



FIBER UPDATE

Ryan Bewley updates the status of the network backbone of the Blue River fiber construction.

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NEW SMART GADGET

Find out how installing a NEST thermostat is a great way to help lower your energy costs.

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NEED A NINESTAR NERD

EVERYONE NEEDS A LITTLE
HELP FROM TIME TO TIME
— INTRODUCING OUR
NEW AGE HANDYMEN

SEE PAGES 4 & 5



DETAILS ABOUT ALL THE
GREAT 'NERD' SERVICES





OUR EMPLOYEES MAKE THE DIFFERENCE. HERE'S A CUSTOMER REVIEW FOR OUR SUPPORT TECH, CHARLEY.

NINESTAR RECEIVED A CALL JULY 18 FROM A CUSTOMER REGARDING HER POWER OUTAGE. SHE SPOKE WITH CHARLEY. SHE SAID SHE WAS DISABLED IN A WHEELCHAIR AND COULDN'T CHECK THE BOX AND TOLD HIM SHE WOULD SEE IF A NEIGHBOR COULD CHECK IT FOR HER. CALLED BACK WITH POWER STILL OUT. SHE SAID CHARLEY HAD A TECH STOP BY HER HOUSE TO MAKE SURE HER POWER WAS BACK ON. SHE WAS VERY GRATEFUL FOR THIS AND WANTED HIS BOSS TO KNOW WHAT A GREAT EMPLOYEE HE IS.

HAVE A STORY IDEA?

Contact David Spencer at dspencer@ninestarconnect.com

COVER STORY: YOU'VE GOT NERDS PAGES 4-5
Learn more about this new service launched Nov. 1 that provides solutions to common (and not-so-common) technology issues.

ENERGY AUDIT PROGRAM PAGE 6
If you would like help saving energy but do not know where to start, or if you think the cost of improvements would be too costly, we can help.

NEW McCORDSVILLE LOCATION PAGE 7
Find out how NineStar Connect is moving forward with plans to refurbish the old post office in McCordsville.

RILEY CONCERT SERIES PAGE 12
Join us for an enjoyable expression of music and renaissance of the arts sponsored by NineStar. Get all the details for the three-part series.

ADVOCACY UPDATE

NineStar Connect was proud to host Congressman-Elect Luke Messer recently at its corporate offices. Check out what discussions in the meeting centered around.

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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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YOUR COOPERATIVE... PROVIDING SOLUTIONS

I'm sure by now most of you have seen NineStar Connect's latest service, NineStar Nerds.

While NineStar Connect has provided computer and networking services to our business customers for years, it has not been until recently we started offering the service for our residential customers.

The decision came about after fielding several calls into our 24/7/365 call center by members requesting the service. I am pleased to say the decision was a good one.

Since Nov. 1, when the service started, our "Nerds" have been busy helping many of our members who otherwise would have struggled to resolve their computer, networking and technology problems. NineStar Connect prides itself on being a cooperative and, with that, working together to meet the needs of all our members.

Included in our cooperative spirit is the idea of being a solutions provider.

We hope you look at our wonderful company in this same way. This is one of the many reasons we have diversified into many non-traditional lines of business.

It has been a direct result of positioning our company to meet the ever-changing needs of our customers and to provide them solutions to make their everyday lives easier.

This month's cover story is all about the NineStar Nerds and the services they provide. I hope you take the time to learn more about the service and what they can do for you and your family. I'm sure you will be pleased to learn there really isn't much they can't do.

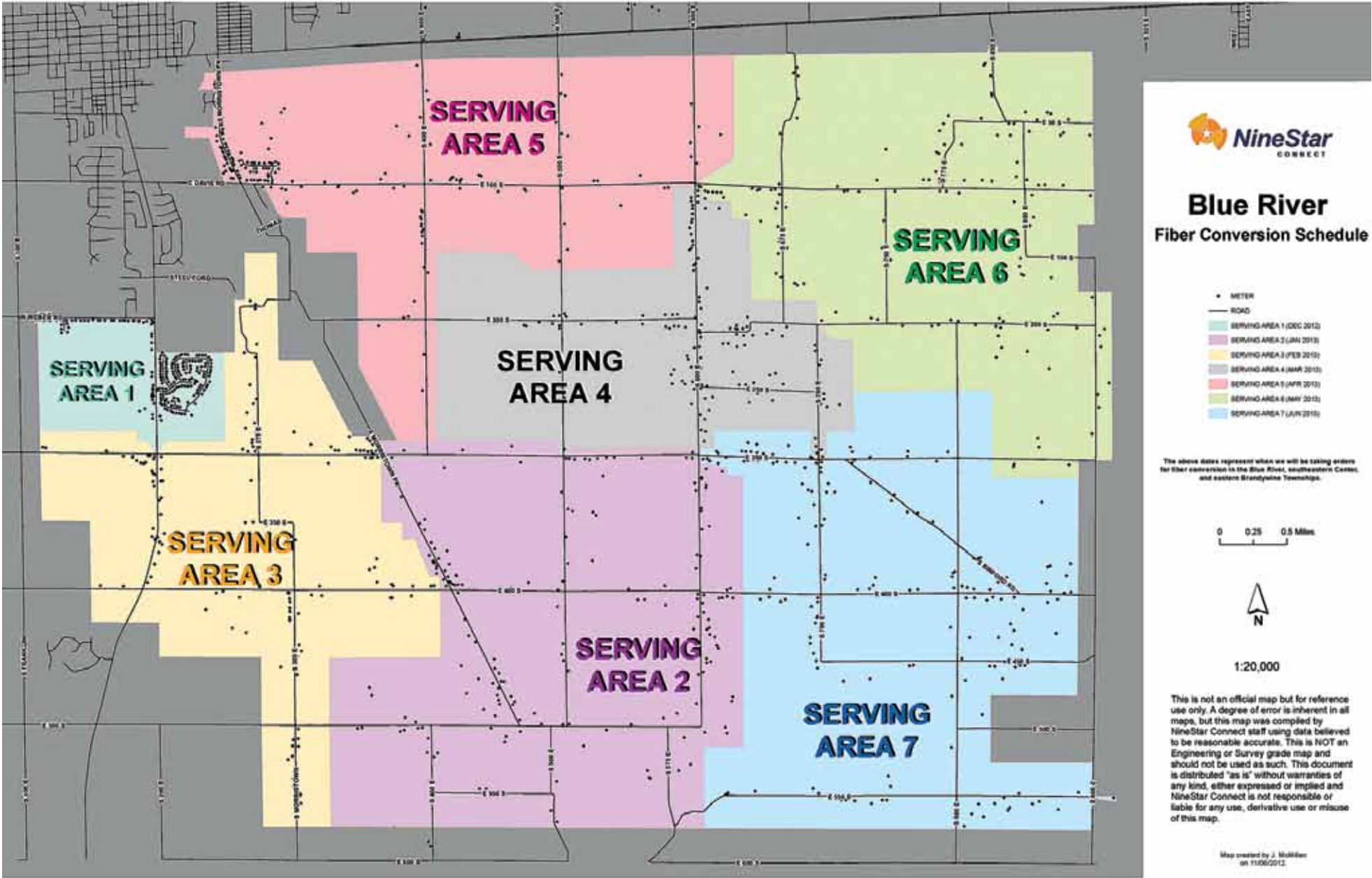
And most importantly, let us not forget the holidays are just around the corner. So many people will be giving very cool gadgets and gizmos, and the latest technology can be frustrating. Consider using the Nerds to help make Christmas morning an unforgettable one!

PRESIDENT & CEO



TIM HILLS

BLUE RIVER FIBER CONVERSION SCHEDULE



NineStar Connect held an informational meeting Nov. 3 for Blue River Township residents regarding deployment of fiber optics in their area. The "Donuts and Coffee" meeting allowed NineStar employees from several departments the opportunity to explain the process from beginning to end concerning the installation of fiber. These departments included engineering, installation and repair, market-

ing and customer service, which shared information regarding packages that soon will be available.

In all, close to 125 people attended the meeting, and many great questions were asked. Most people were looking for updates as to when they will be able to expect communication services to be ready. Depending on where you reside in the township, some residents will be able to take

advantage of our services by the end of the year. However, we are happy to announce that Serving Area 1 is ahead of schedule and is now ready for service. If you reside in this area, a letter has recently been mailed to you. If you have any questions regarding the material you receive, you may call and talk to one of our friendly customer service representatives. However, a follow-up call will be made to you within

the next couple of weeks.

We are still working steadily to provide services to the remaining areas of Blue River Township. We have sectioned off the township into seven Serving Areas with the last area (Serving Area 7) to be able to utilize our services by June. It was stressed in the meeting that installation of this state of the art fiber optic network is a very complex and intricate process, and NineStar

is working diligently to meet customer's needs as quickly as possible.

We are excited to bring advanced telecommunication services to Blue River Township and we are encouraged by the excitement of all who attended the informational meeting. If you have any additional questions regarding updates or the bundles we will be offering, please call 317-326-3131.



NINESTAR INTRODUCES NEW AGE HANDYMEN

Everyone needs a little help from time to time, and whether a customer is looking to configure a new home computer, install a wireless router or require a bit of tech support, NineStar Connect is ready to help.

WRITTEN BY

JULIE YOUNG

NineStar Nerds is a new service launched on Nov. 1 that provides solutions to common (and not-so-common) computer issues including: setup, virus and malware removal, OS install, wired and wireless networking, hardware/software upgrades, data backup, mobile device setup, and much, much more.

“We don’t want to limit ourselves, so if there is something you need that isn’t on the list, don’t be afraid to ask,” said Ross Ferson, director of Network Operations. “We have a flat rate per hour, so even if we don’t say that we offer a service, we can more than likely help you out.”

PC SETUP

If you have recently purchased a new PC or looking to move to a new location, NineStar Connect can assist with the initial setup or migration. Included in the fee is two hours of tech time to be used for the unboxing of the PC, setup of the PC, monitor, speakers, keyboard and mouse. Also included, the technician will walk you through the initial PC setup, install any required Operating System updates, remove any unwanted manufacturer software, and finally install one third-party program (Example: MS Office 2010, Adobe Reader, Chrome, Firefox, etc.). If additional time is necessary to install extra equipment or software, this would be billed at \$59.95/hour in home or \$49.95/hour in office.

VIRUS & MALWARE REMOVAL

If you notice your PC is running slower than normal or experience unexpected behavior like pop-ups, redirection to unknown websites, or being unable to launch certain programs, you may have downloaded/installed a virus or malware. If you believe you have a virus or malware, NineStar Connect can assist with the removal and repair of your PC. Included in the fee is two hours of tech time to remove the virus or malware, returning usability and confidence in the security of your PC. If additional time is necessary to install extra equipment or software, this would be billed at \$59.95/hour in home or \$49.95/hour in office.

OS INSTALL

If you notice your PC is running slower than normal or experience unexpected behavior, it may be time to refresh or reload your Operating System. Or maybe you would like to upgrade you existing OS to Windows 8; either way NineStar Connect can assist you with installation and configuration of the new OS. Included in the fee is three hours of tech time to complete the install of the OS and install of one third-party program (Example: MS Office 2010, Adobe Reader, Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, etc.) If additional time is necessary to install extra equipment or software, this would be billed at \$59.95/hour in home or \$49.95/hour in office.

WIRED/WIRELESS NETWORKING

NineStar Connect offers the installation of the necessary equipment and configuration of devices for a wired or wireless network. Installation includes the setup and networking of three devices. However, the fee doesn’t include any software or hardware. Wired network installs includes setting up the equipment, but doesn’t include any new cable runs. Cable runs can be provided separately by our Service Center department. Included in the fee is two hours of tech time. If additional time is necessary to install extra equipment or software, this would be billed at \$59.95/hour in home or \$49.95/hour in office.

HARDWARE/ SOFTWARE UPGRADES

NineStar Connect provides hardware and software upgrades for many different PC components or devices. If you are looking to increase the memory or upgrade the video card in your PC, NineStar Connect can assist. NineStar Connect techs are also skilled in upgrading software on your PC or the OS on your iDevices or Android devices. Included in the fee is two hours of tech time, however the fee doesn’t include any software or hardware. If additional time is necessary to install extra equipment or software, this would be billed at \$59.95/hour in home or \$49.95/hour in office.

DATA MIGRATION (<100 GB)

NineStar Connect can assist with the one-time migration of data, 100 GB or less, from one device to another. Included in the fee is two hours of tech time. If additional time is necessary to complete the migration, this would be billed at \$59.95/hour in home or \$49.95/hour in office.

(>100 GB)

NineStar Connect can assist with the one-time migration of data, 100 GB or more, from one device to another. Included in the fee is three hours of tech time. If additional time is necessary to complete the migration, this would be billed at \$59.95/hour in home or \$49.95/hour in office.

Ferson said the NineStar Nerds support service is something the co-op has offered its business network management customers and something they hoped to offer the public as well. He said his team fielded several calls from clients each week looking for help, only to have to refer them elsewhere.

“We knew there was a need in the community but, until now, it wasn’t feasible to offer it,” he said. “Now it’s come to fruition and we are very happy to bring this service to our customers.”

NineStar Nerds is a flexible service designed to give customers the most flexible options when it comes to tech support. Clients can dial into the phone center and allow NineStar’s knowledgeable professionals to help them remotely, bring their devices into the shop or schedule an in-home service. Ferson says with support available 24/7 at the call center, there is plenty of staff available to give customer issues the time and attention they deserve.

“What’s really nice about this service is that customers can feel good that they are entrusting the same certified professionals to handle their computer issues that they already know and trust to take care of the other services they use in their homes,” he said.

“WE DON’T WANT TO LIMIT OURSELVES SO IF THERE IS SOMETHING YOU NEED THAT ISN’T ON THE LIST, DON’T BE AFRAID TO ASK.” ROSS FERSON, DIRECTOR OF NETWORK OPERATIONS

“We know that you are entrusting us with expensive equipment and counting on us to take care of your personal data that if it gets lost, it can’t be retrieved.”

NineStar Nerds services are also competitive with other entities that offer similar packages and offer an additional incentive to existing NineStar customers. Customers who take advantage of NineStar’s broadband service are entitled to a 10 percent discount on ‘Nerd’ services, while Triple Play customers enjoy a 20 percent discount. Even those who are not affiliated with the co-op or who anticipate several technical issues throughout the year can call on the Nerds through a one-time fee of \$99.95 which entitles them to a 15 percent discount on services throughout the year.

“Of course, anyone can use our NineStar Nerds services since our personnel are trained in multiple technology and delivery architecture; however, we wanted to reward our customers who use

our services most intensely with the greatest discounts,” said Regina Bever, director of Customer Service.

Southport client Vincent Lombardo said he was very pleased with the service he received from the NineStar Nerds. After purchasing a hard drive for his computer, he originally arranged for a friend to install it but then contacted the Nerds when he realized they would come out to his home.

“Rachel was very professional. She was right on time, she was friendly and she was all business,” he said. “She was in that room almost the whole three hours that she was allowed, but by the time she left, everything was installed and working fine. I’m just glad I saw the ad, remembered the phone number and took a chance. I was very impressed with the service.”

Have a tech problem and want a “geeky” alternative? Call in the NineStar Nerds to help!

SAFETY TIPS

NINESTAR CONNECT GIVES POINTERS FOR HOLIDAY LIGHTING

Each year, electrical fires from unsafe installation and use of holiday decorations cause injuries, damage and even death. You can help keep your family safe during the holidays by taking a few extra precautions with your holiday decorations. To better protect your family against the dangers of fire, make sure your home has smoke detectors and a fire extinguisher. Families should also develop and practice an escape plan in case of a fire or emergency. Below are a few important safety tips to help make your holiday season safer.

- Inspect all Christmas light cords for bare wires, frayed cords, loose connections or damaged light sockets
- Use fused light sets whenever possible
- If using lights or cords outside make sure they are intended for outdoor use
- Always use GFCI protected outlets or cords outside or in damp locations
- Do not overload extension cords
- Follow manufacturers directions for number of light strands linked together (usually no more than 3)
- Secure lights with insulated holders (not tacks or nails)
- Turn lights off when leaving or going to bed
- When installing lights outside, know where overhead power lines are and keep lights, ladders and people far away from power lines
- Unravel and test lights on ground before climbing ladders to install
- Do not mount lights near heat sources (electric heaters, candles, fireplaces etc.)
- Do not close doors or windows on light strands or extension cords
- Replace burned out bulbs promptly with proper wattage replacements
- Periodically check wires; they should not be warm to the touch
- Keep cords out of walkways
- Use one long extension cord rather than several short cords

BLUE RIVER FIBER CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Thank you to everyone who attended our informational meeting at NineStar Connect Nov. 3. The meeting was well attended, and information regarding the construction and timeline for the project was, I hope, very helpful. If you weren't able to attend, please check out our blog where you'll find a map of our anticipated release dates for each serving area. These dates represent the release of a serving area to our customer

service department, where they'll be able to start taking orders for fiber conversion and service.

The contracted portion of the project has been completed, which consisted of the building of the backbone and installation of service drops to homes. All totaled, we've constructed more than 143 miles of backbone

and drop fiber in the Blue River project area. If you haven't had a drop installed during this phase, don't worry — we will facilitate the placement of the drop once your serving area has been released and an order has been placed.

WRITTEN BY



RYAN BEWLEY

SCAVENGER HUNT



LEADERSHIP HANCOCK COUNTY CLASS VISITS NINESTAR

The Leadership Hancock County Class of 2013 visited the NineStar offices last month during its annual scavenger hunt. While at NineStar, the students learned about Indiana's only electric and communications cooperative, and everyone had the opportunity to splice fiber. NineStar's Mike McCarley also discussed with the class the evolution of communications from the beginning to today's state of the art technology.



HOME ENERGY AUDIT

WANT TO SAVE ENERGY? START HERE

NineStar Connect is conducting a pilot energy audit program. For a short period of time, the opportunity to participate in this program is still being made available to NineStar Connect electric members. If you would like help saving energy but do not know where to start, or if you think the cost of improvements would be too costly, we can help.

WRITTEN BY



DARRIN COUCH

This is a great opportunity to find out not only how to effectively improve the energy efficiency of your home but how much those energy efficiency improvements would cost, and how much you could save in annual energy costs.

The "Whole Home Performance Program" is being con-

ducted in cooperation with Wabash Valley Power Association as part of the Power Moves energy efficiency programs. Participants will be provided a comprehensive home energy audit conducted by a Building Performance Institute certified building analyst.



GREAT CUSTOMER SERVICE JUST GOT BETTER. NINESTAR CONNECT'S TECH SUPPORT CALL CENTER IS OPEN AROUND THE CLOCK. 317-326-HELP NINESTARCONNECT.COM

The audit will include diagnostic testing of your home's insulation, air barriers and HVAC system, using a blower door and thermal imaging camera. Each participant will be provided with a detailed audit report. The audit report will outline the estimated annual savings and estimated lifetime savings that could be achieved by completing the suggested projects.

The report also will include a list of experienced weatherization and HVAC contractors who will be providing project estimates as part of the program. Through this program, participants will be able to take advantage of special incentives for insulation and HVAC projects. This opportunity is available to a limited number of NineStar Connect electric members that have total electric homes and HVAC equipment that is at least 15 years old. The charge for participating in the program is \$50. However, if you complete at least \$500 of auditor's recommended improvements, the \$50 will be refunded to you.

If you are interested in participating in the program, or if you would like additional information, please contact Darrin Couch at 317-323-2715 or dcouch@ninestarconnect.com.

NEW McCORDSVILLE OFFICE SET FOR 2013

NineStar Connect is moving forward with plans to refurbish the old post office in McCordsville. The company, which has owned the property since June 2004, plans to turn the building into its new local office. In recent years, the company has rented the building to the U.S. Post Office, but with the construction of the new post office, the move became possible. NineStar received formal approval from the Town of McCordsville last month.

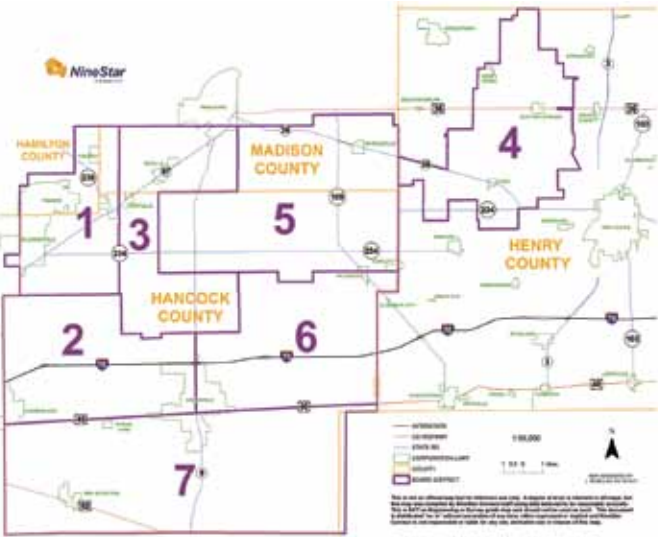
"We are excited about renovating the property and demonstrating our continued commitment to McCordsville," NineStar President and CEO Tim Hills said. "It should be remembered our company was established in McCordsville in 1895, and the area continues to play an important part in this company's future moving forward."

The office, located next to the company's Central Office, will be a full-service location, allowing customers to pay their bills, sign up for products and learn about services. For customer convenience, the company also has satellite offices in Knightstown, Maxwell and its corporate office in Greenfield.



NINESTAR NEWS

NOTICE TO MEMBERSHIP OF UPCOMING ELECTION OF DIRECTORS



The 2013 NineStar Connect Annual Meeting will be held on April 5, 2013. The following director districts are up for election: 3B, 5B, 6A, 6B and 7B.

Any member in good standing residing in these districts who is interested in running for a position on the Board of Directors should contact Christa Meadors at the Main Street office (317-323-2106) and request an Information Guide for Potential Directors.

A Nominating Committee Meeting will be held on Jan. 9, 2013. Any member who desires to be nominated for director by the Nominating Committee should complete a Director Candidate Information Form along with

a Certification of Eligibility to Serve as Director to:

NineStar Connect
Attn: Michael R. Burrow, Vice President and General Counsel
2243 E. Main St.
Greenfield, IN 46140

Forms also may be personally delivered to any NineStar Connect business office. The deadline for submitting these materials in order to be considered for nomination by the Nominating Committee is noon Jan. 8, 2013.

Members being considered for nomination will have the opportunity to meet with the Nominating Committee at a candidate reception on Jan. 9, 2013 immediately preceding its meeting.



NINESTAR HOSTS BLOOD DRIVE

On Oct. 19, NineStar Connect was proud to partner with the Indiana Blood Center for its bi-annual blood drive. The event, held at the south campus, had 28 units donated. This included NineStar employees and was open to the public.

Every day, people are diagnosed with various illnesses that require a blood transfusion. According to the Blood Center, many individuals may require as much as 200 units of blood. So, being able to donate is truly a lifesaver for many people.

NineStar Connect plans to conduct its next blood drive in May 2013. Again, this event is open to the public. Updated information will be published as we get closer to this time. Thanks again to all of you who participated in this significant event!



ILLINOIS RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE VISITS NINESTAR

NineStar Connect recently hosted officials from Illinois Rural Electric Cooperative located in Winchester, Ill. The purpose of the visit was to learn more about NineStar Connect's deployment of Tantalus smart meters, fiber optics and the smart grid. NineStar Connect, a leader in these areas, attracted the attention of the officials from Illinois Rural because they are looking at rolling out smart meters through Tantalus as their upgraded solution to smart grid. Currently, NineStar Connect is one of five utilities in Indiana utilizing this specific type of smart meter.

CONGRESSMAN-ELECT VISIT



President and CEO Tim Hills talks with Congressman-Elect Luke Messer.

NINESTAR CONNECT MEETS WITH OFFICIALS-ELECT

NineStar Connect was proud to host Congressman-Elect Luke Messer recently at its corporate offices. Messer, who won election in November, will represent Indiana's 6th Congressional district when the 113th U.S. Congress is seated in January 2013. Messer met with President and CEO Tim Hills, Vice President and General Counsel Mike Burrow and board member Phil Hayes. Also in attendance were State Sen. Beverly Gard and Scott Bowers, who is Director of Government and Cooperative Relations Issues with Indiana

Statewide.

Discussions in the meeting centered on several topics that will impact NineStar Connect and could have possible future implications on the company. These include; fiber optic deployment in rural areas, new rules and regulations from the FCC, and proposed EPA regulations on coal powered generators and how the industry needs to efficiently manufacture power at a low cost. Also discussed was rural economic development and how access to fiber optics and affordable power is the key to success. After the meeting,

Messer was given a tour of NineStar Connect's facilities.

In addition to meeting with Messer, NineStar Connect officials also recently have met with Congresswoman-Elect Susan Brooks at her offices in Hamilton County, and early in the summer President Hills met with then Congressman Joe Donnelly in Washington, D.C. The same topics were discussed in these meetings as well.

NineStar Connect wishes Indiana's delegation to Washington, D.C. good luck as they start their session in 2013!



ENERGY SAVERS: POWER OF COOPERATION

Many of our members want to save energy and money but are not sure of the best products to purchase. We are pleased to offer access to 20 percent off best-quality energy efficient products through EnergySavers.coop. You can easily access the energy saving products for your home, business and personal use through our main website. Just look for the EnergySavers.coop logo and find special savings on items like CFLs and other lighting products, weatherization products for your home, water conservation items, and other tested energy saving devices. This new service is just another way that we are looking out for you. Little Changes. Big Savings. Together We Save!

SUGAR AND SPICE COOKIES

These are a favorite cut-out cookie. Sweet and spicy, they're a wonderful Christmas treat.

You can make the dough up to three days ahead of time.

Original recipe makes 50 2-inch cookies
Change Servings

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 pinch ground cloves
- 1/2 cup softened butter
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 egg
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

DIRECTIONS:

Mix the flour, the baking powder, cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves together in a bowl.

Cream the butter and brown sugar together with an electric mixer in a large bowl until smooth; beat the egg and vanilla extract into the butter mixture. Add the flour mixture in small amount to the butter mixture, beating each addition until blended. Form the dough into a ball, wrap with plastic wrap, and refrigerate at least 1 hour or up to 3 days.

Preheat an oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Grease baking sheets.

Roll the dough out on a floured work surface with a rolling pin to about 1/8-inch thickness. Cut with 2-inch cookie cutters. Arrange the cut cookies onto the prepared baking sheets.

Bake in the preheated oven until the edges begin to brown, 10 to 12 minutes. Allow the cookies to cool on the baking sheet for 1 minute before removing to a wire rack to cool completely.

GINGERBREAD MEN

Original recipe makes 2 1/2 dozen
Change Servings

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 (3.5 ounce) package cook and serve butterscotch pudding mix
- 1/2 cup butter
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon



DIRECTIONS:

In a medium bowl, cream together the dry butterscotch pudding mix, butter, and brown sugar until smooth. Stir in the egg. Combine the flour, baking soda, ginger, and cinnamon; stir into the pudding mixture. Cover, and chill dough until firm, about 1 hour.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Grease baking sheets. On a floured board, roll dough out to about 1/8 inch thickness, and cut into man shapes using a cookie cutter. Place cookies 2 inches apart on the prepared baking sheets.

Bake for 10 to 12 minutes in the preheated oven, until cookies are golden at the edges. Cool on wire racks.

PEPPERMINT MERINGUES

These are very good, light and airy. The colors are great for the holidays.

Original recipe makes 4 dozen
Change Servings

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 egg whites
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon cream of tartar
- 1/2 cup white sugar
- 2 peppermint candy canes, crushed

DIRECTIONS:

Preheat oven to 225 degrees F (110 degrees C). Line 2 cookie sheets with foil.

In a large glass or metal mixing bowl, beat egg whites, salt, and cream of tartar to soft peaks. Gradually add sugar, continuing to beat until whites form stiff peaks. Drop by spoonfuls 1 inch apart on the prepared cookie sheets. Sprinkle crushed peppermint candy over the cookies.

Bake for 1 1/2 hours in preheated oven. Meringues should be completely dry on the inside. Do not allow them to brown. Turn off oven. Keep oven door ajar, and let meringues sit in the oven until completely cool. Loosen from foil with metal spatula. Store loosely covered in cool dry place for up to 2 months.

COOK AHEAD OF THE HOLIDAYS, SAVE TIME

Holiday hosts and hostesses may want to put a storage freezer on their wish list this year. Having the ability to prepare meals in advance and store them easily for later use could prove invaluable – especially for those who are opening their homes for the holidays.

A freezer can be a party host's best friend come the holiday season. Many foods can be prepared in advance and then frozen until the celebration. Also, having small portions of pre-made foods can be helpful when visitors pop in unexpectedly and may be hungry for a meal. Just take something out of the freezer and heat it.

Certain tips can ensure foods made in advance are stored properly and heat up quickly.

- Casseroles, baked pasta dishes and vegetables can be prepared in advance and frozen.

Be sure to consult with any recipes to see if items can indeed be frozen if you are unsure how they will fare in the freezer.

- Instead of preparing food and storing it in one large container, separate it into two smaller containers so dishes defrost quickly and dinner time isn't delayed.
- Use packaging specifically designed for use in the freezer. These products will offer extra insulation against freezer burn, which dehydrates food. Keeping air out of the packaging will help to alleviate cases of freezer burn and potential waste of good food.
- Mark packages with the date the foods were packaged as well as what is inside. This makes it easy to keep inventory of what is in the freezer.
- Defrost foods in the refrigerator the night before the holiday meal will be served. Heating foods that aren't still frozen considerably cuts down on cook times.
- If food cannot be defrosted before cooking, keep in mind that you may have to cook foods longer than normal.
- If you don't want to have everything prepped in advance and enjoy the taste of a freshly cooked meal, consider preparing side dishes in advance and then leave the roast or turkey to cook. Any steps you can take ahead of time will dramatically cut out the time you have to spend in the kitchen while guests are around.

FREEZE THOSE DESSERTS

Many desserts also can be frozen. Freeze pies before they are cooked. Cakes can be frozen if you freeze the layers separately. Then assemble and frost the cakes before serving. Cream pies cannot be frozen, but you can use pudding in place of cream in many recipes and be able to freeze them. Brownies and other "bar" recipes will freeze and carry well.

UPDATES

NINESTAR PAYS CAPITAL CREDITS

Once again, NineStar Connect will be retiring allocated capital credits to members of the cooperative. All members with credits of more than \$5 will be receiving a check in the mail during the second week of December. Those members with less than \$5 in capital credits to retire this year will have that amount retained in their allocated capital credit account and added to future allocations in the upcoming years. Since 2000, NineStar Connect has paid back more than \$4.5 million dollars in capital credits to their member/owners.

NineStar Connect operates on a non-profit basis and exists for the purpose of providing its members with electric and telecommunication services. Therefore, in a cooperative, the net margins (profits) do not belong to the corporation – they belong to the individual consumers who paid the money on their monthly service bills. In most types of co-ops, net margins, after reasonable reserves are set aside to pay back loans, and cover operating cost and other expenses, are allocated back pro-rata to the members in the form of a capital credit. These allocated capital credits remain in each member’s account until the Board of Directors elects to retire a portion of the allocated capital credits. This year, the Board, through its budgeting process, directed that \$400,000 in allocated capital credits be retired, and, as such, repaid to the members of NineStar Connect. While the amount of annual capital credits retirements are not guaranteed and largely dependent on the performance of the company in any given year, NineStar and its predecessor companies (Central Indiana Power and Hancock Telecom) have returned more than \$4.5 million dollars to members since 2000. Next time you are visiting with friends or family who receive utility and communication services from investor-owned companies, ask them how often they get money back from their providers. By supporting a local company such as NineStar, you are, in essence, supporting yourself as well.

EVENT

NINESTAR HOLIDAY SALE DEC. 8

NineStar Connect employees will be hosting a Holiday Craft and Hobby Sale from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 8, at the Conference Center – East Main Street, Greenfield

This sale is open exclusively to NineStar Connect employees and members. Come check out the talents of our employees, on display in a variety of handmade items. There will be about a dozen booths.

OPERATION ROUND-UP

NINESTAR GIVES THOUSANDS TO LOCAL GROUPS

The quarterly meeting of NineStarConnect’s Operation Round-Up took place in November at the company’s headquarters. The committee deliberated about several applications and voted to award a total of \$34,000 to the following organizations.



Eastern Hancock High School S.A.D.D.



Edelweiss Equine-Assisted Therapy Center



Boys & Girls Club of Hancock County



Love Inc.



Hancock County Food Pantry



Alternatives of Madison County

Eastern Hancock High School S.A.D.D.

This Eastern Hancock High School club, organized to help students say no to drinking and driving, was awarded money to hold a schoolwide convocation and present a motivational speaker on the dangers of drinking and driving.

Edelweiss Equine-Assisted Therapy Center

This southern Hancock County-based equine center was established to improve the lives of people with special needs. They plan to use the funds to purchase feed and hay for their horses.

Boys & Girls Club of Hancock County

This organization dedicated to assisting both boys and girls in the community plans to use the money to purchase new tables and chairs for the club.

Love Inc.

This organization, which brings many churches together to identify and address needs, will use its funds for the Hearts of Hope program, which will provide training for the disadvantaged.

Hancock County Food Pantry

The Greenfield-based food pantry plans to purchase food from Gleaners Food Bank at a reduced rate and then provide it to those in need within the county.

Alternatives of Madison County

This Madison County-based organization strives to eradicate family violence in all its facets through education, prevention, and intervention. Their grant will be used to fund their programs, such as transportation, nutritional services and an emergency shelter.

Operation Round-Up Program (ORU) and the Central Indiana Power Community Trust are established to accumulate and distribute funds for charitable purposes to individuals, families, groups and organizations located within the perimeter boundaries of NineStar Connect’s power service area. The source of these funds is the NineStar Connect electricity customers, who voluntarily have their electric bills rounded up to the next highest dollar. This money is accumulated by the co-op and transferred to Central Indiana Power Community Trust. Each quarter these funds are distributed by a committee made up of members of the cooperative.

If you would like to be considered for an ORU grant, you can download an application form at www.ninestarconnect.com. Applications are due Jan. 25 to be considered at the Feb. 7 meeting.

NEST THERMOSTAT WAY OF THE FUTURE, SAVES YOU MONEY NOW

NineStar Connect is proud to announce the offering of NEST Version 2, the learning Thermostat. The NEST thermostat learns the temperatures you like in your home. Its Auto-Schedule feature can adjust the temperature based on your schedule/routine; and its Auto-Away system can sense when you are gone from home and can automatically turn to an energy-efficient away temperature. It also has a remote control device via Broadband which you can monitor on your cell phone, computer or any wireless device. The NEST has a sleek, slimmed-down appearance that arguably is one of the most attractive objects you can install in your home. It has been called the next generation of thermostats.

Please see below for pricing. Included in the fee is the installation and initial setup of the NEST thermostat to your wireless network and one hour of training time. If additional time is necessary to train or install the NEST thermostat, this would be billed at \$59.95/hour.

Notice the up to 50 percent discount when you sign up for a 1- or 2-year NEST contract.

Did you know that about 89 percent of programmable thermostats can waste energy? Therefore, installing a NEST thermostat is a great way to help lower your energy costs. Please contact NineStar at 317-326-3131 for more information regarding the NEST thermostat.



Installation Fees			
Triple Play (w/ Electric)	\$0.00		
Triple Play or Broadband w/Electric	\$49.95		
Broadband Only	\$99.95		
All remaining individuals/No services	\$119.95		

Nest Fees	2-year	1-year	N/C
Triple Play (w/ Electric)	\$125	\$187.50	\$250
Triple Play or Broadband w/Electric	\$162.50	\$212.50	\$250
Broadband Only	\$187.50	\$225	\$250
All remaining individuals/No services	\$250	\$250	\$250

BUSINESSES CAN HANG UP ON PHONE FRAUDSTERS

We have had a few cases recently in which it appears that a business customer’s phone system or voice mail system has been compromised. The hackers are able to find and exploit a phone system/voice mail unit that has weak security and then are making outbound international calls from that system. All of the fraudulent activity we have encountered has been tied to overseas numbers. The result can be a phone bill that has increased dramatically in a matter of hours. Residential phone lines are not likely to be targeted for these attacks since most customers do not have this type of system in their home. By default, when we add long distance service to a line, international dialing is allowed unless customers specify they want it blocked. Whether your business makes international calls, we are asking that you take the necessary steps to secure your business phone and voice mail systems.

A list of security tips can be found online at, www.ninestarconnect.com, under the “Communications” section. Here are three items to start with:

- Change all voicemail default passwords immediately and change passwords often
- Restrict 0+, 0-, and 10-10-XXX dialing out of your PBX
- Restrict all possible means of out-dial capability in your voice mail system.

For more info, call 317-326-3131.

CHRISTA RIGGS JOINS NINESTAR TEAM

Christa Riggs recently joined the Ninestar Connect team. She will be working in the Marketing Department as the new Marketing Coordinator. With this role, she will promote various advertising/marketing campaigns, assist with NineStar Connect events and provide research, organization and assistance in the marketing department. She will also act as a liaison between other departments at NineStar Connect.

Christa graduated from Eastern Hancock High School and has a bachelor’s degree from IUPUI, where she majored in Continuing Studies and minored in Sociology. Previously, she worked at World Media Group and most recently Stanley Security Solutions. She has a background as a project coordinator, where she managed many media projects from start to finish, and with that has several years of experience in customer service.

“I am thrilled to be working in my hometown,” Riggs stated. “My father worked for years at Indianapolis Power and Light and my grandfather once served on the Board of Director’s here at Hancock County REMC. To be able to be a part of NineStar Connect and all that it presents is wonderful, and I am excited to begin this adventure.”

Christa lives in Blue River Township with her husband, Ronnie, her daughter and two stepsons. You can reach Christa at 317-323-2132.



CHRISTA RIGGS

And the sun, like a bashful swain,
Beamed on it through the waving trees
With a flourish and a vain, --
For my rose laughed in a crimson gleam
And hid in the leaves in wait for me.
The honey-bee came to sing
His love through the languid hours,
And hid his hives, as a shy lover,
Night long of his palace tower.
But my rose bowed in a mockery,
And hid in the leaves in wait for me.
The humming-bird, like a courtier gay,
Came down with a flourish and a vain,
And twanged his wings through the round
Of the rose.

SPRING 2013

The Riley
Spring Concert Series

Join us for an enjoyable
expression of music and renaissance of the arts.

JENNIE DEVOE
Saturday, April 6, 2013
8:00 pm



HOOSIER STONES
Saturday, April 27, 2013
8:00 pm



CATHY MORRIS
Saturday, May 18, 2013
8:00 pm



Jennie DeVoe's voice is smoked honey on a sultry summer evening...smooth, sweet and warm, steeped in the kettle of blues/R&B - but with a rare and wonderful flavor all her own.

A group of Indiana's finest musicians will pay tribute to The Rolling Stones. Tim Grimm, noted actor and award-winning singer-songwriter, is behind the band's creative force.

Electric violinist Cathy Morris, combines contemporary jazz with latin rhythms, funk grooves, fusion, rock, blues and even cajun fun! Cathy calls her distinctive sound as "Party Jazz".

DOORS OPEN AT 7:00 pm. ALL SHOWS START AT 8:00 pm.

Ricks Centre for the Arts • 122 West Main Street • Greenfield, IN

GENERAL SEATING

For tickets:
317-477-SONG

Visit rileyconcert.com
or scan the QR code.

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www.HancockCountyArts.com

JACE MAROSKA PASSES CLIMBING TRAINING

NineStar Connect's Jace Maroska, an electrical groundsman, recently passed the basic climbing course at the Indiana Statewide Training Facility in Franklin, Ind. The apprenticeship starts annually in January, and students go through four years of classroom work and 8,000 hours on-the-job training. Jace will start his apprenticeship in January as a first-step apprentice. The climbing course is just one of several hands-on training programs students go through during their four years. The classes are part of Indiana Statewide Association; ISA shares a training facility in Franklin, Ind., with Hoosier Energy.

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 ninstarconnect.com for last edition's solution.

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

Level: Intermediate

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NINESTAR CONNECTION