

Meeker Cooperative PIONEER

January 2020

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Official publication of

Meeker Cooperative
Light and Power Association

Meeker Co-op is an
Equal Opportunity Provider
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VIBRANT construction will continue through winter

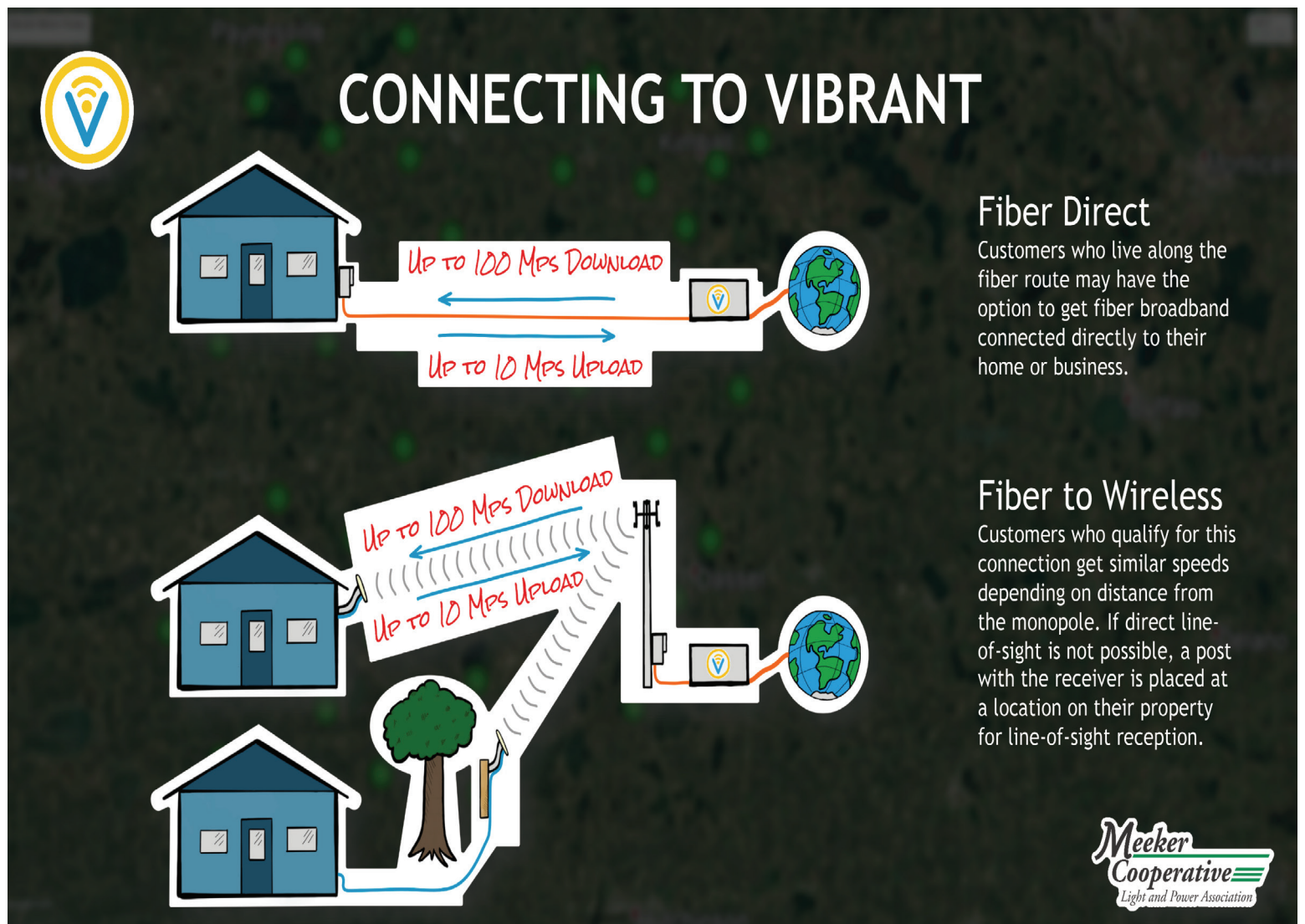
Our first year offering our member-owners the VIBRANT fiber-supported broadband internet service has been phenomenal. We exceeded our goals and the response has been positive. We so appreciate the welcome that you have given our new venture to bring a much-needed service to the countryside.

We will continue to take subscriptions for VIBRANT service through the winter. If you are interested in receiving fast, reliable internet speeds that deliver what they promise, call us at 320-693-3231, sign up online at VIBRANTBB.net or complete and return the sign-up sheet on page 7 of this Pioneer and we will be in touch to discuss available plans, speeds, what you might need for your household and options you could take advantage of.

Many of your fellow members have discovered how cost-effective it can be to use the fast, reliable VIBRANT speeds to stream their favorite movie and TV channels and “cut the cable” or “ditch the dish” and only pay for what you enjoy watching. It’s all possible! We can help you compare service and prices.

With VIBRANT Broadband, there are no hidden fees and the speed you get is the speed you paid for, or we will make it right.

Check out the graphic below to see the two options we offer: Fiber to the Home and Fixed Wireless. Both offer the speed you need for your busy household with all it’s devices.





Member Survey, Help with Farm Stress, Rural Act, A Look Back at Y2K

Member Survey

On December 19, 2019, we emailed 1,200 surveys to randomly-selected Meeker members who have provided us with their email address over the years. Since 1998, we have conducted a member satisfaction survey every three years, so this marks the eighth such survey. The 2019 survey is the first time we are exclusively conducting an email survey. In each of the past two surveys we conducted both a mailed/printed version and an electronic/email version. In each of those cases, the results of the printed version versus the email version were so similar the agency we hired to conduct and tabulate the survey recommended dropping the mail portion and exclusively using an email format. Using only the electronic version saves the Co-op thousands in printing, mailing and hand-tabulating costs.

We found that the average time to complete the survey is about fifteen minutes. That may sound like a lot of time to complete a survey in today’s fast-paced electronic world of short (ten questions or less) surveys. We recognize that, but we only conduct this survey every three years so we try to encompass as large a variety of energy-related issues, Co-op functions and programs as possible.

As a member-owner, it is your perspective and input that shapes the future direction of your electric Cooperative. It also provides us with a score card of how we measure up in our member-owners’ eyes.

In the email that went with the survey we asked for it to be completed by January 15. Since you likely will not receive this newsletter until after that date, we are extending the completion date until the end of January.

We are using the nationally recognized entity “Survey Monkey” to help us format, conduct and tabulate the survey results. As always, the survey is completely anonymous and I will be reporting the results back to you in future editions of the *Pioneer*.

Thank you for your valuable input.

Farm Stress Help

There is no question that 2019 was one of the more

challenging years in agriculture. Regardless of what farm commodity a farmer was producing it was affected by something totally out of their control. Everything from the weather, to Chinese tariffs, to the EPA’s exemptions to petroleum refineries for blending ethanol — all had negative effects on agricultural product prices.

Although farmers know there are ups and downs with farming, the stress of it all can become overbearing. To help farmers, and any others tied to the agriculture community, Avera Health has started a Farm and Rural Stress Hotline. The call is free, available 24/7, anonymous, and your insurance will not be notified.

With agriculture prices declining each of the past several years, farmers are working harder and longer and receiving less for their products, often while trying to keep the family farm. This can lead to stress, anxiety, frustration, and depression. Farmers are expected to “pull themselves up by the boot straps” but there may come a time when they simply need to talk to someone. Do not let your mental health affect your family or life. Call the Farm and Rural Stress Hotline at 800-691-4336 for support.

Rural Act Becomes Law

On Friday, December 20th, President Trump signed into law the RURAL Act. This legislation maintains tax-exempt status for cooperative organizations that have received grant dollars. These grant dollars would have included FEMA disaster relief and funding to expand rural broadband.

It seems a little ridiculous to tax electric co-ops on dollars they may receive from the federal government to help recover from a natural disaster or for grant dollars they may receive to provide high-speed broadband service to the rural areas that most need it. Thankfully, the U.S. House of Representatives, the U.S. Senate and the President also thought so and passed legislation disqualifying grants from being considered as cooperative income subject to taxation.

Co-ops across the country were tireless in working together to get this legislation passed. This really shows the Cooperative Principle of “Cooperation

Among Cooperatives” at work.

As far as I’m concerned, I hope Meeker Co-op never has to receive FEMA funding again. Nothing good has happened if you are eligible to receive FEMA funds. Now on the other hand, if we could secure some broadband grants, that would really be a nice way to enter 2020 for our VIBRANT Broadband program!

Y2, Looking Back 20 years

It hardly seems possible, but 20 years have passed since the big scare about the Y2K bug. If you recall, the “Y2K bug” arose out of a long-standing computer programming practice of using just two digits to represent the year, e.g., 1998 as “98”. Under this practice, “century years” such as the year 2000 were represented as the year “00”. Unless computer systems were reprogrammed, they may have failed to recognize “00” as they switched to a new year. This simple, but important, programming function may have caused systems to malfunction, stop working entirely or simply yield incorrect results when dealing with dates on or after January 1, 2000.

Our goal was to ensure that none of our Co-op members were inconvenienced in any way by the Y2K bug, whether by power outages, billing issues or anything in-between. Although we worked diligently to make all the computer programming changes and checked to make sure a computer system wasn’t affected, we just couldn’t be 100% certain every change had been made.

I recall being at the Co-op office on the evening of December 31st 1999. Around ten that night several concerned employees stopped by to watch and do what we could in case something didn’t function. We were a bit relieved when the Eastern time zone switched to the year 2000 and the likes of New York and all the other metropolises along the east coast stayed lit up. We felt if those eastern United States utilities weren’t having problems with their computers, we would be okay as well. Once the midnight hour hit Litchfield and all the Co-op’s members’ lights stayed on, we knew we had beaten that bug.

VIBRANT Continues to be — VIBRANT

As we closed out 2019, we were still receiving calls from members signing up for high-speed VIBRANT Broadband internet service. We are continuing to install services whenever possible across the Co-op’s entire service territory.

Interestingly, just after the first of the year I received a call from a person who lives a good twenty miles outside the Co-op’s service territory. She explained that their internet service was terrible and had heard good things about VIBRANT Broadband. She wondered if she could receive VIBRANT Broadband service. I explained we cannot provide internet service that far away from our Fixed Wireless poles. She then asked if we would be expanding VIBRANT internet service out her way in the future. Although I learned a long time ago to never say never, I did tell her I was sorry but not to hold her breath for it.

Whether it is from VIBRANT customers themselves or through others they have talked to, it is great to hear how well VIBRANT Broadband is working.

If you are still looking for a high-speed internet service that is locally operated, has no data caps and offers solid customer service, I urge you to give us a call at 320-693-3231, complete and send in the form on Page 7, or check out VIBRANT’s website for more information at VIBRANTBB.net. We will do our very best to install you between snowfalls this winter!

Wishing you a VIBRANT 2020!

Did You Know – According to BroadbandNow there are 2,675 internet service providers in the United States.

*Of that there are;
885 DSL providers
235 Copper wire line providers
450 Cable providers
1,294 Fiber-Optic providers
1,577 Fixed Wireless providers
52 Mobile Broadband providers*

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Meeker Pioneer

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CEO/General Manager: Tim Mergen
Editor: Becky Sorenson

The Meeker Pioneer is the official member publication of Meeker Cooperative and focuses on our members, programs and events. All member story ideas and comments are welcome. Send to Becky Sorenson at the address above.

Office Hours:

Monday - Friday 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

For 24-hour service call

320-693-3231

Fax: 320-693-2980

Web sites: www.meeker.coop

VIBRANTBB.net

Use the “Contact Us” form on the home page

Meeker Cooperative 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.”

Cogeneration and small power production governed by Minnesota Rules

Meeker Cooperative is obligated by Minnesota Rules pts. 7835 to interconnect with and purchase electricity from any cogenerators and/or small power producers. We also are required to provide information free of charge to any and all members who may be interested in entering into an interconnection agreement with the Co-op.

In compliance with Minnesota adopted rules relating to cogeneration and small power production, all interconnections require an application and approval to become a qualifying facility.

Keeping your produce fresh for a week

Electricity continues to be a great value courtesy of your electric cooperative



Save energy and money on the farm



A number of energy and money-saving measures can be taken on the farm that also earn rebates. Location # 22-13-303

Some of these include:

- Lighting retrofits
- Lighting in new construction
- Compressed air evaluations
- Ag ventilation projects
- Dairy plate coolers
- Dairy free heater

Rebate money is limited each year. If you plan to make energy-wise improvements in 2020, the faster the better to make sure you get the rebate you're counting on. We also have Energy Improvement loans — some at 0% interest — to help make the improvements you want.

Contact Chris Toenjes in our Energy Management department at 32-693-3231 for more information or to apply for a rebate.

2020 Energy Management Programs and Rebates/Credits

2020 Energy Management Programs	Rebate
Electric Vehicle Charger	
• Install a Level 2 EV Charger	\$500
• Battery Electric Vehicles (BEV) and Plug-in Hybrid Vehicles (PHEV) are controlled/interruptible and metered Separately at the energy management rate (\$0.057/kWh Sept-May, \$0.062/kWh Jun-Aug)	
Water Heating	
Peak Shave - Monthly Credit (Electric WH not on load mgmt.)	\$800
• Controlled Up to 8-Hours	
• Minimum 80 gallon capacity and 0.90 Energy Factor	
• Must use greater than 400 kWh/month	
• \$4 per month bill credit	
Peak Shave - Metered at energy mgmt. rate (Electric WH not on load mgmt.)	\$400
• Controlled Up to 8-Hours	
• Minimum 80 gallon capacity and 0.90 Energy Factor	
• Must use greater than 400 kWh/month	
• Metered Separately (\$0.057/kWh Sept-May, \$0.062/kWh Jun-Aug)	
Peak Shave – Metered (Gas conversion/new construction)	\$800
• Minimum 80 gallon capacity and 0.90 Energy Factor	
• Metered Separately (\$0.057/kWh Sept-May, \$0.062/kWh Jun-Aug) controlled	
• Or \$4 per month bill credit with no control	
Space Heating	
Interruptible Dual Fuel**	\$10/kW
• Metered Separately (\$0.057/kWh Sept-May, \$0.062/kWh Jun-Aug)	
Ground Source Heat Pumps – Controlled On Dual Fuel**	\$400/Ton
• Metered Separately (\$0.057/kWh Sept-May, \$0.062/kWh Jun-Aug)	
Ground Source Heat Pumps	\$100/Ton
• Metered at Applicable General Service Rate	
• Must be Controlled for Cycled Air Conditioning	
Electric Thermal Storage	\$25/kW
• Central, Room, Cable, Hydronic	
• Metered Separately (\$0.057/kWh Sept-May, \$0.062/kWh Jun-Aug)	

Air Source Heat Pumps — Ductless	\$500/unit
• Controlled on Dual Fuel/Cycled Air Conditioning w/qualified backup heating system	
• Metered separately at energy management rate (\$0.057/kWh Sept-May, \$0.062/kWh Jun-Aug)	
Air Source Heat Pumps** Standard Rebate	\$300/unit
• Minimum 5 kW resistance or an Electric Thermal Storage unit (new/existing)	
• Controlled on dual fuel and cycled air conditioning	
• Metered Separately (\$0.057/kWh Sept-May, \$0.062/kWh Jun-Aug)	
Air Source Heat Pumps** (Quality Installation-must have Q.I. form completed)	
• Installation must be performed by a registered HVAC contractor	
• Matched equipment of the outdoor unit and indoor coil	
• Proper equipment sizing with a completed load calculation on file	
• Performance tests and measurements of the airflor and refrigerant charge	
• Controlled on dual fuel and cycled air conditioning	
• Metered Separately (\$0.057/kWh Sept-May, \$0.062/kWh Jun-Aug)	
14.5 - 14.9 SEER	\$480 Rebate
15.0 - 15.9 SEER	\$580 Rebate
>16.0+ SEER	\$630 Rebate
SEER = Season Energy Efficiency Ratio	

Cooling

AC Tune-Up

- Unit must be five years or older and in working condition\$25/unit
- Work must be performed by licensed HVAC contractor

Energy Management Improvement (EMI) Loan

Loan funds from \$500-\$5,000 are available for interruptible dual fuel, storage space heating, air-source heat pumps, ground source heat pumps, peak shave water heating, storage water heating, heat pump water heaters and electric vehicle chargers and load control equipment installations. Interest rates and maximum loan amount:

- In lieu of rebates: 0%, \$500-\$3,000 and 3%, \$500-\$5,000
- With rebate: 7%, \$500-\$3,000

Maximum loan period of five (5) years (60 months)

**System must include automatic back-up heat.

All rebates for new installations. Retrofit equipment qualifies for 50% rebate.

A New Year brings new opportunities to save energy--and money

You may think energy efficiency upgrades require a great deal of time and expense, but that's not always the case.

If you're interested in making your home more efficient but don't want to break the bank, there are several DIY projects you can tackle to increase energy savings. Let's take a look at three inexpensive efficiency upgrades that can help you save energy throughout the year.

Trim Dryer Vent

Level of difficulty: easy. Supplies needed: tin snips, gloves, measuring tape and masking tape. Estimated Cost: about \$25 depending on the supplies you already have.

If your dryer vent hose is too long, your dryer is working harder than it has to, using more energy than necessary. The vent hose should be long enough for you to pull the dryer out a couple feet from the wall, but the shape of the hose should form a line—it should not have a lot of slack, with twists and curves. A shorter, unobstructed vent hose increases the efficiency of your dryer, dries clothing faster and reduces lint buildup, which can create potential fire hazards.

Simply measure, mark and trim the hose to the desired length, then reattach the hose to your dryer and exterior vent. If you're unsure about the hose length, check out YouTube.com for a quick video tutorial.



Sealing air leaks in your home can help you save 10% to 20% on heating and cooling bills. Apply caulk around windows, doors, electrical wiring and plumbing to seal in conditioned air. Image Credit: Alyson Hurt

Seal Air Leaks

Level of difficulty: moderate. Supplies needed: caulk and caulk gun, weather stripping, gloves, putty knife, paper towels. Estimated Cost: \$25 to \$50 depending on the materials you purchase.

Sealing air leaks in your home can help you save 10% to 20% on heating and cooling bills. Apply caulk around windows, doors, electrical wiring and plumbing to seal in conditioned air. You should also weather strip exterior doors, which can keep out drafts and help you control energy costs. Types of caulking and weather stripping materials vary, but ask your local hardware or home store for assistance if you're unsure about the supplies you need. For more information, the Department of Energy provides step-by-step instructions for caulking and weather stripping: <https://bit.ly/2Kesu6W>

Insulate Attic Stairs Opening

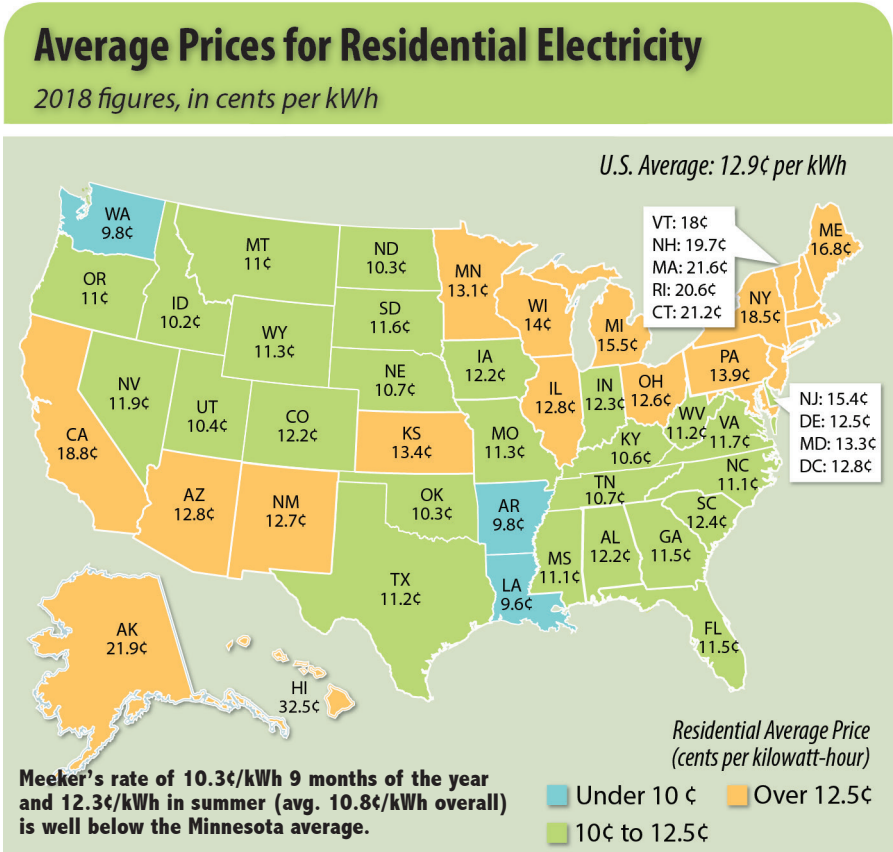
Level of difficulty: moderate. Supplies needed (if you build the box yourself): rigid foam board, faced blanket insulation, tape for foam board, measuring tape, utility knife, caulk and caulk gun, plywood. Estimated Cost: \$50 to \$100.

A properly insulated attic is one of the best ways to optimize energy savings and comfort in your home, but many homeowners don't consider insulating the attic stairs, or the opening to your attic space. Even a well-insulated attic can leak air through the stair opening, but luckily, there's an easy fix. Location #13-08-118

An insulated cover box can seal and insulate the attic stairs opening. You can build your own insulated cover box or purchase a pre-built box or kit from a local home improvement store like Home Depot or Lowe's for about \$60. If you decide to build your own, check out these step-by-step instructions from the Department of Energy: <https://bit.ly/36YNCYQ>. It should also be noted, if your attic opening is located in a garage that you do not heat and cool, this upgrade will not be as effective.

Saving energy doesn't have to be hard. With a little time and effort, you can maximize energy savings and increase the comfort of your home. To learn about additional ways to save, contact the Co-op at 320-693-3231 and ask for someone in our Energy Management Department. We have programs with excellent rebates to help you save energy and money each and every month.

Abby Berry writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.



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A time to gather with friends, family, neighbors



A total of around 100 members and guests attended our four Coffee with the Co-op events in Kimball, Darwin, Watkins and Litchfield. They enjoyed the time to talk with neighbors, hold grandchildren and have a chat with friends before the crazy Christmas schedule began. There were a number of in-depth conversations with Co-op personnel about the new VIBRANT Broadband system and more than a dozen people signed up for the service.

Operation Round Up® distributed \$14,000 in grants to non-profit organizations that applied for grants and fit the Operation Round Up guidelines.



Members judged the top three finalists in the 2019 Co-op Coloring Contest and the winning entries are listed below. The winner in each age category received a \$10 Walmart gift card. Walmart is a member of the Co-op and we enjoy highlighting and shopping at our member businesses whenever possible.

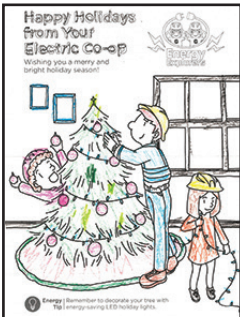
Thank you Members for coming to one or more of our events this year and for your help in choosing the winning coloring pages. It can really be a tough choice with all the artists we have in our Co-op family!

Coloring Contest Winners

Congratulations to our winners of the 2019 Co-op Coloring Contest. Each winner from the 11 age categories received a \$10 Walmart gift card in the mail. Thank you to all the wonderful young artists that took the time to color and send in their entries. It's a joy when we receive them and it's often difficult to choose the top entries; they are all so special in their own ways!



Age 2 Eli Boyer of Litchfield



Age 3 Evalyn Kraft of Kimball



Age 4 Jase Turnbough of Grove City



Age 5 Gannon Hemmesch of Paynesville



Age 6 Grace Schaefer of Litchfield



Age 7 Vance Herdina of Big Lake



Age 8 Sophiya DeBolt of Dassel



Age 9 Jacquelyn McCann of Eden Valley



Age 10 Britton Harrison of Dassel



Age 11 Veronica Yutzky of Grove City



Age 12 Dayton Buer of Grove City

Industry News

Cities ban natural gas in new homes

A dozen cities [principally on the West and East Coasts] have banned natural gas equipment in new buildings. While the restrictions enjoy strong public support, they're causing panic among some homeowners and gas-dependent industries.

The California Restaurant Association last week sued Berkeley, calling its gas-ban law "irresponsible" and claiming that "restaurants specializing in international foods so prized in the Bay Area will be unable to prepare many of their specialties without natural gas." The gas industry has also funded extensive opposition to cities' climate goals, the Los Angeles Times reports.

While the stoves themselves aren't the biggest problem from a climate change perspective a home with a gas stove likely uses gas for other purposes, and it's those other appliances — the furnace and the washer and dryer — that are most responsible for climate-warming pollution, data show. But in recent years, Americans have used gas more than any other fuel except oil, a major reason carbon emissions have kept rising.

[Additionally], extracting and transporting gas demands thousands of wells and miles of pipelines, and that infrastructure tends to leak. The gas released, mostly methane, has between 20 and 80 times the climate-warming potential of carbon dioxide. On the other hand, the U.S. electric grid is much cleaner than it was two decade ago, and modern electric appliances need far less energy to run than older equipment.

In the U.S., natural gas is responsible for more climate-heating emissions than coal is. Globally, gas is the fastest-growing source of emissions, according to a study published in Environmental Research Letters this week.

In the absence of federal policy, dozens of cities across America have set goals to cut their greenhouse gas emissions by the middle of the century. In cities, more than in rural or suburban places, buildings make up a huge portion of climate-warming pollutants — anywhere from 40 to 80% of emissions. Cutting that number means not just stopping the expansion of natural-gas infrastructure, but retrofitting most existing buildings to use electric heat, environmentalists say.

"Gas has been advertised as this kind of bridge fuel, but we're at a point where we don't need a bridge [to renewable energy] — we need to adopt some of these renewable resources," said Emma Searson, Go Solar campaign manager with Environment America.

"We're at the point where we can actually imagine not using fossil fuels in the home."

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\$1,000 College Scholarship Available For Dependents of Co-op Members

Meeker Cooperative is pleased to make available a \$1,000 college scholarship funded by Basin Electric Power Cooperative, one Meeker's power suppliers.

To be eligible a student must:

- be a dependent child (including adopted or step-children) of a Meeker Cooperative member;
- 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 Wednesday, January 29, 2020.

The application is available on Meeker's website at www.meeker.coop. Select Download Forms from the Member Services tab.

The form may be completed on-line, but must be printed to submit with the supporting materials. Location #30-13-422

Applications are also available at Meeker's office or by calling Mary Alice Holm at 320-693-3231.

All decisions by the scholarship selection committee will be final.


\$1,000 Operation Round Up 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 licensure in some area of expertise. The eligible candidate must have an educational plan and must have been enrolled for at least one quarter or semester in the chosen program.

The candidate must be a member of Meeker Cooperative or be an employee of the Cooperative. Scholarship applications are available at the Cooperative or by calling 320-693-3231 or can be downloaded from Meeker's website at meeker.coop, Member Services, Download Forms. The application deadline is close of business on February 6, 2020. The scholarship is made available by the Meeker Cooperative Electric Trust.

Members of the Cooperative may choose to have their bills rounded up to the nearest dollar and employees of the Cooperative are given the opportunity to have their paychecks rounded down to contribute to this fund. This extra change is accumulated in the Operation Round Up® Trust Fund and is awarded as grants to non-profit and charitable organizations. High school scholarships are also awarded to qualifying area students.

All members of Meeker Cooperative are eligible to participate in Operation Round Up. Please call Meeker Co-op at 320-693-3231 if you do not currently participate and would be willing to contribute your extra change each month to local non-profit organizations in your community.



Operation Round Up® December 2019 Grant Recipient List

Community Service

Eden Valley Valley Daze	\$500
Little Red Schoolhouse, District 59	\$1,000
Living at Home/BN Prog., Grove City C.A.R.E.....	\$1,000
Paynesville Area Center	\$750
Rod & Gun Club, Cedar Mills.....	\$500
United Community Action Partnership.....	\$4,000
\$2,000 Energy Assistance; \$500 Head Start Curriculum; and	
\$1,500 Supplies for Homeless and Less Fortunate	
Wings - McLeod Subsidiary of Common Cup	\$1,000

Education and Youth

Grace United Methodist Church Uzone	\$1,000
Meeker County 4-H	\$1,250
Robotics Team, Eden Valley-Watkins High School.....	\$500
Robotics Team, Hutchinson High School.....	\$500
Robotics Team, Litchfield High School.....	\$500
True Friends and Friendship Ventures.....	\$1,500

Total **\$14,000**

High School Scholarships – Two - \$1,000 scholarships per school as eligible to ACGC, Dassel-Cokato, Eden Valley-Watkins, Hutchinson, Kimball, Litchfield, Paynesville.

Save the Dates for these Upcoming Member Trips!


Minnesota Twins vs. Baltimore Orioles
Wednesday, May 20, 2020
12:10 Game

North Dakota Energy Tour
Tuesday, July 14 through Thursday, July 16
Visiting Coal Creek Station, Falkirk Mine, Garrison Dam, and more!

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Let the sunshine in! For additional warmth, open drapes over windows that receive sunlight during the day. Close them at night, which can reduce heat loss from a warm room up to 10%.

Source: energy.gov



2020 Energy Star Appliance Rebates



The following residential appliances qualify for a rebate provided they are Energy Star rated.

- Energy Star Dehumidifier\$25 Rebate
- Energy Star Dishwasher.....\$25 Rebate
- Energy Star Clothes Washer.....\$25 Rebate
- Energy Star Clothes Dryer.....\$25 Rebate
- Energy Star Freezer.....\$25 Rebate
- Energy Star Refrigerator\$25 Rebate

Rebate applications can be downloaded from www.meeker.coop Download Forms, or call 320-693-3231. Along with the application, you must also submit a dated receipt and the yellow Energy Guide from your appliance. All these materials must be submitted within 90 days of purchase to:

Meeker Cooperative, Attn: MSR, 1725 US Hwy. 12 E., Suite 100, Litchfield, MN 55355

FOR ENERGY STAR APPLIANCES ONLY

Slow Cooker Sausage, Spinach & White Bean Soup

Marty Fitzloff submitted this month’s winning recipe for **Favorite Soup/ Stew Recipe**. She will have \$10 credited to her account. Congratulations!

Sausage, Spinach & White Bean Soup

- 1 Tbsp. Olive Oil

1 (12.8 oz) pkg. smoked Andouille sausage, sliced

3 cloves garlic, minced

1 onion, diced

3 carrots, peeled and diced

2 stalks celery, diced
- 2 (15 oz) cans Great Northern beans, drained/rinsed

1/2 tsp. dried oregano

2 bay leaves

4 cups chicken broth

Kosher salt/freshly ground black pepper, to taste

3 cups baby spinach

Heat oil in large skilled over medium high heat. Add sausage and cook, stirring frequently, until lightly brown (3-4 min). Place all ingredients except spinach in slow cooker and add 2 cups water. Cover and cook on low 7-8 hours or on high heat 3-4 hours. Just before serving, stir in spinach until wilted. Serve immediately. Note: There were many similar submissions for this soup. We chose this one because she had not won in the past several years.

For February, submit your Favorite Recipe using Bacon
by January 30 to:

Meeker Cooperative, ATTN: Becky Sorenson, 1725 US Hwy 12, Suite 100, Litchfield, MN 55355



VIBRANT Broadband Sign-Up



Residential (Check the package you prefer)

	Member	Non-Member
<input type="checkbox"/> ESSENTIAL - Up to 25 Mbps Download & 3 Mbps Upload	\$59.95/Month	\$64.95/Month
ESSENTIAL PLUS*	\$69.95/Month	\$74.95/Month
<input type="checkbox"/> STREAMING - Up to 50 Mbps Download & 5 Mbps Upload	\$69.95/Month	\$74.95/Month
STREAMING PLUS*	\$79.95/Month	\$84.95/Month
<input type="checkbox"/> ULTRA - Up to 75 Mbps Download & 7 Mbps Upload	\$79.95/Month	\$84.95/Month
ULTRA PLUS*	\$89.95/Month	\$94.95/Month
<input type="checkbox"/> EXTREME** - Up to 100 Mbps Download & 10 Mbps Upload	\$89.95/Month	\$94.95/month
EXTREME PLUS*	\$99.95/Month	\$104.95/month

☐ I am unsure which package I need. Please contact me to discuss.

Small Office/Home Office (SO/HO) (Check the package you prefer)

	Member	Non-Member
<input type="checkbox"/> SO/HO ESSENTIAL - Up to 25 Mbps Download & 12 Mbps Upload	\$69.95/Month	\$74.95/Month
ESSENTIAL PLUS*	\$79.95/Month	\$84.95/Month
<input type="checkbox"/> SO/HO STREAMING - Up to 50 Mbps Download & 25 Mbps Upload	\$84.95/Month	\$89.95/Month
STREAMING PLUS*	\$94.95/Month	\$99.95/Month
<input type="checkbox"/> SO/HO ULTRA - Up to 75 Mbps Download & 37 Mbps Upload	\$99.95/Month	\$104.95/Month
ULTRA PLUS*	\$109.95/Month	\$114.95/Month
<input type="checkbox"/> SO/HO EXTREME** - Up to 100 Mbps Download & 50 Mbps Upload	\$114.95/Month	\$119.95/month
EXTREME PLUS*	\$124.95/Month	\$129.95/month

☐ Internet Phone Service \$39.95/month or **\$34.95/month when BUNDLED** with the package of your choice above. Keep your local number (where available)

***Plus packages include assistance with customer device networking (managed WiFi); Up to 2 in-home service calls/year; Wireless connectivity on up to 5 devices at time of install.**

☐ Fixed Wireless Service ☐ Fiber to the Home Service ☐ Don't Know

Name _____ Home Phone _____

Address _____

E-Mail Address _____ Cell Phone _____

Someone will be calling you to discuss your plan and installation.

For further information, contact us at 320-693-3231.

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/address, which will be used for identification purposes. Ads received by **Jan. 30** will be included in the February. 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 _____

Please check ad category

____ For Sale, Misc.

____ Agricultural

____ Automotive

____ Wanted

____ Giveaway

____ Service

____ For Rent

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

- Two 7-tine fishing spears. 612-581-6909.
- Husqvarna chainsaw, mod. #36 w/16" bar. \$100/obo. 320-905-6597.
- Craftsman 21" snow thrower, single stage, elec. start, exc. cond. \$225. 320-699-0082.
- '97 Polaris Classic, '97 Polaris XLT, sledbed 3-sled trailer. All \$1,400. 612-309-8554.
- Horsehair robe/ mittens for sleigh/ mancave; 1920 antique, never used. 320-296-4174.
- Mec 600 Jr. shotgun shell reloader. \$125. 320-453-7878.
- '98 Polaris Trail Tour snowmobile. Very low miles. \$1,550. 320-857-2886.
- NordicTrack CX925 Elliptical & BowFlex Treadclimber TC5. Make offer. Text 320-761-8989.
- Wurlitzer spinet piano. 320-693-3091.
- Black glass TV stand w/shelves. Holds 39"-55" TV. Like new. \$75. 320-275-9898.
- Kenmore washer/ dryer. Works well,

some rust. \$150/pair. 320-282-7056.

- Toro lawn mower, 6.5hp, 22", self-prop. Recycle w/bagger. 320-693-7424.

Wanted

- Spike tooth harrow. 320-243-1395.
- Location #36-20-201
- Land to rent. Gerald 320-221-2638.
- Any kind of metals. Will pick up/clean up farms. 320-903-5625.
- Ice fishing spears, old or new. 651-323-8337.
- Misc. Lego pieces or sets, age 8+. 320-693-2970.
- Investor to purchase tillable farmland; lease-back very possible. 320-234-3644.

Giveaway


- Kittens: 1 male, 3 female. Weaned. Two months. Text 320-296-6353.

Services

- Any kind of metals, snow plowing, will pick up/drop off. 320-905-5625.
- A & F Painting/ Restoration. We do it all-Interior, exterior, insured. 763-200-3970.

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 January 30, 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!





TIPS TO AVOID SCAMS

Scammers can threaten you with everything from shutting off power to your home to legal action. Don't fall victim to these types of scams.

Here are a few reminders from your electric co-op.

- Co-op employees will never show up at your door to demand payment.
- Never give personal information to an unknown caller or visitor. Co-op representatives have access to the details they need to service your account.
- Demands for immediate payment by wire transfer, cryptocurrency, gift cards or cash reload cards should immediately raise red flags.
- If you think you've been contacted by a scammer falsely representing the co-op, please let them know as soon as possible.

Space Heater Safety Tips

Space heaters are a great way to warm specific rooms in your home without having to crank up the thermostat, but using space heaters doesn't come without risk! Use the tips below to keep your home safe.

DO: Plug your space heater directly into the wall outlet.

DO: Buy a unit with an automatic shutoff in case the unit tips over, or you forget to shut it off.

DO: Keep your space heater in low-moisture rooms.

AUTO SHUT OFF

DO: Keep your space heater at a safe distance (at least 3 feet) from kids, pets and flammable items.

ON OFF

DO: Always follow the directions and take a broken space heater to a qualified appliance service center.

DON'T: Leave your space heater unattended. Always unplug it before you leave the house or go to bed.

DON'T: Use an extension cord to plug in your space heater. It can cause the heater to overheat, and can be a tripping hazard.

DON'T: Place your space heater near curtains, clothing, furniture or bedding.

DON'T: Try to repair a broken space heater yourself.

DON'T: Put your space heater in your bathroom. The moisture can damage the unit, which could cause it to malfunction.