

**NineStar Connect developing building in McCordsville's new downtown  
Other users anticipated to join utility co-op in McCord Square facility**



McCORDSVILLE – NineStar Connect is developing a building that will house offices for the nonprofit utility cooperative and make space available for other uses in the new downtown district underway in McCordsville.

The project bolsters NineStar Connect's presence in one of its fastest growing service areas, continues its commitment to a locale it has served since its beginnings, and NineStar will not depend upon rate increases to fund the project.

The building is coming to McCord Square, an expansive town center planned at the southeast corner of Broadway and Mt. Comfort Road in McCordsville. At three stories spanning a total of about 34,600 square feet, the building will stand at the southeast corner of Mt. Comfort Road and Second Street, anchoring the south end of the entrance to McCord Square's gateway.

NineStar Connect will primarily occupy the building's first floor, with remaining public and commercial space completing the first level as well as much of the second and third floors. The co-op has a community center at its headquarters in Greenfield, and looks forward to offering something similar at its new McCordsville location. A large stair-step community and gathering space will stretch from the first floor to the second, with a small catering kitchen also available. Plenty of glass will span across the north face of the community space, allowing in natural light and providing a view of what will be Main Street running through McCord Square.

NineStar Connect's presence in the building will initially consist of customer service operations and a 24/7/365 support center. About 15 to 20 NineStar Connect employees will serve customer needs from this location.

Ground-breaking is anticipated in late 2023/early 2024, with initial occupancy in the first quarter of 2025.

While NineStar Connect has an office in McCordsville, it is much smaller and the new building will allow the co-op to better meet the needs of members in the quickly expanding area. By some estimates, the greater McCordsville/Fortville area could have a total population of nearly 100,000 people by 2050. NineStar is focused on being able to serve those future members of the cooperative by creating a facility that has sufficient room to allow it to grow its presence in the community as the community grows.

“The growing McCordsville and Fortville communities provide an excellent opportunity for NineStar Connect to expand our exposure and presence to NineStar members in this area,” said Steve Vail, a member of NineStar Connect’s Board of Directors. “The board of directors are excited about supporting McCordsville and its development of a new downtown McCord Square. This building allows us to do that while also better serving our members and customers in that rapidly growing area of our service territory.”

Fellow director and board chairman Ray Kerkhof agreed.

“McCordsville is going through a rapid transformation with its expanding growth and new town square,” Kerkhof said. “The Board has elected to pursue the McCordsville project to meet that growth and the needs of our current and future members in the McCordsville/Fortville/Fishers area. It is our hope that the project will serve our members and the entire community for many decades into the future.”

Tim Gropp, McCordsville Town Manager, as well as Larry Longman, Vice President of Town Council and liaison to the Redevelopment Commission, welcome the project.

“McCord Square is the result of over a decade of planning and represents the future of McCordsville,” Longman said. “Having NineStar invest as an anchor at the entrance of this new downtown reinforces the Town’s vision and sets a high standard for future development to follow. NineStar has been and will continue to be a wonderful community partner and we look forward to growing the community together.”

Central Indiana Communications, Inc. (“CICI”) is a for-profit subsidiary NineStar Connect established decades ago to make investments that support the co-op and its members without impacting rates for the utility’s services. For example, CICI has brought cable and satellite television to unincorporated areas of NineStar’s service territory and paid for prior building expansions to avoid impacting current ratepayers who would otherwise have to bear those expenses. CICI will buy the land and fund the construction of the building. Because NineStar believes in growing the tax-base of the community, it does not intend to seek tax abatements for the project.

For Andy Hine, the project represents a return to his roots. The 1983 Mt. Vernon High School graduate is an architect with arcDESIGN working with NineStar Connect on the development.

“This project means a lot to our company and to me personally -- to complete a highly relevant, ground-up building in my home county,” Hine said. “They are ensuring that this building will be a permanent fixture in McCordsville new downtown and a part of our community for the long term.”

He added NineStar Connect’s building will be a great addition to McCord Square.

“NineStar is making a commitment to long-lasting construction and materials,” he said. “This building will be an asset that serves the members of the co-op and the community for many years to come.”

Garmong Construction is the lead contractor and project manager for the building.

The plans hark back to NineStar Connect’s beginnings, when in 1895 McCordsville resident Loren Helms strung a wire across a fence from his sister’s house to their mother’s house and installed the first telephones in town. Other neighbors soon joined the line, and the McCordsville Telephone Company was born. That company went on to be part of what became NineStar Connect in 2011.

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