



SEE PAGE 4

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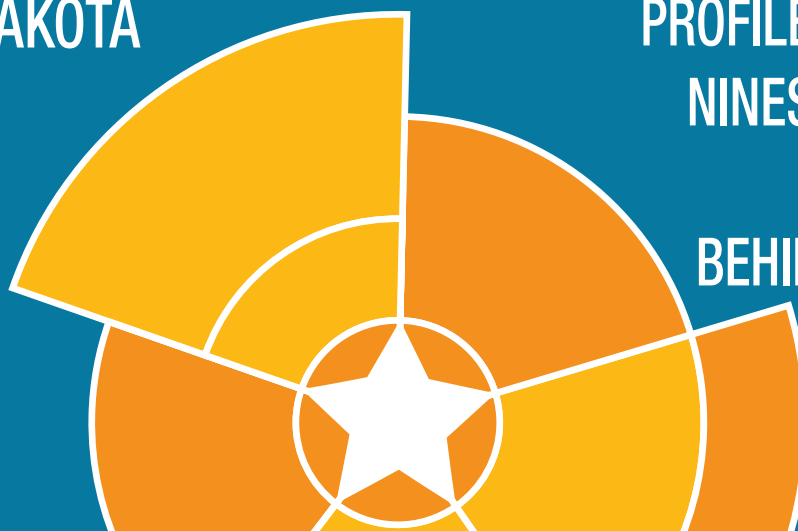
NINESTAR DONATES PIZZA TO FRONT LINE WORKERS

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NINESTAR'S DAKOTA
BARKWILL
DELIVERS
CHRISTMAS
MAGIC
PAGE 5



PROFILE: POWERHOUSE
NINESTAR PRODUCER
DISCUSSES
BEHIND-THE-SCENES
WORK
PAGE 7



Amazon Locker stands outside of NineStar Connect's North Campus and Idea Co-op, located at 2331 E. County Road 600N. When ordering from Amazon, shoppers can select the Locker as a delivery location.



OUR EMPLOYEES MAKE THE DIFFERENCE. HERE'S A CUSTOMER REVIEW FOR STEPHANIE CARMICHAEL.

"STEPHANIE JUST MADE EVERYTHING MORE CLEAR AND UNDERSTANDABLE TO HIM. SHE HAS HELPED THEM IN DECIDING WHAT THEY NEED TO DO WITH THEIR SERVICES. "STEPHANIE IS A GREAT COMMUNICATOR AND VERY HELPFUL."



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STORY IDEA?

Contact David Spencer at dspencer@ninestarconnect.com

COVER STORY PAGE 4

Ninestar Health Partners receive CHIME distinction.

NINESTAR'S DAKOTA BARKWILL DELIVERS

CHRISTMAS MAGIC PAGE 5

NineStar Server Administrator Dakota Barkwell helps Hancock Health play a little Christmas cheer this Holiday season.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT PAGE 9

Employee Spotlight highlighting Stephanie Carmichael, who has been with NineStar for 19 years.

CO-OP LIVING WITH MARY JANE PAGE 12

Four guidelines that will help you when connecting with friends and family in the age of covit.

MESSAGE FROM OUR CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

Patronage and Capital Credits – What are They?

PAGES 8



POWER OUT?
NO INTERNET OR TV?



CHECK NINESTAR'S FACEBOOK OR TWITTER PAGE!!

Social Media is exploding and if you aren't checking your laptop, tablet or smart phone for the latest and greatest fads, trends and updates.....you are not living in the 21st century! We have found that posting news about NineStar Connect on Facebook and Twitter has been a successful line of communication for all of our social media followers. Once you "like" our page, you will automatically be notified of any post we share whether it's information about an outage, an event we are planning, local Channel 9 broadcasting or energy information to save you money.

Additionally, if you have a question for us, send us a message. We will research and respond to your question as quickly as possible. We don't want to "leave you in the dark" about any issues or inquiries you might have for us. Our Customer Service has always been a significant piece of what we do and giving you the answers you need is imperative to keeping you knowledgeable and satisfied with our service. To add, when there is that unfortunate outage, your communication to us is just as helpful in determining where the problem is and who it is affecting so we encourage you to share your thoughts.

So if you haven't already, grab your tablet or smart phone and "Like" or "Follow" our Facebook and/or Twitter page. We will do our best to keep you informed and post all the latest details about NineStar Connect news. But don't forget, we still like to hear your voice! When you need answers fast and need to talk to someone, a phone call to our 24/7/365 Support Center is always just a dial away - 317-326-HELP.



NineStar CONNECTION

The *NineStar Connection* is a publication of NineStar Connect servicing retail and residential customers. Nearly 16,000 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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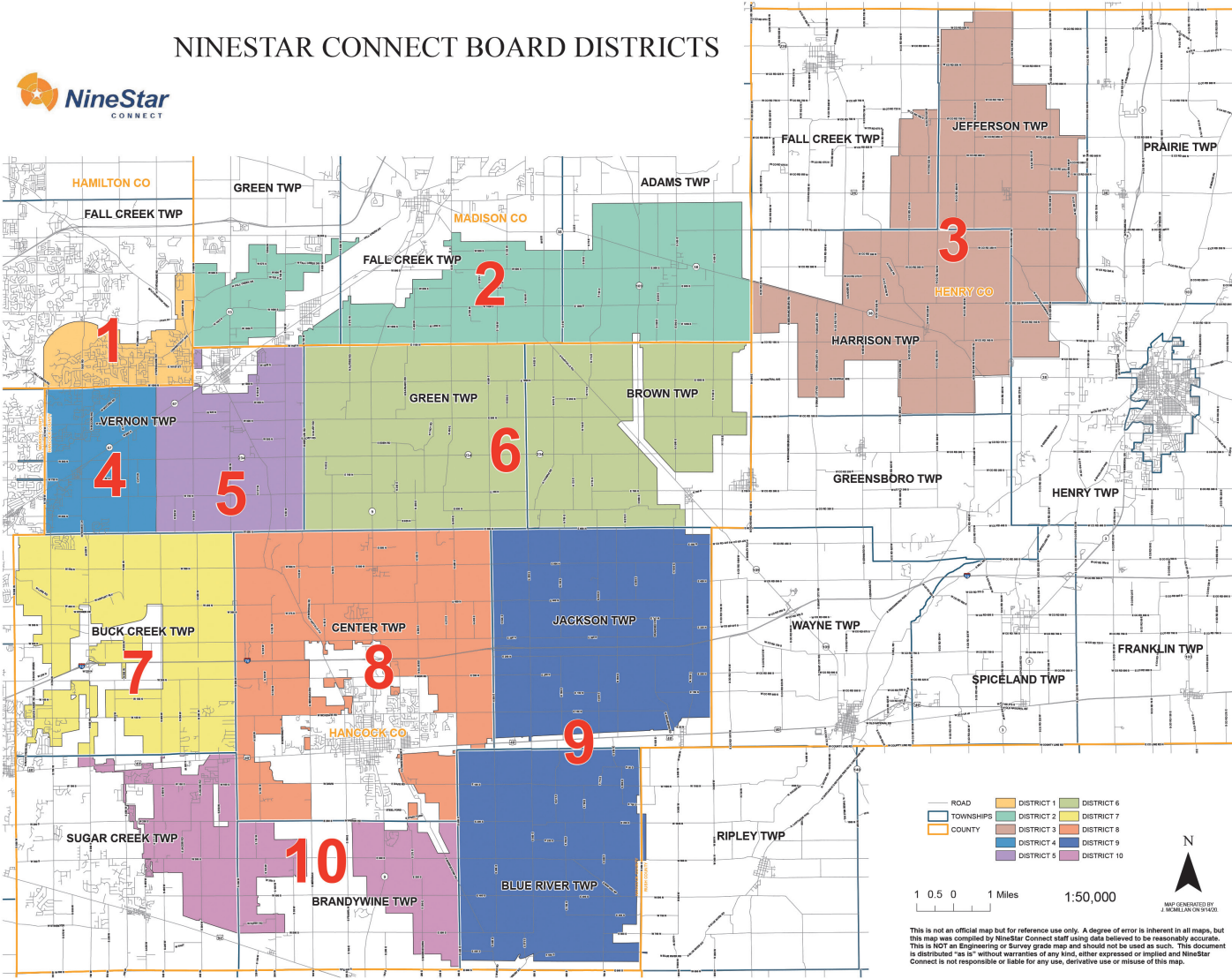
AT LARGE



JAMES E. CHERRY



RONNIE MOHR





By Julie Young

When it comes to choosing a healthcare facility to meet their wellness needs, area residents look for organizations that use proven technologies to deliver safe and effective care. In addition to the safety of bedside medication verification at the point of service, patients want to check-in to their appointments online, receive text messages from their physician's office, and access to their electronic medical record (EMR) so that they can be active partners in their care.

This requires the convenience of a connected network and thanks in part to their collaboration with Ninestar Connect, Hancock Regional Health and Henry Community Health were among 10 Indiana facilities recognized by the 2020 College of Healthcare Information Management Executives (CHIME.)

"CHIME has a survey every year that organizations participate in," said Angie Soliday MSN, RN-BC, director of information services with Hancock Regional Health. "They collect data on how organizations have implemented and leveraged information technology to improve patient safety and outcomes."

Each participating organization received a customized benchmarking report that included scores across eight segments including: infrastructure, security, business/disaster recovery, administrative/supply chain, analytics/data management, interoperability/population health, patient engagement, and clinical quality/safety. They were also given an overall score ranging between 1-10. Both Hancock Regional Health and Henry Community Health (HCH) earned a 7, or "Most Wired" which validates where they are currently, how they compare to other systems and how they might make future improvements.

"It is an honor to be recognized with this

prestigious award," said Paul Janssen, president and CEO of HCH. "However, it is not a surprise when you know of the continued hard work and dedication of our Information Systems Care Team members who make sure we have the important technology we need to go about our work days in caring for our patients."

CHIME president and CEO Russell P. Branzell said that while digital technology has been a driver of innovation in healthcare for many years, the 2020 pandemic took it to another level.

"The Digital Health Most Wired program underscores why healthcare organizations keep pushing themselves to be digital leaders and shows what amazing feats they can achieve. This certification recognizes their exemplary performance in 2020.

Soliday said one of the innovations that led to Hancock Regional's CHIME certification was the integrated EMR in both the hospital as well as the physician network that allows for the sharing of important information such as medication lists, problems and allergies. They are also actively engaged with the Indiana Health Information Exchange (IHIE) and have implemented tools such as the single sign-on to Careweb within the EMR, which places important patient data into the hands of clinicians providing care.

"When you are a patient here, our providers have access to results from other facilities around the state that send data to IHIE. With the pandemic this year, we have expanded access to care through tools that allow for virtual visits. This provided opportunity for patients to have a face-to-face appointment with their clinician from their home," she said.

This proved to be important for HCH as well. As telehealth programs came to the forefront at the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, the providers and healthcare team members

embraced new technologies and worked diligently to improve the lives of patients every day and in every way.

"While we already were working on the implementation, it became one of our top priorities to provide this service throughout all our provider offices," Janssen said. "With the pandemic keeping those most vulnerable patients who needed care out of our physician offices everyone really stepped up and made it happen."

HCH chief information officer Mike Spencer says the CHIME designation is an acknowledgement of a tremendous effort by their Information Technology staff, providers, clinical and financial professionals who made it all possible.

"Henry Community Health continues to look for new ways to use technology and data to support care management, clinical integration, and consumer engagement using a combination of innovation and process design throughout the entire continuum," he said.

Central Indiana hospitals are second to none when it comes to implementing health information technology across their systems, but few providers have the kind of relationship that Hancock Regional and HCH have with Ninestar Connect, which no doubt had an impact on their designation. Soliday said the Ninestar network supports area providers and has been instrumental in helping to set up their telehealth/video conferencing capability years before other facilities had those options.

"They supply the dark fiber connection for us to all of our patient care facilities that allow us to remain connected to all of our locations – not only for our main campus but also for our gateway campus, our immediate cares, all our physician offices and wellness centers," she said. "Ninestar has been a tremendous partner for us."

NINESTAR'S DAKOTA BARKWILL DELIVERS CHRISTMAS MAGIC

In November the two CEO's from Hancock Health and NineStar Connect had a conversation about how NineStar could assist the hospital. Steve Long mentioned outfitting and programming the facility to allow for Christmas music to be heard during December in common areas. The thought with all that is currently going on with the pandemic and the long hours hospital staff is putting in this may provide a bit of cheer. It would be something that could be enjoyed by all, staff, patients and some visitors who are allowed into the facility. Michael Burrow agreed and put into motion a plan to get the music playing. He enlisted NineStar employee Dakota Barkwill the point person to get the job accomplished. Dakota is a Server Administrator with NineStar and has been with the company for a little more than five years. When it comes to technology there is no one better than Dakota. He has spent several days working with the hospital's vendors who handle the audio system in hopes of getting it working the first part of December. It is everyone's hope that the staff will soon hear Christmas music playing through the hospital's campus. Thanks to Steve, Mike and Dakota for spreading a little extra holiday cheer when it is needed the most.



MASTERING MAINTENANCE: COMPRESSED AIR

There's a lot of pressure to keep your compressed air system working efficiently, but there's only one surefire way to success: creating and following a masterful maintenance plan.

Although there are many types of compressors, they all need the basics.

1. PEEK AT THE PERFORMANCE

Take a peek at the performance of your compressors to ensure you're getting peak performance. Compare actual flow rate output with the rated output. Test the power draw per CFM produced to make sure you're on track. Check air pressure settings and check the blowout rate set point. You should also verify the hand off of variable speed trim units to the baseline units.

2. EVALUATE ELECTRICAL EFFECTIVENESS

Evaluate the electrical effectiveness of your compressed air system. Check the amperage draw, verifying the service voltage with all your compressors running. Be sure to tighten any loose connections as well.

3. MAKE SURE MECHANICALS ARE MAGNIFICENT

Grease non-sealed motor bearings. Check motors for pits, corrosion or loose connections. Inspect the thrust bearings and drive gears. Look over belts for wear and tear, as well as proper tension. Visually check the oil and have your oil tested by a qualified laboratory at least once a year. For large systems, change the oil at least once a year and clean particles from the case.

4. ALWAYS ADDRESS AIRLEAKS

Regularly tag and fix air leaks in the system, which can cause performance issues and energy waste. For water-cooled systems, check water quality and keep all the passages clean and free of obstruction. Depending on what kind of compressor you operate, check guide vane linkage assembly, compressor suction or discharge valves, and the operation of the air lubricant separator as well.

Don't blow the opportunity to save energy and get better performance out of your compressed air system. Build your maintenance plan today.

GETTING MORE OUT OF YOUR HEATING SYSTEM

If your heating system isn't up to par, you could be facing higher energy bills, equipment failure and expensive repairs. Get the most out of your heating system with regular inspections, preventive maintenance and targeted upgrades.

TAKE THE HEAT OFF

Ensure optimal system performance and improve heating system efficiency with the following maintenance strategies:

- **TUNE UP.** Have your system cleaned and inspected by a qualified technician at the beginning of each heating season.
- **CHANGE FILTERS.** Clean filters help improve system efficiency and maintain good indoor air quality. Change filters monthly or according to manufacturer's guidelines.
- **SEAL LEAKS.** Leaky ductwork reduces occupant comfort. Seal holes or cracks with mastic tape.
- **INSULATE DUCTS.** Keep heat from escaping and prevent large energy losses with duct insulation.
- **CLEAN DUCTWORK AND REGISTERS.** Regular cleaning improves occupant comfort and indoor air quality.

• ENSURE PROPER HEAT DISTRIBUTION.

Keep areas around registers unobstructed by furniture or equipment.

If your heating system needs frequent repair, it may be time for a replacement. Make sure your new system is sized correctly to fit your needs. Geothermal and air-source heat pumps are highly efficient alternatives to traditional heating systems for many commercial applications. Your local electric cooperative offers Power Moves® rebates for qualifying energy efficiency upgrades. Contact your co-op's energy advisor for details.

FUELING BOILER EFFICIENCY

Boilers used for space heating have unique operational requirements. Although regular maintenance and annual cleaning and inspections are important, you can maximize occupant comfort and the overall energy efficiency of your system by doing the following:

- **MEASURE OXYGEN LEVELS.** Use inexpensive flue gas analyzers and oxygen trim systems to monitor flue gas levels and adjust excess air levels as needed. Oxygen levels shouldn't exceed 6%.

- **MONITOR FLUE GAS TEMPERATURE.** A rise in temperature may indicate the formation of scale or deposits on boiler tubes.

- **CLEAN SCALE BUILDUP OFF TUBES REGULARLY.** Scale buildup inhibits heat transfer, forcing the boiler to burn additional fuel to meet hot water and steam requirements.

- **MEASURE CARBON MONOXIDE LEVELS.** Acceptable limits are within 200 parts per million. Excess levels are a sign that combustion is incomplete, and fuel is being wasted.

- **INSPECT BOILER INSULATION REGULARLY.** Repair or replace any damaged or missing insulation.

- **CHECK STEAM TRAPS FOR LEAKS.** Excess steam emanating from the feed water tank vent may indicate a leak. Install a wireless monitoring system.

Efficiency upgrades can increase boiler efficiency. Boiler economizers preheat feed water and increase efficiency as much as 3%. Replacing an older burner with a new, energy-efficient model can result in energy savings and a quick payback by maximizing combustion efficiency.

Your local electric cooperative may even offer a Power Moves rebate for a qualifying energy efficiency upgrade. Contact NineStar to learn more about options that may be a good fit for your organization.

CHECK THE TEMPERATURE

Efforts to optimize heating system efficiency shouldn't stop at your heating system. Take measures throughout your facility to minimize heat loss, increase building comfort and reduce overall energy costs:

- **WEATHERIZE** windows and doors by filling cracks and putting weatherstripping around gaps where climate-controlled air can escape.
- **TUNE BUILDING CONTROLS** such as sensors, dampers and thermostats to match your current operating schedule and the change of season.
- **ADD INSULATION** to walls and ceilings. Poor insulation will reduce heating system performance and occupant comfort.

By following these guidelines, your building will be comfortable, and you'll take the heat off your energy bills during the colder months.



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SMART COMMUNICATION WITH SMARTHUB

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SmartHub is available through the NineStar website and as a mobile app through the Apple App Store (iOS devices) or Google Play Marketplace (Android devices). SmartHub provides many features that can help you understand your account or get a hold of us in a hurry.

Through SmartHub, you'll be able to view detailed usage information that will provide insight that can help better understand your bill. You'll be able to put yourself in the driver's seat of your NineStar account.

You'll also receive important news and information about NineStar through the app. Any important news or alerts you need to know, you'll receive immediately. You can also contact us with any issues regarding your service.

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CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR WEEKLY \$100 WINNERS:

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Cindy Evans of Greenfield,
Curtis Couch of McCordsville
John Baugh of Franklin
Sean & Monica Alford of Spiceland

**Sign up today for your
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NEWS, PROFILE

PROFILE: POWERHOUSE NINESTAR PRODUCER
DISCUSSES BEHIND-THE-SCENES WORK

BY DREW SMITH / JILL BERNARD

In the absolute black of night, only illuminated by the obnoxious shine of automobile lights and the blast of the football field fluorescents, a man emerged from the sea of moving cars and wandering people in the parking lot to greet one man: John Painter. They talked briefly, speaking of the man’s newborn and his hopes to return to broadcasting. There was nothing awfully unique about this occasion; to a wandering eye it may seem as though it was just as simple as small talk. What was really significant about this occasion wasn’t that it happened, but that, in fact, it seemed to happen all the time. From country club bartending to tarring a factory roof, to being a computer technician at General Motors, and even a plant manager for NineStar, it seems as though Painter has been all over the world, and as though all the world knows him.

“All my life, I have loved to create and have always spent time creating in all types of different forms,” elaborated Painter when asked about the best aspects of his job at NineStar. “The position NineStar has put me in is one that they give me the freedom to be creative in many forms.” While Painter has certainly shuffled around in his career, he now finds himself the producer of NineStar Sports as well as the creator of NineStar’s local TV channel. NineStar Connect is an energy and communications company based in East Central Indiana that provides a number of services including water, electric, and internet, and also as a result of Painter’s work in the company, a local TV channel. Painter has worked with the company for several years, and went onto explain the many positions he had held in the span of time, stating, “Again, I love to be creative. I have held many positions with NineStar, from a telephone lineman, to maintaining the digital headend, and even supervisory roles with outside plant.”

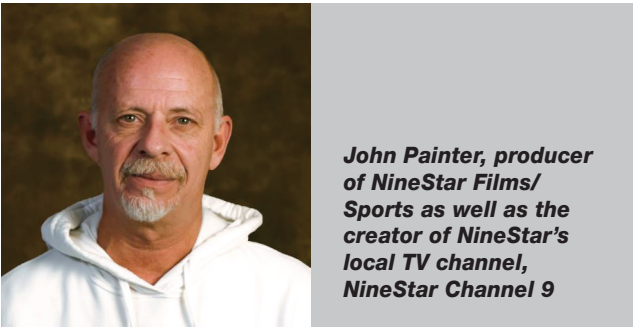
In the early hours of the day, through sizzling heat and bitter rain, one can find Painter at one of the local high school football stadiums, basketball courts, baseball fields, or even wrestling rooms setting up for a rigorous night of recording. He can be seen running cables out to cameras, setting up laptops for editing and rendering, and more time-consuming, tiresome work. “Growing up on a farm, hard work has always been instilled in me by my upbringing,” he pondered in consideration of the tediousness of it all. “I do enjoy it because once we finish, there is a great sense of accomplishment and much satisfaction. I guess because I am just driven by sort of an obsession with those games that I do not feel any fatigue or pain until the next morning.” But even after all the arduous set-up and labor, when the game begins, whatever it is,

Painter runs the show like a trainer runs a well-disciplined mustang on a dirt-ridden horse track.

“I think John possesses a combination of mental fortitude and experience that is perfect for how stressful and nerve-wracking productions can be most of the time,” illustrated Dave Anderson, camera operator for NineStar Films, the team responsible for the filming of local county sports games. Anderson is an established and consistent member of the team, having worked there for nearly four years. “There have been many times over the years that have solidified my faith in John as a producer. Whenever there are technical difficulties with our equipment or there are outside factors beyond our control, John just deals with it or fixes the problem if he can,” elucidated Anderson, “He never gets mentally flustered or panicked, which is pretty remarkable considering some of the things we have had to deal with over the years.” Painter runs a consistently collected and calm ship and maintains a level of quality that is undeniable.

As one could surmise, Painter seems to possess the work ethic of an ox, never failing his responsibilities and always moving forward. “John is different from others in that he is a one-man army,” Bill McKenna, Greenfield-Central Radio/TV teacher and director at NineStar Films, attempted to explain, stating, “He is producing, engineering, and doing all the production jobs himself, every other team is full, John has only himself. He teaches himself new technology, he finds a way, [he’s] self-reliant.” McKenna has been working with Painter for six years and even knew him as a child. “We both were kids during the blizzard of 1978, we both had adventures, mine in the city and his in the country,” McKenna mentioned. “[He] and his dad went out in the storm and worked; I just had an awesome snowball fight. He told me about what it was like to work with his Dad tending to the cows as this epic storm engulfed them. His youth made him who he is.” McKenna has worked in the industry for many years, even working under Channel 6 for some time, as well as ABC. Yet he notices something different in Painter as a producer, simply stating, “He stays with what is good in life. I’ve never worked with anybody as good as him.”

Unfortunately, no matter how fantastic a man like Painter is, especially in the industry, the reality is sports are on the decline. According to research firm Ampere Analysis, viewers aged 18 to 24 are the least interested in sports as a genre in broadcasting, and it seems that participation in sports is decreasing, according to the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS). Talent and hard



John Painter, producer of NineStar Films/Sports as well as the creator of NineStar’s local TV channel, NineStar Channel 9

work can only do so much if the viewer doesn’t care. In considering this, Painter elaborated on his perspective of it: “I watch old sporting broadcasts on YouTube from the 60’s, 70’s, and 80’s. The broadcast was all about the players and the action, period. Total focus was with the game. And it was normally only positive commentary. There was not all the flashy motion graphics and such. It was simple and was all about the game, which is what people have tuned in for. That’s just me. I like the broadcast to be all positive and not overdone with flashy glitz and glamour.”

Even with all the sweat, blood, and tears Painter puts into his work, he doesn’t complain much nor does he think much needs to change. When asked about changes he would like to make to his current job, he simply retorted, “Well, I guess I would like to see us be able to have permanent cabling at all of our stadiums and gyms, so that we wouldn’t have to set-up and break-down for every broadcast. That would be nice!” McKenna attested to Painter’s absolutely solid mentality, explaining, “He goes well beyond what he has to do in his work. He swings for the fences and never gives up. We have had games in tough weather I would have bailed on, but he stays with it and we get stuff done when it looks impossible.”

What lies ahead for John could be an innumerable amount of situations, considering his career, but it seems as though for now Painter is planting his feet in broadcasting. Despite the painstaking labor and the decline in popularity, it is where he chooses to stay, even stating, “I hope to be doing pretty much what I am doing now with NineStar until I retire. However, retirement for me will probably be full of video production, photography, or graphic arts. Maybe as freelance even.” So, whatever Painter ends up doing or wherever he ends up working, he’ll keep it cool and work himself like a lawnmower, and plenty of people from all across his career will see him there and won’t be able to refuse saying hi.

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Message from our Chief Financial Officer

PATRONAGE AND CAPITAL CREDITS – WHAT ARE THEY?

So, you just received a check or a bill credit from NineStar Connect, have gotten a check or bill credit for several years now, and would like to know why? You are a member of a cooperative! How a cooperative operates is governed by federal and state tax laws along with various other regulations, but they are also proudly self-operated under seven guiding principles. One of those most important principles of being a member, is your economic participation with the cooperative.

NineStar is a cooperative consisting of four individual utilities rolled into one, providing its' members electric, telecommunications, water, and wastewater services. Not all members can receive all four services as that depends on where you live in relation to where the cooperative geographically can or does provide those services. As a customer who receives a service from NineStar that makes you a member of the cooperative. Even more importantly, it makes you an owner. One of the key characteristics of being a coop is that any margins or profits generated by each service provided to you by the cooperative are allocated to the members that use the service. Those margins are then in turn returned to the members over time. It is a two-stage process that happens both on an annual basis as well as over a long period of time. This is how it works.

The first step in managing the members ownership of the cooperative begins annually after the cooperative closes its' books, and it is determined what margins were earned by the cooperative for the year. Margins are simply the amounts billed to the customers (revenues), less the expenses of running the utility. Those margins have also been used for capital expenditures and to service the debt incurred by the cooperative to maintain the utility. After margins have been determined, a calculation is made as to how much each individual member generated of the coop's total margins, based on the members individual patronage/use of the coop's services. These individual amounts are called member patronage. Each member has a patronage account that has been assigned to them, and their pro rata share of each year's margins is annually placed into their individual patronage capital account. These individual accounts then become part of the equity of the coop to be returned later to the members. Put

a different way, patronage capital is the portion of the coop equity that has been assigned to the member/owners, and the balance represents the amount of the assets of the coop that each member owns. Conversely, it is not cash held in an account or reserve, nor is it a debt owed to the member. Annually, notice to the members of their current year allocation along with their balance of unretired patronage is sent to each member around the middle of September. It arrives either as notice on your bill or via a letter, depending on if you are a current or former customer.

The second and more extended experience of member ownership is the return of member patronage in the form of capital credits to the cooperative members. Capital credits are returned to the members as the financial position of the cooperative allows, and the retirement depends on the current financial position of the cooperative. NineStar has retired patronage each year for the past ten years and including the current year retirement the cooperative has returned over \$6 Million dollars back to the members since 2011. Because most of the assets of the cooperative are poles, wires, buildings, and other assets needed to operate and maintain the utility, the only available asset to return to the members is in the form of available cash. Each year the Board of Directors with input from senior leadership of the coop determine an amount of cash that can be used to retire patronage in the subsequent year. This amount is a line item in the budget along with capital expenditures, principal payments on long term debt, and other cash requirements needed to operate the utility safely and reliably. Once a final determination is made as to how much can be returned to the members in any given year, a calculation is made that is very similar to the way margins are calculated and allocated to each individual member's patronage account. When a retirement occurs, it is determined what an individual members' patronage balance is as a percentage when compared to the pool of all cooperative members patronage account balances. Once that ratio has been calculated for each member, that ratio or fraction is multiplied



SCOTT HIATT

by the total amount of cash being returned. This calculation then produces the amount that a member will receive or have retired from their patronage balance. Technology makes this easy in the billing and patronage systems of the cooperative and checks and bill credits are then issued to each member near the end of each calendar year.

It is this act of retiring patronage to the member that completes the cycle of the revolving ownership that a member has in the cooperative that serves them. Generally, the number of years of patronage unretired or outstanding at any given time represents the approximate economic life of the assets current members are being served with. General retirement cycles can run from 30 to 40 years depending on the utility, and it is important to note that an allocation of patronage does not occur if there are no margins to allocate. As NineStar strategically invests in assets to allow it to grow and expand into both existing and new utilities, it will always keep the spirit of serving its members and managing patronage in balance with one another. It is the one of the principles that the coop is governed by, and one of the principles as owners you should expect of your cooperative.

SCOTT HIATT

NineStar Connect
CFO



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

BY DOMINIQUE EGBERT

HIGHLIGHTING STEPHANIE CARMICHAEL

STEPHANIE CARMICHAEL has been with NineStar for 19 years. She started September 24, 2001 as a Customer Service Representative and today she is the Team Lead for the Residential Service Department. Some noted accomplishments of Stephanie's were being promoted to Team Lead and creating a manual for her department, that consisted of detailed information on service pricing and standard order of operations for all NineStar's services.

With Stephanie's many years of service she has become proficient at what she does, but she still has challenges. One of the challenges that stood out to Stephanie was fulfilling

customers everyday needs because each day is different and each customer request/needs are different. With that said her favorite part of the job is helping the customers and having that customer show their appreciation for the service she provided. She also enjoys doing special projects outside of her scope of work.

In Stephanie's free time she loves to spend it with her family, go shopping or just do nothing, but one thing Stephanie loves is tropical islands, and she cannot wait to return after the pandemic! Stephanie is married to Casey Carmichael and they have two children, Nathan and Chloe.

MT. VERNON STUDENT WINS 2020 YOUTH POWER & HOPE AWARD

Indiana Connection and Indiana's Electric Cooperatives are proud to sponsor the Youth Power and Hope Awards program. Since 2009, the program has annually honored Indiana youth in grades 5-8 for their community service. Being an active member in the community can mean anything from volunteering at your church to being involved with 4-H to helping support local hospitals or other community organizations.

The winner of the 2020 Youth Power and Hope Award is Kyle Kinker of McCordsville. Kyle is the son of Brent and Hollie Kinker and a seventh grader at Mt. Vernon Middle School. Kyle has volunteered for 4-H and has spent a lot of time volunteering at the Kenneth Butler Memorial Soup Kitchen in Greenfield. Kyle says "My favorite volunteer activity was the soup kitchen. What I like most was meeting the volunteers and patrons. It is awful to be cold and hungry. I'm glad that I'm able to help my neighbors go to sleep at night with a full stomach."

When asked to describe what community service means to him, Kyle responded "To me community service means helping people who



are in need of help such as less fortunate people who can't always repay the favor. I like knowing that my community is healthier and safer because of people who volunteer their time.

Chris Wade, Volunteer Coordinator at the Soup Kitchen says "I have interviewed and worked with many of our younger volunteers over the years. While I cannot remember each one, Kyle Kinker is a different story. This young man came to us back in 2019. The reason I can remember him is he genuinely wanted to be here. I appreciate when our youth are hard workers, energetic and finish a task with no hesitation." "This is the beginning of a genuine servant's heart for years to come.

PLAN FOR THE WASTES OF ENERGY PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE AND SAVE ON ENERGY COSTS



This holiday season, while preparing for the fun that comes from the enjoyable winter holidays, you also can prepare for the higher bills caused by the Wastes of Energy Past, Present, and Future. By overcoming these energy phantoms, you can make amends for past wasted energy and prevent them from taking more from your wallet in the future.

ENERGY PAST: This one frequently raises its head around this time of year. The holiday decorations and lights hibernating in attics and garages 10 months a year typically emerge each winter to smile at neighbors and passersby. Yet these decorations often show their age on your energy bill; if your decorations are five years old or more, they may be gulping significantly more electricity compared to their newer, more energy efficient counterparts. You also can add timers for your decorations to ensure that they are turned on when it makes the most sense.

ENERGY PRESENT: With families spending more time at home during the holidays (and more time than ever in 2020 because of the pandemic), you can expect energy bills to reflect the increased energy use. Yet there are options you can consider (or even gift!) that can help lower that energy use. Options range from advanced power strips that turn off idling equipment to minimize energy waste all the way to ENERGY STAR-certified appliances that can replace older, more inefficient devices that may be toward the end of their lifecycle.

ENERGY FUTURE: It's never too early to plan for the future! You can contact your local electric cooperative's energy advisor for insights on your home's energy use and ways you can improve. Your energy advisor may even recommend that your home receive an energy audit, which includes an in-depth review and will provide you with action items to reduce your home's energy use. You can ensure yourself and your guests are comfortable while minimizing your energy use, regardless of how frightful the weather is outside.

With a little planning, you can take steps to lower your energy use this holiday season and beyond. And much like the Jelly of the Month Club, smart energy use is the gift that keeps giving all year long! Learn more tips about saving energy year-round at www.PowerMoves.com.



OFFICES TEMPORARILY CLOSED

In response to the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus and Hancock County being classified in the red category, our offices will remain closed to the public until further notice. We are here and ready to serve our members.

CUSTOMER SERVICE:
317-326-3131
Mon – Fri 7:30am – 5pm
Sat 8am – Noon

TECHNICAL SUPPORT:
317-326-4357
24/7/365

NineStarConnect.com:

Maybe something's not working, or maybe you just need a little help getting set up. Browse our online Resources & Troubleshooting guides for answers to frequently asked questions. You can also start a live chat or fill out a help request form. Either way, we're here for you, 24/7.

For the latest updates visit [NineStarConnect.com](https://www.ninestarconnect.com) and follow us on social media.



NINESTAR CONNECT UPPING INTERNET SPEEDS AT NO EXTRA COST

BY MITCHELL KIRK
REPORTER
GREENFIELD DAILY REPORTER



GREENFIELD — A utility co-op serving the region is boosting internet speeds for fiber-to-the-home customers at no extra cost for the next several weeks.

From Nov. 25 through Jan. 15, NineStar Connect will provide 1-gigabit upload and download speeds for its fiber-to-the-home customers, said Ross Ferson, chief technology officer for the co-op.

A gigabit is the fastest internet speed NineStar Connect offers, and more than six times faster than its popular 150-megabit package, Ferson said.

Residential fiber customers will continue paying their normal internet costs.

David Spencer, director of marketing and public relations for NineStar Connect, said about 9,200 fiber-to-the-home customers will experience increased speeds.

Ferson said NineStar Connect wants to make the boost because more students are participating in school from home and more people are working from home because of the COVID-19 pandemic. College students will soon be coming home for holiday breaks and will also be able to benefit from the faster internet speeds, he added.

“We built our network over the years and invested in it in such a way that we have the capacity to

offer this,” Ferson said. “It’s something we always planned for and built our network to be future-proof so we can do things like this.”

NineStar Connect did the same for fiber-to-the-home customers earlier on in the pandemic as well.

Along with internet, the Greenfield-headquartered utility provides electric, water, sewer, television, phone and security services in locations throughout east-central Indiana.

Mitchell Kirk is a reporter at the Greenfield Daily Reporter. He can be reached at 317-477-3228 or mkirk@greenfieldreporter.com

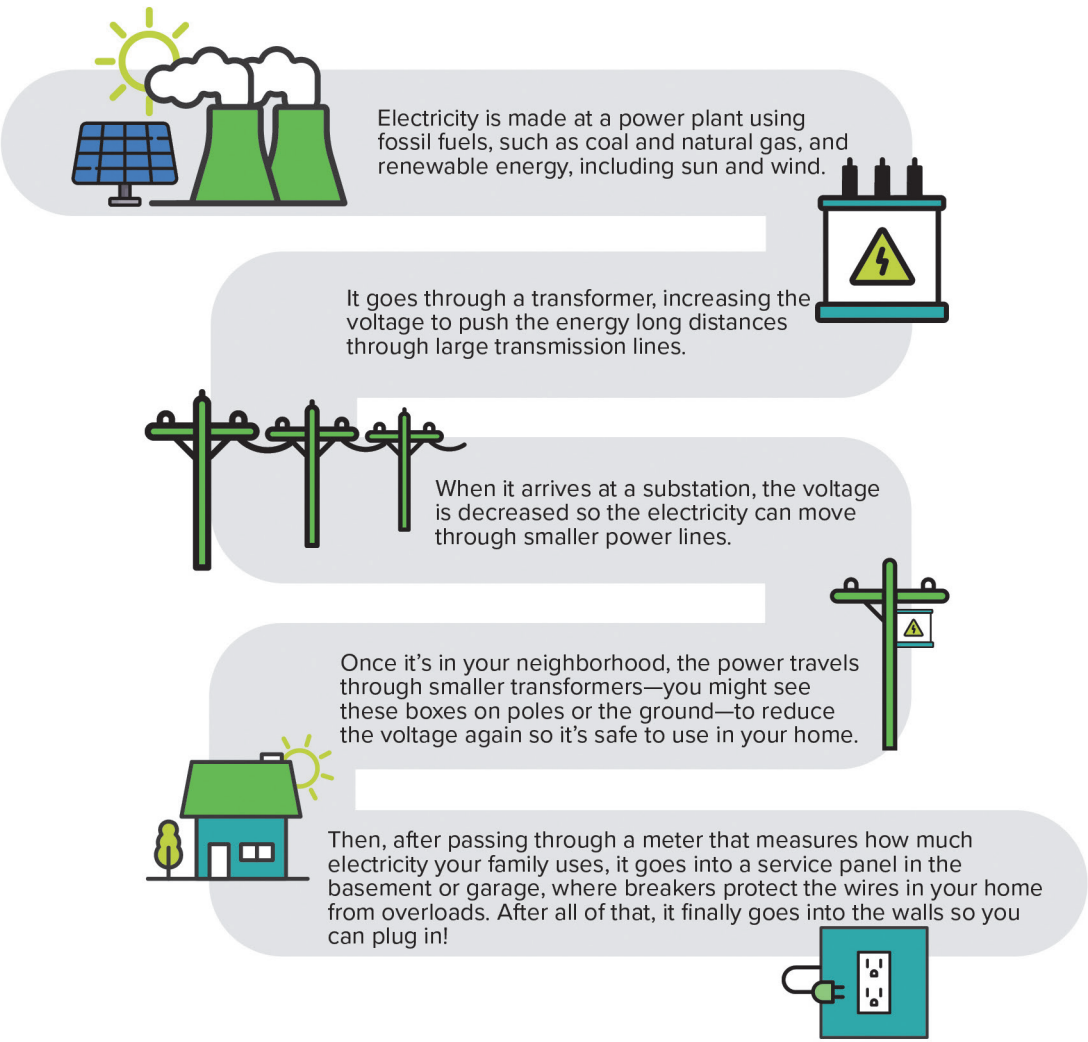
POWER PREMISE:

HOW WIND, NATURAL GAS (AND MORE!) POWER YOUR DAY

BY DALTON CALEY
ENERGY ADVISOR
KOSCIUSKO REMC

Few people turn on a living room lamp and ponder how it can turn on. Not many consider the complex path taken by the power that propels nearly every appliance and system you use during the day to brew your morning coffee, keep your home comfy, and entertain you with those dog and cat social media videos on your phone and desktop.

Most electric distribution co-ops purchase electricity from a generation and transmission (G&T) cooperative that own and maintain the transmission equipment carrying electricity to your community (your local electric co-op delivers it to homes and businesses in your town). Wabash Valley Power and Hoosier Energy are the generation and transmission cooperatives that serve electric distribution co-ops in Indiana. The path that electricity takes to power your day is an interesting one:



It's also interesting to note that the electricity you are using now was just recently produced – energy is consumed as it is used, in real time. So now that you know how energy is produced, the next time you turn on a lamp in your home you too will feel enlightened!

NINESTAR DONATES PIZZA TO FRONT LINE WORKERS

NineStar was happy to donate pizza to CICU, 3 North, OB and ER departments at Hancock Health the week of Thanksgiving. We are thankful for our healthcare workers who remain on the front lines working for our community!



CO-OP LIVING WITH MARY JANE

CONNECTING IN THE AGE OF COVID

BY MARY JANE BOGLE

As we approach the holidays, connecting with extended family is important—now, more than ever before. As more and more families face quarantines, and older Americans renew their efforts to stay socially distanced, family traditions might look very different this year.

In spite of the renewed regulations, we can maintain close contact with the ones we love. Here are four guidelines that can help you strengthen those family ties.

1. MAKE USE OF TODAY'S TECHNOLOGIES. Video conferences and FaceTime are great ways to reach out to family and friends. For family members who might not be so tech savvy, consider enlisting the help of teenagers, who can tutor grandparents in installing and using smart phone apps and Internet connections. (This will likely require an extra dose of patience, but it will be worth it in the end.)

2. SENIORS, CONSIDER ENROLLING IN A CLASS TO GET HELP WITH DEVICES. Attending an appropriate, socially distant technology class at the local library or senior center can be a great resource for grandparents who want to connect virtually with grandkids. Make the class even more meaningful by learning how to use specific apps that can strengthen kid connections. Games such as “Words with Friends,” “Draw Something” and

“Trivia Crack” are new ways to have fun when a family game night just won't work.

3. DON'T FORGET “SNAIL MAIL.” Most of us have gotten out of the habit of sending Christmas cards in the mail, but this year might be the perfect time to renew that tradition. Sending small gifts or treats through your favorite online shopping site is a good idea, too. Finding a surprise package in the mail might just be the perfect pick-me-up for an older relative struggling with loneliness this year.

4. WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS, CALL. The main idea, even if grandparents can't see you, is to establish regular routines, where you can share tidbits about the day. They will love to hear your voice, even if they can't handle logging in to Skype or joining a Zoom meeting.

Every family's comfort level with in-person get-togethers might be different, but let's not let COVID take away our connections with the ones we love the most this year.

