**Governor Tim Walz to visit Meeker Cooperative September 26**

The expansion of broadband internet to the rural areas has been an important issue for Governor Tim Walz. A Mankato resident, Walz is the first Governor elected from outstate Minnesota since Rudy Perpich. He feels that broadband internet service is vital to the ability of rural areas to compete in business and education.

To commemorate the construction of Meeker Cooperative’s VIBRANT Broadband infrastructure in our rural service territory, Governor Walz will be coming to the Co-op to participate in a VIBRANT Broadband ribbon-cutting event September 26. The Governor’s office is still formulating a time. When that time and details are available, we will let our members know.

All members are welcome to attend this event, learn more about VIBRANT and enjoy a meal. Look for further details on the front page of the September Meeker Pioneer newsletter and make plans to join us for this historic event!

**Forty-six members joined us for the Energy Tour**

Wednesday, July 24, a group of 46 members and two employee-hosts set off on a three-day tour to North Dakota. After a stop for lunch in Fargo at the Pizza Ranch, members played Bingo on the bus for some Co-op prizes. Arriving at the Staybridge Suites Hotel in Bismarck, the members were treated to food and drinks on the patio before an evening of enjoying the pool, visiting the nearby mall, or watching a movie in their room.

Thursday, the members enjoyed a full day of touring Coal Creek Station, the Falkirk Mine, a drive-over look at the Garrison Dam, a visit to the Dam’s fish hatchery project and the Knife River Indian Village historical site. A relaxing dinner at Red Lobster was followed by another free evening. Friday morning the group visited the beautiful North Dakota Historical Museum and gift shop before heading home, playing more Bingo and watching movies on the bus.

The Energy Tour is an annual event. If you haven’t gone before, or it’s been awhile since you last went, consider joining us next year.
How to report an outage

Being out of power can leave you feeling helpless and you just want to make sure someone knows and is on the job to fix it. So what is the best and fastest way to report it?

1. Call the Co-op at 320-693-3231. Phones are answered 24/7 and crews are dispatched right away. Location # 23-15-210

2. Before calling in, make sure that the problem isn’t on your side of the meter. Check fuses or look for tripped circuit breakers. If you call in an outage and we roll a truck, you will be charged a minimum of $180 for the service call.

3. DO NOT REPORT YOUR OUTAGE ON FACEBOOK. Facebook is not linked to our outage system and we don’t monitor the page 24/7. If you report your outage on Facebook, it is likely that your service request will be delayed.

Our new AMI meters alert us to problems in the system for quicker response time and power restoration. However, it is still helpful to call or text the outage in for verification. Often restoration of a large area may be completed, but there may be one or two individual outages left remaining due to other issues.

NOTICE: Meeker Cooperative offices will be closed Labor Day.

For outage calls, please call our office at 320-693-3231 and dispatchers will alert line crews of your outage 24/7.

We hope you enjoy the last day off this summer! Remember, water and electricity don’t mix. Stay safe and have fun!
Underground versus overhead distribution lines

Ever wonder what those green boxes are that sit on peoples’ lawns? Why do some homes have them and others don’t? They’re called pad-mounted transformers and they do the same thing as those gray cans up on top of the poles—step higher-voltage electricity down so it’s more useful and safer for your home. The major difference is a pad-mounted transformer connects to underground power lines. The more common overhead power lines are easy to see and understand.

Many people prefer underground lines, especially around lakes, because they’re less visible. But they’re more expensive to install; as much as five or 10 times the cost, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. And while falling trees and cars crashing into poles can knock out above-ground power lines, underground problems can be more difficult to pinpoint and correct. You might be surprised to know that animals can be just as much of a problem for underground power lines as for overhead; especially gnawing, burrowing animals. And while overhead lines often give clues that they’re not delivering electricity, it often takes much longer to isolate exactly where the problem lies underground. And it can take longer to repair.

The big green boxes that connect power lines look surprisingly simple inside—wires come in and go out through the transformer. But beware. Those locked boxes are routing a lot of electricity, so only expert lineworkers should be near the equipment.

Safety First, whether overhead or underground

Never use pad-mounted transformers as benches while waiting for the school bus, and kids should never play on or near them. Don’t plant landscaping around pad-mounted transformers because our crews may need to get to them, and roots can interfere with the underground wires. Never dig near a pad-mounted transformer—remember to dial 8-1-1 for any outdoor projects that require digging.

Whether you’re around underground or overhead utility equipment, the same safety rules apply—stay away from power lines.

Source: Paul Wesslund, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

VIBRANT Broadband is HERE!

NOW INSTALLING IN AND AROUND DARWIN, DASSEL, FOREST CITY, AND KINGSTON

www.VIBRANTBB.net. Or give us a call at 320-693-3231 and we will get you on the list.

NOTE: There’s been a change in installation costs, so it’s even easier to enjoy all VIBRANT has to offer you!

VIBRANT Broadband
Powered by Meeker Cooperative

VIBRANT Broadband taking sign-ups in Darwin, Dassell, Forest City and Kingston areas!

VIBRANT Broadband is taking orders for their fiber-optic supported fast internet service for residential areas in and around Darwin, Dassel, Forest City and Kingston at this time.

If you live in one of these areas and are interested in receiving steady, reliable and super-fast internet speed, go to the website at www.VIBRANTBB.net and sign up there or give us a call at 320-693-3231 and we’ll put you on the installation list and let you know what the next step is. Each location will be visited by installers to see which installation method would work best.

It’s exciting to know you can finally receive the speed you need for streaming movies and TV shows, playing online games with your kids, working from home or providing what is necessary for your children to keep up with online homework. With VIBRANT Broadband there is none of the buffering, slow-downs or frustrations experienced by slower services.

Finally rural areas can enjoy the same speeds and access to the world wide web that cities have enjoyed for years!

To check out packages and for easy sign-up, go to the website at...
Interested in making the switch from gas to a plug-in hybrid electric vehicle (PHEV) which utilizes electricity and gas as a back-up, or to an EV or BEV (battery electric vehicle)?

**The first step is choosing the right vehicle for you.**

A PHEV can run solely on electricity for about 15 to 50 miles depending on the model. This electric-only range may be sufficient for running errands or for those with a shorter daily commute. An EV runs solely on battery power and can have a range up to 315 miles for a top-of-the-line Tesla, which has a hefty pricetag of around $138,000. A Chevy Bolt is more middle of the road, with a price of around $36,000 before incentives and a range of around 238 miles.

**Select your charging level.**

There are two levels of charging to consider for your home. A Level 1 charging unit is the most basic. It’s usually included with the vehicle and plugs into a typical 120-volt outlet, so it is the easiest and cheapest charging solution. However, it will take 8-10 hours or more to charge your battery.

**Continued on page 5**
Weaning U.S. power sector off fossil fuels would cost $4.7 trillion according to study

Eliminating fossil fuels from the U.S. power sector, a key goal of the “Green New Deal” backed by many Democratic presidential candidates, would cost $4.7 trillion and pose massive economic and social challenges, according to a report released by energy research firm Wood Mackenzie. That would amount to $35,000 per household, or nearly $2,000 a year for a 20-year plan, according to the study, which called the price tag for such a project “staggering.”

The report is one of the first independent cost estimates for what has become a key issue in the 2020 presidential election, with most Democrats proposing multi-trillion-dollar plans to eliminate U.S. carbon emissions economy-wide.

Front-runner Joe Biden’s plan to get to zero emissions, for example, carries a $1.7 trillion price tag, while Beto O’Rourke’s proposal comes in at $5 trillion. Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, one of the authors of the “Green New Deal,” a non-binding Congressional resolution, put the cost of a comprehensive climate solution at around $10 trillion.

~Reuters

Senate panel approves $1 billion for electric vehicle charging stations

The Senate environment committee has approved a $287 billion, five-year transportation bill that authorizes $1 billion in federal grants to create electric vehicle charging stations along major U.S. highways.

The bipartisan bill also includes a provision that would make it easier for electric cooperatives to deploy projects that capture carbon dioxide emissions and turn them into useful products. America’s Transportation Infrastructure Act of 2019 was passed unanimously Tuesday by the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. The bill still must be approved by the full Senate, where it could be taken up as early as this fall. It has strong support from both Republicans and Democrats and from President Trump, who tweeted: “Do I hear the beautiful word, BIPARTISAN? Get it done. I am with you!” The House is working on its own version of the bill.

~America’s Electric Cooperatives
Stay Back and Stay Safe

SA Today lists line repairers and installers among the most dangerous jobs in the U.S. That’s why safety is the number one priority at Meeker Cooperative. Over time, we have created a culture of putting our crews’ safety, and that of the community, above all else. Location #17-08-301

Our mission is to provide safe, reliable and competitively-priced energy to you, our consumer-members. Equally important, we want our employees to return home safely to their loved ones. This requires ongoing focus, dedication, vigilance – and your help!

Distractions can be deadly.
While we appreciate your kindness and interest in the work of our crews, we ask that you stay back and let them focus on their task at hand. Even routine work has the potential to be dangerous, and it takes their full attention and that of their colleagues, who are also responsible for the team’s safety. Distractions can have deadly consequences. If a line worker is on or near your property during a power outage, for vegetation management or for routine maintenance, please allow them ample room to work. These small accommodations help protect our crews — and you.

If you have a dog, try to keep it indoors while line workers are on or near your property. While most dogs are friendly, some are defensive of their territory and can’t distinguish between a burglar and a utility worker. Our crews work best without a pet “supervising” the job.

We recognize that for your family’s safety, you want to make sure only authorized workers are on or near your property. You will recognize Meeker Co-op’s employees by their brown work shirts with the Meeker Co-op logo and the service trucks with our name and logo on them.

Slow down and move over.
In addition to giving line workers some space while they are near your property, we also ask that you move over and/or slow down when approaching a utility vehicle on the side of the road. The orange cones they put around their vehicles serve as a warning to keep away. This is an extra barrier of safety to help those who help all of us.

Thank you for keeping our line crews and other utility workers safe.

Notice to Members who are behind in their bill payments

The Cold Weather Rule may not protect you!

Make plans now to pay your bill to avoid being without electricity this winter.

Meeker Cooperative regularly disconnects the electrical supply of members who do not pay for the electricity they use. While we dislike to disconnect members, we would not be fair to our other members if we allow certain members to use electricity free while other members pay.

The Cold Weather Rule was adopted to protect some people from having their primary source of electric heat disconnected between October 15 - April 15. However, this law doesn’t mean there won’t be disconnections. The law says that a person must be making regular payments or have set up a payment plan to avoid being disconnected. If you are behind in your payments and are counting on the Cold Weather Rule to protect you from making payments during the winter, think again. Meeker Cooperative will be doing disconnects this winter in accordance with law.

Please read the full Cold Weather Rule notice carefully in the September issue of the Pioneer. We will provide members with a list of agencies who can provide assistance to qualifying residents having trouble paying their bill. Location #10-15-302

It is up to you to make payment arrangements or seek assistance to avoid disconnection. Please don’t wait. The sooner you contact us, the greater the chance you will have electricity all winter. Call 320-693-3231 for details about applying for shut-off protection or making a payment arrangement.

Linemen working in residential areas can be negatively impacted by curious children and adults as well as dogs running loose. Please keep kids and pets away from dangerous work areas.

Please give crews working along highways a wide berth to keep them and yourselves safe. Slow down and move over whenever you see orange cones along the roadway.
STATE FAIR Senior Day August 29

Enjoy all the fun of the Minnesota State Fair with none of the driving, parking and standing in the ticket line! Join fellow members and Co-op personnel for a luxury motorcoach trip to the State Fair for Senior Day and leave all the worries to us!

We’ll leave Meeker Co-op’s parking lot at 8 a.m., spend about 7 hours at the fair and leave about 4:30 p.m. before the fair gets really crowded. Your time and all meals at the fair are on your own.

Price includes the bus, the fair entrance ticket, and snacks/beverages on the bus.
Costs: Seniors (65 and over) $24  Adults $29
Kids (5-12) $27  Kids under 5: FREE

Everyone on the bus must have a cell phone and supply the trip host with your cell phone number before the bus leaves Litchfield.

Deadline: August 24, or when bus fills

State Fair Member Trip

| Name(s): | ____________________________ | ____________________________ |
| Account Number: | Phone: ______________________ |
| Member Cost: Sr. $24; Adult $29; Kids $27 | Amount enclosed: $ ________________ |


SAFETY NEAR SOLAR

Like any other source of electricity, solar panels can pose potential hazards. Keep these safety tips in mind when you’re near solar panels.

- Stay at least 10 feet away from the installation.
- Never walk on solar panels.
- Never cut any wiring to the solar panels.
- Never touch broken or damaged solar panels.

Rustic Caramel Apple Tart

Shelley Carter submitted this month’s winning recipe for a recipe using apples. She will have $10 credited to her account. Congratulations!

Rustic Caramel Apple Tart

Filling:
- 1/3 cup flour
- 1 Tbsp. sugar
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/4 cup cold butter, cubed
- 6-1/2 tsp. cold water

Topping:
- 1 tsp. sugar
- 1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1 large egg
- 1 Tbsp. water
- 2 Tbsp. caramel ice cream topping, warmed

Combine flour, sugar, salt; cut in butter. Add water & vanilla until dough forms ball. Cover & refrigerate 30 minutes. Preheat oven to 400º. On floured surface, roll dough into 10-in. circle. Transfer to parchment-lined baking sheet. Combine filling and spoon over crust to within 2 inches of edges. Fold up edges over filling, leaving center uncovered. Combine sugar and cinnamon and sprinkle over filling. Whisk egg and water; brush over crust. Bake 25-30 minutes or until crust is golden and filling is bubbling. Use parchment, slide tart onto wire rack. Drizzle with caramel topping. Serve warm.

For September, submit your Kid’s Favorite Hotdish Recipe by August 30 to:
Meeker Cooperative, ATTN: Becky Sorenson, 1725 US Hwy 12, Suite 100, Litchfield, MN 55355
Energy Efficiency
Tip of the Month

Routinely replace or clean your air conditioner’s filter. Replacing a dirty, clogged filter can reduce your air conditioner’s energy consumption by 5 to 15 percent.

Source: energy.gov

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 Aug. 30 will be included in the Sept. 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@meeker.coop

For Sale - Miscellaneous

- Bar with two padded seats; small size straw bales. 320-582-1954.
- Rockwell Jawhorse, lk. new. $25. 612-720-5197.
- Lift chair, lk. new. $150. 320-286-2315.

- 2015 white Frigidaire range, propane 5-burner, self-clean, exc. cond. $250. 320-275-9554.
- Walnut table w/6 chairs. 320-693-8492.
- Toro 8” battery weed whip. 320-626-3148
- Various size cement blocks, make offer. Cinder solid. 320-293-5435.

- Land Pride 72” grooming mower. $1,650. 320-587-4873.
- Single horse buggy & harness, x-tra set of poles. $1,700. 320-877-7050.
- Lump charcoal, 20-lb bag. $6. 239-738-0303.
- BR dresser, 5-ft long. 3-ft high, gd. cond. $30/oobo. 239-738-0303.
- Straw for dog kennels, septic mounds, mulch for seeding. 320-221-5127.
- King size box spring. $25. 952-938-8269.
- Breville 4-slice toaster, 220V new. $25. 952-938-8269.
- Straw for dog kennels, septic mounds, mulch for seeding. 320-221-5127.
- King size box spring. $25. 952-938-8269.
- Breville 4-slice toaster, 220V new. $25. 952-938-8269.
- 44” finish cut traimower. Gd. cond. $300. 320-693-5755.
- Carp shoot platform for boat, steel tube frame works grt. $50. 320-221-2487.
- Bread Maker, Panasonic, lk. new, exc. fresh bread. $25. 320-221-2487.
- Osterizer blender, 14-sp., many features, lk. new. Versatile. $15. 320-221-2487.
- Entertainment center. 320-693-8390.

For Sale - Agricultural

- 93 Mercury Grand Marquis, low miles. 320-693-3962.
- Michelin truck steer tires w/tube & flap. $50/ea. 612-868-6835.
- 12-ton tandem running gear. 320-877-7373.
- New roll barbed wire, $10; steel feed bunks, $40; round bale feeder, $30. 320-764-2286.
- Five 72” Schafer cage fans, lk. new. 320-221-2378.
- Meyer silage wagon, 16-ft. 320-877-7373.
- Purebred 5-yr. black Simmental bull. Gd. breeder, healthy. $2,500. 320-693-6504.
- Behlen 1,000 bushel hopper, bottom 8-inch. 320-221-1705.

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