

JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2020

125 YEARS
1895 - 2020



NineStar CONNECTION

VOLUME 9
ISSUE 1

SEE PAGE 4

TOUCHSTONE ENERGY CAMP NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

Indiana's 38 electric cooperatives are accepting applications from sixth-grade students for Touchstone Energy Camp.

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NINESTAR TOWN HALL

The NineStar Town Hall with the topic of the evening being to meet the NineStar Board of Director Candidates up for election.

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NINESTAR CONNECT ANNUAL MEETING

SCHEDULED FOR MARCH 27

NINESTAR
EMPLOYEES
HONORED
FOR SERVICE
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MEET YOUR
2020 DIRECTOR
CANDIDATES
PAGES 11-12



NINESTAR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 1



CHRIS JETER

DISTRICT 2



MARK EVANS

DISTRICT 3



DON SHAW

DISTRICT 4



DARRELL H. THOMAS

DISTRICT 5



STEPHEN VAIL

DISTRICT 6



JOSEPH PAXTON

DISTRICT 7



DAVID G. HELLER
RETIRING MARCH 2020

DISTRICT 8



RAYMOND KERKHOF

DISTRICT 9



PHILIP M. HAYES

DISTRICT 10



SHELLY KLEIMAN

AT LARGE



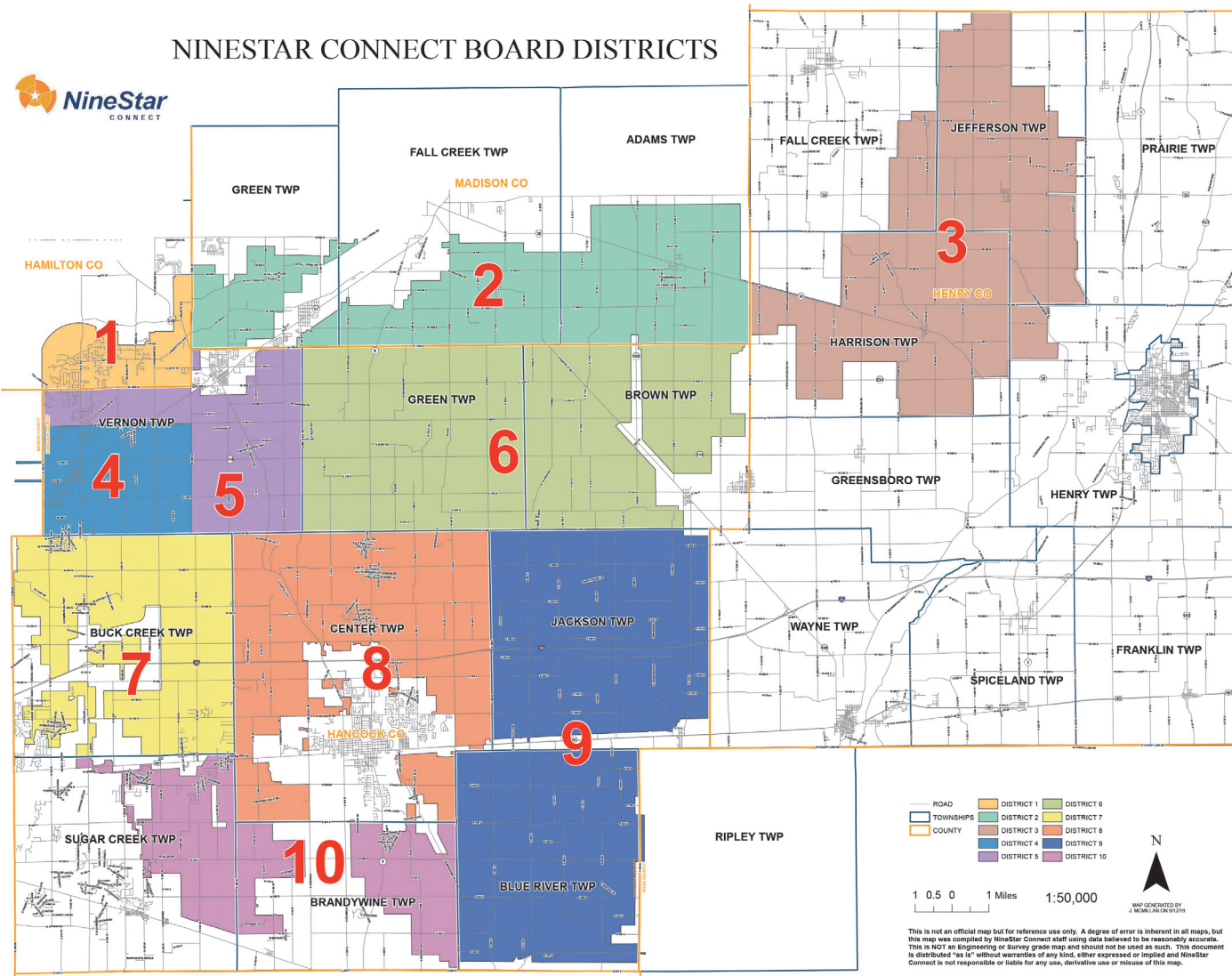
JAMES E. CHERRY



KIM CRONK



RONNIE MOHR





By Julie Young

The NineStar Connect annual meeting is always a highlight of the spring season and this year is no exception. When members gather at Greenfield Central High School on Friday, March 27, they will not only celebrate the current state of the co-op, but will commemorate the past 125 years as well.

“Even though NineStar Connect – in its present incarnation – has only been around for the past nine-or-ten years, we can trace our roots back to the McCordsville Telephone Company, which began in 1895,” said David Spencer, director of marketing and public relations for NineStar Connect.

Founded by Loren Helms, a telephone factory worker who established the first phone system in the community when he ran a wire between the homes of his mother and sister, the McCordsville Telephone Company was established when three neighbors decided to join the line. NineStar member Lowell Thomas still has some of the original equipment used in McCordsville and is donating it to the co-op so that it can be displayed and showcased properly.

“I think our members will get a big kick out of seeing it,” Spencer said. “Being around for 125 years is a big deal and we’ve designed a whole new logo to highlight it.”

The festivities will begin with registration from 5 -6:30 p.m. with dinner and Bingo to follow. Once again, Jonathon Byrd’s Catering will be supplying the menu, which will include: fried chicken or fish, mashed potatoes, green beans, corn, coleslaw, beverages and assorted desserts. According to NineStar Connect

marketing coordinator Erika Whittington the co-op expects to feed at least 1,000 people during the event, so the food has to be top notch.

“Jonathon Byrd’s is always a big hit with our membership and we don’t want to let them down,” she said.

As everyone finishes eating, Bingo will commence. While NineStar has offered workshops in the past to educate or highlight new products or services, last year, they broke out the Bingo cage, which proved to be a popular part of the overall meeting. Game prizes will include gift certificates to local businesses in addition to other various prizes. And, as in previous years, \$5,000 in cash door prizes will be awarded at the end of the meeting.

“Those members who bring a non-perishable food item for the Hancock County Food pantry will also have an additional opportunity to win a door prize,” Whittington said. “It’s all in line with NineStar’s commitment to the community and every attendee will receive a blanket with NineStar’s new 125th Anniversary logo on it.”

The biggest change to the program this year is that there will not be complimentary childcare on site during the meeting due to liability concerns.

After Bingo, the business meeting will get underway. For members who have never attended the event or are new to the co-op, this is your opportunity to learn about what is going on at NineStar Connect and get to know its leadership. Spencer says David Heller, who has served on NineStar’s board of directors for the past 35 years is retiring and members will have the chance to vote on new directors for Districts 1, 7, and 8 as well as an At-Large member. Two of those races have more than one candidate in the running and Spencer



says it will be interesting to see the outcome.

“Of course members can vote early starting on March 1 submitting their ballot at any of our local offices,” Spencer said. “Even if you can’t be at the meeting, your voice matters.” Members who vote early will also receive the special 125th anniversary blanket.

NineStar will also announce the winners of \$15,000 worth of scholarships to graduating high school students, who are not only the children of NineStar members in good standing, but also have a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.75 on a 4.0 scale.

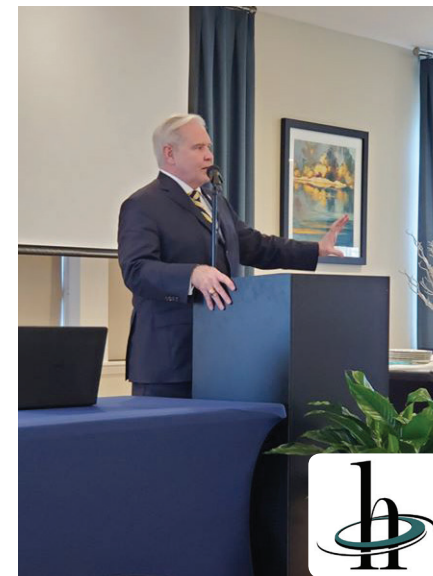
“These students represent the best our service area has to offer and we are proud to help them continue their education,” Spencer said.

Whittington said that although member turnout for the annual meeting is always good, she hopes more of the water service members in the New Palestine area take the opportunity to come out and become more familiar with their co-op.

This is a newer service we have offered and many of them were not familiar with us, so here’s hoping everyone connected to the co-op will come out, meet their neighbors and learn more about what NineStar Connect has to offer!” she said.

NINESTAR CONNECT’S 125TH ANNIVERSARY ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
WHEN: MARCH 27, 2020
WHERE: GREENFIELD CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL
TIME: REGISTRATION BEGINS AT 5 P.M. WITH DINNER, BINGO AND BUSINESS MEETING TO FOLLOW.

TO REGISTER
WWW.NINESTARCONNECT.COM/ANNUALMEETING
OR CALL 888-201-0049



STATE OFFICIAL SPEAKS AT HANCOCK COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING

NEW PALESTINE — Jim Schellinger, Indiana secretary of commerce, touted the state’s business climate in his keynote address at the Hancock Economic Development Council’s annual meeting on Jan. 15 at Woodland Terrace of New Palestine.

Schellinger said Indiana’s infrastructure, government programs and wide array of industries make the state a good place to do business. He also spoke of obstacles like the threat of a recession and global trade disputes. Schellinger discussed his work toward Indiana’s economic development across the state, U.S. and world as well.

Randy Sorrell, executive director of the county’s economic development council, gave a report on activity in 2019: The HEDC received 80 requests for information; completed 13 projects; created 380 proposed new jobs; and brought \$218 million in capital investment.

The council also chose new leaders for 2020. Jeffrey Somers, vice president and business development officer at Greenfield Banking Co., will serve as president. Michael Burrow, president and CEO of NineStar Connect, is vice president. Rick Edwards, vice president and CFO of Hancock Health and Hancock Regional Hospital, is treasurer. April Fisher, Cumberland town manager, is secretary.



HEARTLAND FILM FESTIVAL TAKES “BEST OF THE FEST” TO GREENFIELD, INDIANA, PRESENTED BY NINESTAR CONNECT

Known for showcasing the best in independent, inspiring film from all over the world every October, the Heartland Film Festival — presented by nonprofit arts organization Heartland Film — will offer moviegoers in Greenfield, Indiana a chance to experience the festival atmosphere in their own backyard. The two-day event scheduled for early April will take place at Greenfield Legacy 9 Cinema.

“Our ‘Best of the Fest’ model is the next best thing to the 10-day Heartland Film Festival,” explained Heartland Film Vice President Michael Ault. “It gives the community an opportunity to experience a powerful slate of films that they can’t see anywhere else. Heartland Film is thrilled to be partnering with Legacy 9 and the Greenfield community.”

“We couldn’t be more pleased to partner with Heartland Film as well as Legacy 9 Cinema to bring the festival to Greenfield. We believe arts and culture help sustain and lift up a community and make it a better place to live and raise a family,” said NineStar’s Director of Marketing David Spencer.

Details concerning the “Best of the Fest” appearance in Greenfield are still being determined. More information concerning the movies, dates and times will be forthcoming over the following weeks. Please check NineStar’s social media accounts for updates.

NINESTAR EMPLOYEES HONORED FOR SERVICE

Indiana Electric Cooperatives (IEC) recently honored several NineStar employees for their years of service to the electric industry. Those being honored for twenty-five years of service included; Bryan Giddings, John Painter, Jon Splater, Eric Truitt, and Amy Wisehart. The employees received their awards at the IEC Annual Meeting held in Indianapolis at the downtown Marriott.



BRYAN GIDDINGS



JOHN PAINTER



JON SPLATER



ERIC TRUITT



AMY WISEHART



NINESTAR PRESENTS CHECK TO THE SHELBY COUNTY FIBER BOARD

NineStar Communications based out of Greenfield, Indiana began providing telecommunications services to Shelbyville businesses utilizing the Shelby County Fiber Network in 2019. Recently, NineStar’s Director of Sales Julie Lynch met with Mayor Tom DeBaun and Rob Nolley of the Shelby County Fiber Board to discuss the partnership. After the meeting, Lynch presented a check for \$844 to Mayor DeBaun and Nolley for the Shelby County Fiber Board. The money given back is based off a percentage of revenue generated from communications services that utilize the fiber assets of the Shelby County Fiber Network and will continue to be paid on a quarterly basis. The monies will be used by the fiber board to recoup expenses and improve and expand the network.



NINESTAR’S KORY CHAPMAN GRADUATES ELECTRIC LINEWORKER APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

Kory Chapman, a NineStar lineworker, graduated from Indiana Electric Cooperatives’ Rural Electric Apprentice Program (REAP).

REAP is a four-year program that professionally trains apprentice lineworkers from across Indiana. Graduates complete 576 hours of classroom-related study and 8,000 hours of on-the-job training at their electric cooperative. Students also complete four additional classes through Ivy Tech Community College. Upon completion of the program, graduates earn an Associate of Applied Science and a journeyman lineman certificate.

Chapman was hired at NineStar in 2014.

“Lineworkers are the backbone of our operations and their dedication to the consumers of Indiana’s

electric cooperatives is outstanding.” said Jon Elkins, vice president of safety, training and compliance at Indiana Electric Cooperatives. “We are proud to have these hardworking individuals as part of the cooperative family.”

NineStar’s Vice President of Operations Jeff Conley added, “I am very proud of Kory and what he has accomplished. He is an asset to NineStar.”



DO YOU KNOW A SIXTH-GRADE STUDENT WHO WANTS TO LEARN MORE ABOUT ELECTRICITY AND ATTEND A FUN EDUCATIONAL SUMMER CAMP?
MAKE SURE HE/SHE KNOWS ABOUT THIS PROGRAM!

Indiana's 38 electric cooperatives are accepting applications from sixth-grade students (entering seventh grade in the fall of 2020) for Touchstone Energy Camp. Each year students who attend camp have the opportunity to gain new knowledge about the electrical cooperative industry and electricity, participate in fun summer activities, and make new friends.

Touchstone Energy Camp is a three-night, four-day overnight camp hosted at Camp Tecumseh in Brookston, Indiana, and will take place June 3-6, 2020. Students will meet at Camp Tecumseh the afternoon of June 3 and immediately jump into fun activities and start making new friends. Each year the camp committee works to develop a well-rounded schedule to strike a balance between education and fun. Activities include a live line safety demonstration, bucket truck rides, electrical pole climbing tutorial, and various activities involving circuit boards, renewables, and even

Internet safety.

NineStar plans to sponsor at least two kids to attend the camp. All applicants must be sponsored by a rural electric cooperative, have completed sixth grade and are enrolled in seventh grade, and have adequate transportation to and from Camp Tecumseh in Brookston, Indiana.

Touchstone Energy Camp also includes tons of FUN camp outdoor activities. Program highlights include swimming, canoeing, other lake activities, zip lining, archery, horseback riding, a climbing wall, field games, and, of course – a campfire and hotdogs.

To apply visit TouchStoneEnergyCamp.org (deadline is March 2, 2020)

For more information please contact Erika Whittington at [NineStar Connect](mailto:ewhittington@ninestarconnect.com). 317.323.2129 or ewhittington@ninestarconnect.com



HORSEBACK RIDING • CANOEING • ROCK CLIMBING • ZIP LINING • ARCHERY • SWIMMING

ENERGIZE YOUR SUMMER

ARE YOU AN INDIANA STUDENT ENTERING SEVENTH GRADE IN 2020?
Learn about electricity, try cool activities, and make new friends this summer at Touchstone Energy Camp!

APPLY NOW!

Visit TouchstoneEnergyCamp.org to apply.
APPLICATIONS ARE DUE **MARCH 2, 2020!**

BEWARE OF SCAM CALLS ⚠

We have been getting reports that our customers have been getting scam calls from someone claiming to be a NineStar representative. The caller states that the customer is owing money to NineStar and if it isn't paid, then we will shut your power and/or communication services off.

THIS IS NOT TRUE!

NineStar will never call to ask for a payment over the phone. Please be aware of these calls. If you ever have any questions please call us at **317.326.3131**.

EARLY VOTING

CAN'T MAKE IT TO THE ANNUAL MEETING OR YOU WANT TO VOTE BEFORE YOU GO?

Vote **March 1st - 20th, 2020** at a NineStar location during normal business hours.
Receive a commemorative NineStar 125th anniversary blanket.

Additionally, **March 7th, 8:00am to Noon** at Sulphur Springs/Jefferson Township Fire Department and Markleville Town Hall.

If you vote early you are more than welcome to attend the annual meeting, however an RSVP is still needed.

North Campus 2113 E 600 N, Greenfield	South Campus 2243 E main St., Greenfield	McCordsville 6045 W Broadway, McCordsville
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NINESTAR TO SPONSOR STUDENTS FOR D.C. TRIP

NINESTAR CONNECT ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR INDIANA YOUTH TOUR

NineStar Connect plans to sponsor two students on the annual Indiana Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. The 2020 Indiana Youth Tour is June 18-25.

Students entering their senior year in 2020 are eligible to attend and are selected by their local cooperative to participate in the weeklong trip. Indiana will send a delegation of approximately 100 students from throughout the state. The students travel to Washington and convene with more than 1,800 students from up to 46 states.

“NineStar is pleased to provide this opportunity for our local youth,” said Christa Riggs, Marketing Coordinator at NineStar. “It’s a great trip and a wonderful chance to see the sites, make new friends and learn how everyone, even young people, can make a difference in the political process.”

Applications for Youth Tour are available online by going to IndianaYouthTour.org. Applications are due by March 2, 2020.

Students participating in the trip will visit the Gettysburg Battlefield, Arlington National Cemetery, the Smithsonian museums, tour the Jefferson, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorials, take a night cruise on the Potomac River, and much more.

The Indiana Youth Tour students will also participate in a youth rally hosted by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association and spend a day on Capitol Hill, where they will have an opportunity to meet with Indiana’s congressional delegation to ask questions and share their thoughts on a variety of timely issues.

For more information about the 2020 Indiana Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., contact Christa Riggs at 317-323-2132 or criggs@ninestarconnect.com.



You must be a junior to apply!

MONUMENTS. MUSEUMS. LEGISLATORS. FRIENDS. TRIP OF A LIFETIME.

INDIANA YOUTH TOUR '20
WASHINGTON, D.C.

June 18-25
2020

APPLY NOW

SPONSORED BY NINESTAR CONNECT AND INDIANA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

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

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

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

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

December	Jason & Nettie Greulich	\$50 Amazon Gift Card
January	Brian & Amanda Socolofsky	\$50 Amazon Gift Card

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

President's Message

This year marks the 125th anniversary of NineStar Connect. Mind you, the name “NineStar” hasn’t been around for all of those years but if you trace the direct lineage of our cooperative, you will find it all started back in 1895 when Loren Helms, a McCordsville resident who worked at a telephone factory in Indianapolis, decided he would connect his house, to his mother’s and sister’s house via a telephone wire strung along a fence line. Soon, three other neighbors joined the group and the McCordsville Telephone Company was born. Fast forward another forty years to 1935, another movement started when 39 farmers from the various townships of Hancock County contributed \$5 each to start Hancock County REMC to bring electricity to rural, unserved parts of the county. By the end of 1937, 60 farms and houses had been connected and once again, local people were coming up with local solutions to improve the quality of life and place in our community.

Throughout its 125-year history, NineStar Connect’s success has largely rested on what I like to call its three-legged stool: The first leg being local governance and control. Local residents create local solutions that work for our local communities. Notice I mention “local” a lot. I do so because I’m proud of the fact that generations of coop members, directors and employees have been effective in finding solutions that fit our local community and not sit back waiting for either government or large out-of-state corporations to provide us with an answer. Many failing communities today have residents who see themselves as victims of declining circumstances - powerless to make changes and always seeking the help of something bigger than themselves like government or corporations to make investments and bring back lost opportunities. Not so in our communities where folks understand they own their own destiny and recognize there is no magic pill, government program or big corporation investment that will make their community prosper.

The second leg of that success stool is our historic focus on improving the quality of place and life for the members of our coop and the residents of the communities it serves. As I reflect back on what must have been going through the minds of the original founders of both the telephone and electric coops, I am convinced that they weren’t out to create a telephone or an electric business, per se. Rather, they created these companies as

vehicles to make their lives a little easier and their communities more competitive and attractive for the next generation. The same can also be said of our recent entry into water and wastewater services. We aren’t out to create new companies or giant business monopolies. Instead, we were (and remain) focused on improving the quality of place for both current and future residents by establishing these services in areas of the county that were going unserved. With increased instances of contaminated wells and homes that are not eligible for conventional financing due to improperly installed septic systems, we recognized that future generations – our children and grandchildren – might choose to live, work and invest in other places if we didn’t begin addressing these things that are beginning to impact our quality of life.

Twenty-five years ago, most people would not have dreamed of building a new house or starting a business in a place that didn’t have access to electricity. Today, most wouldn’t build a new house or business that doesn’t have access to the broadband our fiber investments bring. A decade from now, there will be a majority of folks who won’t build new homes or businesses that in a place that doesn’t have access to public water and wastewater services. That’s why we’ve spent 125 years focused on improving the quality of place and lives in the areas we serve.

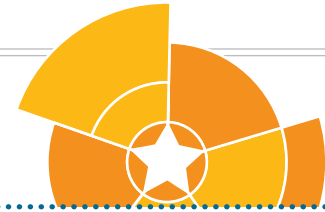
The last leg of the stool on which NineStar’s success rests is perhaps the most important: Transparency. NineStar invests a significant amount of effort in human capital in communicating with our members and communities. We host monthly meetings ranging from our large annual meeting, to smaller town halls, Nerd Nights and Power Hours where we can engage our members and customers and get feedback from them on what we are doing well and what we need to improve in the services we provide. We also have invested heavily in communicating with our younger members via social media outlets like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. And of course, we do this bi-monthly newsletter where yours truly even contributes by offering his thoughts and insights on current cooperative happenings.



Most who track such things will often comment that NineStar does more to communicate with its members and customers than virtually any other utility with which they have been associated and I suspect that is true. Some inevitably ask why we go to such lengths and expend so much efforts.

As a cooperative utility, transparency is a keystone to being able to operate effectively and successfully. We know our members and customers won’t always agree with every decision that is made and in fact, some decisions can be downright unpopular (for example, raising our video prices annually). Nevertheless, no matter how unpopular a decision might be, it is incumbent for your cooperative to communicate what it is doing and why it is doing it. It’s what separates cooperatives from larger investor-owned utilities that sometimes take their customers for granted. Over the years observing us, we hope you see consistency and have come to value how NineStar conducts itself as a locally owned and controlled cooperative utility.

OPERATION ROUND-UP



In 2019, NineStar had awarded 25 grant applications to its Operation Round Up program and presented \$88,595.00 to various organizations throughout the year. The purpose of Operation Round-Up is to accumulate and distribute funds for charitable purposes to groups/organizations within the NineStar service territory. The source of these funds is the membership of NineStar Connect service customers who voluntarily "round up" their bill to the next highest dollar. The money is accumulated by the co-op and transferred to the NineStar Community Trust. Each quarter a group of Trustees (NineStar customers who volunteer their time to serve on this committee) meet and decide how the funds are dispersed with the applications that are received.

Here are some organizations that benefited from the ORU fund this past quarter:



HANCOCK COUNTY CHILDREN'S CHOIR

➤ **AGAPE THERAPEUTIC RIDING RESOURCES**
\$2560.00

⏪ **HANCOCK COUNTY CHILDREN'S CHOIR**
\$3000.00

➤ **HANCOCK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**
\$3000.00

⏪ **MENTAL HEALTH PARTNERS OF HANCOCK COUNTY**
\$3925.00

➤ **NASA (NEIGHBORHOODS AGAINST SUBSTANCE ABUSE)**
\$2000.00

⏪ **NEW PALESTINE INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL ROBOTICS**
\$1000.00

➤ **ONE GREEN TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT**
\$1000.00

⏪ **ROYAL FAMILY KIDS' 101**
\$3400.00

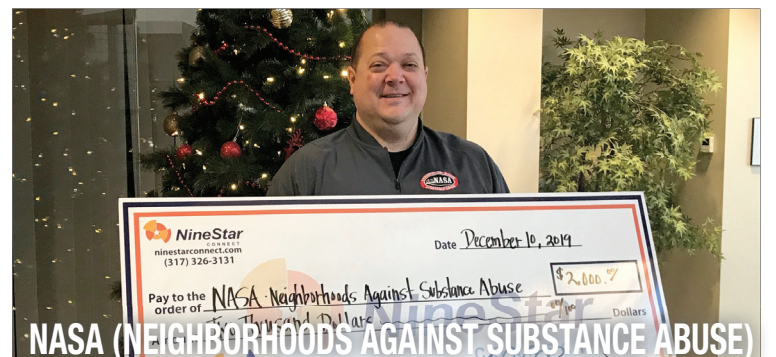
➤ **SHENANDOAH MIDDLE SCHOOL MEDIA CENTER**
\$1120.00



AGAPE THERAPEUTIC RIDING RESOURCES



HANCOCK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



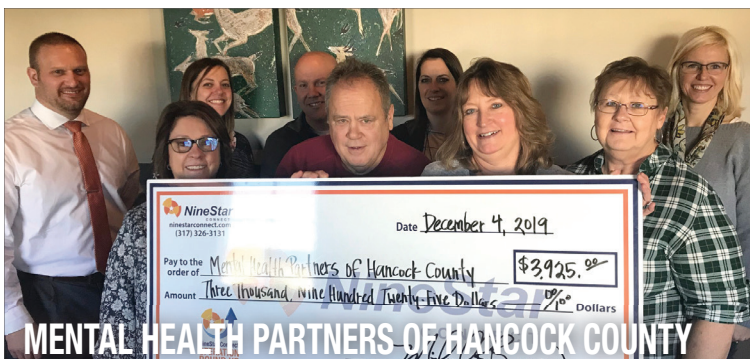
NASA (NEIGHBORHOODS AGAINST SUBSTANCE ABUSE)



ONE GREEN TOWNSHIP VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT



SHENANDOAH MIDDLE SCHOOL MEDIA CENTER



MENTAL HEALTH PARTNERS OF HANCOCK COUNTY



NEW PALESTINE INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL ROBOTICS



ROYAL FAMILY KIDS' 101

For ones that want to send in an application for Operation Round-up dollars, the next application deadline is April 10, 2020. Applications can be downloaded from our website at www.ninestarconnect.com under the Community tab.

TOWN HALL MEET THE CANDIDATE NIGHT

January 16th kicked off the first official NineStar Town Hall of two thousand and twenty. The topic of the evening was Meet the Candidates. NineStar Board of Director Candidates up for election gathered to introduce themselves and talk a little bit about their background and the roll they would play as a possible NineStar board member. Candidates up for election include; Chris Jeter (district one), Jack Negley & Stephen Sandefur (district seven), Ray Kerkhof (district eight) and Kim Cronk & Curtis Stephenson (At-Large). After the meeting, attendees were able to speak with the candidates and ask any questions they may have had.

All candidate speeches were filmed and can be viewed on the NineStar website by visiting www.ninestarconnect.com/2020-ninestar-annual-meeting-celebration. Candidate background information and candidate statements can also be viewed online on that same web page.

As a reminder, early voting will be available beginning March 1 – March 20, 2020 at any of NineStar’s three locations during regular business hours. Additionally, from 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., early voting for Directors of the Board will take place on March 7, 2020 at: Sulphur Springs/Jefferson Township Fire Department and Markleville Town Hall. If you vote early, you are still more than welcome to attend the annual meeting, have dinner and be eligible for prizes; however, an RSVP is still required. New this year, if you vote early and are not able to attend the annual meeting, you will still receive the same giveaway given at the annual meeting. This year, the giveaway will be a commemorative 125th anniversary blanket. For questions on early voting please call 317.326.3131.



2020 Scholarship Program

Providing Fifteen \$1,000 Scholarships

- As of February 1, 2020, the student’s principal residence must be with said student’s parent or legal guardian who is a member of NineStar Connect or a customer of NineStar Communications in good standing.
- The student must be a 2019/2020 school year graduating high school student.
- The student must have a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.75 on a 4.00 scale or its equivalent, at the time of the application.
- Application forms must be submitted to NineStar’s South Campus by 3:00pm on **March 6, 2020**.

Application forms are available at **ninestarconnect.com** under **Community** and at all local High School guidance offices or may be picked up at any NineStar business office.

NineStar North Campus 2331 East 600 North Greenfield, IN 46140	NineStar South Campus 2243 East Main Street Greenfield, IN 46140	NineStar McCordsville Office 6045 West Broadway McCordsville, IN 46055
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For more information call
Dominique Egbert 317-323-2103
email administration@ninestarconnect.com



NINESTAR ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT HELPS UNITED WAY & MEALS ON WHEELS OF HANCOCK COUNTY

The Accounting Department of NineStar worked on packing up canned and boxed foods to help support the United Way of Central Indiana and Hancock County Meals on Wheels. This time of year, it may be difficult for volunteers to deliver food to Meals on Wheels participants because of bad weather. Therefore, the big boxes of food distributed to the program’s partakers can provide meals for a couple of days if inclement weather is in the forecast.

#NINESTAR GIVES BACK





DIRECTOR CANDIDATES

BIOS AND STATEMENTS



CHRIS JETER

BACKGROUND:

Chris Jeter has been a cooperative member since 2013. He is a graduate of Hamilton Southeastern High School, Oklahoma Baptist University (Bachelor's Degree) and The George Washington University Law School (Law Degree). He currently is a practicing attorney and Partner/Owner of MJC Attorneys/Law Firm and has been a Navy Reservist since 2012. His previous positions include being an Associate Attorney with Barnes & Thornburg LLP and an active duty Navy JAG Officer. Chris served one year in Iraq as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom during the troop surge in 2006-2007. He was a proud part of the leadership of Task Force 134, which coordinated all detainee operations. After his tour there, he was awarded the Defense Meritorious Service Medal by the Secretary of Defense for outstanding service. Chris currently serves as Secretary of Fishers Economic Development Commission, member of Indiana Bar Association Veterans Affairs Committee and member of Northview Christian Church. Chris and his wife Karen are parents to two small children, Macy and Hayden which he says requires "specialized training"! They reside in Fishers.

DIRECTOR, DISTRICT 1

CANDIDATE STATEMENT:

Having completed my first term, I have learned a lot but have a lot left to learn. I am proud of the state of our cooperative and view my work on the Board as a public service to the rural Indiana counties in which I grew up. My goal in my next term is to continue pushing the envelope on the quality and price of our services. Every member should be proud to be an "owner" of such a special company. This Board spends every meeting trying to decide how it can better serve its members. I think there is so much work to be done in the expanding of NineStar's water and wastewater services, lowering demand prices, exploring alternative energy sources, and improving our critical infrastructure. To sum it up, I am pleased to be part of a Board that can proudly stand behind the work it has done.



JACK NEGLEY

BACKGROUND:

Jack Negley has been a cooperative member since 1987. Jack graduated from Lawrence Central High School and then Purdue University, West Lafayette with a Bachelor's Degree in Industrial Engineering. Jack currently is a Territory Account Manager with WEG Electric. His prior employment includes GE, Siemens, Furnas Electric, Teradyne and Reliance Electric. All were positions of Technical Sales covering the state of Indiana. He has also served as Sales Manager which he was responsible for a sales budget and oversaw the staff. He has previously sold electrical equipment such as power distribution, transformers and motor control. He has a good working knowledge of electrical systems. Additionally, Jack currently is serving a second term as President of Zion Lutheran Church and School in New Palestine. Previously, he was Vice President, Chair of Stewardship, member of the elders, serves on the by-laws committee and is on the endowment committee which he started 23 years ago. He is also serving on the Advisory Board of Buck Creek Township Fire Department and is a part of the Sigma Nu Fraternity Purdue Alumnus Board. He also was a member of the Mt. Vernon Optimist Club and ran the basketball program for six years. Jack and his wife Carol have lived at the same address since 1987 where Carol taught at Greenfield School Systems. They have three children; Brittany, Kyle and Kayla.

DIRECTOR, DISTRICT 7

CANDIDATE STATEMENT:

I am very close to retirement in my current job and am looking to make a change and get involved more in my community. I have experience in managing both people and budgets, involved with our by-laws at my church, been involved with fundraisers, etc. I am looking for a new challenge that can use my leadership skills, communication skills, and experience from the electrical industry. I see NineStar as an opportunity for me to be involved with a company in moving forward in electrification, broadband and communication technologies, and now in both water and wastewater businesses. I am also a team player and look forward to working at the committee level working the issues to collectively make NineStar grow, be successful, all consistent with the vision and strategic plan of the company.



STEPHEN SANDEFUR

BACKGROUND:

Stephen (Steve) Sandefur has been a cooperative member since 2002. Steve graduated from Roncalli High School and from Purdue University, School of Engineering & Technology with a Bachelor of Science in Construction Management and an Associate in Applied Science in Civil Engineering and Architectural Engineering. He received his Masters of Business Administration (MBA) w/ Management Specialization from Indiana Wesleyan University in 2009. Steve is currently a Senior Consultant/Program Manager for BPM Associates. Previously, he has worked at Hagerman Group, F.A. Wilhelm Construction, Duke Realty Corporation, Verkler Incorporated, Global Performance and NGC Corporation. All previous positions held were in management roles such as business development, project manager, director of construction & field services, general contracting and structural and architectural engineering and lead management. Steve has led and supervised several projects in his career such as Gary Chicago International Airport Runway Expansion Program, Eli Lilly Pharmaceutical Projects Expansion, Federal Express Unload and Sort Building, Department of Transportation, Indiana Governor's Residence Addition and Eiteljorg Museum Connector to WRSP Underground Parking Garage to name a few. He has several certifications and achievements to his name including an LEED AP BD+C (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), Healthcare Construction Certificate (HCC), American Institute of Architects (AIA) First Place Architectural Champion for the State of Indiana in 1990 and AGC (Associated General Contractors) Future Leaders Organization; Education Forum and Member Services Committee Member. Steve has volunteered multiple years for Habitat for Humanity, Rebuilding Together and was a mentor at Pike High School assisting students who are interested in architecture, engineering and construction. He loves to coach all sports, particularly girls' basketball. Steve has lived in Hancock County for nearly 18 years. He plans on being in Hancock County until at least his retirement and wants to do what he can to set an even better place for people to work and live. Steve has two children; Ariana and Marilyn and is soon to be engaged. He resides in Greenfield.

DIRECTOR, DISTRICT 7

CANDIDATE STATEMENT:

My goal is to serve the community I love. Eighteen years ago, I built a home in Greenfield where my children go to school. I am proficient, dynamic, goal-driven, MBA educated, LEED accredited and a healthcare certified professional that wants to utilize my executive leadership, management and operations experience; and put those to work representing the people in district 7. On large and small projects, I have efficiently and effectively managed personnel, costs, quality, service and schedule while maintaining a safe and productive environment. I have over 24 years of professional experience, a strong and diverse education (four degrees), multiple certifications, vision and leadership and have delivered success in the past and will bring synergy to the board. Whether I am leading a team or working on my own, I will deliver professional results for the board's challenges. Utilizing my skills and contributing to the future success of NineStar Connect and its members are my goal.



DIRECTOR CANDIDATES

BIOS AND STATEMENT: CONTINUED



RAY KERKHOF

BACKGROUND:

Ray Kerkhof has been a cooperative member since 1975. He graduated from Greenfield-Central High School and has a Bachelor of Science from Purdue University. After 38 years of service, Ray retired from Harvest Land Coop where he was the Ag Center Manager. He held management positions throughout the years at Harvest Land Coop (previously, Hancock County Coop and Ag One Coop). Through his employment, he has gone through several management and leadership training courses. Since 1981, Ray has also been president of 3-K Farms Inc., his family farming operation. He is also past President and current member of Hancock County Farm Bureau Inc. as well as past President of District VI Farm Bureau Elect and held the office of treasurer of the district. Ray served as First Vice President of Greenfield-Central School Board and on the nominating committee from Indiana for Farm Credit Mid-America. He also served on the board for Hancock County Extension as well as the Hancock Regional Hospital Foundation Board. He is currently serving on the board of NineStar Connect as Secretary and was selected to serve as a representative of NineStar on the board of Indiana Electric Cooperatives. Ray and his wife Pam are members of Trinity Park United Methodist Church and live just outside of Greenfield. They have three children; Chad, Brandi and Nick.

DIRECTOR, DISTRICT 8

CANDIDATE STATEMENT:

After serving three years on the board of NineStar Connect, I found it to be a vibrant and dynamic cooperative. NineStar's entrance into water and sewer has proved to be successful in launching a number of new developments and ventures in our communities. That, along with the Idea Co-op at the Maxwell campus, has spurred new interest in technology and innovation in our rural setting. Today NineStar has projects in updating its electrical footprint, fiber to the home for our new members in the Gem area, and the construction of new sewer and water infrastructure to meet the needs of future development. NineStar and its employees continue to serve its members and raise the quality of life for the communities it serves. I have been proud to serve and wish to continue to be a part of such an outstanding experience.



KIM CRONK

BACKGROUND:

Kim Cronk has been a cooperative member since 1989. He is a graduate of Shenandoah High School, Ball State University (Bachelor's Degree in Education), and the Indiana Law Enforcement Academy. He has received several certifications in business management and law enforcement supervision techniques. Kim is currently a Henry County Commissioner. His previous employment positions include being Henry County Sheriff for 8 years, Henry County Sheriff's Department (various ranks) for 35 years, Shenandoah School Corporation Board Member & President and Henry County Council. Kim has attended numerous certified educational programs in telecommunications and electricity, as well as water and sewage operations. He also has attended several certified classes concerning business management, director service and fiduciary requirements of being a board member of corporations. He is a member of the National and Indiana Sheriff's Associations, Fraternal Order of Police, the Cadiz Lions Club, Ball State University Alumni Association, and several telecommunications and electrical associations. He has also served on several boards associated with youth related activities to include 4-H, FFA and church organizations. Kim has served citizens in Henry and Hancock counties for almost 44 years in various capacities. He is committed to each and every position he is hired for or elected to and serves in all positions to the best of his abilities. He is always striving for positive and progressive improvements in each position when possible. Kim and his wife Nila live in rural Henry County and have two adult children; Lauren and Leanna.

DIRECTOR, AT LARGE

CANDIDATE STATEMENT:

During the past 23 years, it has been an honor to serve as your Director. Currently I serve as the At-Large Director representing members from Hancock, Hamilton, Madison and Henry Counties and all other NineStar Connect operational areas. While serving as a NineStar Connect Director, I have always strived to promote a very progressive business model of high integrity. Currently NineStar Connect is considered a premier leader at the local, state and national levels in the electric, telecommunications, and sewer and water utilities. NineStar has developed this high level of integrity through the collaboration of our cooperative members and the professional leadership of our staff and board of directors. We are a community partner always enhancing the "quality of life" through the various communities that we serve. During my tenure on the board of directors it has been an honor to serve the members of the NineStar family. I would welcome the opportunity to continue representing the membership of NineStar Connect.



CURTIS STEPHENSON

BACKGROUND:

Curt Stephenson, graduate of Ball State University with a Bachelor's Degree from Miller College of Business, was self-employed for many years before selling his business to a bank holding company and later becoming the President/CEO. During his thirteen year tenure, he lead the expansion and growth of this profitable and successful business, and in 2015 was involved in the transition to a top 10 national brokerage firm where he was the Indiana Regional President until his retirement in 2018. Over the years, Curt has been a successful business owner/entrepreneur and President of publicly traded (Nasdaq) company. Curt has served on several boards, both for-profit and not-for-profit. He and his wife, Betty reside in the rural Pendleton area where he has been a cooperative member since 1991.

DIRECTOR, AT LARGE

CANDIDATE STATEMENT:

My interest in serving on the board at NineStar is to remain actively involved in the community and to continue to give back by sharing my business acumen to assure continued growth and remain fiscally responsible. By providing this service, I will oversee that our member services will continue to adapt and grow with our consumer demands moving forward, while also being prudent with our member capital. Having served on a vast number of boards over my working years, I can attest that visionary leaders along with engaged, educated and informed board members provide direction to help align the objectives with senior management for long-term, sustainable results and success for the betterment of all the stakeholders. I truly believe you reap what you sow and communities greatly benefit when leaders are willing to pay-it-forward by giving back. The knowledge and experience shared will empower the continued growth and expansion of Indiana's premier cooperative.