

MEEKER COOPERATIVE PIONEER



IN THIS ISSUE

PAGE 3
Scholarships

PAGE 4
Newsletter Update

PAGE 5
VIBRANT Rate Increase &
Board Candidate Applications

Meeker
Cooperative
Light and Power Association

VIBRANT
Broadband™

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

MUTUAL AID IN MOTION: LINEWORKERS SUPPORT HURRICANE RECOVERY

Four dedicated lineworkers from Meeker Cooperative recently returned from an extended mutual aid mission to assist with hurricane recovery efforts in the Southeast following the devastation caused by Hurricanes Helene and Milton.

The team, in collaboration with Stearns Electric, initially deployed to South Carolina but extended their mission to aid in Florida, demonstrating an unwavering commitment to support communities severely impacted by both storms. Their tireless efforts helped restore power and bring a sense of normalcy back to the region.

Luke Johnson, CEO/General Manager of Meeker Cooperative, and Electric Operations Manager Dan Schrupp led the decision to deploy the team, emphasizing the Cooperative's commitment to Cooperative Principle #6, "Cooperation Among Cooperatives." Schrupp noted, "We have a strong tradition of helping communities in need. When a storm hits elsewhere, we support recovery efforts knowing that others would assist us in our time of need."

Continued on page 2...

HURRICANE STORY CONTINUED...

The Meeker team—John Grabow, Underground Foreman; Logan Josephson, Overhead Foreman; Brandon Skalberg, Journey Lineworker; and Nate Glimsdal, Journey Lineworker—departed on October 2, 2024, to assist at Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative in Pickens, South Carolina, one of the hardest-hit areas. They worked on replacing broken poles and reinstalling conductor lines, helping to restore power to nearly 66,000 homes out of Blue Ridge’s 71,000 members in the wake of Hurricane Helene’s widespread damage.

Josephson reflected on the challenges of working in South Carolina’s rural terrain, with narrow, winding roads and limited access. “There wasn’t a straight road to be found. Everything was hilly, which made it hard to move our equipment,” he explained. Despite these obstacles, the team made significant progress in restoring infrastructure.

Upon completion of their work in South Carolina, the team prepared to head home. However, as Hurricane Milton ravaged Florida, leaving 3 million people without power, Meeker Cooperative’s lineworkers quickly shifted plans and headed directly to Peace River Electric Cooperative in Wauchula, Florida. Arriving just as the storm approached, they rode out the hurricane positioning themselves to respond immediately once conditions allowed. 29-06-201 As one of the first out-of-state crews on the scene, their work involved replacing numerous poles, reconnecting downed conductors, and navigating widespread damage amidst fallen trees and debris.

The extreme conditions in Florida required different approaches. “In Florida, the heat and humidity added another layer of difficulty, and nearly all the poles we worked with were concrete,” said Skalberg. Despite these challenges, the team worked seamlessly alongside over 1,000 linemen from across the U.S. and Canada.

On October 15, after nearly two weeks of intense recovery efforts across two states, the team returned home to Minnesota. The lineworkers noted the warm reception they received from local residents, many of whom expressed gratitude for their swift action. “Helping a community recover, especially under such challenging conditions, is deeply meaningful for all of us,” said Grabow.

Meeker Cooperative is proud to have assisted in this mutual aid effort and will be ready to support recovery efforts whenever communities need it most in the future.



**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 December 31, 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.

2025 SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES



BASIN EPC \$1,000 COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP AVAILABLE FOR DEPENDENTS OF COOPERATIVE MEMBERS & VIBRANT CUSTOMERS

Meeker Cooperative is pleased to make available a \$1,000.00 college scholarship funded by Basin Electric Power Cooperative, one of Meeker's power suppliers.

To be eligible a student must:

- be a dependent child (including adopted or step-children) of a Meeker Cooperative member or Vibrant subscriber; be enrolled or planning to enroll in a full-time undergraduate course of study at an accredited, two-year, or four-year college, university or vocational/technical school; enter college in the fall of the same year the scholarship is given;
- not have previously received this award;
- be a US citizen; and
- complete and submit all required materials and the scholarship application form by the application deadline.

Completed applications must reach Meeker Cooperative by close of business on Friday, January 31, 2025. The application is available on Meeker's website under Member Services (www.meeker.coop/download-forms). The form may be completed online, but must be printed to submit with the supporting materials. Applications are also available at the Cooperative by calling Mary Alice Holm at 320-693-3231.

All decisions by the Scholarship Selection Committee will be final.

An alternate application process is required for dependent children of Meeker Co-op employees. See Mary Alice for details.

\$1,000 MEEKER COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC TRUST NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP

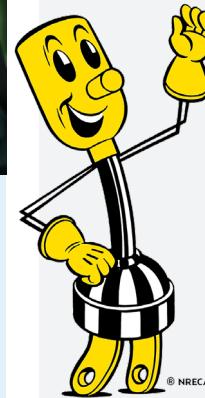
A \$1,000 scholarship is being offered to a student five or more years beyond high school graduation who is working toward a degree, certificate or license in some area of expertise. Applicants must be a Meeker Cooperative member or employee or Vibrant subscriber. Eligible candidate must:

- have an educational plan,
- have been enrolled for at least one quarter or semester in the chosen program, and
- be a member or employee of Meeker Cooperative or a Vibrant subscriber.

The application is available on Meeker's website under Member Services (www.meeker.coop/download-forms), at the Cooperative, or by calling 320-693-3231. Application deadline: Close of business (4:30p.m.) February 6, 2025.

The scholarship is made available by Meeker Cooperative Electric Trust and funded by Operation Round Up®.

WILLIE WIREDHAND'S ELECTRICITY FUN FACT



In 1831, Michael Faraday made the groundbreaking discovery of electromagnetic induction, demonstrating that a changing magnetic field could generate an electric current.

This revolutionary insight laid the foundation for modern physics and electrical engineering. Faraday's work paved the way for the invention of electric generators and transformers, which are essential for producing and distributing electricity. His discovery not only transformed how we harness energy but also set the stage for countless technological advancements that shape our lives today.

MEMBER NEWS

HOLIDAY HOURS

The Meeker Cooperative office will be closed December 24-25 and January 1 for the Holidays.

COLD WEATHER RULE REMINDER

Meeker Cooperative reminds members that the Minnesota Cold Weather Rule is in effect from October 1, 2024, to April 30, 2025. This rule helps protect qualified residential members from electric service disconnection during the winter months.

To qualify, members must meet the rule's requirements and establish a payment agreement. While the rule offers protection, it does not eliminate the responsibility to pay utility bills.

If you're concerned about winter energy bills, contact us today to learn more or to set up a payment plan. Call us at 320-693-3231 for assistance.

2025: MEEKER COOPERATIVE NEWSLETTER GOES ALL DIGITAL

Starting January 2025, Meeker Cooperative's member newsletter will transition to an all-digital format.

This decision comes after thoughtful consideration of how we can best serve our members. Printing and mailing a paper newsletter is a significant expense, and by moving to a digital format we can allocate those resources toward improving services and programs for our members. Additionally, a digital newsletter allows us to share updates and news faster, ensuring you have access to the latest news, helpful resources, and important announcements.

We know that good communication is at the heart of our relationship with our members, and the newsletter has always been an important way to stay connected. 28-21-307 With this shift, we're taking a step forward in ensuring that communication remains consistent, cost-effective, and timely.

To ensure you don't miss an issue, we encourage all members to update their contact information. The digital newsletter will be delivered directly to your email inbox so having an up-to-date email address on file is essential.

HOW TO UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION

Choose one of these three easy ways to update your contact information and stay connected with Meeker Cooperative's digital newsletter:

- Log in to or register for SmartHub: Use SmartHub, our convenient online account management tool, to verify and update your contact information.
- Visit our website: Go to www.meeke.coop/update-my-info/ and complete the online form to update your contact information.
- Contact our office directly for assistance.

We're excited about this new chapter and the chance to strengthen communication with our members. Thank you for your understanding and support as we continue to explore ways to serve you better. If you have any questions or need help updating your contact information, don't hesitate to reach out.



FEATURED RECIPE

HONEY BOURBON CRANBERRY SAUCE | SUBMITTED BY: MICHELE BOREN



INGREDIENTS

- 4 cups (1 12-ounce bag) fresh cranberries, rinsed
- 1/3 cup brown sugar
- 1/3 cup honey
- 1/3 cup bourbon
- 2 sprigs fresh rosemary
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 cinnamon stick
- Zest of 1 orange
- Juice of 1/2 orange
- A pinch of salt and freshly ground pepper

DIRECTIONS

Combine all the ingredients in a pot, over medium heat. Once boiling, lower the heat and simmer until the cranberries burst, about 10 minutes. Continue cooking until the desired thickness. The sauce will thicken further as it cools! Remove from heat and taste to see if it's too tart. If yes, you can adjust by adding more honey to taste. Remove the rosemary sprigs and cinnamon stick, and let it cool completely. Then, transfer to an airtight container and refrigerate for at least 2 hours or up to a week! Serve chilled, reheated or at room temperature.

Submit your favorite recipe for our next issue! The chosen winner will receive a \$10 credit to their account. DEADLINE: December 31, 2024. Email to: szeppelin@meeker.coop | Mail to: Meeker Co-op, ATTN: Shane 1725 US Hwy 12 E, Ste 100, Litchfield, MN 55355



A SMALL CHANGE FOR A STRONGER CONNECTION

Thank you for choosing Vibrant as your trusted internet provider. We are honored to play a part in keeping you connected to what matters most. Whether it's staying in touch with loved ones, working from home, or streaming your favorite shows we are committed to providing you with excellent internet service.

Our commitment to delivering a reliable, high-speed internet experience has never been stronger. To support this mission, we've made significant investments over the past five years to so we can deliver world-class customer service as well as enhance the speed, security, and reliability of our network. These upgrades ensure we continue to meet your growing online needs today and in the future.

To sustain the quality and reliability you've come to expect, a small

adjustment to our rates will take effect on January 1, 2025. This change—\$3.00 per month—allows us to maintain and improve the network that powers your connections every day.

We understand that any adjustment can prompt questions, and we're here to help. If you'd like to explore your plan or discuss this update, our team is ready to assist at vibrantbroadband.com or by calling 320-693-3231.

Thank you for being part of the Vibrant family. Your trust inspires us to keep innovating and improving to so we can deliver the best possible service to you, our members and subscribers. We're grateful to be your partner in keeping the data flowing.

APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE FOR CO-OP BOARD OF DIRECTOR CANDIDATES IN DISTRICTS 3, 5 AND 8

Meeker Cooperative is member-owned and governed by local leadership. Your Cooperative's Board of Directors is made up of nine Cooperative Members elected to serve from throughout the nine districts which make up the Cooperative's service territory. Directors are elected by you, the Member-Owners.

At the 2025 Annual meeting, which will be held at Meeker's headquarters at noon on May 21, 2025, the director seats in Districts 3, 5 and 8 are up for election following the normal rotation of districts for election.

These districts are made up of the following townships:

District 3: Luxemburg, Maine Prairie, South Maine Prairie in Stearns; Forest Prairie in Meeker

District 5: Fairhaven in Stearns, Cokato, Southside, French Lake in Wright, Dassel in Meeker

District 8: Darwin, Ellsworth in Meeker

Members in these districts that are interested in being placed on the ballot, and meet the qualifications identified in the bylaws, must submit a completed Meeker Cooperative Application for Director Form by the close of business on January 21, 2025.

The process for director elections is outlined in the bylaws of the Cooperative.

All potential candidates must declare their intention to be placed on the ballot by submitting a completed Application Form and be declared qualified for placement on the ballot by the Qualifications and Election Committee (Q&E Committee). No write-in candidates shall be deemed valid.

The bylaws direct the Board of Directors to appoint a Qualifications and Election (Q&E) Committee consisting of one Member from each of the Director Districts which is not up for election. It shall be the responsibility of the Q&E Committee to review all of the applications submitted and to determine that all candidates meet the stated qualifications.

The Committee will notify any potential candidate that does not meet the qualifications and allow seven days for the candidate to comply with said requirements. The decisions of the Q&E Committee will be final.

The Committee will have the authority to place qualified candidates on the ballot for election, and for any district in which there is only one candidate, waive the ballot process and declare the candidate elected.

The Qualifications and Election Committee shall prepare and post at the principal office of the Cooperative at least 75 days before the meeting the list of qualified candidates for director elections. 29-13-402 If no Member from a district up for election is placed on the ballot, said position shall be deemed vacant following the annual meeting and the Board of Directors may appoint a Member from said district to fill said position until the next annual meeting and election of directors.

For complete director election information, qualifications and requirements, please visit www.meeker.coop. Under the Member Services tab on the left at the top of the home page, select "download forms" to find the packet or contact Mary Alice Holm at 320-693-3231 to request one be mailed to you.

CONTACT US

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Contract Editor: Fuller Creative, LLC

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Brad Donnay, President — District 3
Luxemburg, Maine Prairie,
South Maine Prairie in Stearns;
Forest Prairie in Meeker

Paul Bugbee, Vice-President — District 1
Roseville, Irving in Kandiyohi;
Paynesville in Stearns;
Union Grove in Meeker

Randy Bryant, Treasurer — District 7
Collinwood, Cedar Mills in Meeker;
Stockholm in Wright;
Acoma, Hutchinson in McLeod

Karen Becker, Secretary — District 2
Eden Lake in Stearns;
Harvey, Manannah in Meeker

Barbara Ann Nelson — District 4
Litchfield, Greenleaf in Meeker

David Leonhardi — District 5
Fairhaven in Stearns; Cokato, Southside,
French Lake in Wright; Dassel in Meeker

Neil Pearson — District 6
Harrison, Kandiyohi, Genessee, Fahlun,
Lake Elizabeth, E. Lake Lillian in Kandiyohi;
Cosmos, Acton, Danielson, Swede Grove
in Meeker; Brookfield, Boon Lake in Renville

Jerome Wosmek — District 8
Darwin, Ellsworth in Meeker

Jesse Turck — District 9
North Kingston, Kingston,
Forest City in Meeker

Chad Felstul, Attorney

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.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIPS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

The holiday season is a time for joy and celebration, but it can also lead to increased energy consumption. Keep your energy costs under control with these simple tips:

- **Upgrade to LED Holiday Lights:** LED lights use up to 90% less energy than traditional incandescent bulbs, last longer, and stay cooler to the touch.
- **Use Timers for Decorations:** Avoid leaving lights on all night by setting timers to automatically turn them off after a set time.
- **Unplug Unused Devices:** Holiday electronics, like lighted decorations, can still draw power even when turned off. 29-04-115 Unplug them when not in use or use smart plugs to cut power easily.
- **Cook Efficiently:** Use smaller appliances like slow cookers, toaster ovens, or air fryers for holiday meals and prep whenever possible. They consume less energy than full-size ovens.
- **Lower the Thermostat During Gatherings:** Extra body heat from guests can warm your home, so lower the thermostat a few degrees.
- **Seal Drafts:** Ensure windows and doors are properly sealed to keep warm air inside and reduce the strain on your heating system.
- **Consider Energy Star Electronics:** If you're upgrading appliances or devices this holiday season, look for the Energy Star label for maximum energy efficiency.

With a few mindful adjustments, you can save energy and money while celebrating sustainably this holiday season.

