

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2017



NineStar CONNECTION

VOLUME 6
ISSUE 4

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Burrow reflects on the past year and NineStar's commitment to the community.

PAGE 8

DEBBIE'S MEMORY HONORED WITH PLAQUE

Longtime NineStar employee and dear friend Debbie Roberts passed away in August, 2017 due to illness.

PAGE 11

PRESORTED
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SEE PAGE 4

FEELING THE PINCH



Price increases
are painful but
NineStar Connect
is ready to help

NINESTAR
EMPLOYEES
RECOGNIZED
BY I.E.C.
PAGE 10

NINESTAR
SUPPORTS GIRLS
ON THE RUN
EVENT
PAGE 11





On page 6, read about how NineStar participated in this year's Christmas Parade, downtown Greenfield.



OUR EMPLOYEES MAKE THE DIFFERENCE. HERE'S A CUSTOMER REVIEW FOR PERRY WILSON.

"PERRY WAS VERY HELPFUL AND PERSONABLE. HE KNEW EXACTLY WHAT HE WAS DOING AND GOT MY SERVICE WORKING PERFECTLY."

- CUSTOMER ANDERSON



Customer service is at the tips of your fingers. NineStar Connect's tech support call center is open around the clock. **317-326-help** ninestarconnect.com

STORY IDEA?

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

COVER STORY PAGE 4

Price increases are painful but NineStar Connect is ready to help

POWER LINE SAFETY PAGE 7

Energy Advisor Matt Strahl visited Mt. Comfort Elementary to teach about Power Line Safety.

OPERATION ROUND UP GRANTS PAGE 9

NineStar Connect awards seven Operation Round Up Grants.

EMPLOYEES RECOGNIZED PAGE 10

Jamie Bell, Shane Osborne and Perry Wilson were recognized by Indiana Electric Cooperatives.

TOWN HALL MEETING!

December 7, NineStar held another Town Hall Meeting this time at Maxwell Intermediate School.

PAGE 5

THE COOPERATIVE SOLUTION: HOW THE UNITED STATES CAN TAME RECESSIONS, REDUCE INEQUALITY, AND PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

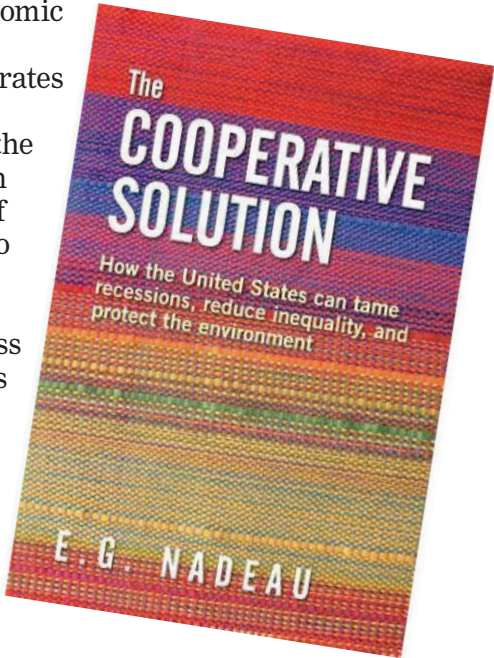
- BY E.G. NADEAU

Are co-ops the answer to the economic, environmental and social problems facing the United States today?

The current profit-oriented model in the United States is the latest evolution of a system that has led to more than 200 years of economic instability, social inequality and environmental damage. With the primary aim of providing services to members, self-governing democratically modeled cooperatives can lead the way to undoing the fundamental flaws in our current economic system.

This book illustrates the potential for co-ops to infuse the US economy with the basic value of democracy and to provide citizens with a means to effectively address the shortcomings of the market-driven economy.

Book review provided by Hancock County Public Library.



The *NineStar Connection* is a publication of NineStar Connect servicing retail and residential customers. Nearly 15,000 families and businesses receive this newspaper as part of their membership. *NineStar Connection* provides news, information and features about people, places and issues related to readers.

NineStar Connection, USPS
Volume 6 No. 3

Published Bi-monthly.
Postage Paid at
Greenfield, IN.

POSTMASTER: Send
address changes to:
2243 E. Main St.
Greenfield, IN 46140

Annual subscription price
is \$3; available to members
of NineStar Connect
co-operative.

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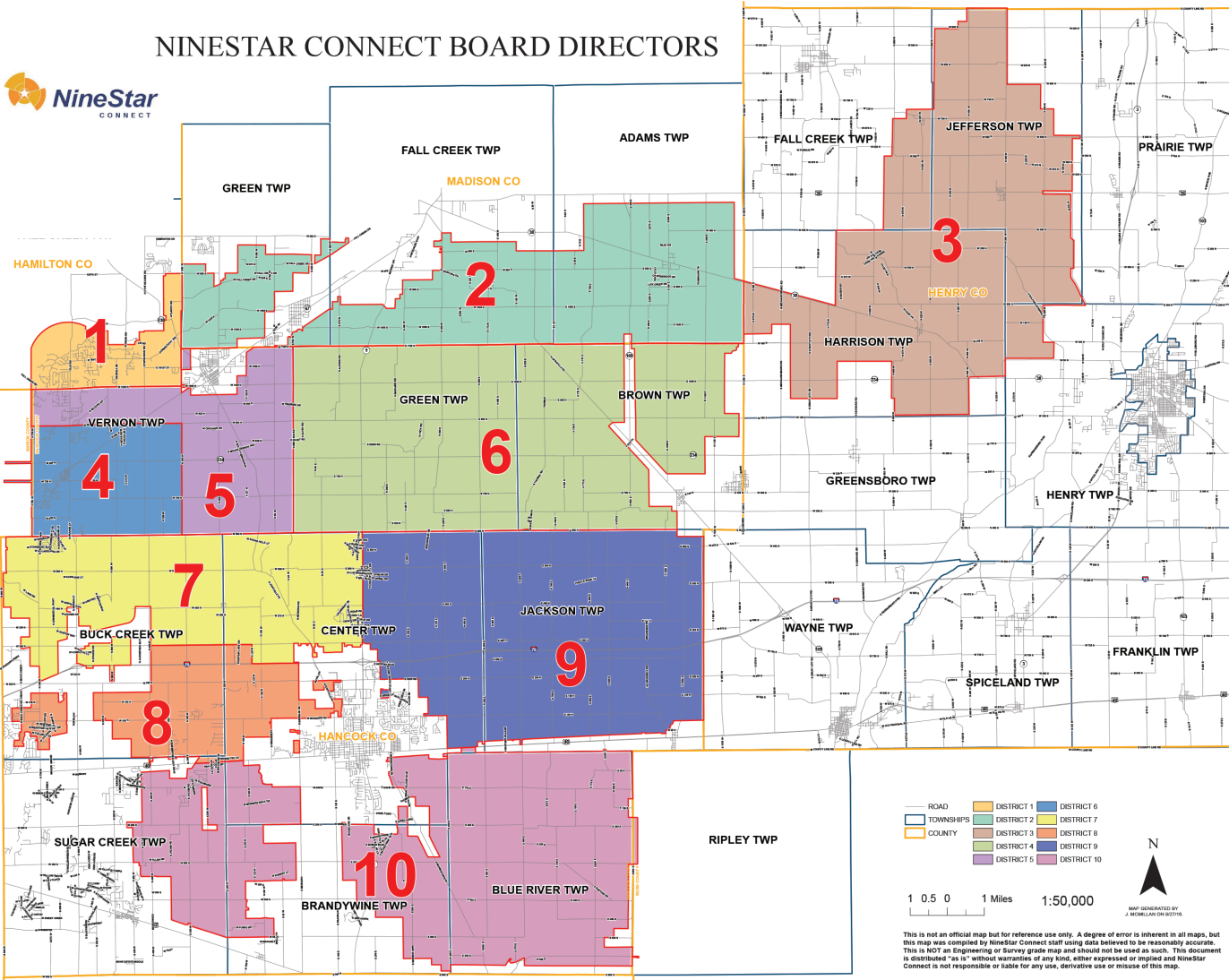
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FEELING THE PINCH

Price increases are painful
but NineStar Connect is ready to help

Price Increases are always painful and never a welcoming thought. However, with new and different ways to watch your TV programs, NineStar can help you not feel the pinch of growing your monthly bill. Please read on to find out ways you can still watch your favorite shows but on a less expensive budget.

PASSING THE BUCKS

Before exploring the various video options, it is important to understand why the price increases are happening and who profits from those fees. When a cable channel creates popular content, it costs the network more to produce. They have to pay the crew, the director, the actors, etc. and they find those funds via advertisers as well as passing a portion of the costs onto cable providers in order to give them access to that content.

Naturally, providers cannot afford to absorb that cost and they cannot merely drop the network because,

in many cases, they would lose multiple channels in the bargain. Parent companies who own one popular channel typically own others as well and they negotiate the acceptance of those networks into their contract with cable providers. The only solution is to pass on that cost to the consumer.

"We don't profit from our video content," says NineStar Vice President of Administration Regina Bever. "They set the price and we have to pay it. Our only option is to pass the cost on to members or drop the channels altogether."

WRITTEN BY

JULIE
YOUNG

STREAMING SERVICES MAKE SENSE

Dropping the channels may be the best option for members who are ready to go Over The Top (OTT) and bypass telecommunications, cable or broadcast services by purchasing their content via the Internet from the networks or streaming services. Access to televised content is controlled by the video distributor through their app or can be watched through a phone, computer, tablet or separate "box" that is independent of a cable provider. OTT plans are paid on a month-by-month basis and can be cancelled when a favorite show goes on hiatus in order to save money.

"Going OTT is not for the faint of heart because people are afraid of cutting the cord to their traditional method of getting their video content," says video producer John Painter. "The younger generation is particularly savvy about these new applications, but we have a diverse membership and we understand that some people may find such a change confusing and jarring."

One of the biggest concerns among members is having

access to local channels, which were free when they were broadcast via airwaves. As these channels made the switch to digital, they became contentious players in the content arena. Members may remember the recent contract dispute between WTHR-13 and some digital TV companies that led to a month-long blackout between the channel and two of its providers. Because these channels are becoming more aggressive in their negotiations every three years, NineStar hopes to forestall any potential issues while still helping members get the access to the channels they want to watch.

"All of our customer service representatives and support service personnel are going to be trained on OTT options so that they can help our subscribers make the decisions that work for them," Chief Technology Officer, Ross Ferson says. "We are also going to have member meetings to talk about how these options work and help people make the leap."

CONNECTIVITY IS KEY

Of course viewers using analog devices can still receive local channels for free if they want to invest in a digital converter box but for their

favorite cable shows, they may want to look into a Roku or Apple TV option which can give them access to thousands of movies, and television episodes from the top free and paid channels and streaming anytime, anywhere and on any device.

"The key is connectivity," Bever said. "NineStar has worked hard to offer our members the best fiber optic connections and the highest speeds available so that they can be online, playing games or watching TV without missing a beat."

NineStar Connect does not raise their prices arbitrarily. They are committed to offering their members the best connectivity and content at the most reasonable rate and willing to help their subscribers find the best video option for their money and the tools they need to navigate the technology.

"Without a doubt we are in a transitional era of television," Painter says. "It will probably take a while for the streaming to become stream-lined and standardized because right now, it's still so experimental. Still, we are committed to helping our members find video options that are the best bet for their budget."

NINESTAR HOLDS TOWN HALL IN MAXWELL

NineStar held their second town hall meeting on December 7th at Maxwell Intermediate School. The evening opened with Chairman of the Board Jim Cherry welcoming everyone in attendance. Then Regina Bever, Vice President of Administration, discussed the Smart Hub program and gave everyone a demonstration using the web portal. Smart Hub allows for electric users to manage their energy consumption and take control when they wish to use their appliances off peak demand times. Members then asked questions which were wide ranging and answered by management staff in attendance. The evening ended with door prizes and giveaways to those in attendance. The next town hall is slated for February 15th at McCordsville Elementary and will feature a meet the candidate night. This will allow membership to meet the individuals who will be running for the board in 2018. Please check your mail towards the end of January for your invitation.



NINESTAR CH 9 FILMING WINTER SPORTS

NineStar TV Ch 9 is back on the road visiting local high schools and filming basketball games. After wrapping up a successful season of fall sports coverage which included; football, volleyball and soccer; the film crew now has its sights set on winter sports. The crew's first game was on November 22nd at Knightstown where they filmed the boys and girl's basketball games.

"We are excited to be filming basketball once again. We have so many talented athletes in our area and we are happy to bring them to you on Ch 9", stated Video Producer John Painter from NineStar. "We hope to squeeze in some other sports as time allows".

Games will be filmed throughout the season and rebroadcast the next day on Channel 9. If the next day is a weekday the game can be seen at 7:00pm. If the next day after the event is a weekend the games can be seen at 2:00pm and 7:00pm. Please check local listings or the guide on the TV as the schedule can change without notice.



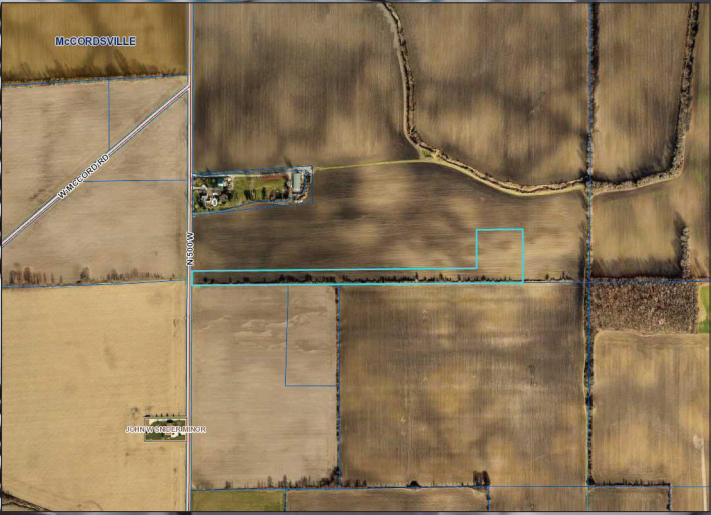
DATE	OPPONENT	SPORT	LOCATION	TIME
15-DEC	KNIGHTSTOWN	GIRLS	EASTERN HANCOCK	6:00
15-DEC	KNIGHTSTOWN	BOYS	EASTERN HANCOCK	7:30
20-DEC	PENDLETON H.	BOYS	HAMILTON S.E.	7:30
5-JAN	MT. VERNON	BOYS	GREENFIELD C.	7:30
12-JAN	NEW CASTLE	GIRLS	GREENFIELD C.	6:00
12-JAN	NEW CASTLE	BOYS	GREENFIELD C.	7:30
DOUBLE HEADER - FAIRGROUNDS				
13-JAN	TRITON C	GIRLS	NEW PALESTINE	2:20
13-JAN	MOORESVILLE	BOYS	NEW PALESTINE	4:00
20-JAN	SHENANDOAH	BOYS	EASTERN H.	7:30
DOUBLE HEADER - BANKERS LIFE				
26-JAN	SCECINA	BOYS	TRITON C.	5:45
26-JAN	PENDLETON H.	BOYS	GREENFIELD C.	8:30
27-JAN	PIKE	BOYS	PENDLETON H.	7:30
1-FEB	FRANKTON	BOYS	MT VERNON	7:30
6-FEB	H.S.E	BOYS	NEW CASTLE	7:30
9-FEB	FISHERS	BOYS	PENDLETON H.	7:30
13-FEB	NEW CASTLE	BOYS	PENDLETON H.	7:30
20-FEB	FRANKTON	BOYS	KNIGHTSTOWN	7:30

UPDATED 2017-2018 BASKETBALL SCHEDULE

NEW SUBSTATION BEING BUILT

It comes as little surprise that McCordsville and the surrounding areas continue to grow at a fast pace. Managing the demand for electricity is something that must be planned for years in advance. In recent months, it has been determined that the time has come for a new substation to be built to keep up with new construction while

maintaining safe, reliable and affordable electricity for existing customers. NineStar Connect is working alongside Wabash Valley Power Association to construct a new substation at 900 North and 500 West in Hancock County. Work has already begun on the project with a completion date set for mid to late 2018.



CHRISTMAS PARADE

Saturday, December 2nd marked another successful Christmas Festival in downtown Greenfield. This year's theme was "It's a Greenfield Christmas". One

of the many attractions of the festival is the Parade of Lights where NineStar's own -- Line Superintendent Tommy Nance and Accounting Administrator

Alisha Love and their families hopped aboard the brightly lit NineStar truck and participated in the parade. The weather was great which made it nice for Santa

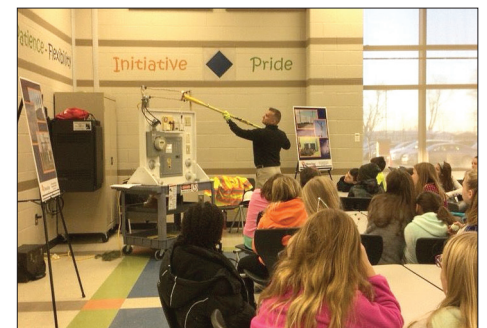
who came to visit all the little boys and girls that attended the festival.



POWER LINE SAFETY – MT. COMFORT ELEMENTARY

Energy Advisor Matt Strahl visited Mt. Comfort Elementary where he performed a Power Line Safety Demonstration for all of the 4th grade classes. In his demonstration, Matt illustrates what happens to a hot dog (representing body tissue) when an electrical voltage runs through it. By doing this, he can visually show the kids the dangers of live power lines. He also talked about how water and electricity don't mix and to never get out of a car when there are downed power lines.

What also made the day special was Matt's own daughter was watching her Dad give the presentation. Brooklyn Strahl, a 4th grader at the elementary, was truly excited to see her Dad in action. And I'm pretty sure Matt enjoyed having her in the audience too!



TOYS FOR TOTS

NineStar Customer Service and Billing Representatives, Eric VanCleave, Amy Wischart, Stephanie Carmichael, Linda Burkhart and Angie Freeman are posing by the Toys for Tots donation box as a "Thank You" to all who donated to the Toys for Tots program this year. Donation boxes were present at both North and South Campuses and toys were also gathered at NineStar's recent Town Hall Meeting. The toys collected will be distributed throughout the community to bring Christmas joy to less fortunate boys and girls.

President's Message

I often find myself in a reflective mood at year's end and this year is no exception. As 2017 winds down and before 2018 ushers itself in, let me share some of my thoughts with you.

Bigger isn't always better. By that, I mean simply that I think our community is fortunate to be served by a locally-based, locally-owned utility like NineStar Connect. To be sure, our smaller size and less dense service area means that the cost of our services can be higher; however, you will seldom see a utility that is as engaged and dedicated to a community's overall success as NineStar Connect. Everyone here at NineStar believes in a simple principle: A rising tide lifts all ships. If our community is successful, NineStar will be successful as well.

Infrastructure investment is a long-term commitment to the community. Since January 1, 2011, NineStar Connect has invested over \$60 million dollars in infrastructure in our community. That investment is less about serving our current members and customers (although it does) and more about being ready to serve our future members and customers. What many people don't realize is that NineStar has made these investments without any local or state incentives or tax abatements to do so. With 100% of our members having access to Gigabit speed fiber by 3Q, 2018, you will see NineStar begin focusing on what it can do to address water and wastewater needs in unserved areas of Hancock County in 2018 and beyond. When you combine this continued infrastructure investment with the annual \$1 million dollars that NineStar pays in local property taxes on that infrastructure, you can begin to realize that NineStar's commitment to the local community is genuine.

Returning money back to members is important to a well-run cooperative. As a not-for-profit cooperative utility, NineStar Connect allocates any profits (known as "margins" to cooperatives) back to members in form of capital credits. When it is financially prudent, it then retires those capital credits back to

the members in the form of cash. Since 2011, NineStar has returned over \$2.4 million dollars to our members and just recently, our board of directors voted to return another \$500,000 to our members this December. That is another half million dollars that will stay and circulate in our local community contributing to its overall prosperity.

The quality of employees directly impacts the quality of service a company offers. NineStar Connect is blessed with having high quality, community-minded employees who provide the very best service for our members and customers. In 2017, these dedicated employees provided over 1,500 hours in community service and donated through payroll deduction nearly \$20,000 to local charities which, in turn, NineStar matched. Since NineStar is a not-for-profit utility, you have every right to expect superior service; however, I believe NineStar employees go above and beyond other utility employees by supporting the community that supports them. The heartfelt dedication of our employees is one of many things that truly distinguishes NineStar from other utilities who provide service in our local area.

Local really is the best. Everyone knows you can't please all of the people all of the time. With that said, however, we also know that local organizations are far more effective in meeting community needs than large multi-state or even multi-national organizations. The NineStar Board of Directors has made it a strategic goal to engage members and customers more regularly to ensure that we are meeting their ever-changing needs. Something new in 2017 was our Member Town Hall nights where members and customers can come to hear what's new at the company and be able to ask questions and engage both directors and management personnel on



the operations of NineStar. In addition, NineStar also hosts regular "Nerd Nights" where we offer instruction and demonstrations of latest communications and Internet technologies which allows our members and customers to leverage their broadband and other services to their full advantage.

On behalf of all the employees and directors of NineStar Connect, I want to thank you for allowing us to serve you this past year and let you know we very much look forward to continuing to serve you, your families and businesses in the new year.

NINESTAR'S CHRIS GROSS HONORED BY NINESTAR BOARD



NineStar's IP Switches & Services Team Lead, Chris Gross, was recently honored with a first of its kind employee Special Recognition Award. The award, recently commissioned by the NineStar Board of Directors, was conceived to honor employees who go above and beyond their normal duties to benefit NineStar or its members.

Chris was presented his award for his perseverance and hard work on getting Google and Netflix cache servers established in our central office. The servers will cut down on the bandwidth needed to download movies and shows for our customers. This upgrade makes the viewing experience more enjoyable for the custom-

er and saves on bandwidth costs for NineStar. Chris worked with Google and Netflix on securing the servers for over eighteen months! NineStar President and CEO, Mike Burrow and CTO Ross Ferson presented the award to Chris at our company-wide employee shutdown held the first week of November.

OPERATION ROUND-UP



NineStar Connect's Operation Round-Up Committee meeting was held on November 2nd at the company's headquarters. Here are some organizations that benefited from the ORU fund this past quarter:

For ones that want to send in an application for Operation Round-up dollars, the next application deadline is January 12, 2018. Applications can be downloaded from our website at www.ninestarconnect.com under the Community tab.



FUSE INC.



LOVE INC. OF HANCOCK COUNTY



NASA

FRIENDS OF RECOVERY, TALITHA KOUM

» The Talitha Koum project is a structure that is being transformed into the future home of a residential substance-abuse facility to help the recovery of women battling addiction. \$5000 was awarded to this organization and the money will be used for the kitchen remodel (cabinets, countertops, fixtures and appliances) within the house.

FUSE INC.

» The FUSE organization provides training/education programs for families that are raising children with special needs. FUSE stands for "Families United for Support and Encouragement". The ORU board decided to provide \$5000 to this organization which will be used for their operating costs, referral services and program staffing. Programs include parent meetings, Dads group, training for youth transitioning into adult services, adaptive swim program, color guard performance group, among others.

HANCOCK COUNTY CHILDREN'S CHOIR

» This organization has grown leaps and bounds with quadrupling the number of participants since its first semester. The children's choir is a grass roots choral performance and education program dedicated to create musical opportunities for youth through a variety of music. This program also teaches their choir members etiquette, public speaking, vocal production and stage presence. This program was given \$2500 this quarter.

LOVE INC. OF HANCOCK COUNTY

» \$3000 was awarded to the Love Inc. program. Love Inc. works with area churches along with the programs they provide to assist members of our community. The programs include - providing assistance such as financial and transportation aid, furniture needs, life-skill workshops such as cooking and job interview skills and mentoring and relationship advice. All of the services they provide is through love and the name of Christ.

MT. VERNON MUSIC BOOSTERS

» The Mt. Vernon Music Boosters work to raise money to help support the band and choir programs at Mt. Vernon schools. With the \$1000 that Operation Round Up provided them, they will be purchasing a Marimba for their music program.

NASA

» Neighborhoods Against Substance Abuse works to develop healthy lifestyles and better decision making to help youth fight against drugs and drinking. They do this with education, prevention and community partnerships. They were awarded \$2,235.90 for the purchase of a Fatal Vision Roadster and three pairs of Fatal Vision Goggles that will help assimilate a person who is impaired and driving.

SIMMONS CEMETERY ASSOCIATION

» \$3000 was given to the Simmons Cemetery Association. The funds will be used for historic preservation and archival data through digital mapping and ground penetrating radar. It will also be used toward restoration of some of the gravestones at the cemetery.



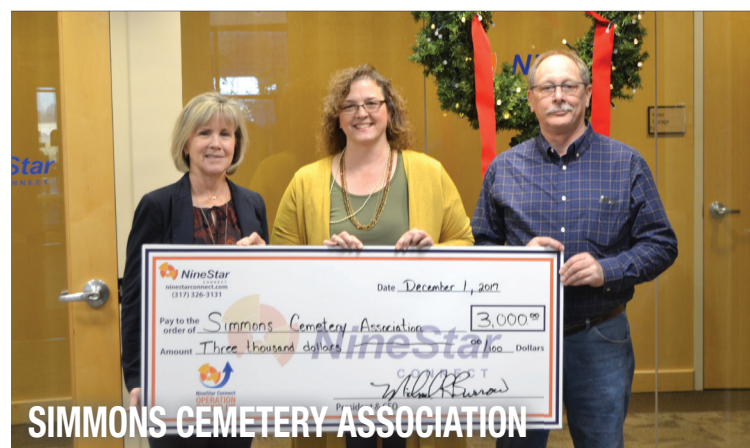
FRIENDS OF RECOVERY



HANCOCK COUNTY CHILDREN'S CHOIR



MT. VERNON MUSIC BOOSTERS



SIMMONS CEMETERY ASSOCIATION

NINESTAR EMPLOYEES RECOGNIZED BY INDIANA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

Longtime NineStar employees Jamie Bell, Shane Osborne and Perry Wilson were recently recognized at a dinner held by Indiana Electric Cooperatives (IEC) at their annual meeting held in downtown Indianapolis.

Jamie Bell was honored for his trip to Guatemala to help bring power to a remote village where there had never been electricity. He along with fifteen other employees from Indiana's cooperatives traveled to the village of El Zapotillo, Guatemala and spent two weeks of their time "turning the lights on" for the community. All work was done without the aid of modern equipment. Since 2012,

Hoosiers have helped to bring hope in the form of electricity to rural Guatemalan villages.

Shane Osborne and Perry Wilson were both recognized for completing the Cooperative Leadership Edge Training program. This certificate program is designed to be more than just training. It is a learning experience with measured results to gauge impact. Shane and Perry both learned and participated in structured and non-structured scenarios to refresh, expand and apply the skills learned in the class. To put their learning into practice, Shane and Perry will select and execute a capstone project once their coursework is completed.



 JAMIE BELL



 SHANE OSBORNE



 PERRY WILSON

UPCOMING NERD NIGHTS

The NineStar Nerds have a treat for you! They will be holding a "Mini" Nerds Night on Wednesday, January 17th that will be a smaller version of the Nerds' Night that you have all come to enjoy. At this mini session, the Nerds will be focusing on providing you details and explaining the benefits of TV Streaming. They will also be there to answer any questions you may have regarding this topic. Additionally, two Roku Streaming Sticks will be raffled off along with a drawing to win a \$100 Visa Gift Card for bringing in a pet toy and/or treat to benefit Frenzy Animal Rescue. Snacks and beverages will be provided at this mini session and the program is set to begin at 6pm. If you are interested in attending, please RSVP by calling 317-323-2112 or visit <http://nerdsrsvp.myninestar.net>.

Also, look for information on a regular Nerd's Night set to take place on February 20th. Dinner will be provided at this one along with giveaways and more chances to win various prizes. More information about this event will be sent as we get closer to the date.

As always, thank you for supporting the NineStar Nerd program and spending the evening with us!

Join the NineStar Nerds "SPECIAL" Night Out "STREAMING TV" Program!

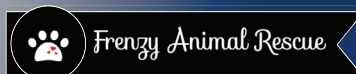


Wednesday, January 17, 2018 | 6:00 pm
NineStar South Campus | 2243 East Main Street | Greenfield

Snacks & beverages provided.

■ Learn all you need to know about streaming TV.

Please bring a pet toy or treats* to be entered into a drawing to win a \$100 Visa gift card!



*Toys and treats to benefit Frenzy Animal Rescue, New Palestine.



Seating is Limited!
Please RSVP by January 10th.
317.323.2112
or visit <http://nerdsrsvp.myninestar.net>



NINESTAR SUPPORTS GIRLS ON THE RUN EVENT

NineStar Connect recently supported the Girls on the Run event held on November 11th at Saxony Park in Fishers. The event, a 5K Run, had close to a 1,000-people participating and over 400 runners. The Girls on the Run program lasts 10 weeks, for girls in the 3rd through 5th grade who participate in an after-school program. Designed to allow every girl to recognize her inner strength, the Girls on the Run curriculum inspires girls to define their lives on their own terms. Throughout the season, the girls make new friends, build their confidence and celebrate all that makes them unique. Locally, Greenfield Intermediate and Harris Elementary participated and had over 40 girls participate in the program.



DEBBIE ROBERTS MEMORY PRESERVED WITH PLAQUE

In August, the NineStar family lost dear friend and longtime NineStar employee Debbie Roberts after a brief illness. Debbie worked for the cooperative for over forty-seven years coming to the cooperative just days after graduating from high school. Her family including her nephew Jerry McPherson wanted to honor Debbie and keep her memory alive. In November, the family presented NineStar Vice President of Administration Regina Bever a Plaque honoring Debbie. The plaque will be on permanent display for people to learn about Debbie and her dedication to the cooperative she loved so much.






CAPITAL CREDIT CHECKS

It's that time of the year again when NineStar mails out capital credit checks; and, if you haven't already, you should be receiving your check soon. The check(s) you will be receiving are for profits that were allocated to your patronage account as a member of NineStar Connect. Profits are allocated to the members and are pro-rated based upon each member's purchase of electric and/or telecommunications services.

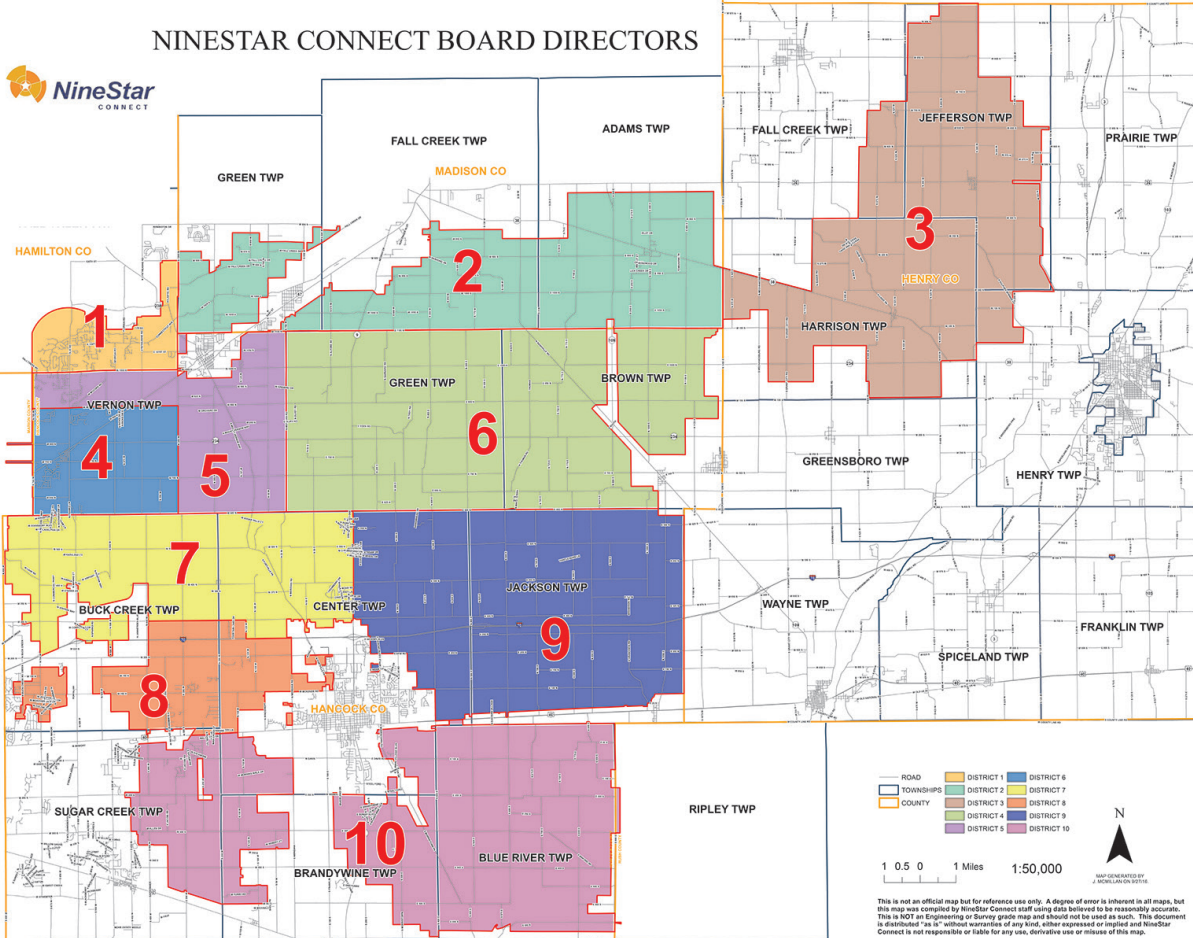
Over the last 5 years, NineStar has been able to make over \$46 million in capital investments in critical electrical and fiber optic infrastructure while still being able to retire over \$13 million of long term debt. During that same period, the company has returned over \$2 million in cash to members in the form of capital credit retirements.



Notice to Membership of Upcoming Election of Directors

The 2018 NineStar Connect Annual Meeting will be held on March 23, 2018. The following director districts are up for election: 3, 4, 5, At-Large #2.

NINESTAR CONNECT BOARD DIRECTORS



Any member in good standing residing in districts 3, 4, or 5 is eligible to run for a district position and any member residing in districts 1, 2, 7, 8, or 10 may run for the At-Large #2 position on the board of directors. Any member interested in running for a board position should contact Kim Gerard or Regina Bever at the Main Street Office (317) 326-3131 or via e-mail: administration@ninestarconnect.com and request an Information Guide for Potential Directors.

A Nominating Committee Meeting will be held on January 10, 2018. 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, President & CEO
2243 E. Main Street
Greenfield, IN 46140

Forms may also be personally delivered to any NineStar Connect business office. **Deadline** for submission of these materials in order to be considered for nomination by the Nominating Committee is **January 3, 2018 at 12 o'clock noon.**

Members submitting required candidate documents will be eligible to be interviewed by the Nominating Committee.