



MARCH - APRIL 2015

NineStar_{CONNECTION}

VOLUME 4
ISSUE 2

TIME TO VOTE

NineStar 62nd annual event will include dinner, entertainment and the chance to vote for directors.

PAGES 6-7



INSTANT UPDATES

Power out? No internet or TV? Check NineStar's Facebook or Twitter page!

PAGE 9

PRESORTED
STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
GREENFIELD, IN
PERMIT NO. 220

NINESTAR'S ANNUAL MEETING MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE **SEE PAGE 4**



CELEBRATION



OUR EMPLOYEES
MAKE THE DIFFERENCE.
CONGRATULATIONS TO
OUR TEAM MEMBER
FOR A JOB WELL DONE!
HERE'S A NICE NOTE
ABOUT BARRY BECKER.

“BARRY DID A
GREAT JOB! VERY
SATISFIED”

- PHILLIP C.

STORY IDEA?

Contact **David Spencer** at
dspencer@ninestarconnect.com

COVER STORY PAGES 4-5
NineStar Connect 62nd Annual Meeting and Celebration will provide members a chance for a fun, informative evening.

NINESTAR ELECTIONS PAGES 6-7
On the night of the NineStar Connect Annual Meeting and Celebration, there will also be director elections. Read about the candidates.

OPERATION ROUND-UP PAGE 8
NineStar Connect helped support a handful of local community organizations through its quarterly distribution of donated funds.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE PAGE 10-11
Reigning 4-H Fair Queen Annalee Witte recently created an event that crowned 20 little girls from around the county.

HERE COMES
THE SUN

NineStar linemen spent the latter part of March setting the anchors for the community solar site. Learn more about the site at the corner of CR 600N and CR 600E in Hancock County.

PAGE 10

NINESTAR SPEAKS AT
GREENFIELD ROTARY CLUB

Director of Marketing David Spencer was honored to be the guest speaker at the Greenfield Rotary Club on Feb. 19. Spencer shared the history of the company and some of the current projects the company is working on. These include the community solar project, fiber to the home and smart meter deployments. Spencer also touched on Senate Bill 309, which is currently winding its way through the Indiana Legislature. The bill deals with electric territory preservation. If you know of a group or service club that is looking for a speaker, please call the NineStar Speaker's Bureau at (317) 323-2132.



Great 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



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.

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USPS

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NineStar Connection

EDITOR
David Spencer

**BOARD OF
DIRECTORS**

Director District 1
Darrell H. Thomas (A)
Stephen Vail (B)

Director District 2
Beverly Gard (A)
David G. Heller (B)

Director District 3
Richard C. Parker (A)
Joseph Paxton (B)

Director District 4
Don Shaw (A)
Kim Cronk (B)

Director District 5
Ronnie Mohr (A)
Mark Evans (B)

Director District 6
Richard Walker (A)
Philip M. Hayes (B)

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

YOUR CURRENT NINESTAR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DIRECTOR DISTRICT 1



DARRELL H. THOMAS (A)



STEPHEN VAIL (B)

DIRECTOR DISTRICT 2



BEVERLY GARD (A)



DAVID G. HELLER (B)

DIRECTOR DISTRICT 3



RICHARD C. PARKER (A)
Retiring 2015



JOSEPH PAXTON (B)

DIRECTOR DISTRICT 4



DON SHAW (A)



KIM CRONK (B)

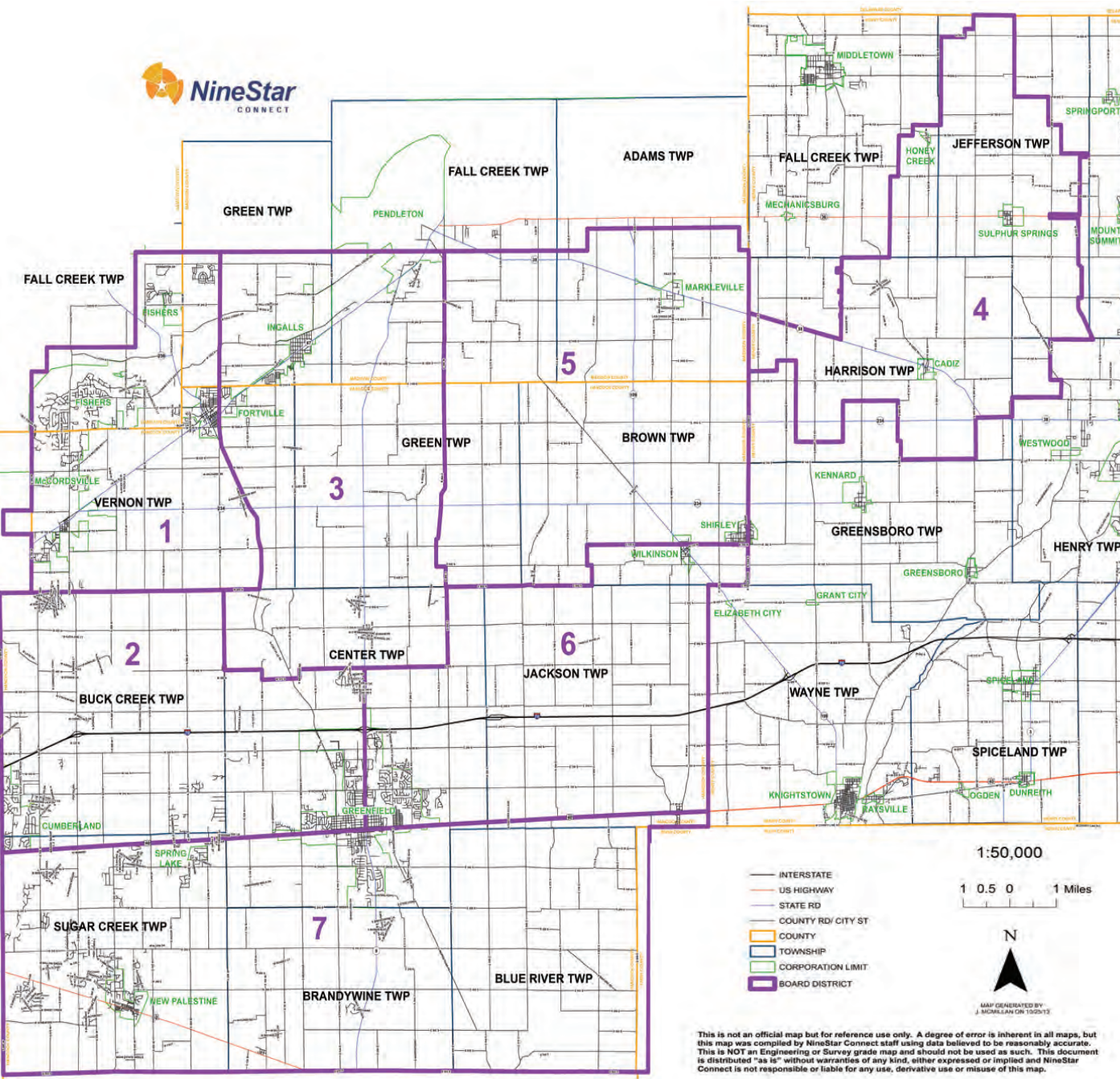
DIRECTOR DISTRICT 5



RONNIE MOHR (A)



MARK EVANS (B)



DIRECTOR DISTRICT 6



RICHARD WALKER (A)



PHILIP M. HAYES (B)

DIRECTOR DISTRICT 7



JAMES E. CHERRY (A)



JAMES GILLETT (B)



NINESTAR CELEBRATION



NINESTAR'S ANNUAL MEETING MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

Are you eager to find out what's new for NineStar, learn how you can take advantage of current features and hear about the state of the co-op? Members are invited to do all that and more when they attend NineStar's Annual Meeting set for 5 p.m. April 17 at Greenfield-Central High School.

According to NineStar executive assistant Christa Meadors, the evening will consist of two workshops, dinner and a business meeting, which will offer the membership updates on a variety of developments and recognize the 2015 winners of NineStar scholarships. There also will be cash prizes totaling \$5,000 for those in attendance.

WRITTEN BY
**JULIE
YOUNG**

"We work really hard to make each year's meeting bigger and better than the one before it," Meadors said. "Members who have attended in the past say it's a great excuse for a date night, and with free child care on site for ages 1-10, it's a great excuse to bring the whole family."

While adults attend the meeting, children will be treated to pizza, fun and games inside the gym, including inflatable obstacle courses, basketball, other games and plenty of supervision. Those who register prior to the April 10 deadline will receive a NineStar Nerd drawing backpack.

"We have NineStar employees as well as a PE teacher helping to organize the games to ensure that everyone has a good time," Meadors said.

The grown-ups are guaranteed to have a good time, too, and maybe learn a little something along the way. Regina Bever, director of customer service, will operate a booth that will enable members to learn more about the various company features that are right at their fingertips through the NineStar Smart hub. In addition to allowing customers to go paperless and pay their bill electronically,

COVER STORY



REGISTER FOR ANNUAL MEETING

NineStar's Annual Meeting is set for Friday, April 17, 2015 at Greenfield-Central High School. Registration begins at 5 p.m. with workshops at 5:30 p.m. and 6 p.m. Dinner begins at 5 p.m. with a business meeting to follow. Workshop attendees will be entered to win a \$100 gas card, and everyone present will be eligible to win door prizes, which total \$5,000 in cash. Free childcare will be available for those ages 1-10 in the gym with food and fun available for the little ones. Shuttle service from the parking lot to the door will be available as well.

Members can RSVP by calling (317) 326-MEET (6338) or online at www.ninestarconnect.com/annualmeeting. Deadline for registration is 4 p.m. April 10.

cally, she said she is eager to help folks learn to navigate the portal and discover the various possibilities they may not know about.

"If you are a dual customer, you can see both the electric and telecommunications portions of your account; you can see how much power you are using, receive notifications about when your account is due and if your home is experiencing an outage even if you are not there. There is so much you can do and we really want to show our members how easy it is to use," she said.

In addition, members can take advantage of two workshops during the event that will help them learn more about the new GigE Internet service that will give them the most up-to-the-minute innovation in terms of speed and reliability.

Ross Ferson, CTO (Chief Technology Officer), said when it comes to the Internet, it's all about speed and reliability, and with the GigE service members are not only getting the best of the best, they are receiving a phone line at no additional cost.

"In this workshop, we are going to go over what you can do with the added speed, its

cost and what kind of support equipment will be required," he said. "It is a service we began offering in January of this year, but it is still new, so ... a lot of people don't know about it yet. This workshop will allow them to find out more."

Brad Henderson, Facilities and Special Projects Manager, will also offer a workshop highlighting the community solar panel project that was first introduced last year. He said there has been so much interest from the membership that this workshop will offer an update on the project and enable more people to become involved with it.

"The site has been prepped, and we are really excited about it," he said. "As the facility is developed, I suspect more and more people will want to know what is happening and what it will mean for investors."

Of course, if you are in the mood for food, you will not be disappointed. Thanks to the feedback from past events, once again Jonathon Byrd's will cater the meal, which includes fried chicken or glazed pork loin, mashed potatoes, green beans, corn, garden salad and assorted desserts. Meadors said last year's fare was such a hit, why mess with success?

"Jonathon Byrd's does a great job for us, and the service is excellent. I have had so many members tell me that, while there are a number of reasons to attend the annual meeting, one of the biggest draws is the food," she said.

During the meeting, members have a great opportunity to learn more about their utility service, including an update on the fiber-optic cable installation, the progress of the smart metering system, as well as existing and potential EPA regulations that will affect everyone. Henderson said there is a need for members to come out and become educated on what is going on as well as the decisions made at the state and federal level, which will impact local charges.

"We have a lot of fun things to keep folks entertained, but this is also a great chance for people to get first-hand knowledge as to what is going on inside their electric and telecommunications utility. That's not something that everyone gets to do," he said.

> SERVICE TERRITORY PRESERVATION

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING SENATE BILL 309

Learn how the legislators who represent NINESTAR CONNECT voted.

Indiana's electric cooperatives are hard at work at the Indiana Statehouse on Senate Bill 309, which protects the affordability of electricity for all Hoosiers by protecting electric service territory.

VOTED IN SUPPORT SENATE BILL 309

- SEN. MIKE CRIDER, R., DIST. 28
- SEN. JIM MERRITT, R., DIST. 31
- SPKR. BRIAN BOSMA, R., DIST. 88
- REP. BOB CHERRY, R., DIST. 53
- REP. SEAN EBERHART, R., DIST. 57
- REP. TODD HUSTON, R., DIST. 37

LOSS OF
SERVICE
TERRITORY
FOR ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVES

HIGHER
RATES
FOR MEMBERS

MEET AND GREET

NINESTAR PLAYS HOST TO 62ND ANNUAL MEETING

On April 17, 2015, at Greenfield-Central High School, NineStar Connect will be celebrating its 62nd 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 child care will be provided. Doors will open at 5 p.m. The meeting will include the business meeting along with director elections. Profiles and candidate statements are included in this newsletter.

DIRECTOR CANDIDATES

DISTRICT 1 CANDIDATE

STEVE VAIL

BACKGROUND:

Steve Vail has been a cooperative member since 1983. He earned his bachelor's degree from Purdue University in May 1981 with a focus on finance and economics and his master's degree from Ball State University in May 2009 with a focus on adult education and organizational development. Steve most recently served as the executive director of the Hancock Hope House. Prior to that, he spent 19 years at Hancock Regional Hospital. Steve currently provides business management consulting services through his company, THE ETL Group. He also helps



to manage the family farm operation. Steve is a member of the Rotary Club of Greenfield and Mohawk United Methodist Church. He serves as a committee member of the Hancock County Redevelopment Commission. He also serves on the board of directors of the Indiana Electric Cooperatives and is a member of the executive committee of that organization.

He is a director on the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corp. This cooperative organization provides financing to rural electric and telephone cooperatives throughout the United States. He is also a Credentialed Cooperative Director through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. Steve and his wife, Shelley, have three children (Kyle, Alyse and Keegan) and live in Greenfield.

CANDIDATE STATEMENT:

NineStar Connect is a leader locally and regionally in the electric and telecommunication industry. We have become leaders in these industries through a strong and clear vision that has been developed through the hard work and passion of both the board of directors and the entire staff of NineStar Connect. We are a community partner that is making a difference in the daily lives of the people and communities we serve. I have been blessed to be a part of this journey for the past few years and am confident in the skill set I possess and the abilities I have to contribute to the continued future successes of the organization through my role as a director. Our potential is only limited by our imagination, and we can arrive successfully at that future through a continued focus on the members we serve and the quality of life that is possible through the services we provide.

DISTRICT 1 CANDIDATE

DARRELL H. THOMAS

BACKGROUND:

Darrell Thomas has been a cooperative member since 1963. Darrell attended McCordsville High School graduating in 1959. He then attended Ball State University; earning a bachelor's degree in 1963 and master's degree in 1966. Darrell is retired; however, he worked 36 years with the Mt. Vernon Schools as a teacher, coach, vice principal and principal. He served

four years as the executive director of Hancock Economic Development Council and 10 years supervising student teachers from Ball State. Some

of the duties he has previously held or currently holds include emeritus member of the Hancock County Community Foundation, member of Sigma Chi fraternity, member of the Indiana Retired Teachers/Principals Association and a member of the McCordsville United Methodist Church. Darrell has also served as chairman of the board of Hancock Telecom for 10 years; vice chairman of TECO (a national PAC for the telecom industry), a committee member on various committees for the national telecommunications association, a member of standing committees for our local cooperative and a mem-



ber of the Central Indiana Power membership committee for a number of years. He specializes in being able to clearly dissect a problem before reacting and has an extensive personal knowledge of the geographic area served by the cooperative. Darrell and his wife, Nancy, have three children (Darren, Shannon and Erin) and eight grandchildren.

CANDIDATE STATEMENT:

In 1865 my ancestors settled on a 120-acre farm southeast of McCordsville. Currently, we live on that land where a portion of the original farmhouse (a log cabin) has been restored. Sometime before the turn of the century, the cabin portion housed the

McCordsville Telephone Co. exchange. Yes, that was the same exchange that eventually became part of our present-day telecom/power cooperative, NineStar Connect. As

you can see, because of this historical/family connection, I am very passionate about the future of NineStar Connect and the area it serves. I would like to continue nurturing this passion as a board member by using my expertise from the past coupled with my knowledge of the industry to insure this new cooperative is recognized by its peers and members as one of "best in the business." The future of this company is bright; however, it will depend upon the leadership of those selected to govern. I would welcome the opportunity to continue representing the members of NineStar Connect.



DISTRICT 4 CANDIDATE

DONALD L. SHAW

BACKGROUND:

Don Shaw has been a cooperative member since 1970. Don is a current NineStar director. He resides in Sulphur Springs with his wife, Judy. They are proud parents and grandparents. Don has owned and operated his own business for 40-plus years. He has been on the Jefferson Township Fire Department for 47 years, 25 years as Chief. Don is in



the Masonic, Scottish Rite and Murat Shrine lodges. He was a county commissioner for eight years and president of the East Central Association of County Commissioners. Don was President of the Three Rivers Solid Waste Board. As

a fireman, he attended two Homeland Security training (FEMA) schools in Maryland. Don was vice president on the Hancock Telecom board, and president of Central Indiana Communications Board. He has attended numerous director seminars. Don spent six years in the National Guard. He is very active in community affairs.

CANDIDATE STATEMENT:

I feel proud to be a member of the NineStar Connect Board of Directors. When I was first elected, the company wasn't nearly the size that it is today. Its growth has been substantial over the years. I hope my tenure has added to the rise of the company. It's a co-op and owned by the members. The merger has had a very positive effect on the growth and services we provide. The world of technology changes daily, and we have to grow with it. I am a board member who wants to forward the advances of communication and electric services. I have owned and operated my own business for 40-plus years. My experience with financial and managerial matters has been a real plus. With your vote, I hope to go forward with the NineStar company.

DISTRICT 7 CANDIDATE

JAMES E. CHERRY

BACKGROUND:

Jim Cherry has been a cooperative member since 1964. He has had cooperative training and education through Co-Bank and Louisville Bank of Coops. Jim currently farms southeast of Greenfield and partners with his two sons, Jeff and Chris. He has served many years on the board of NineStar Connect and previously Central Indiana Power. Jim is part of the Kiwanis, is on the county RDC and attends Willow Branch Methodist Church. He has served on numerous cooperative boards for the past 35 years. Jim and his wife, Susan, live in Greenfield.



CANDIDATE STATEMENT:

As directors of NineStar Connect, we need to work with management and employees to bring value to our members/owners every day. NineStar has unlimited opportunities to add growth and services to what we currently offer to members. In other words, NineStar has the opportunity to be a greater company for our communities and members than we are now. I have had the privilege to serve as a director of the NineStar board since the consolidation. I think there are some more ideas we have not been able to explore in the past that now we will be able to look at. I feel like I can still add value to the board, and for that reason, I would appreciate your support for another term.

JOIN US!

NineStar was created to serve the needs of its members. It takes everyone working together to make the co-op thrive and by attending the annual meeting you can do your part. We will be hosting our annual meeting April 17 at Greenfield-Central High School.

By now, you should have already received the official notice inviting you to attend this year's meeting. It will be an evening of excitement and an opportunity to visit with friends and neighbors. Please RSVP by 4 p.m. April 10.



The show's first guest was Lester Hartley who is a U.S. Navy veteran stationed at Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941. He was aboard the USS Jarvis that fateful morning.

NINESTAR DEBUTS NEW VETERANS SHOW ON CHANNEL 9

NineStar TV is once again offering original local programming that will be sure to attract interest from local viewers. The new show, "Those Who Serve," is a talk show that focuses on veterans and their experiences while serving our country. The show's first guest was Lester Hartley who is a U.S. Navy veteran stationed at Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941. He was aboard the USS Jarvis that fateful morning. Lester shares his memories of that day and his time in the service during World War II. The show is hosted by Phil Jarson, who is a veteran himself. In fact, he was an Air Force sergeant with the American Forces Radio & Television Services (AFRTS). During his six years of service, most of which was overseas, he was a television producer, news anchor, sportscaster, DJ and host of a nightly news magazine. He was also the public affairs officer at Moody Air Force Base in Valdosta, Georgia. Currently, Phil owns and operates All-American Picnic Co. based in Hancock County. To find when "Those Who Serve" airs on Channel 9, please check out our Facebook page for updates as well as the Channel 9 guide on your TV. If you or someone you know is a veteran who would be interested in appearing on the show, please call Liz Rusche at (317) 323-2130.

OPERATION ROUND-UP

The last quarterly meeting of NineStar Connect's Operation Round-Up was held on Feb. 5, 2015 at the company's headquarters. Here are some organizations that benefited from the ORU fund this past quarter:

HANCOCK COUNTY ARTS COUNCIL

The Hancock County Arts Council's mission statement is "to foster, support and promote the arts, humanities, education and cultural activities in Hancock County and its surrounding areas." It also recently moved into a new location at 20A North State Street. This new location is an exciting opportunity for the arts council as the opportunities are endless with being able to host gallery shows, receptions, serve as a small music/theatre venue, and even provide workshops and art classes for our community.



HANCOCK COUNTY ARTS COUNCIL

MORRISTOWN VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Morristown Volunteer Fire Department is a 25-member department that provides service to the communities of Morristown and Hanover Township in Shelby County. Members are first responders for emergency medical care, Haz Mat with limited resources, and rescue for multiple Hurst brand rescue tools and pumps. They also provide CPR classes and fire safety education to schools, churches and nursing homes.



MORRISTOWN VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

COOPERATIVES TO POWER REGION OF GUATEMALA

NineStar Connect Line Superintendent Jeff Conley will join a crew of 13 other Indiana electric cooperative linemen traveling to Guatemala in mid-April as part of an international initiative to bring electricity to a developing area in Guatemala. "Project Indiana: Empowering Global Communities for a Better Tomorrow" will bring electricity to a part of the Central American country, which has none. The crew will spend the second half of April providing electricity to two villages in Alta Verapaz, Guatemala - Jolomljix-Nuevo Damasco and Sepamac. When completed, more than 100 homes will have electricity. Crews from Arkansas electric cooperatives will work in the villages the first half of April, followed by the Indiana crews in mid-month. Conley joined NineStar Connect in 1986 as a grounds man. He became a line superintendent in 2013. This is the Indiana electric cooperatives' second trip to Guatemala. In August 2012, 32 Hoosier volunteers, including 28 linemen from 17 of Indiana's electric cooperatives, traveled to a remote mountain range in Guatemala. The crews spent four weeks working across the rugged mountainous terrain to construct more than 20 miles of power lines and bring electricity to three villages.

UPDATES ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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 smartphone 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 smartphone and "Like" or "Follow" us on Facebook and/or Twitter. 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 at (317) 326-HELP.



EMPLOYEES VOLUNTEER AT MOBILE FOOD PANTRY

Thirteen NineStar employees worked at the Gleaners Senior Citizen's Mobile Food Pantry at the Hancock County Fairgrounds. They unloaded and distributed 10,350 lbs. of food to 72 senior citizen households. Thanks to our awesome employees for volunteering their time for this great community project!

FROM THE PRESIDENT

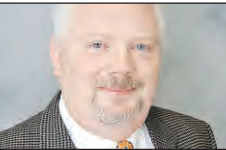
NINESTAR INNOVATES FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES

Each year, spring means NineStar and its employees are busy planning and putting together the finishing touches on our Annual Meeting and Celebration. I've had the pleasure of attending other cooperative annual meetings across the state during the past few years, and it has given me some unique perspectives that I would like to share with you. NineStar members like to celebrate at their annual meeting, and why wouldn't they? With our members voting overwhelmingly five years ago to merge an electric cooperative with a telecom cooperative, they set the stage for a dynamic new form of a cooperative utility of which we are just now beginning to recognize some of the benefits. Our co-op is acknowledged as a state and national leader in many areas including deployment of broadband and smart grid technologies. Many co-ops and small companies around the nation

are curious about NineStar and wonder if what we are doing can somehow be replicated in their areas. Most of our members today have access to technology that is not only the envy of many other rural communities around the United States but also second-to-none with most of the advanced metropolitan areas as well. Several of our employees and directors have been asked to speak at state, regional and national conferences about things NineStar has done - and continues to do - to maximize the benefits for all of our members and customers. Our co-op is never happy with simply doing what we did yesterday with success. Instead, our employees and directors are constantly asking what NineStar can do to continue to be relevant

in the lives of our members and customers. That's why you see NineStar today working on things like its community solar farm initiative, time-of-use billing, Gig-E broadband, and pushing fiber-optics further and further in the communities we serve. No one knows exactly what the future holds, but it appears likely the way energy and information is created and consumed will be different than the way it is today, and NineStar must be prepared whatever that future may bring. Our co-op has always been focused on long-term gains rather than quick returns. Today, we stand on the shoulders of our predecessors and the choices and investments they made that make our lives a little easier and our communities a better place to live. We owe the same to our children and grandchildren, to make investments that may not necessarily produce an immediate return for us but will contribute to the lives and communities of those who follow us. In our modern world, any company can sell you power or communications. Large and impersonal companies do it all the time without ever being a part of the communities they serve. NineStar is different. We participate in all levels of our local communities, and our employees live, work and volunteer their time to make the communities in which they live better places. It's the NineStar Way. It has been said that NineStar is a community asset - a jewel of sorts to be taken care of, protected and passed on to the next generation. That's why I hope all of you take the time to come to the annual meeting and celebrate the things that make NineStar such a special and unique cooperative.

PRESIDENT & CEO



MICHAEL BURROW

DIAL BEFORE YOU DIG

Adding a new room to your home? Adding a fence to your property? Know what's below! Before you plan to dig on your property, please dial 811 and find out what is underground. Underground utility lines could be damaged or hit and could be dangerous to you and your neighbors. Each year millions of dollars are spent on property damage or injuries because 811 was not called. The call is free and an operator is available 24/7 to assist you. Indiana 811 is a non-profit organization built to save time, money, potential lawsuits and to save lives. So before you dig, dial 811!



COMMUNITY



SOLAR ARRAY UPDATE

NineStar linemen spent the latter part of March setting the anchors for the community solar site. The location of the solar array will be at the corner of CR 600N and CR 600E in Hancock County. In all, the crew will have to set more than 100 anchors before the project can move forward. The plans call for the construction phase to last a little more than a month with the array coming online in middle to late April. Please check NineStar's Facebook page for progress and updates. If you would like to learn more about the project, call Brad Henderson at (317) 323-2714.



QUEEN ENCOURAGES YOUTH WITH PROGRAM

Written by AMANDA MATLOCK

Hoping to improve the lives of local girls and expand what it means to truly be a queen, Annalee Witte recently created an event that crowned 20 little girls from around the county. Reigning 4-H Fair Queen Witte, 18, said she wanted the crown to "mean more" than just waving and wearing

her sparkly tiara. The Little Princesses event, conducted at NineStar Connect, invited the young participants to celebrate their uniqueness and embrace their self-worth. "I created this event to extend the platform of the fair queen," Witte said. "The idea behind the evening is

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NO ADDITIONAL FEES!
*Pay by check option also available

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"Sure, this is about having fun and feeling pampered," Witte said. "But I wanted them to take away how special they are, no matter what." Executive Director Devon Kissick Kelly said Witte approached her several months ago about planning a special event to encourage young girls. "She wanted to do more for the county than smile and wave," Kissick Kelly said. "We've been working with her several months because she wanted to give back to the girls. She wanted them to feel beautiful." The 20 female students were identified by school counselors and invited to attend. "We wanted to reach out to the girls who would benefit the most," Kissick Kelly said. "This is about improving their self-esteem and self-image." Eleven-year-old Kareline Jones said she had been looking forward to the event all week. "I wanted to come so bad," Jones said while she was having her nails painted red. "This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for me." Her friend, Jayda Willis, also 11, said she was nervous to come but was looking forward to having her hair done. "This whole day has made me feel so special," Willis said. "I'm having so much fun." Witte said she hopes she's started a tradition that will continue on after she hangs up her crown and heads to college. "Hopefully, this will be something I can pass down to the next queen," Witte said. "I'd love to see this even continue in the coming years." Local sponsors of the event included NineStar Connect, Wal-Mart, Kroger and Bath & Body Works.

IT 101 FOR BUSINESS



A complimentary series of Information Technology education for small and medium-sized business. You may attend one, two or all three sessions. Each session is only a one hour presentation!

SESSION ONE May 6, 2015 | 8:00AM-9:15AM
CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST PROVIDED

Windows 8.1
Tips on how to use Windows 8 and get the most out of the operating system

Security
How to make sure your data network is secure

No Dial Tone?
5 Quick things to check to get you back in business quickly

Wireless Network
How to set up a wireless network for your business and guests

SESSION TWO May 14, 2015 | 11:30AM-12:45PM
LUNCH PROVIDED

Internet Browsers
When to use Chrome, Internet Explorer, Firefox and when not to use them

Hosted Data Services
Why services such as hosted anti-virus software may be the best bet for your business

"Phreaking"
How to keep hackers from getting into your phone systems and running up costs. It happens all the time!

VPN - What and How?
How to set up a Virtual Private Network (VPN) so employees can work from remote locations

SESSION THREE May 20, 2015 | 4:00PM-5:15PM
HORS D'OEUVRES PROVIDED

Office 365
A hosted alternative to purchasing Microsoft Office applications, having to install & update them

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BOARD MEMBER SET TO RETIRE

When you see Richard Parker at this year's annual meeting take a moment and thank him for his more than four decades of service to the cooperative. First appointed as a director in August of 1973, at what was then Hancock Rural Telephone Corp., Richard has worked tirelessly for his cooperative always keeping the members needs in mind.



Parker was first asked to join the board by then board member Maynard Brown when a seat became vacant due to a board member moving away. "I considered it a tremendous honor to be asked to serve," stated Parker who at the time employed full time at Hancock Bank & Trust. Over the next 42 years Parker has been witness to a lot of change in the industry and the cooperative. "You have to remember when we started out all we offered was plain old telephone service. When you look at what we are doing now it's truly amazing."

Through his years on

the board Parker has held many positions including Chairman of the Board and most executive offices. He has also been involved in the telecom industry on various national association and as a director and Chairman of the Board of Telcom Insurance Group, the leading national insurer of independent telecommunication providers.

Current Board Chairman Steve Vail said

"Richard has played an important and vital role for our organization for many years on not only the local cooperative level but also on the state and national level. His business and banking acumen and overall knowledge of our industries is going to be missed on the board."

Richard and his wife Ann have three sons and four grandchildren. He plans to spend more time with them, raise sheep and travel some. "It's been an honor to serve our cooperative and a tremendous experience overall it's just been a great ride."

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.

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