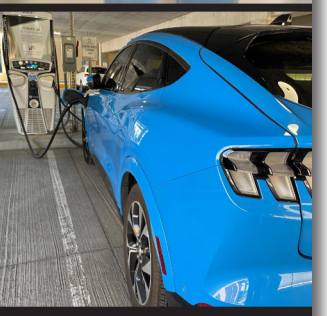
Thriving With Electrified Lives

RECHARGE MANKATO ROADMAP

FEBRUARY 2026



RECHARGE AMERICA

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Executive Summary

The Recharge Mankato Roadmap presents a 10-year aspirational strategy to accelerate electrification across the Greater Mankato area—driving economic growth, reducing long-term energy costs, and creating new opportunities for students, workers, households, and businesses. As transportation and energy technologies evolve rapidly, this roadmap ensures that Mankato doesn't just keep pace with a global and national shift—it helps lead it.

At its core, the roadmap reflects a commitment to serving residents across their full life journey—what we call a "K to Gray" approach. That means introducing clean energy concepts and hands-on learning as early as kindergarten, building technical and career skills through high school and higher education, supporting job seekers and working adults through work force development, and delivering long-term savings and quality-of-life improvements to families and retirees alike. Electrification, in this vision, becomes a foundation for lifelong opportunity.

The strategy is organized around four strategic paths that together power Mankato's energy transition:

- K–12 Education – inspiring students and modernizing school infrastructure
- Higher Education & Technical Training – aligning degrees and credentials with emerging careers
- Workforce Development – equipping local workers with hands-on skills in electrification
- Homes & Businesses – helping residents and employers reduce costs and modernize energy systems

Each path, while aspirational, includes clear goals, measurable outcomes, and actionable next steps designed to ensure the transition is inclusive, community-led, and economically beneficial. Accomplishing every potential step isn't the expectation—demonstrating meaningful progress is. The opportunities ahead for Mankato are enormous. If we were able to pursue these strategies aggressively, Mankato could unlock an estimated $10–12 million in direct annual energy savings for area households and businesses. Over a decade, that adds up to more than $100–120 million in cumulative economic value, with additional benefits generated through rein vestment in jobs, services, and local supply chains that support this transition. When ripple effects are factored in—reflecting how those savings circulate through the regional economy—the total annual economic value could exceed $30 million, or $300 million over ten years, including further gains from farm electrification, fleet upgrades, and solar installations across homes and commercial properties.

All strategies presented in this roadmap are opportunities—not mandates. They reflect a vision of what Mankato could accomplish through coordination, investment, and community leadership. In areas where Recharge Mankato is described as playing a leading role, next steps will be developed based on available funding, local priorities, and the engagement and direction of the Recharge Mankato working group composed of interested and supportive community leaders. This roadmap is intended to evolve in step with Mankato's ambitions and resources.

Recharge Mankato serves as the local catalyst and coordinating initiative for this work—building partnerships across education, industry, government, and community organizations to ensure all residents can participate in and benefit from electrification. From hosting ride and drive events to supporting technical training, policy development, and outreach, Recharge Mankato connects national resources with local leadership to move ideas into action. It is a community-led effort—aligned with the broader Recharge America network and composed of a diverse group of leaders from across our region—created to help Mankato chart its own path toward a more resilient, affordable, and opportunity-rich energy future. Key Recharge Mankato collaborators include the Mankato Area Foundation, the Olseth Family Foundation, and Minnesota State University, Mankato.

This local work is part of a broader effort led by Recharge America, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to helping communities realize the economic benefits of electrification. Recharge America supports local initiatives through data, technical assistance, strategic planning, and storytelling—helping cities like Mankato create locally grounded programs that advance clean transportation, workforce readiness, and community resilience.

With strong momentum already underway and a clear roadmap in hand, Mankato is ready to lead. This plan lays out a practical, community-centered path to a cleaner, more resilient, and economically vibrant future—for everyone who calls this region home.

Introduction

We are Recharge Mankato—a committed cohort of community leaders unified around a vision for a prosperous region powered by innovative energy solutions. Championed for the past eight years by the Olseth Family Foundation, Mankato Area Foundation, and Minnesota State University, Mankato, among others, our group includes local leaders, businesses, educators, and advocates working together to drive economic growth through widespread electrification. By investing in electrification technologies in our homes, businesses, and throughout our community, we are fostering innovation, creating well-paying jobs, and ensuring that our community will continue to thrive in a future of energy innovation.

As of 2023, Greater Mankato is home to just over 100,000 people and generates a regional GDP of approximately $7.2 billion, with a per capita GDP near $60,000. Our economy is robust and diverse, with major contributions from manufacturing, healthcare, education, retail, and agriculture. Agribusiness is especially important across southern Minnesota, fueling tens of billions of dollars in statewide economic activity and supporting thousands of jobs. That agricultural strength—combined with Mankato's role in food processing, advanced manufacturing, and emerging clean technologies—positions the region as a growing hub for food and energy innovation. This economic foundation gives Greater Mankato both the capacity and the responsibility to lead in the next era of energy transformation.

(Sources: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Mankato-North Mankato MSA; Greater Mankato Growth;Minnesota Department of Agriculture).

…BLUE EARTH COUNTY NOW RANKS AMONG THE TOP TIER REGIONS IN THE STATE IN TERMS OF ELECTRIC VEHICLES (EVS) ON THE ROAD AND CHARGE STATION ADOPTION, ON PAR WITH STATEWIDE ADOPTION LEADERS IN THE TWIN CITIES METRO AND PACING AHEAD OF SIMILARLY-SIZED AND GEOGRAPHICALLY LOCATED COUNTERPARTS.

Momentum is already building. Thanks in part to our collective efforts, Blue Earth County now ranks among Minnesota's top regions for electric vehicle (EV) adoption and charging infrastructure—on par with the Twin Cities and ahead of peer communities across Greater Minnesota. We aim to build off this momen tum over the coming years, securing substan tial wins for our community in the process. Widespread electrification across homes, businesses, and farms could unlock $10-12 million in direct annual energy savings for the Greater Mankato area. Over a decade, that translates to $100-120 million in cumulative value, with additional economic gains possible through reinvestment in local jobs, services, and supply chains–a ripple effect that amplifies the value of every dollar saved through electrification. Capturing these benefits will be essential to achieving long-term economic resilience and keeping Mankato competitive in a rapidly evolving energy landscape.

Mankato's Unifying Story

Recharge Mankato began in 2018 when local philanthropists, the Olseth Family Foundation, the Mankato Area Foundation, and community leaders came together to explore how electrification—especially EVs—could unlock new opportunities for our region. The ideas we outlined then in our first community framework - Recharging Mankato - remain as vital today. The transition to electrification represents one of the most significant economic opportunities of our time.

A KEY OUTCOME FROM OUR WORK, THAT SETS MANKATO APART FROM OTHER AREAS WRESTLING WITH THE PROMISE AND CHALLENGE PRESENTED BY ELECTRIFICATION, IS THE UNIFYING STORY THAT WE HAVE DEVELOPED HERE FOR HOW ELECTRIFICATION CAN HELP SUPPORT OUR COMMUNITY GOALS FOR GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT.

Keeping Energy Local:
Mankato's Strategic Shift to Electrification

Reflecting on Josh Tavel's Electric Journey

Josh Tavel grew up in Eden Prairie, Minnesota, and would go on to become one of the auto industry's leading voices in electric transportation. You can easily imagine a younger version of Josh sketching futuristic vehicles or wondering what might one day replace gasoline engines—early signs of the imagination that would later shape his career. That journey brought him to Minnesota State University, Mankato, where he earned a degree in Automotive Engineering and Technology in 1999. In a 2021 alumni spotlight, the university recognized Josh for his role in helping General Motors lead the global shift to electric mobility.

Since joining General Motors, Tavel has held engineering leadership roles across the U.S. and abroad, contributing to major EV programs including the Chevy Bolt and GMC Hummer EV. Today, he helps guide GM's overall battery and electrification strategy—proof of what's possible when early passion is matched with opportunity and training. Josh's story is a powerful example of how public education, hands-on learning, and local talent can help shape the future of global industries—and how Mankato's role in electrification already stretches far beyond city limits.

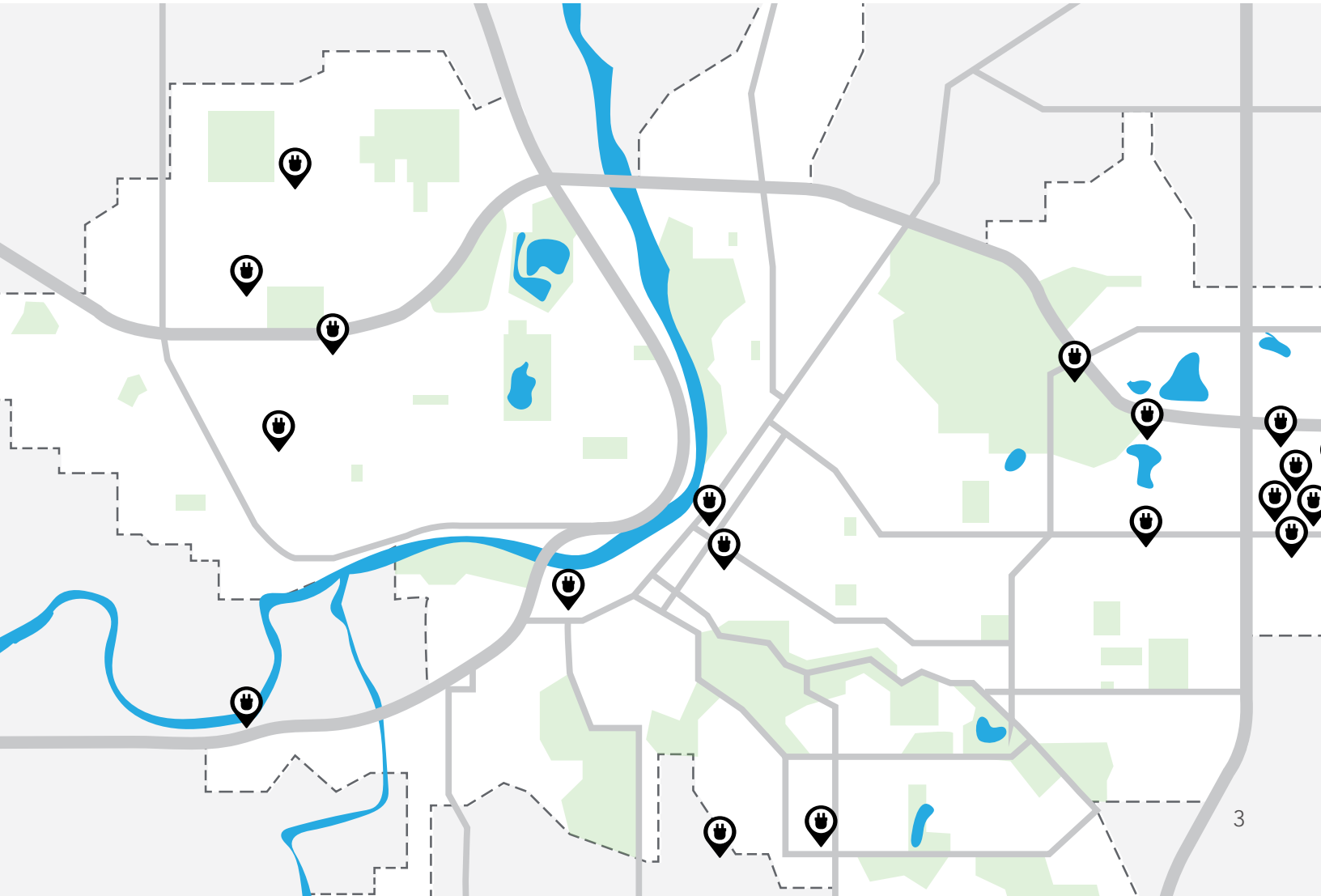
Since then, that proposition has helped drive hundreds of thousands of philanthropic and other supportive dollars into our community to help bring our community together on this topic. Moreover, Mankato has developed a unifying story around electrification as a tool for economic growth, innovation, and community well-being. Beyond funding, that story has strengthened local partnerships and helped drive real progress—from installing EV chargers and hosting community ride-and-drive events to launching workforce training pro grams that prepare residents for tomorrow's jobs.

As communities across the globe compete to lead in the innovative energy economy, Mankato is poised to take its place.

With continued collaboration and investment, we can ensure our region doesn't just keep pace—but sets the pace—for what a thriving, electrified future looks like.

Recharge Mankato remains committed to accelerating community-led electrification efforts across our area that serve our shared goals for boosting the attractiveness of our area to households and businesses alike. Through targeted planning and collective work to secure implementation funding and build strategic partnerships, we aim to boost momentum for widespread electrification efforts across our area while demonstrating measurable progress in securing our shared goals for ensuring that Mankato remains a vital community.

CURRENT EV CHARGING LOCATIONS IN THE REGION



Across Mankato, signs of the electrified economy are everywhere. At the Children's Museum of Southern Minnesota, a hands-on exhibit introducing kids to electric technologies has drawn tens of thousands of visitors. At Minnesota State University, Mankato and South Central College, students are gaining the skills they need for high-quality, future-ready jobs—many of them first-generation college graduates stepping into careers that will grow even as automation and AI reshape the workforce.

In our schools, ISD #77 is exploring the installation of solar arrays across a million square feet of rooftops. Local companies like MTU, Nidec/Kato Engineering, EI Microcircuits, and Kato Cable are at the forefront of a fast-growing energy innovation sector. Mean while, homeowners and business owners alike are turning to trusted local firms like Ploog Electric to upgrade their systems and cut costs through smarter, cleaner energy solutions.

The shift is visible on our roads, too. Blue Earth County has seen EV adoption grow by more than 500% since 2018, with 262 EVs registered in 2023—up from just 40 five years prior. Over 70 public charging ports now serve the region, alongside a growing network of home chargers. But EVs are just the beginning. From cleaner heating and cooling systems to electric tools and transportation options, the technologies of tomorrow are already showing up in homes, schools, job sites, and local shops—delivering real benefits while keeping Mankato on the cutting edge of innovation

(Sources: Atlas EV Hub; ChargeHub; Minnesota Pollution Control Agency).

THE ELECTRIFIED ECONOMY INVOLVES A SHIFT TO USING ELECTRICITY AS A SOURCE FOR ENERGY, RELYING ON EMERGING CLEAN ENERGY TECHNOLOGIES. TRANSPORTATION, BUILDINGS, INDUSTRIAL FACILITIES, AND THE ELECTRIC GRID ITSELF STAND TO GAIN FROM RAPID DEPLOYMENT OF NEW ELECTRIC SOLUTIONS. COMMUNITIES LEADING THAT TRANSITION IMPROVE THEIR ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND CAPTURE THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS THAT COME FROM DELIVERING AND USING ENERGY IN INNOVATIVE WAYS, INCLUDING SPURRING NEW HIGH QUALITY JOBS. IN THE PROCESS, THEY DRIVE DOWN POLLUTION AND POSITION THEMSELVES FOR SUCCESS AS THE GLOBAL ECONOMY CONTINUES TO ELECTRIFY.

While EVs on the road are perhaps easiest to count, they are just one of an array of new technologies powered by electricity that are now available to improve the lives of every resident of Mankato. From heating and cooling solutions for homes to tools that can be used on the job to transportation options, these technologies can be readily integrated into every walk of life - at home, work, school and play - and share some common characteristics: they deliver the utility of the old tools they replace while helping improve our local economy while keeping us on the cutting edge of innovation. Electrification options that can enhance our lives today include:

HOMES

- Air-source and ground-source heat pumps (for heating and cooling)
- Heat pump water heaters
- Induction cooktops and electric ovens • Home EV charging stations
- Smart panels and energy monitoring systems • Battery storage systems
- Rooftop solar with battery backup
- Electric lawn equipment (e.g., mowers, trimmers, snowblowers)
- Home energy management systems
- Residential-scale microgrids (emerging for resilience and independence)

BUSINESSES

- Fleet electrification (e.g., delivery vans, work trucks)
- Commercial EV charging stations
- Electric HVAC systems and controls
- Process electrification technologies (e.g., induction heaters, electric boilers)
- Energy-efficient lighting and smart building controls
- Electric forklifts and material handling equipment
- Battery backup and microgrid systems
- On-site commercial solar installations (rooftop or ground-mounted)
- Solar carports with integrated EV charging
- Behind-the-meter energy storage
- Integrated energy management systems
- Resilience-focused microgrids for critical operations
- Electric cooking and refrigeration equipment for food service and retail
- Electrified manufacturing or production equipment

K–12 SCHOOLS

- Electric school buses
- EV chargers at school parking lots
- Electrified HVAC upgrades
- Smart thermostats and building controls
- Energy-efficient building retrofits
- Solar panels on school roofs
- Battery storage for demand management or backup
- Student engagement kits (e.g., solar-powered learning kits, robotics)
- Clean energy curriculum modules
- Resilience hubs powered by solar + storage (especially in rural areas)

HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Campus fleet electrification
- EV charging infrastructure for students and faculty
- Building electrification and decarbonization planning
- On-campus battery storage and solar integration
- Campus microgrid systems
- Distributed solar arrays
- Living labs using electric tech for research and learning
- Demonstration and pilot projects for emerging clean technologies
- Building performance benchmarking tools
- Electric lab and workshop equipment
- Electrified manufacturing or production equipment
- EV technician training tools (simulators, EV drivetrains)
- Building energy management systems (BEMS)
- Toolkits for residential and commercial energy audits
- Solar installation and maintenance certification programs
- Industrial electrification training modules

Investing in electrification today isn't just smart—it sets Mankato up to thrive in the energy systems of tomorrow. As technology evolves, more homes and businesses will be able to generate, store, and share energy, creating a two-way grid that's cleaner, more reliable, and more community-driven. With solar panels and battery storage, households can reduce costs and even send power back to the grid. Businesses equipped with microgrids and electric fleets can stabilize operations and cut expenses, while campuses and schools become energy hubs—powering themselves and supporting neighbors in times of need.

These shifts don't just improve infrastructure—they create lasting economic impact. In Mankato, our over 17,000 households and 2,500 businesses stand to benefit from lower utility bills and fuel costs. Even modest savings—just $300 per home and $3,000 per business annually—could generate approximately $10-12 million in direct annual savings. And when those dollars stay local, reinvested in contractors, services, and local businesses, the total economic impact could exceed $27 million annually (internal analysis based on Census data, average electrification savings, and a standard 2.3x local economic multiplier, consistent with estimates used by E2

(Source: Clean Jobs America Report, E2, 2022) and the U.S. Department of Energy (JEDI Model, NREL).)

This is how Mankato becomes a leader in the next era of energy—by making smart choices now that build toward a resilient, self-sustaining future.

The benefits go beyond the grid: they reach our workforce, our neighborhoods, and our local economy—keeping more energy, and more prosperity, right here at home.

Showing Our Work:
How Homes and Businesses in Mankato Can Save with Electrification

While our baseline estimates assume modest savings—$300 per home, $3,000 per business on fuel costs alone—the true potential across Mankato is far greater. Switching from fossil fuel heating to air-source heat pumps can save homeowners $500 to $1,200 annually, thanks to their superior efficiency. Driving electric can cut household transportation costs by $800 to $1,000 per year, and even more when paired with home solar and off-peak charging. For businesses, the savings scale quickly. Fleet electrification, upgraded HVAC systems, and smart building controls can reduce operating costs by 20–40%.

WHEN EVALUATING COST SAVINGS FROM ELECTRIFICATION, THE NUMBERS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES. A TYPICAL DELIVERY VAN TRAVELING 1,000–1,200 MILES PER MONTH AT 15–20 MILES PER GALLON CAN CONSUME $2,500 OR MORE IN FUEL ANNUALLY AT CURRENT GAS PRICES. BY SWITCHING TO AN EV, BUSINESSES SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE FUEL COSTS BY RELYING ON LOWER-COST ELECTRICITY. MAINTENANCE SAVINGS ADD FURTHER VALUE—EVS AVOID EXPENSES SUCH AS OIL CHANGES, TRANSMISSION SERVICE, AND REDUCED BRAKE WEAR. TOGETHER, THESE FACTORS AMOUNT TO MORE THAN $2,000 IN ANNUAL SAVINGS PER VEHICLE. FOR LARGER COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS, PAIRING SOLAR WITH STORAGE PROVIDES ANOTHER CLEAR OPPORTUNITY: FACILITIES CAN OFFSET PEAK DEMAND AND AVOID HIGH DEMAND CHARGES, PRODUCING THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS IN YEARLY OPERATIONAL SAVINGS WHILE ADDING RESILIENCE.

ELECTRIC AG IN ACTION

AGRICULTURE IS BEGINNING TO SEE REAL OPPORTUNITIES IN ELECTRIFICATION. WHILE COMPANIES LIKE JOHN DEERE HAVE ONLY RECENTLY UNVEILED ELECTRIC TRACTOR PROTOTYPES, THE MOMENTUM IS BUILDING. THE BENEFITS ARE STRAIGHTFORWARD: REDUCED FUEL COSTS, LOWER MAINTENANCE NEEDS, AND THE POTENTIAL FOR GREATER EFFICIENCY IN DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS. JUST AS EVS AND SOLAR-PLUS-STORAGE ARE TRANSFORMING FLEETS AND COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS, ELECTRIC AG EQUIPMENT REPRESENTS THE NEXT WAVE OF INNOVATION—POSITIONING FARMERS TO CAPTURE LONG-TERM SAVINGS AS THESE TECHNOLOGIES REACH THE MARKETPLACE.

Add on-site solar and battery storage, and farms gain not just savings—but energy resilience. Even though locally we have over 1,000 farms, if just 800 local farms each saved an average of $4,000 a year, the result would be over $3.2 million in direct annual benefits—and nearly $5 million when accounting for ripple effects.

When combined with gains across households and businesses, Greater Mankato could unlock more than $30 million in annual economic value through electrification-driven cost savings and reinvestment in the local economy.

(Sources: U.S. Department of Energy; National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL); Atlas Public Policy; Environmental Entrepreneurs (E2); Minnesota Department of Agriculture).

And this isn't just a local movement—it's part of a global transformation. In Minnesota, the number of EVs has surged from 6,000 to over 53,000 since 2018. Globally, EV adoption has grown nearly 700%, and countries like Norway, India, and the UK are phasing out gas-powered vehicles entirely. Investments in energy solutions surpassed $1.7 trillion in 2023, with governments racing to lead through bold policy and industrial strategies

(Sources: Minnesota Department of Transportation; International Energy Agency (IEA); BloombergNEF; U.S. Department of Energy).

For Mankato, this global momentum makes the case clear: embracing electrification is no longer optional—it's essential. It's a defining strategy to secure economic competitiveness, unlock workforce opportunity, and ensure resilience in a rapidly evolving energy economy. Communities that lead will capture the innovation, investment, and talent of the future. Those that wait will be left behind.

In the years ahead, communities that act fastest to adopt clean technologies will stand out—not just in terms of their innovation, but in their ability to attract and retain talent, businesses, and institutions that drive longterm prosperity. Ensuring Mankato meets this moment is the central mission of Recharge Mankato—and a shared opportunity to power a future where our community thrives in every sense of the word.

Recharge Mankato Roadmap

Leveraging Network Effects to Foster Faster Electrification

Our challenge ahead as a community is how we can tap into the energy transition, to speed it up and take advantage of it here. Recharge Mankato exists to meet that challenge head-on. Our strategy is built on the power of network effects: by supporting early adopters, connecting local institutions, and amplifying success stories, we make every new investment in energy solutions easier, more accessible, and more impactful.

Rather than isolated upgrades, we're building a connected ecosystem—where progress in one part of the community accelerates progress in others. Our roadmap focuses on four strategic paths: K–12 schools, higher education, workforce development, and homes and businesses. School bus electrification remains a clear long-term goal because of the health benefits for students and the powerful example it sets for families. At the same time, we recognize the current challenges: economics and operational realities mean that local partners like Palmer Bus are still working to find a viable pathway forward. By continuing to engage with transportation providers and monitor advances in technology and funding, we can prepare the groundwork for adoption when the timing becomes right.

When Minnesota State University, Mankato deploys EV chargers and launches innovative energy programs, they shape the next generation of electrification-savvy professionals. And when local training programs scale up to meet rising demand, they provide the skilled workforce needed to power this transition.

WHAT ARE NETWORK EFFECTS?

NETWORK EFFECTS OCCUR WHEN THE VALUE OF A PRODUCT, SERVICE, OR SYSTEM INCREASES AS MORE PEOPLE OR INSTITUTIONS USE OR ADOPT IT. IN ELECTRIFICATION, THIS MEANS EACH NEW INVESTMENT—LIKE AN EV CHARGER, AN ELECTRIC SCHOOL BUS, OR A TRAINING PROGRAM—MAKES IT EASIER, CHEAPER, AND MORE ATTRACTIVE FOR OTHERS TO FOLLOW SUIT, ACCELERATING WIDESPREAD ADOPTION.

That momentum extends into neighborhoods and businesses. As more of Mankato's 17,000 households adopt clean technologies—from heat pumps to EVs—they save money, breathe cleaner air, and spark interest across the community. Meanwhile, our 2,500+ local businesses that electrify their fleets or equipment not only reduce costs but model what innovation looks like. Every contractor who installs a charger or heat pump gains experience that lowers the barrier for the next job. Recharge Mankato helps drive this cycle—connecting people to incentives, sharing trusted resources, and making sure no one has to go it alone.

This is more than energy innovation—it's a regional development strategy. Each success creates new jobs, attracts investment, and strengthens our economy. But those gains don't happen by accident. They require coordination, visibility, and shared purpose. That's the role Recharge Mankato plays—as a community hub, helping align schools, colleges, utilities, contractors, and local government to ensure that the full value of electrification is realized locally and equitably. The path is clear—and the time to move together is now.

STATISTICS

$1,000

Local economic value delivered by every EV driven and charged up in a community such as Mankato, Minnesota

Qmerit

166m

Forecasted jobs being linked to EVs by 2031 in the U.S.

U.S. Bureau of Statistics

Almost 50%

Of respondents think that half of the vehicles sold locally in the next ten years should be electric

Recharge Mankato EV Ride & Drive Survey, 2025

Strategic Paths for Electrification

Why K-12 Can Be A Launchpad for Electricification

In Mankato, the journey toward an electrified economy doesn't start in boardrooms or garages—it begins in classrooms. While children aren't purchasing EVs or entering the workforce just yet, this is where Our Electrified Lives begin. By connecting K–12 education to innovative energy concepts and career pathways, Mankato can create a generation that's not just prepared for the energy transition—but leading it—making schools not just centers of learning, but launchpads for community transformation.

WHY IT MATTERS

When students learn about energy systems, sustainability, and new technologies, they bring those conversations home. This ripple effect informs caregivers, builds community awareness, and sets a foundation for workforce readiness.

Today, Mankato Area Public Schools (MAPS) serves over 8,200 students across 24 buildings, stretching over 140 square miles. The region also includes private and charter schools, making K–12 institutions central hubs for engaging families across three counties.

CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT WITH STATE STANDARDS

Minnesota's new K–12 Academic Standards in Science—which rolled out in time for the 2024–2025 schoolyear—integrate energy concepts across all grade levels. These standards encourage students to think like scientists and engineers, from understanding heat transfer in elementary school to solving real-world energy challenges in high school. By connecting this curriculum to local infrastructure and careers, Mankato can give students more than just lessons—it can give them launchpads.

ELECTRIFICATION IS ALREADY TAKING ROOT IN MANKATO

Electrification is not a distant goal in Mankato—it's already underway.

- MAPS signed a 25-year solar agreement in 2018 to power most schools with energy solutions, saving over $1 million in long-term energy costs.
- In 2024, MAPS received a Solar for Schools grant to expand on-site solar installations.
- At Mankato West High, students replaced over 1,300 lights with LEDs, reducing energy use by nearly 50% and saving $5,000 annually—an inspiring example of student-led action.

These steps prove that electrification isn't just possible in schools—it's already happening.

34%

of respondents think that all public schools in Mankato should have solar panels installed within the next ten years

Recharge Mankato EV Ride & Drive Survey, 2025

K–12 Electrification Goals for Mankato (10-Year Plan)

Mankato's K–12 Electrification Plan outlines eight aspirational goals across facilities and curriculum—each one designed to modernize infrastructure, build energy literacy, and connect students to tomorrow's jobs. These goals reflect a shared community vision of what could be achieved with the right partnerships, funding, and leadership. While not guaranteed outcomes, they offer a clear roadmap for local action and investment over the next decade.

Electrify all school buildings:
Transition 100% of heating/cooling systems to electric by 2038.

Solar + battery storage at 50% of schools:
Prioritize emergency hubs and integrate learning dashboards.

100% electric bus fleet:
Replace aging diesel buses through grants and local partnerships.

EV chargers at all middle & high schools:
For staff, families, and community use—linked to solar where possible.

Energy education in all grades:
From solar car kits in elementary to HVAC and engineering tracks in high school.

Energy Ambassadors at every school:
Students lead energy literacy efforts and support events.

Innovative Energy Capstone requirement:
Seniors complete hands-on sustainability projects.

Career exposure for all students:
Annual innovative energy career days, internships, and job shadows.

Supportive K-12 Electrification Programs & Partnerships

Electrifying schools requires more than technology—it demands collaboration, shared leadership, and a collective commitment to innovation. If local partners choose to pursue these opportunities together, Recharge Mankato could help support and coordinate efforts, identifying ways to align funding, capacity, and community goals around K–12 electrification. These potential programs represent possibilities—not guarantees—and would evolve based on local priorities and participation.

- Educators to develop innovative energy curriculum toolkits and professional development.
- Local businesses and colleges to expand energy tech career pathways.
- Bus companies and utility partners to plan for fleet electrification and on-site charging.

Ongoing programs could potentially include:

- Ride & Drive events at schools
- Solar installations with student dashboards
- Energy Ambassadors leadership training
- Paid energy solution internships

66%

Of respondents think that middle school is the best time for students to experience electrification career fairs.

Recharge Mankato EV Ride & Drive Survey, 2025

Next Steps: Launching K–12 Electrification in Mankato

If the community chooses to move forward together, these next steps outline one possible path for turning ideas into action. Grounded in local leadership and adaptable to changing resources, this approach is designed to build momentum, generate early success, and lay the foundation for broader K–12 electrification over time.

- **Convene a K–12 Electrification Steering Team** to align school, business, and community leadership.
- **Assess all facilities** for electrification readiness, solar potential, and charger infrastructure.
- **Develop a 10-Year Implementation Plan** with timelines, cost estimates, and funding strategies.
- **Pilot key initiatives** like student programs, EV charger installations, and curriculum integration.
- **Build awareness** through kickoff events and storytelling that celebrates early wins.
- **Track progress** using metrics like energy savings, student engagement, and workforce alignment.

How Higher Ed Can Help - and Be Helped

Mankato's colleges and technical institutions are essential players in the region's transition to an innovative energy economy. These schools don't just prepare students for tomorrow's jobs—they actively shape the technologies, workforce, and cross-sector collaboration needed to meet Mankato's electrification goals.

As students move beyond K–12, they enter a robust higher education ecosystem that includes Minnesota State University, Mankato, South Central College, and other institutions. These schools provide hands-on training and advanced degrees in critical fields—like EV systems, power electronics, renewable energy, and smart infrastructure. Together, they prepare students to become the technicians, engineers, analysts, and leaders who will drive Mankato's electrified future.

By embedding energy innovation into academic programs and aligning workforce development with community electrification goals, these institutions are helping Mankato electrify smarter, faster, and more equitably.

What's Already in Place

- Mankato's five higher education institutions enroll an average of 26,000 students annually, graduating nearly 5,000 each year.
- South Central College trains students in HVAC, electrical systems, and EV infrastructure.
- Minnesota State University, Mankato offers programs in automotive engineering, public administration, manufacturing engineering, energy systems, and robotics engineering.
- North Mankato ranks among the top 10 places in the U.S. to work in manufacturing, underscoring the region's readiness to scale clean tech.
  (Mankato Free Press, Nov. 11, 2022)
- Programs already span technical trades, engineering, business, public policy, computer science, and urban planning—building a pipeline of talent that's ready to lead in electrification.

Higher Education & Technical Training Goals for Mankato (10-Year Plan)

If pursued in partnership with local colleges, universities, and employers, these six core goals could guide postsecondary institutions across Mankato toward infrastructure upgrades, academic innovation, and expanded workforce development. They represent a vision of what's possible when community priorities, funding, and institutional leadership align around the opportunities of electrification.

CAMPUS INFRASTRUCTURE & DEMONSTRATION POTENTIAL GOALS

Transition campus heating/cooling systems to electric:
Upgrade high-use buildings with heat pumps, energy monitoring, and demand controls.

Electrify campus fleets and install EV chargers:
Ensure chargers are public-facing and integrated into the region's grid strategy.

Develop innovative energy "Living Labs" on campus:
Use solar arrays, battery systems, and smart controls as educational and community engagement tools.

ACADEMIC & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL GOALS

Launch new certificate/degree programs in EV infrastructure, battery storage, and solar installation—including stackable credentials.

Integrate electrification into existing coursework across STEM, business, and policy programs; introduce interdisciplinary capstone projects.

Expand dual-enrollment pathways so high school students can earn innovative energy credentials early—especially those from underrepresented backgrounds.

Recharge Mankato Higher Education Programs & Partnerships

If local colleges, universities, and employers choose to collaborate, Recharge Mankato could help convene and support a range of postsecondary programs that align educational offerings with emerging workforce and infrastructure needs. These potential initiatives reflect a shared vision of what's possible when institutions, industry, and community leaders work together to prepare students for the electrified future.

Illustrative program concepts include:

- Energy Innovation Certificate Accelerator: Flexible credential programs in high-demand sectors for adult learners and career changers.
- Dual-Credit Technical Pathway Partnership: Offers innovative energy courses for high schoolers at South Central College and Minnesota State University, Mankato.
- Energy Innovation Careers Match Program: Connects students to internships, classroom visits, and career mentorships across disciplines.
- Living Labs & Demonstration Sites: Feature solar, batteries, and EV chargers to turn campuses into real-time teaching and innovation spaces.
- Faculty Innovation Fellowships: Fund curriculum development and applied research tied to community electrification needs.
- Community Energy Challenge: Annual competition for students to solve local energy challenges—engaging public, private, and nonprofit partners.

Next Steps:
Advancing Higher Education Electrification in Mankato

If local institutions and partners choose to move forward together, the steps below outline a potential roadmap for advancing electrification through higher education. These actions are not mandates, but ideas to help guide collaboration, attract resources, and spark innovation in support of Mankato's evolving energy future.

- **Form a Working Group** with colleges, employers, and Recharge Mankato to explore shared goals and coordinate early efforts.
- **Assess Campus Readiness** for electrification, including infrastructure needs, fleet potential, and opportunities for demonstration labs.
- **Map Curriculum & Create New Pathways** in electrification-related fields across technical and academic programs.
- **Launch Pilot Demonstrations**, such as solar labs, EV training modules, and certificate offerings aligned with community needs.
- **Secure Funding** through grants, philanthropy, and joint campus-industry partnerships.
- **Promote Careers in Energy Innovation** through public events, employer spotlights, and student-facing media campaigns.
- **Measure Progress** by tracking student enrollment, credentials earned, internships, infrastructure upgrades, and local job placements.

All Hands on Deck to Build our Electric Workforce

Mankato is charging ahead in the transition to energy innovation—and with it comes the need for a skilled, local workforce ready to build and sustain the infrastructure of the future.

From 2018 to 2024, the number of EVs in Mankato's 56001 zip code jumped about 500% from around 50 to over 262, showing strong demand for EV infrastructure, service technicians, and new energy solutions. At the same time, nearly 25% of local job openings within a 30-minute radius are in construction, manufacturing, or utilities—sectors critical to fleet electrification, energy-efficient construction, and EV charging deployment.

And the opportunity goes beyond numbers. Renewable energy jobs are growing twice as fast as the broader U.S. economy, with high demand in fields that are hands-on, well-paying, and often filled by workers under 30.

ENERGY INNOVATION = LOCAL JOBS

EVERY $1 INVESTED IN ENERGY INNOVATION CREATES 3X MORE JOBS THAN FOSSIL FUEL INVESTMENTS.

FOR MANKATO, THAT MEANS MORE ELECTRICIANS, CONTRACTORS, AND TECHNICIANS AT WORK LOCALLY.

THESE JOBS STRENGTHEN THE LOCAL TAX BASE, SUPPORT SMALL BUSINESSES, AND PREPARE THE WORKFORCE FOR LONG-TERM GROWTH.

But to fully realize this potential, the community must act with intention. That means preparing people—especially those historically underrepresented in energy fields—for the careers that electrification is creating.

Aspirational Workforce Development Goals for Mankato (10-Year Plan)

If local partners choose to align efforts around workforce electrification, the following goals could guide Mankato's strategy for expanding local talent, increasing access to training, and strengthening employer pipelines. These goals represent what's possible with collaboration, investment, and sustained community leadership.

Train 3,000 local workers in electrification skills by 2036
Focus: EV infrastructure, solar, HVAC, battery systems, fleet maintenance

Ensure 40% participation from underrepresented communities by 2036
Focus: Diverse, rural, low-income, and first-generation learners

Partner with 50 employers to expand hiring pathways by 2032
Focus: Apprenticeships, internships, and direct hire opportunities

Embed electrification modules into 15 existing training programs by 2030
Focus: Adult education, retraining, union, and technical programs

Aspirational Workforce Programs & Partnerships

If Mankato's employers, training providers, and community leaders choose to work together, Recharge Mankato could help support the launch of flexible, inclusive programs designed to build relevant skills and expand access to opportunity. These potential efforts reflect shared priorities and a commitment to preparing residents for success in an electrified economy—should the community choose to pursue them.

- Electrification Workforce Accelerator
  Fast-track training in EV charging, battery systems, and heat pump retrofits. Delivered by South Central College + industry trainers.
- Innovative Energy Pre-Apprenticeship Programs
  Entry pathways for youth and career changers. Includes technical basics, job readiness, and financial literacy.
- Recharge Employer Partnership Network
  Co-designed curriculum, work-based learning opportunities, and hiring pathways with regional employers.
- Wraparound Support Fund
  Transportation, childcare, tuition assistance, and stipends to ensure participation and retention.
- Workforce Navigator & Outreach Team
  One-on-one guidance and outreach in underserved communities.
- Earn-to-Learn Pilot Programs
  Paid work experiences paired with classroom learning. Tracks outcomes like wage growth and job placement.

Next Steps:
Exploring a Regional Electrification Workforce Strategy

If Mankato's community, employers, educators, and civic leaders choose to pursue this opportunity together, the steps below outline a potential approach to developing a strong, inclusive electrification workforce. These are a starting point for dialogue, collaboration, and innovation.

- **Form a Regional Workforce Task Force:** Bring together educators, unions, employers, workforce boards, and community organizations to explore shared priorities and guide implementation.
- **Conduct an Innovative Energy Workforce Gap Assessment:** Identify high-demand skills, projected job types, and timeline needs to shape curriculum and hiring strategies.
- **Launch the First Accelerator Cohort:** Train an initial group of X–X participants per year in EVSE, solar, and HVAC systems. Track and share outcomes to build visibility and momentum.
- **Secure Funding for Support Services:** Pursue grants and employer co-investment to sustain wraparound services like stipends, transportation, and childcare.
- **Host a Regional Innovative Energy Career Showcase:** Connect jobseekers, employers, and training providers through a public event that highlights electrification careers.
- **Launch a Community Communications Campaign:** Use social media, events, and local media to share real career stories and promote available training pathways.
- **Define Metrics and Track Progress Annually:** Monitor job placements, wage outcomes, employer participation, and demographic reach. Celebrate success, share lessons, and refine strategies.

Enhancing our Homes and Businesses

In Mankato, electrification isn't just about fleets, campuses and large infrastructure. Area homes and businesses must have access to practical, affordable, and visible pathways to adopt electrification technologies. Whether it's a small retail shop installing an EV charger, a landlord upgrading to electric heat pumps, or a homeowner switching from gas to induction cooking, these transitions deliver real, local value.

That's the vision behind Recharge Mankato's focus on residential and commercial electrification. By expanding access to incentives, streamlining the upgrade process, and prioritizing support for renters, low-income households, and small business owners, the initiative ensures that every resident and business can take part in the electrification transformation—and share in the benefits.

From reducing monthly bills and improving indoor air quality to increasing property values and attracting eco-conscious customers, these upgrades offer more than just environmental wins—they bring economic resilience to Mankato neighborhoods.

45%

Of respondents think that half of all multi-family units in Mankato should have access to EV Charges in the next ten years

Recharge Mankato EV Ride & Drive Survey, 2025

68%

Of respondents want more EV chargers at grocery stores

Recharge Mankato EV Ride & Drive Survey, 2025

Aspirational Homes & Businesses Electrification Goals for Mankato (10-Year Plan)

If community members, property owners, utilities, and local leaders choose to work together, Mankato could pursue the following goals to make electrification more practical, equitable, and locally beneficial across the residential and commercial sectors. These targets represent a shared vision of what could be achieved through strategic investment, outreach, and collaboration.

Electrify 30% of Mankato homes by 2036

- Focus: Air-source heat pumps, electric water heaters, induction stoves
- Target outreach to single-family homes and multifamily rentals

Electrify 25% of commercial buildings by 2036

- Focus: HVAC, cooking equipment, hot water systems, and fleet vehicles
- Priority sectors: restaurants, logistics, light manufacturing, office parks

Install EV chargers at 50% of multifamily and commercial properties by 2032

- Prioritize high-traffic areas and underserved neighborhoods
- Pair installations with workforce training and incentive support

Ensure 60% of eligible low-income households access rebates by 2036

- Partner with housing agencies and utilities
- Address renter-landlord dynamics and “split incentive” barriers

Aspirational Programs & Partnerships for Homes & Businesses

If Mankato residents, business owners, property managers, and local partners choose to pursue electrification together, Recharge Mankato could help support a suite of accessible, community-focused programs. These potential initiatives aim to make clean energy upgrades more achievable—connecting people to resources, rebates, and practical support designed to meet local needs.

Illustrative program concepts include:

- Home Electrification Incentive Navigator
  Step-by-step tools to help homeowners and renters layer incentives (federal, utility, local) for HVAC, weatherization, induction stoves, and EV charging.
- Small Business Electrification Accelerator
  Offers technical assessments and personalized coaching to help local businesses upgrade HVAC systems, appliances, and fleets—while navigating available rebates.
- EV-Ready Housing Initiative
  Assists landlords, property managers, and condo boards in installing shared EV charging, with case studies, financing tools, and community support.
- Commercial & Retail EV Charging Grant Program
  Helps fund visible, public-facing chargers at local businesses and job centers—boosting walkability and supporting customer attraction.
- Low-Income Electrification Equity Fund
  Provides wraparound services and gap financing for income-eligible households, including streamlined rebate access and support for landlord-tenant collaboration.
- Electrification Storytelling Campaign
  Celebrates local families and businesses already making the switch, using relatable stories to inspire and inform the broader community.

Next Steps:
Exploring Community-Scale Home & Business Electrification

If residents, businesses, contractors, utilities, and local organizations choose to pursue community-scale electrification together, the following steps outline one possible path forward. These actions represent opportunities—not requirements—and could be adapted over time based on local engagement, funding, and evolving community priorities.

- **Establish a Home & Business Electrification Roundtable**
  Bring together realtors, contractors, housing agencies, utilities, and business leaders to explore collaboration and align resources around shared goals.

- **Distribute the Electrification Incentive Navigator Toolkit**
  Customize step-by-step guides for homeowners, renters, landlords, and businesses in both print and digital formats to increase access and understanding.

- **Launch Demonstration Corridors**
  Identify one residential neighborhood and one commercial block to showcase highly visible upgrades—EV chargers, signage, efficient appliances, and solar—to inspire broader participation.

- **Expand the Local Installer Network**
  Partner with South Central College to offer training and certification for contractors. Build a "Recharge-Certified" directory to promote trusted local expertise.

- **Launch the Low-Income Electrification Equity Fund**
  Collaborate with utilities, nonprofits, and philanthropic partners to support income-eligible households—prioritizing neighborhoods with high energy burdens and significant rental housing.

- **Kick Off a Public Outreach Campaign**
  Work with community partners to share resources through radio, flyers, social media, and events. Host workshops at libraries, schools, and faith organizations to reach residents where they are.

- **Define and Track Key Metrics**
  Monitor installations, rebate use, business engagement, and household cost savings. Use community data to refine programs and celebrate local successes.

Potential Project Path Spotlight – Partnering with Local Auto Dealers

If Mankato chooses to accelerate its shift toward innovative transportation, local auto dealers could serve as key allies in expanding access to EVs. As trusted community businesses, dealerships are often the first touchpoint for residents curious about going electric—positioning them as natural ambassadors in Mankato's broader electrification journey.

A prospective **Dealer Support Initiative**, coordinated through **Recharge Mankato**, could help elevate dealerships as local EV leaders. By providing tools and strategies—like an EV Sales Support Toolkit, staff training workshops, and co-branded educational materials—this initiative could make it easier for dealers to support customers through the EV transition. In return, participating dealers might benefit from increased visibility at Ride & Drive events, shared marketing efforts, community recognition, and qualified leads generated through outreach.

Over time, this effort could evolve into a **Preferred Dealer Network**, linking public events, workforce training, and education initiatives to strengthen both local businesses and EV adoption. If pursued, this collaborative model would represent a win-win: growing local economic opportunity while helping Mankato lead in the clean transportation transition.

Conclusion & Next Steps:

Powering What Comes Next for Mankato

Mankato stands at a pivotal moment. The path toward an innovative energy future is no longer hypothetical—it's unfolding right now, in our schools, on our job sites, in our neighborhoods, and across our local economy. The Recharge Mankato Roadmap outlines a practical, community-driven strategy to ensure that this transition benefits everyone—from students and jobseekers to small business owners, renters, farmers, and families.

The strategies outlined here will drive economic growth, workforce opportunities, cost savings, and regional resilience. By building on our strengths—strong schools, active employers, curious students, and community pride—Mankato has the tools to lead. Already, we're seeing the momentum: solar on schools, growing EV interest, workforce upskilling, and business partnerships. This roadmap builds on that energy and lays out a path for how we go further—together.

This roadmap offers a phased, scalable structure to move from pilot programs and early demonstrations to full community transformation over the next decade. The strategy is built on momentum already underway—student-led energy projects, solar-ready schools, rising EV adoption, and growing interest from local employers. What happens next is not just about policy or technology—it's about commitment, coordination, and local leadership.

Potential Next Steps for Launching the Recharge Mankato Roadmap

If community members, institutions, and local leaders choose to take action together, the steps below offer a potential starting point. These ideas are meant to spark collaboration, attract resources, and demonstrate what's possible when a region unites around a shared vision for electrification.

- **Pursue Strategic Funding & Partnerships**
  Identify and pursue grants, philanthropic support, and matching investments. Leverage federal and state programs (like the Inflation Reduction Act) and forge new alliances with utilities, foundations, and regional development entities.

- **Form Sector Working Groups**
  Invite cross-sector volunteers to join teams focused on K–12 education, higher education, workforce development, homes & businesses, and auto dealerships. Identify champions, coordinate meeting schedules, and begin shaping collaborative priorities.

- **Explore and Fund Quick-Start Projects**
  Launch pilot initiatives—such as Ride & Drive events, student Energy Ambassador programs, neighborhood charger installations, or workforce training cohorts—to generate momentum and demonstrate near-term impact.

- **Design a Regional Electrification Data Dashboard**
  Develop tools to track progress on key metrics such as EV adoption, school upgrades, student participation, and job placements. Use the data to tell the story, guide improvements, and inspire confidence from funders and stakeholders.

- **Create a Community Outreach & Storytelling Campaign**
  Share the voices of Mankato's residents, educators, workers, and business owners who are helping lead the way. Use local media, social platforms, and events to build awareness and pride in the region's electrification efforts.

- **Establish a Community Electrification Task Force**
  Convene cross-sector leadership to guide long-term implementation, ensure accountability, and champion equity in all phases of this work. This group could serve as both a sounding board and a catalyst for sustained collaboration.

A Community-Led Energy Future

Recharge Mankato is not a mandate—it's an invitation. An invitation to imagine what's possible, to organize around shared values, and to build a future where opportunity, sustainability, and innovation grow from local pride.

This roadmap presents one potential path forward. Whether pieces of it are pursued or the whole plan inspires something new, Mankato's future will be shaped by the choices we make together. If we act—intentionally, inclusively, and boldly—we can ensure what comes next is built right here and powered by all of us.

Appendices

Potential Programs and Partnerships

The following program and partnership ideas reflect what could be possible if Mankato's institutions, businesses, residents, and civic leaders choose to move forward together. They are not finalized commitments, but a set of community-informed concepts designed to spark collaboration, attract resources, and guide local innovation. Each entry represents one way to turn electrification into real, visible progress—should local interest and alignment make it feasible to pursue. These appendices serve as a living toolkit for the region to adapt, refine, and activate over time.

Supportive K-12 Electrification Programs & Partnerships

1. School Electrification Demonstration Grants
   a. Funding for rooftop solar, battery storage, and building electrification retrofits
   b. Include classroom energy dashboards and educator support materials
2. Electric School Bus Transition Support
   a. Assistance to Palmer Bus Company and Yaeger Bus Service to, in partnership with the district and other customers, develop grant applications, procurement planning, and charging infrastructure
   b. Work with local bus companies to develop a technical roadmap to replace 100% of buses with electric models by 2038
3. Campus EV Charging Expansion Program
   a. Planning, funding, and signage for chargers at every middle and high school by 2028
   b. Open access models for staff, families, and local fleets
4. Resilient Schools Partnership Initiative
   a. Targeted solar + battery installations at schools that serve as community emergency hubs
   b. Support for grid-independent backup power strategies

Curriculum & Student Engagement Programs

5. Career & College Readiness Pathways
   a. Integration of energy innovation across career pathways (e.g., engineering, construction, ag-tech, computer science)
   b. Project-based coursework aligned with community energy needs
6. Recharge Mankato Ride & Drive Events at Schools
   a. Hands-on EV test drives, energy innovation career booths, and fundraiser tie-ins (e.g., donations to coding clubs)
   b. Helps normalize technology and excite families about emerging jobs
7. Community Electrification Fair & Energy Ambassadors Program
   a. Student-led outreach events showcasing local electrification progress
   b. Public exhibitions of EVs, solar tech, battery systems, and clean careers
8. Energy Innovation Career Awareness Campaigns
   a. Videos, posters, and online resources promoting a wide range of electrification- related careers
   b. Tailored by grade with diverse role models and local employer stories
9. K–12 Electrification Curriculum Toolkit
   a. Age-appropriate lessons in energy systems, EVs, smart homes, and grid innovation
   b. Developed in partnership with Mankato teachers and aligned with state science and Career & Technical Education standards
10. Energy Innovation Capstone Project Support
    a. Mentorship, community partners, and small grant funding for student senior projects
    b. Includes pathways in technical buildouts, advocacy, and research
11. Energy Innovation Tech Job Shadow & Internship Network
    a. Facilitated connections with local employers
    b. Expansion of paid summer internships for upper-level high school students
12. Energy Ambassadors Expansion & Leadership Training
    a. Establish Energy Ambassador programs in every middle and high school
    b. Include leadership curriculum and event planning tools for students

Academic & Workforce Programs

1. Energy Innovation Certificate Accelerator
   a. Launch new short-term credential programs in EV charging infrastructure, solar PV, battery storage, and building electrification
   b. Align with high-demand local career pathways and offer flexible scheduling for adult learners and career changers

2. Dual-Credit Technical Pathway Partnership
   a. Provide dual-enrollment opportunities in energy innovation topics for high school students at South Central College and Minnesota State University, Mankato
   b. Focus on technical trades, engineering technology, and energy systems

3. Energy Innovation Careers Awareness & Employer Match Program
   a. Deliver career spotlights, classroom visits, and paid internship opportunities in energy innovation fields
   b. Reach students in business, public policy, computer science, and trades programs

4. Energy Innovation Capstone & Internship Fund
   a. Provide mentorship, seed funding, and placement support for student capstone projects and internships tied to electrification
   b. Prioritize hands-on learning with local employers and municipalities

Campus-Based Programs

5. Electrification Innovation Living Labs
   a. Develop energy innovation demonstration zones on each participating campus, featuring solar, battery storage, smart controls, and public dashboards
   b. Use these labs as educational tools and public engagement asset

6. Campus Electrification Planning & Workforce Strategy Hub
   a. Provide technical assistance and planning support for electrifying campus infrastructure
   b. Coordinate workforce development strategy in alignment with evolving infrastructure needs

Faculty & Community Engagement

7. Recharge Research & Faculty Innovation Fellowships
   a. Offer competitive grants to faculty who integrate electrification themes into curriculum or conduct applied research in energy systems
   b. Promote interdisciplinary collaboration tied to regional challenges

8. Community Energy Solutions Challenge
   a. Host annual student innovation competitions to solve real-world electrification challenges for Mankato-area organizations, businesses, and farms
   b. Build interdisciplinary, team-based problem-solving experience

Supportive Workforce Programs & Partnerships

1. Electrification Workforce Accelerator
   a. Offers hands-on, fast-track training in EV charging installation, battery systems, and heat pump retrofits
   b. Delivered by South Central College and industry trainers
2. Energy Innovation Pre-Apprenticeship & Bridge Programs
   a. Career entry pathways for youth, career changers, and displaced workers
   b. Focus on foundational technical skills, financial literacy, and job readiness
3. Recharge Employer Partnership Network
   a. Engages local employers to co-design training content and host work-based learning experiences
   b. Matches students with hiring needs in construction, logistics, ag-tech, and manufacturing
4. Wraparound Support Fund for Trainees
   a. Provides transportation, childcare, tuition assistance, and stipends for participants in energy innovation programs
   b. Ensures equitable access and retention
5. Workforce Navigator & Outreach Team
   a. Offers one-on-one support for jobseekers navigating electrification pathways
   b. Conducts community-based outreach to promote participation from underserved neighborhoods
6. On-the-Job Training & Earn-to-Learn Pilots
   a. Pair paid work experiences with structured learning in Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment, solar installation, or HVAC upgrades
   b. Track wage growth, placement outcomes, and employer satisfaction

Supportive Home & Business Programs & Partnerships

1. Home Electrification Incentive Navigator
   a. Digital and print tools to help homeowners and renters find and apply for utility, state, and federal rebates
   b. Includes heat pumps, induction stoves, EV chargers, insulation, and weatherization
2. Small Business Electrification Accelerator
   a. Direct outreach and upgrade coaching for local small businesses
   b. Offers technical assessments and connects owners to rebates for HVAC, fleet, or appliance upgrades
3. EV-Ready Housing Initiative
   a. Incentivizes landlords, condo boards, and developers to install shared charging infrastructure
   b. Offers design guidance, case studies, and financing support
4. Commercial & Retail EV Charging Grant Program
   a. Funds charging stations at retail centers, restaurants, and commercial campuses
   b. Prioritizes visibility, walkability, and local job destinations

5. Low-Income Electrification Equity Fund
   a. Coordinates with utilities and housing agencies to pre-qualify households for rebates
   b. Offers wraparound support for renter-landlord collaboration and split-incentive solutions

6. Electrification Storytelling Campaign
   a. Features local households and businesses that have benefited from electrification upgrades
   b. Delivered through local media, social channels, and neighborhood events
   c. Supports all goals by driving social adoption and awareness

Supportive Auto Dealers Programs & Partnerships

1. Establish a Dealer Advisory Group
   a. Invite 5–7 local dealership managers or sales leaders to form a working group
   b. Meet quarterly to share updates, gather feedback, and co-design program components Include both new and used dealerships with a mix of EV inventory and geographic coverage

2. Develop an EV Sales Support Toolkit for Dealerships
   a. Include quick-reference sheets on EV incentives (federal, state, utility)
   b. Provide rebate application checklists and a charger installation FAQ
   c. Offer customer-facing flyers branded with Recharge Mankato
   d. Include guidance for used EV sales and vehicle inspection best practices

3. Train Sales Staff on EV Basics & Incentives
   a. Host a 1-hour EV 101 workshop for dealership teams
   b. Cover topics like EV range, charging options, total cost of ownership, and common myths
   c. Provide simple scripts and talking points for staff to use with curious buyers

4. Promote Dealer Participation in Ride & Drive Events
   a. Schedule events at schools, employers, and public spaces where dealers can showcase EVs
   b. Offer per-test-drive incentive donations to local youth programs or nonprofits
   c. Allow participating dealers to feature exclusive event discounts or bundles

5. Create a Recharge Mankato Preferred Dealer Network
   a. Highlight participating dealers on the Recharge Mankato website and in public materials
   b. Provide "Recharge Mankato EV Ready Dealer" signage and window decals
   c. Share leads generated from community education campaigns and online interest forms

6. Launch a Dealer-Coordinated Incentive Referral Program
   a. Partner with utilities and coops to offer additional rebates or financing bonuses
   b. Create a digital or printed referral card dealers can give to customers for added benefits
   c. Track referral usage and report monthly results back to dealers

7. Integrate Dealers Into Community Outreach
   a. Invite dealers to participate in career fairs, workforce panels, and school visits
   b. Pair dealership staff with local students for job shadow or "day in the life" learning experiences
   c. Co-brand outreach materials that feature local businesses supporting electrification

8. Track Impact and Share Success Stories
   a. Collect metrics on EV sales, test drives, and referrals tied to Recharge Mankato events
   b. Celebrate standout dealers and staff in newsletters, local press, and social media
   c. Use testimonials to demonstrate how the program benefits both dealers and the community