



**NORTH ITASCA
ELECTRIC**

OWNED BY THOSE WE SERVE

**WATTS
NEWS**

VOL 28 NO. 2

PUBLISHED FOR THE MEMBERS OF NORTH ITASCA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

FEBRUARY 2025

CEO Report

Good afternoon NIECI!

What a change a year makes. I have snowmobiles running through the parking lot again! It's good to see people out enjoying the local businesses we have and amazing trail system.

I tip my hat to the countless hours our dedicated volunteers invest in the sports we love. We have snowmobile and ATV clubs in our communities that provide opportunities to enjoy the wilderness around us. Without your commitment and willingness to work with the state of Minnesota, local government, and landowners we wouldn't have these opportunities. Thank you!

Our board met in

December and approved the budget for 2025. Once again, we were faced with the difficult decision to raise rates. After detailed presentations and deep discussions the rates were set for 2025 as follows, starting 1/1/2025:

Proposed Rates	2023	2024	2025
Service Availability kWh	\$49.00	\$50.00	\$53.00
Dual Fuel	0.1288	0.1300	0.1378
ETS (Storage)	0.0673	0.0673	0.07335
	0.0581	0.0581	0.06258

I have shared the challenges faced around North Itasca Electric Cooperative often. This month I want to share some outstanding news. I've written about the opportunities for grants in past articles. We applied for roughly five grants. I am very proud to report we were selected for



Brad Dolinski, CEO

one of the grants. This investment in the system will improve reliability for decades to come.

Through this grant we will be upgrading the Wirt Substation. This substation transformers are very expensive. We were looking for opportunities to make

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Member Services Update

by Drew Francisco

Hello again everyone! Hope all of you had a great Christmas and are enjoying the new year so far. It's been a busy few weeks as we prepare to gear up for 2025. I've been attending meetings with Great River Energy and Minnesota Rural Electric Association to get a better understanding of what to expect as we move forward into the new year. That includes rebate structures, income eligible programs, business assistance and other various opportunities North Itasca Electric can utilize to help local communities and membership.

One of the presentations at the MREA meet-

ing I attended was provided by Senior Climatologist, Kenneth Blumensfeld with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. His presentation was about understanding Minnesota's climate. Observations, trends and projections related to all this strange weather we have been seeing over the last year or two.

It was very interesting to see historical data related to average monthly temperatures throughout the state in its entirety. Seeing some of the average temperatures from 50 years ago has now validated the stories my grandmother told

me when I was young. I always thought there was no way it was that cold, but now I've seen the recorded data. Sorry Grandma, I still don't think you walked up hill to school both ways, but maybe I'll stumble across information that will prove that too!

After hearing Kenneth's presentation, I wanted to know what our temperatures were doing locally, simply because a change in temperature is equal to a change in

Member to p.2>

GRE secures hundreds of millions in federal funding

Great River Energy and a consortium of its member-owners have officially secured a significant \$812 million in funding provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Empowering Rural America (New ERA) program, marking the culmination of nearly two years of dedicated effort by GRE and its member-owners.

This achievement represents the largest New ERA award to date. The funding is a monumental step forward for GRE and its member cooperatives, furthering their commitment to providing

reliable, affordable and sustainable energy solutions.

"Our consortium laid out an innovative portfolio of projects and power purchase agreements that will benefit cooperative members across Minnesota," said GRE President and Chief Executive Officer David Saggau. "The projects in our New ERA proposal will allow us to procure more than 1,000 megawatts of renewable energy while creating over 1,500 new jobs, saving our members \$30 million on average

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MP, GRE receive approval for 345-kV line

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission today approved the Certificate of Need and Route Permit for Minnesota Power and Great River Energy's jointly owned high-voltage transmission line to bolster electric reliability in northern and central Minnesota and support the regional clean energy transition.

The Northland Reliability Project is an approximately 180-mile, double-circuit, 345-kilovolt (kV) transmission line that extends from near Grand Rapids in Itasca County to near St. Cloud in Benton County and into Sherburne County. The approved route

will largely follow existing transmission line corridors, thus minimizing environmental impacts and the need for new right-of-way for the new 345-kV transmission line.

The project will support a reliable and resilient local and regional power grid as more renewable energy is brought online; existing power plants are retired; more homes and businesses shift to electricity to power appliances, equipment and heating and cooling systems; and more frequent extreme weather events occur.

"We appreciate all of the community

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February Refrigerator Sale

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Energy SCAMS

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Office Hours

Monday - Friday
7 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
(218) 743-3131

CEO Report (continued)

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 an investment in the new transformer and equipment in that sub. Along with rebuilding Wirt, we will install new reclosures in several other substations. These devices provide information needed for our engineering model along with being adjustable for future needs. Finally, we will be replacing some overhead lines to three-phase underground to serve our community of Inger. This improvement will help to balance loads and prevent outages to communities along that line.

This grant opportunity was made possible by the hard work of many of our staff. Special shout out to our Line Superintendent Daryl Pederson, Office Manager Tina Danielson, Kristi Robinson and Rachel Hockert from Star Services, along with leadership from the Minnesota Rural Electric Association. Thank you all for helping North Itasca Electric's application to

rise to the top.

With the start of the new year, we jump into a very busy time for our Office Professionals. Closing out 2024 means the audit preparation begins. I need to thank our hard working group here, along with the normal monthly duties, focus on the audit is extra load managed by amazing individuals. Tina, Krista, Gina, Sheila and Haley, thank you for all your hard work and dedication to the Member-Owners and communities we serve.

In February it appears we will have a busy month. Our directors and I will head to the Great River Energy Regional Meeting in St. Cloud to get an update from their leadership. We will also head to the Capitol to meet with our legislators in St. Paul. Our intention is to discuss the Nuclear Moratorium. I look forward to reporting back to you next month.

By your side! Miigwech Brad

Member Services

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energy usage. Regardless of what type of heat source you are using, temperature plays a key factor in how much of that source you are going to utilize.

So, I did a study of my own. I pulled local weather data for "heating months" we will call it, to see what our trends are doing. I'm glad I'm not a climatologist because I

have no explanation for why our weather is so inconsistent. But the graph below is what I found:

This graph will not only make my high school math teachers proud, but it validates why our energy bills might look a little different. The temperature trend for 2024 has surpassed the lowest temperature seen in 2023 (on average).



Average temperature for heating months.



Drew Francisco


to help you understand why you are seeing an increase. Sometimes you may think a high bill is normal just because of our demographic, but it's not always the case. I have seen issues with electrical or equipment that cause your usage to increase without you even realizing it.

I know this is riveting stuff, but I won't keep you any longer. I'm here to help with any concerns, questions or projects you may be starting. Feel free to reach out to me any time and I look forward to working with you!

Until next time, Drew Francisco

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Highlights from the Board Room

NORTH ITASCA ELECTRIC CO-OP., INC.
MINUTES FOR THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING
December 19, 2025

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors was held at the office and electronically through Zoom on December 19

Directors present: J. White, W. Waller, J. Kilian, L. Kongsjord, T. Christensen, L. Salmela and R. Bain.

Also Present: CEO Brad Dolinski, Daryl Pederson, Andy Shaw and Gina Vickerman.

Absent: M Rahier, T. Danielson and Drew Francisco.

- Pledge of allegiance was recited.
- A motion to adopt the agenda. Seconded; motion carried. A motion was made to consent agenda. Seconded; motion carried.
- A safety discussion was held. Andy explained the importance of Estate planning at any age and said no area of law has more problems than Estates.
- Brad reviewed the 2025 budget. A motion to approve the budget as presented and open to discussion. Seconded. Further discussion was held and L. Samela called for a vote. Ayes; 8, Opposed; none; motion passed.
- A motion to accept the Operating Reports as presented. Seconded; motion passed.
- Daryl presented the Line Department report. Crews completed 1 new service this month along with many tree trimming tickets. ROW clearing is now in the Inger/Bowstring area. The upcoming reconductor projects will be on County Road 172, County Road 152 and at Hwy 6 and County Road 14.
- Brad gave the Members Service report in Drew's absence. Load control audits are under way and the audit showed 9 units not controlling out of 30 audited sites. The Bigfork Area Revitalization will be opening the first grant application window January 2, 2025. IRRRB will match the grant funds we currently have available.
- Brad presented the Office Report. The 2024 Write-off's total was \$12,567.83. The capital credit checks were mailed out on December 10th. Moved to accept the Office Report. Seconded; motion passed.
- Brad presented the CEO report. The MREA Annual Meeting will be held February 17th – 19th. Moved to receive compensation. Seconded; motion carried. The GRE Regional Meetings will be held February 5th & 6th. Moved to receive compensation. Seconded; motion carried. MISO board approved Tranche 2.1 of its long-range transmission plan.
- Wes Waller gave the MREA report. A motion to keep T. Christensen and J. White as the alternate voting delegates. Seconded; motion carried.
- Lloyd gave the GRE report. A motion to accept the PPA and Appendix B Resolution with one word change of "per event" not per day. Seconded; motion passed. Moved to permit Brad and Lloyd to sign as POA on the Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange Subscriber's Agreement. Seconded; motion passed.
- Made a motion to adjourn. Seconded; motion carried. The regular meeting adjourned at 1:50 p.m.

GRE receives over \$800 million

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annually, reducing carbon dioxide emissions by over 5 million tons and creating a host of benefits across the communities we serve."

GRE's \$812 million New ERA award will enable the cooperative to procure 1,275 megawatts of renewable energy from rural areas across Minnesota and North Dakota. The projects will include large-scale wind energy, distributed renewable energy and other innovative energy solutions aimed at advancing sustainability across the region.

"This funding represents a once-in-a-generation investment for rural electric cooperatives. Our member-owners have presented a robust, complex and ambitious collection of projects and initiatives that not only help reduce carbon dioxide emissions but also provide tremendous, long-term value for our membership," said GRE Director of Member Services Jeff Haase. "The funding ensures enhanced reliability, rate stability, and creates new educational and job opportunities that will have lasting positive impacts on our communities."

Following the announcement of GRE's award, the USDA has now allocated approximately 90% of the total available New ERA funding, benefiting rural electric cooperatives across the United States.

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To be placed on the board meeting agenda:

Regular board meetings are generally held the fourth Thursday of every month. If you wish to speak with the board or have an item that you would like to have placed on the agenda, please contact CEO Brad Dolinski at least two weeks in advance to be included on the agenda.

EFFECTIVE WAYS To Lower Home Energy Use

Outside factors, such as fuel and equipment costs and extreme weather, can impact electricity prices. But you have the power to control home energy consumption by taking proactive steps to reduce energy use.



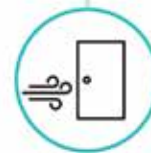
Thermostat Management

The thermostat is one of the best places to lower your energy use because heating and cooling account for a significant portion of home energy consumption. During winter months, adjust your thermostat to the lowest comfortable setting to reduce energy use. The Dept. of Energy recommends 68 degrees or lower.



Utilize Off-Peak Energy Times

Plan energy-intensive chores and tasks, such as running the dishwasher or washing clothing, during off-peak energy hours, when the demand for electricity is lower. Off-peak times are early in the morning or late evenings. By scheduling these activities during off-peak periods, you can help keep rates lower, reduce demand and relieve pressure on the grid.



Seal Your Home

According to ENERGY STAR®, about 20% of heated or cooled air that moves through a home is lost due to lack of proper insulation and air leaks. Ensure your home has sufficient insulation levels and seal air leaks around windows and doors with caulk and weatherstripping. This is a simple, effective way to lower energy use and improve indoor comfort.



Maintain Equipment

The health of your heating and cooling system is essential for comfort and can greatly impact energy bills. Maintain your system by regularly replacing dirty filters and scheduling annual inspections for maintenance and necessary repairs.

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Cold weather rule & energy assistance program notice

In accordance with Minnesota’s Cold Weather Rule, electric service cannot be disconnected for nonpayment between Oct. 1 and April 30 if electricity is the primary heat source and ALL of the following statements apply:

- Your household income is at or below 50% of the state median household income. Income may be verified on forms provided by North Itasca Electric Cooperative or by the local energy assistance provider.
- You enter into and make reasonably timely payments under a payment agreement that considers the financial resources of the household.
- You receive referrals to energy assistance, weatherization, conservation, or other programs likely to reduce your energy bills from North Itasca Electric Cooperative. Minnesota’s Cold Weather Rule does not completely stop winter disconnects. Before disconnecting electric service to residential members between Oct. 1 and April 30,

North Itasca Electric Cooperative must provide:

- A 30-day notice of disconnection;
- A statement of members’ rights and responsibilities;
- A list of local energy assistance providers;
- Forms on which to request Cold Weather Rule protection; and
- A statement explaining available payment plans and other options to continue service.

Energy Assistance Program

The Energy Assistance Program (EAP) is a federally funded program through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services which helps low-income renters and homeowners pay for home heating costs and furnace repairs. Household income must be at or below 60 percent of the state median income (\$67,764 for a family of four) to qualify for benefits. Applications must be received or postmarked by May 31, 2025. To learn more about the EAP program or to apply for assistance:

- Visit the Minnesota Department of Commerce Energy Assistance website, <https://mn.gov/commerce/consumers/consumer-assistance/energy-assistance/>, for more details and to access the application portal.
- Contact your county EAP service provider for additional information and assistance, Kootasca Community Action (218) 999-0800. North Itasca Electric Cooperative exists because of you, and we are dedicated to the people and communities we serve. If you are having difficulty paying your electric bill and do not qualify for either of these programs, please contact Sheila Hafeman at (218) 743-3131 to set up a payment plan.

Energy assistance

If you cannot pay your winter heating bills, contact one of these locations for energy assistance help.

KOOTASCA ENERGY ASS'T.
822 NE 5th Ave.
Grand Rapids MN 55744
218-999-0800, 877-687-1163

BI-COUNTY COMMUNITY ACTION COUNCIL
P.O. Box 579
Bemidji, MN 56601-0579
800-332-7161

ITASCA COUNTY SOCIAL SERV.
Itasca County Courthouse
123 NE 4th St
Grand Rapids, MN 55744
218-327-2941

KOOCHICHING COUNTY FAMILY SERVICES
615 4th St
International Falls, MN 56649
218-283-8405

LEECH LAKE ENERGY ASST.
115 6th St, Ste E, Cass Lake, MN 56633
218-335-8292

Electrical Inspections

Except for minor repair work, all electrical work you do at your home, cabin, or property is required to be inspected by a State Electrical Inspector. A rough-in inspection must be made before any wiring is covered. A final inspection is also required. Please visit www.electricity.state.mn.us for more information.

The inspectors can be reached weekday mornings between 7:00 a.m. and 8:30 a.m.

- **Itasca County** – Steve Bartlett (218) 591-1616
- **Koochiching County** – Curt Collier (218) 966-5070
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GRE to install advanced grid monitoring

GRE, the not-for-profit power cooperative serving 1.7 million people across Minnesota and Wisconsin, today announced a partnership with Prisma Photonics to deploy its PrismaPower™ monitoring technology across approximately 90 miles of transmission lines in northern Minnesota. The partnership will enable real-time monitoring and notification of threats to Great River Energy’s power lines and to its member-owners and customers. These threats include wildfires, icing, wind and physical damage, like downed lines.

The multi-year project will implement PrismaCircuit™ and PrismaClimate™ solutions across five critical transmission lines connected to four substations through fiber optic lines, strengthening grid resilience ahead of Minnesota’s challenging winter season. The monitored lines are in central and northern Minnesota.

“As we work to maintain reliable service for our member-owners throughout Minnesota’s

The technology delivers real-time alerts for various grid events, including electrical faults, physical disturbances and severe weather conditions, with precise location information down to the specific tower.

distinct seasons, we’re leveraging innovative new technologies that maximize our existing infrastructure investments,” said Great River Energy’s Priti Patel, vice president and chief transmission officer. “This solution allows us to utilize our current fiber optic network in a new way to increase resilience in areas of northern and central Minnesota.”

Unlike traditional monitoring solutions that require installing physical sensors on power lines, Prisma Photonics’ technology transforms existing optical fiber infrastructure into an advanced sensing system. This approach enables seamless and rapid deployment without service interruption or the need for

specialized installation crews. The technology covers every section of the monitored lines in all weather conditions. “As the world grapples with increasing extreme weather events, innovative power utilities like Great River Energy are working to adapt by hardening and modernizing grid assets to ensure safe, continued service for customers,” said Dr. Eran Inbar, CEO of Prisma Photonics.

“Our partnership with Great River Energy demonstrates how utilities can extract additional value from their existing infrastructure to enhance grid resilience while avoiding traditional sensor-based solutions’ complexity and maintenance requirements.”

The technology delivers real-time alerts for various grid events, including electrical faults, physical disturbances and severe weather conditions, with precise location information down to the specific tower. This enables maintenance crews to respond more efficiently, reducing downtime and improving overall grid reliability.

Roxanne's Sales Talk

by Roxanne Prather, Member Services Representative

As I'm writing this, I'm thinking about all the fires in California, and how blessed we are to not go through what they are going through. My heart breaks thinking about all they have lost. I can't imagine what they are going through.

This all makes me think of all the house fires that happen in the winter. Most of these fires can be prevented by cleaning your dryer lint vent trap every time you use it. Believe it or not, 20-30% of people worldwide don't clean their vent.

If you notice lint on your clothes in the dryer you might need to pull the screen, poke a lint brush into the track to clean out any lint that has gone past your lint screen.

Space heaters are another big fire hazard. All it takes to start a fire is for the heater to short out, or for someone to accidentally place a piece of clothing on top of it.

Nowadays, most space heaters have auto shut off in case they get tipped over. The older heaters don't have an auto option. If you must use a space heater, make sure you know which type you have. Always keep it out of the way of traffic and never put one in a child's room. If you need more heat in an area of your home, space heaters are not the way to go.

On top of that, using a space heater can be very expensive. Here's how to figure out what it costs to run your space heater.

Look at your heater and find out the wattage. A 1500-watt electric space heater draws 12.5 amps of electricity at 120 volts (Watts = Amps x Volts). You are charged on your bill by kilowatt-hours or (kWh). So, take your space heater rating in Watts (which you should be able to find on a sticker on the

heater) and multiply it by how many hours a day you use it, then divide the answer by 1000. That will give you the kilowatt-hours. If you're using a 1500-watt space heater for 24 hours it would be 36 kWh x 0.13 cents/kWh = \$4.68 a day or \$140.40 in 30 days.

If you need more heat in your home and are looking for an affordable solution, please stop in or call the Co-op to talk to Andrew Francisco. Andrew is great at figuring out options to keep your home comfortable without breaking the bank.

Also, remember we offer financing to those who qualify. To qualify, you just need to be current on your bill for 3 consecutive months. If qualified, you can put as little as 20% down to finance for up to 3 years. Also, don't forget to ask about rebates!

Roxanne's Wisdoms:

Why is my garbage disposal not working?

If your disposal is not working, first check to see if the breaker has tripped. The breaker will trip if something gets stuck in the grinding plate.

If the breaker has tripped make sure the disposal is turned off or unplugged. Afterwards use an allen wrench to insert into the hole in the bottom of the disposal and turn the grinder back and forth to get the object out. If there isn't a hole at the bottom of the disposal take a wooden broom handle and go through the top of the sink drain.

If the breaker has not been tripped. Look to see if the stopper start switch on the disposal has been properly installed. If your disposal doesn't have the stopper start switch, check to see if the wall switch is faulty. To check this, use an ohmmeter.

If the wall switch is good, check the safety switch, using an ohmmeter. The safety switch protects the motor in case something jams. When you have checked all the items above, and the disposal is still not working, it could be a worn-out motor. If it is the motor, you will have to replace it.

Remember, if you need help with repairs you can go to RepairClinic.com to watch videos and order the parts you need.

Electricity FAQs from the Energy Information Administration:

How old are U.S. nuclear power plants, and when was the newest one built?

The average age of U.S. commercial nuclear power reactors that were operational as of April 30, 2024, is about 42 years. The oldest operating reactor is Nine Mile Point Unit 1 in New York State, which entered commercial service in December 1969. The newest reactor to enter service is Vogtle Unit 4 at the Alvin W. Vogtle Electric Generating Plant in Georgia that began commercial operation on April 29, 2024.

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) licenses new commercial nuclear reactors to originally operate for 40 years. Before expiration of the original

license, licensees can apply for a 20-year operating license extension. The NRC may subsequently grant a third 20-year operating license extension for a total operational life of 80 years.

How much coal, natural gas, or petroleum is used to generate a kilowatt-hour of electricity?

The annual average amounts of coal, natural gas, and petroleum fuels used to generate a kilowatt-hour (kWh) of electricity by U.S. electric utilities and independent power producers in 2022 were:

- Coal—1.14 pounds/kWh
- Natural gas—7.42 cu.ft./kWh
- Petroleum liquids—0.08 gal./kWh
- Petroleum coke—0.85 lbs./kWh

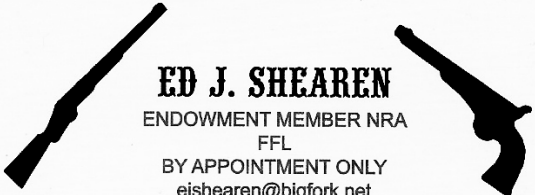
How many power plants are in the United States?

As of December 31, 2022, there were 25,378 electric generators at about 12,538 utility-scale electric power plants in the United States.

How many nuclear power plants are in the United States?

As of April 30, 2024, there were 54 commercially operating nuclear power plants with 94 nuclear power reactors in 28 states. Illinois has 11 reactors, the most of any state, with a total nameplate electricity generating capacity of 12,415 megawatts (MW), equal to 12% of total U.S. operating nuclear electricity generation capacity.

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GRE/MP 345 kV transmission line upgrade moves forward

>from p.1
members and stakeholders who have participated in the regulatory process. This project will serve Minnesotans for decades, helping ensure a reliable, resilient electric grid for our region as our energy transition continues. We will continue our commitment to community as we work with property owners over the coming years to construct and energize this project responsibly,” said GRE Vice President and Chief Transmission Officer Priti Patel.

The joint project is one of 18 transmission projects approved in July 2022 by the region’s grid operator, the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO), in the first phase of its Long Range Transmission Plan to integrate new generation resources and boost grid reliability and resilience as the energy transition continues.

“Expanding the transmission system and working together with other utilities and stakeholders is how we’re maintaining the safe and reliable service our customers and communities depend on while building the carbon-free future,” said Dan Gunderson, vice president – Transmission and Distribution for Minnesota Power. “This joint project with Great River Energy will support local reliability and enhance the regional grid as the way we generate, transmit and use electricity evolves. It also will enhance the grid’s flexibility and resiliency. We appreciate the thorough regulatory process and the input and interaction of many stakeholders to achieve the best route possible.”

The Northland Reliability Project also will be a significant boost to Minnesota’s economy, according to a study from the Bureau of Business and Economic Research at UMD’s Labovitz School of Business and Economics. Researchers estimate the project will have a \$2 billion total impact. The report, “Northland Reliability Project Economic Impact Analysis,” can be found on the University of Minnesota’s Digital Conservancy website.

Minnesota Power and GRE held nearly 30 public open houses and stakeholder meetings to provide opportunities for engagement with landowners, local governments, agencies, Tribal Nations and tribal

organizations. Public feedback is reflected in the route the utilities proposed and that the MPUC just approved.

Construction is expected to begin on the segment of the project in Benton and Sherburne counties in late 2025 and on the remainder of the project in 2027 with the transmission line expected to be operational by 2030. The route approved by the Commission generally follows existing transmission corridors and runs through Itasca, Aitkin, Crow Wing, Morrison, Benton and Sherburne counties.

The transmission line is expected to be operational by 2030.

The project is estimated to cost over \$1 billion. Final project costs will be determined by final routing and design considerations.

The MPUC will separately review cost recovery for Minnesota Power’s share of the project.

Utilities across the region are significantly increasing the amount of renewable energy they provide to their customers. By reducing coal-based energy and more than doubling renewable energy, GRE anticipates that by 2035 its retail electric sales will be provided by a 90% carbon-free power supply in alignment with the Minnesota carbon-free standard. Minnesota Power was the first utility in the state to deliver 50% renewable energy to customers in 2021 with plans for 80% of its electric sales to be provided by a carbon-free power supply by 2030.

Project details

The Northland Reliability project is divided into two segments.

Segment one: Approximately 140 miles of new 345-kV double-circuit transmission lines will be constructed primarily along existing transmission line corridors, from Minnesota Power’s Iron Range Substation in Itasca County to GRE’s Benton County Substation near St. Cloud.

Segment two: A 20-mile 230-kV line will be replaced with two 345-kV circuits along existing transmission corridors from the Benton County Substation to a new Big Oaks Substation that will be built as part of a separate project. A 20-mile 345-kV line will also be replaced along existing transmission corridors from the Benton County Substation to the Sherco Substation in Sherburne County.

Other improvements: In addition to the transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project will expand the Iron Range Substation near Grand Rapids and the Benton County Substation near St. Cloud. A new Cuyuna Series Compensation Station will be built in Crow Wing County near the existing Riverton Substation.


For more information and a map of the Northland Reliability Project’s route corridor, visit northlandreliabilityproject.com.

The statements contained in this release and statements that ALLETE may make orally in connection with this release that are not historical facts, are forward-looking statements. Actual results may differ materially from those projected in the forward-looking statements. These forward-looking statements involve risks and uncertainties and investors are directed to the risks discussed in documents filed by ALLETE with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

TIPS TO AVOID ENERGY SCAMS ⚠️

Scammers will try anything to deceive utility customers, including a tactic that claims customers have overpaid their bill. If you receive a call, text or email from someone claiming you overpaid a utility bill and need to provide your banking or credit card information to receive a credit, it’s likely a scam. In most cases, your utility will apply a credit to your account to cover future charges or refund an overpayment with a mailed check.

Source: Utilities United Against Scams



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Wrapped in Savings

by Abby Berry spaces.

Ensuring your home is properly insulated can improve energy efficiency and make your home more comfortable. Insulation acts like a cozy coat that reduces heat loss during winter months and a protective layer that reduces heat gain during summer months.

Many older homes have less insulation than newer homes, but even newer homes can benefit from additional insulation. While it's not the least expensive efficiency improvement, adding insulation and air sealing your home can provide the biggest bang for your buck in energy savings and overall comfort.

The most common areas to insulate are attics, ceilings, crawlspaces or unconditioned basements, exterior and interior walls, floors, and ductwork located in unconditioned

The amount and effectiveness rating of insulation required for each area varies by climate, but many websites like The Department of Energy or Home Depot provide easy-to-follow recommendations. Visit energy.gov/insulation to learn about recommended R-values for specific areas of the home based on climate zones.

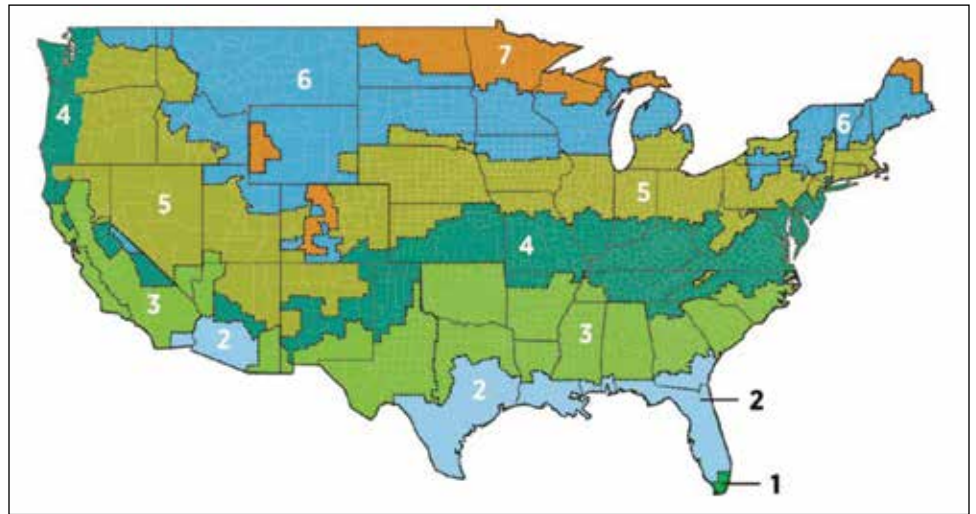
It's important to understand how insulation effectiveness is measured. Insulation is rated in R-value, which measures the material's resistance to conductive heat flow. The higher the R-value, the greater the insulating effectiveness. The R-value you'll need depends on factors like climate, type of heating and cooling system and which area of the home you plan to insulate.

Insulation is offered in

a wide range of materials from bulky fiberglass rolls to cellulose materials made from recycled paper products. If you're considering installing additional insulation, talk to an expert who can offer guidance on the right materials for your budget, climate and comfort needs.

Investing in proper insulation for your home not only enhances comfort but also reduces energy consumption.

Abby Berry writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.



(top) U.S. map of climate zones, (below) chart of recommended R values for areas of the home based on climate zone. Source: energy.gov/insulation.

Climate Zone	Uninsulated Attic	3-4 inches of Existing Attic Insulation	Uninsulated Floor	Uninsulated Wood-Frame Wall	Insulated Wood Frame Wall
1	R30-R49	R19-R38	R13	R13 or R0 + R10 CI*	N/A
2	R49-R60	R38-R49	R13	R13 or R0 + R10 CI	N/A
3	R49-R60	R38-R49	R19	R20 or R13 + R5 CI or R0 + R15 CI	Add R5 CI
4 except Marine	R60	R49	R19	R20 + R5 CI or R13 + R10 CI or R0 + R15 CI	Add R10 CI
4 Marine and 5	R60	R49	R30	R20 + R5 CI or R13 + R10 CI or R0 + R15 CI	Add R10 CI
6	R60	R49	R30	R20 + R5 CI or R13 + R10 CI or R0 + R20 CI	Add R10 CI
7 and 8	R60	R49	R38	R20 + R5 CI or R13 + R10 CI or R0 + R20 CI	Add R10 CI



Meter seals

If you or an electrician is performing electrical work at your residence which requires opening meter sockets or load control receivers, you need to contact North Itasca Electric first.

By contacting North Itasca Electric, you can help prevent possible problems which could occur when North Itasca Electric finds that seals have been cut. These problems would mostly be on sub meters where load control meters are installed.

This equipment is owned, controlled and maintained by North Itasca Electric. These seals may only be cut if permission is granted by North Itasca Electric in advance or deemed an emergency by an electrician.

North Itasca Electric does realize that there could be instances where work needs to be done, in such cases; North Itasca Electric still needs to be contacted. If it is determined that loads have not been controlled during load control periods, demand charges could be applied to your billing.

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MRB1987AWW \$885.30 SALE \$796.77

Midea 18.7 c.f. white, 30" bottom mount refrigerator. 2 level freezer drawer, full width door shelves, humidity controlled crisper bins, LED lighting throughout the refrigerator, frost-free, ice maker ready, Energy Star certified.



FRSS2623AW- \$1151.33 SALE \$1036.20

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MRF266N6CWE \$1402.23 SALE \$1262.01

Mora 27 c.f. white, French door with freezer drawer, 36" wide refrigerator. Filtered water dispenser, automatic ice maker, LED lighting, quiet operation, full width pantry drawer, gallon door storage, 2 humidity controlled drawers, built-in ice maker, internal filtered water dispenser inside the refrigerator. 2 tier freezer drawer.



FRSS2623AW \$1203.33 SALE \$1083.00

(Same as above but stainless)

LRDCS2603S \$1824.49 SALE \$1642.04

LG 26 c.f. stainless bottom mount, 33" wide refrigerator with door cooling, ThinQ, pull drawer bottom freezer, print - proof finish, Energy Star certified, multi - air flow freshness system, built-in digital sensors, smart cooling system, humidity crispers. Factory installed ice maker stores up to 12 lbs. of ice at a time. Freezer drawer with 2-tier organization. LED lighting throughout. SmartDiagnosis saves time and money on service calls.



There will be some others on the floor as well, call Roxanne or stop in to check them out!

218-743-3132 – Email: roxannep@nieci.com



Blandin Foundation Scholarships

Blandin Foundation Scholarship applications for the 2025-2026 academic year are now available.

Blandin Foundation Scholarships – \$1,000 to \$6,000 per student each year – are for every student of high schools in the Itasca County area and Hill City, Remer, Blackduck, Northome and Bug O Nay Ge Shig schools, even if you're not in the top of your class. Homeschooled and online students who would have graduated from one of these schools are also eligible.

You can apply if you are under age 25, your Student Aid Index (SAI) from the FAFSA is under 30,000, and you plan to pursue certificate programs, community technical or tribal college, and colleges or universities anywhere in the United States.

Find eligibility information, application link and helpful information: blandinfoundation.org/programs/itasca-area/scholarships/

Blandin Foundation scholarships fund up to a bachelor's degree. It is not available for masters/graduate degrees or doctorates/post-doctorates.

Please note: If you are encountering barriers to FAFSA completion, please reach out. We are happy to assist you in the process and can consider special circumstances if needed.

New scholarship opportunity for students in northern Itasca County

Through the Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation (GRACF), a new scholarship is now available to help area students in the city of Squaw Lake, and Good Hope, Max, Third River, Moose Park, Alvwood, Kinghurst, Ardenhurst, and Grattan townships to pursue further education. The Popple River Fund scholarship is meant to honor the curiosity instilled on the river and in nearby forests, by the donor's grandparents Eddie and Elna Downs, uncle Steven Downs, and mother Diane Downs Derr. This scholarship is open to both traditional and nontraditional students who meet the eligibility criteria.

To qualify, applicants must have graduated from a public high school (traditional or public charter) or earned a GED and live in the above areas. The scholarship is not available to graduates of homeschool or private/parochial schools. Whether a student is heading to college for the first time, returning to complete a degree, or pursuing a new career path, this scholarship aims to make further education more accessible.

Scholarship Application 2025.

The GRACF scholarship application opened on January 1, 2025, and is **open until midnight on March 1, 2025**. Scholarships are one way that GRACF has been connecting donors' charitable intentions to community needs for almost 30 years to make our Greater Itasca Area a better place to live.

To apply for this scholarship or other available scholarships, go to the GRACF website at www.gracf.org > Apply for a Scholarship and apply to the Universal



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Dr. Helterbrand graduated from St. Louis University School of Medicine and is a proud U.S. Air Force veteran.
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Polar Revue coming to Edge stage March 2

It's time for the annual local talent show hosted by Ebb and Flow Dance! All ages and talents are invited to the Edge Theatre stage on Sunday, March 2 starting at 2 p.m.

In the past, acts have included instrumentals, singing, comedy, skits, light shows and even hula hoop routines.

To sign up, call Jayme Rahier at (218) 244-5019. Come out to perform or to watch your friends from the community showcase their talents!

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Classic Movie Series

by Jack Nachbar

Coming up is February and that means love and romance for Valentine's Day, right? So the Classic Movie Series in Bigfork is going to deliver big time. *Love Crazy* (1941) stars the greatest romantic comedy team of all time.

William Powell and Myrna Loy each made dozens of movies, but they are best remembered for the 14 they played together. *Love Crazy* was their 10th pairing, and, as the film's title hints, it was their craziest and funniest.

Bill and Myrna are a happily married couple. But Myrna mistakenly believes Bill is having an affair. So, she demands a divorce. Bill learns that if he can be declared insane, the divorce can be put off for years. Nutty schemes, disguises, and verbal fantasies follow in speedy order, and every goofy moment is funny. The movie is a "Screwball Comedy" at its absolute best.

Love Crazy will be shown Thursday, Feb. 13 (just a day before Valentine's Day) at 6:30 p.m. at the Edge Center Theater in Bigfork. FREE! And as an ad for the movie says, "Hearty Laughters welcome! Come on over and howl!"

MARCH CLASSIC MOVIE: Get out your ten gallon Stetsons and saddle up! It's the famous Western, *The Magnificent Seven* (1960), starring Yul Brynner and Steve McQueen. Thursday, March 13 at 6:30 p.m. at The Edge.

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DNR accepting comments on OHV strategic master plans

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is accepting comments through Feb. 21 on strategic master plans for each of the three primary categories of off-highway vehicle (OHV) recreation: all-terrain vehicles (ATV), off-road vehicles (ORV), and off-highway motorcycles (OHM).

The plans communicate the background and trends of OHV recreation, share information about statewide OHV trail management and strategic planning, and provide guidance regarding future trail maintenance and development practices. While the plans do not identify specific trail alignments or include commitments for future development, they do identify considerations that might make an area well-suited or ill-suited for future trail development. In addition to the three strategic master plans, the DNR has developed an overview document that ties the individual plans together.

The plans and overview document are available for review at <https://engage.dnr.state.mn.us>, click on "Off-Highway Vehicles Strategic Master Plans."

Comments on the draft plans must be submitted no later than 4:30 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 21.

Comments can be provided electronically through the project webpage or by emailing them to OHV.Planning.DNR@state.mn.us. Mail-in comments should be sent to Molly Lou Pintok, 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155.

Black spruce and jack pine cones

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources State Forest Nursery is seeking individuals to collect black spruce and jack pine cones this winter.

In addition to helping sustain Minnesota's forests, cone collectors will receive payment for high-quality cones. Currently, a bushel (about nine gallons) of healthy, viable black spruce cones fetches \$100 and jack pine cones are worth \$30 per bushel.

Black spruce typically grows in northern lowland bogs and wetlands, while jack pine is found in sandy, well-drained soils in northern and central parts of the state. Seed collectors should make sure they identify the right species before collecting.

Deer River is one of the drop-off stations accepting jack pine and black spruce cones. Before collecting, give them a call (218-212-2000) to see if that area is still collecting cones. The area office can also provide instructions on proper collection and labeling. Cones must be ripe, closed, and free of stems and debris. Currently, the collection window for black spruce and jack pine seeds is from now through the end of February. For contact information, seed collection tips, and more, visit the DNR's seed and cone collection webpage (mndnr.gov/seedcone).

Pie and ice cream social Feb. 14

Jesse Lake Lutheran will host a Pie and Ice Cream Social on Valentine's Day – Friday, Feb. 14 from 2-4 p.m. A free will donation is asked.

Beverages will be served as well as favorite pies with ice cream. Really wish you could take a pie home? There will be whole pie silent auctions!

Bring your sweetheart or your sweet tooth!

Jesse Lake Lutheran Church is two miles west of Talmoon at 45834 County Road 4. For more information, call the church at (218) 832-3883.

2024 Forest Health Annual Report

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has released its 2024 Forest Health Annual Report which uses data from aerial surveys and on-the-ground site visits to compile information about insect outbreaks, disease epidemics, and other impacts to the state's forests.

DNR aerially surveyed 17.5 million acres of Minnesota for damage to forests in 2024. Since the early 1950s, aerial surveys have been a valuable tool for discovering, tracking, and managing forest health threats like spruce budworm, oak wilt, ice storm damage, eastern larch beetle, and more.

"By tracking changes and trends of what's happening to trees, the DNR provides information that landowners and forest managers can use to help make our forests healthier and more resilient," DNR Forest Health Program Coordinator Brian Schwingle said.

Key findings in the 2024 report include:

- The rainy growing season of 2024 helped reduce oak mortality from twolined chestnut borer and Armillaria root disease. However, the rain caused widespread fungal leaf disease on poplars across Minnesota, though affected trees should not be impacted long-term.

- Spruce budworm damaged more acres in 2024 than it has since 1961. This damage was concentrated in St. Louis, Lake, and Cook counties.

- Emerald ash borer was discovered in five additional counties, increasing the number of Minnesota counties with known EAB infestation to 53.

- Oak wilt was confirmed for the first time in Carlton and Kandiyohi counties, bringing the number of Minnesota counties with known oak wilt to 33.

Managing forests so they can thrive is a cooperative effort. Minnesotans can help keep trees and forests healthy through proper yard tree care and forest management. To help reduce the spread of harmful pests and diseases, buy and burn local firewood and report EAB if spotted outside the quarantine area to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.

The report is available at www.dnr.state.mn.us/treecare/forest_health/annualreports.html.

Bigfork swears in new council members, declares vacancy

by Sally Sedgwick

Newly elected councilors Annette Buckingham and Samantha Olson (incumbent) were sworn in at the January 14 Bigfork City Council meeting, and a vacancy was declared to fill the seat of Jerry Denny. Residents may deliver letters of interest to City Hall during open hours until Feb. 11.

During Public Forum members of the Bigfork Improvement Group (BIG) said the group was seeking volunteers, especially from Bigfork itself. The group hosts events for youth and elderly during the year. The next meeting is Feb. 5 at 5:30 p.m. at the BIG Community Center, and it is open to the public. The group can also be contacted via Facebook.

Other questions from community members were raised on dogs running loose in town, slippery sidewalks, the ice rink not open or flooded properly, and the beach area being open for walking without a plowed area for parking.

The skating rink was addressed during the meeting. Advertisements for an attendant have not produced any interest. When one is found, the rink will reopen; watch the city Facebook page.

In the water study on piping material mandated by the state, a total of 6 services using galvanized pipe and 24 using unknown materials were found; Widseth will apply for funding to replace the 23 city-side connections in the water system where unknown materials were used, and also for grants to replace the other (customer) piping.

The Scenic Range NewsForum was selected as legal newspaper.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 11 at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall.

Excerpted from an article in the Scenic Range NewsForum



2025 Bigfork City Council members: (back) Mayor Amy Pifher; (front from left) Annette Buckingham, Samantha Olson and Sarah Scheff.

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Visit your co-op at www.NorthItascaElectric.com
get updates on Facebook!

SAIL classes

For more information or to register (required), contact ElderCircle at (218) 999-9233. New attendees may start anytime. Weights are provided but please bring your own water.

Online schedule:

- Virtual via Zoom video conference
Mondays & Thursdays, 10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
- Virtual via Zoom video conference
Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9:00-10:30 a.m.

In person at:

- Bigfork Old Scenic Church
Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9:00-10:30 a.m.
- Bowstring Town Hall
Tuesdays & Thursdays, 10:00-11:30 a.m.
- Deer River, Bethany Lutheran
Mondays & Thursdays, 10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

FREE Tax Preparation



Tax preparation for families and individuals of all ages and backgrounds

February 3 - April 11, 2025

BY APPOINTMENT ONLY

For information and appointments:
218-245-9202

- By appointment only--walk-in service is not available.
- Limited duration face to-face contact.

Sponsored by:



- Free service for families and individuals of all ages.
- AARP membership is not required.
- Tax-Aide volunteers are IRS trained and certified every year.

This service is available through a grant provided by the State of Minnesota.



Defensive Driving

Retired Minnesota State Patrol Trooper Mike Flatley offers a defensive driving class by Zoom for ages 55 and older. A class is scheduled for Feb. 17, 5-9 p.m. Due to a change in the law, the four hour course replaces the initial 8-hour course, which is no longer required. Cost is \$15. Preregister at (218) 750-3189 or by email at mnflats@hotmail.com. Early registration is suggested. See mndefensivedriving.blogspot.com for more information.

Community Cafe in Deer River

The Community Cafe is available to anyone who is in need of a meal. Each Monday - Thursday, 4:30 p.m.- 6:30 p.m. (or until gone), a nutritious three-course meal is served. Location: King Elementary School door #9. For more information, visit communitycafemn.org.

B.I.G. Community Center in Bigfork

Coffee Club/Cribbage, Monday-Friday 7-9 a.m.
Bingo every Thursday, 1-3 p.m.
B.I.G. meetings 1st Wednesday, 5:30 p.m.
Crafting Group 3rd Wednesday, 5-7 p.m.

Outdoor skills & stewardship

A little cabin fever settling in? Try these Department of Natural Resources "Outdoor skills and Stewardship" webinars.

Each webinar begins at noon on Wednesdays and lasts less than an hour. More information and to register, visit dnr.state.mn.us/fishwildlife/outreach. For questions email benjamin.kohn@state.mn.us or call (651) 259-5178. You can also browse and listen to previous webinars.

Feb. 5: Outdoor classes at school are cool!

Join us for a discussion with Luke Adam and students from Nashwauk-Keewatin High School on how they have been able to integrate fishing, hunting and other outdoor pursuits into their school class offerings.

Feb. 12: Status of the American Chestnut in MN

The American Chestnut was brought to near extinction due to the introduction of the deadly Chestnut Blight Fungus. Minnesota DNR Division of Fish and Wildlife Staff Member David Stein will explore the history, distribution, and ecology of the American Chestnut in Minnesota, as well as current conservation and restoration efforts being used.

Feb. 19: Appreciating birds we love to hate

House sparrows and cowbirds. Vultures and grackles. These much-maligned birds have plenty of beauty and intrigue when we stop and take a closer look. Join a virtual birding adventure with Amy Simso Dean as she explores the life histories and behaviors of common species with a bad rap.

Feb. 26: Reading the landscape

Environments are never static, they are always changing, and there are always reasons that can be found for what you are observing. Bryan Wood, executive director of Osprey Wilds Environmental Learning Center, will teach the concepts of how to read a landscape, from making observations to thinking through the possible factors at play. Feel like a detective as you start discovering clues that allow you to tell the story of an area.

...from www.dnr.state.mn.us/fishwildlife/outreach/index.html

area bookmobile stops

New to the area? Get your Arrowhead Library Card on the Bookmobile.

Mondays: No stop in Feb.; Mar. 10, 31

Note: *the Gemmel stop has been canceled.*

1:45 - 2:30 p.m. Northome; Apartments
3:15 - 4:15 p.m. Alvwood; Hoot-n-Holler
4:30 - 5:30 p.m. Squaw Lake; Community Ctr

Note: *the Squaw Lake stop has been shortened.*

Tuesdays: Feb. 18; Mar. 11

12:00 - 1 p.m. Bowstring Store
2:30-3:30 p.m. Effie: Country Store
4:00-5:15 p.m. Bigfork: City Hall

Note: *the Bigfork stop has been shortened*

Thursdays: Feb. 20; Mar. 13

11:45 a.m.-12:45 p.m. Togo: Junction Bar & Grill

Bookmobile or Mail-a-Book information: call Arrowhead Library System at (218) 741-3840

— Community Education —

Bigfork: Register for classes at 743-3444, Ext. 42503, or online at www.getlearning.org,

OPEN BASKETBALL

Date: Wednesday nights through April
Time: 7 - 8:30 p.m.

Location: Bigfork School small gym

Cost:\$10 (pays insurance entire period)

Improve your game, stay fit, and enjoy fun, friendly competition in a supportive, energetic environment. All skill levels welcome!

Deer River: Register for classes online at (218) 246-8241, Ext. 60227 or www.getlearning.org

ADULT OPEN VOLLEYBALL

Date: Sundays through April 13

Time: 6:30-9 p.m.

Location: Deer River High School School East Gym

Cost:\$10

Join a fun, competitive co-ed volleyball league! 18 and up

FITNESS WALKING

Date: Monday-Friday

Time: 3:30-7 p.m.

Location: Deer River High School

Cost:\$2

Register at the DRHS Office or call 218-246-8241 ext. 60227.

Marcell: For information, call the Family Center at (218) 832-3444.

FITNESS WALKING

Date: Tuesdays, Thursdays Saturdays

Time: TU, TH: 11 a.m.-1 p.m., 4-7 p.m.; SA 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Location: Marcell Family Center

Cost: Free

Visit your co-op at www.NorthItascaElectric.com

Northome Food Shelf

12059 Main St

Bring your own bags.

1st Mon.: 9 a.m.-noon

2nd Mon.: 2-5 p.m.

3rd Mon.: 9 a.m.-noon

4th Mon.: 2-5 p.m.

Northern Itasca Emergency Food Shelf

200 Main, Bigfork

Thursdays

12:30-3 p.m.

3rd Thursday

12:30-4:30 p.m.

(218) 256-4170

Blackduck Community Library:

(218) 835-6600

Tues: 1-6 p.m..

Wed: 9 a.m.-noon.

Thurs:12-5 p.m.

Fri: 12-5 p.m.

Sat.: 9 a.m.-noon

Northome Library

(218) 897-5952

Mon: 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Tues: 9 a.m.- 3 p.m.

Wed: 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Thurs: noon - 6 p.m.

Fri: 9 a.m.- noon

Resource Centers:

Blackduck:
(218) 835-5768

Northome:
(218) 897-5952

Community News

Email editor at sedgwick@paulbunyan.net,

~ February Calendar ~

Bigfork

Join in at the Edge Center for the annual community Talent Show, the Polar Revue, on Sunday, March 2 at 2 p.m. Come applaud your neighbors and friends on the stage. Call Jayme Rahier at (218) 244-5019 to sign up.

Spring Lake

The Spring Lake Store is hosting a community Valentine's Day Party in the Fireside Room from 1-3 p.m. in Sat., Feb. 15. Stop in and enjoy live music, treats and crafts.

Squaw Lake

The Squaw Lake Fire Department has released its calendar of events for 2025: Come and join in and support this great organization!

Saturday, March 15: Perch Jerkers ice fishing contest on Round Lake (ice permitting). 1-3 p.m. AND the drawing for the Spring Raffle at the community center.

Saturday, April 15: Fish Fry and pie auction, 4-7 p.m. at the community center.

Saturday, May 17: Pancake Breakfast, 9-11 a.m. at the community center.

Saturday, June 7: Take a Kid Fishing on Round Lake, 9 a.m.-noon.

Saturday, Aug. 16: Pancake Breakfast, 9-11 a.m. at the community center.

Saturday, Sept. 13: Hog roast and s'more toast at the community center.

Talmoon

A pie social is on the calendar! Jesse Lake Lutheran is having a pie and ice cream social at the church 2 miles west of Talmoon on County Road 4 on Valentine's Day, Fri. Feb. 14 from 2-4 p.m. Come and have some pie and bid on a pie to take home!



Marcell Family Center

Winter Frolic - Feb. 1
11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

218-832-3444

49023 State Highway 38 Marcell, MN 56657

MFC hours:

Fitness Center, gymnasium, multi-purpose room, public computer room and WiFi hotspot.

Mon: 11 a.m.-2 p.m., 4-7 p.m.

Tues, Thurs: 11 a.m.-2 p.m., 4-7 p.m.

Fri: 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Sat: 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

- 1 Winter Frolic at the Marcell Family Center, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Crafts, games food. Call 218-832-3444 for more information. A family event.
- 5 "The Club I Never Wanted to Join" breast cancer support group meets 3:30 p.m. at Zion Lutheran Church in the chapel, south entrance, Grand Rapids. More info with Lynn (218) 832-3612, lynn_etl@msn.com.
- 6 Jesse Lake Lutheran hosts a Grief Support Group at 10 a.m. on Thursday mornings. For more information, call Marion at (320) 293-5741.
- 6 First Thursday "Practical Water Wisdom" online programs over the lunch hour with Itasca Waters. Topic: "Invasive Freshwater Jellyfish: Why are they increasing so fast and what do they do in lakes?" with Dr. Beatrix Beisner, Department of Biological Sciences, University of Quebec at Montreal, Canada. Register at itascawaters.org.
- 10 Women of the Woods meet at 10 a.m. at Sand Lake Community Center. Call Lori Dehn, (218) 659-4796.
- 10 Effie City Council meets at Effie Community Center, 6 p.m.
- 10 Blackduck ISD 32 School Board meets, 6 p.m. in the Media Center.
- 10 ISD 318 School Board meeting at Educational Services Center Board Room, 601 SW 7th St, Grand Rapids 6:30 p.m., open forum 6 p.m. Livestream at watchictv.org, 6 p.m. Information: jasmussen@isd318.org or call (218) 327-5704.
- 11 Bigfork City Council meets at City Hall, 5:30 p.m.
- 12 ISD 317 School Board meets at Deer River HS, 6 p.m. Public forum 5:45 p.m.
- 12 ISD 363 South Koochiching-Rainy River School Board meeting, 7 p.m.
- 13 Classic Movies presents *Love Crazy* (1941), with William Powell and Myrna Loy. 6:30 p.m. at the Edge Center. Free.
- 14 Valentine's Day
- 14 Stop & Stitch meets at the Marcell Family Center the 2nd Tuesday of every month, 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. More info, call Debbie at (218) 360-1503.
- 14 Pie and Ice Cream Social at Jesse Lake Lutheran Church, 2 miles west of Talmoon on Co. Rd. 4, 2-4 p.m. Also a whole pie silent auction.
- 15 Community Valentines Party at Spring Lake Store; live music, treats, crafts. 1-3 p.m. in the Fireside Room, free.
- 17 No school, all schools. President's Day. **North Itasca Electric offices CLOSED.**
- 19 Stitch-n-Bitch meets at the B.I.G. Community Center in Bigfork the 3rd Wednesday of every month, 5-7 p.m. More info, call Krista at (218) 410-2258.
- 22 12th annual Blackduck Stumpjumpers Drag Races on Blackduck Lake. 8 a.m. registration, 10 am. start. Many race classes, including kids, vintage and antique; more info on Facebook or call Max (218) 556-5701.

24 Women of the Woods meet at 10 a.m. at Sand Lake Community Center. Call Lori Dehn (218)-59-4796

18 Jessie Lake Lutheran free community meal 4-6 p.m. February meal is beef stew.

24 Northwoods Quilters meet 4th Tuesday at Marcell Town Hall, 9 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Show 'n Tell and quilting techniques.

24 Bigfork Valley Hospital board meets in public meeting, 9 a.m.

MAR

2 Polar Revue at the Edge, 2 p.m. Annual community talent show: music, skits, dance, comedy...bring your talent and perform on the big stage! To sign up, call Jayme Rahier at (218) 244-5019.

6 First Thursday "Practical Water Wisdom" online programs over the lunch hour with Itasca Waters. Topic: "Lakeshore Development and Natural Shoreline Protection to Preserve Biotic Health"

Area Church Directory

Alvwood Community Church Sun 10:00a 58712 Co. Rd. 131 Blackduck 56630 218-659-4681	First Presbyterian Church, BF Sun 10:15a 109 Ash St. Bigfork 56628 218-743-3783	Old Scenic Community Church Sun 9:00a 25747 Co. Rd. 340 Bigfork 56628 218-743-3953
Balsam Bible Chapel Sun 10:00a 41516 Scenic Hwy 7 Bovey 55709 218-245-1960	Gemmel Community Church Sun 10:00a 10609 Town Rd 34 Gemmel 56660 218-897-5966	Our Lady of the Snows Catholic Church Sun 9:00a Mass also Tu, W, 9:00a. 320 Golf Course Ln Bigfork 56628 218-743-3255
Bear River Lutheran Church Sun 10:00a 11141 Hwy 22 Cook 55723 218-376-1012	Good Hope Church - Bigfork Sun 10:00a 101 Golf Course Ln. Bigfork, MN 56628 218-556-9856	Sand Lake Alliance Sun 10:00a 55581 Co. Rd 4 Spring Lake 56680 218-659-2872 Church website: www.sandlakealliancechurch.org
Bethesda Lutheran Church Sun 9:00a Mizpah 56660 218-897-5654	Grace Community Church (ELCA) Sun 10:15a 401 State Hwy 38 N Bigfork 56628 218-743-3368	St. Catherine's Catholic Church Sat 4:00p 52265 State Hwy 46 Squaw Lake 56681 218-743-3255
Bowstring Chapel Sun 10:15a 45114 Co Rd 133 Deer River 56636 218-832-3171	Hope Lutheran Church Sun 10:30 a.m. 12234 Third St. Northome 56661 218-897-5654	St. Michael Catholic Church Sat 7:00p 12026 Lake St Northome 56661 218-743-3255
Calvary Covenant Sun 10:30a 54764 Co. Rd. 31 Northome 56661 218-897-5684	Jehovah's Witnesses Tu 7:00p., Sun 10:00a Hwy 38 Bigfork 56628 218-743-3275	Suomi Evangelical Lutheran Church Sun 10:30a 42935 Co. Rd. 48 Deer River 56636 218-832-3883
Centennial Lutheran Church Sun 8:30a Hwy 46 Squaw Lake 56681 218-259-0115	Jesse Lake Lutheran Church Sun 8:30a 45834 Co. Rd. 4 Talmoon 56637 218-832-3883	True Life Church Sun 10:00a 45976 Terry Talmoon 56637 218-244-7089
Deer River Bible Church Sun 10:00a 33276 State Highway 6 Deer River 56636 218-246-9570	Marcell Community Church Sun 10:30a 49103 State Hwy 38 Marcell 56657 218-832-3200	Church directory sponsored by North Itasca Electric Cooperative, send changes to editor, sedgwick@paulbunyan.net
Dora Lake Alliance Sun 10:00a 59329 Co Rd 145 Northome 56661 218-659-4551	Northome Community Church Sun 10:00a 12071 Bartlett St. Northome 56661 218-897-5040	
Effie Fredheim Lutheran Church (ELCA) Sun 8:30a Hwy 1 Effie 56639 218-743-3368	Northwoods Chapel Sun 9:00a 50539 Mushgee Rd. (corner of Co. Rd. 622) Deer River 56636 218-659-2784	

Practical Water Wisdom Series begins in February

Would you like to leave a legacy of clean water for future generations? If so, then Itasca Waters has the online series for you.

The free, online series on the first Thursday at noon every month (except July, when it will be on the second Thursday) will touch on topics about how we can keep our water drinkable, swimmable and safe. Attendees will take away tips and strategies for maintaining

the wonderful water resources we have in Minnesota. Every action we take can add up to a big win for clean water.

The first program to kick off the 2025 season on Thurs., Feb. 6 will be “Invasive Freshwater Jellyfish: Why are they increasing so fast and what do they do in lakes?” presented by Dr. Beatrix Beisner, Department of Biological Sciences, University of Quebec at Montreal, Canada. It is free, open to all, and includes an interactive Q&A session.

The talk will review some of the known history of this invasive species in North American lakes and why they are being noticed more often now. While we have much to learn about these organisms, the talk will provide some insight into their life histories and

ecology and how they might be affecting food webs in our lakes.

For the remaining monthly topics, you will hear about lakeshore development, ice-out forecasts, beaver dams and ponds, climate change and fisheries, septic system inspections, harmful algae blooms, drainage infrastructure, traditional ecological knowledge in lake management, banded mystery snails, and water-focused books for children.

We hope you will be inspired each month to think about water in a new way. Please join us on February 6 for our first talk on freshwater jellyfish by registering at <https://itascawaters.org/water-wisdom-2025>. For more information contact info@itascawaters.org.



The Practical Water Wisdom series is the brainchild of Itasca Waters, a nonprofit organization located in Itasca County whose mission is to ‘team up’ with other organizations and concerned citizens to maintain abundant, clean water for our continued health, enjoyment, and a strong economy. This series is supported by its members, Minnesota Sea Grant, Itasca Coalition of Lake Associations, Itasca County Soil and Water Conservation District, KAXE-KBXE, Rapids Radio, and Grand Rapids Herald-Review.

Spring Lake Store
An Old Fashioned General Store
Community Valentine's Day Party!
Saturday Feb. 15
1:30-3 p.m. in the Fireside Room
Live music, treats & crafts - free!

<p>Hours Mon-Thurs: 9 a.m.- 4 p.m. Fri-Sat: 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Sun. 10 a.m.-2 p.m.</p>	<p>Cheeses, deli meats, sandwiches, groceries, gifts, WiFi, post office Fireside Room</p>
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Whenever you plan to dig over 12 inches deep, 2 days before you start, call Gopher One at 811 or (800) 252-1166. It's required by Minnesota state law and it is a free service.

• recipes • recipes • recipes • recipes • recipes • recipes • recipes • recipes • recipes • recipes • recipes •

Stop by the headquarters building in Bigfork to pick up your own 2024 Christmas Cookie and Candy Contest recipe book! You can also email Roxanne at roxanne@nieci.com or call her at (218) 743-3132 for an emailed copy.

Please share your recipe with us! If your recipe is chosen, you will receive a \$10 credit on your electric bill from North Itasca Electric Cooperative. Send your recipe to the editor, WATTS NEWS, P.O. Box 43, Spring Lake, MN 56680.

Easy Brownie Bombs

Thank you to Missy Hopkins for this winning Christmas recipe!

- 1 box regular brownie mix
- 1 can coconut pecan frosting
- 1 20 oz. package chocolate almond bark

Prepare the brownies as instructed on the box, let cool and then break up with a fork and put in a bowl. Add the tub of frosting and stir well.

Form into 1 to 1 ½ inch balls and place on cookie sheet covered with waxed paper. Put it in freezer until frozen. Then melt the chocolate almond bark in the microwave, stirring every minute until it is melted.

Dunk the frozen balls in the melted mixture, drain the excess chocolate and place on waxed paper. Let cool until hardened, place in a container and keep in the refrigerator.

Kirsten's Lefse

Thank you to Steve Fowler for this February recipe!

1 stick butter	Dash salt
3 1/4 cup water	3 1/2 cups instant potatoes
1/2 cup cup whipping cream	1 1/4 cups flour
1 teaspoon sugar	

Boil together butter and water. Add whipping cream, sugar and salt. Stir. Add instant potatoes. Spread mixture on a pan, in a thin layer, to cool.

When chilled, add the flour. Roll into a “log” roughly 3” x 12”. Cut log-roll into about 20 pieces and roll each piece flat on a well-floured surface.

Brown the cakes on a griddle heater to 400 degrees. Flip and brown the other side. Keep warm under a clean cloth.

We like them topped with butter and cinnamon sugar or lingonberry jam!

AD DEADLINE

for the FEBRUARY issue: Friday, Jan. 17

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-FREE-

Free to anyone who collects scrap metal. Too many items to mention.
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-FOR SALE-

For sale: Skid Pro 72" 2020 year Brush Hog. 4 blades high or low hydraulic skid steer mounted, heavy duty. \$6,500. Call (320) 761-8699 3/25

For sale: Numotion electric wheelchair, Series 1450, Xwide (33" seat) purchased 3 months ago for \$12,000. Best offer. Call (218) 244-5779 2/25
For sale: Santa Bears. Some are dated. Mostly white in color \$15 each. Call (218) 832-3050 2/25

-FOR SALE-

For sale: 4x8 trailer with new wood sides, new tires and recently painted. \$600 Call (612) 710-6028 1/25

**-POWER SPORTS-
 -accessories-**

For sale: 1999 Polaris 335. 1,300 miles. Snowplow & winch, topper, chains. Moving. 49256 Center Pt. Rd. Bigfork. \$2,600 Call (218) 832-3363 2/25

**-WINTER SPORTS-
 -fishing, skiing-**

For sale: Cross country skis with poles. Call (218) 832-3050 2/25

Wanted: late model 7 x 12' fish house. Call (406) 581-5635 2/25

-FARM-

Hay for sale: Square bales, mixed grass. Baled dry, stored dry. \$5 per bale. Call (218) 244-0957 3/25

Wanted: 100 hp tractor. Call (406) 581-5635 2/25

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

If you have a home office, look for opportunities to save energy in your workspace. Use ENERGY STAR®-rated equipment, which consumes up to 50% less energy than standard models. Set equipment like printers and scanners to automatically switch to sleep or energy-saver mode when not in use. In addition to saving energy, the equipment will stay cooler, which will help extend its life. Another way to save energy in your home office is to use efficient lamps for task lighting. Replace any older bulbs with energy-saving LEDs.

Source: energy.gov

Member Warning: Doxo.com

There is an on-line bill pay website that appears to be affiliated with North Itasca Electric, but it is not.

Doxo.com is third-party website that allows people to pay their electric bills via their site. However, doxo.com may charge the member extra fees, and North Itasca Electric cannot control when we will receive the member

payments from doxo.com, possibly resulting in a late payment from the member or even disconnection due to non-payment.

To make sure you're paying North Itasca Electric directly, visit our website www.northitascaelectric.com, for our direct link to the online bill payment portal, mypcportal.com.

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Send to: Editor, WATTS NEWS,
 P.O. Box 43
 Spring Lake, MN 56680 or
 (218) 659-2779
 call: _____
 or email: sedgwick@paulbunyan.net

Put WATTS AD in subject line.
 If no response, please resend.

2025 Rebates

Note: Rebates available until funds run out.

Appliances

- Dehumidifier - \$25.00
Must be ENERGY STAR listed
- Dryer - \$25.00
Must be ENERGY STAR listed

- Refrigerator or freezer harvest - \$75.00

When removing an older unwanted working refrigerator or freezer from the distribution grid.

- Refrigerator (New construction)

No rebates for new construction. There are no energy savings when installing an additional appliance to the distribution grid.

- Refrigerator or freezer w/recycling - \$75.00

When replacing an older less efficient working refrigerator or freezer and recycling it.

Heat Pump Water Heaters

- 50 gallon or 80 gallon - \$500.00
- ECM motors for a furnace or air exchanger - \$50.00
- ECM recirculating pump - \$50.00

HVAC

- AC tune up - \$25.00

When tuning up your existing Air Conditioning equipment.

- WIFI thermostat - \$25.00
- ECM motors - \$50.00

When replacing a standard motor with an energy efficient ECM motor.

- Ground Source Heat Pumps (per ton) - \$400.00

Central Air Source Heat Pumps

When installing new or replacing older equipment up to 5 Tons.

Note: Air Sources Heat Pump rebates require a Quality Installation (QI) contractor. QI Contractors will submit rebate form to North Itasca Electric Cooperative when installations are complete.

- Central Air Source Heat Pumps with a SEER rating of 14.5 - \$450.00
- Central Air Source Heat Pumps with a SEER rating of 15 - \$550.00
- Central Air Source Heat Pumps with a SEER rating of 16 - \$650.00
- Central Air Source Heat Pumps with a SEER rating of 17 - \$1,000.00

- Central Air Source Heat Pumps with a SEER rating of 18+ - \$1,200.00

Ductless Air Source Heat Pumps

- Ductless Air Source Heat Pumps with primary heat being delivered fuels - \$300.00
- Ductless Air Source Heat Pumps with primary heat being electric - \$500.00

Lighting

- LED home lighting and holiday bulbs - \$2.00 each with proof of purchase (not to exceed 50% of cost)
- LED holiday light strings - \$1.00 per string with proof of purchase (not to exceed 50% of cost)
- LED or DLC rated yard lights - \$30.00 with proof of purchase

WILLIAMS SEPTIC & ELECTRIC, INC.



Licensed & Bonded

- Septic Installation Inspection Design
- Hauling & Excavating
- Residential & Commercial Wiring

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Brian Williams at
(218) 659-4216

P.O. Box 633 / 52034 Silk Rd. Squaw Lake, MN 56681

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FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC REPAIR**

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Call for immediate appointment

43576 Co. Rd. 14, Bigfork

BIGFORK

BUSINESS REVITALIZATION GRANT PROGRAM 2025



REVITALIZE YOUR BUSINESS ENERGIZE YOUR COMMUNITY

The Bigfork Business Revitalization Grant Program to help boost the local economy through the appearance of our small business community.

The aim of this grant fund is to help local businesses by enhancing the external or internal appearance of their business premises within our community. By recognizing our roles as both business owners and community members, it holds significance for us to cultivate and sustain an impression of advancement and prosperity.

USES

- a. Improvement of exterior building and/or entry aesthetics.
- b. Replacement of weathered awnings or signage.
- c. Exterior business area revitalization to existing structure(s)
- d. Interior improvements to existing structure(s)

APPLICATION PERIODS

- Application Period 1:
 - January 2nd, 2025 - April 30th, 2025
 - Funds awarded & distributed in May of 2025
- Application Period 2:
 - June 1st, 2025 - October 31st, 2025
 - Funds awarded & distributed in November of 2025

LEARN MORE:

QUESTIONS? LEARN MORE BY CONTACTING DREW FRANCISCO:

- andrewf@nieci.com
- 218-256-4142
- 301 Main Ave, Bigfork MN, 55628

