PAREKER COOPERATIVE IONER MEEKER COOPERATIVE

The official publication of



Meeker Co-op is an Equal Opportunity
Provider and Employer

JULY/AUGUST 2021

ANNUAL MEETING & MEMBER APPRECIATION ATTENDANCE & MEAL RSVP

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YOU'RE INVITED TO AN A MAZE'N COMBINED ANNUAL MEETING AND MEMBER APPRECIATION DAY



The COVID-19
Pandemic made
2020 a year of
uncertainty and
adapting. This
led to Meeker
Cooperative
changing events
or canceling them
altogether. The
Annual Meeting,
normally held in

March or April, was postponed until June and was limited to only a business meeting, no bingo or dinner as has been the tradition. Member Appreciation Day was simply canceled due to the uncertainty of the pandemic.

The board decided to combine the Annual Meeting and Member Appreciation Day and hold both this summer at A maze'n Farmyard on August 11, 2021.

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ANNUAL MEETING & MEMBER APPRECIATION DAY

- FROM FRONT PAGE

The **Annual Meeting** is important in the life of a Cooperative. This is where you can hear reports about the financial standing



of the Cooperative, the activities of the Electric Trust, the actions of the Qualifications & Election Committee in preparation for director elections, and more. During the meeting, Members are asked to volunteer to count the ballots returned and announce the election results. It is the Cooperative way that Members elect fellow Members to serve as directors to oversee the Co-op on behalf of all the Members.

Member Appreciation Day is another annual event for Meeker Cooperative. It's free to all Meeker Members and VIBRANT Subscribers and their immediate families living in the same household. There are already so many activities for the whole family to enjoy at A maze'n Farmyard, but Meeker Cooperative is adding more. There will be bucket truck rides, information booths, and a meal. A maze'n Farmyard has a giant slide, a barn full of animals you can pet, inflatable bouncers, a giant maze, and so much more. Join us for an evening of fun for all ages! #28-27-203

Mark your calendar: August 11. Member Appreciation activities will begin at 4:30 p.m. with the Annual Business Meeting taking place at 7:00 p.m. See the back page for the RSVP. Learn more about A maze'n Farmyard by visiting amazenfarmyard.com



MEEKER COOPERATIVE LIGHT AND POWER ASSOCIATION NOTICE OF 2021 ANNUAL MEETING

Please take notice that the Annual Meeting of the Members of Meeker Cooperative Light and Power Association will be held at 7:00 p.m. Wednesday, August 11, 2021, at A maze'n Farmyard, 57645 State Highway 55, Eden Valley, Minnesota, for the following purposes: 1. Reading of, and acting upon, the unapproved minutes of the 2020 annual meeting; 2. Receiving and acting upon reports of officers, directors and

committees; 3. Electing directors of the Cooperative to fill offices of those whose terms expire; 4. Considering any unfinished business and taking up such new business as shall properly come before the meeting and acting on such matters as necessary for the best interest of the Association.

Karl Lundin, Secretary

QUALIFICATIONS AND ELECTION COMMITTEE

The Qualifications & Election Committee met via teleconference on May 19 to review the applications submitted for Director.

The Committee included one Member from each of the Co-op's districts where the seat is not currently up for election. Four applications were submitted and the Members were verified and placed on the slate of candidates for the 2021 elections. Incumbents Kevin Issendorf – District 4 and Karl Lundin – District 9 were unopposed in their respective Districts. The Committee acted as provided for by the Bylaws and waived the ballot process for these Districts and declared each elected.

Two individuals, Incumbent K. Bruce Krueger and Randy Bryant, filed for nomination in District 7. The Committee placed both candidates on the ballot. A mail ballot will be sent to the Members in District 7 in July, prior to the Annual Meeting. For more information about the candidates, please refer to the Profiles of the Candidates included in this newsletter.

Members of the 2021 Qualifications & Election Committee included:

Barbara Ingalsbe – District 1 Luvern Becker, Jr. – District 2 John Donnay – District 3 David Leonhardi – District 5 Donna Nelson – District 6 John (Art) Riehle – District 8



- Never give personal information to an unknown caller or visitor. Our 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 us know as soon as possible and contact Law Enforcement.

DISTRICT 7 COLLINWOOD, CEDAR MILLS IN MEEKER, STOCKHOLM IN WRIGHT, ACOMA, HUTCHINSON IN MCLEOD



Randy Bryant

CANDIDATE 70050 173rd St, Dassel, MN 55325

Randy has been a Cooperative member for 16 years. He lives in Collinwood Township. He has followed the Cooperative closely through the *Pioneer* newsletter.

Randy participates in Operation Round Up® and has previous board experience for the

Forest Lake Airport. He feels his past experience as an Engineering Manager at 3M and handling multi-million-dollar projects, his Electrical Engineering degree, and past experience in electrical power generation are the strengths he brings to the board.

One of the things Randy feels the Co-op should do is seek out means to help members lower their annual costs. He also believes a goal for the Co-op is to continue to provide reliable and cost-effective electrical service to members.

A long-term goal Randy would like to see is a means for members to better understand their usage and methods to reduce it.

Randy feels that when it comes to regulations, changes in state and federal laws could have a direct negative impact on costs for electricity. These changes affect new powerplant construction and transmission line costs.

Randy views maintaining distribution lines remains a high-priority for reliable service to our members. He believes the biggest concern facing our Co-op is the national grid system and its impact on power interruptions.

Randy feels that his background in capital project management, his exposure to cogeneration projects, and having spent time in a coal-fired power house are benefits he brings to the Co-op Board of Directors. #28-18-102

IS YOUR ACCOUNT INFORMATION UP-TO-DATE?

Please take a moment to update your information.

Go to www.meeker.coop/update-my-info or call us at 320-693-3231.



K. Bruce Krueger

INCUMBENT

14509 620th Ave, Hutchinson, MN 55350

Mr. Krueger has been a Meeker Cooperative member for over 42 years and a Director since 2006. Bruce is retired from Hutchinson Utilities. He has experience on his church board and Township board, with combined service of over 20 years.

Bruce participates in several of Meeker Cooperative's programs and services including Cycled Air Conditioning, Dual Fuel, Storage Water Heating, Operation Round Up®, and VIBRANT Broadband.

He feels his experience at Hutchinson Utilities brings knowledge to the Board and he understands the importance of local democracy. Local people that use the products and services are the ones making the decisions and ensuring fiscal responsibility of the Co-op.

He feels his strengths lie in being willing to listen and having an open mind. He thinks that all of the Co-op's programs need to be periodically evaluated to ensure they benefit both the member and the Co-op. Two of his short-terms goals are keeping rates affordable and continuing to build-out VIBRANT Broadband.

Bruce says that in today's world, Internet is as needed in the same way as electricity was in the 1930s. He also feels that the Co-op needs to continue looking for other opportunities to enhance our member's lives.

Bruce feels that the EPA needs more governance and the there is too much regulation.

He also feels that the Net Metering Law rate and over-generation needs to be addressed and renewables need to be sized to the load. He also feels that electrical storage technologies need to catch up to generation technologies.

His views on power distribution are that while underground may be more aesthetically pleasing, it is more expensive to install and more work to fix when there is an issue.

Bruce feels the biggest concern for Meeker Cooperative is over-regulation from both the state and federal levels.

In general, Bruce believes that the Co-op's mission is to energize and connect and continue to provide reliable and affordable electricity and broadband so our members can work, learn, and communicate in today's world. As he's seen, he feels that if the Co-op doesn't provide these services, no one will.

Bruce feels that Operation Round Up continues to be a beneficial program for all communities.

2020 MEEKER COOPERATIVE FAST FACTS

EMPLOYEES **→** 41

MEMBERS **→ 7,814**

RESIDENTIAL → 81%

SEASONAL **→ 12%**

COMMERCIAL **→** 6%

OTHER ■ 1%

MILES OF LINE → 1,946

MEMBERS PER MILE **→** 4.02

NEW SERVICES BUILT → 72

CHANGE JOBS **→** 53

LINE REBUILDS **→ 14**

RIGHT OF WAY

MILES MAINTAINED **→ 257**

LINES PATROLLED → 570 MILES

POLE CHANGES **→ 79**

DISTRICT 4 LITCHFIELD, GREENLEAF IN MEEKER



Kevin Issendorf

INCUMBENT 23578 MN Hwy 22, Litchfield, MN 55355

Kevin Issendorf has been a director for nine years and a Co-op member for 41 years. He is retired from 3M and now owns and operates an orchard and produce farm. Kevin has experience on boards and committees such as St. Paul's Lutheran Church, the VFW, and the Litchfield Farmer's Market.

Strengths that Kevin feels he brings to the Co-op are his past experience on the board, meeting with people and listening to new ideas, and ability to sort out the good ideas from the not-so-good ideas.

As a long-time Meeker Cooperative member, Kevin participates in several of the Co-op's programs including Cycled Air Conditioning, Dual Fuel, Storage Water Heating, Peak Shave Water Heating, Operation Round Up®, Meeker's Solar Project, SmartHub and ACH. Kevin also subscribes to VIBRANT Broadband.

Kevin is an advocate for the Co-op's programs and services and thinks that we should always look for more ways to help members conserve energy and stay connected. For example, he believes VIBRANT Broadband is one of the best moves the Co-op has made and he would like to see it continue to expand its boundaries and bringing better broadband service to more people.

Kevin believes the Co-op should continue to emphasize training and safety for the employees. Kevin also feels that looking for new opportunities (such as VIBRANT Broadband) will help Meeker and our communities.

While Kevin feels pollution is one of the reasons for the need for renewable sources such as solar and wind to generate electricity, he also feels that renewables have to be used in conjunction with backup generations power supplied by natural gas, water power, or coal.

Kevin has concerns about Minnesota's Net Metering Law where electricity generated from solar power systems less than 40 kW can be sold back to the Co-op. He feels this is not a good solution for the Coop in general. He also feels the EPA has its place, but wants to make sure it doesn't overstep its bounds.

He feels it is a must to maintain our powerlines, and also feels that both underground and overhead power distribution are needed depending on which works better for an area.

DISTRICT 9 NORTH KINGSTON, KINGSTON, FOREST CITY IN MEEKER



Karl Lundin

INCUMBENT 28560 660th Ave, Litchfield, MN 55355

Karl Lundin has been a Meeker Cooperative Member for 59 years and a Director for 18 years. Karl is retired but has participated in several groups and organizations including serving on the church council, Country School Board, Litchfield Lions Club, alternate voting delegate to Basin Electric in Bismarck, Star En-

ergy Services Board as Vice Chairman, and currently as Secretary on the Meeker Co-op Board. Karl participates in many of Meeker Co-op's member events.

Karl feels his strengths are in talking with state legislators, meeting with other Co-op members, and working well with other board members.

Karl takes advantage of several of the Co-op's programs and services, including Cycled Air Conditioning, Dual Fuel, VIBRANT Broadband, Operation Round Up®, Meeker Member Solar Project, ACH, SmartHub, and Meeker's rebate programs. Karl supports the work to bring VIBRANT Broadband to as many members and non-members as possible.

Karl believes in the Strategic Planning process, where Meeker Staff and Board of Directors come together to plan and set goals. He feels one of the long-term goals of the Co-op should continue to deliver reliable electricity 24/7.

His opinion on renewables, climate change, and the EPA are that the United States has done a lot to clean up the environment, and continues to do so, but he would like to make sure that there is backup generation to solar and wind. He also feels that Minnesota's Net Metering Law is unfair to Co-ops and finds the EPA regulations to reduce carbon from coal to be very restrictive. He is concerned about how the "Green New Deal" will affect Co-op members.

He says tree trimming is a must for reliable power distribution and that both overhead and underground delivery systems are needed. Each has its benefits.

Karl believes that it is important for Meeker Cooperative Board Directors to be able to attend all meetings, Annual Meetings, power supplier Annual Meetings, State, National and other informational meetings, even if they are out of state and last two or three days.

FIND YOUR LOCATION NUMBER

Four location numbers have been hidden within this Pioneer and four more will be found in articles published on our website between now and the next Pioneer mailing. If you find your number and claim it by calling Meeker Cooperative before September 3, you will have a \$10 credit to your account! When you call and verify your



information is correct in our system, you will also receive an additional bill credit equal to one month's output from a Member Solar Panel.

Good luck!

MORE ARTICLES AVAILABLE ONLINE!

We are posting **MORE** articles on our website in between issues of the Pioneer.

Go to www.meeker.coop/news to stay up to date!



UNDERSTANDING POWER SURGES AND BLINKS

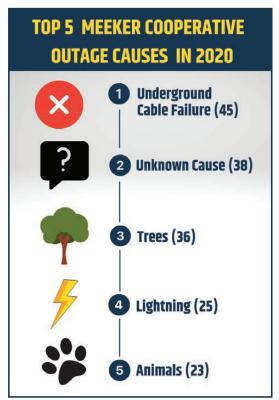
Have you ever noticed your lights blink during a thunderstorm? Or perhaps you've noticed a blinking microwave clock when you arrive home. When this happens, you've likely experienced a brief disruption to your electric service, which could result from a power surge or blink. While the symptoms of surges and blinks can appear similar, what's happening behind the scenes can be quite different.

WHAT'S A POWER SURGE?

Power surges are brief overvoltage spikes or disturbances of a power waveform that can damage, degrade or destroy electronic equipment within your home or business. Most electronics are designed to handle small variations in voltage.

Surges can be caused by internal sources, like HVAC systems with variable frequency drives, or external sources, like lightning and damage to power lines and transformers. #25-27-476

Meeker Cooperative encourages all members to install surge protective devices (such as surge protector power strips) to safeguard your sensitive electronics. If you're experiencing frequent surges in



your home or business and you believe the cause is internal, contact a qualified electrician to inspect your electrical system.

WHAT'S A POWER BLINK?

Power blinks are also brief service interruptions, but they're typically caused by a fault (short circuit) on a power line or a protective device that's working in reaction to the fault. Faults can occur through a variety of instances, like squirrels, birds or other small animals contacting an energized power line; tree branches touching a power line; or lightning and other similar events.

Any of the events noted above can cause your power to blink, but you may also experience a brief interruption when protective devices that act like circuit breakers are working to detect the fault. Believe it or not, these brief power blinks caused by protective devices are actually good because that means the equipment is working as it should to prevent a prolonged outage.

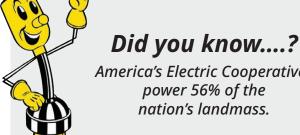
Regardless of the cause, Meeker Co-op crews will be on their way to inspect the damage and make necessary repairs after a power outage. And you can help too! Any time you experience repeated disruptions to your electric service, please let us know by calling 320-693-3231 or visiting www.meeker.coop/outage-central.

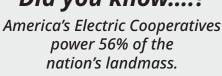


Lightning strikes can cause faults (short circuits) on power lines, which can cause your power to blink. Photo Credit: Pat Gaines

Looking to buy, sell, or give away something? online classified section. Go to: www.meeker.coop/classifieds and list your item FREE!

WILLIE WIREDHAND'S ELECTRICITY FUN FACT







VIBRANT Reviews

I wanted to reach out right away to share how wonderful our experience was. Everything from start to finish was extremely professionally done, with clear expectations communicated that were met or exceeded every step of the process.

Our installer was a perfect representative of VIBRANT; polite, respectful, and very knowledgeable. He listened to our ideas for where we preferred installation, gave some expert feedback to guide us to the best plan, and then did impeccable work installing all components. #02-22-302

We are completely happy with the service we received and our internet speed is everything that was promised. We will 100% recommend VIBRANT and your 5-Star service to all of our friends and family in your coverage area!

Thank you!

Matt and Kari T



FCC'S EMERGENCY BROADBAND BENEFIT PROGRAM (EBBP) ELIGIBILITY

VIBRANT Broadband is working with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) on the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program (EBBP). The EBBP enrollment is currently open.

As one of the broadband providers, eligible VIBRANT Broadband customers can receive a discount of up to \$50 per month toward broadband service for eligible households.

You may qualify if your household:

- Has an income that is at or below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (based on your household size and state).
- Qualifies for Lifeline benefits through participation in SNAP, Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income, Federal Public Housing Assistance, or Veterans and Survivors Pension Benefit;
- Participates in one of several Tribal specific programs: Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance, Tribal Head Start (only households meeting the relevant income qualifying standard), Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy

Families (Tribal TANF), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations;

- Experienced a substantial loss of income since February 29, 2020 due to job loss or furlough AND has a total household income in 2020 at or below \$99,000 for single filers and \$198,000 for joint filers;
- Received a federal Pell Grant in the current award year;
- Received approval for benefits under the free and reduced-price school lunch program or the school breakfast program, including through the USDA Community Eligibility Provision, in the 2019-2020 or 2020-2021 school year; or
- Meets the eligibility criteria for a participating provider's existing low-income or COVID-19 program, and that provider received FCC approval for its eligibility verification process.

To learn more visit: vibrantbroadband.com/ebb

Featured Recipe

Grilled Lobster Tails with Garlic Butter

Congratulations to Shelley Carter of Bloomington for submitting this month's winning recipe for BBQ/GRILLING.

INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup salted butter, softened
- 2 tablespoons minced garlic
- 1 dash hot sauce
- freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 4 (6 ounce) lobster tails
- 4 (10 inch) skewers
- 1 tablespoon olive oil, or to taste
- · kosher salt to taste
- 1 medium lemon, cut into wedges



INSTRUCTIONS

- Combine butter, minced garlic, hot sauce, and pepper in a bowl; mix until fully combined. Set aside.
- 2. Preheat an outdoor grill for medium-high heat and lightly oil the grate.
- Butterfly lobster tails by cutting lengthwise through the centers of the hard top shells and about halfway through the top of the
- meat with kitchen shears. With your fingers, press shell halves of the tails apart. Flip them over, and insert a skewer down the lobster tail so that the tail is easier to remove after cooking and doesn't curl up. Brush tails with olive oil and season with salt.
- 4. Place lobster tails on the preheated grill with the cut shell sides down; grill until shells are
- bright in color, 5 to 8 minutes. Flip and spoon 1 tbsp butter mixture onto the butterflied meat through the cut in the shell. Grill until lobster meat is an opaque white color, 4 to 7 more minutes, basting once more with butter mixture
- 5. Remove lobster tails from the grill and serve with more garlic butter and lemon wedges.

Submit your favorite SQUASH RECIPE for our next issue! Please include a photo if you are able.

The chosen winner will receive a \$10 credit to their account. DEADLINE: Sept. 2, 2021

E-mail to: szeppelin@meeker.coop | Mail to: Meeker Coop, ATTN: Shane, 1725 US Hwy 12, Ste. 100, Litchfield, MN 55355

REPORTING AN OUTAGE

Being out of power or Internet 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. For electric, crews are dispatched right away. For the Internet, our trouble-shooting team can determine the issue and get you back online ASAP.
- 2. Before calling in, make sure that the problem isn't on your side of the meter or router. Check fuses or look for tripped circuit breakers. Reboot the router. Beware if you call in an outage and we roll a truck, you will be charged a minimum (\$95 for VIBRANT or \$180 for electric) for the service call if the equipment failure is not Meeker's.



3. DO NOT REPORT YOUR OUTAGE ON FACEBOOK. Facebook is not linked to our outage or tech support 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.

For electricity, our AMI meters alert us to problems in the system for quicker response time and power restoration. However, it is still helpful to call 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.



HAVE YOU CONSIDERED UPDATING YOUR EMAIL PROVIDER?

When the Internet was young, you would get your email account directly from your Internet Service Provider (ISP). Your email address would generally look like name@ localisp.net. You would sign up to websites, pay your bills, and generally register using that email address.

Then it happens. You move, or you want to change Internet Service Providers, but you're stuck because you have their email address. What do you do now?

The best thing is to get an email account that you can take with you, no matter where you move or which ISP you switch to. There are several to choose from, but the most common ones are Google's

Gmail, Microsoft's Outlook.com, and Yahoo Mail. These offer free email accounts and have advanced features well beyond what most ISPs can provide.

Many of these features include junk email filters, email scheduling, privacy, and plenty of storage. Best of all, you can check your email anywhere from any web browser, and you can set it up to receive on your smartphone.

Once you get your new email account, you should take the time to change all of your online accounts to that new email address. Yes, this will take some time, but it will be well worth it. It's time to upgrade to a modern email service provider.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

When shopping for new light bulbs, know the difference between lumens and watts. Lumens measure the amount of light produced by the bulb. Watts measure energy consumption.

Energysaving LEDs
come in a
variety of colors
and brightness
levels and last
15-25 times
longer than
incandescent
bulbs.

Source: energy.gov



2021 MEEKER COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC TRUST \$1,000 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

ACGC Senior High School Karla Schultz, Kari Schultz

Dassel-Cokato High SchoolDustyn Terming, Emma Thomas

Eden Valley-Watkins High School

Bella Butterfass, Reilly Hennen

Hutchinson High School

Tristan Hoppe, Caitlyn Atkinson

Kimball Area High SchoolMatthew Loch, Alex Nelson

Litchfield Senior High School

Katherine Spanos, Emma DeWolf, Samuel Dougherty

Paynesville High School

Paige Welling, Duncan McNab

BOLD High SchoolNo eligible student





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, Gennessee, 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

MEMBER APPRECIATION & ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA

Wednesday, August 11 at A maze'n Farmyard (Come and go as you please)

5:00 - 7:30PM: MEAL 4:30 - 8:00 PM: ACTIVITIES 7:00 PM: BUSINESS MEETING

Available Activities Include

- Bucket Truck Rides
- Energy Management information booth
- VIBRANT **Broadband booth**
- · Board Q&A booth
- Huge 150-foot Slide
- Silo Slide
- Mazes
- Pony Rides
- · Barn full of animals to hold and pet
- · Miniature golf putting greens
- Snack & Gift Shop
- Bird House
- Duck & Fish Pond
- Corn Pit
- And more!

DO YOU PLAN ON ATTENDING THE COMBINED MEMBER APPRECIATION DAY! ANNUAL MEETING?

PLEASE RSVP BY JULY 28, 2021

CALL 320-693-3231 or GO ONLINE meeker.coop/RSVP21

*Attendees for Member Appreciation must live in the same household as the account holder.

OFFICE HOURS

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

CONTACT US

320-693-3231 | Fax: 320-693-2980 1725 U.S. Hwy. 12, Suite 100, Litchfield, MN 55355 www.meeker.coop | www.vibrantbroadband.com



🕝 meeker.coop 🕝 vibrantbb.net

CEO/General Manager: Tim Mergen | Editor: Shane Zeppelin

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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.





