

PIONEER

NATIONAL
CO-OP
MONTH



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Meeker
ENERGY

VIBRANT
Broadband™

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

POWERED BY PURPOSE: CELEBRATING CO-OP MONTH

Every October, cooperatives across the nation celebrate National Co-op Month. It is a time to reflect on the cooperative difference and thank the members who make it all possible. This year carries even greater meaning as 2025 has been designated the International Year of the Cooperative by the United Nations. This recognition reminds the world of the impact cooperatives have on local communities, economies, and everyday lives.

At Meeker Energy, this is more than a celebration. It is an opportunity to reaffirm the values that have guided us since the beginning: member ownership, local accountability, and service to community.

Unlike investor-owned utilities, we do not exist to make profits for shareholders. We exist to serve you, our members, our neighbors, and our communities. That purpose is what sets us apart.

MEMBER-OWNED, LOCALLY LED

Being a cooperative means we are locally controlled. Members elect our board of directors, who live right here in our service area and understand our community's challenges and opportunities. Decisions are not made in faraway boardrooms. They are made at home by people who care about the same things you do.

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CO-OP MONTH CONTINUED...

FOCUSED ON SERVICE

That local accountability keeps us focused on what matters most: delivering reliable and affordable electricity while adding real value to the people we serve. We continually invest in our system by strengthening our local grid, adopting new technologies, and preparing for the future of energy use.

We also recognize how rising costs affect families and small businesses, which is why we work hard to manage expenses and keep rates aligned. When storms strike, our crews are ready to respond quickly because this is our home too.

COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY

The cooperative difference goes far beyond keeping the lights on. From sponsoring youth programs and supporting schools to helping expand broadband and backing local volunteer initiatives, 29-02-422 Meeker Energy is here to strengthen our communities. Community support is part of our mission, not an afterthought.

PLANNING AHEAD

As energy demand grows and technologies evolve, we remain committed to providing a balanced and reliable energy mix that ensures both dependability and affordability. Our goal is to keep Meeker Energy strong, sustainable, and ready to serve for generations to come.

That is the power of the cooperative difference. That is what it means to be powered by purpose. It is also why this year's theme, the International Year of the Cooperative, matters so deeply.

As you celebrate Co-op Month, remember that you are not just a customer. You are an owner, a stakeholder, and a vital part of keeping our community connected and thriving.

We thank you for the trust you place in Meeker Energy. We are proud to serve you today and into the future.



THE 7 COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES

Cooperatives around the world operate according to the same set of core principles and values, adopted by the International Cooperative Alliance. These principles are a key reason why America's electric cooperatives operate differently from other electric utilities, putting the needs of our members first.



1. Voluntary & Open Membership

Membership is open to anyone who can use the co-op's services and accepts the responsibilities, without discrimination.



2. Democratic Member Control

Co-ops are run by their members, who set policies and elect leaders. Each member has an equal vote and voice.



3. Members' Economic Participation

Members invest in and control the co-op's capital. Surpluses support growth, reserves, member benefits, or approved community needs.



4. Autonomy & Independence

Co-ops are self-governed organizations. Any outside agreements must preserve democratic control and cooperative identity.



5. Education, Training & Information

Members, leaders, and employees receive education to contribute effectively, while outreach helps the public understand cooperatives.



6. Cooperation Among Cooperatives

Working together across local, regional, and global structures allows co-ops to strengthen services and communities.



7. Concern for Community

Co-ops prioritize the long-term well-being and sustainability of their communities.



Four location numbers are hidden within this Pioneer. If you find your number and claim it by calling Meeker Energy before October 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.

HEAT SMARTER, SAVE MORE: AIR SOURCE HEAT PUMPS WITH MEEKER ENERGY!



Are you looking for a more efficient and cost-effective way to keep your home comfortable? Look no further than an Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP) with Meeker Energy's fantastic dual-fuel programs and incentives! ASHPs offer a compelling alternative to traditional LP furnaces, delivering significant savings and year-round comfort this heating season.

WHY CHOOSE AN AIR SOURCE HEAT PUMP?

1. Superior Efficiency: Unlike LP furnaces that generate heat by burning fuel, ASHPs transfer heat from the outside air, even in cold temperatures, making them incredibly energy efficient. They can deliver up to three times more heat energy than the electrical energy they consume, drastically reducing your overall energy usage for heating compared to LP furnaces.

2. Year-Round Comfort: ASHPs provide both heating and cooling in one system, eliminating the need for separate units and ensuring comfortable temperatures throughout your home, all year long.

3. Lower Operating Costs: With their high efficiency, ASHPs generally lead to lower monthly energy bills compared to propane furnaces, especially when combined with Meeker Energy's special rates.

MAXIMIZE YOUR SAVINGS WITH MEEKER ENERGY!

As a Meeker Energy member, you can unlock even greater savings when you combine an ASHP with our **Energy Management Rate of 5.7 cents per kWh for dual fuel heating**. This program allows you to primarily use your efficient heat pump at a reduced rate, switching to your backup LP furnace 05-29-222 only during periods of peak demand. By allowing the Co-op to temporarily manage your energy use in these periods, you get the best balance of cost savings and reliable comfort.

Factor in available federal tax credits (30%, up to \$2,000 when installed before Dec. 31, 2025). Plus, we're making it easier than ever to make the switch! Meeker Energy offers **rebates of up to \$1,200 for members who install a qualifying air source heat pump in 2025**. These incentives can significantly offset the upfront cost of your new system, making energy-efficient heating and cooling more accessible than ever.

READY TO MAKE THE SWITCH?

Don't let another season go by paying high LP costs. Invest in an Air Source Heat Pump and experience the comfort and savings it provides, amplified by Meeker Energy's dedicated programs and rebates. Contact us today to learn more and find out how you can start saving!



Learn more about our rebates and programs at meeker.coop/programs.





STAY PROTECTED THIS WINTER: KNOW YOUR COLD WEATHER RULE RIGHTS

From October 1 through April 30, Minnesota's Cold Weather Rule helps protect residential members from electric disconnection if loss of service would affect the home's primary heat source. The rule, Section 216B.097 of the Public Utilities Act, guides how disconnects are handled, it does not prohibit them.

To qualify for protection, you must:

- Declare an inability to pay by completing the Inability to Pay Form with proof of one month's household income or verification from a local energy assistance provider.
- Have a household income at or below 50% of the state median and/or be a recipient of energy assistance for the current heating season.
- Enter into and stay current on a payment agreement with Meeker Energy.

Even during winter, disconnects may occur when these conditions are not met. Members will receive:

- Advance notice at least 30 days before disconnection.
- A statement of rights and responsibilities.
- A list of local energy assistance providers.
- Access to Cold Weather Rule forms and payment plan options.

If you're struggling to pay your bill, don't wait. Contact us early to discuss payment arrangements or explore energy assistance programs that can help with heating costs and prevent service interruption.

Visit meeker.coop/download-forms or call 320-693-3231 for forms, payment options, and assistance.

For complete details about the Cold Weather Rule and available resources, visit www.meeker.coop.



**WILLIE WIREDHAND'S
ELECTRICITY FUN FACT**

Hydropower has ancient roots. More than 2,000 years ago, civilizations used water wheels to grind grain and perform essential tasks. Today, this age-old technology has evolved into a major renewable energy source. Hydropower now generates roughly one-sixth of the world's electricity, providing clean, reliable energy from the natural flow of water.

MEMBER NEWS

JOIN US AT LOCAL TRUNK-OR-TREAT EVENTS!

Meeker Energy is excited to take part in two community Trunk-or-Treat events this October. These family-friendly gatherings are a fun and safe way for kids to show off their costumes, enjoy Halloween treats, and connect with local organizations. Stop by our decorated trunk to say hello and grab some goodies!

Prairie Meadows Fall Festival

Thursday, October 23 | 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.
650 Co Hwy 10, Spicer
Gymnasium

Paynesville Trunk-or-Treat

Saturday, October 25 | 12:00 – 2:00 p.m.
West St. James Street,
Downtown Paynesville

Litchfield Trunk-or-Treat

Sunday, October 26 | 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.
East 10th Street,
Fairgrounds Parking Lot

Come join the fun, meet our team, and enjoy a safe and festive way to celebrate Halloween!





STAY CYBER SAFE THIS OCTOBER NATIONAL CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS MONTH



Staying safe online doesn't have to be complicated or costly. By following a few key habits, you can greatly reduce your risk of cybercrime and protect your personal information, devices, and accounts.

At Meeker Energy and Vibrant Broadband, we encourage members to practice the Core Four from the National Cybersecurity Alliance:

1. STRENGTHEN YOUR PASSWORDS.

Use long, unique, and complex passwords; at least 16 characters that mix letters, numbers, and symbols. Avoid reusing passwords, and consider using a password manager to securely store them.

2. ENABLE MULTIFACTOR AUTHENTICATION (MFA).

MFA adds a second layer of protection beyond your password. It may include a code sent to your phone, a fingerprint scan, or a security key. Always enable MFA on

critical accounts like email, banking, and social media, and never share verification codes.

3. KEEP SOFTWARE UPDATED.

Updates often include security patches that block potential threats. Turn on automatic updates when possible and don't ignore reminders; your phone, computer, and apps all need regular updates to stay secure.

4. WATCH FOR SCAMS AND PHISHING ATTEMPTS.

Be cautious with emails, calls, or texts that create urgency or request personal details. 29-04-412 Avoid clicking suspicious links or downloading unexpected attachments. When in doubt, verify with a trusted source before responding.

Cybersecurity starts with awareness. Small steps, taken consistently, help protect your identity, finances, and peace of mind.

FRESH ZUCCHINI RELISH

Submitted By: Rosalea Hoeft

INGREDIENTS

- 4 cups diced zucchini
- 1 large onion, thinly sliced
- 2 celery ribs, sliced
- 2 medium carrots, sliced
- 1 medium sweet red pepper, sliced
- 2 Tbsp. salt
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup water
- 1/2 cup cider vinegar
- 1/2 tsp. celery seed
- Dash onion salt
- Dash ground turmeric

DIRECTIONS

In a large bowl, combine the zucchini, onion, celery, carrots, and red pepper. Sprinkle with salt, cover with cold water, and let stand for 3 hours. Rinse well and drain. In a large saucepan, bring the sugar, water, vinegar, celery seed, onion salt, and turmeric to a boil. Stir in the drained zucchini mixture and return to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer, uncovered, for 5 minutes. Transfer to a large bowl and let cool to room temperature. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 days before serving.

Submit your favorite recipe for our next issue! The chosen winner will receive a \$10 credit to their account. DEADLINE: October 31, 2025. Email to: szeppelin@meeker.coop | Mail to: Meeker Energy, ATTN: Shane 1725 US Hwy 12 E, Ste 100, Litchfield, MN 55355

FEATURED RECIPE



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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.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY TIPS FOR HUNTERS



At Meeker Energy, your safety is always our priority. Hunting season is a special time of year in Minnesota, and we want to remind everyone to stay alert when enjoying the outdoors. 24-33-302 Electrical equipment can sometimes be hidden by trees, brush, or tall grass, so it is important to keep safety in mind while in the field.

Here are a few key reminders to help you hunt safely:

- **Keep clear of electrical equipment.** Stay away from power lines, poles, substations, and transformers. Damaging this equipment can cause dangerous outages and put lives at risk.
- **Do not shoot at or near power lines or insulators.** A single stray shot can bring down a line or damage equipment, creating fire hazards or electrical shock risks.
- **Know your surroundings.** Before setting up a stand or releasing an arrow, look around carefully and identify where electrical equipment is located.
- **Be extra cautious in wooded areas.** Power lines may be harder to see when leaves and branches conceal them. Always scan the area before aiming or climbing.
- **Never place deer stands on utility poles.** Poles carry high-voltage lines and are dangerous to climb. They also need to be accessible for our crews in emergencies.
- **Never place decoys on power lines or other utility equipment.** This can create serious electrical hazards and make it harder for crews to maintain the system.

By keeping these tips in mind, you can enjoy a safe and successful hunting season while helping us keep the power flowing reliably for all members.



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FREE!**


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