

MARCH – APRIL 2020

125 YEARS
1895 - 2020



NineStar CONNECTION

VOLUME 9
ISSUE 2

NINESTAR EVENT CANCELLATIONS

Following Governor Eric Holcomb's order of staying home and social distancing, all NineStar public events will be cancelled until the end of May. This includes the NineStar Conference Room.

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WE ARE HERE FOR YOU

If you need any assistance, please contact us utilizing the methods found.

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PRESORTED
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WHEN IT'S ALL ON THE "LINE"

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WINNERS
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Ninestar Connect is here for you. If you need any assistance, please contact us utilizing the methods found on page 6. (See page 6)



OUR EMPLOYEES MAKE THE DIFFERENCE. HERE'S A CUSTOMER REVIEW FOR ANDREW COX.

“ANDREW IS A GREAT EMPLOYEE. YOU ARE LUCKY TO HAVE HIM ON YOUR TEAM.”
- CUSTOMER HUFFMAN



Customer service is at the tips of your fingers. NineStar Connect's tech support call center is open around the clock. **317-326-help**
ninestarconnect.com

STORY IDEA?

Contact David Spencer at dspencer@ninestarconnect.com

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**POWER OUT?
NO INTERNET OR TV?**



**CHECK NINESTAR'S
FACEBOOK OR TWITTER PAGE!!**

Social Media is exploding and if you aren't checking your laptop, tablet or smart phone for the latest and greatest fads, trends and updates.....you are not living in the 21st century! We have found that posting news about NineStar Connect on Facebook and Twitter has been a successful line of communication for all of our social media followers. Once you "like" our page, you will automatically be notified of any post we share whether it's information about an outage, an event we are planning, local Channel 9 broadcasting or energy information to save you money.

Additionally, if you have a question for us, send us a message. We will research and respond to your question as quickly as possible. We don't want to "leave you in the dark" about any issues or inquiries you might have for us. Our Customer Service has always been a significant piece of what we do and giving you the answers you need is imperative to keeping you knowledgeable and satisfied with our service. To add, when there is that unfortunate outage, your communication to us is just as helpful in determining where the problem is and who it is affecting so we encourage you to share your thoughts.

So if you haven't already, grab your tablet or smart phone and "Like" or "Follow" our Facebook and/or Twitter page. We will do our best to keep you informed and post all the latest details about NineStar Connect news. But don't forget, we still like to hear your voice! When you need answers fast and need to talk to someone, a phone call to our 24/7/365 Support Center is always just a dial away - 317-326-HELP.



The *NineStar Connection* is a publication of NineStar Connect servicing retail and residential customers. Nearly 16,000 families and businesses receive this newspaper as part of their membership. *NineStar Connection* provides news, information and features about people, places and issues related to readers.

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NineStar Connection

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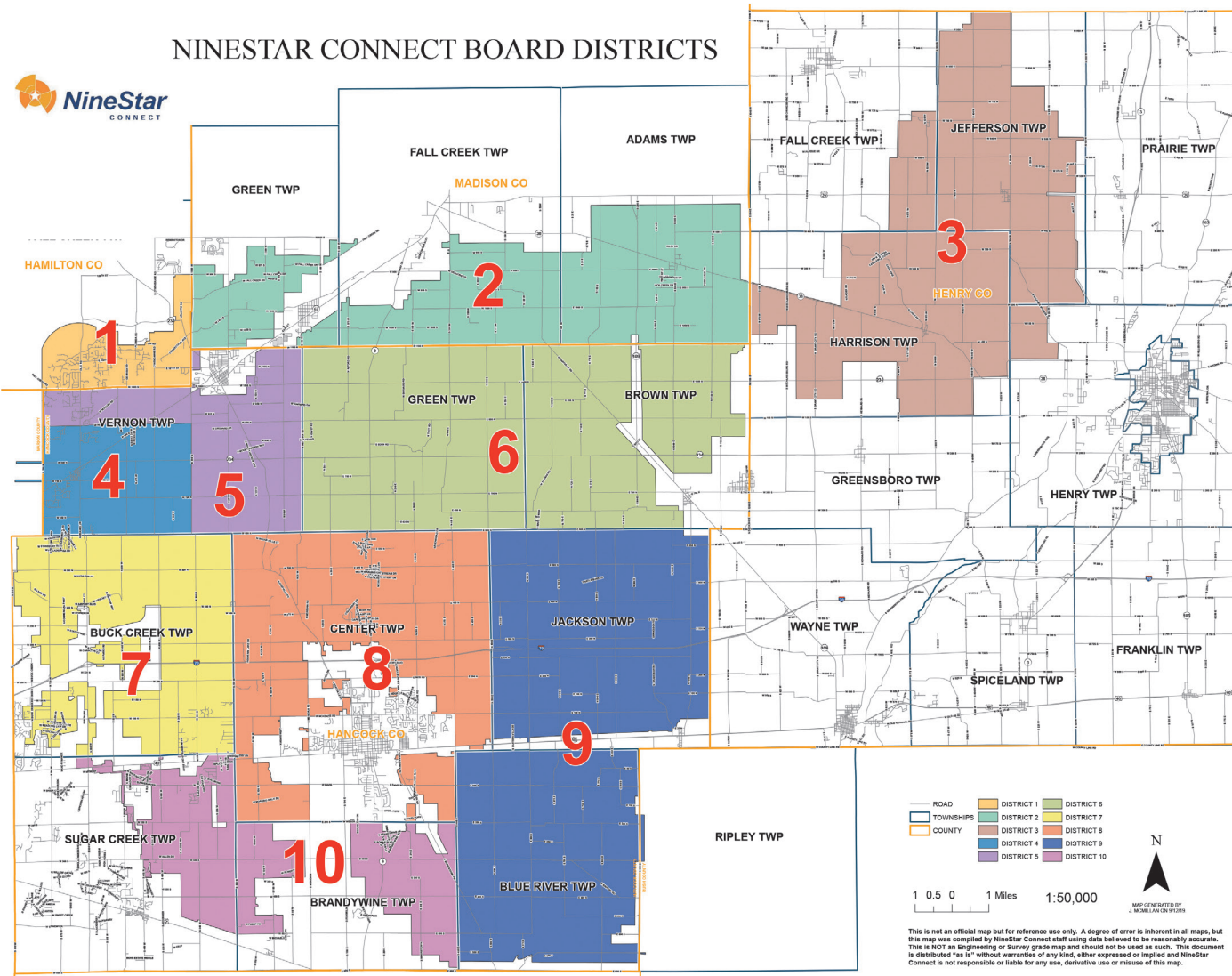
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WHEN IT'S ALL ON THE "LINE"

NINESTAR CONNECT'S FIBER NETWORK HELPS HANCOCK HEALTH COMBAT THE CORONAVIRUS

By Julie Young

Where Hancock Regional Health goes, NineStar Connect is sure to follow.

On Friday, March 13, George Plisinski, manager of telecom operations for NineStar received a call from Steve Long, president and CEO of Hancock Health asking where the closest fiber connection was to the Kroger Plaza. Plisinski informed him that it was approximately 2,000 feet away – and across State Road 9.

"We didn't know why he was asking at first, but then we learned that they wanted to set up a COVID-19 triage clinic in an empty storefront next to Wasabi in the Kroger Plaza to prevent the hospital emergency room from being overwhelmed, but they needed our fiber connection to get it online with the rest of the hospital system," Plisinski said. "and of course that requires a permit."

Naturally, cutting through the red tape of bureaucracy is never easy under the best of circumstances, but getting emergency approval on a Friday afternoon with a deadly pandemic on the way is all but impossible. However, thanks to the intervention of Senator Mike Crider and Greenfield Mayor Chuck Fewell, NineStar was able to run the necessary fiber connection in record time.

"The whole thing got fast tracked," Plisinski said. "We found out that the nearest fiber connection was 1,800-feet away near the McDonald's and Steve was able to get a message to the mayor in order to let him know that something was coming. I got the plans submitted just after 5 p.m. and within 15 minutes it was approved."

As soon as they had the permits, it was time to put the plan into action and that required naming a project manager and coordinating logistics so that utility crews could mark their dig lines and traffic could be re-directed so that the fiber could be laid and ready to go by Monday morning. Plisinski said any time one makes a request to lay 2,000 feet of fiber at a moment's notice, it requires some additional explanation and by Saturday, he'd gotten pretty proficient at explaining what was going on and rallying the troops to help.

"It was amazing, we told them what we were doing and what we needed and they were all too willing to help," Plisinski said.

While even the most well planned projects have their challenges, last minute ones have theirs as well. With six, high-pressure gas lines that service Greenfield, a 12-inch water line and several sewer lines to avoid, one wrong move can create even more chaos. When excavation issues could have cost the team several hours of precious time as crews made a road trip to southern Indiana, Mayor Fewell offered to send over wastewater and vacuum trucks to help clear the space.

"All totaled, it took about 36 hours to build the 1,800 feet of fiber, which is pretty amazing and that includes having to work around the inch-and-a-half of wet snow that fell that day," Plisinski said. "We got half of it done on Saturday and half on Sunday."

David Spencer, director of marketing and public relations for NineStar Connect said the co-op has been a proud partner of Hancock Regional Health for 20 years and are committed to keeping them connected so that they can give their patients the highest quality of care.

"We first ran fiber to their clinic in Knightstown so that those in a rural setting could be treated via telemedicine and they knew if their backs were against the wall, they could count on us to get the job done," Spencer said.

Spencer said when he considers all the moving parts involved to approve the project and then the level of cooperation required to get it accomplished, it was nothing short of a miracle that NineStar was able to finish laying the fiber so quickly.

"I think what you see during times like these are a new kind of hero who make it possible for a hospital to create a satellite space to triage those with coronavirus symptoms," Spencer said. "I don't know that you could have gotten that kind of response from a larger corporation. You might not have even gotten a call back in time."

But it's not really that surprising. After all, helping out one's fellow man is in a co-op's DNA and NineStar Connect is second to none when it comes to stepping up to meet a community need—especially when the chips are down or when there is a tight deadline. Working for sustainable development in their communities and cooperating with other entities on the state, local and national level is the hallmark of what cooperatives such as NineStar Connect are all about.

"A lot of us take the seven cooperative principles as an oath of office when we start working here," Plisinski said. "It's the driving force we use to get the job done."



ANNUAL MEETING RECAP

NineStar Connect's Annual Meeting and Celebration was held on Friday, March 27th at the company's corporate office. With plans already made to hold the meeting at Greenfield-Central High School, quick action had to be taken to reverse its preparations and quickly change the meeting to a remote, virtual-type set up due to the coronavirus pandemic.

This year, NineStar is celebrating 125 years of when the company was founded in 1895 under the name McCordsville Telephone Company. It was the year of honoring not only the company's history but the current company we know as NineStar Connect; along with its employees and most importantly, it's members. As news emerged of the growing pandemic and the stay-at-home restrictions that were placed for our state, NineStar's employees and management geared up to invite members to early vote for the board of director election so quorum for the meeting could be met and the meeting could be held on time. Thanks to our members, we received more votes for the board of directors than we had in recent years.

The evening of March 27th, NineStar's Board Chairman Phil Hayes, Board Treasurer Ray Kerkhof, President & CEO Mike Burrow, CFO Scott Hiatt and PR & Marketing Director David Spencer were all on hand to give a message and updates about the company including naming new term directors of the board, financial reports, a summary of the 2019 Operation Round Up donations, the announcement of the 2020 Scholarship winners along with the ever popular door prizes that were given away to those members who early voted and/or registered to attend this year's meeting.

The board of directors that will be serving a new term of 3 years are:

- District 1 – Chris Jeter
- District 7 – Jack Negley
- District 9 – Ray Kerkhof
- District At Large – Kim Cronk

Also at the meeting, we acknowledged those employees with service recognition awards:

- 5 years: Alisha Love, Dakota Barkwill, Dustin Mayhugh and Jonathan Gingry
- 10 years: Chris Gross, Jeremy Couch and Keith West
- 15 years: Donna Sturges
- 20 years: Gary Jackson
- 25 years: Julie Mitchell
- 30 years: Jennifer Roach
- 35 Years: Retiring Board Director, David Heller

Lucky winners of the night were:

- \$500 – Charles Gorth and Daniel Richey
- \$300 – Andrew Barriento, Jerome Beightol, Chad Cole, Michael Halterman, Deanna Hobbs, Debbie Kerr, David Matlock, Michelle Mohr, Walter Ricker, and Walter Robinson
- \$100 – William Beaty, Richard Bloom, Byford Borgman, Rick Bramwell, Linda Burkett, Jan Cochard, Daryl Myran, Robert Reed, Larry Smith and Sheri Wilburn.

\$50 Cracker Barrel Gift Card winners (for registering online): Robert Benefiel, Tom & Judith Collins and Mark Elsbury

A big "Thank you" to all of you that not only viewed our meeting online but made this meeting possible. We wish you continued good health and blessings as we continue to move forward together to a better 2020.

EVENTS CANCELLED

All NineStar Events and Conference Room Rentals are cancelled until the end of May.

QUESTIONS? CALL 317-326-3131



NINESTAR EVENT CANCELLATIONS

With the COVID-19 pandemic that is impacting all of us, NineStar Connect is following Governor Eric Holcomb’s order of staying home and social distancing. We feel by following the state mandated guidelines is important for you, for us and for our community. That being said, all NineStar public events such as NineStar Nerd Nights, Town Hall Meetings and NineStar Power Hours will be cancelled until the end of May. This also includes any community events that were planned to be held in the NineStar Conference Room.

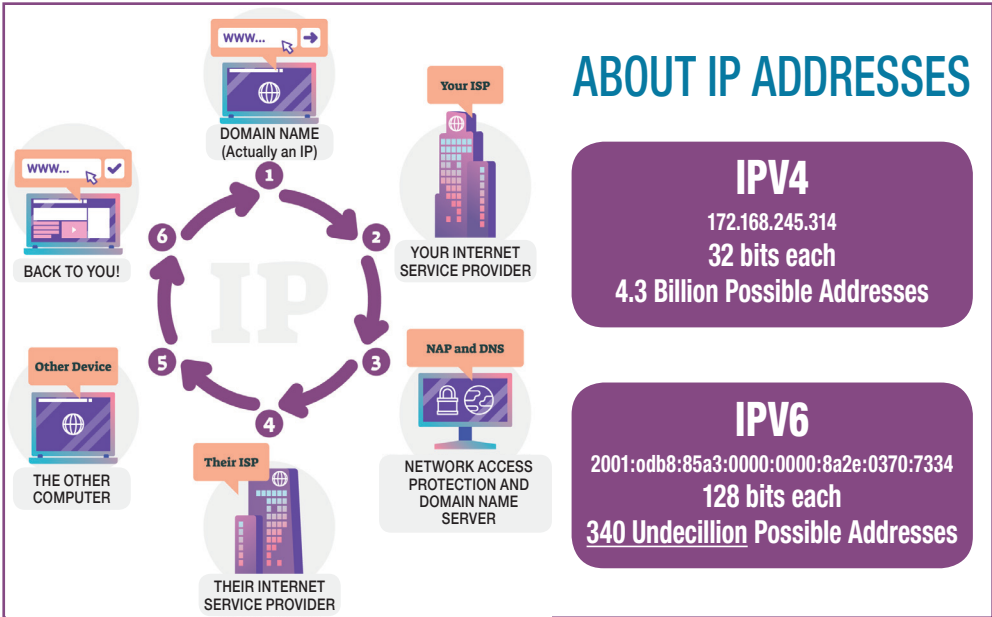
We just want you all to know that “We Will Get Through This!” We know if everyone does their part to stay home, wash hands, travel only when necessary and keep practicing social distancing; things will get better. This is a moment in time that we will never forget but we will remember how we fought it together. We are Here and NineStar cares about YOU!

IPV6 INFORMATION

IPv6 stands for the Internet Protocol, version 6. It is a protocol that’s intended to replace the current version, IPv4. One of the main benefits of IPv6 versus IPv4 is that it provides a pool of nearly unlimited IP addresses. Other improvements include more efficient routing and stateless address auto-configuration. The transition to IPv6 is expected to take some time, so IPv4 and IPv6 will coexist with one another for years.

With the amount of Internet-enabled devices constantly growing year after year, the global IPv4 address pool has been depleting in different regions across the world. The North America numbers authority (ARIN) has been out of IPv4 since 2015, and the numbers authority for Europe (RIPE) has no new space since late 2019. Since the future of IPv4 is limited in size and scope, IPv6 is a natural transition to make for everyone.

To tell if your computer or home network is ready for IPv6, visit <https://test-ipv6.com/> to test your IPv6 connectivity. If there are any ‘red’ times, there are actions still needed to be completed on your side. If you have any questions or issues, please contact our support center at 317-326-HELP.



RESIDENTIAL

Residential connections should be configured for DHCPv6 to automatically obtain IPv6 network information from NineStar. We dynamically assign one IP for WAN and a /56 block for your LAN side to utilize.

BUSINESS/STATIC

Business and static needs will need to go through your sales representative (Residential Service Consultant for residential static customers). For Business customers, we will require your ARIN Org ID for allocation reporting purposes. Once your order is processed, you will be given your WAN information and a /48 LAN block from NineStar to utilize as you see fit.



WE ARE HERE FOR YOU

It seems our world has changed in the blink of an eye. But, NineStar's commitment to our members is the same. We know you're focused on keeping your family safe. And, NineStar is focused on powering your world – however that may look. We're here for you.

Our team is proud to power our community when it matters most. We understand the important role we have with your family and in our community. When nothing else seems certain right now, we want to assure you our team is committed to providing you with the quality service and value you expect from NineStar.

Cooperatives routinely plan for emergency situations and our emergency plan has served us well in a variety of circumstances – from ice storms to tornadoes and flash floods. In these unprecedented times, we've taken some additional unprecedented steps to make sure our team is in place to power your world.

We hope you stay safe during this public health emergency. We are adjusting our operations to comply with executive order 20-08 from Governor Eric Holcomb. All NineStar business offices are closed to the public as of March 23, 2020. We are fortunate to have technology that allows many of our functions to be completed remotely. Many of our employees are working from home and we've separated departments into shifts so they can practice social distancing even when they're in the office. As always, the phones will be answered when you call.

IF YOU NEED ANY ASSISTANCE, PLEASE CONTACT US UTILIZING THE FOLLOWING METHODS:

TECHNICAL SUPPORT (24/7)

- 317-326-HELP
- support@myninestar.net
- Live chat from our home page.

CUSTOMER SERVICE (M-F, 7:30AM-5PM)

- 317-326-3131
- customerservice@ninestarconnect.com
- Live chat from our home page.

ALTERNATE WAYS TO PAY:

- SmartHub. The app is available on your mobile devices.
- Phone. Call 317-326-3131 Monday-Friday 7:30am – 5pm.
- Drop Box. The box is located at each of our three locations.
- Mail payment to 2243 E Main St., Greenfield

NINESTAR'S FIBER NETWORK HANDLING EXTRA TRAFFIC WITH EASE



While some copper and cable networks are straining under the extra load of internet traffic caused by the current pandemic crisis, NineStar's fiber optic network serving all of its members and customers in east-central Indiana is holding up to the extra traffic that businesses, stay-at-home workers, e-learning students, and Netflix bingers can throw at it. This is a huge benefit to those living in Hancock County and portions of surrounding counties served by NineStar.

Total usage is up over 58% in March, 2020 versus March 2019. The second half of March, 2020 saw a 767 Terabyte increase in traffic over the first half of March. To put this in perspective, 767 Terabytes is equivalent to 171,128 high definition DVD movies. And NineStar's network is scaled to

handle much more traffic than what is being used today.

"Twenty years ago, we started investing in fiber-to-the-home technology when people were still mostly using dial-up internet connections, knowing that our members and customers would require much more bandwidth someday," states Michael Burrow, President & CEO of NineStar Connect. "Today, we are fortunate to be reaping the benefits of that long view and I am particularly thankful to all of our coop members who have supported our long-term investments in infrastructure that benefits both current and future residents of our community."

TURNING UP THE SPEEDS

What started as a way to give our fiber internet customers higher speeds while being at home for spring break turned into higher speeds needed for many other reasons. Originally, we kicked off our "Free Speeds up to 1 Gig" offer to our fiber internet customers as a way to show our thanks and gratitude. We planned on turning up the speeds March 9th through April 10th.

When the COVID-19 pandemic started taking affect, many of our members were forced to start working and participating in e-learning from the safety of their homes. Because of this, we decided to extend the higher speeds through April 30th. With parents and kids all being online at once, the higher speeds have been a nice treat for our customers. Several have reached out to say thank you for the speeds during such a difficult time.

"With all of the e-learning about to go down in my home... perfect timing!!"
- CUSTOMER STRAUZER

"Love the speeds!!!"
- CUSTOMER BRAMMER

"This is amazing! Way to give back to the community!"
- CUSTOMER WATKINS

EXTENDED



Rocket Fast Speed for **FREE**

Enjoy Speeds up to 1 Gig.
No Extra Cost

Now - April 30th

PAPERLESS BILLING

Enroll in **Paperless Billing Today** and you could be our **NEXT BIG WINNER!**

*Enroll in Paperless Billing for a chance to win a \$50 Amazon or \$50 Netflix gift card!





*Drawings Monthly. Winners will be notified via email with gift card voucher.

Each month we pick a new winner for just choosing to get your billing statement electronically. If you are drawn as a lucky winner, you will receive a \$50 Amazon Gift Card.
Congratulations to our latest monthly winner:

February	Dee Wickard	\$50 Amazon Gift Card
March	Duane and Debbie Vansickle	\$50 Amazon Gift Card

Paperless Billing is the easiest, cheapest way of paying your bill each month. Please feel free to give one of our Residential Service Consultants a call at 317-326-3131 to help you set up if needed. It will be a call you are glad you made!

President's Message

From the 2020 Annual Meeting

These are truly unprecedented and historic times. Everyone here at NineStar had been looking forward to celebrating the 125th anniversary of our company and welcoming our 1200+ members who were new to our coop in 2019. Instead, we are focused on the task at hand to make sure we are able to continue to provide critical utility services for our members and customers over the upcoming few weeks during a national public health crisis.

Normally, I like to focus my annual meeting talk on things that the cooperative is working on today that will benefit our members and communities long term. However, this year, most of those long-term efforts have been temporarily suspended. Instead, all of our energies today are focused in the very near-term couple of months. Allow me to explain.

This current public health emergency has forced all of us at NineStar to pare down what we do to the bare essentials. Quite simply we have to keep the lights on, the internet on, and the water flowing. It doesn't get much simpler than that and this is how we are doing it.

This is a graph that I'm sure most of you have seen in recent days. It is the basis of the public health strategy to "flatten the curve" with the goal of keeping our health care facilities from being overwhelmed from a pandemic spread of the coronavirus. This graph is also equally applicable to public utilities – particularly small ones like NineStar Connect.

Over the last two weeks, we have been slowing and then suspending much of our non-essential business operations, sending employees to work from home and otherwise doing those sorts of things that attempt to limit or slow our employees and the customers they serve from being exposed to the coronavirus. With public health officials predicting many Americans will eventually become infected with this virus, it is incumbent on our company to attempt to slow our employee's exposure rates so we don't have a majority of them who are ill and unable to work at any given time during this emergency. Put another way, if our employee illness rate spikes too quickly, our ability to provide basic utility services becomes more difficult and that impacts all of our members and customers.

Over these last few days, we have been very mindful that we have many new and existing members and customers scrambling to order and connect new services from NineStar. That's why we have attempted to maintain new service installations. However, as circumstances have worsened, we have suspended new video installs and delaying new residential installations into the month of May in hopes that we can protect both our employees and the public during what we are being told will be the worst part of the public health crisis. From what we understand today, the month of April – perhaps into early May – is likely the critical timeframe for us to know whether we are getting past the current crisis or are in for a longer period of vigilance.

We continue to try to help businesses and those working from home with their ongoing needs as much as we can because we recognize people's livelihoods and paychecks depend on their ability to communicate and maintain some level of business activity and for

home-bound students to be able to continue with e-learning. Nevertheless, we must acknowledge that there might be a point in time where our employees will only be asked to respond to service outages of existing members and customers. We sincerely hope our members and customers who desire new and additional services will understand the gravity of our current situation and be patient as it might take us longer than normal to be able to install services that require onsite visits during this period.

All of our buildings are now closed to the public and most employees. They will remain closed until we receive indications from public health officials that it is safe to reopen them. Please continue to pay your utility bills as you can either by mail, online or if necessary, using the drop boxes at our offices.

Most of our office operations like customer service, support center, and accounting have been transitioned to employees who are now home-based until further notice. Utilizing our current technology, these employees will be able to answer your calls, respond to your questions and process most service requests as if they were still in the office. Call wait times might be increased if we find we have several employees ill at the same time, so we do ask that you be patient when calling into NineStar over the next few weeks. Of course, you can always utilize our e-mail support (support@myninestar.net) or online chat on our homepage.

A handful of our business activities cannot be done remotely, and you might see one or two employees going to our offices while they are closed. You may also see our linemen and service techs going into one of our offices as well. Please don't ask them to answer the doors or help you with an issue in person. They are permitted at the office for a limited time to do a specific task and will not be able to help with other requests. Again, if you need NineStar, please call or otherwise communicate via our website.

If you experience any technical issues with your internet or video connections, we urge you to continue to call our 24 hour support center for help. We have found that many technology issues can be addressed and fixed remotely or over the phone where we can guide our customers through a fix for their issue without having to send a technician onsite.

None of our electric, water and wastewater operations require us to enter customer homes or businesses. That allows us to maintain proper social distancing and reduces the risk to both the public and our employees. As such, we anticipate near normal response times to any service interruptions we may experience during this crisis for these services, subject to any staffing level issues caused by employee illness.

On our telecommunications operations, we likely will see some delays in installation and response times to service interruptions. Please recognize that we will



MICHAEL R. BURROW

prioritize service for two classes of our communications customers during this crisis: Health care facilities and government agencies. NineStar's fiber network connects critical care health care facilities in Hancock, Henry, Shelby and Rush Counties as well as many local and county government offices in these counties as well as Hamilton and Madison Counties. We believe under the present circumstances the health and well-being of our communities and our members and customers are best served if we respond to any service-related issues of these organizations first.

We know that your ability to get through these tough times largely depends on us continuing to be able to provide the critical utility services you require at your homes and businesses. We will do everything we can to make sure those services remain connected for you. The best way to stay current on the latest news on NineStar and any issues we may be working is to follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram or updates on our homepage. We will do our best to keep you updated on the latest happenings of your local coop.

In the upcoming days many of our friends, neighbors, family and co-workers may very well come down with the Coronavirus. We pray that their symptoms will be mild, and their recoveries will be swift. Over the last 125 years, this coop and the communities it serves have weathered through many crisis by working together for the betterment of all. A wise person once said that "the greatest songs have yet to be sung." Together, we will get through this current emergency as well and I look forward to seeing all of you in person as we sing new songs celebrating our cooperative at next year's Annual Meeting."

SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS – 2020

At this year’s Annual Meeting, 15 names were announced for the 2020 Scholarship program for children of NineStar Connect’s members. The students have to be a 2020 graduating high school senior and have a seven-semester minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.75 on a 4.0 scale or its equivalent at the time of the application. Each scholarship winner received \$1,000.

Winners included:



Padraig Alford
Mt. Vernon
High School



Evan Bobb
Pendleton Heights
High School



Cameron Cole
Mt. Vernon
High School



Cora Downing
New Palestine
High School



Anthony Fleming
Mt. Vernon
High School



Grace Hobbs
New Palestine
High School



Corina Jennings
Eastern Hancock
High School



Samuel Jennings
Greenfield-Central
High School



Lillian Leiner
Hamilton Southeastern
High School



Logan Overman
Greenfield-Central
High School



Ellie Robertson
Greenfield-Central
High School



Hannah Rodgers
Eastern Hancock
High School



Elizabeth Salsbury
Heritage Christian
High School



Shaun Shipley
Mt. Vernon
High School



Paige Wickard
Eastern Hancock
High School



NineStar Connect
2020 Scholarship
Winners

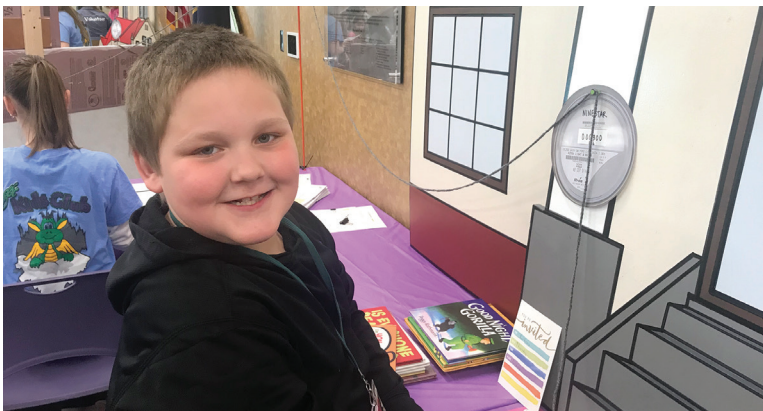
CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL GRADUATES OF 2020!

KID\$VILLE

On March 7th, NineStar participated in Greenfield Banking Company's "Kid\$ville". Kid\$ville is an annual event that helps kids understand the value of making, saving and spending money. Kids, ages 12 and younger, can participate. They have various jobs they can choose from and the job they pick, will be the job they learn for the "week". After a day's work, they receive their paycheck which they can spend, save or donate to a nonprofit organization.

NineStar had one exceptional employee who chose "Lineman" as his job choice. He assisted with putting up power lines as well as fixing them when there was an "outage". Even though it was all pretend, we believe he will be a great future lineman and we couldn't ask for a better employee.

Kid\$ville was held at the Greenfield Public Library this year and NineStar enjoys being a part of it. Thanks to GBC for another successful Kid\$ville!



MAKING 3D PARTS FOR VENTILATORS

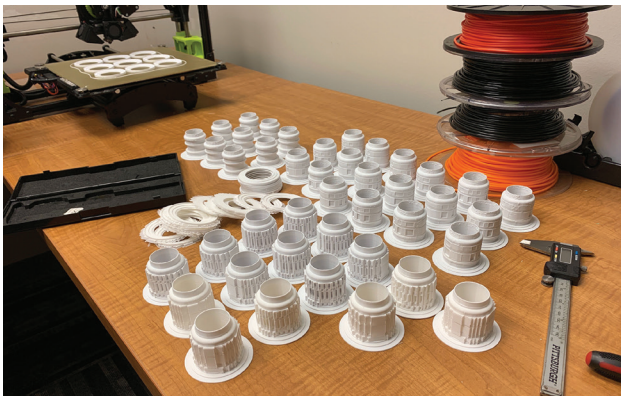
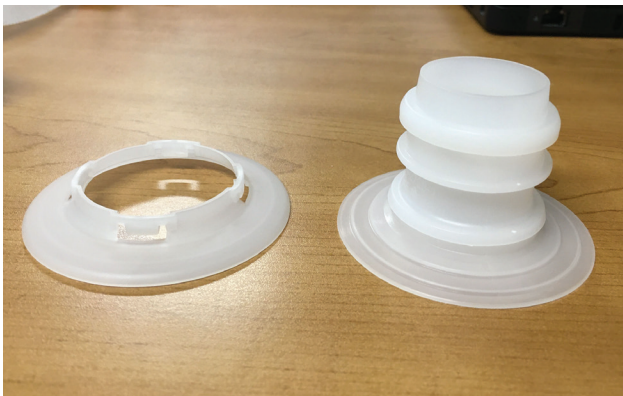
NineStar's Matt Young has been hard at work making plastic objects on the 3D printer...but not any plastic object. He is working with the hospital to make pieces for ventilators and face mask parts. The ventilator piece is what connects to the hose of a personal air purifier. This fits in their suit to create a seal to prevent any invasion of airborne diseases. It takes around 3 hours to print each piece and so far, we have delivered 152 to the hospital.

Matt is now focused on printing the headpiece shown for the face mask. This piece is used so a mask can be attached and kept at a good viewing angle. It typically takes around 4

hours to print two at a time and currently, 8 have been printed with more to do.

As we all know by now, there is a shortage of ventilators in health care centers and hospitals due to the COVID-19 pandemic. By themselves, these plastic pieces look pretty ordinary. It's hard to believe that when the pieces fit together, they make something that is needed to save so many lives. It brings a whole new meaning to each one that is produced. NineStar is beyond proud to be able to step up to the challenge and provide assistance where we can.

#NineStargivesback

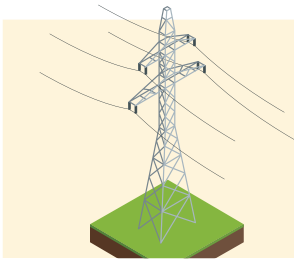


WHEN THE POWER GOES OUT, YOUR CO-OP GOES TO WORK

You may recall a time when you suddenly heard a loud crash or witnessed a bright flash, and then darkness.

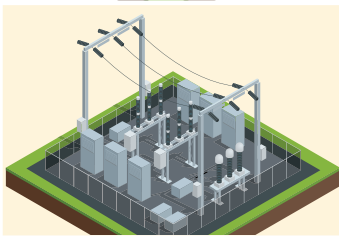
The lights were out.

As frustrating as the moment was, you should rest assured that your local electric cooperative was already getting to work. Improved technology has helped electric co-ops quickly identify power outages so that crews can repair damage and restore service to homes and businesses. Severe storms can sometimes cause significant damage, resulting in multiple repairs that need to be made before all power is restored. Some of the potential areas for damage include:



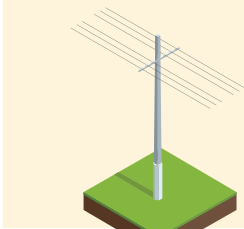
HIGH-VOLTAGE TRANSMISSION LINES:

The transmission towers and cables that carry electricity to transmission substations rarely fail. Yet if they are damaged, these can cause significant outages – and they must be repaired to ensure that the rest of the system can function properly.



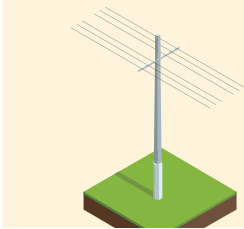
DISTRIBUTION SUBSTATIONS:

Each substation can serve thousands of members; substations are checked during power outages. If the issue is located at the substation (or the transmission lines leading to the substation), then that means that power can be restored to hundreds or even thousands of members.



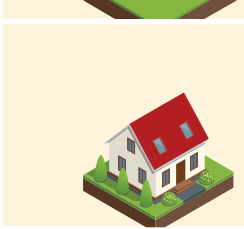
DISTRIBUTION LINES:

If a power outage is not because of damage at a substation, the main distribution lines are then checked. Main distribution lines carry the electricity to large groups of buildings, including businesses and housing developments, in a community.



TAP LINES:

These lines carry power to underground transformers or connected to poles outside of homes and businesses. Line crews prioritize which lines to work on based on which lines will restore power to most members.



INDIVIDUAL HOMES:

If your home is still without power, then the service line from the nearby transformer to your home may have been damaged. These lines are then repaired to restore power to homes, schools, and other buildings.

If you lose service in your neighborhood or to your home, stay clear of downed power lines and report the outage to your local electric co-op. This will ensure that they are aware and restore service as soon as

possible. By understanding the process, you can know more and be assured that your local electric co-op is working as hard as they can to make sure that the electricity stays on to help power your day.

CO-OP LIVING WITH MARY JANE

DO'S AND DON'TS OF LEARNING AT HOME



BY MARY JANE BOGLE

As a veteran homeschool mom, I'm not particularly fazed by the new "learn at home" mandate, but my confidence as an educator wasn't always so high. On our first day of homeschooling ten years ago, I remember thinking in the first half hour, "This is wonderful! Why didn't we do this sooner?"

Come mid morning, however, my thoughts had shifted radically. "What were we thinking! Is it too late to re-enroll?!" And so began the ups and downs of a journey that has lasted over ten years and culminated in some amazing academic achievements. This, in spite of four moves (thanks to my husband's work), many different co-op learning environments and even a part-time arrangement with our local public school.

The bottom line is that you can do this—and do it well. To make your journey a little easier, here are a few "dos and don'ts" I've learned along the way.

RULE #1: DON'T STRESS OUT. No one learns well under stress, and kids pick up on your mood more quickly than you think. If you and your students are getting frustrated, it's okay to walk

away for a few minutes. In fact, the break in brainpower might just give you the breakthrough you need.

RULE #2: DO TAKE BREAKS THROUGHOUT THE DAY.

In addition to these brief "brain breaks," work some planned downtime into your day. We used to call this recess, remember? A quick nature hike or walk around the block can clear the mind and help your students concentrate better when they return.

RULE #3: DO READ ALOUD TO YOUR KIDS EVERY SINGLE DAY. If possible, choose a book a few steps beyond your student's current reading level. Even 30 minutes a day can reap huge dividends in increased vocabulary, comprehension and syntax, as well as empathy and imagination. Not a great reader? Pick an audio book and listen to installments over lunch.

RULE #4: DON'T FOCUS ON THE CHECKLISTS AND MISS THE EDUCATION. It's easy to get caught up in "checklist" mode, where our sense of accomplishment is tied to the number of tasks we've

completed. But making time for right brain activities (art, music, creative writing, jigsaw puzzles, etc.) will help your children become more holistic thinkers, improve their spatial abilities and boost mental speed. Now might be the perfect time to learn a new musical instrument or take up art lessons—online, of course!

RULE #5: DON'T FORGET TO HAVE FUN. When we began our homeschool journey, I was encouraged to write down my goals, and one of them was that my children would become lifelong learners. They won't value an education if it isn't enjoyable, so take some time to find out what piques their interest and pursue activities unique to their individual passions. So many companies are offering free online learning experiences, so you're bound to find lessons specific to each kid.

Of course, none of us may have chosen our new "learn at home" environment, but now might be the perfect time for a "re-set," helping your kids find new passions in the process.