

# MEEKER COOPERATIVE PIONEER



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*Meeker*  
**Cooperative**  
Light and Power Association

**VIBRANT**  
Broadband™

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

## A&C FARM SERVICE: GROWING WITH THE TIMES

*A&C Farm Service has been a trusted name in agriculture since 1963, when Jerry Kern and Alvin Winter first opened their doors. Originally selling Allis-Chalmers, New Holland, and Gehl equipment, the business steadily grew alongside the farming community it served. In 1977, Jerry purchased Alvin's share of the business, and he and his wife Eileen continued to lead the operation. Following Jerry's passing in 1996, A&C became a family-run business, led by Eileen Kern and her children Larry, Lori, Randy, Ron, and Kevin.*

Today, A&C Farm Service offers a wide range of products, from major ag equipment brands like Chandler, DR

Equipment, Gehl, Generac, Grasshopper, Kinze, Kioti, McCormick, Meyers, New Holland, Simplicity, Vermeer, Versatile, Westfield, and Wilrich, to outdoor power equipment including Ferris, Dr. Grasshopper, Toro, Husqvarna, Land Pride, Snapper, Yamaha ATVs, and MokWheel electric bikes. They've also expanded with an Auto Value parts store to meet growing needs.

Over the decades, the agricultural landscape has changed dramatically. "Farms have grown, and equipment has gotten a lot bigger and more complex," said Kevin Kern.

*Continued on page 2*



## A&C FARM SERVICE CONTINUED...

"Back in the '60s, planters were four or six rows. Now they're 12, 16, even 24 rows. Tractors that used to be 60 horsepower are now 700."

Reliable electricity and broadband have become just as critical to A&C's success as the equipment they sell. "Everything revolves around computers now," Kevin explained. "When the power goes out, our hands are tied. We can't look up parts, can't run diagnostics, it just shuts us down." Fast, dependable broadband through Vibrant Broadband is equally essential. "Every part of our business runs through the internet," Kevin said. "Ordering parts, updating tractor software, even dealing with manufacturers—most of them won't even take a phone call anymore. It's all online."

In addition to traditional equipment, A&C Farm Service is helping customers embrace the future with electric-powered options. Rechargeable yard tools like weed trimmers and handheld blowers are becoming increasingly popular, offering ease of use and low maintenance—especially appealing to older customers. "The biggest service issue we see with gas-powered tools is dirty carburetors from old gas," Kevin shared. "With electric, there's no gas, no carburetor issues—just plug it in and go. It's especially helpful for older folks who have a hard time starting gas engines."

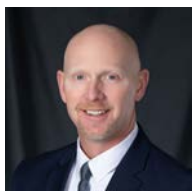
A&C also carries electric bikes from MokWheel, offering affordable and practical options for both recreation and short-distance transportation. "Our bikes are a great way to save on vehicle wear and tear, and some even come with solar panels to recharge," Kevin added. "Plus, it's a nice way to unwind after a day's work and get a little exercise."

Members will soon have a chance to see some of A&C Farm Service's latest offerings firsthand. At Meeker Cooperative's upcoming Annual Meeting and Member Appreciation Event, A&C will be showcasing their lineup of electric-powered yard tools and MokWheel electric bikes. It's a great opportunity to explore these easy-to-use, low-maintenance options, ask questions, and learn more about how electric products can make everyday tasks easier and more efficient.

Looking ahead, A&C Farm Service plans to continue evolving with technology, keeping pace with both the farming industry's needs and the growing demand for efficient, eco-friendly products.

**To learn more about A&C Farm Service's products and services, visit [www.acfarmservice.com](http://www.acfarmservice.com).**





# CELEBRATING 90 YEARS OF MEMBER-POWERED PROGRESS

At Meeker Cooperative, we believe in the strength of working together. That belief has guided us for 90 years—since 1935, when local farmers and neighbors came together to bring electricity to this area, one pole at a time. Today, we serve thousands of homes and businesses across the region, but the heart of our Cooperative remains the same: we are built by, governed by, and exist for our members.

This year, as we celebrate our 90th anniversary, I want to personally invite you to take part in something that has always been central to our success: the Annual Meeting.

## WHY THIS MEETING MATTERS

The Annual Meeting is more than a formality. It's a foundational part of who we are as a cooperative. It's where you, as a member-owner, can hear directly from our leadership, ask questions, and engage in conversations that help shape our future.

For the Cooperative, this meeting is equally important. It's how we keep you informed about our financial performance and long-term goals, ensuring we remain aligned with what's most important to our members. The way we operate is directly influenced by your feedback. That's a rare thing in today's utility landscape, and it's something we take seriously.

When members show up, participate, and lend their voices, it strengthens our entire organization. It ensures we stay member-focused and community-rooted. It keeps us on mission.

Here's why showing up makes a difference, for you and your Cooperative:

- **Accountability:** Leadership reports on financials, goals, challenges, and progress directly to members.
- **Director Elections:** The results of the board director election are announced during the Annual Meeting. These directors represent your interests and help shape the future of the Cooperative.
- **Feedback and Engagement:** It's a valuable time for members to share input and help guide the Co-op's direction.
- **Education and Communication:** Members receive updates on programs, industry changes, and initiatives impacting their service.
- **A Voice and a Vote:** As a member-owner, you have a say in how your cooperative is run—this is your platform.

- **Stay Informed:** Learn where the Co-op stands and where it's headed in a changing energy landscape.
- **Community Connection:** Engage with fellow members, Co-op employees, and neighbors in a meaningful setting.

## A MILESTONE WORTH MARKING

As we reflect on nine decades of service, I'm incredibly proud of all we've accomplished together. What began as a bold vision to power rural communities has grown into a thriving Cooperative that continues to evolve and serve.

Our success didn't happen by chance—it's the result of steadfast support from our members. Celebrating 90 years is about more than milestones; it's about the people who have shaped our story and carried us forward, year after year.

## YOU'RE INVITED

Please join us on May 21, 2025, at Meeker Cooperative's headquarters for our Annual Meeting and Member Appreciation Event! The meeting begins at noon, followed by an afternoon packed with exciting activities from 12:30 PM to 6:00 PM. Connect with Co-op leaders, explore engaging exhibits on broadband, energy efficiency, and safety, and take a walk through 90 years of Meeker history. Enjoy delicious pork chops and sides, check out electric vehicles and gadgets, and enter to win prizes like bill credits, smart home tech, and more. With interactive displays, fun for kids, and plenty of ways to learn and celebrate, it's a day you won't want to miss!

Whether you've been a member for decades or just joined, this is your cooperative—and your voice matters. We hope to see you and your family as we celebrate 90 years of service and look ahead to what's next.

Thank you for being a vital part of Meeker Cooperative.

*Dedicated to keeping the lights on and the data flowing,*

**Luke Johnson**

CEO, Meeker Cooperative





## ELECTRICAL SAFETY STARTS AT HOME:

# 5 WAYS TO PROTECT YOUR FAMILY THIS MAY

*Every May, Electrical Safety Month serves as a vital reminder of the importance of preventing electrical hazards at home. Electricity powers nearly every aspect of modern life, but if handled improperly, it can pose serious risks, including injuries and property damage.*

Meeker Cooperative understands the risks associated with improper electricity use, which is why we're committed to reminding you to stay vigilant and practice electrical safety not only in May, but year-round.

By following key safety practices, you can reduce the risk of electrical hazards and ensure your family stays protected. Here are five essential tips for powering up safely at home.

**1. BE VIGILANT.** Regularly inspect your home's electrical system for any signs of damage or outdated components and replace any frayed electrical wires or cords. 25-22-407 The Electrical Safety Foundation International estimates roughly 3,300 home fires originate from extension cords every year, either from overloading, overheating or fraying. If you're relying on extension cords as permanent power solutions, consider contacting a qualified electrician to install additional outlets where you need them.

**2. USE SURGE PROTECTORS.** Safeguard your sensitive electronics and appliances from surges with surge protectors. These handy devices help divert excess voltage away from your electronics, reducing the risk of damage or electrical fires. Not all power strips include surge protection, so read the product label carefully. Additionally, surge protectors can lose effectiveness over time and should be replaced when damaged or outdated.

**3. PRACTICE SAFE POWER STRIP USE.** Avoid overloading electrical outlets with power strips that exceed the outlet's capacity. High-energy devices, like heaters, microwaves and hairdryers should be distributed across multiple outlets. Overloading an outlet with a "busy" power strips can lead to overheating and create a fire hazard, so be sure to check the power strip's wattage rating before plugging in items.

**4. WATER AND ELECTRICITY DON'T MIX.** It may seem obvious, but accidents involving water contact with electrical items happen. Always keep electrical appliances and devices away from water sources, like sinks, bathtubs or swimming pools. Make sure your hands are dry before touching any electrical switches or appliances--never handle electrical devices with wet hands. Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs) should be installed in areas where water and electricity are typically in close proximity, including kitchens, bathrooms and outdoor outlets.

**5. EDUCATE FAMILY MEMBERS.** One of the best ways to ensure the safety of everyone in your household is to talk about electrical safety. Teach children not to play with electrical outlets or appliances and ensure they understand the potential dangers of electricity. Create and practice a home fire escape plan that includes electrical safety precautions in case of emergencies.

Practicing electrical safety at home is essential for protecting your family, property and peace of mind. Remember, electrical safety isn't just a one-time effort, it's a year-round responsibility.

## KNOW WHAT'S BELOW. CALL BEFORE YOU DIG.

*Most of us never think about the electric, gas, water, and other utility lines buried below the ground, but hitting one of these lines while digging is not the reminder you'll want--trust us! If you are planning a digging project, call 811 at least three business days before you start. Or you can submit a request online by visiting [www.call811.com](http://www.call811.com).*



### 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 May 31, 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.

# GET YOUR A/C SUMMER-READY AND EARN A \$25 CREDIT!

*As the temperatures rise, your air conditioner or air-source heat pump becomes a vital part of keeping your home comfortable. But just like your car needs regular maintenance, so does your cooling system. An A/C tune-up is a smart way to make sure your system runs efficiently, keeps your energy bills in check, and avoids costly breakdowns during the hottest days of the year.*

A tune-up involves a licensed HVAC professional performing a full inspection and service of your system. This includes cleaning the condenser coil, checking the coolant charge, inspecting and replacing indoor filters, checking the belt and motor lubrication, testing all system controls, and blowing out the drain lines. They'll also do a full visual inspection of your A/C and walk you through how to keep it running smoothly throughout the season.



## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

A well-maintained unit cools more effectively, uses less energy, and is less likely to break down. That means more comfort, lower costs, and peace of mind. If your system is five years or older and still in working condition, it's the perfect time to schedule a tune-up.

## BILL CREDITS AVAILABLE

Meeker Cooperative is offering a \$25 bill credit when you have a qualifying tune-up performed by a licensed HVAC contractor. 25-19-301 It's our way of helping you stay cool and save money.

Don't wait for a hot day to discover your system isn't up to the task. Schedule your A/C or air-source heat pump tune-up today and take advantage of this limited-time offer. For full details and to claim your \$25 credit, visit [www.meeker.coop/programs](http://www.meeker.coop/programs) or give us a call.

## THINKING ABOUT A NEW SYSTEM?

Don't forget—Meeker Cooperative also offers rebates for new air-source heat pumps! It's a smart, energy-efficient upgrade that can help you save year-round. Learn more about available incentives at [www.meeker.coop/programs](http://www.meeker.coop/programs).

## WILLIE WIREDHAND'S ELECTRICITY FUN FACT



Nerve impulses in the human body are actually tiny electrical signals that travel along neurons to transmit information. These signals allow your brain to communicate with your muscles, organs, and senses almost instantly. It's how you move,

feel, think, and react—your body's own built-in electrical communication system!

## MEMBER NEWS

### OFFICES CLOSED

Meeker Cooperative offices will be closed on Monday, May 26 in observance of Memorial Day.

### SUMMER RATE REMINDER

For members enrolled on separately metered energy management programs, the summer rate of \$.062 per kWh goes into effect June – August. If you have any questions about the energy management program you are enrolled on or if you are interested in finding out more about the Co-ops' programs, please visit our website at [meeker.coop/programs](http://meeker.coop/programs) or call our Energy Services Department at 320-693-3231.



# STATE FAIR BUS TRIP

AUGUST 21, 2025 | \$45 PER PERSON



Skip the parking headaches and ride with Meeker Cooperative to the Minnesota State Fair for a day of food, fun, and festivities—scan the QR code to sign up!

*Experience the grandeur of the MN State Fair hassle-free! Join us on a luxury motorcoach trip for Opening Day, celebrating all things Minnesotan in agriculture, entertainment, and cuisine—with something for everyone to enjoy.*

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

While you're there, don't miss:

- Tasting iconic fair foods like cheese curds, mini donuts, and anything-on-a-stick
- Strolling through the Agriculture Horticulture Building and Creative Activities exhibits
- Enjoying free music and entertainment

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.



## MOVE OVER TO KEEP OUR CREWS SAFE

At Meeker Cooperative, our crews work hard every day to keep your electricity flowing safely and reliably. Whether they're maintaining overhead or underground power lines, servicing substations, operating heavy equipment, or checking meters, their jobs often require them to work near busy roads—and that can be dangerous.

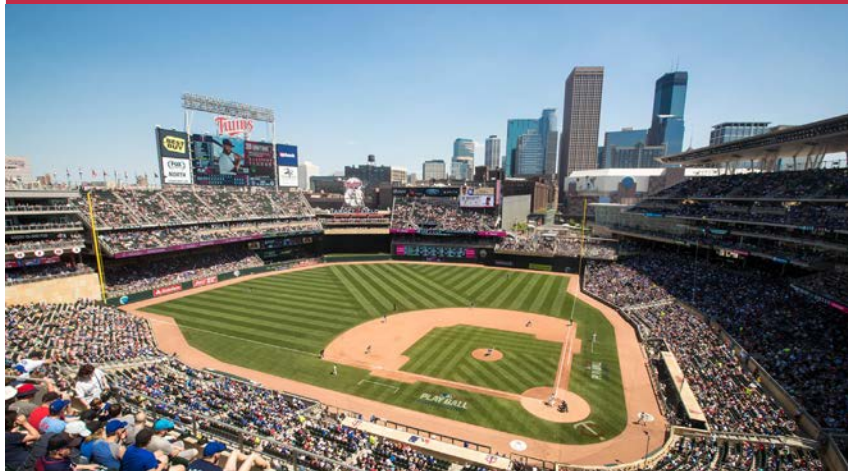
When our employees need to stop alongside a roadway, they create a work zone using flashing lights and traffic cones. These signs signal to passing drivers that workers are present and vulnerable. 25-32-139 One of the best ways you can help protect them is by following Minnesota's Ted Foss Move Over Law.

This law requires drivers on roads with two or more lanes to move over one full lane away from any stopped emergency or maintenance vehicle with flashing lights, including utility vehicles. If moving over isn't possible, you must slow down and pass carefully.

While most people know this law applies to police, fire, and ambulance vehicles, it also includes utility, maintenance, and construction crews. Our team is out there working to keep your power on please do your part to keep them safe.

# TWINS GAME BUS TRIP

JUNE 26, 2025 | \$75 PER PERSON



Hop on the bus with Meeker Cooperative and enjoy a fun, hassle-free day at Target Field cheering on the Minnesota Twins—call our office at 320-693-3221 to learn more and sign up!

*We are excited to invite you to join us for a fun-filled day at Target Field to watch the Minnesota Twins play against the Seattle Mariners on Thursday, June 26! Our bus trip will take you straight to the stadium, without having to worry about traffic, parking, or navigating downtown Minneapolis.*

Your ticket includes a comfortable and convenient ride to the game, ticket to the game and all-inclusive ballpark fare (including hotdogs, burgers, chicken tenders, popcorn, chips, soda, water, juice, and milk).

We'll depart from the Meeker Cooperative parking lot at 8:00 a.m. and arrive at Target Field in plenty of time to catch the first pitch at 12:10 p.m. After the game, we'll return to the same location.

Don't miss out on this opportunity to cheer on the Twins with your friends and family while leaving the driving to us. Tickets are limited and sell out fast, so make sure to reserve your spot today. The deadline to register is May 14, 2025.

## FEATURED RECIPE

### HASSELBACK KIELBASA | SUBMITTED BY: SHELLEY CARTER BLOOMINGTON



#### INGREDIENTS

- ¾ pound yellow onions (2 to 3 onions)
- 1 (1-pound) fennel bulb, stalks removed
- 1 each red, yellow, and orange Holland bell pepper
- Good olive oil
- 2 tablespoons minced garlic (6 cloves)
- 2 teaspoons minced fresh thyme leaves, plus extra sprigs
- 1 teaspoon whole fennel seeds, chopped
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 pounds fully cooked, smoked kielbasa
- ¼ cup Dijon mustard
- ¼ cup liquid honey

#### DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 425°F. Slice the onions into ½-inch thick half-rounds and place in a large bowl. Cut the fennel into 1-inch wedges, keeping the core intact, and add to the bowl. Slice the peppers into 1-inch strips, removing stems and seeds, and add them too. Toss the vegetables with 4 tablespoons olive oil, garlic, thyme, fennel seeds, 2 teaspoons salt, and 1 teaspoon pepper.

Spread the vegetables in a single layer on a large roasting pan or two sheet pans. Roast for 20 minutes, stirring once. While roasting, slice the kielbasa into ¼-inch pieces, but leave the bottom intact. After 20 minutes, stir the vegetables again and remove the thyme.

Place the kielbasa on top of the vegetables. Mix the mustard and honey, and brush it over the kielbasa. Roast for another 30 minutes, brushing with more honey mustard every 10 minutes. When the kielbasa is browned and crispy, sprinkle the vegetables with a little more salt and serve hot with the extra honey mustard.

Submit your favorite recipe for our next issue! The chosen winner will receive a \$10 credit to their account. DEADLINE: May 31, 2025.  
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



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## YOU'RE INVITED:

### MEEKER COOPERATIVE'S ANNUAL MEETING AND MEMBER APPRECIATION EVENT!

Mark your calendars for Wednesday, May 21, 2025, and make plans to join us at Meeker Cooperative's headquarters for our Annual Meeting and Member Appreciation Event! This special day is all about celebrating YOU—our valued member-owners—and the cooperative spirit that powers our community.

The Annual Meeting kicks off at noon, offering important updates from Co-op leadership and the announcement of board election results. Then, from 12:30 to 6:00 PM, enjoy an afternoon filled with hands-on exhibits, safety demonstrations, fiber splicing displays, and more. From exploring electric vehicles and yard tools to chatting with your local director, there's something for everyone.

Bring the family and dig into a delicious meal featuring Wattenhofer Grilled Pork Chops and sides, 31-10-102 plus enjoy prize drawings, a smart home showcase, and fun-filled activities for the kids—including bounce houses, a petting zoo, and an electric scooter giveaway!

Whether you're curious about broadband, energy savings, or simply looking for a fun community day, this event has it all. Join us for connection, conversation, and celebration—we can't wait to see you there!



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888.264.6380  
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[www.meeker.coop/news](http://www.meeker.coop/news).