

# NEWSLINE



## OPERATION ROUND UP

### TURNING CENTS INTO DOLLARS FOR A GOOD CAUSE

Operation Round Up (ORU), a charitable program unique to electric co-ops, is designed to provide financial assistance to non-profit or community-based organizations that demonstrate a commitment to enhancing the quality of life in the local area served by Itasca-Mantrap.

The Itasca-Mantrap Operation Round Up® Trust Board recently awarded \$57,000 in Operation Round Up grants for 78 civic projects in the Itasca-Mantrap and surrounding area. While ORU received applications for more grants, all requests could not be granted due to limited funding.

Since the program's inception in 2006, Operation Round Up has awarded nearly \$1.2 million to local organizations, thanks to the generosity of Itasca-Mantrap members.

The Operation Round Up Trust Board meets twice a year to select grant recipients from the applications received. The next application deadline is Friday, March 15, 2024. To apply, download the most recent application from the Itasca-Mantrap website.

**Grantees listed on page 3**

## Join us for our Member Appreciation Open House

Friday, December 8 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.



## CEO UPDATE

BY CHRISTINE FOX, PRESIDENT-CEO

As we wrap up 2023, I find myself reflecting on Itasca-Mantrap. Our mission is to serve our members and I believe we accomplish this by providing reliable, affordable electricity to our members in a safe manner.

Our team at Itasca-Mantrap is always looking ahead, exploring ways to innovate and utilize new technologies to improve our services. As our nation increasingly relies on electricity to power the economy, keeping the lights on has never been more important. We are committed to powering and empowering our community at a cost local families and businesses can afford.

One critical component of reliable power is the mix of energy resources used to generate the electricity that keeps the lights on. You may not realize it, but Itasca-Mantrap does not generate electricity. Instead, we purchase it from our power supplier, Great River Energy (GRE), then we distribute it to homes and businesses throughout our community. GRE is increasingly adding more renewables to the mix but is also exploring new technologies to ensure reliable power is available to our members whenever they need it.

Itasca-Mantrap is also using technology to enhance our local grid, limit service disruptions and improve our outage response. These technologies include an integrated software program, advanced metering technology and proactive right of way management – just to name a few.

Our integrated software program is a single platform that ties member information, meter data management and accounting together. It enables us to cross-reference the data and provide immediate feedback to our members. Questions about your bills, usage or an outage can be answered by calling in to Member Services or by simply logging in to SmartHub on your computer or cell phone.

Further, the program, along with an integrated reporting tool used to mine information from the system, allows us to analyze data and predict outcomes. We've only just begun to tap into this resource and are excited about its potential.

Advanced metering technology (AMI) enables two-way communication between the co-op and members. In the event of a power outage, AMI helps pinpoint the exact location of the outage and can even analyze damaged or tampered meters. AMI helps Itasca-Mantrap save money with real-time data, and ultimately improves power reliability for our community.

Proactive tree trimming is another way we limit service disruptions. Scheduled trimming keeps power lines clear from overgrown limbs that are likely to fall and makes it more difficult for those pesky animals to jump onto our lines. In addition, keeping the right of way clear around our underground lines allows our Lineworkers easier access, which means a faster restoration to any outage that we may incur.

Regarding affordability, Itasca-Mantrap walks the fine line between controlling costs and investing in our future. We are happy that we have not needed to increase our rates since June 2018 but are still able to invest in our personnel, our system, and our members. In these times of inflation and unpredictability, that is a remarkable feat.

We have done all of that and much more with a safety mindset. I am happy to report we have not had any personal injury accidents (other than minor cuts and bruises) in the past three years. I am proud of our safety record, and I thank all our team members who keep safety top of mind.

Serving our members by providing reliable, affordable electricity in a safe manner is a deliberate objective that takes the entire cooperative (and its power supplier) to achieve. The Itasca-Mantrap team members who serve you are top notch and are completely responsible for our success. Thank you, team members!

And 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, September 28, 2023, at 9:00 a.m. at the Itasca-Mantrap office.

A quorum of directors was present.

#### Approved:

- Consent agenda
- Great River Energy amendment to Dodge County Wind purchase power agreement with NextEra Energy Resources
- August financials, subject to audit
- Donation of Unclaimed Capital Credits to the Operation Round Up Trust

#### Revisions to Board Policies:

- 3.94 – Alcohol, Smoking, Cannabis and Controlled Substances
- 4.10 – Delegation of Authority from and Relationship between the Board of Directors and the President-CEO
- 4.60 – President-CEO Relationships
- 4.70 – President-CEO Vehicle

#### Rescindment of Board Policies:

- 4.20 – President-CEO Responsibilities
- 4.30 – Reports to Board of Directors
- 4.50 – President-CEO Travel Expenses

#### Reports heard:

- Operations and Safety
- Marketing and Member Services
- CEO
- Key Ratio Trend Analysis

#### Reviewed:

- Changes to Itasca-Mantrap's membership
- 2022 Form 990, 990-T and the Minnesota Unrelated Business Income tax returns.
- GRE Power Cost Adjustment detail for August 2023
- Administrative Policy 3.94.1 – D.O.T. Controlled Substances and Alcohol Use
- Administrative Policy 3.94.2 – Controlled Substances, Cannabis and Alcohol Use

#### NEXT BOARD MEETING:

The next regular meeting of the Board of Directors is Thursday, December 21, 2023, at 9:00 a.m.

# Fall 2023 Operation Round Up grant recipients!



## Heartland Lakes Community School (HLCS)

3rd Annual Earth Day Jubilee..... \$ 400

## Nevis Public Schools

FRC Team 3102 TNT Nevis Robotics..... 500

Additional Class Library Book Series..... 400

Community Education Program ..... 400

Cultural Literature .....250

Robotics .....700

Indigenous Student Art/Music Club .....250

Indigenous Student Book Club ..... 350

PBIS..... 300

Preschool ..... 500

Middle School Book Club ..... 300

Early Childhood Speech Therapy .....250

Cooking in Speech Therapy..... 300

Special Education Life Skills ..... 300

Special Olympics - Recreation & Leisure Skill ..... 300

Special Education - Sensory Materials.....250

Special Education - Stem Materials .....250

Special Education Cooking in the Classroom.....250

Auditory Processing Technology Support ..... 400

Title 1 Reading Resource Library.....1,000

Up Close Science Enrichment .....325

Flexible Classroom Seating..... 400

Flexible Classroom Seating..... 400

Secret Stories Classroom Reading Act..... 400

Upper Elem. MN Authors Book Club..... 500

Struggling Reader Resource Library ..... 400

Building Math, Reading, and Social

Skills through Cooking ..... 300

School Wellness ..... 300

Tiger Time .....250

## Park Rapids Area Schools

2nd Grade Healthy Food .....200

Century Art Department ..... 650

Reward Good Behavior .....150

Flexible Seating..... 400

STEM..... 350

Test Prep.....200

Park Rapids Area Bands ..... 1,243

Alternative Learning Center -

Community Access ..... 600

Alternative Learning Center - Cooking skills .....200

Business Professionals of America ..... 500

Indian Education.....250

Flexible Seating.....250

Speech Team.....1,000

Cross Country Team.....375

HS Science Department ..... 1,947

Post Prom.....700

Century Middle School Students ..... 400

Puberty Education Supplies/Samples .....322

Volleyball..... 500

## Pine Point School

1st -3rd Grade Science .....563

Reading Readiness and Recovery ..... 450

Goals and Positive Behavior ..... 500

## Community Organizations/Clubs

Akeley Lions Club.....250

Akeley Regional Community Center .....2,000

Central Minnesota Council, Boy Scouts ..... 750

Family Safety Network .....5,000

FWC Nevis Women's Club.....700

Hackensack Area Fire & Rescue .....2,500

Heartland Concert Association.....1,500

Heartland Homes .....2,000

Helping Hands Century PTA.....1,000

Hubbard County 4-H.....1,600

Hubbard County Historical Society ..... 600

Kinship of the Park Rapids Area .....1,000

Let's Go Fishing-Headwaters Chapter .....1,000

Living at Home of the Park Rapids Area .....1,000

Lutheran Social Service Hubbard Meals ..... 2,000

Lutheran Social Service Menahga Meals .....1,500

Mantrap Valley Conservation Club..... 400

Nevis Tigers PTA.....700

Northern Light Opera Company ..... 600

Park Rapids Amateur Hockey Association ..... 700

Park Rapids Amateur Hockey Association .....	700
Park Rapids Figure Skating Club.....	250
Park Rapids Fire Department.....	3,000
Park Rapids Girls Basketball Boosters.....	375

United Way - Child Abuse Prevention .....	1,500
United Way of Bemidji Imagination Library .....	1,000
Walker Youth Hockey.....	700
<b>Total:</b> .....	<b>\$57,000</b>



**Standing row (L-R):** Ron Ahmann, Rhonda Lageson, Jennifer Magnussen, Carol Winskowski **Sitting row (L-R):** Al Judson, Richard Magaard, Christine Longfors



**Standing row (L-R):** Barb Boeckman, Lisa Koppelman, Carol Winskowski, Jen Magnussen **Sitting row (L-R):** Carol Van Nyhuis, Ron Ahmann, and Steph Carlson.

It is with great pleasure that we say thank you to the Operation Round Up Trust board members who have reached the end of their terms and welcome in the new members who will take their place.

Welcome to Barb Boeckman, Steph Carlson, Lisa Koppelman and Carol Van Nyhuis. We look forward to your contributions to the work of the Operation Round Up Trust Board.

Thank you to Al Judson, Rhonda Lageson, Chris Longfors and Richard Magaard for your service to the Operation Round Up Board.

# Merry, Bright and Efficient Holiday lighting

Decking the halls doesn't have to take a toll on your energy bill! Keep your holiday lighting merry, bright and energy efficient with LED light strands.

- Consider replacing older light strands with new LED light strands which are 70 percent more efficient and last 10 times longer than standard bulbs.
- You can get the look of cozy lighting with LEDs, just look for "warm white" on the label.
- Unlike older light strands, LED lights give off virtually no heat, making them safer for kids, pets and snowmen.
- Save energy by setting a timer for outdoor lighting and decorations. Program the timer so the lights turn on in the evening and turn off later at night when you sleep.

Source: Dept. of Energy

## Tips to Fight the Winter Chill & Save Energy

We all have our favorite season. Some people love crisp, cool weather and bundling up under a favorite blanket, while others prefer the warm temperatures summer brings and all the fun outdoor activities that go with it.

But there's one thing we can all agree on: high bills are never fun. Itasca-Mantrap is here to help you find ways to manage your home energy use and keep winter bills in check.

Here are five tips to help increase your home's energy efficiency this winter:

**1. Mind the thermostat.** This is one of the easiest ways to manage your home's energy use. We recommend setting your thermostat to 68 degrees (or lower) when you're home. When you're sleeping or away for an extended period of time, try setting it between 58 and 62 degrees; there's no need to overheat your home when you're away.



**2. Button up your home.** The Department of Energy estimates that air leaks account for 24-40 percent of the energy used for heating and cooling a home. Caulking and weather stripping around windows and doors is another simple, cost-effective way to increase comfort and save energy. If you can feel drafts while standing near a window or door, it likely needs to be sealed.

**3. Use window coverings wisely.** Open your curtains during the day to allow natural sunlight in to warm your home. Close them at night to keep the cold, drafty air out. If you feel cold air around windows, consider hanging curtains or drapes in a thicker material; heavier window coverings can make a significant difference in blocking cold outdoor air.



**4. Consider your approach to appliance use.** When combined, appliances and electronics account for a significant chunk of our home energy use, so assess how efficiently you're using them. For example, if you're running the dishwasher or clothes washer, only wash full loads. Look for electronic devices that consume energy even when they're not in use, like phone chargers or game consoles. Every little bit helps, so unplug them to save energy.

**5. Think outside the box.** If you're still feeling chilly at home, think of other ways to warm up—beyond dialing up the thermostat. Add layers of clothing and bundle up under blankets. You can even add layers to your home! If you have hard-surface flooring, consider purchasing an area rug to block cold air that leaks in through the floor.



If you're taking steps to save energy but continue to see major increases in your bills, give us a call at 218-732-3377. We can help identify areas and other factors impacting your home energy use and recommend next steps for savings.

The winter months often bring some of the highest energy bills of the year. By being proactive about saving energy, you can increase the comfort of your home and reduce monthly bills. Visit our website at [itasca-mantrap.com](http://itasca-mantrap.com) for additional energy-saving tips.



TIP OF THE MONTH:  
**ENERGY  
EFFICIENCY**

Get smart with a better way to heat and cool your home! Smart thermostats are Wi-Fi enabled and automatically adjust heating and cooling temperature settings in your home for optimal performance. Smart thermostats learn your temperature preferences and establish a schedule that adjusts to energy-saving settings when you're asleep or away.

For maximum energy savings, look for smart thermostat models with the ENERGY STAR label.

Source: Dept. of Energy





# 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](http://www.gopherstateonecall.org)

### OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

#### DISTRICT 1

Brian Behrens, Chair

#### DISTRICT 2

Patricia Roehl, Director

#### DISTRICT 3

Terrence Cook, Treasurer

#### DISTRICT 4

Al Czeczok, Assistant Secretary-  
Treasurer

#### DISTRICT 5

Nancy M. Utke, Director\*

#### DISTRICT 6

Tim Kivi, Secretary

#### DISTRICT 7

Dan Breitbach, Vice Chair

#### PRESIDENT-CEO

Christine Fox

\*Great River Energy Director Representative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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

## Season's Greetings & Happy Holidays from Itasca-Mantrap!



# Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

**Our office will be closed**

**Friday, Dec. 22 | Noon-4:30 P.M.**

**Monday, Dec. 25 | All Day**

**Friday, Dec. 29 | Noon-4:30 P.M.**

**Monday, Jan. 1 | All Day**

**Attention: Area Sophomores & Juniors**  
Application Pool is now open!

# Seeking Youth Tour '24 applicants!

Win an  
all-expenses-paid  
trip

Visit our website  
[itasca-mantrap.com/  
youth-tour](http://itasca-mantrap.com/youth-tour)  
to apply today!

