

AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2021



# *NineStar* CONNECTION

VOLUME 10  
ISSUE 3

## NINESTAR NAMED ONE OF CENTRAL INDIANA'S TOP WORKPLACES OF 2021!

The Indianapolis Star names  
NineStar Connect a winner  
of the Central Indiana Top  
Workplaces 2021 award.  
Read more on page 7.

## NINESTAR DAY AT THE HANCOCK COUNTY 4-H FAIR!

A thank you to everyone who  
visited the NineStar booth on  
Tuesday, July 22nd.  
See photos on page 12.

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SEE PAGE 4



# TO THE NEXT DEGREE



**NineStar**  
CONNECT

## ANNOUNCES PARTNERSHIP WITH WGU



PURDUE AND  
NINESTAR  
ANNOUNCE  
IOT SMART  
FARM  
**PAGE 5**

MEMBER-OWNED  
RENEWABLE  
ENERGY  
EQUIPMENT  
**PAGE 9**







The Gem Water Tower gets a fresh coat of paint with the help of a few brave souls. They even added something special to the face. Read more about it on page 10.



OUR EMPLOYEES MAKE THE DIFFERENCE. HERE'S A CUSTOMER REVIEW FOR NATHAN DENTON.

"NATHAN WENT OVER AND BEYOND AND OUT OF THE WAY TO RENDER REALLY GOOD SERVICE."

CUSTOMER MARSH



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](http://ninestarconnect.com)

STORY IDEA?

Contact David Spencer at [dspencer@ninestarconnect.com](mailto:dspencer@ninestarconnect.com)

**COVER STORY** **PAGE 4**  
To the next Degree! NineStar Connect announces a partnership with Western Governors University.

**EMPLOYEE PROFILE: JEREMY PIKE** **PAGE 7**  
Learn more about some of the people who power the company! This issue's highlight is Purchasing Coordinator, Jeremy Pike.

**MEMBER-OWNED RENEWABLE ENERGY EQUIPMENT** **PAGE 9**  
Have questions about installing solar panels and Distributed Generation sites? NineStar is always here to help.

**OPERATION ROUND-UP** **PAGE 10**  
Learn what organizations benefited from the ORU fund this past May!

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

A Frank Conversation about Electric Rates and Fairness.

**PAGE 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.



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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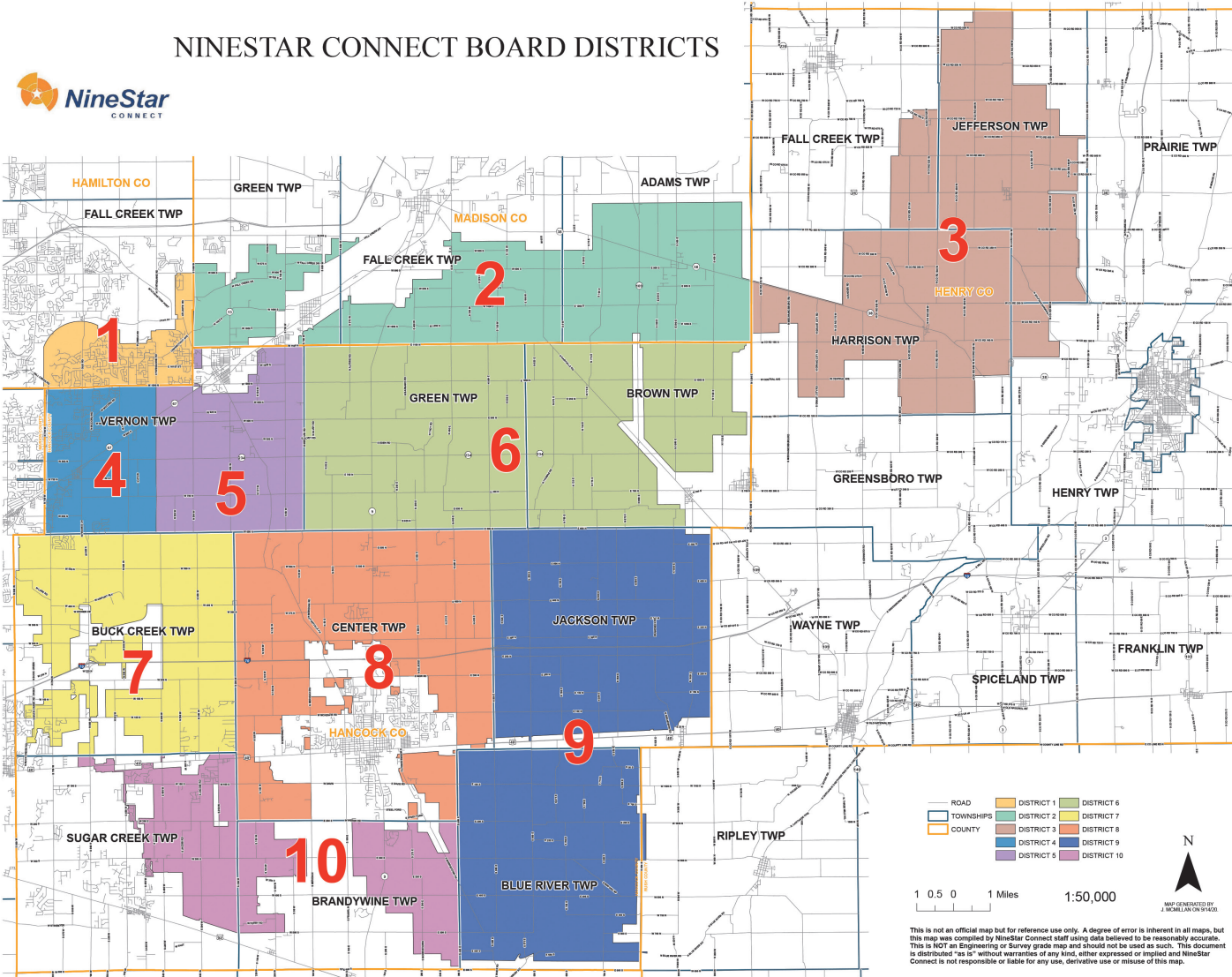
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# TO THE NEXT DEGREE



By Julie Young

In an effort to encourage employees and members to pursue those educational opportunities that will advance their career goals, NineStar Connect has announced an exciting new partnership with Western Governors University (WGU.)

Known for offering affordable tuition and a competency-based educational model, WGU has built relationships with reputable businesses across the country to meet the needs of employers and their potential workforce. Through collaborations with entities such as NineStar Connect, individuals of all backgrounds can pursue educational goals that can fundamentally change their lives.

According to Alison Bell, Indiana chancellor and regional vice-president for WGU, the university and the co-op began discussing a possible partnership in the fall of 2019. Although there was a lot of synergy and enthusiasm for a collaboration at that time, the pandemic put things on the back burner and an agreement was not finalized until recently. Bell said there is a need for skilled, educated workers throughout NineStar's service area and this partnership will give students the opportunity to pursue a quality, online education that fits into their lives and will give them the skills they need to be successful in their chosen career field.

"This is a pretty simple partnership, but it is one that has the ability to make a big impact," Bell said. "We feel confident that this partnership will meet the needs of employers in Hancock County and beyond in a dynamic and relevant way."

Under the terms of the partnership, NineStar Connect will provide 100 percent tuition to qualifying, full-time employees who are enrolled in a WGU program. They are also offering a special high-speed broadband package for members and employees that are WGU students. In addition, qualifying NineStar employees and members are eligible to apply for a \$2,500 WGU scholarship that is reserved for the university's collaborative partners.

"WGU is everywhere and if someone wants to earn their undergraduate or graduate degree without leaving their community, this is a great way to do it," Bell said.

Ross Ferson, chief technology officer for NineStar Connect said the cooperative's partnership with WGU has the potential to be a game changer when it comes to recruiting qualified employees and allowing other students to advance their careers. He said not only does WGU offer a quality, online education at an affordable price, but its competency-based model gives employers confidence that a WGU graduate has the skills they have listed on their resume. As someone who is always on the lookout for candidates that have high-end networking skills and understand complex routing and switching mechanisms, he appreciates the fact that WGU wants

to know what his needs are so that they can provide him with appropriate candidates.

"I am constantly looking for tech talent and we wanted to find a way to ensure that the people coming out of college were qualified to work here and have the skills we are looking for," he said. "This partnership will not only benefit the cooperative internally, but those members across the service area who are looking to complete their education in a cost-effective way."

In addition to WGU's model that allows students to pay by the semester while learning at their own pace, NineStar and the university are doing all they can to help students connect to their online classroom with two broadband packages designed specifically for WGU students.

The first is a student "Broadband Promotion Package" for \$89.50 (a \$119.50 value.) This broadband only package offers students 500/500 connectivity in an affordable way so that they can concentrate on their homework in the privacy of their own home. In addition to managed wi-fi, the student package also includes a NineStar router (a \$12 value), which gives students access to the co-ops local support system 24/7. The second package option is a 500/500 connected smart phone for learning on the go.

"Non-traditional students need non-traditional support as well as a fast, reliable connection," said NineStar Connect director of customer service and billing Darrin Couch. "No matter what kind of issue a student may have with their connection, the NineStar team is ready to help troubleshoot the problem and get them back online."

NineStar Connect president and CEO Michael Burrow said the co-op is excited about its partnership with WGU, which has become a leading influence in the development of workforce-based approaches to education and has been recognized by the White House, state and local leaders as a model that works in post-secondary education.

"For many years, NineStar has been committed to the concept of lifelong learning and we feel that WGU provides non-traditional ways for people who might be busy with work and family commitments to pursue much needed educational opportunities," he said.

"We do not take for granted that we have an employer satisfaction rate of 90 percent," she said. "We provide a rigorous curriculum that is workforce relevant thanks in part to the partnerships we have developed with entities such as NineStar. It's a win-win for everyone."

## NINESTAR HOSTS ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

On August 13th, NineStar hosted a roundtable discussion with Senator Todd Young & Congressman Greg Pence. Their visit centered around discussions on broadband deployment into rural areas and infrastructure. We were honored they took the time to discuss such important issues that affect all NineStar members.







# LEMON AID:

AN OLD, CLUNKY HEAT PUMP CAN HELP INSPIRE YOU TO UPGRADE TO NEW TECH AND SAVE!

Some of the coolest new tech for your home will chill you out in the summer and keep you toasty in the winter – while reducing your carbon footprint and lowering your energy costs.

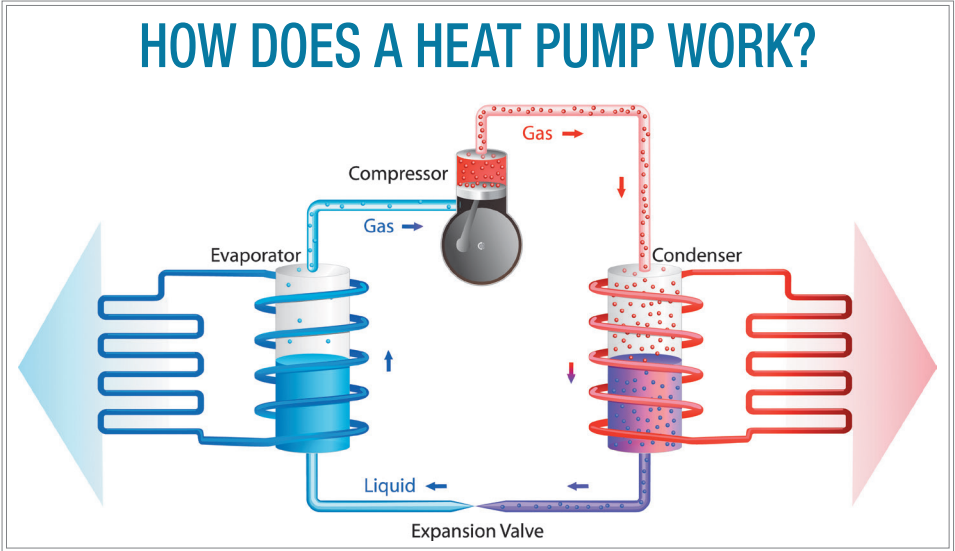
If your home is cooled by an air source heat pump, the system also heats your home in the winter. And if your heat pump is more than 10 years old, it may be time to upgrade to a new system. Fortunately, air source heat pump technology also has improved significantly over the last decade. A new cold climate air source heat pump will not only provide energy efficient cooling, but it will minimize your energy bills even in winter’s brutal cold.

Electric heat pumps have been around for a long time, and they’re among the most efficient ways to cool your home. Air source heat pumps essentially pull heat from the air — in the summer the system pulls the warm air from your home and pumps it outside; in the winter, it pulls the heat from the air outside and pumps that heat into your home. While they are a terrific energy

efficient option in the summer, typical heat pumps can lose their efficiency when the temperature drops near 20 degrees Fahrenheit. Fortunately, advances in compressor technology allow new cold climate heat pumps to gather heat at much lower winter temperatures. When it’s 47 degrees or above outside, cold climate heat pumps operate at nearly 400% efficiency (meaning they produce nearly four times the energy they consume). And even when the temperature outside drops to zero,

a cold climate heat pump will still operate at about 200% efficiency. That means your system will use a lot less energy – and minimize the use of a backup heat source, saving you money.

NineStar even offers Power Moves® rebates for qualifying upgrades to a cold climate air source heat pump! For more information, contact NineStar’s Energy Advisor Matt Strahl or visit [www.PowerMoves.com](http://www.PowerMoves.com).



# PURDUE AND NINESTAR ANNOUNCE IOT SMART FARM

Purdue Polytechnic Anderson, and NineStar Connect recently entered into a partnership to foster agriculture community engagement and education. The project will consist of utilizing NineStar’s farm field on SR9 north of Greenfield, Indiana by setting up new innovative farming technologies that will serve as a lab for local students and area farmers.

“NineStar is thrilled to be working with Purdue University on this community engagement project. Our cooperative is committed to supporting the community and our members through innovative projects. We believe initiatives like this make the communities we serve places that thrive” said Michael Burrow, President and CEO of NineStar Connect.

“This partnership has a great potential to encourage students to apply their knowledge to bring creative and innovative solutions to practical problems. The students will test devices that we use in the lab and my hope is that program will make them think about the applications of sensing and digital technology in the agriculture sector,” said Dr. Rashmi Deodeshmukh, assistant professor of practice at Purdue Polytechnic.





# KEEPING YOUR COOL

## when energy demand heats up, it can lead to serious savings and other benefits

During the severely sweltering summer, planning ahead to save energy can keep you cool while helping the environment — and even get you some green back!

People know the basic rules of supply and demand — when demand goes up, the price typically goes up. The same goes for electricity: when businesses are operating and everyone is running their A/C on a hot summer afternoon, wholesale electricity prices can soar. You may not see these price differences on your home's energy bill because your electric co-op may average these costs into one amount per kilowatt-hour (kWh). Yet eventually, high demand days can lead to higher average costs for everyone.

NineStar Connect is part of a complex system that must be prepared to meet the highest power

demands put on the energy grid. This is similar to the way a big box store parking lot may seem larger than needed. When you pass by on most days, most of the spots are empty. Yet on the day after Thanksgiving, customarily the year's busiest shopping day, the parking lot may be crammed with cars. NineStar Connect has to build or buy enough capacity to fulfill everyone's needs on that hottest day (or coldest night) of the year.

### Response to Demand Can Save

Many co-ops offer advice and programs to limit the peak demand during those days of extreme temperatures and energy use. Options for homeowners can include load management programs for different devices, such as air conditioners and water heaters, to shift energy use to times when electricity is in less demand. By doing this, the distribution co-op and its generation

and transmission cooperative can avoid building new power plants to meet increasing demand (this construction would lead to higher costs for NineStar Connect and its members) or having to purchase energy on the market.

You can contact NineStar's Energy Advisor Matt Strahl for information on resources available to help you lower your home's energy use. NineStar even offers programs (and rebates!) for you to help keep a lid on long-term energy costs. Everyone has a role in reducing long-term energy costs for the local electric cooperative — which, in turn, also minimizes the costs you will have to pay in the future. Call NineStar for details, and you can visit [PowerMoves.com](http://PowerMoves.com) for more energy-saving tips and advice.

## POWER COST ADJUSTMENT

Wabash Valley Power Alliance (WVPA) is the generation and transmission entity who NineStar purchases wholesale power from for our members. They are responsible for supplying power and meeting the needs for NineStar and twenty-two other co-ops throughout Indiana, Illinois and Missouri. In order to meet the needs of these co-ops WVPA contracts with Duke Energy of Indiana. Annually, Duke Energy of Indiana completes an audit and does a true-up of costs associated with the power requirements. As a result of the audit for 2020, energy supplied to Wabash Valley

from Duke Energy resulted in a \$15 million dollar deficit. Consequently, Wabash Valley Power Alliance has raised its wholesale power costs to NineStar and the other twenty-two co-ops to recover the shortfall during the calendar year of 2021.

We emphasize that this is a pass-through cost from our power supplier and NineStar does not benefit in any way. We are breaking it out on your bill represented on the Power Cost Adjustment (PCA) line charge. It's a volumetric charge based on the total kWh you used per

month. This is an additional charge of 0.004423 per kWh. To the average user of 1300kWh per month it will amount to an additional charge of \$5.75.

Wabash Valley Power Alliance has advised NineStar that this Power Cost Adjustment will be in effect until the end of 2021. We will share any additional information with our members as it becomes available from Wabash Valley Power Alliance.





INDIANAPOLIS STAR NAMES NINESTAR CONNECT  
A WINNER OF THE CENTRAL INDIANA TOP  
WORKPLACES 2021 AWARD

NineStar Connect has been awarded a Top Workplaces 2021 honor by Indianapolis Star Top Workplaces. The list is based solely on employee feedback gathered through a third-party survey administered by employee engagement technology partner Energage LLC. The anonymous survey uniquely measures 15 culture drivers that are critical to the success of any organization: including alignment, execution, and connection, just to name a few.



“During this very challenging time, Top Workplaces has proven to be a beacon of light for organizations, as well as a sign of resiliency and strong business performance,” said Eric Rubino, Energage CEO. “When you give your employees a voice, you come together to navigate challenges and shape your path forward. Top Workplaces draw on real-time insights into what works best for their organization, so they can make informed decisions that have a positive impact on their people and their business.”

ABOUT ENERGAGE

Making the world a better place to work together.™

Energage is a purpose-driven company that helps organizations turn employee feedback into useful business intelligence and credible employer recognition through Top Workplaces. Built on 14 years of culture research and the results from 23 million employees surveyed across more than 70,000 organizations, Energage delivers the most accurate competitive benchmark available. With access to a unique combination of patented analytic tools and expert guidance, Energage customers lead the competition with an engaged workforce and an opportunity to gain recognition for their people-first approach to culture. For more information or to nominate your organization, visit [energage.com](http://energage.com) or [topworkplaces.com](http://topworkplaces.com).



EMPLOYEE PROFILE  
BY DOMINIQUE EGBERT  
HIGHLIGHTING  
JEREMY PIKE

**JEREMY PIKE** joined the NineStar team in January of 2018. His first position held was Operations Assistant in the Electric Operations Division, and he was promoted to Purchasing Coordinator in October of 2018, the position he holds today.

Jeremy is responsible for the purchasing of inventory for the Electric Operations Division. His day to day consists of tracking existing inventory, swapping out used material and ordering new material based on workload, price changes and industry trends that change daily. Jeremy also coordinates the disposal of scrap material (i.e., transformers/wire) to minimize the amount of waste/loss as much as possible. In addition, he assists with answering dispatch during the day and after-hours during outages.

I asked Jeremy about major accomplishments. He said “Sometimes I am very proud that Alisha Love, NineStar’s Staff Accountant, and I work hard every year to keep our inventory adjustments below 2%. For instance, the last two years we have accomplished a .016% and 0.10% adjustment, respectively.”

Jeremy’s favorite part of his job is going out to visit new service areas and line rebuilds where the Lineman are constructing all their job assemblies with the material he has ordered. Jeremy said, “Watching it all come to fruition is quite impressive”. I asked Jeremy how his job has changed since the pandemic? Jeremy’s response.

“The COVID-19 pandemic along with a few natural disasters has triggered a parts shortage. The pandemic forced many manufactures to reconfigure plants to accommodate social distancing which slowed production, packing and shipping and delayed deliveries. Deliveries for seasonal work projects are arriving less consistently and back-ordered items are increasing. Commodity prices have also increased, with the cost of steel, copper, and petroleum-based products, including plastic and composites are up at least 6% to 8% since the pandemic began. Unfortunately, this problem could continue well into next year.”

I asked Tommy Nance, Director of Electrical Operations about Jeremy’s work ethic. Tommy replied.

“Jeremy’s work ethic and passion make him a model employee. NineStar and its members are very fortunate to have him working here. Jeremy always does what’s right not just what’s easy.”

As a current employee at NineStar, I can see Jeremy runs a tight ship and takes pride in his work and we are lucky to have him. In Jeremy’s spare time he enjoys going to sporting events and the majority of his post-5pm time is spent with his 7-year-old son Jase and his wife Christa.

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

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Congratulations to our latest monthly winners:

May	Daniel & Angela Kennedy, Wilkinson, IN
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July	Michael and Rose Bolinder, Fortville, IN

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



# President's Message

## A Frank Conversation about Electric Rates and Fairness

A lifetime ago, a mentor of mine told me if I really wanted to understand the basis for a dispute, “pay attention to whose ox is getting gored.” I took that to heart and over the years, have used it to settle many business and personal differences.

In the art of ratemaking for electricity, the same can also be true and that’s why NineStar’s board of directors is always seeking to make our rates fair for all our members. One fairness issue that has existed for decades is the problem of fairness within a rate class – particularly our residential rate class. The vast majority of NineStar’s ratepayers are residential (around 92%). Yet within that residential rate class, we recognize there are disparities caused by the variable cost of energy that is fundamentally unfair to some of our ratepayers.

We have not made it a secret with our members that NineStar pays more for power during peak usage – namely 4-8 pm, Monday through Friday than all other times of the day. Up until recently, technology only allowed us to measure total kilowatt hours consumed by each member each month, and so any residential rate we created effectively blended the lower cost of off-peak with the much higher cost of on-peak. This means that members are essentially overcharged for power consumed 20 hours of the day to make up for the substantial undercharge for power consumed during peak hours.

This blended rate would be fair IF all members consumed power identically. But they do not.

For example, today we can have two members (Smith and Jones) who both consume the average residential usage of 1300 kWh per month that receive identical bills. However, consider if 30% of Smith’s total monthly kilowatt usage is during peak where Jones only has 20% of his total usage during peak. Is it fair that Smith and Jones pay the same monthly electric bill? Probably not.

Smith is actually costing the cooperative 21% more than Jones to provide that identical 1300 kWh monthly service because Smith is consuming more of his power during the high-cost peak. Indeed, by charging both members a blended 24-hour rate, NineStar is effectively charging Jones more to help pay for the greater cost of Smith. Put another way, Jones is being forced to subsidize Smith.

Personally, I worry that this issue will get worse in future years when Smith purchases an electric vehicle, comes home from work at 5:00 pm and then plugs in his car to recharge during peak. The more power consumed during peak, the more everyone pays under a blended rate regimen even if some don’t consume any energy during peak.

For nearly two years, the NineStar board of directors, along with our rate consultants, has been studying this issue and wrestling with this fundamental fairness issue, asking whether the cooperative is sending the right price signals to its members by utilizing a blended 24-hour residential rate. Put another way, what incentive does Smith have to shift some of his dishwashing, clothes drying and car charging off peak to save the cooperative (and Jones) money if he doesn’t save any money himself?

Today, meter technology has advanced such that we can measure usage during these peak times. Later this fall, NineStar’s board of directors will be voting to migrate away from our blended 24-hour residential rates to meet its cost-of-service requirements and instead moving to a lower off-peak rate and a higher on-peak rate for all residential ratepayers. Because these off-peak, on-peak rate separations will be small (two or three cents per kWh), most of our residential members will see little impact to their current overall monthly rate – after all, the current blended 24-hour rate is an average. However, some members will see a decrease because they are consuming less energy during peak than the average residential ratepayer and conversely some members will see an increase because they are consuming more energy during that 4-8 pm peak than the average residential ratepayer.

All members will be getting more detailed information on this new electric rate in the upcoming weeks and we encourage you to read the information and reach out to us with any questions you might have. **The most important takeaway you should know is this: You have an opportunity to consume the same amount of power but actually reduce your electric bill if you can shift some**



MICHAEL R. BURROW

of your electric usage away from 4-8 pm, Monday through Friday.

In the past, when a residential ratepayer called in asking how he might be able to reduce his monthly power bill, we only had one answer – use less electricity. Unfortunately, for most members, this really isn’t an option. We are excited that later this year, we will have the opportunity to work with many of our residential members and help them shift some electric usage off peak and in turn, save money on their monthly power bill.

It is very important to note at this juncture there isn’t a ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ way of making electric rates. Rates are designed to simply cover the cost of providing the utility service. The reason to change our residential rates isn’t to make more profit for NineStar. Co-op utilities like NineStar are non-profit which means that any profit it makes above the cost of providing service is allocated and returned proportionately to the ratepaying members who generated the income. Instead, NineStar’s effort is designed to make our residential rates fairer to all electric members of the coop by sending the right price signals and allowing them to make their own decision when to consume power and possibly save money on their monthly electric bills. To conclude, additional information will be discussed about rates in our next Power Hour Meeting that will be held in October.



# SAVE THE DATE

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### JOIN US FOR A VIRTUAL TOWN HALL MEETING!

Learn about NineStar's **EXTENDING OUR REACH** Capital Campaign



- You are already a NineStar Co-op member and owner. Now you have the opportunity to become an **IMPACT INVESTOR**.
- Our goal is to purchase a new bucket-truck and we want to pay you the interest.
- This is an opportunity to grow our cooperative economy and serve you and your fellow members.
- Help us better serve our 17,000 members and invest in **YOUR** co-op.

**Wednesday, September 8, 2021 | 6pm**

**TUNE IN VIRTUALLY AT:**  
vimeo.com/ninestar

For more program information visit [ninestarconnect.com/extending-our-reach/](http://ninestarconnect.com/extending-our-reach/)



## MEMBER-OWNED RENEWABLE ENERGY EQUIPMENT

Have you thought about installing solar panels or other renewable energy equipment on your property? Has a salesman come knocking on your door offering to make you a great deal on renewable energy equipment? Do you have questions about how the metering or the billing works if you install renewable energy equipment? NineStar is here to help you. We have Engineering and Billing staff that can help answer these and other questions you may have.

If you install solar panels on your property and connect them to your home's electrical wiring system you become a Distributed Generation (DG) site. This simply means you are generating electricity near where it will be used. This is exactly what happens when you install solar panels on your property.

NineStar does not sell, install, or recommend installers for renewable energy equipment. However, as your member-owned cooperative we are here to offer information that can help you make informed decisions about this type of financial investment. There are also requirements you or your contractor must follow to allow the safe interconnection of your DG site to the electric grid. The process includes completing an installation application and agreements that must be signed to allow you to get paid for excess generation you deliver back to the energy grid.

If you are considering a project please contact NineStar's Energy Advisor, Matt Strahl, by calling 317-326-3131 or send an email to [mstrahl@ninestarconnect.com](mailto:mstrahl@ninestarconnect.com) to make sure you have the information you need to move forward.

## Join the NineStar VIRTUAL Power Hour!

**LEARN ABOUT "REAL TIME PRICING"**



**Wednesday, October 13, 2021 | 6pm**

**TUNE IN VIRTUALLY AT:**  
vimeo.com/ninestar

### MEETING TOPICS

- Time of Use Change to Peak Time Savings
- Review of changes effective November 2021



# OPERATION ROUND-UP



Each quarter a group of Trustees (NineStar customers who volunteer their time to serve on the ORU committee) meet and decide how the extra change that is rounded up from customer’s bills are dispersed from the applications that are received. Here are the organizations that benefited from the ORU fund this past May:

ACADEMY PLACE APARTMENTS	\$3,500.00
BEAUTIFY KNIGHTSTOWN	\$1,000.00
BOSMA VISIONARY OPPORTUNITIES	\$4,500.00
FORTVILLE-VERNON TOWNSHIP PUBLIC LIBRARY	\$5,000.00
FUSE, INC	\$3,500.00
HOPE CENTER INDY, DAVID NOLEN FOOD PANTRY	\$3,500.00
NEW LIFE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP	\$3,500.00
NEW PALESTINE BIBLE CHURCH, TRAIL LIFE	\$3,000.00
PURDUE EXTENSION, HANCOCK COUNTY	\$1,000.00
TALITHA KOUM WOMEN’S RECOVERY HOUSE	\$4,500.00

The purpose of the Operation Round Up program is to accumulate and distribute funds for charitable purposes to groups/organizations within the NineStar service territory. The source of these funds is the membership of NineStar Connect service customers who voluntarily “round up” their bill to the next highest dollar. The money is accumulated by the co-op and transferred to the NineStar Community Trust.

For ones that want to send in an application for Operation Round-up dollars, the next application deadline is October 8, 2021. Applications can be downloaded from our website at [www.ninestarconnect.com](http://www.ninestarconnect.com) from the “In the Community” tab.

If you have any questions about the ORU program, please email [OperationRoundUp@NineStarConnect.com](mailto:OperationRoundUp@NineStarConnect.com) or call 317-323-3087.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF MAY ORU RECIPIENTS!



FORTVILLE-VERNON TOWNSHIP PUBLIC LIBRARY



BEAUTIFY KNIGHTSTOWN



FUSE, INC



PURDUE EXTENSION, HANCOCK COUNTY

## WATER TOWER FACELIFT!

If you have driven by the area lately, you might have noticed that the Gem Water Tower has recently had a facelift with new paint and our NineStar logo. This task is no easy feat as it includes a bucket of paint, some rollers and some very brave men as they are lifted up several yards in the air to get the job done. And now, in all its glory, it stands tall and bright surrounded by the foliage of the area. Lookin’ good!







# NEW DEVICES ALLOW HOMEOWNERS TO BETTER CONTROL THEIR ENERGY USE

by Kevin Carpenter  
Energy Advisor, Tipmont REMC

**W**i-Fi enabled devices allow users to stream movies or ask a virtual assistant such as Amazon’s Alexa about the weather. Some homeowners also use Wi-Fi gadgets to better control energy use in their homes.

As technology has improved, more devices that increase homeowners’ comfort have become available. Some new thermostats can be controlled by a smartphone, and a few even use machine learning to better control heating and cooling systems. For those willing to go to the next level, real-time energy monitors will display your home’s energy use and may even show when specific appliances cycle on and off!

## WI-FI THERMOSTATS

Wi-Fi thermostats are a proven technology. Unlike programmable thermostats that came before them, it is much easier to set up a schedule for Wi-Fi thermostats or adjust them on the fly. Some models utilize machine learning to figure out how deep of a setback your home can handle to maximize energy savings, even for heat pumps.

Traditionally, the recommendation for heat pump thermostat settings is to “set it and forget it.” Setting and forgetting is a tried and true method to minimize expensive auxiliary heat. Newer Wi-Fi thermostats can take advantage of setbacks by learning when the heat pump needs to turn on to

reach the desired temperature, while preventing the auxiliary heat from turning on.

## HOME ENERGY MONITORS

These devices come in two different types. One kind, such as SiteSage, monitors each circuit of your home’s circuit breaker box to tell you how much electricity is used at each circuit. They do not show more detailed energy use; if multiple appliances or devices are powered on the same circuit, the monitor will not be able to tell how much electricity each appliance is using.

That’s where the other type of energy monitor, such as the Sense, can come in! It uses electrical harmonics and machine learning to detect appliance patterns to “learn” what devices are using electricity in your home. They have been on the market long enough that they can identify many frequently used appliances fairly quickly. Home energy monitors can inform you about the majority of your home’s energy use and what devices potentially cause energy waste. In fact, some energy advisors have even used these to get greater insight on a home’s energy consumption!

These new devices can allow you to minimize your home’s energy waste and save money. For more information about how your home’s energy use can be improved, contact NineStar’s Energy Advisor, Matt Strahl.

# 2020 CAPITAL CREDIT ALLOCATION

You are looking at your electric bill, and wondering what does my 2020 capital credit allocation mean! Did you know you were a member of a cooperative, and one of the principals of a cooperative is that they annually allocate their margins back to their members? The dollar amount labeled as “COOP” is your share of the 2020 margins of the NineStar Electric Division. The dollar amount listed as “G&T” is your share of the margins allocated to us by our power provider, who themselves are a cooperative and allocate their margins to NineStar as a member, just like we do to our own members. Lastly, your unretired allocation (Capital Credit Account) balance is displayed, representing the difference between what has been allocated to you, less what has been returned. Over time, the unretired balance will be returned to our members as finances allow.



NINESTAR DAY AT THE HANCOCK COUNTY 4-H FAIR!

THANK YOU

to everyone who visited us on Tuesday, July 22nd  
for NineStar Day at the Hancock County Fair.



2021 4-H Queen Contest

Congratulations

4-H Fair Queen & Court

- QUEEN**  
Addison Hill
- PRINCESS**  
Abby Elsbury
- COURT**  
Abbey Hughes  
Erica Long  
Claire Bishop
- MISS CONGENIALITY**  
Heather Schafer



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