

MEEKER COOPERATIVE PIONEER



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The Pioneer Newsletter is the official Cooperative publication.
Meeker Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

MEEKER CO-OP CELEBRATES MILESTONES AND MEMBER ENGAGEMENT AT ANNUAL EVENT

The 2024 Meeker Cooperative Annual Meeting and Member Appreciation Event took place on August 6 at Powder Ridge in Kimball, MN. With 728 members and subscribers in attendance, the evening combined food, fun, and Cooperative business, making it a memorable and productive event for all.

The meeting highlighted the Cooperative's achievements and future plans. Reports were delivered by several key individuals, including Mark Larson of the Qualifications & Election Committee and Holly Schultz-Anderson, who announced that the Meeker Cooperative Electric Trust had reached a significant

milestone of \$1 million in grants. Finance Manager Scott Froemming provided a positive financial update, announcing a clean audit. CEO/General Manager Luke Johnson shared the Cooperative's recent success in securing \$23.6 million in county, state, and federal grants, and the Cooperative's ongoing efforts to apply for additional funding. Johnson also discussed the impacts of Minnesota's carbon-free by 2040 mandates, specifically addressing concerns about transmission, reliability, and affordability.

Continued on page 2.

ANNUAL MEETING CONTINUED...

An election was held for Board seats in Districts 4, 5, 7, and 9. The only contested seat was in District 4, where ballots were mailed to members and counted at the meeting. Barbara Ann Nelson was elected as the new District 4 director. Incumbents Randy Bryant (District 7) and Jesse Turck (District 9) were re-elected. David Leonhardi (District 5) was elected after appointment to fill a vacant position.

The event wasn't all business. Attendees enjoyed pulled pork sandwiches, baked beans, potato salad, chips, and cookies, along

with live music from local musician Steve Michaud. 24-25-344 Kids were entertained with lawn games, a bouncy house, a power bungee jump, and a petting zoo. Adults had fun too, with bucket truck rides and several rounds of Bingo, including a Blackout Bingo round where a lucky winner took home an electric lawnmower.

This event was a celebration of community and a reminder of the power of member involvement in shaping the future of Meeker Cooperative.

DISTRICT 8 DIRECTOR POSITION OPEN APPLICATIONS NOW BEING ACCEPTED

The District 8 seat on Meeker Cooperative's board of directors is open. District 8 includes the following townships: Darwin and Ellsworth in Meeker county.

Meeker Cooperative's bylaws specify that the Board of Directors may appoint a member to fill any open board seat. Once appointed, the Director will serve until the next Annual Meeting, at which time the seat will be up for election by the membership of the district to fill the unexpired term.

If you are interested in applying for the District 8 Director position, the Director Qualifications and the Application Form may be found on Meeker Cooperative's website at www.meeker.coop. Select Member Services at the upper left and then Download Forms from the dropdown menu. Click on the Director Application packet to download the materials. You can also call Mary Alice Holm at 320-693-3231 to request a packet.

The application deadline is close of business (4:30 p.m.) on October 4. Selected applicants will be notified and will be interviewed in person by the Board of Directors on Monday, October 28.



**FIND YOUR
LOCATION
NUMBER**

Four location numbers are hidden within this Pioneer. If you find your number and claim it by calling Meeker Cooperative before September 30, you will have \$10 credit to your account. When you call and verify your information is correct in our system, you will also receive an additional bill credit equal to one month's output from a Member Solar Panel.



CO-OPS POWER COMMUNITIES WITH PURPOSE

Communities come in all shapes and sizes. Some are based on geographical proximity, some are based on shared interests or hobbies, and some communities can even be found in virtual spaces like social media groups. Regardless of where or how they are formed, communities can bring people together and create a sense of belonging. Meeker Cooperative is deeply committed to our members and subscribers, and we're glad you are part of the electric cooperative community.

This October, more than 30,000 cooperatives across the U.S. are celebrating National Co-op Month. It's a time to reflect on all the aspects that set cooperatives apart from other types of businesses, but more importantly, it's a time to celebrate the power of co-op membership.

Electric cooperatives are not-for-profit utilities that are built by the communities they serve. For Meeker Cooperative our mission has always been to provide you with reliable power. We care about your quality of life, and because we are locally operated, we're uniquely suited to meet our members' evolving energy needs.

Beyond the business of electricity, our employees and directors are equally invested in our local community. Meeker's expansion into the broadband business was in response to an identified unmet need of its members. Why? Because we live here, too. 03-35-401 That's why we work hard to support local economic development projects, youth programs and scholarships, charitable giving initiatives and additional programs that make our community a better place to call home.

All co-ops, including Meeker Cooperative, are guided by seven cooperative principles that embody the values and spirit of the cooperative movement. These seven principles are a framework to help all co-ops navigate challenges and opportunities while remaining true to our purpose:

1. **Open and Voluntary Membership:** Co-op membership is open to anyone who can use its services, with no barriers or restrictions, allowing all who benefit to join and support its mission of providing reliable energy and community support.
2. **Democratic Member Control:** Members actively shape the co-op by participating in its decision-making processes, reflecting the essence of co-ops being created by the members, for the members. Members exercise this control by electing directors from each of our 9 districts, ensuring that the leadership truly represents our membership.
3. **Members' Economic Participation:** Members contribute financially to the co-op, which ensures

it runs efficiently both now and in the future. At Meeker Cooperative, this happens primarily through paying your energy bills. Your contributions are reinvested in maintaining and improving the co-op's infrastructure, ensuring reliable services and long-term sustainability for all members.

4. **Autonomy and Independence:** Co-ops are independent, member-controlled organizations. This autonomy allows them to make decisions that best serve their members without outside interference. At Meeker Cooperative, this independence lets us tailor services to meet the unique needs of our community, ensuring every decision benefits our members.
5. **Education, Training, and Information:** Co-ops prioritize education to ensure employees have the training and information they need to help the co-op succeed. At Meeker Cooperative, we also extend this commitment to our members and communities through initiatives such as Co-op 101, VIBRANT University, and Safety Demonstrations, which provide valuable knowledge on Co-op operations, broadband services, and safety practices.
6. **Cooperation Among Cooperatives:** Co-ops believe in supporting and learning from one another. By sharing resources and expertise, co-ops help each other thrive, particularly during times of need. For example, we provide mutual aid to other co-ops during storms and assist with information sharing on electric and broadband-related topics, ensuring that all co-ops can continue delivering essential services to their members.
7. **Concern for Community:** Every cooperative is deeply rooted in the well-being of its local community. Co-ops are dedicated to giving back and fostering growth and development within their communities. One way Meeker Cooperative does this is through Operation Round Up, where members voluntarily round up their bills to the nearest dollar. These funds are then pooled together to support local non-profit and charitable organizations, making a positive impact on our community and helping those in need.

This October, as we celebrate National Co-op Month and the power of membership, we hope you will recognize the many aspects that set electric cooperatives apart. Our focus is reliable power. Our purpose is people--the local communities we're proud to serve.

Meeker Cooperative... Energizing and Connecting... Enhancing Your Life.

Luke Johnson
CEO, Meeker Cooperative

INTRODUCING OUR NEW DISTRICT 4 BOARD MEMBER: BARBARA ANN NELSON

We are excited to welcome Barbara Ann Nelson to the Meeker Cooperative Board of Directors. Barbara Ann, a Licensed Practical Nurse with over 30 years of experience in healthcare, brings a wealth of knowledge and dedication to our Board.

Barbara Ann's professional journey has been extensive, spanning roles in long-term care, private home care, and clinic nursing. Currently, she serves as the Informatics Manager at Meeker Memorial Hospital and Clinics, where she excels in optimizing workflows, educating staff, and troubleshooting concerns related to electronic medical records.

Her involvement with cooperatives is equally noteworthy. Barbara Ann and her husband, Marcus, are active participants in the Member 101 program and have recently engaged in the North Dakota energy trip and tours. Her background in cooperative events and her personal connection to Meeker Cooperative, where she has been a member for 15 years, reflect her deep-rooted commitment to our community.

Barbara Ann's motivation to join the Meeker Cooperative Board stems from her long-standing admiration for the Cooperative's history and its impact on the community. She recalls her high school days participating in the Peanut Butter and Milk Festival and the influence of dedicated board members as pivotal experiences that inspired her to contribute to the Cooperative's mission.

As a new board member, Barbara Ann's primary goals are to learn extensively about the Cooperative's operations, build relationships with



fellow board members and staff, and understand the needs of the Co-op members. She envisions Meeker Cooperative evolving through the adoption of technology and sustainability initiatives while remaining a reliable resource for members.

Barbara Ann believes that the Cooperative should focus on innovation and adaptation, staying competitive by embracing current trends, advancements, and relevant legislation. 05-15-317 She emphasizes the importance of community involvement and support, ensuring that the Cooperative continues to serve its members effectively.

Outside of her professional life, Barbara Ann enjoys spending time with family and friends, engaging in photography, crafting, and camping. A fun fact about Barbara Ann is that she was named after the Beach Boys' song "Barbara Ann."

Barbara Ann Nelson's extensive experience, commitment to community, and passion for innovation make her a valuable addition to our Board. We look forward to her contributions and are excited to see the positive impact she will bring to Meeker Cooperative.

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION

1. **Publication Title:** The Meeker Pioneer
2. **Publication Number:** 018-308
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9. **Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor and Managing Editor:** Meeker Cooperative, 1725 U.S. Hwy. 12 E., Litchfield, MN 55355
Managing Editor: Shane Zeppelin, 1725 U.S. Hwy. 12 E., Litchfield, MN 55355
10. **Owner:** Meeker Cooperative, 1725 U.S. Hwy. 12 E., Litchfield, MN 55355
11. **Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total:** None
12. **Tax Status:** Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months
13. **Publication Title:** Meeker Pioneer
14. **Issue Date for Circulation Data Below:** 07/15/2024
15. **Extent and Nature of Circulation**

	Avg. No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Mos.	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run)		
b. Paid Circulation	0	0
1. Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions	7,780	7,795
2. Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions	0	0
3. Paid Distribution Outside the Mails	0	0
4. Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail via USPS	0	0
c. Total Paid Distribution	7,780	7,795
d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution		
1. Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies	0	0
2. Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies	0	0
3. Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes via USPS	0	0
4. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside Mail	10	10
e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution	10	10
f. Total Distribution	7,790	7,805
g. Copies not Distributed	50	50
h. Total	7,840	7,855
i. Percent Paid	99	99
16. Electronic Copy Circulation		
a. Paid Electronic Copies	0	0
b. Total Paid Print Copies	7,780	7,744
c. Total Print Distribution	7,790	7,805
d. Percent Paid	99	99

17. **Publication of Statement of Ownership:** Publication required. Will be printed in the September 15, 2023 issue of this publication.
18. **Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager or Owner:** Shane Zeppelin **Date:** 09/04/2024

I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including multiple damages and civil penalties).

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Meeker Cooperative Distributes \$14,550

Thanks to the generous contributions from Meeker Cooperative members and VIBRANT subscribers, the Meeker Cooperative Electric Trust Board recently approved \$14,550 to support local community organizations.

Operation Round Up is a valuable program that enables members and VIBRANT subscribers to positively impact their community with just a small contribution. By rounding up their monthly bill to the nearest dollar, participants contribute spare change that, when pooled together, amounts to significant support for those in need.

This initiative also allows electric cooperatives to give back in a meaningful way. As not-for-profit organizations, cooperatives are dedicated to enhancing the quality of life in the communities they serve. Operation Round Up helps fulfill this commitment by funding local organizations and initiatives.

“By making an annual contribution equivalent to the cost of a cup of coffee, our members can make a substantial, positive impact on our communities,” said Trust Chair Holly Schultz-Anderson. “Through Operation Round Up, small change accumulates to create a big difference for many families, neighbors, and friends.”

The Trust meets three times per year to review applications and award grants. The remaining application deadline for 2024 is November 7. The application and guidelines can be found on Meeker Cooperative’s website. www.meeker.coop.

August 2024 Recipient List

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Advocates 4 Health	\$1,000
Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc.	\$500
Darwin Tourism & Promotions Committee	\$500
Fire Department, Cokato	\$1,000
Forest City War Memorial Park	\$1,000
Kimball Days	\$500
Let’s Go Fishing, Paynesville	\$200
Rescue Squad, Litchfield	\$2,850
True Friend and Friendship Ventures (Friends Needs to Be Friends)	\$1,000
Wrapped in Love	\$500

EDUCATION AND YOUTH

SWWC Foundation for Innovation in Education	\$1,000
United Way of West Central MN (Imagination Library)	\$1,000

K-12 TEACHERS WORKING COOPERATIVELY WITH OTHER GRANTS

Hutchinson Middle School (Speaker)	\$500
Hutchinson Public Schools, ISD 423 (Exploratory Camp - Manufacturing & Health Care)	\$1,500
Litchfield High School, ISD 466 (Gardening Project)	\$1,500

TOTAL **\$14,550**

WILLIE WIREDHAND’S ELECTRICITY FUN FACT



Electric cars have roots in the 19th century, with inventors like Thomas Edison experimenting long before gas-powered cars took over. Edison believed electric vehicles were the future, and though gasoline dominated, his early work helped pave the way for today’s growing electric vehicle industry.

MEMBER NEWS

UPCOMING DREAMING OF STREAMING EVENT

Get ready for an engaging evening with VIBRANT-U at our next educational event: “Dreaming of Streaming”!

Date: Tuesday, October 9

Time: 5:30 PM

Location: Meeker Cooperative Office, 1725 HWY 12 E, Litchfield

Explore the exciting world of streaming with our comprehensive presentation that covers everything from the basics of streaming to advanced content creation and device options. Following the presentation, enjoy a live demo showcasing the latest in streaming technology.

This event is FREE and open to all. Whether you’re a streaming novice or looking to enhance your skills, this session is designed to provide valuable insights and hands-on experience.

Don’t miss out on this opportunity to dive into streaming. We look forward to seeing you there!



LEARN MORE ABOUT OPERATION ROUND UP AT
www.meeker.coop/operationroundup

GET AHEAD OF THE SEASON WITH MEEKER COOPERATIVE'S HEATING PROGRAMS

As summer gives way to fall, it's the perfect time to start preparing for the cooler months ahead. Meeker Cooperative offers energy-efficient heating programs designed to help members save money while keeping their homes warm and cozy. Two of our standout programs—Dual Fuel Heating and Electric Thermal Storage Space Heating—offer both comfort and savings. Here's how they work:

Dual Fuel Heating:

The Dual Fuel Program is a controlled home electric heating system that provides a cost-effective way to heat your home. By combining two heat sources—an electric heat source and a backup system—you can enjoy warmth without the worry of high energy bills. During peak demand periods when the cost of electricity rises, the system automatically switches from electric heat to your backup system, which could be powered by propane, natural gas, or fuel oil.

How It Works:

Most of the time, your electric heating system provides 100% of your heating needs. However, when demand for electricity is at its highest, the Dual Fuel Program's load control equipment temporarily switches off your electric heat and activates your backup system. This helps conserve energy during peak periods while still keeping your home warm and comfortable.

Requirements and Benefits:

- Participants must have a hard-wired 240V electric heating system such as a plenum heater, boiler, baseboard, air source heat pump or ground source heat pump combined with an acceptable home backup heating system, such as fuel oil, propane, natural gas, or electric thermal storage.
- This program requires the installation of an energy management meter and load control switch.
- Participants receive electricity used for heating at a discounted rate of 5.7¢/kWh September - May, and 6.2¢/kWh June - August.
- A rebate of \$25/kW of connected load is available for new program enrollments.

Electric Thermal Storage Space Heating:

For those who want the 'all-electric' home without the gas backup system, the Electric Thermal Storage (ETS) Space Heating Program is another excellent option for members looking to save on heating costs. The ETS system stores the

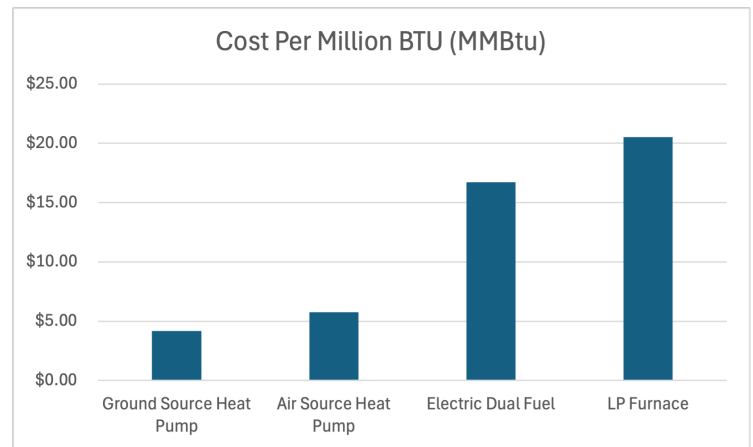
heat in high-density ceramic bricks and releases it throughout the day, ensuring your home stays warm without increasing your energy bill.

How It Works:

An ETS unit is a stand-alone heating system that doesn't require a backup fossil-fuel source. Instead, it stores heat in ceramic bricks that can retain heat for extended periods. When your home needs heating, the system automatically releases the stored heat, keeping your space comfortable throughout the day. This program is particularly beneficial for homes where consistent warmth is needed without the hassle of fuel delivery.

Requirements and Benefits:

- Participants must have a thermal storage electric heating system, such as a central furnace, room units or radiant floor cable.
- This program requires the installation of an off-peak meter and load control switch.
- Participants receive electricity used for heating at a discounted rate of 5.7¢/kWh September - May, and 6.2¢/kWh June - August.
- A rebate of \$25/kW of connected load is available for new program enrollments.



Different fuels are sold in different units, like propane in gallons or electricity in kilowatt-hours, and each has a different energy content. Heating systems also vary in efficiency. This chart helps you compare the cost of different fuels and systems on the same basis by using their energy content, making it easier to compare options fairly.

Learn More:

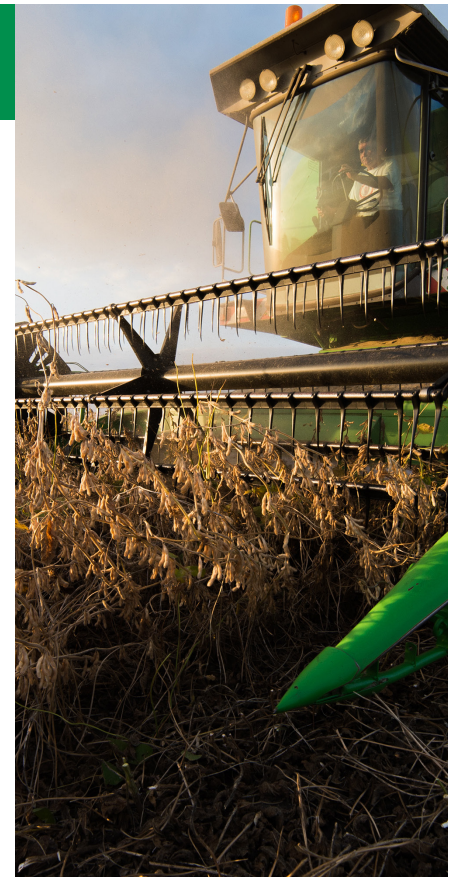
For more information on these programs and how to enroll, contact Meeker Cooperative at www.meeker.coop/programs/. Let's make sure you're ready for the cold months ahead while keeping your energy costs under control!

TIPS FOR A SAFE HARVEST SEASON

Agriculture is the backbone of our country, and our livelihood greatly depends on the crops provided by American farmers. In addition to being one of the most labor-intensive professions, farming is also considered one of the most dangerous jobs in the U.S.

The hard work and exhaustive labor are tough but rushing the job to save time can be extremely dangerous—even deadly—when farming near electrical equipment. Every year, across the U.S. there are collisions where tractors and other farming equipment accidentally collide with utility poles and power lines, causing injuries and power outages. These dangerous accidents can be avoided by looking up and around your surroundings when operating large farm machinery. 29-02-415 If you're preparing for harvest season, please keep the following safety tips in mind:

- Maintain a 10-foot clearance around all utility equipment in all directions.
- Use a spotter and deployed flags to maintain safe distances from power lines and other electrical equipment when working in the field.
- If your equipment makes contact with an energized or downed power line, contact 9-1-1 immediately and remain inside the vehicle until the power line is de-energized. In case of smoke or fire, exit the cab by making a solid jump out of the cab (without touching it), and hop away to safety.
- Consider equipment and cargo extensions of your vehicle. Augers on grain carts, mobile augers combines, lumber, hay, tree limbs, irrigation pipes and even bulk materials can conduct electricity, so keep them out of contact with electrical equipment.



FEATURED RECIPE

CARAMEL-CROWNED PUMPKIN SQUARES | SUBMITTED BY: MARGARET ARNOLD



INGREDIENTS

CRUST

- 1 cup sifted flour
- ½ cup quick cooking rolled oats
- ½ cup brown sugar, firmly packed
- ½ cup butter, melted

FILLING:

- 2 cups canned pumpkin
- 13-oz. can evaporated milk (either 2% or whole)
- 2 eggs

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Mix crust ingredients in a food processor or by hand with pastry blender or on low with electric mixer. Press crust into the bottom of a 9x13 inch pan. Bake 15 minutes. Combine filling ingredients in a large mixing bowl. Beat thoroughly. Pour over crust. Return to oven and bake for 20 minutes. Combine topping ingredients. Sprinkle them over the pumpkin filling. Return to oven and bake 15-20 minutes or until filling is set. Cool and cut into 2 inch squares. Serve with whipped cream.

- ¾ cup sugar
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ginger
- ½ tsp cloves

TOPPING:

- ½ cup chopped pecans
- 2 T butter
- ½ cup brown sugar, firmly packed
- Whipped cream, as desired

Submit your favorite recipe for our next issue! The chosen winner will receive a \$10 credit to their account. DEADLINE: September 30, 2024. Email to: szeppelin@meeker.coop | Mail to: Meeker Coop, ATTN: Shane 1725 US Hwy 12 E, Ste 100, Litchfield, MN 55355

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CEO/General Manager: Luke Johnson
Contract Editor: Fuller Creative, LLC



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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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South Maine Prairie in Stearns;
Forest Prairie in Meeker

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Paynesville in Stearns;
Union Grove in Meeker

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Collinwood, Cedar Mills in Meeker;
Stockholm in Wright;
Acoma, Hutchinson in McLeod

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Lake Elizabeth, E. Lake Lillian in Kandiyohi;
Cosmos, Acton, Danielson, Swede Grove
in Meeker; Brookfield, Boon Lake in Renville

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Darwin, Ellsworth in Meeker

Jesse Turck — District 9
North Kingston, Kingston,
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Chad Felstul, Attorney



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Send Attention: Editor at the address above.



WHEN YOU
SAVE
WE ALL
SAVE

Enroll in one of Meeker Cooperative's Energy Management programs by November 15, 2024, to be entered to win one of five \$200 bill credits on your December 2024 statement.

To be eligible, your energy management system must be completely installed, operational, and checked out by a Meeker Cooperative energy services technician by November 15, 2024.

LEARN MORE ABOUT
ENERGY MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS AT:
www.meeker.coop/programs/

MORE NEWS & CLASSIFIEDS ONLINE

Keep up-to-date with your Cooperative in-between issues of the Pioneer and browse our classifieds online at:
www.meeker.coop/news.