

Meeker Cooperative PIONEER

November 2020

In this issue...

Introducing TechShield and VIBRANT
Premium Protection..... Cover

Basin Electric Power Cooperative
College Scholarship 3



VIBRANT-U — Answers to your
Internet questions 6

Reliable Power Mapping 6

Becky Sorenson Retires 7

Meeker Cooperative will be closed on Thurs. and Fri., November 26-27

Our employees will be celebrating Thanksgiving with their families. In the case of a power or Vibrant Broadband outage, call us anytime at **320-693-3231** and our dispatch team will assist you night or day.

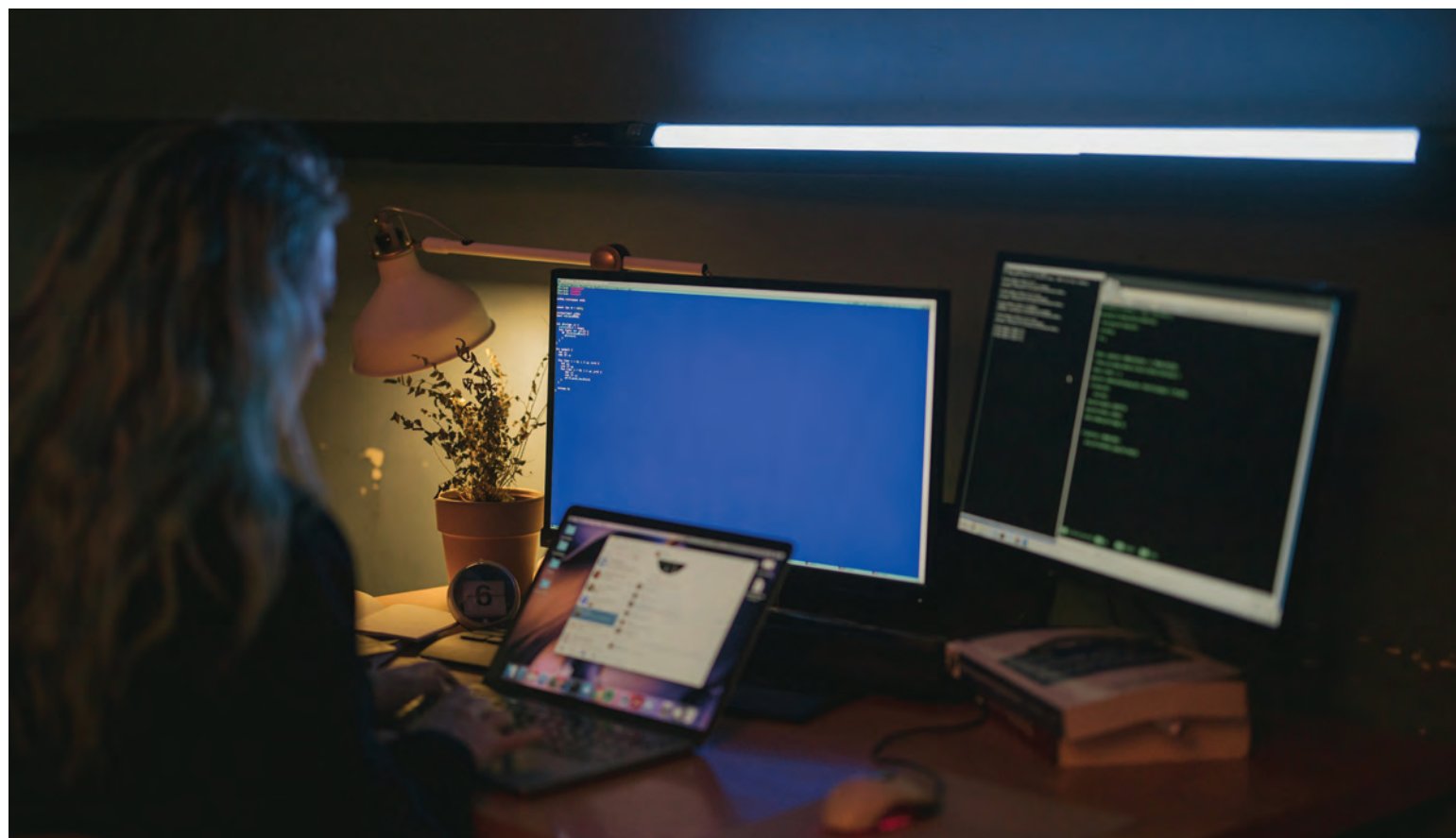
Have a safe, warm and
blessed holiday.

Official publication of

**Meeker
Cooperative**
Light and Power Association

Meeker Co-op is an
Equal Opportunity Provider
and Employer

VIBRANT TechShield: Your key to enhanced internet



For more than 85-years, Meeker Cooperative Light & Power has supplied our members with reliable electricity. Over those years, we've constantly improved our technologies and operations to not only meet the needs of our members, but also keep the cost of delivering electricity as low as possible.

When we decided to take on the task of delivering Internet to our members and rural communities, we accepted that it wouldn't be without its hiccups. After all, we've been here before. However, we couldn't have predicted how smoothly the launch of VIBRANT Broadband has been. It's a home run for Meeker Cooperative and its members and anyone who is a VIBRANT Broadband subscriber. So how do you follow up a home run? With another home run!

It's About Choice

VIBRANT Broadband is tasked to stand out from traditional Internet providers and be something more. No longer are you stuck with three menu choices and three courses, none of which might satisfy you. Today's modern Internet is all about choices.

VIBRANT Broadband offers high-speed Internet connectivity and phone service. We don't offer television entertainment packages or email addresses. The reason is simple: to keep the cost of connectivity for our VIBRANT Subscribers as competitive as possible.

You also have a choice you may not have thought about, and that's a choice in your entertainment. Previously, you had Over-The-Air antenna, satellite TV or cable packages. With broadband Internet, you now have a choice to stream your entertainment and cut the cable cord or ditch the dish. There are many streaming options available online, and many can save you money. Depending on your personal entertainment desires, you could even stream recent programming for free!

Something new we are bringing exclusively to VIBRANT subscribers that differentiates us from other providers is TechShield. Along with that, we will be offering an upgraded package called VIBRANT Premium Protection.



TechShield

We are living in the best of times, and being connected brings us closer than ever to our family, friends, education, entertainment, and careers. It also exposes us to unwelcome online threats. That is where TechShield comes in.

WHAT IS TECHSHIELD – CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

Strategic Planning Updates, Thanksgiving

Strategic Planning Update

Last month I mentioned that the employees and board were participating in a Strategic Planning exercise for the Co-op. It encourages us to look at all our programs and services and the how and why we do them. Just as important is looking ahead and planning for the Co-op's future. What services and programs will our future members and customers need and want? I often describe the strategic planning process of thinking a "customer ahead" type look at the Co-op.

After several days of discussions on ideas and topics from Battery Storage to VIBRANT Broadband, six main initiatives or goals rose to the top. In no particular order they are:

- **Power Supply** – with GRE announcing the closure of its largest power plant, Coal Creek Station, we have an opportunity to explore future power supply options and develop new agreements as appropriate for the Co-op's future needs. This project will require substantial amounts of staff time over the next two years as many options will need to be reviewed and analyzed.
- **Safety** – We will continue to improve our safety culture and grow our safety program for the employees and general public. Part of this safety initiative is to successfully complete the Rural Electric Safety Accreditation Program (RESAP) in 2021. RESAP is a safety program sponsored by our national association along with our insurance carrier. A couple of the tasks involved with its successful completion is a review of the Co-op's performance against key OSHA safety measures and safety professionals coming to inspect our facilities, equipment and materials for safety concerns as well as observe the employees in action to ensure that they are following safety procedures and policies.
- **Broadband Plan** – We have been delivering "Rip Snort'n Fast" internet for just over a year now and have learned many things as would be expected in any type of startup. Although we initially developed a broadband business plan, many things have changed from technology to how our customers are using the internet. As you can imagine in our original plan there was no thought of anything like the Covid-19 pandemic. It has created challenges from installations to materials and equipment procurement. Because of the pandemic, eLearning, working from home and telemedicine have greatly expanded and changed how and how much the internet is used. All things we now need to incorporate into a new VIBRANT business plan.
- **Human Resources** – You have all seen them. The handwritten or formally printed signs hanging in front

of many businesses from main street businesses to those in industrial parks. No, I'm not talking about political candidate signs but "Help Wanted" signs. Finding qualified employees in certain skilled areas is becoming more of a challenge. We will work on a plan and program to recruit, retain, and train employees to ensure our services and programs are delivered to the highest standards and the Co-op's customers and members needs are met.

- **Member Engagement** – I mentioned this initiative a bit last month when I referred to our looking at the future of this newsletter. Is it, along with all our other member engagement efforts, still providing the value they once were? We will look at everything from the Annual Meeting to the Member Appreciation Day to other Co-op hosted events to ensure we are delivering the member and customer relationship and communication needs effectively and efficiently.
- **Sales and Service Culture** – Continue to train and provide employees with the education, tools, and technology needed to provide excellent customer and member service and sales skills.

Additionally, we looked at the Mission and Vision and Value statements of the Co-op to ensure they are still in alignment with our new goals and the future of the Co-op. We made changes to the Vision and Value statements of the Co-op but I want to focus on the Co-op's Mission Statement here. Following is a summary of the evolution of the Co-op's Mission Statement as developed by the employees and board during the various strategic planning sessions.

When we conducted our first strategic plan back in 1999, we developed the following Mission Statement to go with it: To be the provider of choice for reliable, competitively priced energy and other services that benefit the Cooperative's member-customers.

With the Strategic Plan in 2003 it changed to: To enhance the quality of life of the Cooperative's Members and Customers by providing reliable, competitively priced energy and other value-added services.

During the 2008 Strategic Planning process it was tweaked to: 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.

It has stayed the same since. Although there have been tweaks along the way it has served us well. However,

where the Co-op is today and the services it now provides, we decided to take a hard look at the current statement and see if it was still serving its purpose.

According to our strategic planning facilitators a mission statement should be a short explanation of the Co-op's reason for existence, while identifying its products or services and communicating its purpose to its customers and employees.

I believe our new statement does that. It is much more concise yet conveys what we are about –electric and broadband for the betterment of our members and customers.

The new Mission Statement is:

Energizing and Connecting ... enhancing your life.

There you have it. The Co-op's Mission Statement and strategic goals for the next several years. I don't believe anything too grandiose or out of this world. Just an emphasis and focus on sound business practices while providing you with the electricity and broadband you need and striving to deliver them with the best customer service possible.

Happy Thanksgiving

2020 has certainly been a year of many adjustments, in many ways, for many people. It has created a need for better flexibility, collaboration and certainly understanding. It has created ten years' worth of changes in six months' time. Yet through it all it has created incredible resilience in individuals, families, and certainly businesses. I see that every day in the Co-op's employees, members and customers. I thank you for putting your faith in Meeker Cooperative and VIBRANT Broadband and its employees! May the Lord bless you all abundantly this Thanksgiving.

Did You Know

In honor of Thanksgiving also known as Turkey Day I thought I'd provide a bit of Turkey Trivia. Enjoy!

- Turkeys are actually a type of pheasant (which in my mind is better than a pheasant being a type of turkey).
- According the Guinness World Book of Records the heaviest turkey weighed 86 pounds.
- Turkeys range of vision is about 270 degrees.
- A full-grown turkey will have about 3,500 feathers.



Board of Directors

Kevin Issendorf, President — District 4
Litchfield, Greenleaf in Meeker

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

Karl Lundin, Secretary — District 9
North Kingston, Kingston, Forest City in Meeker

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

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

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

Stephen Plaisance — District 5
Fairhaven in Stearns; Cokato, Southside, French Lake in Wright; Dassel in Meeker

K. Bruce Krueger — District 7
Collinwood, Cedar Mills in Meeker; Stockholm in Wright; Acoma, Hutchinson in McLeod

Larry Huhn — District 8
Darwin, Ellsworth in Meeker

Chad Felstul — Attorney

Meeker Pioneer

USPS 018-308 ISSN 1525-1055
Periodicals Postage Paid at Litchfield, MN.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to
Meeker Pioneer, 1725 US Hwy. 12, Suite 100
Litchfield, MN 55355.

The Meeker Pioneer is published monthly
for \$5 per year for members and
\$10 per year for non-members by
Meeker Cooperative, 1725 U.S. Hwy. 12, Suite 100
Litchfield, MN 55355

CEO/General Manager: Tim Mergen
Editor: Shane Zeppelin
Contributor: Becky Sorenson

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

For 24-hour service call
320-693-3231

Fax: 320-693-2980

Websites: www.meeker.coop
VIBRANTBroadband.com
Use the "Contact Us" form on the home page

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 Attention: Editor at the address above.

Meeker Cooperative Mission Statement:

"Energizing and Connecting...enhancing your life."

\$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 of Meeker's power suppliers.

To be eligible a student must:

- Be a dependent child (including adopted or step-children) of a Meeker Cooperative member
- 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
- 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 27, 2021.

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.

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. #29-28-102

Additional scholarship opportunities may be available. Watch for more information in the *Pioneer* as it becomes available.



We will STILL have our Coloring Contest for ages 2-12! See inside this Pioneer for your coloring sheet!

A Coloring Contest Committee will be picking the winners this year rather than Coffee on the Co-op attendees!

Have fun and be sure to return your coloring artwork by December 11!

This Christmas, give a welcome gift of electricity or internet!

The holidays can be challenging for people in this economy. Not only do they have their normal expenses (which seem to be growing) they also have their Christmas gift list, holiday cooking and baking costs. Then there are those who seem to have everything and it's a challenge to know what to get them.

Consider purchasing a gift certificate for billing credits to put under their tree. It's a gift that fits everyone and will be truly appreciated.

To purchase a gift certificate, contact our Member Service Department at 320-693-3231, or stop into the office.

Then check that gift off your list!



This Christmas, give a gift the whole family can get excited about!

Your super-busy family needs **super-fast internet speeds**

VIBRANT Broadband™
Powered by Meeker Cooperative

Who wants to wait for files to download or videos to buffer?

Not your busy family! VIBRANT Broadband's fiber supported system delivers speeds you've only dreamed about — up to 100 Mbps — so your home's internet will be fast enough for simultaneous use by multiple people, devices and applications:

- | | | |
|---------------|------------|-------------|
| • Smartphones | • Tablets | • Snapchat |
| • Pandora | • FaceTime | • Streaming |

Sign up TODAY and your family will be all smiles Christmas morning!

Visit www.VIBRANTBROADBAND.com or call 320-693-3231

Knock, Knock, Knockin' On VIBRANT Poles

Strange things are no stranger for the year 2020, and we've encountered one of them recently when it was discovered that woodpeckers seemed to take a liking (or disliking) to our fixed wireless yard poles.



The birds are looking for something to snack on, but that doesn't mean our poles are infected with insects. Utility poles are treated for infestation and preservation so they aren't susceptible to beetles or worms. So, what seems to be the cause of woodpeckers voraciously attacking them? #05-31-318

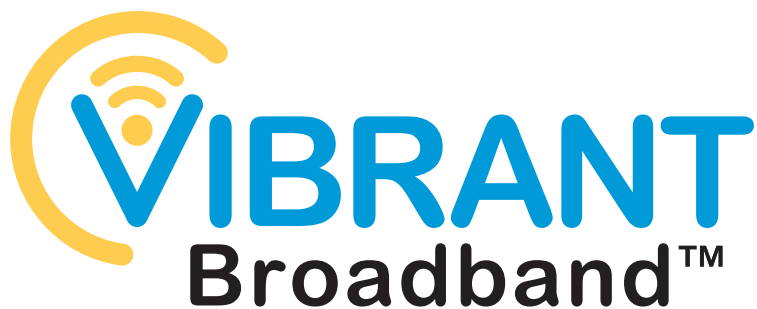
One theory is that the transceivers mounted to the poles, causes a vibration that mimics that of insects. Woodpeckers can also detect hollows in the wood, making them think there may be insects. Plus, they can hollow out an area in a tree trunk (or pole) for nesting in quick order. Whatever the cause, there can be real damage to utility poles.

A team has been tasked to determine a solution for prevention.



Hey VIBRANT,
I just want to tell you that your service is the best we have ever had in our area. We have went through four different providers over the years and no one could even come close to the internet speed we get now. Other providers promised results at a higher cost but the service was always the same, poor connections. Thank you for the awesome customer service from the ordering staff and the installation guy, Cody.

I will be telling my friends about vibrant and the excellent service we have received. Thanks again. -J & K



Powered by Meeker Cooperative

Providing *Rip Snort'n FAST* Fiber-Fed Internet to our Rural Communities.

We want you and your family to have the greatest and safest online experience. That's why we are bringing you **TechShield** and **VIBRANT Premium Protection**.

TechShield gets you malware and virus protection on up to 5 computers and 5 devices. You also get Password Genie, a password vault to help remember your passwords and log onto websites. Plus, you get 50GB of cloud storage.

VIBRANT Premium Protection expands your cloud storage to 250GB and gets you Identity Theft Protection and remote tech support for all your Wi-Fi connected devices.

We are working to roll these features out exclusively to VIBRANT Broadband subscribers. If you're not already a subscriber, call today!

TechShield will be available for \$5.99/mo or included FREE with a 50Mbps or above VIBRANT Broadband package. VIBRANT Premium Protection is available for \$10.00/mo to all subscribers.



ESSENTIAL

UP TO
25
Mbps
Downloads
Starting at

\$59.95/mo

TECHSHIELD

ADD
\$5.99/mo

STREAMING

UP TO
50
Mbps
Downloads
Starting at

\$69.95/mo

TECHSHIELD

INCLUDED!

ULTRA

UP TO
75
Mbps
Downloads
Starting at

\$74.95/mo

TECHSHIELD

INCLUDED!

EXTREME

UP TO
100
Mbps
Downloads
Starting at

\$79.95/mo

TECHSHIELD

INCLUDED!

ADD



ONLY
\$10/mo

Packages also available for Small Office/ Home Office and Business. Call us or visit our website for information. **320-693-3231 • VIBRANTBROADBAND.COM**

Fill out form or go to vibrantbroadband.com/contactme



I want to know more about **VIBRANT Broadband** high-speed Internet for my home or business.

I'm interested in:

☐ VIBRANT Broadband

☐ VIBRANT Premium Protection

☐ VIBRANT Phone

☐ TechShield

Name: _____

Service Address: _____

Street

City

Phone: _____

Text: _____

Email: _____

By giving us your phone number or email, you agree to allow us to contact you. We NEVER share your information with third parties. See our Privacy Policy on our website.

Best Time to Call:

☐ Weekday AM

☐ Weekday PM/Evening

☐ Weekend

☐ _____

Other

MAIL TO: Meeker Cooperative • 1725 US HWY 12 E, STE 100 • Litchfield, MN 55355

VIBRANT Broadband may not be available in all areas. We continuously expand our service. Check with us often to see if we can make you VIBRANT!



11/20

How Does Your Internet Service Rate?

VIBRANT Broadband was recently chosen by Meeker residents as one of the top providers for Internet service. This is quite an honor and we thank you! VIBRANT Broadband, the “new kid on the block” needed to make a great first impression. We promise to continue to make great second, third, and ongoing impressions. We are here to serve you!

The headline may be a bit misleading because we are not going to talk about rating our service against our competition, but rather talk about our pricing (or rate) structure. Some companies offer an “Introductory Price” to entice you to sign up and commit to a multi-year contract. They put effort into their offers, but fall short if you aren’t reading the fine print. If you’re confused by it all, well, that’s by design. You get “hooked” for a low rate and promises of high bandwidth only to find out later after having a two-plus year agreement with them that they raise your monthly rates and cap your data each month. Sure, this can be remedied by calling the provider and getting an upgraded package, which then turns out to be as expensive if not higher, than some of the others on the market.

Meeker Cooperative Light & Power is a cooperative who has served its members for over 85 years. When we launched our initiative to deliver fiber-fed high-speed broadband to our members and rural communities, we decided we weren’t going to play the “Introductory Pricing” game.

VIBRANT Broadband spends a tremendous amount of time researching our costs-to-rates, just like we do on the electric side of the business. There’s quite a commitment, support and trust you, our members, have invested in VIBRANT Broadband and we are being good stewards of your investment.

We have developed a pricing model that fits nearly every budget, offers several broadband speeds, and gives you a great internet experience. Some providers try and woo you with low introductory pricing or more bandwidth than you can swallow. Don’t fall for the marketing hype. If you want to use their service, we want you to be happy. Just make sure as you compare services and pricing that you are taking everything into consideration. #12-23-106

What VIBRANT Broadband can offer is great reliable internet with great speeds, great customer service, for a great price while being stewards of your investment. So, how does your current provider rate?



Powered by Meeker Cooperative



independentreview.net

is honored to be awarded
as a favorite Internet provider.
Thank you for your support!
VIBRANT Broadband brings you
Award Winning “Rip Snort’n FAST”
fiber-fed Internet.

Vacationers and Snowbirds: Check this before leaving town!

When leaving home for an extended length of time, turning off the water heater and the water supply to your home is a good idea. But not all good ideas are simple tasks.

Several Cooperative Members with dual fuel heating systems turned off the breaker to their water heater while they took extended trips to warmer climates. Instead of saving them money, however, it led to higher electric bills.

Quite often, the off-peak meter is wired to the same breaker as the water heater and, without knowing it, these members may have turned off the power to their energy management controls. If this was the case, any electric heat used by the off-peak electric heating equipment is uncontrolled and billed at the general service rate rather than the off-peak rate. The result is a higher electric bill.

To prevent this from happening, Meeker Cooperative encourages you to complete this simple test of your dual fuel space heating system.

1. Turn on the electric dual fuel space heating system.
2. Turn off the breaker to your water heater.
3. Check to see if the off-peak or EM meter is running and registering energy used.
4. If the EM meter is not running, the water heater breaker is the power source for the EM control equipment. If this is the case, you must contact your electrical contractor and request that a disconnect be installed near your water heater. This will allow you to shut down your water heater while maintaining power to the EM equipment and your electric heat.

Industry News

US DOE provides funding for \$26 million in nuclear plant hydrogen projects

Washington — The US Department of Energy has provided funding to two projects worth \$26 million seeking to advance hydrogen generation by nuclear reactors, starting with a facility at an Xcel Energy plant, DOE said in a statement October 8.

The DOE funding requires recipients to match the government support with their own in-kind or other contributions, and the \$26 million value is the total including such recipient efforts. DOE did not say in the announcement what proportion of either of the projects was coming from the government versus the recipient, but previous projects have often required a 50/50 split in contributions.

The projects are designed to help nuclear plants be able to switch between electricity production and hydrogen generation depending on market conditions, consequently increasing their profitability, DOE said.

In the first project, valued at \$13.8 million, nuclear operator Xcel Energy’s Northern States Power subsidiary will build a hydrogen generating testing facility at one of its nuclear plants in Minnesota, DOE said. DOE did not identify the plant. Xcel operates the Monticello and Prairie Island stations.

Xcel will develop a “fully functional hydrogen plant” that can use electricity from the nuclear reactor to generate hydrogen and test various electrolysis technologies for doing so, DOE said. The goal is that the system be “reversible,” meaning it could generate electricity from burning hydrogen when power demand was higher. #18-08-202

There are several pilot projects by four US nuclear plant operators to explore hydrogen generation as a way to use surplus electricity during periods of high renewable generation. The nuclear industry has said this is a potential solution to the problem of low power prices when wind and solar output is high, which has caused nuclear units in some markets to shut permanently.

The second project will support work by FuelCell Energy, a Connecticut company, in conjunction with the Idaho National Laboratory, on a solid oxide electrolysis cell to be used at nuclear stations. That project is worth \$12.5 million, DOE said.

S&P Global

TECHSHIELD – CONT.

What is TechShield?

TechShield has three components: a virus protection suite, a password vault, and cloud storage for backups and more. This is an essential part of being connected, and VIBRANT Broadband is proud to offer this to our subscribers.

We will expand on what you get with TechShield SecureIT

This suite protects your computers or mobile connected devices from malware and computer viruses. Once installed, it scans files and web pages for nasty trojans that can spy on you or cause your computer or mobile device to unwillingly share your information. It prevents hackers from getting into your system and it keeps up to date without any user interaction.

Password Genie

Using the same password for multiple log-ins is a bad idea. It can be how a hacker gets at your private data. Password Genie is a program that keeps track of your passwords and log-ins so you don't have to rely on memory or that piece of paper that always seems to be misplaced. Password Genie can also securely store form data, like your address and credit card information, to quickly fill out forms when registering or ordering online.

#25-33-113

FileHopper Plus

FileHopper Plus is a cloud storage feature that allows you to securely backup your computer, save photos, music, documents, and share large files. You will get a generous 50GB of storage. With FileHopper Plus, you can access

your files from any computer or device from anywhere you're connected.

TechShield covers up to five computers and five connected mobile devices in your home.

VIBRANT Premium Protection



TechShield offers connected users with great protection, but some users may want more. That's where VIBRANT Premium Protection comes in.

For a small monthly fee, VIBRANT Premium Protection gives you additional cloud storage and security. It increases your FileHopper Plus storage from 50GB to 250GB. It also gives you identity theft protection with guaranteed restoration services.

Protecting your identity is crucial. With VIBRANT Premium Protection, you get individual identity theft protection, financial and dark web monitoring and alerts, lost wallet assistance, and restoration services with \$25,000 Identity Theft Insurance.

On top of this, you also get remote tech support for many of your Wi-Fi connected devices. This includes troubleshooting why your DVD player doesn't connect, why your Smart TV isn't connecting, removing computer viruses, setting up new emails, help with logins, and much more.

VIBRANT Broadband Subscribers Benefit

VIBRANT Broadband sets itself apart from our competitors by providing reliable fiber-fed Internet at affordable rates to our members and to our

non-member rural communities. Adding these enhancements keeps you and your family safer online.

As a VIBRANT Broadband Subscriber of 50Mbps or higher, we are including TechShield as part of your package, FREE! This is a \$7.99/mo value. For VIBRANT Subscribers who are at 25Mbps, we are offering TechShield at a discount of \$5.99/mo.; still a great value!

Every VIBRANT Broadband Subscriber can also get the VIBRANT Premium Protection package, which increases cloud storage, adds identity theft protection, and remote tech support for only \$10.00/mo.

With these value features added to VIBRANT Broadband, we further differentiate ourselves from other providers on the rural market. These enhancements rival any competitive virus protection software, cloud storage, password keeper, and identity theft protection you can buy, at a great price.

If you're a current VIBRANT Broadband subscriber, look for these new features. If you're thinking about becoming a subscriber, we hope these added features entice you to **Be VIBRANT!**

If you haven't looked into VIBRANT Broadband, compare the reliability based on our subscriber testimonials, and these new online protection features to your current provider. We hope you'll choose to be part of our VIBRANT Family.



HOW MUCH BANDWIDTH DO I NEED?

Here are average speed requirements for different activities most people do online:

- Web browsing, emailing, social media - **1 Mbps**
- Video Streaming/Live Streaming HD - **6-7 Mbps**
- Video Streaming 4K - **25 Mbps**
- Audio streaming - **.35 Mbps**
- Video calling - **8 Mbps**
- Game streaming HD - **10 Mbps**

If you have several devices using the Internet at the same time, you will want more speed. You would calculate what you may want like this example:

Streaming a High-Definition movie on TV one: **6Mbps**

Streaming a 4K Ultra-High Definition movie on TV two: **25Mbps**

Gaming: **3Mbps**

Social Web Surfing with video: **6Mbps**

Total Bandwidth: 40Mbps

Some content creators, businesses, and gamers may want to consider VIBRANT Broadband packages that offer higher upload speeds to save time transferring files or content.

The packages that VIBRANT Broadband offers are suitable for the vast majority of the subscribers that Meeker Cooperative Light & Power serves. # 05-31-318

Reliable power brought to you by mapping technology

If the power in your home has ever gone out, you probably wondered why. The most likely culprits are the weather, accidents where someone/something hit a power pole or squirrels (or other curious, pesky animals). But the cause isn't nearly as pressing as how long it will take to bring the power back.

Making sure reliable electricity continues to flow to your homes, farms and businesses is Meeker Cooperative's top priority. One of the ways we keep electricity reliable and resilient is through technological improvements made over the years.

Meeker Co-op and Great River Energy, one of our wholesale power providers, use the latest in

geographic information systems (GIS) to get a bird's eye view of our system. This mapping technology allows us to see where outages occur and assess potential issues on our systems. GIS also allows us to use large amounts of data to predict where there might be areas of improvement on our grids.

"We use GIS from transmission planning all the way to operations and maintenance," said Jeff Grussing, Great River Energy's leader of GIS development. "From planning a power line to dispatching crews for maintenance, GIS is a valuable resource that helps ensure a reliable, resilient grid. Everyone in Great River Energy's transmission division uses GIS, which allows us to visualize the data so we can use

locational intelligence to make decisions about where to make improvements or where we might see concerns."

The use of GIS is just one way Meeker Cooperative and Great River Energy work together to keep reliable electricity flowing to your home.



Retirement calls, Becky answers



After more than fifteen years of serving Meeker Cooperative Light and Power Association members huge helpings of the *Pioneer* Newsletter and communication pieces, Becky Sorenson heeds the call to retirement.

Before coming to Meeker Cooperative, Becky was the Associate Editor of the Enterprise Dispatch newspaper. She also worked as a freelance writer and advertising writer for NordicTrack, West Group (now Thomsen Reuters) and North American Outdoor Group.

Becky has been part of many fast-paced changes during her tenure. She’s helped implement websites, new member trips and events, and electronic versions of the newsletter. “How we conduct surveys and communicate with members is always evolving, but it’s so important to be able to maintain good communication with our member-owners”, says Becky in a Q&A session. “The biggest change was the addition of VIBRANT Broadband, which has been a game-changer internally and in serving our members.”

One of the most challenging things Becky worked on over the years has been making sure that what the Cooperative is doing and how they are communicating with the members has value and meets the needs of their homes and families. It can be challenging when the nearly 8000 members all have unique situations and expectations but it’s also satisfying.

When asked what she found most rewarding, Becky tells us, “It’s the people I met and interacted with. From my co-workers, to the members, to our supportive Directors, to other cooperative communicators. It has been a valuable, memorable and fun experience that I feel very fortunate to have been able to experience. Of course, getting to meet two governors, riding a 100-foot bucket truck, participating in a member trip to Branson, and driving a Smart Car and electric car, are some of the highlights of so many experiences.”

Becky says she will miss her fellow employees the most. “I’ve been very blessed to have worked with people who are professional, kind, and fun-loving. If only the members would truly know how much Meeker Co-op employees work hard for them.”

What will Becky be doing? “I really would like to write something that isn’t work-related. I would like to sleep in, read more, take longer walks with our new pup, try a new artistic pursuit and, of course, hang up my “Grandma Is In” sign.”

We thank Becky and wish her a happy and wondrous retirement.

Statement of Nondiscrimination

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs).

Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident. Person with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA’s TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail:
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intakeusda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Christmas Crock Nut Clumps

Marg Theis submitted this month’s winning recipe for **Favorite Christmas Cookie Recipe**. She will have \$10 credited to her account. Congratulations!

Christmas Crock Nut Clumps

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| (1) 16 oz. salted & unsalted peanuts | (2) 10 oz. peanut butter chips |
| (1) 12 oz. semi & milk chocolate chips | 1-2 lbs. white almond bark |

Put peanuts in crock pot first.
Top with remaining ingredients.
DO NOT STIR! Cover with lid and cook for 2 hours on low.
Stir and cook for an additional 30 minutes.
Stir well until coated.
Spoon onto wax paper. Cool for 1 hour and enjoy!

For December, submit your favorite Leftover Turkey Recipe to:

Meeker Cooperative, ATTN: Shane Zeppelin,
1725 US Hwy 12, Suite 100, Litchfield, MN 55355

Deadline: November 24

Location, Location, Location



In last month's issue, one location number was inadvertently printed twice. If that was your number, you will only receive one bill credit, sorry. However, to make up for the missing fourth location number, we have printed five in this edition. Good luck!

Find your location number

Five location numbers have been hidden within this *Pioneer*. If you find your number and claim it by calling Meeker Cooperative by Nov. 25, 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!*



Take a few minutes to update your data for our files.

We have been communicating with our members via email and phone recently. However, many of our members don't have valid email addresses or their land lines have been disconnected. Therefore we can communicate with those members only by mail.

If you want to be informed in the quickest way possible, please complete the form below and mail it in and we will update your data. Thank you so much for your help.

Name _____
Acct. # _____
Email _____
Phone: _____
Cell Phone _____

Please mail to:
Meeker Cooperative Light & Power Assn.
1725 U.S. Hwy. 12 E., Suite 100
Litchfield, MN 55355

Or email your updates to szeppelin@meeker.coop

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 **November 24** will be included in the December issue.

Please run this ad in the next Pioneer

Name: _____
Address: _____
Telephone number: _____

Please check ad category

☐ For Sale, Misc.
☐ Agricultural
☐ Automotive
☐ Wanted
☐ Giveaway
☐ Services

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: Shane Zeppelin or email szeppelin@meeker.coop

For Sale

TABLES, CHAIRS, RECLINERS, coffee table, lift chair, hide-a-bed. 320-593-8229.
DOG HOUSES, very well built, 2 sizes, \$120/\$140 each. 320-295-1110
SNOWBLOWER 21" single stage. Craftsman electric start, \$175. 320-699-0082.
PLASTIC TOTES, 275 gallon, \$50 each, quantity discount. 320-894-3734.
BORDER COLLIE PUPPIES, 8 weeks, child friendly, farm raised, \$300. 320-295-2833.
PONTOON 2003, 19' Forester 50HP, Evinrude 4-stroke, \$6500 OBO. 320-241-3206.
SNOWBLOWER TORO 521, 2-stage, self propelled, Briggs, excellent condition, \$155. 320-693-7424.
1991 POLARIS INDY 400 Snowmobile, \$400. 320-583-8695.
SNOW PLOW BLADE for 4-wheeler. 320-380-4884
WALKER with seat and wheels, used twice, \$85 firm. 320-253-8192

Automotive

2011 IMPALA, fully loaded, leather, 150k, \$6250 OBO. 320-241-3206.
2002 CHRYSLER PT CRUISER, good condition/tires, \$4500 OBO, 98,50 mi. 320-282-8907

Wanted

TRANSMISSION for 1993 Dodge 4x4 pickup 1/2 ton. 320-296-3644.
TRACTOR CHAINS, used set. 320-260-1417.
LAKE SUPERIOR AGATES, will pay cash. 320-493-7555.
CHILD'S PLAY KITCHEN cupboards set. 320-221-7708.
OLD SPEARS & spearing decoys, will pay cash. 320-583-6903.

For Rent

CABIN, RICE LAKE, Paynesville, 3BR, 2BA, sleeps 9, furnished. 513-827-2942.

Giveaway

PIANO AND BENCH, Wuvlitzer Spinnet, great shape. 320-693-3091.
FREE KITTENS, you pick, trained, leave message for Cheryl. 507-995-7231
BARN CATS, lots of color, friendly, good mousers. 320-398-2655.
FREE STEREO, record, tv console. 320-974-3369.

Agricultural

TRACTOR REPAIR MANUALS, 5 available, \$100 cash. 320-333-5129.
TRACTOR FOR PARTS, 841 Ford, junk, burned piston. 320-453-7413.
BRED BEEF COWS, four commercial confirmed, due late February. 320-980-4042.
HAY SMALL SQUARE bales, \$3.50/bale. 320-974-3369.
INTERNATIONAL DISC 8', Grow drill 10', digger 8', good shape, best offer. 320-248-8588.
1952 FARMALL SuperM International loader, chains, 12V, p. steering, \$2750. 320-248-8588.

Services

WELDING FABRICATION, stainless alum. shop on site. 320-290-5950.
SMALL ENGINE REPAIR, Muonio Motors, repair all small engines. 763-244-7426.
PRESSURE WASHING, AUTOMOBILES, ATV, farm equipment, ice dam removal. 320-221-2596.

