

# NEWSLINE



## ANNUAL MEETING 2024 RECAP

### ANOTHER YEAR IN THE BOOKS AT ITASCA-MANTRAP

The 83rd Annual Membership Meeting is officially in the books. On June 12, Itasca-Mantrap hosted more than 300 Members and friends for lunch and the meeting.

The business meeting included reports from Itasca-Mantrap President and CEO Christine Fox, Board Chair Brian Behrens, a presentation from our '23 Youth Tour Delegate Tyler Officer and an introduction to our '24 Youth Tour Delegate Sean Ward.

Director elections were held for a three-year term in Districts 6 and 7. In District 6, Incumbent Tim Kivi received 472 votes and challenger Charles "Chuck" Church received 170 votes. Incumbent Dan Breitbach was uncontested in his bid for re-election in District 7 and was elected by acclamation.

Members were treated to a lunch catered by Main Street Meats as well as logoed cookies from Flour Chicks Bakery! While there was plenty of food, there was also plenty of smiles and conversation, as is tradition at the Itasca-Mantrap Annual Meeting.

To end the meeting, prizes were given away, with four winners taking home hanging flower baskets from Hafner's Greenhouse and five Energy Credit Certificates worth \$200 each!

Following the meeting, the board held a reorganization meeting and elected officers:

- Chair – Brian Behrens
- Vice Chair – Terrence Cook
- Secretary – Tim Kivi
- Treasurer – Patricia Roehl
- Assistant Secretary-Treasurer – Al Czczok



## CEO UPDATE

BY CHRISTINE FOX, PRESIDENT-CEO

While preparing my remarks for the Itasca-Mantrap Annual Meeting, I wanted to update our members on the accomplishments and future endeavors of our cooperative. The best way to achieve this objective was to showcase our strategic plan. The strategic plan is the guide to our future and covers five areas of focus: safety, member communications and education, technology, team members, and positioning for the future.

In this article, I highlight two focus areas. There is too much to share to encapsulate it all within one article, so stay tuned to the August Newsletter for part 2.

Let's start with our safety goal "Everyone works safely, nobody gets hurt." Itasca-Mantrap Team Members are committed to safety and have a stellar record on safety to show for it. We express this commitment to safety in many ways but let me tell you about a few:

- We established a Safety Committee many years ago and continue to hear their ideas to support safety in the workplace. Since the inception of this strategic plan, we have implemented 5 safety suggestions fielded through our Safety Committee and are currently working to implement a few more.
- We invite other cooperatives and our statewide association to our cooperative to perform an extensive safety audit. Based on their recommendations, we make changes to our facilities and operations.
- We provide safety training on many different subjects, including Pole Top and Bucket Rescue, Hazard Communications, Driving Safely – to name a few.
- Our commitment to safety extends beyond our Team Members. Just recently, we sponsored an electric demo trailer at the Park Rapids Fire Department Open House.

Educating our community on the dangers of electricity is tantamount to our safety goal.

The communication and education of our members on electricity is our next focus area. We desire to "Further our reputation as a recognized trusted energy advisor. To power our community and empower our members." While everything we do is in pursuit of our mission to "serve our members," this strategic goal is directly tied to you, our members. Some of the goals within this portion of the strategic plan are:

- Promote beneficial electrification including electric vehicles (EV). To that end, we recently purchased a Tesla to conduct our own research on the pros and cons to owning an EV in northern Minnesota.
- Re-brand Itasca-Mantrap with a more simplistic and easily recognizable brand. We are nearly complete with our rebranding efforts. You'll notice our new logo on our trucks and clothing. We continue to transition to our new brand while exhausting existing supply.
- Increase member communication. We've increased our efforts on social media which led to an increase in member engagement. We provide a monthly newsletter to share news from our cooperative with you. We've had success with hosting various events such as Apps and Amps, the End of Summer Social and of course, our Annual Meeting. We'll be rolling out a new event this year. Be sure to join us for the Powered Up! Energy Forum on July 26 at the Park Rapids American Legion.

Please join me next month as I share more aspects of our strategic plan.

Thank you for allowing me to serve you.

## BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS:

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors for Itasca-Mantrap Co-op. Electrical Ass'n. was held on Thursday, April 25, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. at the Itasca-Mantrap office.

A quorum of directors was present.

### Approved:

- Consent agenda
- March financials, subject to audit
- Independent Audit Report for 2023
- Certification of Director Candidates for 2024 election
- Revisions to Board Policies 8.60, Meter Testing and 8.94, Use of Cooperative Equipment
- Use of the Tesla by Team Members and Directors and use of the kilowatt monitors by members.
- Loans and Grants from the USDA and GRE to KI Developers of Park Rapids, LLC, the ultimate recipient.
- Director Utke as the Itasca-Mantrap delegate to the GRE Annual Meeting. Affirmed Director Utke's nomination to the GRE Board of Directors for the next year.

### Reports heard:

- Operations and Safety
- Marketing and Member Services
- Financial
- CEO
- Quarterly Reports
- Meeting attendance

### Reviewed:

- Changes to Itasca-Mantrap's membership
- GRE Power Cost Adjustment detail for March 2024
- Operation Round Up grant awardees for spring 2024
- Plans for the Annual Meeting
- Appointments of Election Judges for 2024 election

### NEXT BOARD MEETING:

The next regular meeting of the Board of Directors is Thursday, July 25, 2024, at 9:00 a.m.





# POWERED UP ENERGY FORUM

**Friday July 26, 2024**

American Legion, Park Rapids, MN  
1-4 p.m.



**ITASCA-MANTRAP**  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



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## POWERED UP! ENERGY FORUM

### EMPOWERING THE FUTURE OF ENERGY

Get ready to be energized on July 26 at the “Powered Up Energy Forum,” proudly presented by Itasca-Mantrap and Minnesota Power. This event is a must-attend for anyone interested in learning about renewable energy and sustainability.

Attend panel discussions led by industry professionals, delving into the latest advancements in solar power and sustainable transportation solutions. From innovative technologies to forward-thinking strategies, this forum offers an opportunity to explore the renewable energy landscape. But that’s not all!

Experience the future firsthand as you step behind the wheel of the latest electric vehicles, provided by local dealerships. Feel the power and potential of sustainable transportation in action.

This isn’t just an event—it’s an opportunity to connect with leaders in the field, gain invaluable insights and actively contribute to shaping the future of renewable energy.

Don’t let this opportunity pass you by—mark your calendars for the “Powered Up Energy Forum” at the American Legion in Park Rapids on July 26 from 1 to 4 p.m. Together, let’s ignite change and power up towards a greener, more sustainable tomorrow!



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

Here’s an easy way to lighten the load on your clothes dryer. Before you dry a load of damp clothing, toss in a clean, dry towel. The towel will absorb excess water, shortening the drying time.

Remove the towel about 15 minutes after the cycle begins. Shorter drying times will extend the life of your dryer and save energy!

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





# APPS & AMPS

Apps & Amps was hosted at Foxy's Bar & Grill on April 18, and the focus was rebates and outage reporting.

Foxy's, often coined the "Irish Roadhouse," offered a lively atmosphere for engaging conversation and humor. Couple that with delicious chicken wings, and you have a night to remember.

Thank you to Cody and Vanessa, and to all who attended!



**Pictured above:** Foxy's owners, Vanessa and Cody.



# Welcome to Karl Just & Lars Berg!



**Karl Just** joined Itasca-Mantrap in May as a new apprentice lineworker. Karl graduated in 2020 from Minnesota State Community and Technical College in Wadena with a diploma in Electrical Lineworker Technology. Since then, Karl has gained experience as an apprentice lineworker while being employed by a local electric cooperative, an investor-owned utility, and two utility line construction contractors.



**Lars Berg** joined Itasca-Mantrap in May as a temporary seasonal lineworker. Lars recently completed his AAS in Electrical Lineworker Technology from Minnesota State Community and Technical College in Wadena. He was previously employed with Arvig gaining experience with underground services.





**Front Row L-R:** Scott Kluver, Innovative Builders; Craig Olson, Bremer Bank; Marnie Gugisberg, KNWM; Nancy Utke, Itasca Mantrap; Mindy Young, Itasca Mantrap; Nikki Torkelson, Itasca Mantrap. **Second Row L-R:** Randy Roers, Innovative Builders; Jeff Borling, Great River Energy; Ashley Ylitalo, KNWM; Christine Fox, Itasca Mantrap; Brittney Thoreson, KNWM

# Expanding Horizons:

## *Crystal Brook Senior Living Grows to Serve More Seniors*

We're delighted to share some wonderful news! On May 9, 2024, Knute Nelson | Walker Methodist (KNWM) closed on financing for the expansion of Crystal Brook Senior Living in Park Rapids. This expansion marks a crucial step forward in their mission to provide exceptional care and support for adult seniors in our area.

The \$6.6 million investment has allowed for the expansion of Crystal Brook's memory care housing by 17,714 sq. ft., incorporating 20 additional units for memory care. With the help of Itasca-Mantrap, the organization received a \$2.36 million pass through loan from USDA REDLG, an E3 loan of \$350,000 from Great River Energy, as well as funding from lead lender, Bremer Bank, to make the project possible. The expansion will provide much-needed space to support more residents in the future.

"We are honored to support Crystal Brook within the Park Rapids community," says Christine Fox,

President and CEO of Itasca-Mantrap. "We look forward to seeing the growing impact they will have on the lives of older adults and their families in this area."

"We are so thankful to our financing partners for supporting us as this project came to fruition," says Katie Perry, Chief Operating Officer/SVP of Knute Nelson | Walker Methodist. "Our passion for serving the Park Rapids area only grows alongside the incredible community support we continue to witness."

With 88 units in total, Crystal Brook continues to be a beacon of comfort and care in our community. Of these, 69 units are dedicated to senior/assisted living, following an aging-in-place model, and 19 units are designated for memory care. The expansion involved reconfiguring one unit from the existing memory care household.



## ITASCA-MANTRAP ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

### ITASCA-MANTRAP ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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#### 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

Christine Fox

\*Great River Energy Director Representative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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



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Use the SmartHub app to  
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