

MEEKER COOPERATIVE PIONEER

The official publication of

Meeker
Cooperative
Light and Power Association

VIBRANT
Broadband™

Meeker Co-op is an Equal Opportunity
Provider and Employer

JULY/AUGUST 2022

**THANK YOU
VIBRANT SUBSCRIBERS**

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DIRECTOR KARL LUNDIN**

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EST. VIBRANT 2018
DREAMING OF STREAMING



"Thank You, Vibrant Broadband Subscribers!"

We would like to start off by saying "Thank You" to our VIBRANT Broadband subscribers. You put your trust in us and are helping build a local Internet service we can all be proud of.

In 2015, Meeker Cooperative was looking into Smart Grid technology to connect its substations with fiber for the purpose of electrical data collection. At the same time, Meeker Cooperative Members were asking about getting better Internet service to their homes.

Rural Internet had been expensive, slow, and inconsistent. It was typically delivered through aging copper wire with its very limited data and speeds, high-latency satellite signals, or early wireless transceivers. For decades the Internet providers only offered fiber to the home Internet service in select areas, generally just where the population was dense and all but ignored making high speed Internet available in most rural areas.

Taking a page out of Meeker's own history book, our Board of Directors thought if Meeker Cooperative Light and Power Association was able to bring electricity to our rural areas in 1935, why couldn't we bring high-speed Internet now? A decision was made that if we were going to connect our substations with fiber, we could build out an infrastructure that can serve our Members with broadband Internet.

CONTINUED ON 4

"ENERGIZING AND CONNECTING...ENHANCING YOUR LIFE."

Tribute to Karl Lundin

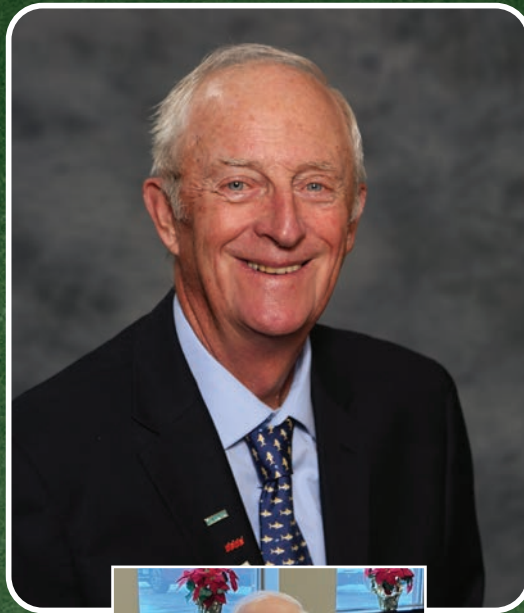
The board and employees of Meeker Cooperative are saddened by the death of District 9 Director Karl Lundin. We will remember Karl for his dedication and "can-do" attitude in everything he did.

Karl was best known as a carpenter, owning his own business, Lundin Construction. He built over 300 homes in the Litchfield area where he and his wife Darlene lived and raised five boys.

It may come as a surprise to many to learn that Karl helped oversee the construction of the Meeker Cooperative office and warehouse building when it was built in 2005.

Karl was elected as Meeker Cooperative's District 9 Director in 2003. Re-organization of the districts within Meeker's service territory left District 9 without a director and Karl won the election to fill the position. District 9 includes Forest City, Kingston, and North Kingston townships; however, directors serve all of the members.

In 2005, Karl was elected to serve as the Cooperative's Treasurer and moved up to be elected as Chair of Meeker Cooperative's Board in 2011. He served two 1-year terms as the Board Chair. He was again elected as an officer in 2018 and currently served as the Vice Chair.



In April 2008, Karl was appointed by the board to serve along-side the Cooperative's general manager as a STAR Energy Services Governor. Meeker Cooperative is one of the owners of STAR Energy which provides engineering, mapping and other support services to its member-owners and others.

While being a Director, Karl supported many items that have moved the Cooperative forward and impacted the Cooperative's growth. He provided expertise, as mentioned earlier, for the building of Meeker's headquarters, was involved in the implementation of the solar garden and supported the upgraded metering installation. Karl was a huge proponent for VIBRANT Broadband, and was optimistic about Meeker helping its Members get connected with high-speed Internet.

On Board meeting days, Karl would often stop to talk to Meeker's employees on his way to the Board Room. He always looked out for the Members and kept your concerns in mind in every board decision he made.

We greatly appreciate Karl's commitment to the Cooperative and for being an example of the "Cooperative Way." He will be missed and we are thankful and honored to have known him.

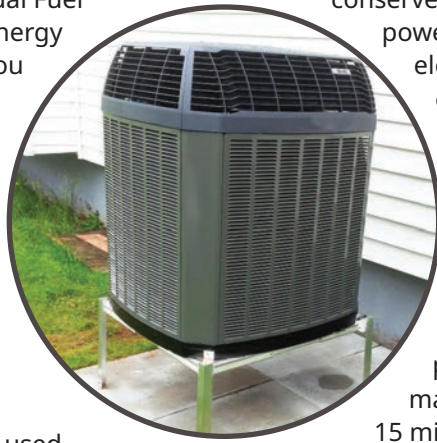


PLAN FOR DUAL FUEL HEATING TO SAVE THIS WINTER

Meeker Cooperative's Dual Fuel Program can save you energy costs. If you plan now, you could be saving when winter arrives.

Dual fuel combines two heating sources to best fit your budget and meet your heating needs. With a dual fuel heating system, an electric heating source such as a high-efficient air-source heat pump, is used in conjunction with fuel oil, natural gas, propane, or electric storage heat as the back-up system. The electric heating system is metered separately at 5.7 cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh) during May – September and 6.2 cents per kWh June – August. #36-36-202

Dual Fuel is a controlled electric heating program that helps save money and



conserve energy. When electric power demand is high, the electric source is shut off or controlled. During this time, your home's back-up heating system provides the heat you need. During the summer months the cooling mode of the heat pump is cycled approximately 15 minutes on and 15 minutes off during a load control event.

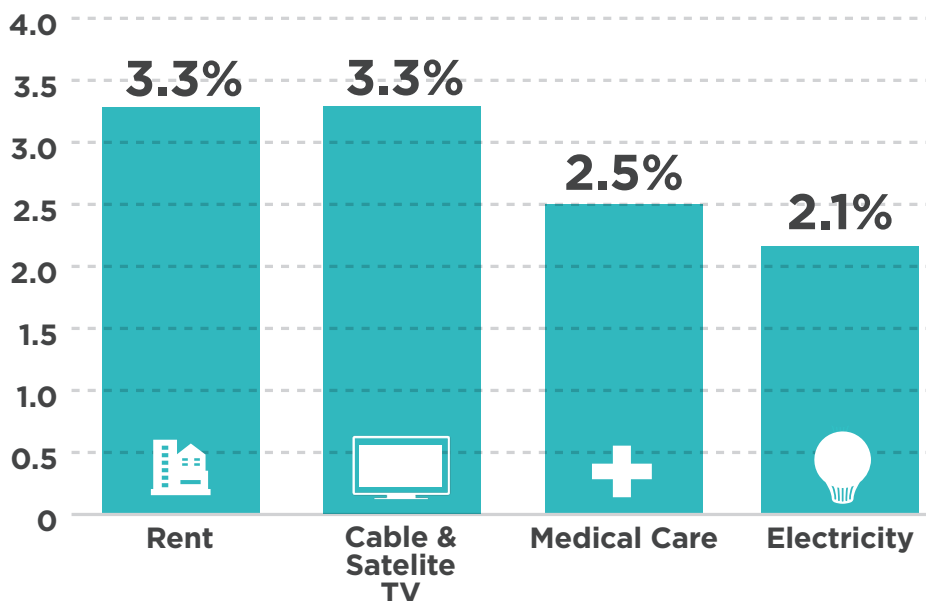
Air source heat pumps which meet certain qualifications and requirements may be eligible for rebates ranging from \$530 - \$1,200. Call Meeker Cooperative's Energy Services experts at 320-693-3231 to find out more about this program and what options you have for Dual Fuel Heating.

ELECTRICITY REMAINS A GOOD VALUE

The cost of powering your home rises slowly when compared to other common expenses. Looking at price increases over the last five years, it's easy to see electricity remains a good value.

Average Annual Price Increase 2016-2021

Percent



Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
Consumer Price Index

APPLICATIONS FOR DISTRICT 9 DIRECTOR POSITION NOW BEING ACCEPTED

Meeker Cooperative is saddened by the death of District 9 Director Karl Lundin. His passing leaves an open seat on the board for representation from that district. (See page 2 for Cooperative Tribute to Karl).

Meeker Cooperative's bylaws specify that the Board of Directors may appoint a member to fill any open board seat. Once appointed, the Director will serve until the next Annual Meeting, at which time the seat will be up for election by the membership of the district to fill the unexpired term.

If you are interested in applying for the District 9 Director position, the Director Qualifications and the Application Form may be found on Meeker Cooperative's website at www.meeker.coop. Select Member Services at the upper left and then Download Forms from the drop-down menu. Click on the Director Application packet to download the materials. You can also call Mary Alice Holm at 320-693-3231 to request a packet.

The application deadline is close of business (4:30 p.m.) on August 15. Selected applicants will be notified and will be interviewed in person by the Board of Directors on Monday, August 29.

FIND YOUR LOCATION NUMBER

Four location numbers are hidden within this *Pioneer* and four more 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 **August 31st**, 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!



"THANK YOU", VIBRANT BROADBAND SUBSCRIBERS *CONTINUED FROM COVER*

After a lot of research and planning, construction of the fiber infrastructure began in 2018. In July of 2019 our first VIBRANT Broadband subscriber was connected. We now have thousands of satisfied subscribers happily surfing and streaming and staying connected with the World.

Tim Mergen is credited to coming up with the name VIBRANT for the broadband service. In 2015, he was at an Internet/broadband conference learning about the industry and saw the word printed on a handout. He circled it thinking that it would be a great name for an Internet company.

Several years later, when Meeker Co-op decided the need to bring Internet to its Members was there and the Co-op was going to begin offering broadband service, he pulled out the paper with the word VIBRANT circled on it and the VIBRANT Broadband brand was developed from there. #25-02-302

VIBRANT Broadband is one of only a few fiber-fed hybrid systems in the country bringing high-speed Internet to rural homes and businesses two ways; fiber-to-the-premises and fiber-fed fixed wireless.

This system allows VIBRANT Broadband to reach the most people in the shortest time-frame. It also allows VIBRANT to grow and expand quicker, reaching even more rural residents.



Our **Rip Snort'n FAST** fiber-fed Internet has touched the lives of so many of our VIBRANT Broadband subscribers that we receive positive feedback on a regular basis. Here are some reviews people have sent us.

Tony A. – "Thank you for your service. I was impressed with your service and the knowledge your tech had. I am a small business and I try to support local business. I look forward to years of service and great Internet."

Justin K. – "LOVE MY VIBRANT! Seriously, I couldn't be happier with the service. Great job to you all for the solid fast network!"

Robyn S. – "Thank you for your good service regarding our VIBRANT Internet needs. We felt that we had excellent customer service and communication. The installation went very smoothly."

Lillimae K. – "The gentleman was on time,

professional, knowledgeable about the equipment, systems and provided information on other devices. Once the installation was complete, he made sure it was working properly and answered all my questions. Glad I decided to have [VIBRANT] Internet installed!"

Gary and Deb W. – "I can't say enough good things about the whole process. The best part is that this is local and not having to deal with some huge company and getting the run-around on the telephone. We're anxious to sit back, learn this whole streaming process, and enjoy watching a whole new line-up of shows on our television and to have Rip Snort'n FAST Internet! Thank you again!"

Bethann M. – "Thank you so much for making us part of the living again! The whole service from the initial contact to the final installation was wonderful. All of the people I was in touch with were courteous and professional. Couldn't be more pleased with the service."

Craig & Debbie L. – "We were very pleased with the service and information provided. Technicians were respectful, pleasant and helpful. We love the Internet speed you recommended for us."

And we have many, many more.

If you have VIBRANT and would like to send us a review, simply email vibrantreviews@meeker.coop or submit a review on our Google Business page (search on Google.com for Meeker Cooperative or VIBRANT Broadband).

Meeker Cooperative has earned a reputation for its customer service that is second to none. We are known for "keeping



the lights on” and restoring outages in a timely manner, no matter what Mother Nature throws at us.

We carry that same customer service expectation to VIBRANT Broadband. It’s this reputation of customer service, reliability, and speed that have residents and businesses calling us to bring VIBRANT Broadband to them.

You, our Members and subscribers, telling your friends and relatives how good VIBRANT is, has spurred those phone calls and inquiries. We urge you to take advantage of our Share VIBRANT, Get Rewarded program and receive \$25 credit for every referral you give (see page 6).

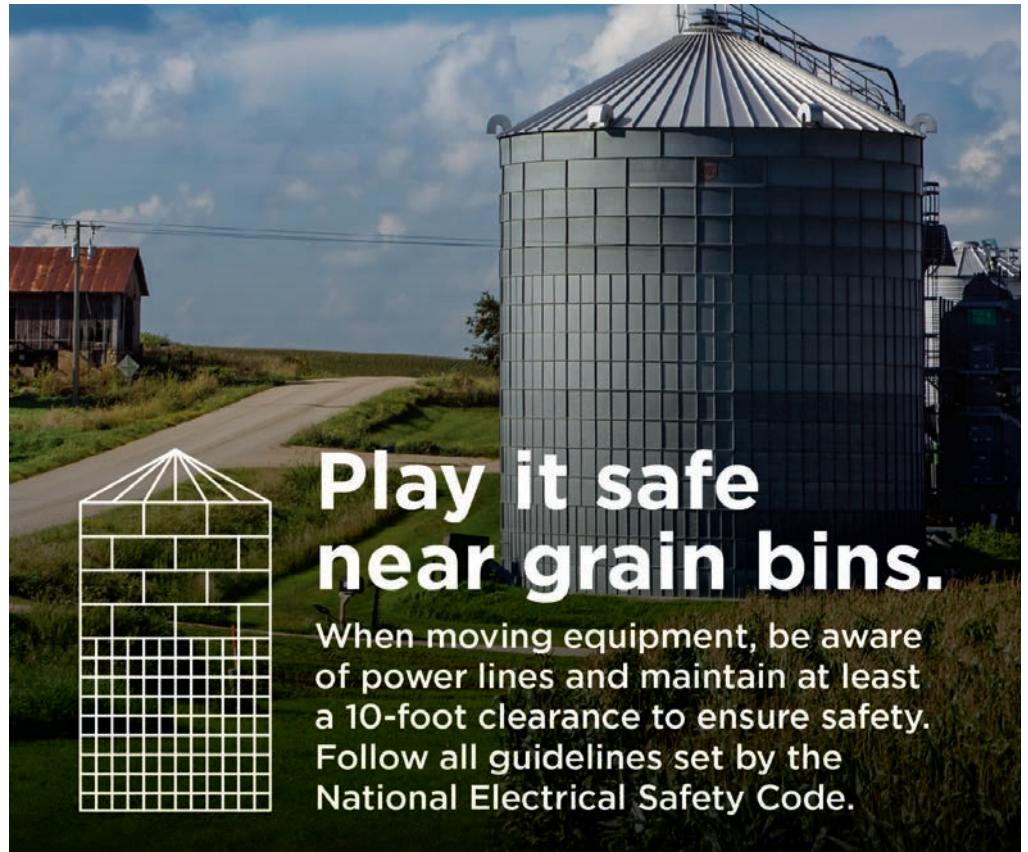
Do you know someone still getting the Circle of Frustration (as Tim Mergen has often called the spinning circle that appears when the Internet service is buffering)? Tell them how much you like VIBRANT and ask them to use you as a referral. It’s a great way to put a few dollars into your pocket and help grow the Internet service you already own.

You are the reason VIBRANT Broadband exists.

Thank You!



Always assume a downed power line is energized. Downed lines can energize the ground up to 35 feet away.



WILLIE WIREDHAND'S ELECTRICITY FUN FACT



Do you know....?

For you to enjoy electricity in your home, it has to travel from the power plants to high voltage switchyards, then through the transmission lines, up to the substations. From there, it goes to the distribution lines, which in turn takes it to a transformer, and finally to your house.

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.**



STREAMING HAS BECOME MAINSTREAM

We are living during a time where technology gives us choices. One of those technologies is streaming. We are referring to streaming video entertainment over your Internet connection.

There is so much content to stream that regular cable and satellite television seems antiquated in comparison. The biggest challenge people have when it comes to streaming is taking that first step, wondering where to start.

This is why we developed our VIBRANT-U Dreaming of Streaming education event.

At the Dreaming of Streaming session, you can learn how to start streaming, what content is available, and see a first-hand demonstration of streaming. It's a great way to learn about streaming and have your questions answered.

Attendees have said to us that they learned a lot from the event. It gives



them a direction and the confidence to simply start.

There are many streaming options available. You're not stuck with the local provider's choice of channel lineup or tiers. You can choose to use a streaming service such as YouTube TV, Hulu with Live TV, or DirecTV Stream for live local broadcasting. If local live TV isn't of interest, you can choose specific content channels and save money. You can choose to keep one channel for a few months, then unsubscribe to them and go back to it a few months later. You aren't locked into a contract for most services.

There are so many things to discover when you're streaming. It's like television when the technology first came out;

exciting and new!

This event has become so popular that we have scheduled three more in the coming months:

Wednesday, August 17

Wednesday, September 14

Wednesday, October 26

Events will be held from 5:30-6:30 PM at Meeker Cooperative, 1725 Hwy 12 E, Litchfield.

We also have information about streaming on our website at: vibrantbroadband.com/streaming

♥ Thank you!

We know the world is full of choices.

*Thank you for choosing
VIBRANT Broadband!*

*Looking forward to continuing
to provide you*

RIP SNORTIN' FAST™

Internet!



SHARE VIBRANT, GET REWARDED!

How would you like to receive a \$25 credit to your VIBRANT Broadband or electric account? It's easy with the Share VIBRANT, Get Rewarded referral program! If you are a current VIBRANT Broadband subscriber or Meeker Cooperative Member and you refer someone who signs up for VIBRANT Broadband and lists you as their referrer, you will receive \$25 credit on your account.

It's easy! Read the details at vibrantbroadband.com/sharevibrant



VISIT US AT THE MEEKER COUNTY FAIR

Visit Meeker Cooperative/VIBRANT Broadband at the Fair. Our booth is located in the Commercial 2 building on the South East end.

VIBRANT Broadband and Energy Services representatives will be there to answer your questions on *Rip Snort'n FAST* Internet and electricity energy savings. #17-12-107



Get notified when it matters.



GET NOTIFICATIONS AND VIDEO ALERTS WHEN ACTIVITY OCCURS.

As part of a monitored security system, receive email, text, or image alerts when alarms are triggered, doors or windows opened, the power goes out or any other activity occurs.



SECURITY AUTOMATION VIDEO MEDICAL ALERTS
888.264.6380 heartlandss.com

MINNESOTA FARMFEST®

August 2-4
Gilfillan Estate, Redwood Falls, MN



Visit Meeker Cooperative, along with other Electric Cooperatives, at Farmfest 2022.
Bring this coupon with you to Farmfest!!
Enter the Grand Prize drawing for battery-powered electric yard tools.

Clip this coupon & put it in your wallet now!

Meeker Cooperative Farmfest 2022
Drawing at the Touchstone Energy
Cooperatives Booth #2301

Name _____

Address _____

Town/State/Zip _____

Phone # _____



Know what's below.
Call before you dig.

Featured Recipe

Congratulations to **Angie Zumach** for submitting this issue's winning recipe for Summer Punch Recipe.

- 8 cups rhubarb
- 2 cups sugar
- 1/2 cup lemon juice, added after cooking
- 2 quarts water
- 1 small pkg, strawberry jello
- 1 cup vodka or brandy (optional)
- 7-Up

1. Simmer rhubarb, water, and sugar for 10-15 minutes. Drain and press through colander.
2. Add juice, jello, and vodka (or brandy). Stir until jello dissolves.
3. Freeze in ice cream pail at least 2 days before use.
4. To serve, scoop spoonfuls into glass and fill with 7-Up.



Rhubarb Slush

Submit your favorite **Homemade Wild Rice Dish** for our next issue! Please include a photo if you are able.

The chosen winner will receive a \$10 credit to their account. DEADLINE: August 22, 2022.

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

Follow Us!

Stay **CURRENT** and **VIBRANT** by following our Facebook pages

f /meeker.coop
f /vibrantbb.net



MORE ARTICLES & CLASSIFIEDS 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 and browse our Classifieds!

RECEIVE ELECTRICAL OUTAGE TEXTS!

Sign up to receive texts when an electrical outage occurs in your area. Go to:

www.meeker.coop/outagetext

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Brad Donnay, President — District 3

Luxemburg, Maine Prairie,
South Maine Prairie in Stearns;
Forest Prairie in Meeker

Mark Larson, Vice President — 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

Larry Huhn, Secretary — District 8

Darwin, Ellsworth in Meeker

Paul Bugbee, Treasurer — 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

Kevin Issendorf — District 4

Litchfield, Greenleaf in Meeker

Stephen Plaisance — District 5

Fairhaven in Stearns;
Cokato, Southside, French Lake in Wright;
Dassel in Meeker

Randy Bryant — District 7

Collinwood, Cedar Mills in Meeker;
Stockholm in Wright;
Acoma, Hutchinson in McLeod

Open — District 9

North Kingston, Kingston,
Forest City in Meeker

Chad Felstul, Attorney

Meeker Cooperative

Light and Power Association

2022 MEEKER COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC TRUST \$1,000 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS



ACGC Senior High School

Zachary Bagley
Liberty Jans

Dassel-Cokato High School

Kendall Aho
Zoe Verhey

Eden Valley-Watkins High School

Macey Brutger
Tori Haines

Hutchinson High School

Hannah Kruse
Paige Schmidt

Kimball Area High School*

Megan Kiphuth
Kate Kraemer
Luci Schiefelbein

Litchfield Senior High School*

Makenna Holtz
Whitney Rick
Beau Weseloh

Paynesville High School

Alissa Gottwald
Kate Landsteiner

HOW YOUR GROUP CAN APPLY:

The Trust meets three times per year to review applications and award grants. The last application deadline for 2022 is November 3. The application and guidelines can be found on Meeker Cooperative's website at www.meeker.coop Scroll to the bottom of the home page and click on the Round Up logo to download the materials and guidelines to apply.

HOW TO CONTRIBUTE:

Funds are generated by members/subscribers choosing to round their billing statement up to the nearest dollar and by employees choosing to round down their paychecks. On average, contributions from any individual members are about \$6 per year, but added together, they can make a big impact. If you are not currently an Operation Round Up participant, please contact the Cooperative to get signed up. #04-32-201

*Trust provides two scholarships per school per year.
Additional scholarships are due to unclaimed funds from previous awards.

\$1,000 BASIN ELECTRIC SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

Lindsey Wirz

OFFICE HOURS

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

CONTACT US

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1725 U.S. Hwy. 12, Suite 100, Litchfield, MN 55355
www.meeker.coop | www.vibrantbroadband.com

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

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Send Attention: Editor at the address above.

