

MEEKER COOPERATIVE PIONEER



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Meeker
Cooperative
Light and Power Association

VIBRANT
Broadband™

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Meeker Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

ENSURING RELIABLE POWER: MEEKER COOPERATIVE'S PROACTIVE VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Few elements are as vital to the smooth operation of our modern society as electricity. Yet, behind the scenes of our daily lives lies a delicate balance between nature and infrastructure. Meeker Cooperative understands this delicate balance all too well, which is why we tirelessly work on a proactive vegetation management program, one of the many ways we ensure reliable power for our members.

WHAT IS A RIGHT-OF-WAY?

To understand why we do what we do, you first need to understand what it is we are talking about. A power line right-of-way is a strip of land that an electric utility uses to construct, maintain, repair

or replace overhead and underground power lines. The right-of-way provides clearance from trees and other things that could interfere with line installation, maintenance, and operation.

At Meeker Cooperative, our right-of-way (ROW) policy emphasizes clearances tailored to different scenarios:

- For three-phase lines: 20 feet
- For single-phase lines in road right-of-way: 15 feet
- For single-phase lines in yards: 10 feet (road to pole in the yard)
- For secondary wires: 5 feet (pole to house)

Continued on page 2.

There are three main reasons to maintain a right-of-way: safety, reliability and affordability.

SAFETY

Your safety is a top priority for Meeker Cooperative. A tree that is growing too close to a power line creates a hazard. Danger increases when trees and power lines make contact, but the tree does not even need to be touching the line to cause deadly results. Electricity can jump, or arc, from the power line to a nearby conductor, such as a tree.

Additionally clear right-of-way ensure safe access to electric lines for our crews completing maintenance and outage response work.

RELIABILITY

Do you know that your chances of receiving uninterrupted service through a storm are greatly increased if your electric cooperative maintains clear right-of-way? Contrary to what many people believe, lightning rarely causes power outages. It's wind and ice build-up that causes trees and limbs to fall on power lines. An effective right-of-way maintenance program keeps many of the potential problems away from power lines and improves reliability for you and your neighbors down the line. A tree growing too close to your neighbors' power lines can knock out power for hundreds of others - including you.

AFFORDABILITY

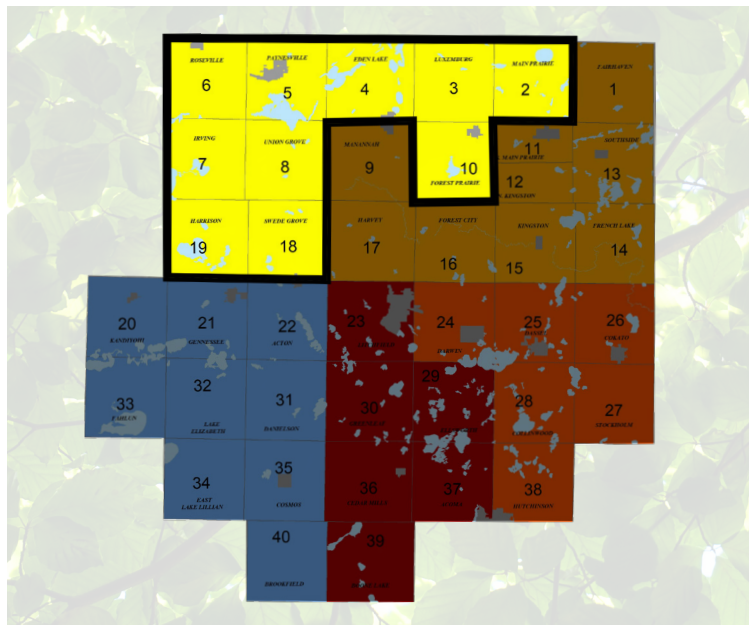
An electric cooperative is a not-for-profit business, which means we provide a service and cover costs. When trees grow too close to power lines, the potential for costly repairs grows. Suddenly, minor restoration efforts could become major restoration efforts. As these costs increase, so do your electric rates. An effective right-of-way program can help with electric rates.

2024 TREE TRIMMING

In 2024 our focus remains unwavering: reducing outages and upholding the reliability of our electrical grid.

"Through meticulous planning and strategic execution, we've streamlined our operations to seamlessly integrate technology and data analysis into every aspect of our vegetation management program. 16-16-301 With cutting-edge mapping software, our contractors efficiently track tree cutting, ensuring a proactive approach to maintaining clearances and safeguarding our infrastructure," shared Dan Schrupp, Meeker Cooperative's Electric Operations Manager.

Meeker Cooperative employs various methods for vegetation management, including trimming with bucket trucks and side trimmers, mowing with forestry mowers, and spraying with herbicides. "By trimming with precision



and employing responsible herbicide spraying techniques, we strike the delicate balance between preserving our natural surroundings and ensuring the smooth flow of electricity to our members," Schrupp said.

Collaboration is key to our success. Partnering with local contractors like Tree Story and ROW Spraying, we've built a network of dedicated professionals to maintain clear right-of-way. Through annual assessments and physical inspections, we measure the effectiveness of our vegetation management program, ensuring that every tree cleared contributes to the reliability of our electrical grid.

Each year it is our goal to complete one-fifth of our system, in 2023 we covered nine townships in the southwest part of our service area. But challenges lie ahead. The persistent drought and the threat of Dutch Elm disease remind us of the fragility of nature and the importance of our ongoing efforts to mitigate these risks. "This year, our sights are set on ten townships in the northwest and northern parts of our service territory," Schrupp noted.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

We realize that cutting and trimming trees on your property is not always ideal. The Cooperative works closely with members to only remove and trim what is needed for the safety of the public and our line workers, and to maintain the reliability of our distribution system.

One way you can help is by not planting trees within at least 25 feet of power lines. If you plant a medium-sized or larger tree, plant it at least 40 feet away from power lines.

For more information on the vegetation management program, please contact us at 320-693-3231.



**FIND YOUR
LOCATION
NUMBER**

Four location numbers are hidden within this Pioneer. If you find your number and claim it by calling Meeker Cooperative before April 30, 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.

ENERGY TOUR BUS TRIP

AUGUST 21-23, 2024 | \$175 PER PERSON

We're excited to invite you to join us for our 2024 Energy Tour, August 21-23! This three-day luxury coach tour will take you through North Dakota's coal country, where you'll learn how electric power is generated at a lignite coal plant, how a coal-gasification plant produces natural gas, and visit the North Dakota History Museum.

You'll be staying at a hotel in Mandan for two nights. The trip cost is \$175 per person for a single or double room. Most meals are included, except for fast food and coffee stops during the bus trip to and from

North Dakota, and any restaurants you may visit during your free time.

The tour includes visits to:

- Basin Electric Powers Antelope Valley Power Station near Beulah, ND
- Great Plains SynFuels Plant
- The Coteau Properties Freedom Coal Mine
- Garrison Dam Power Generation Plant
- Lewis & Clark Riverboat Dinner Cruise on the Missouri River
- The North Dakota History Center

WILLIE WIREDHAND'S ELECTRICITY FUN FACT



Electric eels possess a remarkable ability to produce electric shocks, reaching astonishing voltages of up to 600 volts. They use this skill for navigation, communication, and hunting prey.

MEEKER MEMBER TRIP: ENERGY TOUR

Please reserve _____ places for the Energy Tour Bus Trip on August 21-23.

Name(s): _____

Account Number: _____ Phone: _____

Cost Per Person: \$175

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Please note that the people listed above will share a room.

Return to: Meeker Cooperative, Attention: Michele Boreen, 1725 US Highway, 12, Suite 100, Litchfield, MN 55355 by August 1.

MEMBER NEWS

ANNUAL MEETING: SAVE THE DATE

Mark your calendars for the 89th Meeker Cooperative Annual Meeting and Member Appreciation scheduled for Tuesday, August 6, 2024 at Powder Ridge and join us for updates on the recent progress and future goals of the Cooperative.

DIG SAFE, DIG SMART

Building a deck? Planting a tree? Installing a mailbox? Call 811 before you dig! The safest and only legal way to dig is to know what's below ground. Even small projects like planting a shrub require you to make advance arrangements before digging.

Call 811 or visit gopherstateonecall.org.

STATE FAIR BUS TRIP

AUGUST 22, 2024 | \$45 PER PERSON

Experience the grandeur of the Minnesota State Fair hassle-free! Join us on a luxury motorcoach trip for Opening Day, celebrating all things Minnesotan in agriculture, entertainment, and cuisine.

Departing from Meeker Cooperative at 8 a.m., our luxury motorcoach will take you to the fairgrounds, where you'll enjoy 7 hours of exploration before departing at 4:30 p.m. The price of the trip includes the bus ride, a fair entrance ticket, and beverages on the bus. 29-29-301 Keep in mind that activities, snacks, and meals inside the fair are on your own.

Seating is limited and filled on a first-come, first-served basis until the bus is full.

Tour participants must have a cell phone and supply the trip host with your cell phone number before the bus leaves Litchfield.

MEEKER MEMBER TRIP: STATE FAIR 2024

Please reserve _____ places for the State Fair Bus Trip.

Name(s): _____

Account Number: _____

Phone: _____

Cost Per Person: \$45

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Return to: Meeker Cooperative, Attention: Michele Boreen, 1725 US Highway, 12, Suite 100, Litchfield, MN 55355 by August 9.

REMINDER: RATE INCREASE EFFECTIVE APRIL 1, 2024

The recent rate adjustment approved by the Meeker Cooperative Board of Directors, which took effect on April 1, 2024. This decision was made after careful consideration to address the impact of inflation on energy prices and essential electrical distribution equipment.

You will see the effects of this adjustment reflected on your bills in May. The overall rate increase across all rate classes is 3.2%. This adjustment ensures the continued reliability and quality of our service to you, our valued members and owners. The decision to raise rates is never taken lightly. We understand the impact it may have on your household budget. However, it's essential to maintain the integrity of our operations and support crucial investments in our distribution system for long-term reliability.

The charts to the right show the rate adjustment for the Small Single-Phase rate which includes an increase in the Fixed Charge from \$43 to \$46.50 per month. Additionally, there will be adjustments to the Energy Charge structure, with the summer rate remaining at 12.3¢/kWh and the rate for other months increasing from 10.3¢/kWh to 12.3¢/kWh. Additionally, the Power Cost Adjustment (PCA) will be adjusted to show \$.0000/kWh. From time to time an adjustment to the PCA may be warranted, such as the Cooperative receiving a PCA from one or more of its wholesale power providers. For information on all rate classes go to <https://www.meeker.coop/rates/>

We understand that managing monthly bills is important to you. That's why we offer various energy management programs and rebates to assist in conserving energy and cutting costs. 25-17-401 By participating in these programs,

you not only lower your energy bills but also contribute to maintaining stable rates.

If you are facing financial challenges, please reach out to us to discuss acceptable payment plans. Additionally, resources provided by the Minnesota Department of Commerce can assist eligible members with utility payments. If you have any questions regarding this rate adjustment, we encourage you to call our office during regular business hours (8 am-4:30 pm) at 320-693-3231.

SMALL SINGLE-PHASE RATE 01 & 02		
	Current Rates	New Rates
Fixed Charge	\$43.00/month	\$46.50/month
Energy Charge		
June - August	\$0.1230/kWh	\$0.1230/kWh
Other Months	\$0.1030/kWh	\$0.1230/kWh
PCA	\$0.0112/kWh	\$0.0000/kWh

SAMPLE RATE INCREASE IMPACT CALCULATIONS					
kWh Used Per Month	Fixed Charge Increase Per Month	Energy Charge Increase Per Month	Total Bill Increase Per Month	Annual Total Increase	% Annual Bill Increase
800	\$3.50	\$3.04	\$6.54	\$78.48	4.73%
1,000	\$3.50	\$3.80	\$7.30	\$87.60	4.50%
1,500	\$3.50	\$5.70	\$9.20	\$110.40	4.15%
2,000	\$3.50	\$7.60	\$11.10	\$133.20	3.94%

FEATURED RECIPE

EGG ROLL CASSEROLE | SUBMITTED BY: ROSALEA HOEFT



INGREDIENTS

- 1 bag colslaw mix
- 1 lb pork sausage
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp ginger
- salt to taste
- 1/4 C onion, chopped
- 2 1/2 tbsp soy sauce
- 1/4 tsp pepper

DIRECTIONS

In a large skillet over medium heat, brown sausage, stirring and crumbling, until cooked through. Add the coleslaw mix, garlic, ginger, onion, and salt to the skillet with the sausage. Cover and cook for a five minutes. Remove lid and add soy sauce and pepper. Add additional seasoning if desired. (You can substitute pork sausage with ground chicken, and 1 1/2 C. sliced mushrooms are also a nice addition to this recipe.)

Submit your favorite recipe for our next issue! The chosen winner will receive a \$10 credit to their account. DEADLINE: April 30, 2024. Email to: szeppelin@meeker.coop | Mail to: Meeker Coop, ATTN: Shane 1725 US Hwy 12 E, Ste 100, Litchfield, MN 55355

CONTACT US

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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.

REMEMBER ELECTRICAL SAFETY DURING SPRING PLANTING

As you prepare for planting season, don't forget to plan for safety. There are many aspects to safety on the farm, but electrical safety is often overlooked. Keep these safety tips in mind as you prepare for planting.

TRAIN OTHERS

Train anyone working on your farm, including family members and seasonal workers, about electrical hazards.

SAFETY FIRST

Have daily meetings to review the day's work and discuss safety implications. Know and review where the power lines are, the clearance required, and the proper position of extensions as they are transported.

WAIT TO UNFOLD

Remind workers to fold or unfold extensions well into the field, not close to the field's edge where power lines are typically located.

USE A SPOTTER

When working in the vicinity of power lines, always have a spotter on the ground, who can direct you away from power lines or poles if you are getting too close.

DO NOT EXIT YOUR CAB

If your machine or truck makes contact with a power line, pole, or guy wire, you could become electricity's path to ground and become electrocuted if you step out of the cab. 04-35-448 Stay in the vehicle.

CALL 911

Call 911 to have your electric utility dispatched to de-energize the power source. Only exit the cab if your equipment is on fire. If that happens make a solid jump out, and hop away with feet together, as far as you can.

DON'T FORGET ABOUT AIR SOURCE HEAT PUMP REBATES

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF REBATES UP TO \$1,200 WHEN YOU INSTALL A QUALIFYING, ENERGY-SAVING AIR SOURCE HEAT PUMP!

An air source heat pump is an energy-efficient and cost-effective way to heat and cool your home. It uses the outside air as its main source of heating, which can significantly reduce your monthly utility bills.

Meeker Cooperative provides rebates up to \$1,200 for members who install a qualifying, energy-saving ASHP on our energy management programs. Additionally, when you install an ASHP and enroll it in the Cycled AC and Dual Fuel programs, you pay nearly half the standard rate for electricity.

LEARN MORE AT:
www.meeker.coop/programs/