



JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2014

NineStar_{CONNECT}

VOLUME 3
ISSUE 1

ANNUAL MEETING

NineStar 61st annual event will include dinner, entertainment and the chance to vote for directors.

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SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY

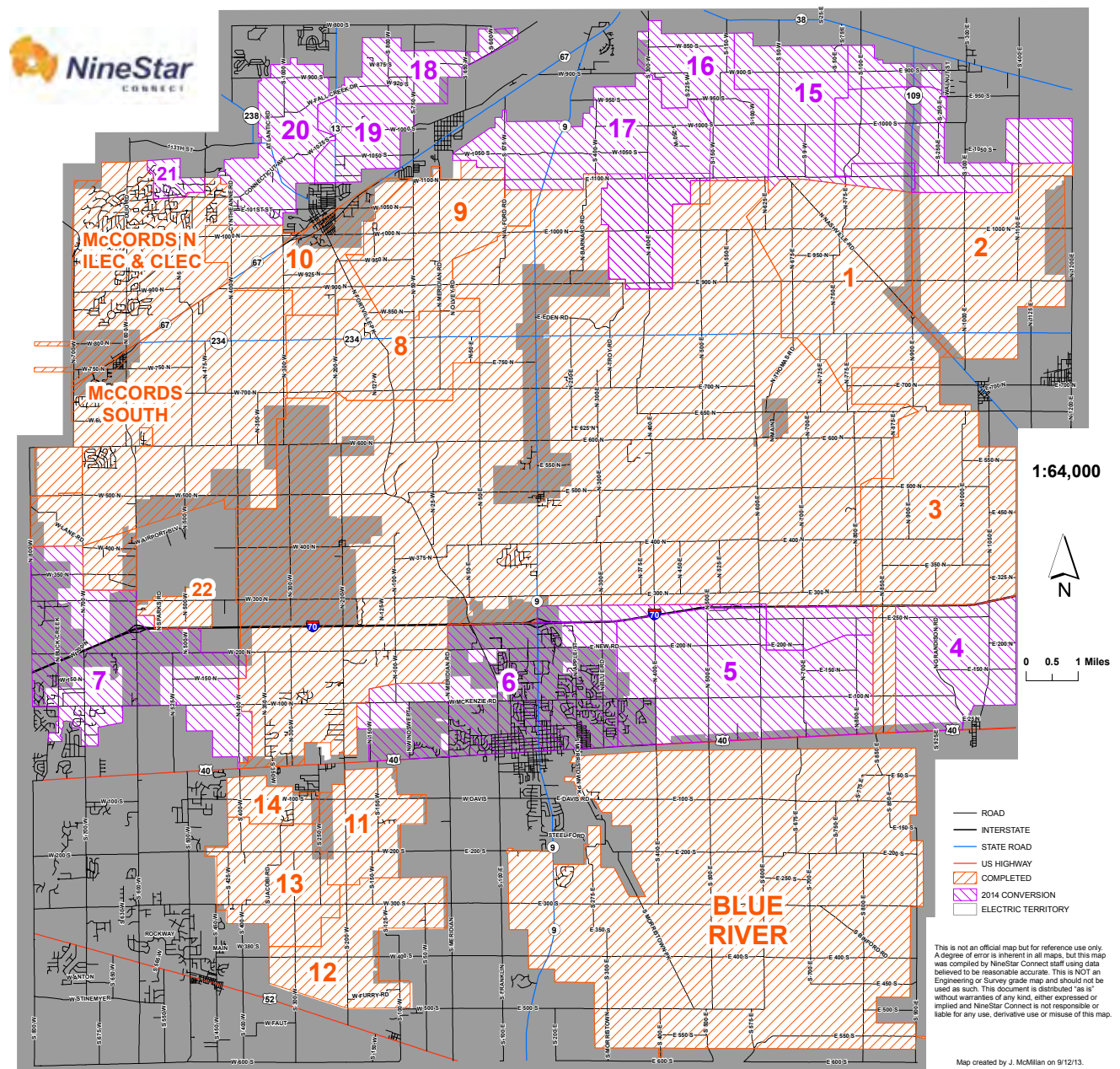
NineStar Connect is looking for 15 talented students

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ROLLOUT PLAN



FIBER OPTICS AND SMART METER SOLUTIONS NINESTAR
CONNECT PLANS FOR 2014 **SEE PAGE 4**



Jace Maroska



OUR EMPLOYEES MAKE THE DIFFERENCE. HERE'S A CUSTOMER REVIEW FOR JEFF JONES.

I WANTED TO THANK NINESTAR CONNECT LINEMEN WHO CAME TO OUR RESCUE AFTER A STORM KNOCKED OUR POWER OUT. AS A RESULT WE DID NOT HAVE TO GO WITHOUT POWER THAT NIGHT. THE LINEMEN WERE THERE EARLY IN THE MORNING AND GOT THE POWER RESTORED. THEY WERE FANTASTIC!

- BILL J.

HAVE A STORY IDEA?

Contact David Spencer at dspencer@ninestarconnect.com

GETTING CONNECTED PAGES 4-5

NineStar Connect seeks to invest in capital projects so it can offer members the latest and greatest products and services.

ANNUAL MEETING PAGES 6-7

NineStar Connect's 61st annual meeting is coming up, offering members a chance for a fun evening and to vote for directors.

RECENT RETIREMENTS PAGE 8

Two long-time employees wrapped up their careers at NineStar Connect.

TOUCHSTONE HOMES PAGE 12

NineStar Connect offers members building a home the change to maximize energy efficiency.

COLD COMFORT

NineStar Connect crews went to great lengths to ensure service was maintained during recent severe winter weather.

READ MORE ON PAGE 10

'I AM VERY PROUD'

The weather we have had the pleasure to experience this winter has been nothing short of exhausting and inconvenient. Every day it seems there has been talk of the polar vortex, snow, ice, winds and freezing temps. While it is winter, and some of this is expected, if you are like me you have your sights squarely focused on spring.

However, I am fully aware there will be at least six more weeks of winter and my wishful thinking won't make spring get here any faster. So with several more weeks of winter in our future, the possibility of extreme conditions exists. Because of that, we here at NineStar have to be vigilant and prepared for any situation that may come our way.

One such situation where we were prepared was the three-day stretch from Jan. 5-7. During this time period, nearly 11 inches of snow fell throughout our territory, and this snow was followed by bitter cold temperatures that dipped to -11 degrees! These conditions hadn't been experienced in our area for at least 20 years.

While the occurrence of these conditions are indeed rare, as a utility we had to be ready to respond and be open for "business as usual" for our customers who count on us. After all, in conditions like we experienced, customers count on their advanced telecommunications and electricity more than normal.

While only a small percentage of electric customers even experienced an outage in these extreme conditions, our linemen and groundmen, worked tirelessly to restore power in short order. In fact, the average interruption in service lasted only 55 minutes! Think about that for a minute -- if you remember back to news accounts that week, most investor-owned utilities had customers out until later that week. Almost four days after the storm blew through.

I am very proud and thankful for the job our linemen and groundsmen did during the weather event we experienced over those three days. I am also very proud of all the other employees at NineStar who braved the elements to get into work to ensure our customers would be taken care of when they needed it most.

PRESIDENT & CEO



TIM HILLS

MEET YOUR NINESTAR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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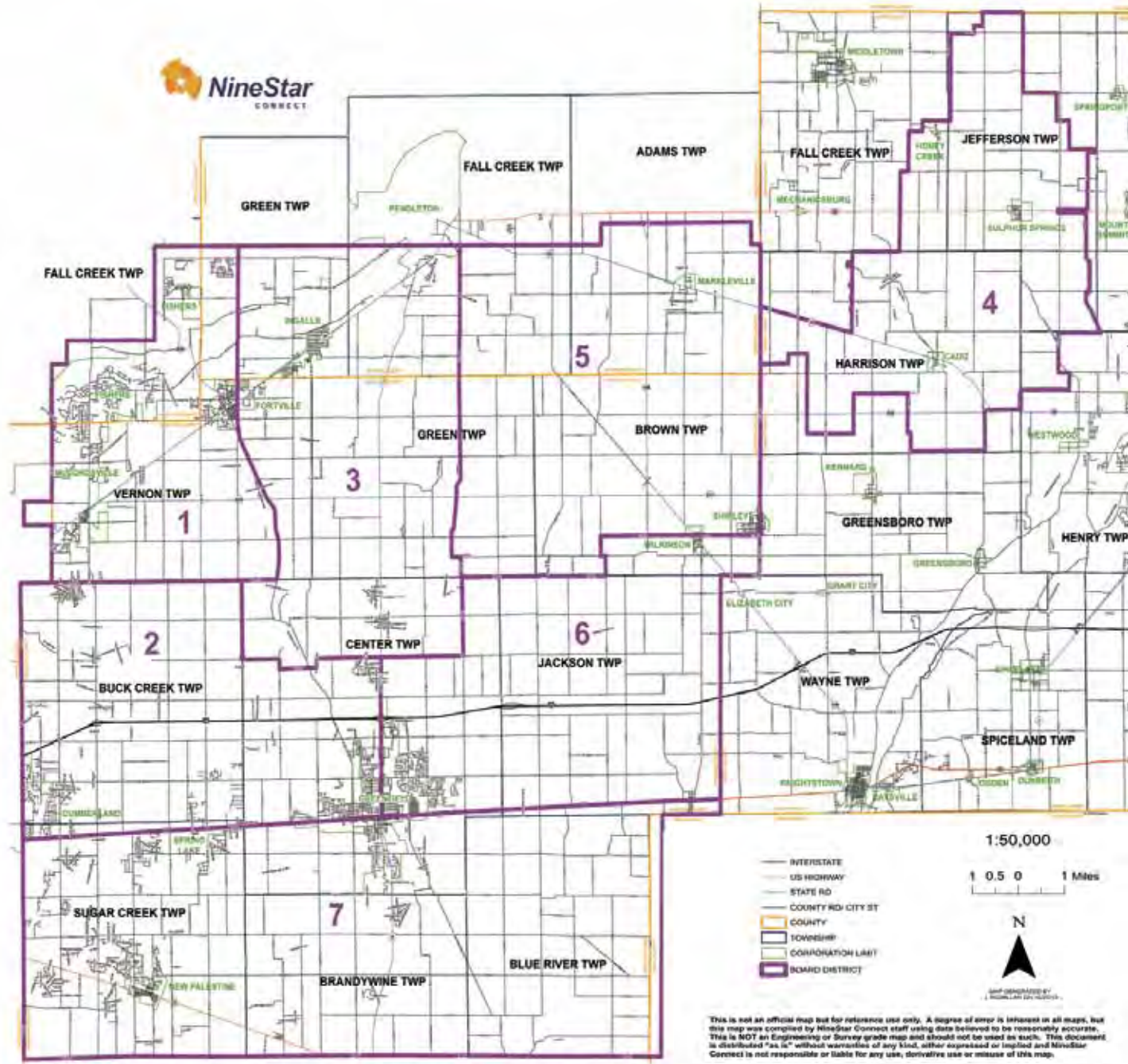


JAMES GILLETT (B)

RETIRING IN 2014



THOMAS KIRBY



The *NineStar Connection* is a publication of NineStar Connect servicing retail and residential customers. Nearly 15,000 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.

NineStar Connection, USPS

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ADDRESS: NineStar North Campus 2331 E. CR 600N Greenfield, IN 46140

NineStar South Campus 2243 E. Main St. Greenfield, IN 46140

PHONE: (317) 326-3131 (765) 533-4303

EMAIL: dspencer@ninestarconnect.com www.ninestarconnect.com

NineStar Connection

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David Spencer

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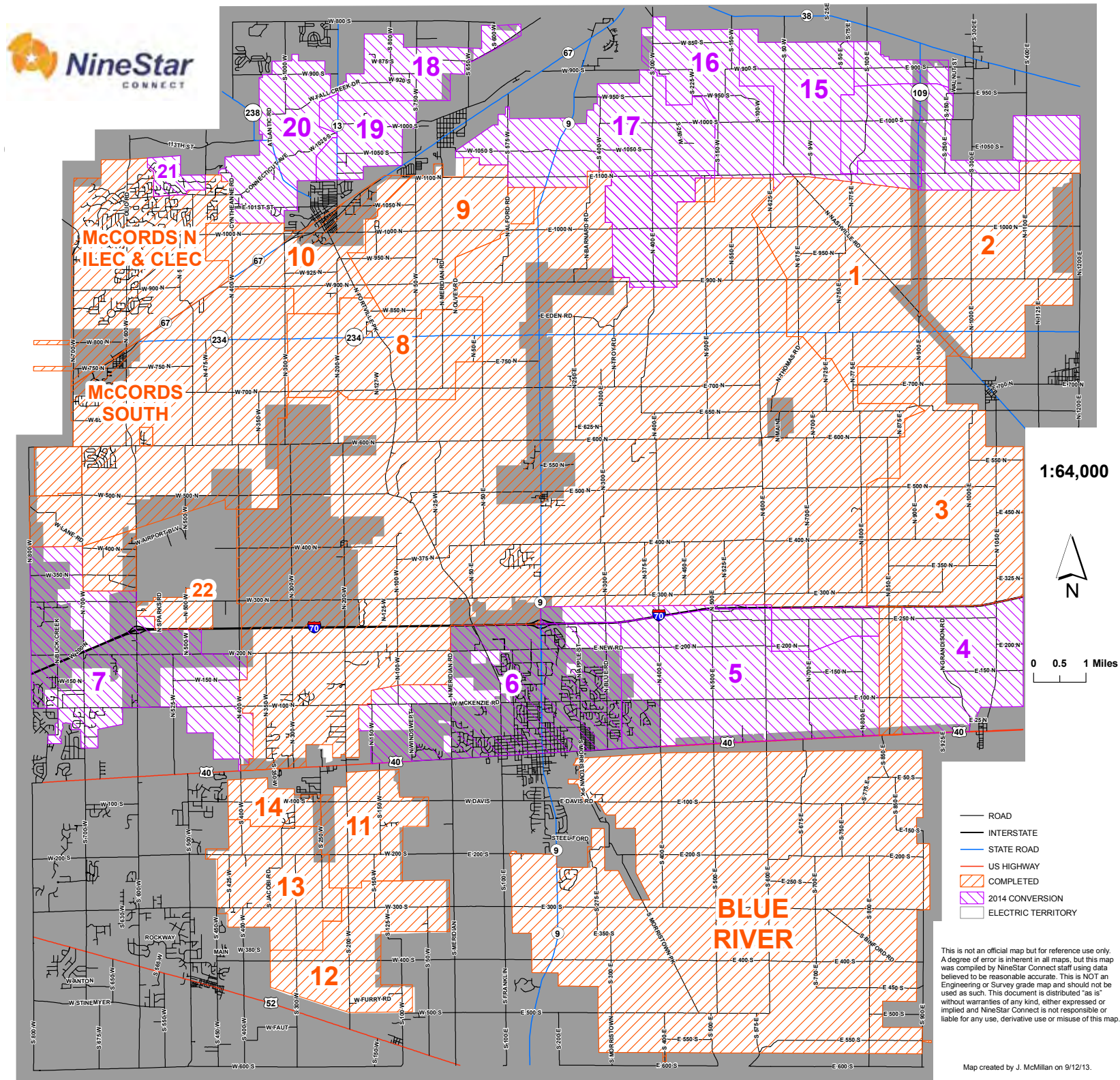
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Director District 7 James E. Cherry (A) James Gillett (B)

Retiring in 2014 Thomas Kirby

ROLLOUT PLAN



FIBER OPTICS AND SMART METER SOLUTIONS NINESTAR CONNECT PLANS FOR 2014

In an effort to offer its members the latest in products and service innovation, NineStar Connect is springing into action this year with two projects designed to keep its customers on the cusp of technology.

“This year we have two main capitol projects that we are focused on, including the expansion of our fiber optic network and the deployment of Smart Meters to all NineStar electric customers,” said Ryan Bewley, director of engineering for NineStar Connect.

Bewley said ILEC customers in north east Hancock County, along with parts of Madison and Henry counties, will be converted from their existing landlines into NineStar’s fiber optic network, which will connect them to the very best communications infrastructure available today. Not only will these members be provided with broadband that is faster than cable or wireless technologies, but they will also have access to the high definition video as well as safe and secure voice service.

For years, NineStar has been working to put the main fiber optics lines in place so the fiber to the home conversion in member areas can run smoothly and efficiently. Once the home structure itself is connected to the fiber optic network, NineStar technicians work with residents to convert their household systems, such as audio/video, phone and computers, to the new connection. The process takes from two to four hours depending on the number of devices needing to be connected, but members can rest assured that highly qualified, NineStar employees are more than capable of getting the job done and giving customers the best possible connectivity available.

“Our fiber optic network is really the core building block to the services that we offer, and when our members are wired into that network, they can take advantage of all of the products and services that we have to offer now and in the future,” Bewley said.

Those include the new Smart Meters designed to automate the meter reading process, sending information to the billing department literally at the speed of light.

Jarrod Beeson, director of switching and special projects for NineStar, said the new Smart Meters will not only eliminate costly monthly readings but will give members unprecedented insight into their monthly energy consumption.

In the past, meter readings have been a time consuming and costly process for utility companies, which must hire the labor force and provide fuel to conduct the readings on a monthly basis. Although radio technology streamlined the procedure to an extent, readers still had to be within a close proximity to a customer’s home in order for it to work properly. Beeson said Smart Meters will change all of that.

“They remove the need for a middleman and send the data right to the company,” he says. “Billing statements will still be sent on a monthly basis, and while our customers will not see a difference, they can rest assured that this process is safe, secure, accurate and more efficient than anything we’ve had before.”

In addition to a more streamlined billing process, the Smart Meter technology will also improve NineStar’s stellar customer service. Beeson said the new system allows the company to troubleshoot potential problems on the grid and fix them rather than reacting to

them after the fact.

“We can see if a transformer is about to go down and identify power outages as they occur rather than waiting for the customer to call and tell us about it,” he said.

But that’s not all. The new Smart Meters also will give members an interactive experience with their energy usage and identify any trends in consumption that affect the bottom line.

“Our customers are serious about energy efficiency, and with our handy app, which can be accessed on any tablet or smart phone, customers can track changes in the energy they use,” Beeson said. “Members will be able to see how their bill is affected when they change out a water heater, furnace or buy any other high efficiency appliance for their home.”

Lest anyone think the fiber optic network or Smart Meters are keeping a member’s home under watch, Beeson and Bewley are quick to point out that the new systems are only in place to give the cooperative more frequent readings along with a better picture of the whole network. All of the data transmitted by the Smart Meters through the fiber optics is encrypted and sent via short blasts of communication rather than constant surveillance.

“There is no way for the system to know if you are watching TV, spending time on the Internet or washing clothes. NineStar cannot glean any sensitive information from the data, and anything that it transmitted is in the form of kilowatt hours (kWh), so it’s not like hacking into a computer,” Beeson said. “Members can rest assured knowing that Big Brother isn’t watching. This is only a utility engineering tool.”

In addition, NineStar has a strict privacy policy passed by the Board of Directors that no customer data is shared with any third parties. Thus, any customer account information regarding services purchased or usage information is strictly limited for use by the customer and NineStar only.

Bewley said he hopes to have the main line for the fiber-to-home connections in place by the third quarter of this year, and Beeson said depending on the fiber construction, he expects to have 90 percent of the Smart Meters deployed by the end of 2014.

“It is a different type of technology, but the end result is the same -- to provide our members with the best possible experience that NineStar can offer,” he said.

WRITTEN BY
JULIE YOUNG

EDUCATION

NINESTAR TO OFFER 2014 SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The 2014 Scholarship program provides 15 scholarships of \$1,000 each for children of NineStar members and customers. As of Feb. 1, 2014, a student’s principle address must be with said student’s parent or legal guardian who is a member or customer in good standing of NineStar Connect or NineStar Communications.

The student must be a 2013/14 school year graduating high school student.

The student must have a seven semester minimum cumulative grade-point average of 2.75 on a 4.0 scale or its equivalent at the time of application.

Application forms must be submitted to NineStar Connect by 3 p.m. March 10, 2014

Application forms are available at ninestar-connect.com under “Our Community” and at all local high school guidance offices. They also may be picked up at any NineStar Connect business office.

NineStar Connect North Campus: 2331 E. 600 North, Greenfield, IN 46140

McCordsville Office: 6045 West Broadway, McCordsville, IN 46055

NineStar Connect South Campus: 2243 E. Main St., Greenfield, IN 46140

Knightstown Office: 37 E. Main St., Knightstown, IN 46148

For more information, call Kim Gerald at 317-323-2105.

WEATHER

NINESTAR WORKSHOP FOCUSES ON STORM PREPAREDNESS

NineStar Connect is once again hosting a series workshop for its members through the year in 2014. We hope you can join us for the first of these workshops at 8 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 22. The event will take place at NineStar’s main office at 2243 E. Main St. in Greenfield. Those attending will learn about the unpredictable spring weather, and ways you can protect your family and homes should the weather turn severe this spring. Seating is limited to the first 100 people, so please RSVP today to guarantee your spot. The easiest way to register is to call 317-323-3663 or email mbrservices@ninestar-connect.com. Everyone who attends will have a chance to win door prizes and receive special giveaways.

MEET AND GREET

NINESTAR PLAYS HOST TO 61ST ANNUAL MEETING

On April 4, 2014, at Greenfield-Central High School, NineStar Connect will be celebrating its 61st annual meeting and celebration. We hope you can join us that night and partake in the festivities. Once again, a delicious meal will be served and entertainment will be provided. Doors will open at 5 p.m. with the official meeting starting at 7 p.m. The meeting will include the business meeting along with director elections. Profiles and candidate statements are included in this newsletter. In the following weeks please be on the lookout for the official notice in the mail.

DIRECTOR CANDIDATES



DOYLE S. BAKER
DISTRICT 2 CANDIDATE

Background: Doyle S. Baker has been a cooperative member since 1988. He received his Bachelor's and Master's degree from Purdue University majoring in Industrial Technology. He retired from Eli Lilly and Co. where he worked in production, health and safety, and engineering. He then joined the teaching profession. He taught industrial technology (focusing on electricity, electronics, drafting, computer aided drafting and woods). Doyle has completed a credentialed cooperative director program and board leadership program from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. He and his wife Rebecca are members

of Outlook Christian Church. Together, they are parents to six children; August, Stephen, Terry (deceased), Denise, Christopher and Douglas. Doyle and Becky reside in Greenfield.
Statement: I am committed to the future goals and past accomplishments of NineStar Connect. Since the merger in 2011, I have learned about the communications side of our cooperative and realize it is a never ending educational experience. With today's technology explosion, it seems only natural to be amazed at the competence of those who help our members. NineStar has provided fiber for hard to reach areas that previously had no cable services. The Smart Meter installations will help members to reduce their electric bill. NineStar continues to exceed expectations and remains one of the leading cooperatives in the United States. I believe the future holds an even better opportunity to expand service areas and offer affordable products to our members. I am proud to be a member of this cooperative and serve on the Board of Directors and I hope to continue serving its members for another term.



BEVERLY GARD
DISTRICT 2 CANDIDATE

Background: Beverly Gard has been a cooperative member for 26 years. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. She also did graduate work at University of Tennessee and Memphis Medical Units. She is a biochemist and worked at Lilly from 1964 to 1967. She was also an Indiana State Senator for 24 years from 1988-2012. For more than a decade, she was chairman of the Indiana Senate Energy and Environmental Affairs Committee. As an active member of the National Conference of State Legislatures, she chaired national commit-

tees for three years that dealt with energy, agricultural and environmental issues and was considered one of the national legislative experts on environmental policy as it affects energy production. Additionally, her legislative work as an advocate for telecommunication and energy cooperatives required her to achieve a high level of understanding of the issues it faces and to acquire possible solutions that challenge cooperatives. She has also served on various charitable organizations, such as the Hancock County Community Foundation, Greenfield Chamber Board of Directors, and the Greenfield Revitalization Board of Directors. She currently is Chairwoman of Staff/Parish Committee with Bradley United Methodist Church, President of the Hancock County Public Library Board of Trustees, Chairwoman of the State of Indiana Environmental Rules Board, on the Board of Directors of the Hancock Regional Hospital Foundation, Vice-President of the Indiana Library Federation and member of Indiana Farm Bureau. Additionally, because of the position she held with the National Conference of State Legislatures, she has traveled to many places in the world to see new innovations and sources of energy production. She also was invited to have a personal conversation with President George W. Bush on environmental regulations and energy production and how proposals would impact Indiana consumers. Beverly and her husband, Don, live in Greenfield and have two grown sons, David and Doug.
Statement: During all my 24 years as State Senator, I served on committees that dealt with telecommunications and energy issues. Much of my legislation was on behalf of Indiana's electric and telecommunications cooperatives, including addressing anti-competitive policies of investor owned companies that were detrimental to cooperatives and their members. Additionally, I was the author of the legislation that allowed our electric and telecommunications cooperatives to merge. Of utmost importance

to NineStar members are the issues of reliability, affordability and transparency of operations and services. Poorly thought out environmental policy threaten affordable, reliable energy for NineStar members. Sound financial management and product diversification is necessary as loss of federal dollars threaten affordable telecommunication services. My educational background in science and my years of leadership on relevant public policy issues provide an opportunity for a unique and beneficial perspective in the oversight of NineStar as it strives to continue providing value to members.



DAVID G. HELLER
DISTRICT 2 CANDIDATE

Background: David Heller has been a cooperative member since 1965. He obtained his bachelor's and master's degrees from Ball State University. David retired from Mt. Vernon Schools as a teacher for six years and as an administrator for 28 years. He was an Educational Consultant for five years for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association and represented various national committees for NineStar Connect. He is a Sunday School Teacher at Otterbein Church, a member of Hancock County Retired Teachers Association and a current board member of NineStar Connect. He and his wife, Shirley, are the parents of two sons, Trent and Todd (deceased), and live in Greenfield.
Statement: I am proud to be a board member of NineStar Connect, the merger of Hancock Telecom and Central Indiana Power. We have brought many additional services to the people in this community. This merger has been a culmination of two



companies, both with the highest cooperative spirit. To keep this forward-looking company moving in the right direction, I seek your support.



KIM L. CRONK
DISTRICT 4 CANDIDATE

Background: Kim Cronk has been a cooperative member since 1989. He graduated from Shenandoah High School and received his bachelor's degree in Education from Ball State University. He also attended the Law Enforcement Academy. He is currently Captain of the Henry County Sheriff's Department, Henry County commissioner and serves on the board at NineStar Connect. Previously, Kim served as Henry County

Sheriff for eight years, was a Henry County councilman and school board president of Shenandoah High School. He is currently a member of Indiana Electric Statewide, National Rural Telecommunications Association, National Sheriff's Association, Indiana Sheriff's Association and Fraternal Order of Police. He lives in New Castle and has two daughters, Lauren and Leanna.
Statement: During the past 17 years, I have served as a member of the Board of Directors for NineStar (formerly Hancock Telecom) and attended numerous conferences, which provided several hours of educational training in the ever-changing world of telecommunications. During my tenure as a director, I have always strived to be a progressive board member promoting the progressive business practices of NineStar. Also, the other board members and I also take pride in the fact that NineStar, being a cooperative, is owned by its members and is a not-for-profit organization promoting "customer service" and "quality of service" as our primary objectives.



ROBERT C. GLAZIER
DISTRICT 6 CANDIDATE

Background: Robert Glazier has been a cooperative member since 1990. He graduated from Tufts University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Geology. He also graduated from the Air Force Officers Training School and attained the rank of Captain while serving during the Vietnam War. He is a retired Director of Utilities (Chief of Staff) for the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission, having served in that position for 15 years. He previously served as Chief Engineer for the IURC. Because of these positions, he has attended many training courses and seminars on management, and financial

and accounting issues related to utilities. Bob is also a former member of the board of directors for Meals on Wheels of Hancock County. He has delivered meals once a week for more than 12 years. He was the first recipient of the "Bob Glazier Volunteer of the Year Award" named in his honor. He is a former Chairman of the Indiana Council of Economic Education and presently serves on its executive committee. Bob is a recipient of the "Sagamore of the Wabash," the highest honor bestowed by the governor of Indiana. Bob and his wife, Carolyn, live in Greenfield and have raised three sons, Steve, Craig and Mark.
Statement: I have served one term as Director of Hancock Telecom and one term as Director of NineStar Connect. I am very proud to have been elected the first Chairman of the Board of NineStar Connect. I was a strong proponent of the merger of Central Indiana Power and Hancock Telecom and would like to serve another term on the NineStar board to help explore further opportunities that the merger provides. I

believe that my experience as Director of the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission and as a board member of both Hancock Telecom and NineStar provide me with the tools needed to continue to be an engaged and contributing director. I understand utility management and financial matters and the unique accounting methods required for electric and telecommunication cooperatives.



RICHARD WALKER
DISTRICT 6 CANDIDATE

Background: Richard Walker has been a cooperative member since 1966. He is a farmer in Charlottesville. He graduated from Charlottesville High School and has lived in Jackson Township all his life. At one time, Richard was a deputy on the Sheriff's Department and a security officer at Hancock Regional Hospital. His training involves the Law Enforcement Academy, FEMA training and hospital security training.
Statement: I have lived in Jackson Township all my life and have been a member of REMC since the '60s. I have been very impressed with the merger to NineStar and the difference it has made in area (District 6). I have been able to take advantage of these services. I have been very pleased to have a phone that works when it rains and have an Internet and cable all in one. This is a much needed service for a rural area like District 6. As a director of NineStar, I would like to get services expanded for more people in my district so they can experience the benefits I have been lucky enough to acquire. I know that getting expanded into all areas will benefit both NineStar and local residents.



NINESTAR EMPLOYEES MAKE RAY OF LIGHT DONATION

In 2003, NineStar Connect established the endowed Ray of Light Fund as another way to benefit the communities it serves. The fund is jointly administered through the Hancock, Henry and South Madison County Community Foundations, and all donations go directly to the community foundation of the employee's choice. In November, the NineStar employee designation committee met to decide which non-profit organization would be awarded the first Ray of Light Grant. After a review of applications, the group picked the Special Olympics for the award of \$1,000. NineStar employees who sit on the committee include; Julie Mitchell, Ryan Bewley, Jill Snyder, Terry McDonnell and Jeff Fradenburgh.

HONOR

NINESTAR EXECUTIVE SPEAKS AT FLORIDA CONFERENCE

Mike Burrow, Vice President & General Counsel at NineStar Connect, was invited recently to speak at an industry conference in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. The conference was sponsored by John Staurulakis, Inc., a leader in financial, regulatory, business development, management, advocacy, for rural telecommunication companies. The focus of the conference was on issues facing rural telephone companies and how they can position themselves to deal with the changing industry. Burrow spoke to the group about the NineStar Consolidation and the benefits and rewards of a merger between a telephone and electric company.



MIKE BURROW

RETIREMENTS



Lynn Funk (left) and Cindi DeWitt pose together

PAIR OF LONGTIME EMPLOYEES MOVE ON

With close to 60 years of service between them, long-time NineStar Connect employees Lynn Funk and Cindi DeWitt have recently retired. Both employees chose last December for the conclusion of their careers. Both individuals were treated to retirement gatherings at NineStar complete with cake and punch. In addition, they also were presented with clocks at the company Christmas party and honored in front of their fellow employees. Cindi and Lynn will be missed, and we wish them nothing but a long and happy retirement in the years to come. We thank them both for their hard work and dedicated service to the company.

CINDI DEWITT

Cindi started her career with Central Indiana Power in April of 1980 and was hired into the company by then General Manager Gene

Ruesch. Cindi began her career as a receptionist and customer service representative; she answered customer calls, solved their issues and at sometimes worked on billing issues. In 1988, she moved into the Accounting Department. For the past 10 years, Cindi has continued her service in the Accounting Department, where she has been working on accounts payable; her duties include writing checks for the electric side of NineStar Connect.

Cindi's supervisor, Ryan Fox, NineStar's Controller commented "Cindi enjoyed working for this company and you could tell that by her willingness to do whatever was needed throughout her career. She will be missed not only in the Accounting Department but throughout the Electric Operations."

Cindi is married to Dick and has two children, Stephanie and Stephen, and seven grandchildren. In her retirement, her immediate plans include a vacation to Florida and a cruise. More long-term plans include sleeping in, relaxing and looking forward to gardening this spring/summer.

LYNN FUNK

Lynn started her career 26 years ago when then General Manager Gene Ruesch hired her. Lynn began working in Member Services. This position included working with the members with their bills and energy saving programs. Around 2005, Lynn moved to Engineering as an Engineering Customer Service Representative. This position's main duties included all the permitting and locating for construction projects. In her job, she dealt with many job superintendents from various builders and job sites.

Lynn's supervisor, Ryan Bewley, Director of Engineering, stated "Lynn's long history with the company made her well-rounded by working in different departments over the years. She has always added value to them and will be missed, especially in the Engineering Department." Lynn is married to Jack and has a stepson named Christian. In her retirement she plans on relaxing and going to the beach whenever she can. Long-term goals include traveling and spending time in Florida.

IN THE KITCHEN

INGREDIENTS

2 sticks unsalted butter at room temperature, plus melted butter for pans
1 pound almond paste
1 cup sugar
1 teaspoon pure almond extract
6 large eggs
1 cup all-purpose flour
Pinch fine sea salt
1 1/3 cups raspberry preserves, recipe follows, or strawberry jam with seeds
8 cups tinted Royal Icing, recipe follows, or store bought; and
Decorative dragees, silver, gold, etc., for garnish

DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F. Brush 3 (12 1/2- by 9-inch) rimmed baking sheets (otherwise known as quarter sheet pans) with melted butter. Line the pans with parchment paper, leaving a few inches of overhang on opposite sides. Butter the top of the parchment paper as well, then set aside.

In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the almond paste and sugar on medium speed until well combined, about 5 minutes. Add the almond extract. Roughly cut the room temperature butter into pats and gradually add to the almond paste-sugar mixture. Beat until light and fluffy, about 2 minutes, scraping down the sides of the bowl if needed. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating to combine after each addition. Add the flour and salt and beat until just combined.

Divide the batter evenly among the prepared baking sheets, about 2 1/4 cups each sheet, smoothing the batter out with an offset spatula. Gently tap the baking sheet on the table to remove any air pockets in the batter. Air pockets will cause holes in the baked cake. Bake until just set, but not browned, 15 to 20 minutes. Give the baking sheets a turn halfway through baking, after about 8 minutes, for even baking, if needed, but don't worry too much because we're covering the cakes. Test with a toothpick or skewer and if clean, remove from the oven and transfer to wire racks to cool.

To make the jam easier to spread and to prevent tearing the cake, puree the raspberry jam in a food processor. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Turn 1 cake layer out onto the lined baking sheet. Spread half of the raspberry jam in an even layer over the cake. Carefully flip the cake out of the baking sheet and top with a second cake layer. Spread with the remaining jam. Carefully flip the final layer out of the baking sheet and top the cake. Place a piece of parchment paper over the final layer and top with a second baking sheet. Weigh down with 2 large (28-ounce) cans. Chill in the refrigerator for at least 1 hour and or even overnight.

Remove the cake from the refrigerator and cut into 1-inch squares. Place onto wire racks over at least 2 baking sheets, leaving at least 1-inch between each cake piece.

Place each of the tinted royals icings in a heatproof bowl set over a pan of simmering water, with the bottom of the bowl not touching the water, until pourable. You should have about 8 cups total. You'll be using about 1 heaping tablespoon icing on each. Carefully place a cut cake on a



chocolate fork/dipper (or a small fork). Place the cake over the icing and spoon the icing onto the cake. If the cake drops into the icing, carefully pick it up with your spoon and place back onto your fork/dipper. Place back onto the wire rack using another dipper or fork to slide onto the wire rack. Top with decorative dragees, as desired. Repeat with the remaining icing and cakes. Alternately, for each tinted frosting, set 3 cooling racks over baking sheets and divide the cut cake pieces evenly among the racks. Pour the tinted frosting slowly over the cake pieces. If you need extra frosting, just remove the cooling rack, scrape the excess frosting from the baking sheet, melt or microwave until pourable and touch up any area the frosting didn't coat the first time.

Let stand until set, about 30 minutes at room temperature, or cover and place in the refrigerator for up to 1 week until ready to serve.

RASPBERRY PRESERVES

1 quart raspberries
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 3/4 cups sugar
Put your raspberries and 1/4 cup water in a saucepan over medium heat. Once it's at a simmer, partially cover and cook 8 to 10 minutes. Pass the berry mixture through a food mill and measure the liquid that remains. You need 3 1/2 cups. Add more water if there isn't enough.

Put the berry liquid into a new saucepan over medium heat and bring to a simmer again. Once it simmers, start adding your sugar in 1/2 cup increments. Give it a stir to incorporate and bring it back to a simmer before adding of the next 1/2 cup sugar. Once the last 1/2 cup is added, bring the liquid to 216 to 218 degrees F on a candy thermometer. Stir constantly.

Let this cool to room temperature prior to using. If not using right away, refrigerate for up to 1 week.

Yield: 2 cups.

ROYAL ICING

6 tablespoons corn syrup
2 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon almond extract
17 1/2 cups confectioners' sugar (about 5 boxes)
Green and violet food coloring (or your favorite colors)
In a large heatproof bowl, combine 1 1/4 cups plus 1 tablespoon water, corn syrup and almond extract. Once incorporated, slowly whisk in the sugar until fully combined. Alternately, slowly mix together in a stand mixer and transfer to a heatproof bowl prior to icing cakes.

Divide the icing into 3 heatproof bowls. To make a pale green color, add a little less than 1 drop green food coloring to the first bowl. To the second bowl, add 1 drop purple coloring for a lavender color. Leave the final bowl white, or add another color, as desired.

PETIT FOURS

DELECTABLE DESSERTS SET HEARTS A-FLUTTER

Valentine's Day is synonymous with candlelight dinners, romantic movies and delicious desserts. Although chocolate is often standard fare for the day of love, many other treats, including petit fours, can win the heart of a special person.

Although people often believe the term *petit four* refers to a particular recipe for a dessert, it actually denotes a variety of small desserts. Petit fours are bite-size pastries generally eaten at the end of a meal or at tea time. The name is comprised of French terms meaning "small oven," which generally means the desserts are cooked at a low temperature in an oven. Petit fours may be "secs," meaning "dry" desserts, including biscuits and puff pastries. Most are "glaces," or "iced" desserts, such as tiny cakes. These are often the desserts people associate with the name "petit fours."

Cake-type petit fours are traditionally made from an almond-flavored sponge cake or an almond genoise. Other types of cake, such as pound cake, can be used, but the consistency must be firm enough to handle cutting and filling. The options in fillings and coatings is as endless as the imagination. Some prefer to coat them in fondant, a sugary dough that hardens upon standing and produces a firm, flat surface for decorating. Others like their petit fours covered in chocolate or another candy material.

These desserts are available from many bakeries and retailers. For those who want to treat a Valentine to home-made petit fours, one trick is to bake the batter in mini loaf pans and then cut in half, or use small cupcake tins to achieve the desired bite-size shape. Or bake the batter in a sheet pan and then use cookie cutters to make small shapes. Jams, fruit preserves, frosting, icing, almond paste, and any other fillings can be used in between the layers.

Fondant can be purchased from party and craft stores or specially ordered from cake decorating retailers. An easy fondant can be made from a confectioners' sugar and marshmallow recipe.

After a romantic meal, serve petit fours with a dessert liqueur for the perfect Valentine's Day dessert.

NINESTAR ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR ENERGY CAMP

NineStar Connect is pleased to announce it will once again sponsor two students to attend Touchstone Energy® Camp scheduled for June 4-7, 2014 at Camp Tecumseh in Brookston, Ind. For 12 years, Touchstone Energy® Camp has educated more than 1,000 sixth-grade students about how to stay safe around electricity, while providing campers a chance to make friends from around Indiana and enjoy a variety of outdoor activities.

“This is a fun and exciting way for students to learn about electric safety and the role of electric cooperatives in their community. On top of that, they get to experience all the fun activities and social aspects of summer camp,” said Tim Hills, President of NineStar.

Sixth-graders from across Indiana will enjoy three days of exhilarating outdoor

activities, such as zip lining and rock wall climbing, as well as traditional camp activities, such as horseback riding, canoeing and swimming. Campers also will participate in interactive lessons about safe electricity, working together in a hands-on equipment connect simulation and wiring a table-top demo to light up a bulb. They’ll even enjoy a bird’s eye view of their friends during bucket truck rides with lineworkers.

Sixth-grade students eligible to attend should fill out an application and return it to Christa Riggs by March 3. Parents must be cooperative members of NineStar Connect. Applications are available at www.ninestarconnect.com.

The Touchstone Energy® Camp program was developed by a committee of electric cooperative employees from around the state of Indiana. It is funded in part by Hoosier Energy, Wabash Valley Power Association, Indiana’s Rural Electric Cooperatives, Indiana Statewide Association of REC’s and local sponsors.

For more information, please contact Christa Riggs, Marketing Coordinator at 317-323-2132 or criggs@ninestarconnect.com.



POLAR WARRIORS

NINESTAR SYSTEMS FAIR WELL DURING EXTREME WEATHER

Recent extreme winter weather, caused by a polar vortex, according to the National Weather Service, has been demanding on virtually all citizens in Indiana during the past month. The state’s public utility systems have been pushed to their limits during these below zero days. NineStar’s electrical distribution grid is no exception.

“You always hope for the best but plan for the worst,” stated NineStar’s Jamie Bell. As the company’s Director of Operations, Bell is the person who is ultimately responsible for constructing and maintaining all of NineStar’s outside plant facilities, including its fiber optic and electrical distribution grids. “Our systems always perform as expected during normal weather ranges,” he stated, “but the true test of how well everyone has done comes during extreme weather.”

NineStar’s systems performed

exceptionally well during the extreme weather and cold experienced in Central Indiana Jan. 5, 6 and 7 and then again Jan. 27 and 28. On Jan. 5, nearly 11 inches of snow fell in the NineStar service area. It began as a heavy, wet snow but later began blowing and drifting as the winds picked up. Eventually, everything quickly froze hard as temperatures plummeted.

About 19 percent of NineStar’s electric members experienced some sort of an interruption in service during the 72-hour period from Jan. 5-7. However,

the average interruption lasted only 55 minutes. Other nearby customers of larger, investor-owned utilities experienced outages that lasted for several hours or even days that resulted in pipes freezing and other damage to homes and businesses.

“NineStar’s linemen didn’t hesitate to get out in the harsh weather when an outage came in,” noted Line Superintendent Jeff Conley. “We had 100 percent of our crews working to make sure any outage was kept to an absolute minimum because we knew the extreme conditions were both life-threatening and potentially property damaging. Our linemen and groundmen are some of the most dedicated, hard-working in Indiana.”

Members south of McCordsville also experienced intermittent “blinking” of electrical power – that is, power that was inter-

rupted for a second or less, which is enough to cause lights to blink, and televisions and computers to reset. While it took a few hours to diagnose the cause of the blinking, it was discovered that customers who are served out of a phase in the Lee Hanna substation were, literally, consuming the maximum amount of power that the phase was engineered to handle. “This issue, once isolated, was able to be corrected short-term by transferring some load to other phases,” reported Ryan Bewley, Director of Engineering. “However, the long-term plan is to establish a new substation in the McCordsville area to accommodate the rapid growth in population and electrical load in that area. We would hope to have a new substation located, constructed and online in the next 24 to 30 months.”

Of course, all NineStar electric members were consuming extraordinary amounts of power during the first cold snap in January. In fact, NineStar sold more electricity during a 24 hour period on Jan. 6 than any 24-hour period in its history – more



than 827,000 kilowatt hours (kWh). NineStar’s members only consumed 553,000 kWh during the preceding 24 hour period on Jan. 5. By comparison, NineStar sold only 714,112 kWh on Jan. 27 and 747,591 kWh on Jan. 28, during the most recent below zero time period.

It should also be noted that the number of outages in January and the length of those outages were greatly reduced by NineStar’s contin-

ued right-of-way maintenance and tree trimming program that was initiated almost 10 years ago. During the past seven years, the number of tree-related outages have been reduced by more than 75 percent. “During the extreme wind and cold earlier in January, NineStar only experienced three tree-related outages, which is quite remarkable given the conditions that existed,” commented Jamie Bell. “Sure it hurts to see a

tree that was planted too close and has grown into power lines trimmed or cut down, but it sure beats the alternative of being without power for several hours or days during below zero weather.”

For members and customers who use the social media outlets Facebook and Twitter, NineStar encourages you to follow the company. “When we have a large outage or weather events that can potentially cause wide-spread outages, we make every attempt to communicate with our members and customers in real time using these social media outlets. We know a lot of the times that our customers simply want to know what is causing the interruption in service, whether crews are in route or on sight, and approximately how long the interruption will last.” stated Director of Marketing David Spencer. “We are in regular communications with our ground crews and make every effort to share as much information and be as transparent as we possibly can with our customers,” he added.

WABASH VALLEY POWER CELEBRATES GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

Nearly 400 people gathered at the Indiana State Museum recently to Celebrate50, the occasion marking Wabash Valley Power Associations golden anniversary. The evening’s program included a historical video and congratulatory greeting from former Indiana Senator Richard Lugar, and NRECA CEO Jo Ann Emerson. In addition, two special exhibits were created to reflect not only Wabash Valley’s history but also the changing world through each of the five decades. Guests at the event included former and current co-op directors, managers and Wabash Valley Power Association employees, along with guests from key business partners such as ACES, CFC, CoBank, Duke Energy Indiana, Hoosier Energy and Indiana Statewide. NineStar Connect secures the power it provides to its members through its association with WVPA. A cooperative itself, Wabash Valley Power enables its member cooperatives to improve their overall buying power in the electricity marketplace by creating a generation and transmission cooperative.

Local distribution cooperatives such as NineStar Connect recognize the benefits of buying wholesale power through a larger cooperative and joined as members of Wabash Valley Power. Today, Wabash Valley Power has grown to serve the wholesale power needs of local distribution cooperatives in a four-state area. In addition to supplying power, WVPA also provides a broad variety of business services to help its member systems better leverage their own resources and benefit from joint efforts with other nearby co-ops.



Representing NineStar at the event were (from left) Phil Hayes, Steve Vail, Ronnie Mohr, Jim Cherry and Mike Burrow.

NINESTAR TV TO PROVIDE EXTENSIVE WINTER OLYMPICS COVERAGE

NineStar TV has you covered when it comes to the Sochi Olympic Games with coverage beginning Feb. 6, one night before the Opening Ceremony on Feb. 7. Additional to the primary coverage on WTHR - NBC channel 13, your NineStar TV service will have complete enhanced coverage on USA Network, MSNBC, CNBC and NBC Sports Network. Combined, we will provide our viewers with more than 350 hours of Olympic coverage in 18 days. If that is not enough, available to NineStar TV subscribers is our “WatchTV Everywhere” service, at no additional charge. Be sure to call NineStar Customer Service to get account set-up information to help enable you to watch Olympic coverage utilizing apps on your mobile devices, including “NBC Olympics Live Extra” with 1,000+ hours of live streaming and full event replays.

For a link to the NBC schedule, go to <http://www.nbcolympics.com/tv-listings>, enter your zip code and NineStar Connect as your provider.



SAVE THE DATE - NINESTAR PLANS ANNUAL MEETING

Join us at the 2014 Annual Meeting of NineStar Connect on April 4, 2014 at Greenfield-Central High School, located at 801 N. Broadway in Greenfield. Both dinner and registration begin at 5 p.m. for NineStar Connect and Communication customers.

Join us for a free dinner, music and prizes!

- \$15,000 in scholarships will be drawn
- \$5,000 in cash prizes will be drawn
- Must be present to win
- Save The Date

BUILDING A NEW HOME?
WE HAVE AN APP FOR THAT!

The air is cold and the snow is still piled up on the sidewalks from the near blizzard that struck last month. Planning to build a new home may be far from your mind now, but once spring hits, new home construction may be part of your plan. If a new home is in your future, you should consider building a Touchstone Energy Home.

What is a Touchstone Energy Home? A Touchstone Energy Home is a well-insulated, electrically heated and cooled home that is more energy-efficient, less expensive to operate, cleaner, safer and more comfortable than today's standard building code models.

A home built to today's standard energy code is rated 100 on the Home Energy Rating Scale (HERS). If a home used no energy it, it would be rated a zero. Touchstone Energy Homes have been receiving an average HERS rating of 51. That's 49 percent better than a code-built home.

Heating and cooling typically accounts for just 15 percent of energy costs in a Touchstone Energy Home, compared to roughly half of the average home's energy bill. The average Touchstone Energy Home costs just over \$500 per year to heat and cool. Yes, you read that correctly. The AVERAGE Touchstone Energy Home costs just over \$500 PER YEAR to heat and cool.

Owners of a Touchstone Energy HOME receive a one-year heating and cooling cost guarantee, a performance report and a pewter medallion to display on the home's exterior, which can increase your home's value.

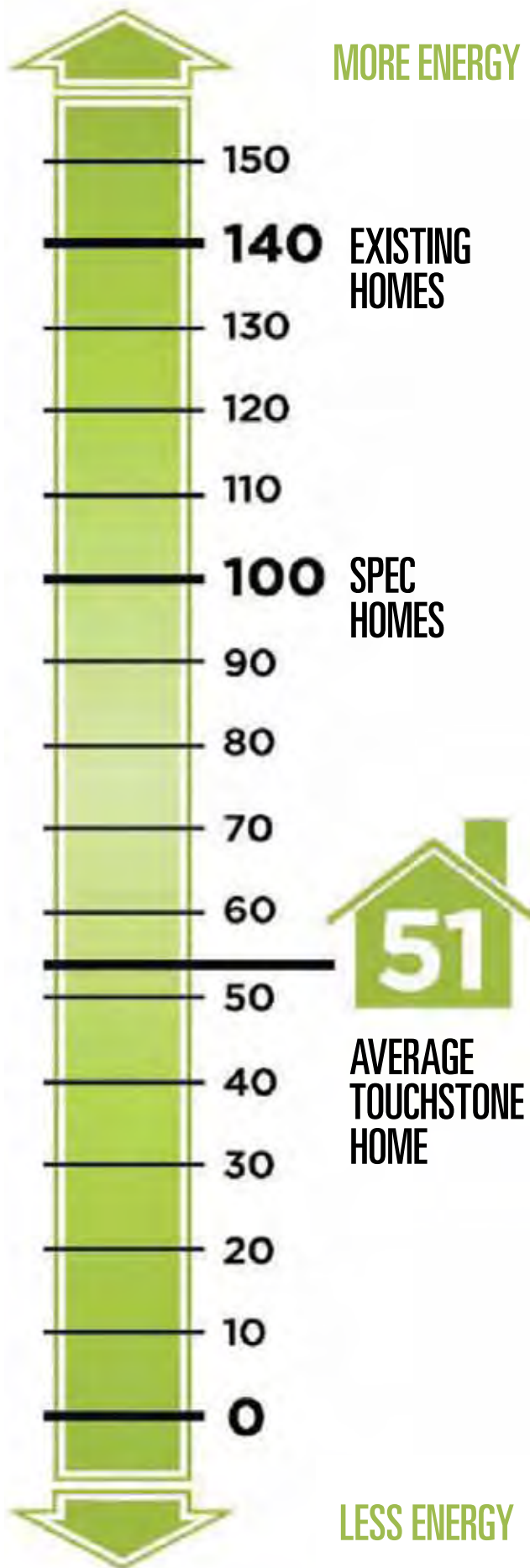
The Touchstone Energy Home incorporates energy-saving features into building plans. The standards are broken into seven categories:

- Insulation standards for foundations, walls and ceilings
- Basements and floorings
- Building envelope/thermal bypass requirements
- Mechanical systems
- Water heating
- Lighting and appliances
- Fireplaces

Worried about the cost? The additional cost to build a home to Touchstone Energy standards on average is only 25 cents to \$1 more per square foot. And you will definitely save that in your heating and cooling expenses.

How do you begin building a Touchstone Energy Home? Simply talk to NineStar Connect and have your builder complete a training course before construction begins. The builder, NineStar Connect, member and home energy rater all work together to make sure the necessary steps are followed in order for the home to be certified a Touchstone Energy Home.

The Touchstone Energy Home program is available to all NineStar Connect electric cooperative members who construct homes to meet the program's standards. To find out more about the program, please contact NineStar's Home Energy Advisor Darrin Couch at 317-326-3131.



NINESTAR EMPLOYEE MARK W.
ENOS PASSES AWAY

The NineStar family is mourning the recent passing of employee Mark W. Enos. Mark lost his courageous battle with cancer Tuesday, Jan. 21, 2014.

Mark was born Jan. 10, 1958 in Greenfield. He graduated from Greenfield-Central High School in 1976. He married Becky (Bolton) Enos. Mark worked for Greenfield Beverage as a Truck

Driver, was a Building Inspector for the City of Greenfield, Heavy Equipment Operator at Fisk Sanitation, and most recently, worked at NineStar Connect in Building Maintenance. He was a member of the VFW #2693 in Greenfield, Shelby Eagles, F.O.P., A.B.A.T.E. and H.O.G.



Mark enjoyed riding his Harleys, but his greatest joy was playing with his grandchildren. He was also a member of the Patriot Guard Riders.

He is survived by his loving wife of 32 years, Becky; daughter, Abigail (Brad) Herbert of Greenfield; and grandchildren, Adam and Madysen. Mark was preceded in death by his aunt and uncle, Vera and Bob Maxwell.

Ninestar will miss his hard work, dedication and friendly conversations that always included a smile. He will be missed.

SUDOKU

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes.

See ninestarconnect.com Facebook page for last edition's solution.

	9			8		3	
5					3		7
					2	4	9
6	2	5				9	
1		7			4		2
			2				5
	6						4 5
		1	3				6
9				7	1	8	