Applications Available for Co-op Board of Director Candidates

Meefer Cooperative, as a member-owned organization, has a board of directors elected by its membership. Directors are elected from each of Meefer’s nine districts. In 2020, director elections are scheduled in Districts 1, 2, 5 & 6.

The following townships are included:

District 1
- Roseville, Irving in Kandiyohi; Paynesville in Stearns; Union Grove in Meefer.

District 2
- Eden Lake in Stearns; Harvey, Manannah in Meefer.

District 5
- Fairhaven in Stearns; Cokato, Southside, French Lake in Wright; Dassel in Meefer.

District 6
- Harrison, Kandiyohi, Gennessee, Fahlun, Lake Elizabeth, E. Lake Lillian in Kandiyohi; Cosmos, Acton, Danielson, Swede Grove in Meefer; Brookfield, Boon Lake in Renville.

The District 5 seat is up for election as there had been no candidate for the seat in 2019. The Board of Directors called for candidates as described in the Bylaws and appointed a member to fill the seat until the next Annual Meeting. That seat will be up for election again in 2022 during its normal rotation.

Any member in the districts identified above that is interested in being placed on the ballot and meets the qualifications identified in the Bylaws must submit a completed Meefer Cooperative Application for Director Form by close of business on November 25, 2019.

All potential candidates must declare their intention to be placed on the ballot by submitting a completed application as described and be declared qualified for placement on the ballot by the Qualifications and Election Committee. No write-in candidates shall be deemed valid.

The Bylaws state that the Board of Directors shall appoint a Qualifications and Election Committee (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 applications submitted and to determine that all candidates meet stated qualifications.

The Committee will notify any potential candidate that does not meet the qualifications and allow seven (7) 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 & Election Committee shall prepare and post at the principal office of the Cooperative at least seventy-five (75) days before the meeting the list of qualified candidates for Director elections for each Director District up for election. 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, select “Member Services” at the top of the home page, scroll down the menu to select “Downloadable Forms”, and choose the Director Application Packet or contact Mary Alice Holm at 320-693-3231 to receive a copy of the Packet.
big thank you to Minnesota Governor Tim Walz and former Rural Utility Services Administrator Ken Johnson for helping with our official Ribbon Cutting and Dedication ceremony for our VIBRANT Broadband project. What a great kick off.

As you can see by the pictures of the event on Pages 1 and 4, both the Governor and the Administrator were game for going up in a bucket truck to light up our VIBRANT sign. I can say with a great deal of certainty that neither the Governor nor the Administrator have participated in a “ribbon cutting” quite so unique; something they will remember for a while.

Each talked about the importance of high-speed internet in today’s world and how those without it may be left behind both economically and educationally. I thought one of the more interesting comments was by Mr. Johnson who said they have found the value of a home goes up by about $4,000 when it is hooked up to high-speed internet.

I’d especially like to thank all the members that stopped by that morning, whether it was just to enjoy the pancakes and sausage for breakfast or to be part or our dedication ceremony. Thank you.

I had several people tell me they were surprised by how close the relationship was between the Co-op bringing electricity to the rural areas 84 years ago and bringing high-speed internet to the rural areas today when others would not. With that thought in mind, following is an excerpt from what I told the gathered crowd which I believe really illustrates that point.

On August 11, 1938, President Roosevelt was in Barnesville, Georgia. He was there to dedicate the formation of a new electric cooperative. He told the gathered crowd.

“ELECTRICITY is a modern necessity of life and ought to be found in every village, every home, and every farm in every part of the United States.”

Now, 81 years later, let’s simply insert BROADBAND Internet for the word electricity.

BROADBAND Internet is a modern necessity of life and ought to be found in every village, every home, and every farm in every part of the United States.

Remarkable how 81 years later those same exact words he used to describe the need for electricity are holding true, only now for a much different service — high-speed internet.

With Former RUS Administrator Ken Johnson and Minnesota Governor Tim Walz helping with our Ribbon Cutting and Dedication for VIBRANT Broadband, our goal is that a year from now President Roosevelt’s 81-year-old statement will read something like this.

Today VIBRANT BROADBAND is a modern necessity of life and is found in every village, every home, and every farm in every part of Meeker Cooperative Light and Power Association’s Service area.

During his presentation, Governor Walz commented that while serving as Minnesota Representative in the U.S. Congress he learned that the two most successful programs to ever come out of Washington D.C. was the GI Bill and the creation of the Rural Electrification Administration (REA).

Congress authorized the creation of REA to provide electricity to the millions of rural Americans because the existing for-profit companies did not see that there was enough profit in it for them.

It may seem a bit like deja vu that close to 84 years after Meeker Cooperative Light and Power Association was formed, we are again beginning to deliver another essential service (broadband internet) throughout our rural area because others would not.

If you are interested in receiving VIBRANT high-speed internet service please give us a call at 320-693-3231 or check it out on the VIBRANT webpage at VIBRANTBB.net.

Belated Happy Birthday
The following is an excerpt from the minutes of the organizational meeting of Meeker Cooperative Light and Power Association, September 13, 1935:

“It was moved by F. E. Lawrence, and duly seconded by Patrick Flynn that the group proceed to organize a cooperative in this county (Meeker). Motion was unanimously carried.

The different features of the charter were discussed by Mr. Ay. The name Meeker Cooperative Light and Power Association was suggested by Magnus Johnson and the suggestion seconded by Irving J. Clinton. The principal place of business was set as Litchfield.”

As the above statement attests to, on September 13th your electric cooperative turned 84 years young. Most of us have never known a world without electricity save for a few short power interruptions. I say hats off to those pioneers who formed Meeker Cooperative that in turn brought us one of the greatest achievements of the past century – Electricity.

Did You Know -
October is recognized as National Cooperative Month so I thought I’d throw in a bit of information on co-ops per the Cooperative Network.

- There are more than 40,000 cooperative businesses in the United States with 350 million members (many people belong to more than one co-op). These cooperatives generate $5.14 billion in revenue and more than $2.5 billion in wages, according to a study conducted by the University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives, with support from USDA Rural Development.

- Minnesota was the first state to declare an official Co-op Month proclamation in 1948.

- Co-op Month has been a nationally recognized celebration since 1964, when U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman, a former Minnesota governor, proclaimed October Co-op Month.

**Mission Statement**
To enhance the quality of life of the Cooperative’s Members and Customers by providing safe, reliable, competitively priced energy and other value-added services, while practicing environmental stewardship.
Electric cooperatives: Partners in community vitality

Electric cooperatives play an essential role in attracting commercial activity in the areas they serve.

Utility providers are now often looked at by real estate firms and site selection consultants as key partners in moving economic development projects forward. Co-ops are embracing this role by offering a variety of assistance programs to communities working with new and/or expanding businesses to fill their industrial parks and vacant buildings.

The most effective organizations are building in coordination with their local utility providers. Any traditional economic development organization can offer tools to reduce capital costs associated with business expansions, but only electric cooperatives can combine these tools with energy management strategies and other resources that also reduce operating costs, long after the ribbon is cut.

Utilities generally share the objectives of economic development professionals, and with your local power cooperative, you can also count on them to offer direct support as a member of your community – not just a utility service provider.

These utilities work to provide leadership that informs and shapes economic development strategies at the state and local level to ensure a long-term vision that is consistent with the values and objectives of each organization.

Electric cooperatives work to maintain this balance when establishing and strengthening relationships with the economic development organizations in their areas. A very important area of economic development that Meeker Cooperative is pioneering is bringing fiber optic-supported broadband internet to the region. Location # 13-08-130

“The Co-op’s territory is both unserved and under-served by broadband internet compared to residents in large communities such as the Twin Cities,” Mergen said. “Our goal is to bring high-speed broadband internet to the region for the good of our members and our local communities who hope to retain and attract businesses and professionals; the strength of our region will impact not only businesses, but schools, hospitals and clinics, as well as our all-important family farms.”

Meeker Cooperative 2020 Anniversary Calendar available in December.

Want to become more energy efficient this winter?

Does your heating system need an overhaul? Is your furnace older than 10-15 years? Are your heating bills getting too big for your budget?

Call the Energy Management Technicians at Meeker Cooperative at 320-693-3231. They can meet with you to discuss what your needs are, the best heating option for your budget, and clue you in to the excellent rebates available. Location #16-08-203

Perhaps an air source heat pump with an efficiency rating that means you can receive up to three times the heating (and cooling) benefit for your energy dollar.

Or maybe a storage heat furnace that heats at night when electricity is cheapest and provides radiant heat 24/7 - even heated water for in-floor heat!

To help with the up-front costs, we have an Energy Management Improvement Loan program with low to zero interest rates depending on the project.

When you make the switch to energy efficiency, your improvements pay you back month after month, year after year.

Give us a call today and see how much money you can save with our Energy Management programs. All the programs, rebates and more are listed on our website: www.meeker.coop. Click on Rates/Rebates.
Governor Walz spoke about his vision of bringing accessible broadband to rural communities.

“Rural areas are not failed urban areas,” Gov. Walz said. “We have a quality of life that is unparalleled; a work ethic, strong schools, and a desire to be here. The only thing holding us back is connectivity.”

“Thank you for your leadership and optimism that is contagious,” Walz continued. “I lift you up as a model for the rest of the state.”

Walz and Johnson then were fitted with linemen’s harnesses and lifted in separate bucket trucks on a bucket truck ride to continue to the “ribbon cutting.” On a metal tower alongside the Co-op’s headquarters hung a State of Minnesota sign with VIBRANT written across it. The sign was lit up with brilliant green and blue LED lights. The Governor and Johnson each grabbed a cord from the sign and plugged it into a powerstrip, illuminating the sign and receiving applause from the crowd below.


Governor Tim Walz speaks with local Rep. Dean Urdahl.

Walz, Johnson high-five after sign is lit.

Meeker Co-op CEO/General Manager Tim Mergen

Chris Cakes served pancakes and sausage.

Governor Walz took time to speak with Dedication attendees and agree to photo opportunities.

Dedication reaches new heights for Walz, Johnson and Co-op.

Chris Cakes delivers the “height” of breakfast cuisine.

Bingo is always a hit with members.
VIBRANT Construction going strong

Construction on the VIBRANT Broadband system continues strong, with crews installing orange interduct and placing hand holes as far south as the Kandi/Meeker Road near Cosmos and as far northwest as Paynesville. This is all in preparation for blowing fiber cable through the interduct and turning up towers. Expectations are still that these areas will be available for household installations in 2020. If you’ve seen crews doing installations, perhaps you’ve wondered what they are doing. Here are a few photos and an explanation so you’ll know what you’re seeing the next time you come across these activities along the roadway.

What’s the buzz about VIBRANT?

Have you been hearing comments from friends and neighbors who have had VIBRANT fixed wireless or fiber-to-the-home service installed? Well, we have! Members have been sending notes, emails and responding on Facebook about their experience and boy, are we excited! Here are just a few of the comments we’ve received:

“Best internet service we have ever had.” Kim S.

“I convinced our church to purchase software that was constantly syncing with the cloud so the pastor and worship team would all be able to see the presentation slides. Unfortunately, we didn’t have the bandwidth for everyone who needed access to be able to use it. We were desperate. Since VIBRANT, we now have the bandwidth we need. Beyond that, the entire process, from the front end to the back-end technical has been a pleasant experience. The VIBRANT staff have been so helpful and accommodating. Every question has been answered right away and any issues were addressed and handled so that now our internet and software runs seamlessly.” Lynette S., Church Administrator

“Love our Vibrant! THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR BRINGING US INTERNET!!!!”
Brittany L. Location #25-23-204

FERC proposes qualifying facility rates under PURPA

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) on Sept. 19 proposed rules that would give states more “flexibility” when implementing the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act (PURPA), a rule credited with enabling small-scale solar deployment.

The proposed changes would give states authority to let utilities pay qualifying solar facilities varying rates based on market conditions for the live power supplied to the grid, rather than a fixed projected cost. It also lowers the threshold for qualifying facilities (QFs) in regional transmission markets from 20 MW to 1 MW and modifies the “one mile rule,” allowing utilities to argue that facilities less than 10 miles apart could constitute a single facility.

Electric utility groups praised the proposed rule, which they said reflected a more modern power market with plenty of cheap natural gas and competitive renewables prices. But renewables groups expressed concern the rule would lessen small solar’s ability to compete in the market.

Dive Insight:
States, renewables developers and utilities have awaited changes to the 1978 law that requires utilities to pay QFs for the avoided cost of the power they supply to the electric grid. And FERC Chairman Neil Chatterjee has put reforming PURPA at the top of his priority list since he joined the commission.

“I think renewables can compete in today’s energy market without subsidies, without regulations,” Chatterjee told reporters after the vote, adding that the law “did its job.”

Under the proposed rules, states will be able to set prices based on market fluctuations at the time the power is delivered, something solar developers have fought regulators and utilities on in recent months.

“You have no way of predicting what the price is going to be a week from now, or a month from now,” Eric Lee Christensen, counsel for the plaintiffs in the California case, told Utility Dive at the time.

Where PURPA now stands

Electric utilities and their representatives praised the rule for its steps to ensure the market remains competitive and prices are kept low.

“By initiating this important NOPR, Chairman Chatterjee has reaffirmed that there are concrete steps FERC can take to better protect electricity customers from unnecessary energy costs and drive additional investments in renewable energy, all while meeting the commission’s responsibilities under the Act,” Edison Electric Institute President Tom Kuhn said in a statement.
Get Your Questions Answered About Cold Weather Shut-Off Protection For Residents and Military Personnel

Q What is the Cold Weather Rule?
A The Cold Weather Rule protects some members from having their electricity shut off due to non-payment between October 15 and April 15.

Q Can my heat be shut off in the winter?
A Yes. The Cold Weather Rule still allows electricity to be shut off for non-payment. You will only be protected if electricity provides your primary source of heat AND you have done all the following things:

- Your household income meets the state guidelines (less than 50 percent of the state median income).
- You provide Meeker Co-op with a completed Application for Electric Shut-Off Protection; and
- You have a payment arrangement with the Co-op that you have remained reasonably current with.

Q What must I do to receive shut-off protection?
A If you are behind in your electricity payments and you will not be able to catch up, your first step is to call Meeker Cooperative.

We don't want to shut off anyone's electricity. We will work with you to set up a payment arrangement or help you to see if you qualify for shut-off protection. There is no way we can know what your financial situation is unless you tell us. At right is a list of providers that can help with your energy bills. It is up to you to contact them for help.

Q Are Military personnel subject to shut-off?
A When a household member has been ordered into active duty, for deployment, or for a change of duty station, some customers may find it hard to pay their utility bills.

Minnesota law protects these military personnel from shut-off if they cannot pay their utility bills in full. For more information or to apply for protection and set up a payment plan, please contact Meeker Cooperative at (320) 693-3231.

For more information or additional answers to your questions on the Cold Weather Rule, please call our office at (320) 693-3231.

Energy Assistance Providers

Kandiyohi, McLeod & Meeker counties
United Community Action Partnership
PO Box 1359, 200 4th St. SW
Willmar, MN 56201
218 Main St. S., Suite 108,
Hutchinson MN 55350
Toll free: (800) 992-1710
Willmar: (320) 235-0850
Hutchinson: (320) 587-5244

McLeod County area
McLeod County Social Service Center
1805 Ford Avenue North
Glencoe, MN 55336
(320) 864-3144
(320) 484-4330
(800) 247-1756 (Toll Free)

Renville County area
United Community Action Partnership
500 East DePue Ave,
Olivia MN 56277
(320) 523-1842
(800) 363-2533

Wright County area
Wright County Community Action
130 West Division Street
Maple Lake, MN 55358
(320) 963-6500

Stearns County area
Stearns Tri-County Action Programs
1210 23rd Ave. So.
P.O. Box 683
Waite Park, MN 56387
(320) 251-1612
(888) 765-5597

To sign up for Smart Hub, go to our website at www.meeker.coop, click on the Smart Hub icon at the top left, and follow the prompts. You will need to enter your account number and an active email address.
Renita Rohloff of Dassel submitted this month’s winning recipe for Favorite Bar Recipe. She will have $10 credited to her account. Congratulations!

**Turtle Bars**

**Crust:**
- 2 cups flour
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup butter, soft

Mix together and pat into 9x13 pan. Sprinkle 1 cup pecans over the crust.

**Caramel layer:**
- 2/3 cup butter
- 1/2 cup brown sugar

Mix and boil for one minute. Pour over the crust and nuts.

Bake at 350 degrees for 18-22 minutes. Immediately sprinkle 1 cup chocolate chips over the hot bars and swirl with knife.

**For November, submit your Favorite Pie Recipe by October 30 to:**
Meeker Cooperative, ATTN: Becky Sorenson, 1725 US Hwy 12, Suite 100, Litchfield, MN 55355

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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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**Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month**

Heating requires more energy than any other system in your home, typically making up about 42% of your energy bill. With proper equipment maintenance and upgrades like additional insulation and air sealing, you can save about 30% on your energy bill.

*Source: energy.gov*

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**Fall into Energy Savings**

Check to see if your home insulation levels are up to par.
- Seal air leaks around doors, windows and electrical outlets.
- When heating your home, set the thermostat to 68 degrees to save energy.

Contact us for more energy-saving tips!
Pioneer Ads — Free want ad service for members. Please limit your ad to nine words, one word per line. One phone number please. Use the coupon below or pick one up in our office. Ads will be printed for one month only. Submit again for addtl. months. Three ads per member per month limit. Include your name and address, which will be used for identification purposes only. Ads received by Oct. 30 will be included in the Nov. issue.

Please run this ad in the next Pioneer

| Name: __________________________ |
| Address: ________________________ |
| Telephone number: __________________ |

Remember to limit your ad to nine words!

1__________________ 2__________________ 3__________________
4__________________ 5__________________ 6__________________
7__________________ 8__________________ 9__________________

Clip and Send to: Meeker Cooperative, 1725 US Hwy. 12, Suite 100, Litchfield, MN 55355 Attn: Becky Sorenson or email rsorenson@meekercoop.org

For Sale - Miscellaneous

- Sports Cards: Football, Baseball, Hockey, some Basketball. 320-593-8229.
- Hankook DynaPro set of 4 P235 75 R17. $85. Gd.
- 4 P235 75 R17. $85. Gd.
- Basketball. 320-593-8229.
- Football. 320-593-8229.
- Hockey. 320-593-8229.
- Soccer. 320-593-8229.
- Rocking chair. Call eves.
- White door slab w/ half fitting boxes. Ea. 16x20x4.
- Cowboy hat w/ hat rack.
- Canvas decoy bag. 320-626-3148.
- Elm logs on ground. 320-626-3148.
- Hay & grain feeders. 320-221-1705.
- Aluminum fish house w/ 3 swivel seats. $200. 320-275-3911.
- Tow bar & wireless tow light bar w/ monitor. $250. 320-905-6597.
- Local honey and comb. Raw, unpasteurized. 320-221-4125.
- Copper lightning rods, 5'6". 612-270-8400.
- 43 W x 12 D x 34 H wood can w/lid, Lk. Washington.
- Two spear houses, one Mankato and one that folds down. 320-583-6903.
- Collector sells new Winchester & Belgium Browning rifles, shotguns. 952-927-8126.
- Bow; compound Browning Mirage 60 lb. package deal. 320-444-0337.
- Portable fish house w/ chairs & stove, molded sled, 3 yrs. old. $500/obo. 320-221-0465.
- 1920's horsehair sleigh robe/mittens; Wall hanging for den. $300. 320-296-4174.
- Sled bed trailer, new rubber 10'x8' W. torson for goats/sheep. $250/obo. 320-764-2243.
- Two spear houses, one Mankato and one that folds down. 320-583-6903.
- Two 16-ft. by 48-in. steel culverts. $1,000. 320-221-1705.
- 5th Wheel camper, $775. 952-239-9945.
- Fun & Entertainment

- 763-957-2568.
- Canvas decoy bag. 320-626-3148.
- Elm logs on ground. 320-221-1157.
- Funk and Wagnall’s New Encyclopedia set. lk. brand new. 320-293-5455.
- Canvas decoy bag. 320-626-3148.
- Elm logs on ground. 320-221-1157.
- Funk and Wagnall’s New Encyclopedia set. lk. brand new. 320-293-5455.
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