

# MEEKER COOPERATIVE PIONEER



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The Pioneer Newsletter is the official Cooperative publication.  
Meeker Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

## APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE FOR CO-OP BOARD OF DIRECTOR CANDIDATES IN DISTRICTS 4, 5, 7 AND 9

*Meeker Cooperative is member-owned and governed by local leadership. Your Cooperative's Board of Directors is made up of nine Cooperative Members elected to serve from throughout the nine districts which make up the Cooperative's service territory. Directors are elected by you, the Member-owners.*

At the 2024 Annual meeting, the director seats in Districts 4, 7 and 9 are up for election following the normal rotation of districts for election. The district 5 seat is also up for election to fill the opening for that unexpired term. The seat for district 5 will also be up for election in 2025 as part of the prescribed rotation of districts.

These districts are made up of the following townships:

- **District 4:** Litchfield and Greenleaf in Meeker County.
- **District 5:** Fairhaven in Stearns, Cokato, Southside, French Lake in Wright, Dassel in Meeker
- **District 7:** Collinwood, Cedar Mills in Meeker, Stockholm in Wright, Acoma, Hutchinson in McLeod
- **District 9:** Forest City, Kingston, and North Kingston in Meeker County.

Members in these districts that are interested in being placed on the ballot,

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# FROM PENNIES TO PROGRESS: MEEKER COOPERATIVE'S LEGACY OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT

*Meeker Cooperative has always been committed to improving our members' quality of life. Since 1998, this tradition has continued through our community service program called Operation Round Up®.*

## SMALL CHANGE ADDS UP

Meeker Cooperative members and VIBRANT Broadband subscribers actively participate by opting to round up their monthly bill amounts to the nearest whole dollar. Employees can also participate by rounding down their paycheck. Through this simple gesture, members contribute a tax-deductible donation ranging from \$.01 to \$.99 per month, with a maximum annual contribution of \$11.88. On average, each member's yearly donation amounts to \$5.78. Nevertheless, collectively, these seemingly modest contributions yield remarkable results: thousands of dollars in grants and scholarships.

## MEEKER COUNTY AG SOCIETY (MEEKER COUNTY FAIR)

In 2023, the Meeker County Agricultural Society (Meeker County

Fair) was one of 45 local organizations to benefit from this grant program. They received a \$1,000 grant to help furnish a new building on the fairgrounds, known as the Mother's Room.

The Meeker County Agricultural Society, established in 1872, has been a cornerstone of community engagement for 151 years. This organization, known for the Meeker County Fair, showcases the talents of local FFA Chapters, 4-H Clubs, and residents, fostering unity across generations. The fair offers diverse entertainment options for all ages, making it a cherished annual event.

"Operation Round Up funds were strategically utilized to create a valuable addition to the fairgrounds – the Mother's Room. This dedicated space provides parents with a comfortable area for breaks, attending to infants and young children, and managing diaper changes," according to the Ag Society Board Treasurer, Loree S.

***Continued on page 3.***



**FIND YOUR  
LOCATION  
NUMBER**

Four location numbers are hidden within this Pioneer and four more in articles published on our website. If you find your number and claim it by calling Meeker Cooperative before February 29, you will have \$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.

“The room also serves as a refuge during hot weather, offering relief to guests experiencing heat exhaustion.”

Thanks to the Operation Round Up grant, the Meeker County Agricultural Society was able to furnish the Mother’s Room with essential items such as a changing table, mini fridge, end table, lamp, rocker, rug, and mirror.

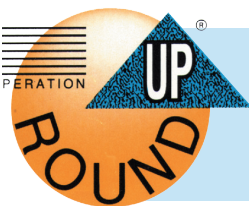
“The impact of these funds has been significant, enhancing the fairgrounds and ensuring a more inclusive and comfortable experience for all attendees. 10-15-326 We extend our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to the Meeker Cooperative Trust Board, VIBRANT subscribers, Meeker Cooperative members, and employees for their contributions towards the betterment of our Fairgrounds.”



***Thanks to the Operation Round Up® grant, the Meeker County Agricultural Society enhanced the Mother’s Room with essential furnishings.***

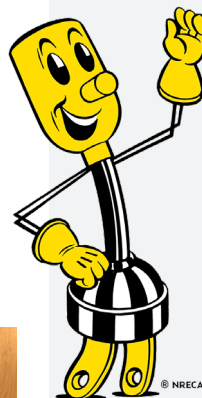
Meeker Cooperative’s Operation Round Up® program has awarded \$1,053,392 to local organizations and community service programs since its inception in 1998.

Operation Round Up® funds are given to local civic organizations and worthy causes through an application and selection process. The Trust meets three times per year to review applications and award grants. The application deadlines for 2024 are February 1, July 5, and November 7. The application and guidelines can be found on Meeker Cooperative’s website [www.meeker.coop](http://www.meeker.coop).



**LEARN MORE ABOUT OPERATION ROUND UP AT**  
[www.meeker.coop/operationroundup](http://www.meeker.coop/operationroundup)

## WILLIE WIREDHAND'S ELECTRICITY FUN FACT



In 1752, Benjamin Franklin’s kite experiment demonstrated lightning as electricity, a pivotal discovery in understanding natural phenomena and electricity’s nature.

## MEMBER NEWS

### SAVE THE DATE

#### Twins Game Day

Date: June 20th, 2024

Join us at Target Field for a day of Minnesota Twins vs. Tampa Bay Rays action! Our bus trip includes snacks, beverages, and game tickets. Relax, socialize, and cheer on the Twins without worrying about traffic or parking.

#### State Fair Excursion

Date: August 22, 2024

Experience the Minnesota State Fair like never before! Join Meeker Cooperative members and Co-op personnel for a motorcoach trip. Forget about driving and parking—enjoy a carefree ride to the fair, celebrating all things Minnesotan, from agriculture to entertainment.

#### 2024 Energy Tour

Dates: August 21-23, 2024

Embark on a three-day bus tour through North Dakota’s coal country. Highlights include stops at Basin Electric Generation Facilities, Lewis & Clark Riverboat Dinner Cruise on the Missouri River, the North Dakota History Center, and more!

# EXPLAINING THE FIXED CHARGE: ENSURING FAIRNESS IN ACCESSING ELECTRIC SERVICE

At Meeker Cooperative, we understand that the cost of electric service isn't always easy to understand. With a rate increase ahead of us, we wanted to take some time to further explain one of the lesser understood elements of your bill – the Fixed Charge.

At its most fundamental level, the Fixed Charge is a way to recover the basic cost of electric service regardless of how much energy is consumed. Even if you use just one kWh of electricity while your neighbor uses 1,000 kWh, the cost to build the line, maintain the distribution system, and deliver electricity to both of you remains the same.

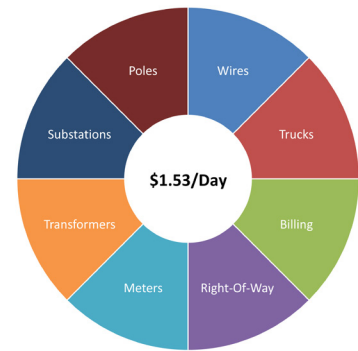
This monthly fee covers various costs related to the infrastructure and equipment necessary for providing electric service. This includes things like owning, maintaining, and

managing the meters, transformers, distribution lines, substations, etc. Additionally, costs are incurred for repairing and replacing damaged lines, clearing the Right-of-Way, and maintaining vehicles, tools, inventory, and buildings. As you can imagine, these expenses accumulate quickly.

But it's not just about infrastructure. There are also costs associated with our business functions. Calculating your bill, sending it, and processing payments all come with their own expenses. Our computer and telephone systems, accounting, financing, collections, dispatching, customer service, and communication also require investments. 08-01-304 And let's not overlook the dedicated and qualified people employed at Meeker Cooperative who need to be compensated.

While the list of costs could go on and on, the underlying message remains the same: none of these costs change based on you or your neighbor's energy usage. The facility charge ensures that each member pays a fair share of the cost to access electric service while the energy charge is just that - the purchase price for the amount of energy you use.

**FIXED CHARGE**  
The cost of making electricity available at your location.  
(Based on Meeker Cooperative's small single phase rate.)



In summary, no matter how much or how little energy you use each month, there are certain costs that must be recovered. Our goal is to recover those costs in a fair manner which is why we have a monthly Fixed Charge.

Last month we announced that after careful consideration, the Board of Directors has approved an overall increase of 3.2% across all rate classes that will go into effect on April 1, 2024; you can expect to see a change in the Fixed Charge on your bill. Detailed information and a breakdown of the upcoming rate increase will be shared in the March Pioneer.

## FEATURED RECIPE

### SWEET AND SOUR CHICKEN WINGS | SUBMITTED BY: ROSALEA HOEFT



#### INGREDIENTS

- 16 chicken wings
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1/2 c. cornstarch
- 1/2 c. cooking oil
- 1 1/2 c. sugar
- 1 c. cider vinegar
- 1/2 c. ketchup
- 1/2 c. chicken bouillon
- 2 tbsps. soy sauce

#### DIRECTIONS

Bend wing tips behind large bone joints to make frying easier. Season chicken with salt. Coat with eggs and then with cornstarch. In a large skillet, brown the wings in hot oil. Remove as chicken browns and place in 13x9x2" baking pan. Combine sugar, vinegar, ketchup, chicken bouillon and soy sauce in a medium saucepan. Bring mixture to a boil. Pour into baking pan. Bake in moderate oven (350 degrees) for 45 minutes or until the chicken is tender and golden brown. Let stand a few minutes before serving. Makes 6 to 8 servings.

Submit your favorite recipe for our next issue! The chosen winner will receive a \$10 credit to their account. DEADLINE: February 29, 2024.  
Email to: [szeppelin@meeker.coop](mailto:szeppelin@meeker.coop) | Mail to: Meeker Coop, ATTN: Shane 1725 US Hwy 12 E, Ste 100, Litchfield, MN 55355



# THE STREAMING REVOLUTION: Why High-Speed Internet Matters



In today's digital age, streaming has become an integral part of our entertainment and information consumption. From binge-watching our favorite TV shows to live streaming sports events or educational webinars, high-speed internet has revolutionized the way we access and enjoy content. 30-05-212 Let's explore the basics of streaming and the importance of having a reliable high-speed internet connection.

Streaming refers to transmitting audio or video data over the internet in real time. Unlike traditional downloading, where you need to wait for the entire file to be downloaded before you can access it, streaming allows you to watch or listen to content as it is being delivered. This instant access has made streaming immensely popular, with platforms like Netflix, YouTube, and Spotify leading the way.

To fully enjoy the benefits of streaming, a high-speed internet connection is essential. Here's why:

- **BUFFERING-FREE EXPERIENCE:** High-speed internet ensures that your content loads quickly and streams seamlessly without interruptions. Buffering, that dreaded delay when the video stops to load, becomes a thing of the past. With a fast connection, you can immerse yourself in the content without any disruptions.

- **HIGH-QUALITY VIDEO AND AUDIO:** Streaming services often offer content in various resolutions, from standard definition to ultra-high definition. With a high-speed internet connection, you can effortlessly enjoy high-quality video and audio, bringing the cinematic experience right into your living room.
- **MULTIPLE DEVICE SUPPORT:** In today's connected world, many households have multiple devices simultaneously streaming content. A high-speed internet connection provides the bandwidth necessary to support multiple devices without compromising the streaming quality on any of them.
- **INTERACTIVE FEATURES:** Many streaming platforms offer interactive features like live chats, real-time comments, or multiplayer gaming. These features rely on a fast internet connection to ensure smooth communication and engagement with other users.

Streaming has transformed the way we consume entertainment and access information. VIBRANT Broadband is proud to provide a reliable high-speed internet connection to our community. Learn more about our convenient and affordable packages at [www.vibrantbroadband.com](http://www.vibrantbroadband.com).



## Dive into the world of cybersecurity with VIBRANT-U's BRAND NEW Hackers, Scammers, & AI event!

Uncover the secrets of scam calls, phishing emails, and dodgy links. Equip yourself with the tools to recognize, avoid, and combat scams.

Join us on Thursday, Feb 22, 5:30 - 6:30 PM at Meeker Cooperative. FREE admission for everyone!



## CONTACT US

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Contract Editor: Fuller Creative, LLC

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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Brad Donnay, President — District 3

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

### Larry Huhn, Vice President — District 8

Darwin, Ellsworth in Meeker

### Karen Becker, Treasurer — District 2

Eden Lake in Stearns;  
Harvey, Manannah in Meeker

### Paul Bugbee, Secretary — District 1

Roseville, Irving in Kandiyohi;  
Paynesville in Stearns;  
Union Grove in Meeker

### James Ellingson — District 4

Litchfield, Greenleaf in Meeker

### David Leonhardi — District 5

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

### Neil Pearson — 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

### Randy Bryant — District 7

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

### Jesse Turck — District 9

North Kingston, Kingston,  
Forest City in Meeker

### Chad Felstul, Attorney

## MORE NEWS & CLASSIFIEDS ONLINE

Keep up-to-date with your Cooperative in-between issues of the Pioneer and browse our classifieds online at:  
[www.meeker.coop/news](http://www.meeker.coop/news).

## DIRECTORS CONTINUED...

and meet the qualifications identified in the bylaws, must submit a completed Meeker Cooperative Application for Director Form by the close of business on April 5, 2024.

The process for director elections is outlined in the bylaws of the Cooperative.

All potential candidates must declare their intention to be placed on the ballot by submitting a completed Application Form and be declared qualified for placement on the ballot by the Qualifications and Election Committee (Q&E Committee). No write-in candidates shall be deemed valid.

The bylaws direct the Board of Directors to appoint a Qualifications and Election (Q&E) Committee consisting of one Member from each of the Director Districts which is not up for election. 28-06-315 It shall be the responsibility of the Q&E Committee to review all of the applications submitted and to determine that all candidates meet the stated qualifications.

The Committee will notify any potential candidate that does not meet the qualifications and allow seven days for the candidate to comply with said requirements. The decisions of the Q&E Committee will be final.

The Committee will have the authority to place qualified candidates on the ballot for election, and for any district in which there is only one candidate, waive the ballot process and declare the candidate elected.

The Qualifications & Election Committee shall prepare and post at the principal office of the Cooperative at least 75 days before the meeting the list of qualified candidates for director elections. If no Member from a district up for election is placed on the ballot, said position shall be deemed vacant following the annual meeting and the Board of Directors may appoint a Member from said district to fill said position until the next annual meeting and election of directors.

For complete director election information, qualifications, and requirements, please visit [www.meeker.coop](http://www.meeker.coop). Under the Member Services tab on the left at the top of the home page, select "download forms" to find the packet or contact Mary Alice Holm at 320-693-3231 to request one be mailed to you.

## CHARGE YOUR EV FOR LESS!

REBATES | EV PROGRAMS | TAX INCENTIVES

Meeker Cooperative offers a lower rate for charging electric vehicles during off-peak hours on our Energy Management Program. We also offer up to a \$500 rebate for the installation of an in-home charging unit enrolled on our Energy Management Program. Add state and federal tax incentives for even more savings!

LEARN MORE AT:

[www.meeker.coop/electric-vehicles/](http://www.meeker.coop/electric-vehicles/)