

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2013



# *NineStar* CONNECTION

VOLUME 2  
ISSUE 6

## ANNUAL MEETING INFORMATION

Mark your calendar,  
elections scheduled.

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## GEARING UP

4-H'ers explore options  
at open house.

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# HOME SMART HOME

NEW NINESTAR SYSTEM GIVES HOMEOWNERS PEACE OF MIND **PAGE 4**





OUR EMPLOYEES  
MAKE THE  
DIFFERENCE. HERE'S  
A CUSTOMER  
REVIEW FOR KAREN  
ZETTLER.

KAREN ZETTLER  
GOT THE JOB  
DONE! SHE IS VERY  
APPRECIATED!

- JOANNA S.

HAVE A STORY IDEA?

Contact David Spencer at  
dspencer@ninestarconnect.com

COVER STORY PAGES 4-5

NineStar's new Smart Connect service offers customers many ways to automate and monitor their homes.

OPERATION ROUND-UP PAGE 7

NineStar Connect Operation Round-Up awarded more than \$10,000 to programs that will help people in the community.

SAFETY CLASS PAGE 8

NineStar Energy Adviser Darrin Couch shares electricity safety tips with area schoolchildren.

SEALING THE DEAL PAGE 10

NineStar offers tips on how homeowners can make heating and cooling systems more efficient.

CAREER  
FAIR

NineStar Connect met with local job seekers at a career fair at Greenfield-Central High School. The company shared information about the skills needed in today's economy.

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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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HOLIDAY TECH HELPERS HERE

With one major holiday down and another quickly approaching, it seems as though our lives continue to get busier and busier. Our jobs, families and commitments in the community continue to pull us in so many different directions leaving us to question why there can't be more hours in a day.

As you continue to fight the madness and scramble to find just the right gifts for your loved ones, please remember NineStar Connect has two great resources that can be very valuable to you this time of year.

First are the NineStar Nerds, who are available to assist you with any job, big or small. Whether it's PC Setup, Hardware/Software Upgrades, Mobile Device Set up, Virus Removal, Diagnostics/Repair, and Networking, the Nerds have the expertise to get the job done. No longer do you have to stress if the latest technology gadget will be working come Christmas morning. The Nerds are happy to assist you and help give you peace of mind this holiday season. And don't forget, if you are a NineStar Triple Play customer, you automatically receive a 20 percent discount on all Nerd services.

Secondly, NineStar's 24/7/365 Support Center is always available to assist NineStar customers with any question or situation that arises. And just like the name implies, you can call and speak to a human being that speaks our native "Hoosier" any time of the day. As is the case with the Nerds, our personnel who work in the support center are trained to handle any situation that arises. They are friendly and truly live the creed that no question is too small or dumb to ask. They have even helped me with an issue or two in the past and did so with great patience and understanding. They will be available Christmas Day should any need arise.

I would encourage all NineStar customers to take advantage of the NineStar Nerds and the 24/7/365 Support Center this holiday season to alleviate stress and worry with your holiday gadget purchases. These two great resources are here for you to provide much needed peace of mind so you can focus what matters most... your family and this special time of season.

On behalf of myself, our board of directors, and dedicated staff, I want to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year!

PRESIDENT & CEO



TIM  
HILLS

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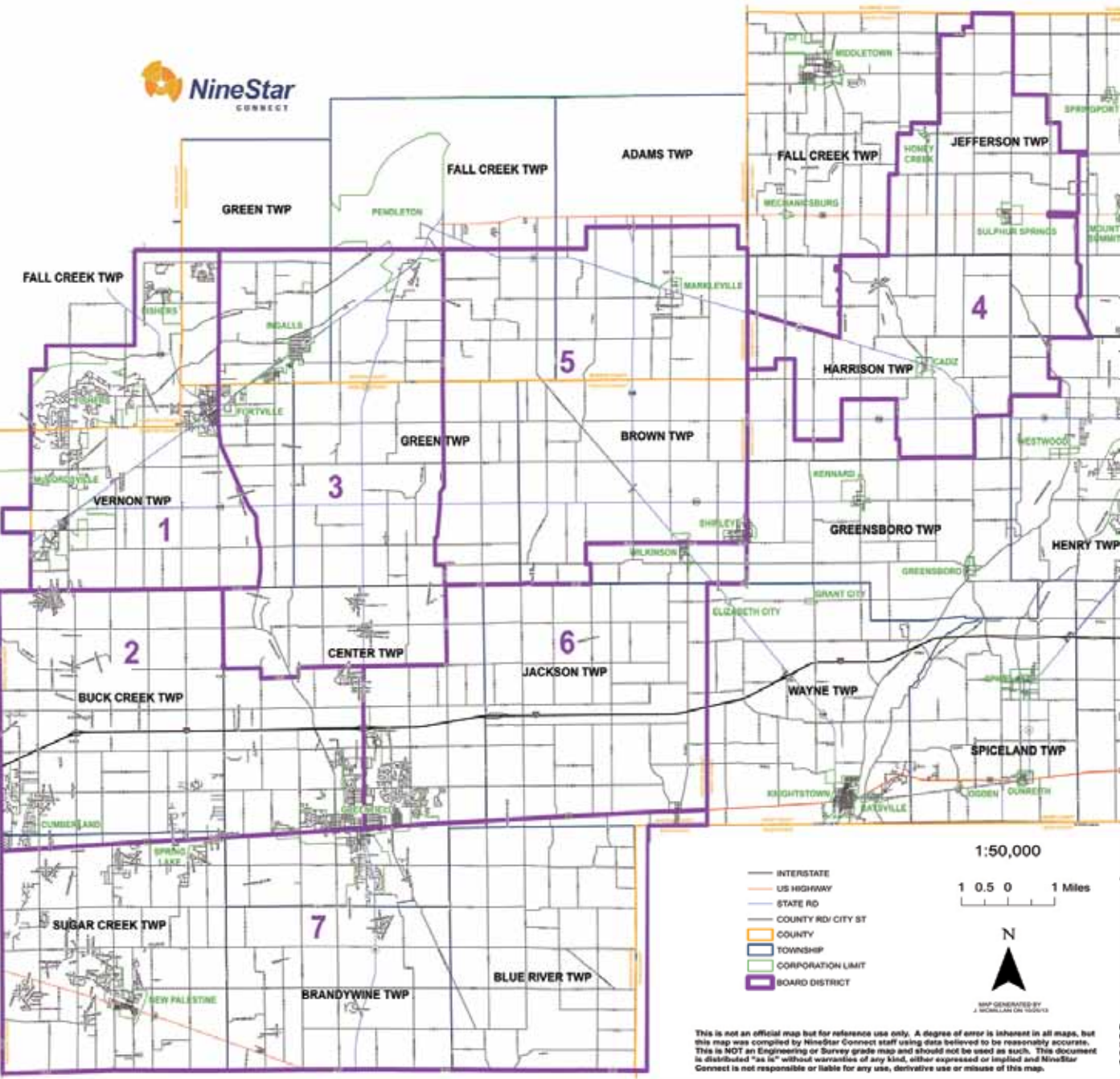
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RETIRING IN 2014



THOMAS KIRBY





# HOME SMART HOME

## NEW NINESTAR SYSTEM GIVES HOMEOWNERS PEACE OF MIND

A few years ago, the idea of home automation technology seemed like something out of the cartoon “The Jetsons.” Who could have imagined a day when homeowners could control a myriad of household systems at the touch of a button? Well, thanks to NineStar Smart Connect, the future is here with a home automation package that will simplify your lifestyle and offer you peace of mind no matter where you are.

WRITTEN BY  
**JULIE  
YOUNG**



NineStar Smart Connect is a full-featured home automation system that enables members to control their appliances and lighting systems, lock and unlock doors digitally, manage HVAC systems to save money and energy, set motion and lighting sensors on exterior units, monitor the premises through video surveillance cameras and equipment, and receive alerts when a potential problem arises.

“This is a new product line we are launching in January of 2014 but we are taking preorders for it now,” said Ross Ferson, director of network operations for NineStar Connect. “It’s a completely modulated system, which means that homeowners can choose the features that matter most and add new ones as their needs change.”

It’s also the wave of the future. According to ABI Research, a technology market-research firm, about 1 million home automation units were purchased across North America in 2011 and that number is growing exponentially. Their studies suggest that initial figure could grow six-fold by 2016.

Ferson is one of several NineStar employees who have tested the Smart Connect technology in their homes in recent months and he says that he is excited for members to experience it for themselves. He said it is a system that enables homeowners to customize their home based on their daily routine.

“I can unlock my front door by a key, on a keypad or remotely and turn lights on before I get in the house. The moment I arrive, my home knows to kick on the thermostat and to turn it down again when I leave. I can set my exterior lights to come on at a certain time, turn off later in the evening and to shine for a

few minutes whenever the motion detectors spot activity in the yard,” he said.

In addition, the Smart Connect system allows him to monitor his home through security cameras, knowing that the surveillance data is stored off site in a secure location in the event of a break in. He can also receive text messages and phone calls to alert him to potential problems, such as water in the basement, smoke, a dramatic change in temperature or if security has been compromised.

Best of all, it’s affordable! Members pay a \$300 equipment fee over three months in order to feel less of a pinch in the budget, and their monthly fee is based on the services they order. Ferson says members who order five features pay \$25 per month, and broadband customers receive a \$5 discount.

“This is really only the beginning of the automated services NineStar plans to roll out in the coming months in order to make our members’ lives simpler,” he said.

From home security systems to independent living technology and Smart

Farm solutions, NineStar Connect is committed to meeting the needs of the membership it serves. Families want to feel safe and protected, older adults want to stay in their homes longer, and the agricultural community is looking for technology to manage their farms effectively and efficiently for higher production.

“We are still several months away from bringing this service to the membership, but when we do, it will provide our agricultural customers the tools they need to monitor all aspects of their farm at any time and from anywhere,” Ferson said.

Network administrator Jeff Summers has been using the Smart Home Connect system in his house for the past month and is very pleased with its capabilities. He said he likes knowing that when his garage door opens, he is able to turn lights on in his kitchen so he doesn’t have to walk into a dark house. In addition, he enjoys the front door deadbolt application that alerts him when his son arrives home from school each day and the cameras that allow him to check in and make

### TOP TEN

- NINESTAR SMART CONNECT HOME INTELLIGENCE DEVICES
- PROGRAMMABLE DOOR LOCKS
  - PROGRAMMABLE THERMOSTATS
  - SECURITY CAMERAS
  - ALARM INTEGRATION DEVICE
  - APPLIANCE OUTLET CONTROL SWITCHES
  - GARAGE DOOR SENSORS
  - WATER SENSORS
  - LIGHTING CONTROL PANELS
  - DOOR/WINDOW SENSORS
  - OUTLET ON/OFF SWITCH

sure his child is safe and sound.

“It’s really a very intuitive system that we set up and program for the customers,” he says. “It’s easy to use, and the fact that people are able to purchase the features they want and will use allows them to learn the system at their own pace without being overwhelmed.”

Summers is admittedly a “tech-person” who likes to tinker with the various features on the system, while his wife is a little more moderate in her use of the applications, but he said he expects NineStar customers to embrace the system and enjoy the peace of mind that comes along with a fully automated home.

“It’s amazing what a system like this is able to do, and if you already have our security system, there are even more options at your fingertips. It’s easy, it’s intuitive and those who I have installed systems for really love it!”

George Plinski recently brought the Smart Home Connect system into his house and was thrilled with the plug-and-play install and the system’s ability to seamlessly interface with his existing security and camera systems.

“Aside from its many applications, I like the fact that it isn’t a big, clunky mechanism that looks terrible. It integrates right into your home and is aesthetically pleasing to look at,” he said.

He said once the rules are written into the system, it is easy to operate and offers homeowners a peace of mind that money can’t buy.

“With this system, you can finally go on vacation and enjoy your vacation knowing that you won’t return to any of the horror stories we have all heard over the years. It really is technology of George Jetson but stops short of being Wall-E.”



## 2014 NINESTAR DIRECTOR ELECTIONS UPCOMING

The 2014 NineStar Connect Annual Meeting will take place April 4, 2014 and the following director districts are up for election: 2A, 2B, 4B and 6A.

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 take place Jan. 7, 2014. 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 Street  
Greenfield, IN 46140

Forms may also be personally delivered to any NineStar Connect business office. The deadline for submission of these materials in order to be considered for nomination by the Nominating Committee is noon Jan. 6, 2014.

Members who are being considered for nomination will have the opportunity to meet with the Nominating Committee at a candidate reception Jan. 7, 2014 immediately preceding its meeting.

## DEEP FREEZE



## BEHIND THE DOOR OF REFRIGERATOR RECYCLING

Have you ever wondered where your member's old fridge or freezer goes after it is picked up by JACO? Chances are it ends up right here in Indianapolis at the recycling center just east of downtown. They recycle up to 150 units a day.



# NINESTAR GEARING UP

## OPEN HOUSE GIVES 4-HERS CHANCE TO EXPLORE

The 2014 Hancock County 4-H Fair is still many months away and most of us are focused on holiday celebrations at this time of year, but on Sunday, Nov. 24, 2013 many Hancock County area families were enjoying a 4-H Open House. This is the first opportunity for area youth to sign up to participate in the 2014 4-H Program.

The open house offers children the opportunity to meet club leaders, project superintendents and program leaders from the Purdue Extension Office. Exhibition Hall was packed with tables full of project examples, including a wide variety of animals for people to see and pet. The animals were a huge attraction, but there

were also dozens of other project examples for everyone to look at, including electric circuit boards, model airplanes, achievement books, woodworking projects and poster boards. Eager project superintendents were on hand to talk to the children and share information about the projects they represented. The open house offers

youngsters the chance to learn just how many unique opportunities are available from the 4-H Youth Program. Each year, Exhibition Hall is bursting at the seams with projects that hundreds of local youth have spent countless hours creating. Based on the crowd of local children wandering through the open house, the tradition



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

will continue on to the 2014 4-H Fair.

Any youth interested in signing up for the 4-H program has until Feb. 1 to sign up.

NineStar Connect has for many years been a big supporter of the 4-H Youth Program. Brad Henderson (Manager of Member Services) serves as President of the Indiana State 4-H Electric Program Committee. Darrin Couch (Energy Adviser) serves as superintendent for the Hancock County 4-H Electric



Project. Many other NineStar employees volunteer their time and expertise during project workshops to assist children with their electric projects. Meeting and workshop dates have already been set for next spring.

An organizational meeting will take place from 6 to 7 p.m. April 9, 2014 for all electric project participants. Division workshops will be conducted in May as follows:

Division I – 6 to 8 p.m. May 1, 2014  
Division II – 6 to 8 p.m. May 8, 2014  
Electric project kits for Division I, II and III are available at the Purdue Extension Office compliments of NineStar Connect. Those with questions about a 4-H Electric Project should contact Darrin Couch at (317) 323-2715 or dcouch@ninestarconnect.com.

# OPERATION ROUND-UP HELPS CAUSES



The quarterly meeting of NineStar Connect's Operation Round-Up took place Nov. 7, 2013 at the company's headquarters. The committee decided on three applications and awarded \$10,500.00 to the following organizations.

### Greenfield Veterans Honor Guard

The honor guard travels to various locations locally and around the county to perform at a multitude of funerals, parades and other ceremonial appearances. Funerals consist of a 21-gun salute, bugler and presentation of flag. With guard numbers decreasing, extra funding is needed to be able to fulfill these important duties.

### Hancock County LINK

LINK stands for Leaders in Navigating Knowledge. This Non-for-Profit organization assists with college degree programs, life-long learning programs, career counseling and business programs. They promote and support post-secondary education as they believe this is important for Hancock County to be able to enhance economic development.

### FUSE Inc.

FUSE represents Families United for Support and Encouragement. At FUSE -- information, resources and support are provided for families with children of special needs. FUSE provides essential tools for parenting and other challenges that are present when raising a child with special needs. They are committed to improving lives and supplying up-to-date information for those families. FUSE supports "inclusiveness and diversity" and wants people to remember that "children with special needs are children first."



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 and communications service areas. The source of these funds is the membership of NineStar Connect electric/communication customer, who voluntarily has their 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.

Those who want to be considered for an ORU grant can download an application at [www.ninestarconnect.com](http://www.ninestarconnect.com).



## WASHINGTON, D.C. YOUTH TOUR 2014

One of the many benefits of NineStar Connect is that we are an electric and communications co-op, and therefore have the privilege to offer a Youth Tour that is sponsored by the electric division (NRECA) and the communication division (NTCA).

Both tours will be taking a trip to our nation's capital, Washington, D.C.

This is an all-expense paid journey for a few lucky teenagers to be able to enjoy and get an education that not many are able to do. With the potential to make lifelong memories and explore possible career aspirations, this is a wonderful opportunity for any individual who qualifies.

Students will be traveling with other students from our state as well as numerous chaperones that include parents, teachers and co-op employees. While in Washington, D.C., selected students will experience first-hand glimpses of our nation's history by visiting Arlington National Cemetery, Mt. Vernon, the U.S. Capitol, Smithsonian Institution museums and much more!

The NRECA Youth Tour is scheduled for June 12-20, 2014 and is for any current high school junior. We had two girls, one from Greenfield-Central High School and one from Pendleton Heights High School that attended this tour last year. Both enjoyed the trip and were featured in our July issue of our newsletter. For more information about this tour, please visit [www.nreca.coop/what-we-do/youth-programs/](http://www.nreca.coop/what-we-do/youth-programs/).

The NTCA Youth Tour is scheduled from May 31 to June 4, 2014. The student must be age 16 or 17 – no students older than age 18 will be accepted. For more information about this tour, please visit [www.frs.org/youth-programs/youth-tour](http://www.frs.org/youth-programs/youth-tour).

Both websites will give you general information about each program; however, if you have a student who is interested in attending either tour, please contact Christa Riggs at [criggs@ninestarconnect.com](mailto:criggs@ninestarconnect.com) or 317-323-2132.

## WASTE NOT

### HOLIDAY ENERGY SAVINGS TIP

If you're expecting guests for holiday festivities, consider giving your heating unit a break. With the oven cranked up and the house packed with people, the temperature will rise on its own. Also make sure the furnace has a clean filter so it can work efficiently as possible all winter long. In addition, you can always find more ways to save by calling our energy advisor Darrin Couch at 317-326-3131.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH



## PROGRAM TEACHES ELECTRIC SAFETY

Darrin Couch and Brad Henderson recently visited Fortville Elementary School and presented NineStar's Electric Safety Program to all of the fourth-grade students in the school. This important program is a valuable tool in promoting electric safety to students and educating them against the potential dangers of electricity transmission and distribution.

To date, Couch and Henderson have visited seven schools, presented 12 demonstrations and presented the program to more than 692 students. The road show will continue through December with trips scheduled for Thorpe Creek Elementary School and Maxwell Intermediate School.

The Electric Safety Program is about 1 hour in length. The presenta-

tion explains to students how electricity is delivered to their homes and schools and the importance of being aware of electric distribution equipment in their surroundings. The safe use of electric equipment is discussed and demonstrated to students. Simulating the danger of a person coming into contact with electricity by "frying" a hot dog on simulated high voltage power lines is a highlight of the program for students as well as an effective educational tool.

Teachers or administrators can contact the Energy Adviser at NineStar Connect, Darrin Couch, to schedule the Electric Safety Program for their students. Darrin can be reached by phone at 317-323-2715 or email at [dcouch@ninestarconnect.com](mailto:dcouch@ninestarconnect.com).

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## IN THE KITCHEN

### Sweet Potato Chipotle Soup

Yield: 1 gallon

- 2 oz. Olive Oil
- 1 Cup Yellow Onion, Diced
- 1 Tbsp. Garlic, Minced
- ½ Cup Carrot, Diced
- ¼ Cup Celery, Diced
- 3 # Sweet Potatoes, Peeled and Diced
- 1 Tbsp. Chipotle Powder
- 2 Tsp. Ground Coriander
- 3 Qts. Chicken Stock
- 1 Tbsp. Salt
- 1 Cup Heavy Cream
- 8 oz. Bacon, Diced
- ¼ Cup Red Pepper, Small Dice
- ½ Cup Scallions, Chopped
- ½ Cup Sour Cream
- 2 Tsp. Lime Juice

1. Sweat onion, garlic, carrot and celery in olive oil until soft but not brown.
2. Add sweet potatoes, chipotle, chicken stock and coriander. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to medium and cook for approximately 25 minutes or until sweet potatoes are soft.
3. Puree soup in small batches in a blender and return soup to the pot. Then stir in heavy cream and season with salt.
4. Sauté bacon in sauté pan, stirring occasionally until crisp. Drain off grease and stir in red peppers and scallions.
5. Combine sour cream and lime juice together.
6. Place soup in bowl and garnish with a tablespoon of sour cream in the center of the bowl and the bacon scallion garnish on top of that.

### APPLE-CHERRY STRUDEL

- 3 CUPS WATER
- 1 EACH EGG
- 1 TSP. SALT
- 3 TBSP. OIL
- 4 CUPS FLOUR
- 1 # BUTTER
- 1 # SUGAR
- 1 # PANKO BREAD CRUMBS
- 5 # APPLES, PEELED AND SLICED
- 1 # BROWN SUGAR
- 4 TBSP. CINNAMON
- 1 # BUTTER, DICED
- 1 TSP. VANILLA EXTRACT
- 1 TSP. SALT
- 1 # SUNDRIED CHERRIES

1. PLACE WATER, EGG, OIL, AND SALT IN MIXING BOWL. USE A DOUGH HOOK ATTACHMENT TO MIX INGREDIENTS.
2. ADD FLOUR TO MIXING BOWL 1 CUP AT A TIME WHILE HOOK IS MIXING INGREDIENTS. ADD FLOUR UNTIL DOUGH STARTS TO PULL AWAY FROM BOTTOM OF BOWL.
3. PLACE DOUGH IN AN OILED BOWL, COVER AND LET REST FOR APX. 1 HOUR.
4. MELT BUTTER AND SUGAR IN SAUTE PAN. ADD BREAD CRUMBS AND COOK UNTIL GOLDEN BROWN, STIRRING OCCASSIONALLY. COOL ON SHEET TRAY.
5. COMBINE APPLES, BROWN SUGAR, CINNAMON, AND BUTTER IN BOWL AND TOSS TOGETHER. PLACE ON A SHEET PAN AND COOK IN A 350° OVEN FOR 5 MINUTES.
6. ADD VANILLA, SALT AND SUNDRIED CHERRIES TO ABOVE MIXTURE AND COMBINE ALL INGREDIENTS.
7. STRETCH OUT DOUGH ON FLOURED TABLECLOTH. SPRINKLE WITH BUTTERED BREADCRUMBS AND ADD LINE OF FRUIT MIXTURE. ROLL STRUDEL AND PLACE ON PARCHMENT LINED SHEET TRAY AND BAKE IN 350° OVEN FOR APX. 20 MINUTES OR UNTIL GOLDEN BROWN.

### PARMESAN CUP w/BLUE CHEESE MOUSSE

- 4 OZ. PARMESAN CHEESE, SHREDDED
- 6 OZ. CREAM CHEESE
- 3 OZ. BLUE CHEESE CRUMBLIES
- 1 OZ. HEAVY CREAM
- 2 TBSP. PARSLEY, CHOPPED

1. PLACE SMALL PILE (APX. 2 TBSP) OF PARMESAN ON A SHEET PAN WITH SILPAT AND SPACE THE CHEESE APART. YOU SHOULD GET APX. 15 OUT OF THE 4 OZ OF CHEESE.
2. PLACE CREAM CHEESE INTO THE BOWL OF A MIXER. MIX ON MEDIUM SPEED WITH THE PADDLE ATTACHMENT. ONCE LIGHT AND FLUFFY ADD IN THE BLUE CHEESE, CREAM AND CONTINUE TO MIX FOR APX. 2 MORE MINUTES.
3. PLACE CREAM CHEESE MIXTURE INTO A PIPING BAG AND RESERVE.
4. PLACE SHEET PAN INTO 350° OVEN FOR APX. 5-6 MINUTES OR UNTIL PARMESAN IS MELTED AND GOLDEN. REMOVE TRAY FROM OVEN AND FORM CHEESE INTO LITTLE AS CUPS AS SHOWN.
5. PIPE CHEESE INTO PARMESAN CUPS AND GARNISH WITH THE CHOPPED PARSLEY.

### CRÈME ANGLAISE

- 6 EACH EGG YOLKS
- 5 OZ. GRANULATED SUGAR
- 1 EACH VANILLA BEAN
- 1 PINT HEAVY CREAM

1. COMBINE EGG YOLKS AND SUGAR IN A MIXING BOWL AND WHIP TOGETHER.
2. PLACE HEAVY CREAM INTO A SAUCEPOT ALONG WITH SCRAPED VANILLA BEAN. BRING TO A BOIL. GRADUALLY POUR HOT CREAM INTO YOLK MIXTURE WHILE STIRRING RAPIDLY TO PREVENT SCRAMBLED EGGS.
3. STRAIN THE SAUCE AND RESERVE.

### FARFALLE PASTA w/ GRILLED CHICKEN, MUSHROOMS, SPINACH & CHARRED TOMATO SAUCE

- 1# FARFALLE PASTA, PAR COOKED AND SHOCKED
- 8 OZ. MUSHROOMS, CHOPPED
- 1 TBSP. GARLIC, MINCED
- 1# GRILLED CHICKEN BREAST, SLICED
- 1 # SPINACH
- 1# RIPE TOMATOES
- 3 EACH SHALLOTS, PEELED AND HALVED
- 1 EACH RED PEPPER
- 2 OZ. FRESH BASIL
- 4 OZ. EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL (EVOO)
- 1 OZ. WHOLE BUTTER
- 2 OZ. PARMESAN CHEESE
- TO TASTE SALT/PEPPER

1. PLACE TOMATOES, SHALLOTS AND RED PEPPER INTO MIXING BOWL ALONG WITH 2oz. OF EVOO. TOSS TOGETHER AND PLACE ON A PREHEATED GRILL. COOK UNTIL ALL INGREDIENTS ARE CHARRED. REMOVE THE SKIN FROM THE PEPPER AND PLACE INGREDIENTS INTO A BLENDER AND PUREE. ADD IN BASIL AND SEASON WITH S/P. RESERVE.
2. PLACE LARGE SAUTEPAN ON STOVE AND BRING UP TO MEDIUM-HIGH HEAT. ADD IN 2 OZ OF OLIVE OIL AND ADD IN CHOPPED MUSHROOMS AND COOK UNTIL SOFT AND FRAGRANT. ADD IN CHOPPED GARLIC AND CONTINUE TO SAUTE. ADD IN GRILLED CHICKEN AND COOK FOR 2-3 MORE MINUTES.
3. ADD IN 1 CUP OF RESERVED SAUCE ALONG WITH THE SPINACH AND BRING TO A SIMMER. ADD IN WHOLE BUTTER AND STIR UNTIL INCORPORATED. ADD IN PASTA AND TOSS TOGETHER UNTIL HOT. SEASON WITH S/P.
4. PLACE IN SERVING BOWLS AND GARNISH WITH PARMESAN CHEESE.



## NINESTAR HOSTS COOKING DEMO WITH SKYLINE CHEF

NineStar hosted a holiday cooking demonstration at its corporate offices in Greenfield last month. Special guest Executive Chef Scott Reif-emberger of the Skyline Club prepared several appetizing menu items ranging from appetizers to main entrees to desserts. Those in attendance witnessed how to make each selection and then at the conclusion were able to sample what was prepared. The foods included:

Parmesan Cup with Blue Cheese Mousse  
Sweet Potato Chipotle Soup  
Bow Tie Pasta with Grilled Chicken, Wild Mushrooms, Baby Spinach and Charred Tomato Sauce  
Apple, Pumpkin, and Sundried Fruit Strudel with Vanilla Anglaise

More recipes for these tasty concoctions can be found on NineStar's Facebook page.

The event was another in a series of quarterly membership seminars designed to allow members of NineStar Connect learn more about their cooperative. All events are free and just require an RSVP. The next seminar Feb. 22 will cover storm preparedness.



TRIBUTE

LONGTIME  
EMPLOYEE MARK  
HUDSON RETIRES

After close to 38 years of dedicated service, Mark Hudson officially retired from NineStar in October. Hudson was first hired at Hancock Rural Telephone Company in May of 1976 by then President Dan O'Connor.

His first job with what was then a phone company was as a central office technician. He also worked on the construction crew as an installation/repair tech to understand several aspects of the communication business before he was turned loose in the switching department, where he used his degree in electronics, which he received from Ivy Tech. Around 1990, Hudson was then promoted to switching supervisor, a position in which he supervised a team of four switching techs. Around 1995, Hudson became assistant plant superintendent



overseeing all inside and outside plant operations, a position he held until 1998, when he became plant superintendent responsible for all plant operations. After a stint as VP of operations, he finished the rest of his career as the Director of Multimedia Services.

Mark and his wife Debbie have been married 38 years and have two sons, Chad and Sean. They also have one grandson, two granddaughters, one step granddaughter and another grandson due in February. Mark plans to relax, do some traveling, spend time with family and possibly even dabble in the real estate business in his retirement.



THREE STEPS TOWARD  
COMFORT THIS WINTER

Men, would you buy a brand new Corvette and put spare tires on it? Ladies, would you remodel your kitchen but keep all of your old appliances when everything else is updated? No, you would not. You would put the best tires money could buy on that shiny new car. And, you'd want to finish your kitchen remodel off with new appliances.

However, we are often guilty of doing these same things in our home. We will upgrade the heating and cooling system with a new heat pump or geothermal system and, in some cases, we're surprised

when our electric bill doesn't go down very much. But, in order for your heating and cooling system to do its job well, you must seal up any air leaks and insulate your home. That way, the warm air you work so hard to have doesn't escape right out of your home this winter.

**AIR SEALING** – Use caulk to seal high-impact areas in your home, such as plumbing, wiring, light fixtures and ductwork penetrations from your attic. Gently push back the insulation on the attic floor to locate the tops of the wall headers and use caulk or

spray foam to seal the cracks. Give your attic access hatch inside your home a makeover. If you have a simple flat board blocking the access hole, attach three inches of foam board insulation to the backside of the hatch. Apply weather stripping to the lip that holds the board in place. Apply latches from the home side that will keep the board fitting snugly against the weather stripping. It may not seem like much air could escape through those places but, added together, they can account for significant heat loss – as much as leaving a window open all winter!



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

**INSULATION** – Wait! Before you think about adding insulation to your home, have you air sealed? If you haven't air sealed properly, air moving through newly installed insulation drastically reduces its R-value and will make your new insulation worthless! We recommend R42ceiling insulation to newly built homes. If you don't have that, adding more may help keep you warmer this winter. What does R-42 look like? Fiberglass batts – 13.5 inches. Blown-in fiberglass – 19 inches. Blown-in cellulose – 13.5 inches.

**EQUIPMENT** – Once you've sealed and insulated your home properly, your heating system can do its job effectively. If you're in the market for a new heat pump or geothermal system, visit PowerMoves.com to see if you qualify for a rebate. If your heating system doesn't need replacing quite yet, there are things you can do to save energy and money. Make sure to check your filters monthly and keep them clean. Don't turn off your central heating system and use space heaters thinking you'll save money on your heating bills. You won't. If you already have an electric air-source heat pump, don't "flip the switch" to emergency heat. It knows when to switch automatically between the heat pump and the backup, or emergency, heat. And finally, don't be fooled by commercials or ads that claim the heater in the fancy hand-crafted wooden box is more efficient than a space heater from a discount store.

If you need more information to help make your home more efficient, call NineStar Connect and ask to speak with Darrin Couch, your energy adviser.

FACILITIES



NINESTAR PLANS  
PARKING LOT  
EXPANSION IN 2014

Hardly a day goes by when the conference center at NineStar Connect's south campus isn't used by the community. It is a cost effective facility that is complete with a full-scale kitchen, state-of-the-art technology and room for more than 100 people. As more and more events such as chamber luncheons, not-for-profit gatherings and family events take place, parking has become a concern. To remedy this situation, NineStar has approved a parking lot expansion in 2014. Construction will begin in early 2014 and if all goes well, the project should be complete by the end of May. Once completed, the expanded lot will include more than 60 additional parking spaces. To learn more about the facility and how you can schedule the use of the space, visit ninestarconnect.com or contact Brad Henderson at 317-326-3131.



TECH

SMART HUB: BILL/  
PAYMENT SERVICE  
ONLINE

Attention Electric customers! We have recently implemented a new online bill payment service to make your life a little easier. Introducing NineStar Connect's Smart Hub. The enhanced features of this new site include easy bill payments, your billing history and outages in your area. You can also report outages, check and compare usage from the previous year to the current year and much more! Just by a couple of clicks of the mouse, you can see all the basics about your electric bill and usage that will help with energy efficiency and, in return, save you money.

It's easy to get started. First time users just need to log onto www.ninestarconnect.com and click on "My Account" located at the top of the homepage. Then under "Electric," click on "View & Pay Your Bill Online." The following page is a simple tutorial page that will give you instructions on how to set up your username and password. Once those are set up, you have the luxury of logging on and viewing your account at any time.

You will soon realize how much more user friendly and informative this site will be. Currently, this site is just for our electric division but with hopes to expand to the communication side in the future. If you experience any problems with logging on for the first time, please call one of our friendly Customer Service Representatives to assist you at 317-326-3131.





## NINESTAR ATTENDS TOUCHSTONE ENERGY BRAND CAMP

The marketing department of NineStar Connect recently attended a brand camp put on by Touchstone Energy and sponsored by Wabash Valley Power Association. The two-day event, held in downtown Indianapolis, was attended by many REMC's from around the State of Indiana. Also on hand were Touchstone Energy's national staff representatives Amy Rosier, Scott Bialick and Jason McGrade. The focus of the event included growing the co-op connections card, utilizing the co-op web builder and discussion on apps. The session concluded with the unveiling of Touchstone Energy's new campaign...The Power of Co-op Membership. Several things learned will be incorporated into the marketing efforts to better serve our members.

## IN THE COMMUNITY



## NINESTAR ON HAND AT G-C CAREER FAIR

NineStar Connect employees Christa Riggs and Doug Watson speak with Greenfield-Central High School students about NineStar and what skills are needed to work at the company. NineStar was on hand for the student career fair at G-C which gives students and opportunity to learn more about the companies in their community.

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

## 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](http://ninestarconnect.com) Facebook page for last edition's solution.