**How I serve  
the Co-op:**

Install new  
services and  
take care of the  
members,  
especially  
during  
outages.

**Started at Itasca-Mantrap:** December 1992

**Where I live:** Nevis, MN

**Hometown:** Cromwell, MN

**Education/ Training:** Lineworker School at Wadena  
Technical

**Prior Experience:** Worked with Emblom's Midwest  
Powerline Construction building overhead lines

**Why I like working at Itasca-Mantrap:** Working as a  
team with our members and employer

**Family:** One son and two daughters

**Community Involvement:** Coaching football, basketball,  
and baseball

**Hobbies:** Fishing and Hunting



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

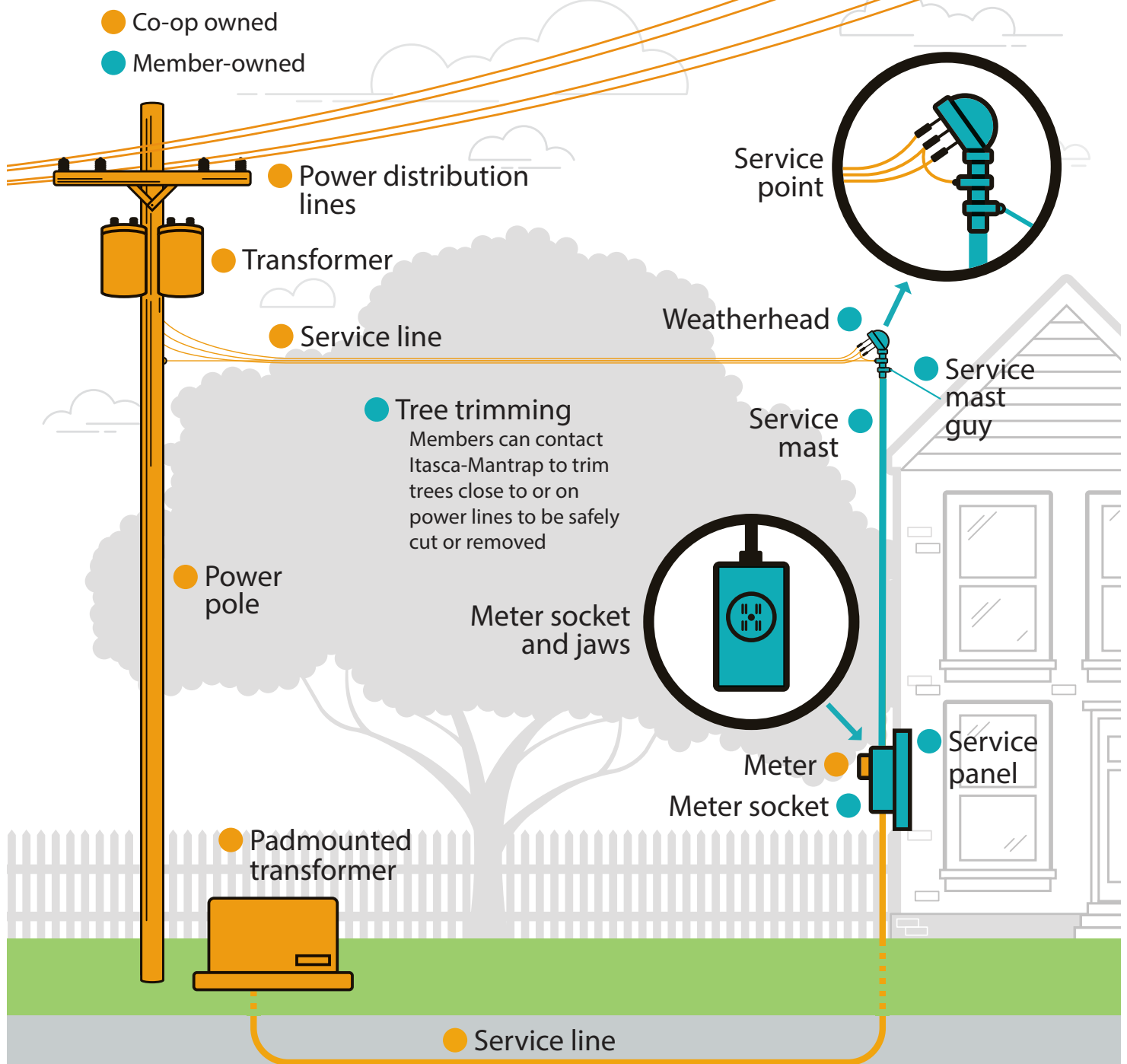
- Billing & Payment Information
- Outage Reporting
- Quick, Easy Communication
- Billing Alerts
- Detailed Usage Reports



# WHO OWNS WHAT?

## Electric Co-op Owned Equipment vs Member-Owned Equipment

This graphic depicts equipment owned by the co-op (in gold) and the member (in blue). If a storm damages any equipment owned by the co-op, we are responsible for repairs. If a storm damages any member-owned equipment, the member is responsible for repairs. Members should hire a licensed electrician when making any repairs to member-owned equipment.



Note: This graphic depicts overhead and underground service.  
Please be aware of which type of service you receive at your home or business.

## Itasca-Mantrap Electricity Bill Payment Options

### AUTO PAY



### ONLINE THROUGH SMARTHUB



### ONLINE WITH PAY NOW



### MAIL



### DRIVE-UP DROP BOXES



## Energy Efficiency

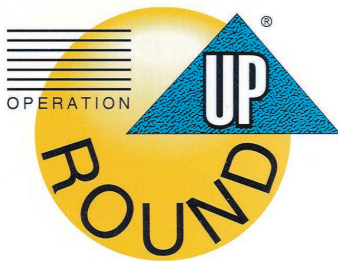
### Tip of the Month

Spending more time at home? Try an online energy audit to assess the overall efficiency of your home. Visit [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov), then enter "home energy yardstick" in the search box to get started!

Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy



**OFFICE CLOSED**  
**FRIDAY, JULY 3**



Operation Round Up® helps enhance our community.

This voluntary program provides financial assistance to organizations such as first responders/fire departments, youth activities, education, emergency assistance & other community-based projects in our service territory.

### ITASCA-MANTRAP COOPERATIVE

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

### OFFICE HOURS

8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday - Friday

Phone (during office hours & 24-hour outage reporting):

218-732-3377 (or) 888-713-3377

Fax: 218-732-5890

E-mail: [itasca@itasca-mantrap.com](mailto:itasca@itasca-mantrap.com)

[www.itasca-mantrap.com](http://www.itasca-mantrap.com)



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### OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

Dist. 1 – Brian Behrens, Director  
Dist. 2 – Patricia Roehl, Director  
Dist. 3 – Terrence Cook, Treasurer  
Dist. 4 – Al Czezok, Asst Sec-Treas

Dist. 5 – Nancy M. Utke, Chair  
Dist. 6 – Tim Kivi, Secretary  
Dist. 7 – Dan Breitbach, Vice Chair  
President-CEO – Christine Fox