

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2022



# NineStar CONNECTION

VOLUME 11  
ISSUE 3

## FORMER DIRECTOR INDUCTED INTO HALL OF FAME

Former NineStar Director,  
Ronnie Mohr was recently  
inducted into the 2022  
Greenfield-Central Hall of Fame.

## AFTER SCHOOL SAVINGS

Helpful tips for teens to lower  
afternoon and evening energy  
use.

PRESORTED  
STANDARD  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
GREENFIELD, IN  
PERMIT NO. 220

SEE PAGE 4

# CHARGED UP

## WHAT MEMBERS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE ENERGY MARKET

### NINESTAR BLOG:

10G HOME  
NETWORKING:  
IS IT REALLY  
NEEDED IN TODAY'S  
WORLD?

PAGES 6

HANCOCK COUNTY  
4-H FAIR QUEEN  
AND ELECTRIC  
PROJECT  
WINNERS

PAGE 11





Hancock County  
Community Night -

Eric Truitt and Dusty  
Mayhugh making an  
appearance at this year's  
Community Night at the  
4-H Fairgrounds.



OUR EMPLOYEES MAKE THE  
DIFFERENCE. HERE'S A  
CUSTOMER REVIEW FOR  
BRETT FYFE.

"WE COULDN'T BE HAPPIER  
WITH THE VIDEO EXIT PROCESS  
AND HOW NICE, POLITE AND  
PROFESSIONAL BRETT WAS."

THE YORK FAMILY



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

PAGES 4

What members need to know about the energy  
market.

FORMER DIRECTOR INDUCTED INTO  
HALL OF FAME

PAGE 9

Former NineStar Director, Ronnie Mohr, was  
recently inducted into the 2022 Greenfield-  
Central Hall of Fame.

OPERATION ROUND-UP

PAGE 10

Here are the organizations that benefited from  
the ORU fund this past May.

HANCOCK COUNTY 4-H FAIR QUEEN AND  
ELECTRIC PROJECT WINNERS

PAGE 11

Congratulations to all participants in this year's  
4-H Electric projects as well as the 4-H Fair  
Queen and her Court.

PRESIDENT'S  
MESSAGE

A Summertime  
Reflection on  
the Reliability of  
Electricity

READ MORE ON  
PAGE 8

# NOTICE

Nobody has the authority  
to remove NineStar's  
electric meters other than  
NineStar personnel.

As soon as the meter reports  
it's "off" we will be dispatching  
a truck to that location to  
check out. If your electrician  
tells you they can pull the  
meter, please let them know  
they need to contact NineStar  
to schedule a time for us to  
pull the meter. We do not  
charge for this during normal  
business hours (Monday -  
Friday 8am to 4pm). Possible  
charges might incur if a meter  
is pulled by the homeowner or  
an electrician.



**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.

**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.

**ADDRESS:**  
NineStar North Campus  
2331 E. CR 600N  
Greenfield, IN 46140

NineStar South Campus  
2243 E. Main St.  
Greenfield, IN 46140

**PHONE:**  
317-326-3131  
765-533-4303

**EMAIL:**  
[dspencer@](mailto:dspencer@ninestarconnect.com)  
[ninestarconnect.com](http://ninestarconnect.com)  
[www.ninestarconnect.com](http://www.ninestarconnect.com)

**NineStar Connection**

**EDITOR**

David Spencer

**BOARD OF  
DIRECTORS**

Director District 1  
Charles Kennedy

Director District 2  
Mark Evans

Director District 3  
Robin Ritchie

Director District 4  
Scott Pittman

Director District 5  
Steve Vail

Director District 6  
Joseph Paxton

Director District 7  
Jack Negley

Director District 8  
Raymond Kerkhof

Director District 9  
Phil Hayes

Director District 10  
Thomas Ording

**AT LARGE**

James Cherry  
Susan Bodkin  
Timothy Bryant

# NINESTAR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DISTRICT 1



CHARLES KENNEDY

DISTRICT 2



MARK EVANS

DISTRICT 3



ROBIN RITCHIE

DISTRICT 4



SCOTT PITTMAN

DISTRICT 5



STEPHEN VAIL

DISTRICT 6



JOSEPH PAXTON

DISTRICT 7



JACK NEGLEY

DISTRICT 8



RAYMOND KERKHOF

DISTRICT 9



PHILIP M. HAYES

DISTRICT 10



THOMAS ORDING

AT LARGE



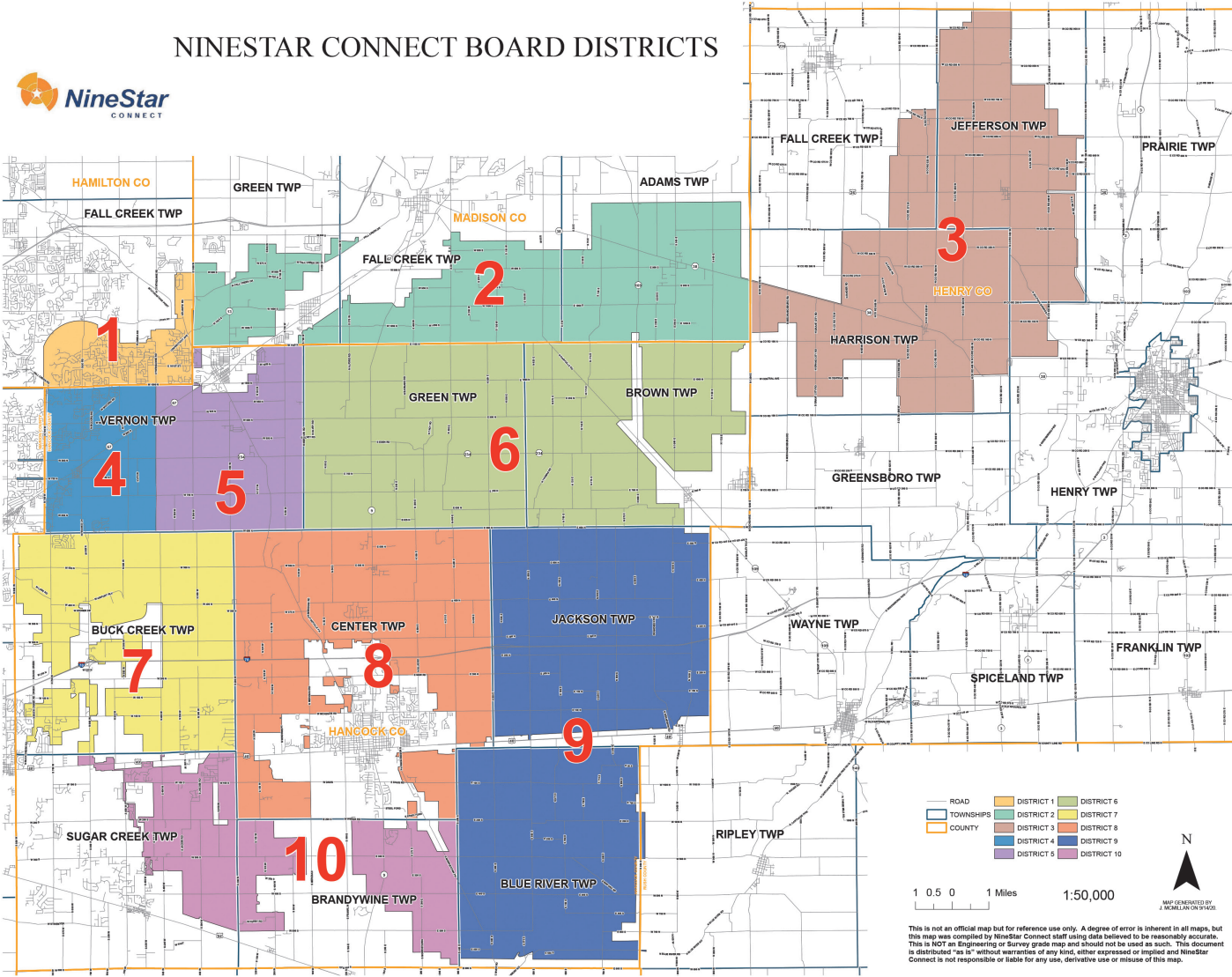
JAMES E. CHERRY



SUSAN BODKIN



TIMOTHY BRYANT





# CHARGED UP

## WHAT MEMBERS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE ENERGY MARKET

By Julie Young

Consumers already facing record inflation, product shortages, and shrinking savings accounts may not be surprised to learn that their energy rates are also expected to increase over the next few months, but it's hardly welcome news. Although there tends to be an uptick in electricity costs as people use more power to cool their homes, NineStar members may want to brace themselves for what's to come and, more importantly, why.

### A POWER PLAY

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, there are several factors that influence the price of electricity. These include the types of fuels used to generate power, the power plant costs, transmission and distribution systems, weather conditions, and government regulations.

NineStar Connect obtains its power from the Wabash Valley Power Alliance (WVPA), a not-for-profit wholesale provider of electricity to more than 325,000 homes, schools, farms, and businesses. The WVPA is comprised of 23 locally owned distribution cooperatives (like NineStar) and has a board that has worked hard to create a diverse power supply portfolio to provide their distributors with the most cost-competitive and consistent energy resources on the market.

"The WVPA has a diverse portfolio of resources, but it doesn't shelter us from market volatility completely," said WVPA CEO Jeff Conrad.

Although electricity always tends to cost more in the summer, because people rely on their air conditioning to keep their homes comfortable when it's hot outside, center to the recent spike in costs is the law of supply and demand. Phil Hayes, NineStar director and chairman of the WVPA board says the majority of WVPA's portfolio is in coal, a resource that is in heavy demand – but in short supply because the industry has not ramped up production to meet the current market needs.

"Coal is one of our long-term contracts, which means it is not as expensive as it could be, but if it isn't available, then we have to reach out to our other suppliers or the open market, which causes costs to rise," he said. "To give you an idea of how rapidly coal has risen...in April 2021, coal was selling for \$34.40 per ton. In April 2022, it

is \$109.55 per ton which is a 300 percent difference, and it's even higher today. We are trying to work out the best solutions for the co-ops, but it's difficult."

Other suppliers in the WVPA portfolio include nuclear energy, renewables, and natural gas, but most of those industries are facing their own set of troubles, making delivery less than ideal. Hayes said the cost of natural gas (which makes up 12 percent of the portfolio) has skyrocketed and although nuclear power is relatively stable, the WVPA has only a five percent investment in the resource. The co-op does have a 17 percent investment in renewable energy sources (such as solar and wind,) but tariffs and supply chain issues have caused problems in those sectors as well.

"Wabash is trying to provide its member co-ops with the lowest prices of electricity that it can," Hayes said. "The market goes up and down all the time, but what we are seeing right now is truly unprecedented and its causing problems across the board."

### TIME IS MONEY

Although WVPA has negotiated competitive rates with its contracted suppliers, the US electric grid is built in anticipation of peak load times, or the time of the day when the most people will need the most power. For NineStar members, peak load times occur between 4-8 p.m., when most households are preparing dinner, doing laundry, using their personal devices and small appliances, and running their air conditioners in the summer. Purchasing power from the WVPA accounts for 70 percent of the co-op's operating costs, which is passed along to members (along with applicable rates and taxes necessary to comply with the law.)

"What might cost \$80 per megawatt hour (MWH) ordinarily, might cost the WVPA \$72 if we have a long-term contract," Hayes said. "But if that producer is not available or if they are having transportation/supply chain issues, then things get complicated."

According to NineStar CFO Scott Hiatt, the WVPA charges NineStar by the kilowatt hour (KWH) based on those peak load times and because 95 percent of NineStar's membership is residential as opposed to commercial, there is no way to balance the load and costs. NineStar has created a rate structure to encourage members to use the other 20 hours of the day when electricity is less expensive, but it is very difficult to get

people to buy into it.

"If the entire membership opted to shift usage to off peak times, it might help the co-op secure a better price, but people don't want to be inconvenienced," he said. "We've tried to incentivize customers to use those off-peak hours or to enroll in a cycle off program, but not enough people are interested in it to make a big difference."

***"NineStar has created a rate structure to encourage members to use the other 20 hours of the day when electricity is less expensive, but it is very difficult to get people to buy into it."***





# AFTER SCHOOL SAVINGS

## TIPS FOR TEENS TO LOWER AFTERNOON AND EVENING ENERGY USE

**B**uses steadily starting and stopping along subdivision streets signal the start of the season's school day schedules.

As teens settle back into the school year, they're also getting used to their afterschool routines: fall sports, homework or part-time jobs. Regardless of when teenagers arrive home, there are steps they can take to minimize their electricity use.

### OPEN CURTAINS FOR NATURAL LIGHT.

As teens get ready to do homework, they may instinctively turn on all the lights in the house. Yet energy can be saved by leaving lights off and opening blinds and curtains instead. The sun can often provide enough needed light naturally, saving electricity. This should only be done when it's cool; if it is still hot outside and the air conditioner is turned on, then curtains should remain closed to keep the outside heat from coming in. (More heat coming in means more work for the AC!)

### TURN ON FANS INSTEAD OF CRANKING UP THE AIR CONDITIONER.

It may be instinct to just let the thermostat control the climate in the house. However, if the afternoon is cool enough, teens can turn off the air conditioner and open windows and let fans circulate air. A breeze flowing through the

house can make it comfortable without the AC.

### TURN GAMING SYSTEMS AND COMPUTERS OFF AND USE POWER SAVE MODES.

Some people habitually leave devices on all day, even when not in use. Yet the standby modes for computers and gaming systems can use a surprising amount of electricity. Teens can save energy (and money) by turning off these devices. If they must be on, selecting a power save mode can minimize their energy use.

### RECHARGE DEVICES OVERNIGHT SO THEY ARE READY TO GO THE NEXT DAY.

Mobile phones, iPads and other devices with rechargeable batteries can be charged overnight so they are ready the next morning on a full charge. This is the most efficient use of the energy grid: electricity demand on the grid peaks in the afternoon and evening, and if you have time of use rates, every little watt used off-peak can help.

By taking simple steps, teens can benefit the environment and even save money by lowering their energy use. Contact NineStar's Energy Advisor, Matt Strahl, for advice on steps you can take to improve your home's energy efficiency.



NINESTAR BLOG

[www.ninestarconnect.com/blog/](http://www.ninestarconnect.com/blog/)

By Jonathan Gingry

# 10G HOME NETWORKING: IS IT REALLY NEEDED IN TODAY’S WORLD?

In today’s high-speed Internet world, is 10G home networking really necessary? Most people wouldn’t think so, but if the old saying is true – that past is prologue – it’s all but certain that home Internet users will have an increased “need for speed” for years to come!

Two decades ago, home Internet usage was still just taking off. The idea of a fiber optic connection to the home was a far-off, futuristic concept and those who had Internet capability were primarily using a dial-up connection. Though DSL, which at 5Mbps was considerably faster than dial-up’s 56Kbps began to take over, both operate at a snail’s pace compared to today’s standards which, depending on location, can range from 10Mbps to over 1Gbps in speed for an Internet connection.

Not only has the advent of Netflix, Hulu, Disney + and other video/music streaming services driven up the need for increased home speeds, but the number of colleges and universities that offer online classes have had an impact on speeds as well.

With connection speeds increasing, it is only natural that the average homeowner wants the fastest connection possible and today, you can get a pretty good router that will handle 1Gbps for about \$150-\$200 or you can rent one from NineStar and it’s Managed WiFi for \$12 a month. This may seem like a tremendous connection now, but 10 years from now, chances are connections will be closer to 10Gbps per household.

So what does this have to do with 10G home networking speeds? It’s simple. If necessity is the mother of invention, it only makes sense that speed drives innovation and a 10G router or switch will become commonplace in time. While a lot of people may think that a 10G router made by Cisco, Juniper or another big networking firm would be too cost prohibitive for the average user, what if I told you that there is a small overseas company creating the hardware and developing the software to make 10G home

networking more affordable and user friendly?

Mikotik has a whole line of affordable 10G routers and switches that come in desktop form as well as rack mount options as well. Their CRS305-1G-4S+IN switch/router runs their SWOS software or OS and allows different functions for the device thanks to the 4 SFP+ ports for inexpensive, pluggable 10G SFP+ optics, such as the 10G SFP + copper optic. While \$60 per optic may seem like a lot of money, compared to their \$2,000-\$3,000 hard-to-use counterpart – this is a steal. The software is pretty straight forward as well. You connect your router to your ISP and to your home network or computer, go to the new

management IP address, run a few commands from the interface, and you will be up and running in a matter of minutes. The total cost is about \$150, which is comparable to a good home router.

It’s hard to believe that when home Internet usage first began taking off that we would be talking about connection speeds in the multiple gigabytes per second, let alone 10Gbps for a home network, but as demand increases for faster connections, the network needs to be upgraded as well. Making the “switch” shouldn’t be complicated or cost prohibitive and thanks to Mikotik, it doesn’t have to be.



OUT  
AND  
ABOUT



NineStar’s Energy Advisor Matt Strahl, Director of Customer Service & Billing Darrin Couch, and Board Director Phil Hayes attended Electrify Indiana hosted by WVPA and Hoosier Energy.



April Fisher, NineStar VP of Legal & Analytics, participated on a panel discussing Innovation & Entrepreneurship at the Mt Comfort Development Summit held at the Indianapolis Regional Airport on Thursday. Over 100 people attended the summit that reviewed the progress of development along the Mt Comfort Corridor. NineStar was a proud local co-sponsor of the summit along with Hancock Health and the Hancock County Community Foundation



Team NineStar collected some hardware at this year’s Morristown Derby Days finishing 2nd and 3rd. Congrats to Ian and Shanna for their awesome performances!



# DISCOVERING BENEFICIAL ELECTRIFICATION BENEFITS

## GREENER ENVIRONMENT AND GREENER WALLET!

**Brian Hawk,**  
Energy Advisor - Noble REMC

As gas prices soared over the last several months, more drivers considered the appeal of electric vehicles. Those thoughts likely grew stronger when drivers stared at the gas pump's ever increasing price display while they filled the tank.

Transitioning from a gas-powered vehicle to an electric vehicle can help drivers save on long-term energy costs. Switching to a more energy efficient model can also reduce dependence on fossil fuel. It's an example of beneficial electrification. The nonprofit Beneficial Electrification League defines "beneficial electrification" as applying electricity to uses that achieve one of the following conditions while not harming another:

- Saving consumers money
- Benefiting the environment while reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- Improving people's quality of life
- Fostering a more resilient energy grid



It is not an "electrify everything" approach. Beneficial electrification has become possible in recent years as more renewable energy resources such as wind and solar energy have been added to the grid while more fossil fuel sources, such as coal plants, are scheduled to be retired in the coming years.

There are several reasons families and businesses would consider beneficial electrification improvements:

### It can help people achieve their sustainability goals.

Families and businesses that switch to more efficient electric appliances and HVAC systems will reduce their carbon footprint. Many businesses now incorporate sustainability goals into their corporate strategy. Lowering their dependence on fossil fuels by reducing their energy use can help them reach those goals.

Energy efficient upgrades can lower long-term energy costs.

Energy Star-certified appliances use less energy and last longer than other products on the market, which lowers overall operation costs. Some electric co-ops may offer rebates for qualifying energy efficient upgrades, making them even more economical. In some cases, newer technology such as LED lighting can have additional benefits, including a longer lifecycle compared to older kinds of lighting.

### Reduce dependency on volatile energy resources.

Coal, natural gas and oil have seen drastic price fluctuations in the last few years given supply chain issues and global demand. Electricity is generated from a variety of resources, including wind, the sun, nuclear power and even landfill gas. By upgrading appliances and HVAC systems to efficient electric alternatives, you will be able to utilize the diverse resources generating electricity.

Families and businesses that take advantage of beneficial electrification can reduce their carbon footprint and lower their long-term energy use. Contact NineStar's Energy Advisor, Matt Strahl, for details on options you should consider.



## WHEN FAST JUST ISN'T ENOUGH.

50	150	500	1GIG
50/50Mb	150/150Mb	500/500Mb	1Gig/1Gig
Upload & Download Speeds	Upload & Download Speeds	Upload & Download Speeds	Upload & Download Speeds
Great for Social Surfing and Streaming	Perfect for Streaming and Gaming	Ideal for Working from Home and Smart Homes	Work, Stream, Game and be on all Devices at the Same Time
\$62.50	\$89.50	\$119.50	\$149.50*
			<small>*Includes Managed WiFi</small>

**BETTER BANDWIDTH** **BETTER PRICING**



To learn more, visit [ninstarconnect.com](https://ninstarconnect.com) or call 317.326.3131



# President's Message

## A Summertime Reflection on the Reliability of Electricity

By Michael R. Burrow, President & CEO

I grew up on Hancock County REMC (now NineStar Connect) electric lines never dreaming I would someday be president of the cooperative. I was reminiscing the other day about how member expectations have changed over the years. Back when I was in elementary school, it wasn't all that unusual for our power to be interrupted. Mom kept several flashlights and kerosene oil lamps on the ready when the lights would go out. It was, as my parents would often say, "part of living in the country." They were still a part of an American generation who could remember what country living was like before the arrival of electric lines. It gave them a perspective that my generation and those who followed simply don't have.

Today, I'm still living on cooperative electric lines but (knock wood) my power is seldom out. I no longer subscribe to the belief that outages are just a part of living in the country since most NineStar members no longer live in the country, but instead reside in one of the many suburban subdivisions that are becoming ever more prevalent in our serving territory. Even those members like me who live 'in the country' on farms and private residences outside of these subdivisions depend more on electric power today than they might have two or three generations ago given the technological advancements in home electrical and communications systems. Unlike those earlier coop members of my parent's generation, members like me today have become far more dependent on electricity and expect their power to be available at all times which, in turn, causes NineStar to utilize outage data to make our electric distribution system even more resilient and reliable for the future.

No discussion of improving the reliability of a local electric distribution system can start without mentioning vegetation management. Over the last 20 years, NineStar Connect has spent millions of dollars to remove trees and other plant life away from our lines and other critical infrastructure as a form of insurance to prevent outages. This sustained effort has paid real dividends as we are seeing far fewer outages caused by fallen trees or other forms of vegetation than we witnessed 20-30 years ago.

NineStar line crews rebuild 20+ miles of electric line on our distribution system every year – not necessarily because it is failing but because of its age, it is susceptible to failing and causing unnecessary outages for our members. With these annual line rebuilds, we are replacing 1950's and 1960's era copper wire with modern steel and aluminum distribution wire that is capable of carrying much heavier electrical loads. Part of

our calculus of improved reliability not only focuses on reducing the number and time of outages, but also making sure the infrastructure is in place so that our members' growing load requirements are met in the future as well.

Local and national data shows that wild animals frequently cause electrical outages when they come into contact with lines and transformers. Animal contact with electrical infrastructure can also create environmental dangers beyond the frustration of a power outage. According to the "Wildlife Society Bulletin," 44 wildfires across the western United States from 2014 to 2018 were caused by bird electrocutions on power lines and transformers. One fire in Idaho in 2015 burned 10,000 acres and required over 165 firefighters to extinguish.

Animal-caused outages is why over the last decade you have seen our linemen installing pole wraps and other devices like bushing and arrestor covers that reduce contact with our lines and transformers and have notably decreased the overall number of outages caused by animals. We still respond to animal-caused outages but after power has been restored and before our linemen leave, they will install these various mitigation devices to avoid a repeat outage caused by the inevitable next squirrel or raccoon.

No discussion of electrical outages would be complete without bringing up the most common human-caused outage. In 2021 alone, NineStar had to replace 41 utility poles that had been struck by motor vehicles. Often, these vehicles are driven too fast or carelessly in poor weather conditions, lose control and hit our poles causing outages to a significant number of our members. Unfortunately, there isn't much NineStar can do to mitigate vehicles hitting our utility poles other than emphasizing to both experienced and new drivers to be careful when driving the rural roadways within our serving area.

I'm often asked 'why NineStar installs its utility poles so close to the road?' It's a valid question. NineStar, like any other electric utility, places its infrastructure in the public right-of-way. We always install our poles at the back of the right-of-way but in many rural settings, the right-of-way is notoriously narrow. As you drive around, take note how far utility poles are placed from the pavement on Indiana state roadways verses county roadways. That's because state right-of-way is much wider than most county rights-of-way. If



you notice a utility pole that has been placed close to the pavement, it has almost certainly been put there not because the electric utility wants it there, but because the public right-of-way is very narrow in that location.

Of course, one of the biggest efforts NineStar is making to increase system reliability is investment and deployment of fiber optic connected smart switches. These devices are quickly transforming our electric distribution system into a 'smart grid' in every sense of the word. Assume during a storm, a tree branch breaks off and lands on overhead electric wires, tripping several breakers along a circuit. With smart switches deployed, they can automatically close open breakers in a matter of a few seconds and isolate an outage to a smaller section of the line. That reduces the overall outage time, as well as the number of impacted members and provides a lineman with fewer miles of overhead line to patrol to find the root cause of the outage. As more of these smart switches are deployed deeper into our distribution system, the fewer members will experience outages during storms or other unforeseen incidents that interrupt the operation of our local electrical grid.

From NineStar's perspective, the cost of mitigation is far less than the cost of an outage. That's why you have seen steady year-over-year investments in reliability as we continue to pre-empt some of the most common causes of power outages.

I always welcome comments and questions from members. Feel free to reach out to me.



# FORMER DIRECTOR INDUCTED INTO THE GREENFIELD- CENTRAL HALL OF FAME

Former NineStar Director, Ronnie Mohr was recently inducted into the 2022 Greenfield-Central Hall of Fame. The G-C Alumni Hall of Fame seeks to Honor and celebrate the successful lives and impactful contributions of Greenfield-Central graduates (including Eden, Greenfield, Hancock Central and Maxwell High Schools). Other inductees include Dean Dobbins, Brent Eaton, and Marciann Miller. All inductees will be recognized at the Red Letter Gala on September 24th.



RONNIE MOHR



In almost every suburban neighborhood one can find one of those green boxes that are usually situated near the street between every other house. While they may seem like a well-positioned gathering place for kids, just the right height for sitting, they are no bench for the school bus stop. Nor are they a desk for last minute homework, a base for a game of kickball in the street, or a launching pad for acrobats tumbling in the grass. These pad-mount transformers are part of the electrical system for the buried power lines bringing electricity to each home. “The pad-mount transformers are the same as the transformers you see on utility poles. The only difference is they’re mounted on the ground because the wires are underground,” said Jon Elkins, vice president of safety, training and compliance at Indiana Electric Cooperatives. “They’re designed to be safer, with a locked metal case around the transformer and conduit around the wires, but they’re still electrical transformers. Just inside each box is 7,200 volts of electricity.” While ground transformers may have that outer casing around them, they lack the innate security of distance pole-top transformers and overhead power lines have. Their safety can be compromised by carelessness or by accident. “When they’re hit by vehicles or dug under, then they’ve been altered, which could present a potentially unsafe situation,” said Elkins. Some general safety tips IEC wants consumers to remember:

- Do not let children play on or near pad-mounted transformers.
- Never stick anything through cracks into the transformer box.

# GROUND-MOUNTED UTILITY BOXES ARE NOT JUNGLE GYMS

PERSUADE KIDS AND OTHERS TO STAY AWAY FROM  
TRANSFORMERS FOR BURIED POWER LINES

- If you see a transformer that is unlocked or in need of repair, contact the electric utility immediately. Contact information should be on the transformer box itself.
- Always call 811 if you plan to dig around a transformer or anywhere in your yard to have all buried utilities marked.
- Keep shrubs and structures at least 10-12 feet from the “door” of the pad-mounted transformer and at least three-five feet from the sides to allow utility workers required access.

Consumers should always use caution and keep a safe distance from ground transformers — which is why they are plainly marked with warnings. “Kids may not understand why they shouldn’t be on or near them. We hope parents will show them the warning stickers and tell them about the dangers of electricity,” Elkins said. “The electrical equipment inside is designed to be safe, and people don’t have to be scared of it,” he added. “But it’s better to avoid the boxes altogether.”

Indiana Electric Cooperatives, located in Indianapolis, represents 38 electric distribution cooperatives that serve 1.3 million Hoosiers in 89 of the state’s 92 counties. The cooperatives are collectively the second largest electricity provider in Indiana. For more information about the association, visit [IndianaEC.org](http://IndianaEC.org).

Mandy Barth, Vice President of Communication  
317.487.2221 or [mbarth@indianaec.org](mailto:mbarth@indianaec.org)

# PAPERLESS BILLING

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

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

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

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

Congratulations to our latest monthly winners:

May	Teresa Smith - Greenfield, IN
June	Mike & Darlene Wireman - Shirley, IN
July	Richard and Katelyn Hooker - Fishers, IN
August	Ron and Janet Johnson - Greenfield, 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!



# 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:



CHANGING FOOTPRINTS



GREENFIELD-CENTRAL FAMILY, CAREER & COMMUNITY



IWIN FOUNDATION



VERNON TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT

**CHANGING FOOTPRINTS**  
\$2500.00  
Funding to improve electrical outlets and lighting in newly acquired building

**GIRLS ON THE RUN OF CENTRAL INDIANA**  
\$2500.00  
Funding to support 44 scholarships for girls to participate in the program

**GREENFIELD-CENTRAL FAMILY, CAREER & COMMUNITY**  
\$5000.00  
Funding for 18 students to attend the National Leadership Conference

**HANCOCK COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COURT**  
\$3200.00  
Funding to help send the judge and two staff members of Mental Health Court to the NADCD convention

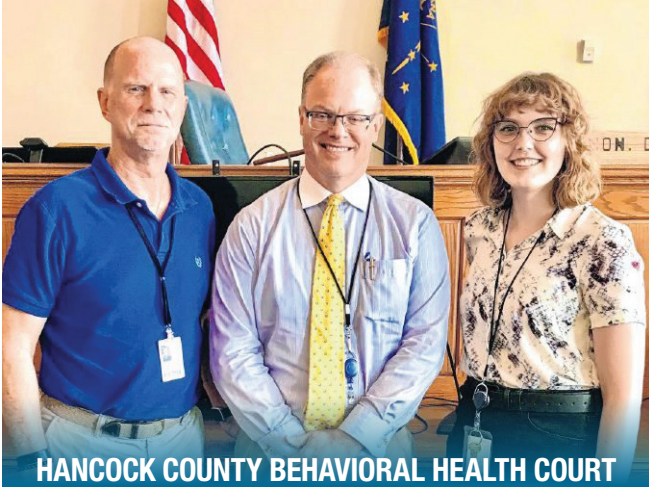
**IWIN FOUNDATION**  
\$10,000.00  
Funding to help support services to women undergoing breast cancer treatment

**PENDLETON AMERICAN LEGION POST 117**  
\$2500.00  
Funding to help replace the air conditioning in their building

**VERNON TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT**  
\$4212.00  
Funding to help purchase PAK TRACKERS, safety tools



GIRLS ON THE RUN OF CENTRAL INDIANA



HANCOCK COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COURT



PENDLETON AMERICAN LEGION POST 117

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 7, 2022. Applications can be downloaded from our website at [www.ninestarconnect.com](http://www.ninestarconnect.com) under "About" and then "In the Community".

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!**



# HANCOCK COUNTY 4-H ELECTRIC PROJECTS WINNERS!

Judging for this year's Hancock County 4-H Electric Projects took place on June 14th, 2022. This year 30 projects were judged in 5 Levels. Volunteer judges from Carrol White REMC, Hendricks Power Cooperative, Parke County REMC, and Decatur County REMC were on hand to provide their expertise in judging the project's this year. Throughout the state of Indiana, the 4-H Electric Program is supported by many electric cooperative employees as well as the Indiana Statewide Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives. The countless hours of support from these groups continues to make the 4-H Electric Program a success. Through this program experts can share their knowledge of electricity and electric safety with hundreds of participants in the 4-H Youth Program. NineStar Connect is a proud supporter of the 4-H Youth Program and provides leadership for the 4-H Electric Projects in Hancock County.



**Elizabeth Dodd** won overall Grand Champion on her electrical wiring model.  
**Carter Crouch** won overall Reserve Grand Champion on his lamp.  
Their projects will be entered at the State Fair!

**OTHER WINNERS BY LEVEL WERE:**

**LEVEL 1**  
**Sawyer Shanks**, Champion;  
**Gavin Nelson**, Reserve Champion

**LEVEL 2**  
**Jazmin Cuautle**, Champion;  
**Nicholas Royster**, Reserve Champion

**LEVEL 3**  
**Autumn Linn**, Champion;  
**Jackson Martinez**, Reserve Champion

**LEVEL 4**  
**Ezekiel Fish**, Champion;  
**Ava Armstrong**, Reserve Champion

**LEVEL 5**  
**Elizabeth Dodd**, Champion;  
Reserve Champion, **Carter Crouch**

NineStar Connect provided a special award to 4-H Farm Model Project participants for adding utility distribution equipment in their models such as power poles, wires, and transformers. This year's winners were Braxton Green in Level 1, Kamryn Whisman in Level 2. The winners were awarded a NineStar Connect toy bucket truck to congratulate them on their efforts.

# CONGRATULATIONS 2022 4-H FAIR QUEEN & COURT

**QUEEN**  
Claire Bishop

**PRINCESS**  
Claire Jaques

**COURT**  
Carlyn Blue  
Morgan Stone  
Alaina Nugent

**MISS  
CONGENIALITY**  
Hannah Williams

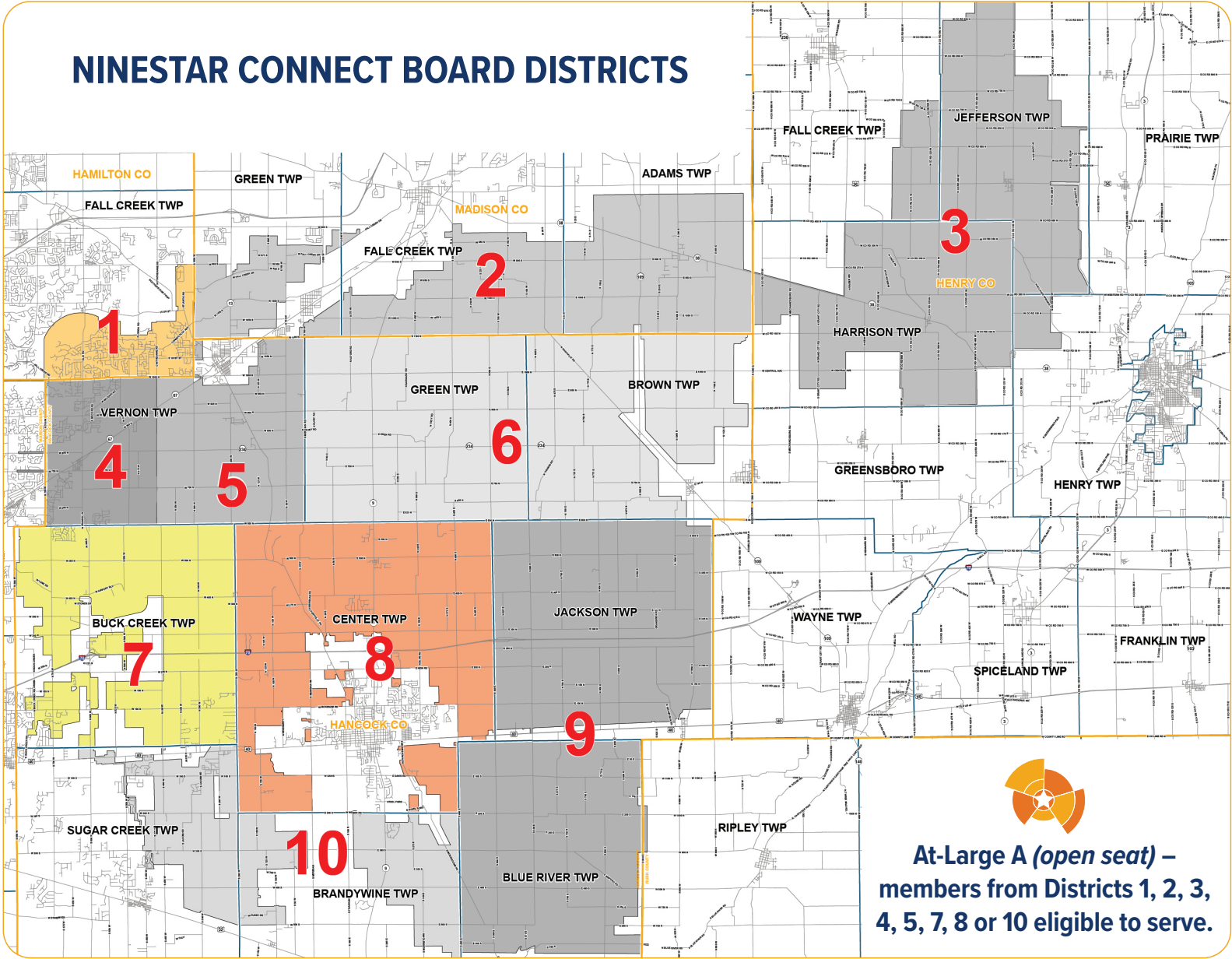


CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THIS YEAR'S PARTICIPANTS!



# NOTICE TO MEMBERSHIP OF UPCOMING ELECTION OF DIRECTORS

The 2023 NineStar Connect Annual Meeting will be held on March 24, 2023.  
The following director districts are up for election: 1, 7, 8, At-Large A.



Any member in good standing residing in districts 1, 7, or 8 is eligible to serve for a director position in these districts. Any member residing in districts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, or 10 is eligible for consideration to serve as the At-Large A director. The At-Large A directorship is an open seat because the incumbent director has announced his retirement and does not intend to serve another term.

Any member interested in being considered for director must first attend one of the mandatory information meetings to be held on October 13th, 25th or 26th at 6:00 pm. To RSVP for one of the meetings, please send an email to [candidateinfo@ninstarconnect.com](mailto:candidateinfo@ninstarconnect.com).

[ninstarconnect.com](http://ninstarconnect.com). Meeting attendees will receive the nomination application form at the information meetings.

Nomination applications may be personally delivered to any NineStar Connect business office that is open to the public.

**Deadline** for submission in order to be considered for nomination by the Nominating Committee is **Monday, October 31st at 12 o'clock noon**.

Members who have attended the mandatory information meeting and completed the nomination application by the deadline will be eligible to be interviewed by the Nominating Committee on November 8th or 10th.