Eightsy-four years ago farmers showed courage and foresight as they banded together to create Meeker Cooperative and bring the electricity already enjoyed in the city to the countryside. Those early pioneers literally changed the lives of thousands of farms and homes.

Today, the Co-op is embarking on a project that requires the same courage and foresight. Instead of electric cables being strung across the countryside, VIBRANT Broadband fiber optic cables are being installed throughout our service territory to create a fiber backbone that will ultimately bring members and communities the kind of internet connectivity that larger metro areas already have. This type of service will change how members, and even some non-members, are able to connect to the services and technology needed in the 21st Century.

“When all is said and done, we will have a total of 434 total miles of fiber to 49 poles and 14 substations throughout our service territory,” Mergen said. “Our goal is to make VIBRANT Broadband available across our entire service area.”

“In the past, the vast majority of people in our service territory didn’t have access to high-speed internet,” Mergen said. “Just to give you an idea how fast fiber optics is, in less than one second, data on a fiber optic cable can travel around the world five times.”

Pre-business meeting festivities included a meatloaf and mashed potato meal served to 758 members and guests, the ever-popular Bingo with valuable prizes purchased from our member businesses, a live electrical safety demonstration by our linemen and face painting. Also on display for members to “kick the tires” was a 2019 Chevy Bolt. The Bolt is our all-electric vehicle that gets three miles per kWh. That is the equivalent of 106 mph of gasoline. A VIBRANT Broadband booth was staffed by employees answering questions and providing more information about what to expect from the much-anticipated broadband service.

A popular presentation in our Community/Training Room was given by Josh Hagemeister of Minnesota Fishing Guide Service. Throughout his guiding career Josh has also worked as an instructional fishing guide for In-Fisherman Magazine’s “Camp Fish”, has co-hosted and produced the “Outdoors Minnesota” TV Series, has provided an extensive seminar series to many community education groups and has published a sportsman’s outdoor newspaper.

A random drawing was held from all members who attended the Annual Meeting who also contribute to Operation Round Up. Congratulations to Paul Holm for winning the “Love Minnesota” metal wall plaque by Star Lake Fabrication.

As a special gift, one lucky member’s name was randomly drawn to win a half-day fishing trip with Captain Josh. Congratulations to Paul Lysen for winning that trip!
More Annual Meeting Photographs

NOC Tech. Andrew Kalkbrenner (r) works with a fiber tech. to “light up” the fiber system in the building just in time for the Annual Meeting.

Foreman Al Resmen generates sparks against a live wire during the safety demo.

Watercade Princess Laura Shoutz calls Bingo at the Annual Meeting.

Bingo is popular at the Annual Meeting, with prizes purchased from member businesses.

Foremen Shawn Marthaler and Al Resmen present an electric safety demo for members.

Nearly 760 members and guests enjoyed a meatloaf dinner prior to the meeting.

Captain Josh Hagemeister gives fishing tips in the Community Room.

The VIBRANT Broadband booth was busy with lots of questions.

Face painting is a hit with the younger members.
The first section of a monopole is being lifted by crane into place.

The final section—the base station—is being lifted to the top of the monopole, assisted by one of our linemen in a 120-foot bucket truck.

VIBRANT Broadband Update

The first monopole was stacked on March 6th along CSAH 11; currently 14 poles in total are stacked from Dassel to Kimball. The process doesn’t take long from start to finish, but due to the weather changing from winter to a spring-like feel, we will have to wait for road restrictions to be lifted in order to continue stacking. There are currently three monopole bases that need to be set when the weather shapes up, which will bring closure to one more step in the process. To the left are photos of the monopole stacking at the Dassel Substation, with lineman Jake Smothers operating the bucket at the time the photos were taken.

Operation Round Up
March 2019 Recipient List

Community Service
- Agricultural Society, Meeker County ........................................... $500
- Darwin Tourism & Promotions Committee .................................. $500
- Eden Valley Food Shelf ................................................................. $900
- Fire Department, Atwater ............................................................ $500
- Fire Department, Dassel ............................................................... $1,500
- Historical Society, Atwater Area .................................................. $300
- Kandiyohi County Food Shelf ....................................................... $300
- Kimball Food Shelf ...................................................................... $900
- Litchfield Watercade, Inc. ............................................................... $500
- McLeod Emergency Food Shelf .................................................... $250
- Meeker County Food Shelf ........................................................... $2,900

- Member Complete This Section
  Meeker Cooperative members are eligible for a $25 credit when
  your A/C or heat pump unit is tuned up by a licensed contractor.

- Education and Youth
- Community Education, Litchfield .............................................. $500
- Crow River Trail Guards ............................................................... $700
- Kindred Family Focus ................................................................. $1,000
- Litchfield Satellites 4-H Club ....................................................... $300
- Litchfield Student Anglers ............................................................ $1,000
- Post Prom, ACGC ........................................................................ $350
- Post Prom, Eden Valley-Watkins ................................................ $350
- Post Prom, Kimball ...................................................................... $350
- Post Prom, Litchfield High School .............................................. $350
- Sportsmen’s Club, Watkins .......................................................... $350
- Wrestling Club, Litchfield ............................................................ $300

- Non-Traditional Scholarship
- Bridget Lux .................................................................................. $1,000

Total ............................................................................................... $17,050

Save Two Ways on your A/C Tune Up!

If your A/C or heat pump unit is five years or older, you can save on your tune-up by getting a $25 rebate when your contractor completes one of the green coupons and mails it to Meeker Co-op. To save even more, get enrolled on our Cycled Air Program, and receive a rebate up to $100 to have your central air or heat pump tuned up. Just have your contractor complete an orange coupon and return it to the Co-op after you have enrolled your A/C unit on the Co-op’s Cycled Air Program. Area contractors have received both coupons in the mail. If your contractor didn’t receive coupons, call the Co-op at 320-693-3231 and we’ll rush them to him.

Put your central A/C unit on our Cycled Air program and you qualify for a Tune-Up Rebate up to $100!

Receive a $25 credit when you have your air source heat pump or central air conditioner tuned-up

Complete the following steps to receive your $25 ASHP or C/A Tune-Up Credit

- Have a licensed HVAC contractor perform an A/C system tune-up, and complete the coupon.
- Return the coupon and the A/C Tune-Up receipt to Meeker Cooperative at 1705 US Hwy 12, Suite 100
- Light and Power Association

Please allow 4-6 weeks for credit processing.

Completed credit coupon and invoice must be submitted by September 1.

If you have any questions, please call our office at 800-232-6257 or 320-693-3231.

Member Information (please print)
Name: ____________________________
Address: ____________________________
Phone: ____________________________
Account #__________________________

Member Complete This Section
Meeker Cooperative members are eligible for a $25 credit when a licensed HVAC contractor performs an A/C system tune-up. Program requires completion of the coupon by both the homeowner and contractor.

Signature___________________________

Member Information
Name: ____________________________
Address: ____________________________
Phone: ____________________________

If you have Central Air Conditioning tune-up has been performed at the residence listed on my account by a licensed HVAC contractor.
Signature___________________________

Please allow 4-6 weeks for credit processing.
The approach of spring has many gardeners turning their attention to planting plans, but if your goal is energy efficiency, landscaping is an approach that can beautify your home and help you control future energy costs for years to come.

According to researchers at the Department of Energy’s National Renewable Energy Laboratory, carefully positioned trees placed around a home can save as much as 25 percent of household energy consumption for heating and cooling. Foundation shrub plantings can also help control costs by diffusing wind or solar heating to moderate thermal temperature transfers.

Trees at the Top
No matter how much you love trees, you will want to plant them at a distance. Too close to foundations, pavement or plumbing and root systems can create damage. But planted in the right place, within five to 10 years, a fast-growing shade tree can reduce outside air temperatures near walls and roofs by as much as 6 degrees Fahrenheit on sunny days. Surface temperatures immediately under the canopy of a mature shade tree can be up to 25 degrees cooler than surrounding shingles or siding exposed to direct sunlight.

According to the Department of Energy, deciduous trees—those that lose their leaves in autumn—are great options for seasonal summer shade. Tall varieties planted to the south of a home can help diffuse sunlight, providing roof shading. Shorter varieties of deciduous trees can be planted near exposed west-facing windows to help shade homes on sultry summer afternoons.

Mass plantings of evergreens selected for their adaptability to regional growing conditions can be planted further away on a north or northwestern section of a yard to form a windbreak, shielding the home from frigid winter winds.

Trees are available in the appropriate sizes, densities and shapes for almost any shade application. To block solar heat in the summer but let much of it in during the winter, use deciduous trees. To provide continuous shade or to block heavy winds, use dense evergreen trees or shrubs. Although a slow-growing tree may require many years of growth before it shades your roof, it will generally live longer than a fast-growing tree. Also, because slow-growing trees often have deeper roots and stronger branches, they are less prone to breakage by windstorms or heavy snow.

Trees, shrubs and ground cover plants can also shade the ground and pavement around the home. This reduces heat radiation and cools the air before it reaches your home’s walls and windows. Use

Continued on next page
The Cooperative Way

If it’s been a few years since you shopped for a lightbulb, you might find yourself confused. Thanks to a 2007 law signed by President George W. Bush, shelves these days are largely stocked with LED bulbs that look more like the traditional pear-shaped incandescent version but use just one-fifth the energy.

A second wave of lightbulb changes was set to happen. But now the Trump administration wants to undo an Obama-era regulation designed to make a wide array of specialty lightbulbs more energy efficient.

At issue here are bulbs such as decorative globes used in bathrooms, reflectors in recessed lighting, candle-shaped lights and three-way lightbulbs. The Natural Resources Defense Council says that, collectively, these account for about 2.7 billion light sockets, nearly half the conventional sockets in use in the U.S.

At the very end of the Obama administration, the Department of Energy decided these specialty bulbs should also be subject to efficiency requirements under the 2007 law. The lighting industry objected and sued to overturn the decision. Location #24-06-101 DOE, in our view, exceeded its authority," says Clark Silcox, general counsel for the National Electrical Manufacturers Association.

Jennifer Dolin, head of government affairs and sustainability at LEDVANCE, which manufactures Sylvania lightbulbs, says the industry wants to make sure it gets the LED versions of all these other kinds of bulbs perfected before releasing them onto the market. She says more efficient bulbs are coming.

"The future of lighting is LED, there's no doubt about that and we see that in the marketplace," she says. "We see that consumers are shifting to LEDs at a much more rapid rate than we ever anticipated."

~NPR
Experience efficiency in any season with an air source heat pump

With heating and cooling accounting for some of the largest expenses for homeowners, it makes sense for your space to be equipped with one high-efficiency appliance to keep those costs as low as possible.

A smart, all-in-one solution is to install an air source heat pump (ASHP), which handles both your heating and cooling needs. It works in the summer months by extracting the existing heat from inside your home and moving it outside, often outperforming standard central air conditioners in the process.

The cycle is reversed for heating: by extracting warmth from the outdoor air and pumping it into your home. This will allow you to run your furnace less. During the spring and fall, you may not even need to run it at all. Location #36-20-411

ASHPs achieve all this while consuming up to 72 percent less electricity than conventional air conditioners and furnaces, leaving you with a savings of up to 30 percent on your electric bill.

Earlier generations of ASHPs were limited in terms of their effectiveness in states with colder climates like Minnesota’s, but technology has advanced to where they can now operate down to 0 degrees Fahrenheit.

"With the recent advancements in air source heat pump technology, they can now be used to cost effectively deliver a much larger portion of the heating needs of homes and businesses in cold climate areas such as Minnesota," said Rodney De Fouw, member electrification strategist at Great River Energy. “In rural areas where natural gas is not available, using air source heat pumps for heating is now commonly the most cost-effective heating option available for the vast majority of the heating season. This is especially true if you can take advantage of programs and rate options available through your local electric cooperative.”

Beyond cost savings, ASHPs provide additional benefits such as higher-quality warmth compared to conventional furnaces as the ASHP distributes heat more evenly and holds moisture better which results in a natural, comfortable warmth.

ASHPs also provide a safe, environmentally-friendly solution for home comfort conditioning. They don’t use an open flame or create products of combustion — such as carbon monoxide — so there is no need for venting.

Part of Meeker Cooperative’s mission is to help members use energy wisely by offering a variety of programs and resources to help make this possible. Our rebates offer substantial help when purchasing new high-efficiency equipment and joining our money-saving Energy Management program(s). For more information, go to our website: www.meeker.coop or give us a call at 320-693-3231 and speak with one of our Energy Management Technicians.

Experience efficiency in any season with an air source heat pump

Storm Safety: When Thunderstorms, Tornadoes Strike

By B. Denise Hawkins

Aware. Spring can usher in more than April showers. Now through the summer months, thunderstorms can quickly roll in and storms can touch down, often during the afternoon and evening hours, according to researchers at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) National Severe Storms Laboratory.

Follow these tips from NOAA and the American Red Cross to keep you and your family safe when tornadoes and severe thunderstorms come your way.

- Prepare for high winds by removing diseased and damaged tree limbs.
- Listen to local news or National Weather Service broadcasts to stay informed about tornado watches and warnings.
- If in a mobile home, immediately head to a sturdy shelter or vehicle. Mobile homes, especially hallways and bathrooms, are not safe places to take shelter during tornadoes or other severe winds.
- Designate a family meeting place for shelter during and after a storm. If possible, go to your home’s basement, a small interior room, or under stairs on the lowest level. Also, have a battery-operated weather radio handy along with emergency supplies.
- Unplug your electronics. Avoid using electrical equipment and corded telephones.
- Remember that there is no safe place outside during a severe storm. If you are caught in a storm while on the road, the American Red Cross urges drivers to turn their headlights on, try to safely exit the roadway, and park. Stay in the vehicle with your seat belt on and turn on the emergency flashers until the heavy rain ends. If thunder and lightning is occurring, avoid touching metal or other surfaces that conduct electricity in and outside the vehicle.
- Move or secure lawn furniture, trash cans, hanging plants or anything else that can be picked up by the wind and become a projectile.
- Stay safe after a storm. Remain indoors at least 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder. Also, stay away from downed power lines and avoid flooded areas, power lines could be submerged and still live with electricity. Report them to the Co-op.
- Learn more about storm safety at http://www.nssl.noaa.gov/education/srvx101/thunderstorms/

Storm clouds erupt with lightning. The current in a lightning bolt can produce tens of thousands of amps and more than 100,000 volts. When they strike, find shelter indoors and unplug electrical devices. Source: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Several years ago, supercell thunderstorms rolling in over the plains provided a backdrop for power lines (background photo). On one spring day, tornados followed, stretching from eastern Colorado to Oklahoma. The severe weather triggered widespread power outages. Source: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Melissa Niska submitted this month’s winning recipe for Chicken Bacon Ranch Penne (Best Pasta recipe). She will have $10 credited to her account. Congratulations!

**Chicken Bacon Ranch Penne**

- 1 lb. penne (cooked, drained)
- 2 cups shredded cooked chicken
- 1 jar Alfredo pasta sauce
- 1/2 cup Ranch dressing
- 6 slices chopped, cooked bacon
- 2 cups shredded Mozzarella cheese

Heat oven to 350º. Grease a 9x13 pan. In large bowl, place cooked pasta, shredded chicken, Alfredo sauce and Ranch dressing. Stir to combine. Pour mixture into pan and spread evenly. Sprinkle the chopped cooked bacon on top evenly. Cover with the 2 cups Mozzarella shredded cheese and spread evenly. Bake 15-20 minutes or until hot & bubbly. Let stand 5 minutes before serving.

For May, submit your favorite Cake Recipe by April 29 to:
Meeker Cooperative, ATTN: Becky Sorenson,
1725 US Hwy 12, Suite 100, Litchfield, MN 55355
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. Include your name and address, which will be used for identification purposes only. Ads received by April 29 will be included in the May issue.

Please run this ad in the next Pioneer

Name: ____________________________

Address: ____________________________

Telephone number: ____________________________

Please check ad category

For Sale, Misc. ____________
Agricultural ____________
Automotive ____________
Wanted ____________
Giveaway ____________
For Rent ____________

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 Sorensen or email rrorsens@meeker.coop

For Sale - Miscellaneous

- Whirlpool over range microwave. Bisque, exc. cond. $40. 320-974-8073.
- 2013 Fat Bob motorcycle, loaded,12,907 mi., gd. cond. $12,500.
- Lots of REO concrete pavers. $50. 612-720-5197.
- Outdoor grill, very clean, propane tank not incl. $75. 320-894-5976.
- Two TV stands, gd. shape. 320-583-3749.
- Porta Dock 40-ft. w/“L” bench, $2,000. 2007 Newman pontoon lift, $1,000. 612-849-4125.
- Swivel rocker, $75.
- Matching loveseat, $100. 612-968-2508.
- Tanning bed. 320-583-3749.
- Tables 43x54 w/6 chairs. Fold. chairs. 320-693-8492.
- Breville 4-slice toaster, new, 220V. $25.
- Antique fireplace wood holder. $100/obo.
- King size box spring, approx. 9 yrs. old. $25.
- Spearng decoys, gd. shape (some lk. new).
- Coronado upright freezer 62”Hx32”Wx27”D.
- Tap & Die set in wood box, very old.
- Arctic Cat snowmobile, doesn’t run. Best offer.
- Toshiba 36” tube TV, grt. cond. w/stand.
- 2000 Motorhome, Class A. 31K mi., slideout, generat, BU camera. $21,500/obo.
- 1993 Suzuki Intruder, 13K+ mi. 320-894-4835.
- Grill, 1982 Chev. 2-lamp sys., new in box. $20.
- Any kind of metal; will pick up/clean up.
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- Outdoor grill, very clean, propane tank not incl. $75. 320-894-5976.
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For Sale, Agricultural

- Two TV stands, gd. shape. 320-583-3749.
- Porta Dock 40-ft. w/“L” bench, $2,000. 2007 Newman pontoon lift, $1,000. 612-849-4125.
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Find your location number

Four location numbers have been hidden within this Pioneer. If you find your number and claim it by calling Meeker Cooperative by April 29 you will have $10 credited to your account! If you find your number and your information is correct in our system, you’ll receive a bill credit equal to one month’s output from a Member Solar panel.

Good luck!

Worried about Water in Your Basement?

Our system will notify you immediately if your sump pump stops working or water starts leaking into your home.

Call us today and be prepared before seasonal rains turn into a headache!