



## OPERATION ROUND UP®

Each quarter a group of Trustees meet and decide how the extra change that is rounded up from customer's bills are dispersed from the applications that are received.

Read more on page 6

## OUT & ABOUT!

A showcase of places we've been in the community.

Read more on page 9.



## NineStar's

# VISIONARY VAIL

## BOARD MEMBER STEPS DOWN AFTER 25 YEARS



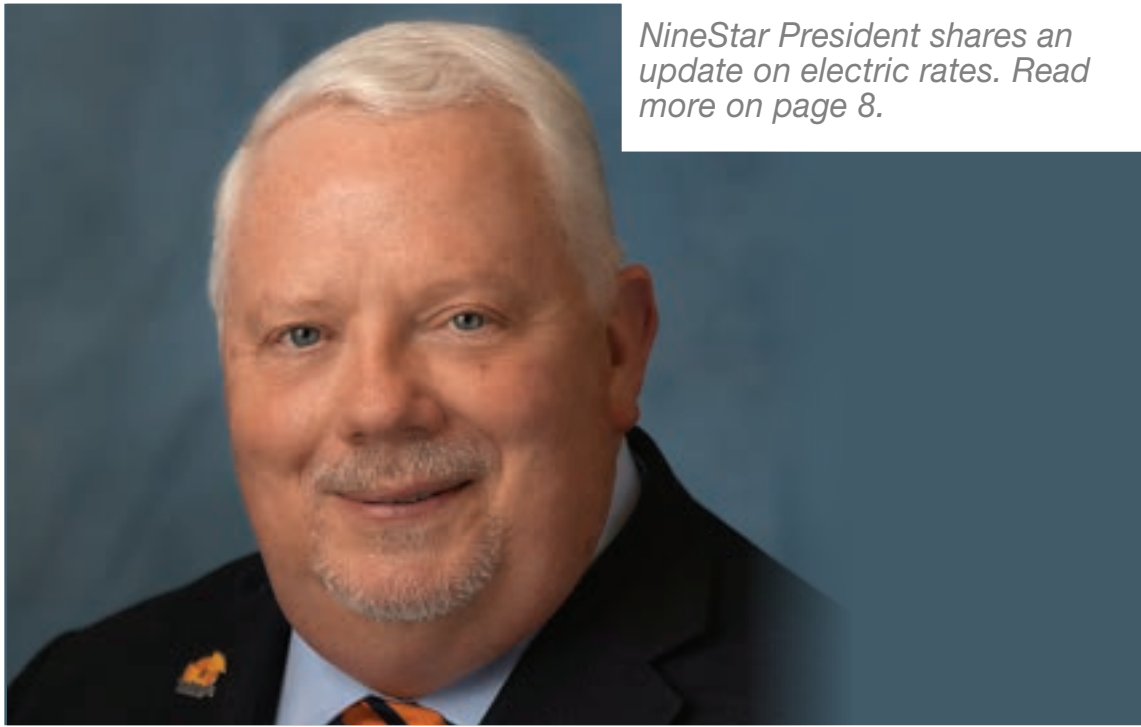
SEE PAGE 4

NEW PAPERLESS  
BILLING PROGRAM  
PAGE 11

SUMMER CONCERT  
SERIES ANNOUNCED  
PAGE 12



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



NineStar President shares an update on electric rates. Read more on page 8.



OUR EMPLOYEES MAKE THE DIFFERENCE. HERE'S A CUSTOMER REVIEW FOR BRYAN GIDDINGS.

"BRYAN AND HIS TEAM DID AN AMAZING JOB HOOKING UP POWER TO OUR NEW BARN. WE WERE VERY HAPPY WITH THE SERVICE WE RECEIVED."

CUSTOMER FONTAINE

<b>COVER STORY</b>	<b>PAGE 4</b>	<b>4H FAIR QUEEN CANDIDATES &amp; PICK-IT BRACKET CHALLENGE WINNERS</b>	<b>PAGE 7</b>
Visionary Vail: Board Member Steps Down after 25 Years			
<b>OPERATION ROUND UP</b>	<b>PAGE 6</b>	<b>OUT &amp; ABOUT!</b>	<b>PAGE 9</b>
Each quarter a group of Trustees meet and decide how the extra change that is rounded up from customer's bills are dispersed from the applications that are received.		A showcase of places we've been in the community.	
		<b>2024 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS</b>	<b>PAGE 10</b>
		<b>NEW PAPERLESS BILLING PROGRAM</b>	<b>PAGE 11</b>

## the COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES

- 1
**VOLUNTARY & OPEN MEMBERSHIP**
- 2
**DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL**
- 3
**MEMBERS' ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION**
- 4
**AUTONOMY & INDEPENDENCE**
- 5
**EDUCATION, TRAINING, & INFORMATION**
- 6
**COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES**
- 7
**CONCERN for COMMUNITY**



Customer service is at the tips of your fingers. NineStar Connect's tech support call center is open around the clock. **317-326-help**  
[ninstarconnect.com](http://ninstarconnect.com)

STORY IDEA?

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



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 12 No. 4

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@  
ninstarconnect.com  
[www.ninstarconnect.com](http://www.ninstarconnect.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  
Jan Cochard

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**

Richard Griffin  
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



JAN COCHARD

DISTRICT 6



JOSEPH PAXTON

DISTRICT 7



JACK NEGLEY

DISTRICT 8



RAYMOND KERKHOF

DISTRICT 9



PHILIP M. HAYES

DISTRICT 10



THOMAS ORDING

AT LARGE



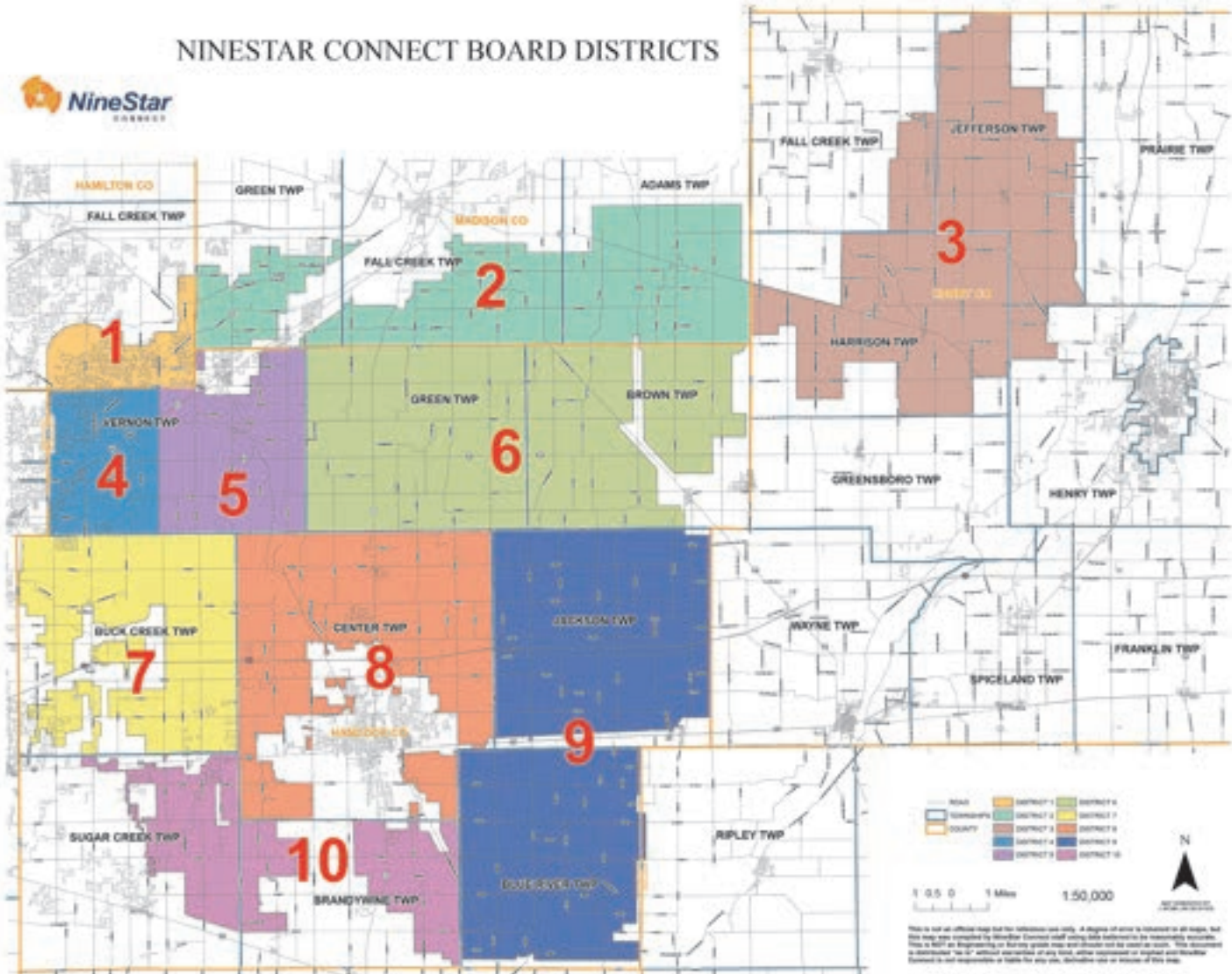
RICHARD GRIFFIN



SUSAN BODKIN



TIMOTHY BRYANT





**NineStar's**

# VISIONARY VAIL

## BOARD MEMBER STEPS DOWN AFTER 25 YEARS



For Steve Vail, it's all about the long game. "I love strategy, I love visioning, looking toward the future," he said. It's a big part of what he enjoyed about serving on the NineStar Connect Board of Directors. He had plenty of time to help see the cooperative's collective vision after serving 25 years on the NineStar board of directors. As he prepared to step down from the post in March, he was confident the co-op's future would remain bright for the next quarter century and beyond.

### CALL OF THE COOPERATIVE

In the 1990s, Vail was working for Hancock Memorial Hospital (Hancock Regional Hospital) while also working with a group of community leaders developing a program which later became Leadership Hancock County. One of his colleagues in those efforts was Tom Seng, CEO of Central Indiana Power—which merged with Hancock Telecom in 2011 to form NineStar Connect. One of CIP's longtime board members was preparing to retire, and Seng asked Vail to run. Vail thought it would be a good fit for him and that decision – joined by his employment at the hospital, previous profession with Farm Credit, and later when he served as Executive Director of Greenfield's homeless shelter, The Hope House, continued a theme that lasted throughout his life. "If you're a cooperative like Farm Credit, a nonprofit like the hospital, or a cooperative like NineStar Connect, you need to make margins to further your success of the cooperative, but it's about community," Vail said. "...I've been pulled into and had a desire to be a part of companies that are more about the community and quality of place, quality of life. It's just been a really good fit for me."

### MERGING MINDS

In 2010, boards for Central Indiana Power and Hancock Telecom started having joint meetings discussing the advantages of merging. "All of those conversations focused around how it would be better for our member-owners and how it would positively impact the community," Vail said. Central Indiana Power had a few businesses it had branched out into not directly related to electric power, but most of its efforts were focused on affordability and reliability for its members. Over time and with advances in technology and innovation, the cooperative started pursuing modernizing its electric grid with smart meters. That would benefit not only customers, but CIP by providing a greater understanding of electrical usage and intelligence for making better business decisions. Smart meters



required a communication component, however, and Hancock Telecom just happened to be pursuing an initiative of delivering fiber optic service to homes. "NineStar Connect—the success story of that and the inklings we had about why it would be good to pull those together have come true through a collection of a great group of peers that I've worked with as fellow directors over the years, but also Mike Burrow's leadership and the great staff and leadership team that he's put together at NineStar Connect," Vail said. "It's just been a great group to work with. We've worked well together over the years, and I think it's created a pretty bright future for NineStar, and for the community at large, because I think we play a significant role in the quality of life for Hancock County."

### ACCOMPLISHING A VISION

Vail was elected to his board position eight times, some of which drew challengers while others he was uncontested. His tenure provided ample opportunities to practice his love of strategic thinking, something he also got to do at the hospital and for a consulting firm he started that worked with various nonprofit groups. "That's one part I'm truly going to miss is being part of that planning for the future and how do we set up a framework to be successful," he said. Looking back on his time on the board, he feels like that framework has been accomplished, and continues to be. "The importance of having a group of likeminded, visionary people sitting in a room visioning that future strategically—I think it's one of the things that differentiates NineStar from other utility groups because we're very attentive to that process," Vail said. "And it's not a process that's once a year, it's continuous. Every board meeting we're talking strategically and making adjustments to that plan, and just being very forward thinking, very progressive." One example of that progressive thinking was NineStar Connect's decision to enter into the water and wastewater realm, Vail continued. Hancock County had great electric infrastructure at the time,

and NineStar was building its broadband network with fiber to the home, but it was not drawing the kind of quality development the cooperative thought could be supported in the county to make it better. The gap seemed to be primarily water, but also wastewater. "We thought who better else to fill that than a local, member-owned company rather than an outside group coming in and being that provider for those utility services," Vail said. "We knew Hancock County was going to grow, and we felt a responsibility for NineStar to be that organization to do it in the right way."

Vail also praised the consistency NineStar Connect has maintained over the years, as well as leaning into the strengths of the cooperative business model.

"We think the synergy between all of those four utility services serves our members very, very well," he said. NineStar's adoption of technology has also been a strength. "We're always looking for those things that are going to aid us in what we're trying to do," Vail said.

Additionally, serving on NineStar Connect's board was a conduit for Vail to serve on boards at state and national levels, like the six years he was a board member for the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation.

### A NEW CHAPTER

Vail's reason for stepping down could be answered with one word and a big smile. "Grandkids," he said. Vail has three children—two in California and one in Colorado—and five grandchildren. He and his wife, Shelley, want to be part of their lives more as they grow up, and want to be free to travel.

"Everything I do, I'm always all in, and I felt like that was going to be a challenge to be all in with my grandkids, but then also be all in for NineStar Connect," Vail said. "...There's a lot of great people out in the community. I just occupy a seat. It was not my seat—it's the community's seat, it's our members' seat—and there's so many bright, qualified people out there that can bring a new perspective."

His advice to his successors is to be informed, educated and engaged. "Be the best that you can be as the person sitting in that seat representing cooperative members throughout NineStar," he said.

It was an emotional week, he said on the last day of his term, which was also the day after his final board meeting and the day of his final NineStar Connect Annual Meeting as a board member.

"What's been important to me over that time has been the relationships that I've had with my fellow board members and staff," he said. "That's the difficult part of stepping off this—those relationships now change a little bit."

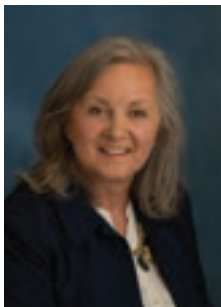
Even though he is leaving, he is confident knowing NineStar Connect is winning the long game. "That future is very bright," he said.



# ANNUAL MEETING

Thank you to all of our members who took the time to vote and/or attend our annual meeting.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR ELECTED DIRECTORS!



District 3  
Robin  
Ritchie



District 4  
Scott  
Pittman



District 5  
Jan  
Cochard



At Large B  
Timothy  
Bryant

## ANNUAL MEETING PRIZE WINNERS:

### \$100 Winners:

- \$100 – Jerry Allison
- \$100 – Brandon Jacobsen
- \$100 – Robert Boyd
- \$100- James Massey
- \$100 – Warren Twerberg
- \$100 – William Buckler
- \$100 – Stephanie Fields
- \$100 – Gary Andry
- \$100 – Lanita Hill
- \$100- Scott McCarty

### \$300 Winners:

- \$300 – Jay Vandeleest
- \$300 – Bobby Goff
- \$300 – David Dellacca
- \$300 – Genesis Thomas
- \$300 – Candice Davis
- \$300 – Lena Borsa
- \$300 – Pamela McClintic
- \$300 – Colin Caffrey
- \$300 – Thomas Will
- \$300 – Jack Levine

### \$500 Winners:

- \$500 – Andrew Boyle
- \$500 – Christen Bickel

### Prize Winners:

- Iphone 15 – Lou Cullom
- Dell Laptop – Gary Lykens
- SoloStove Fire Pit – Tyler Craner
- Apple Watch – Scott Walloch
- Apple AirPods Pro – Stephen Mayer

### Survey Winners:

- Erica Dobson
- Ciara Komlanc
- Brett Gutwein
- Matthew Robinson
- Richard Smith
- Michael Pope
- Mervin Jones
- Julia Welpott
- James J Banta
- Johnna Vickers
- Kerry Barnard
- Gail Rogers
- Shawn Williams
- Roger McGinnis
- Darlene Killingbeck

# CUSTOMER APPRECIATION WEEK AT VICTORY FIELD

Calling all NineStar members and customers!!! Our 2024 Customer Appreciation Week will be held at Victory Field. You and your family will have the opportunity to reserve up to four tickets to a game of your choice during the week of June 18th.

**WHAT:** CUSTOMER APPRECIATION WEEK

**WHEN:** JUNE 18TH – 23RD

**WHERE:** INDIANAPOLIS INDIAN'S GAME AT VICTORY FIELD

All members and customers will receive a mailer with unique voucher codes. Instructions on how to redeem your tickets is located on the mailer.

You will get your choice of the following games where the Indian's will take on the Iowa Cubs:



**TUESDAY, JUNE 18TH @ 7:05 PM – DOLLAR MENU NIGHT**

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 19TH @ 7:05 PM – HALF-OFF NIGHT**

**THURSDAY, JUNE 20TH @ 7:05 PM – THIRSTY THURSDAYS**

**FRIDAY, JUNE 21ST @ 7:05 PM – FIREWORKS NIGHT**

**SATURDAY, JUNE 22ND @ 7:05 PM – NEGRO LEAGUES NIGHT**

**SUNDAY, JUNE 23RD @ 1:35 PM – KIDS EAT FREE**



# NineStar Connect 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 Operation Round Up fund the first quarter of 2024:

**CHANGING FOOTPRINTS - \$4,543.00**

Funds for marketing items and collection bins to leave at various locations.

**FORTVILLE AREA RESOURCE MISSION (FARM) - \$5,000.00**

Funds to support their evening food pantry expansion.

**HANCOCK COUNTY COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS - \$2,000.00**

A program to start a closet for clothing and personal care items for released detainees.

**JB STEPHENS ELEMENTARY, CAMP INVENTION - \$2,500.00**

Scholarships for their summer STEM camp, Camp Invention.

**MORE THAN CONQUERORS - \$5,000.00**

To help balance the cost of insurance increase due to adding swimming to their summer camp.

**MT. COMFORT ELEMENTARY, CAMP INVENTION - \$3,000.00**

Scholarships for their summer STEM camp, Camp Invention.

**NEW PALESTINE HIGH SCHOOL ROBOTICS TEAM - \$2,500.00**

Funds to help host a robotics event with electronic hardware, registration fees, and legal representation.

**WILKINSON POLICE DEPARTMENT - \$2,590.00**

Funds to help purchase 2 radar units for the new patrol vehicle.

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 July 5, 2024. 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 THE 2024 FIRST QUARTER ORU RECIPIENTS!**



## 4-H FAIR QUEEN CANDIDATES

GOOD LUCK TO THIS YEAR'S 2024 4-H FAIR QUEEN CANDIDATES!



Kalin Wallpe  
Katie Holmes  
Aerin Hubbell  
Emmy Mills  
Amelia Stone  
Hailey Condry

Alyssa Coffey  
Alyssa Cain  
Shailynn Steeno  
Hunter Southwood  
Kynsey Hasty

Sponsored by:



Pictured are the candidates at one of the Queen Workshops

## PICK-IT BRACKET CHALLENGE WINNERS

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2024 PICK-IT BRACKET CHALLENGE WINNERS:

1ST PLACE \$500 BILL CREDIT WINNER: CAROL LIVINGSTON  
2ND PLACE \$250 BILL CREDIT WINNER: JOAN MILLER  
3RD PLACE \$ 150 BILL CREDIT WINNER: CINDY SKINNER  
RANDOM PRIZE \$100 BILL CREDIT WINNER: MIKE ELSBURY  
LAST PLACE \$50 PRIZE WINNER: MELISSA HAYES

**PICK-IT**

# President's Message

By Michael R. Burrow, President & CEO

**B**efore I get into my message this month, I would like to give a shout out to Mark S., one of our members who wrote me a thoughtful note thanking me for my last newsletter article on how NineStar continually invests in upgrading its electrical distribution system to improve reliability for our members who receive electricity from our co-op. Mark, your note actually hit on one of the key differences between investor-owned utilities and non-profit cooperative utilities like NineStar. As a cooperative, NineStar, its directors and employees all follow the seven cooperative principles. One of those principles is "Member Education" which we take very seriously by investing a lot of time to engage our members and customers on the workings of their cooperative. We want to be transparent with all that we do and over the years, we have developed programs like our Power Hour, Nerd Nights, Town Halls and even this newsletter (in both print and electronic form) which are all designed to engage and educate our members in all things NineStar Connect. My message in our newsletter is just a small part of that member education effort and I'm happy that it was well-received by Mark.

A decade ago, a lot of my messaging to both NineStar employees and members focused on communications services and how investments in fiber optics was critical to the future needs of our members and the community. With the rapid changes that are now occurring in the energy sector, I find that most of my messaging lately has been on NineStar's efforts in providing reliable and affordable electricity to its members. Since I previously wrote about our efforts to increase reliability, this time I will focus on the affordability issues facing Indiana electricity providers and how NineStar has been responding.

It has not been that many years ago that Indiana was happy to report it had the 5th lowest cost of electricity in the nation. However, today Indiana has slipped to 32nd overall. Just this year, Duke Energy announced it is seeking a 16% increase in electric rates, AES (formerly Indianapolis Power & Light) wants a 14% increase and CenterPoint Energy in southern Indiana a 16.5% increase. All these investor-owned utilities are seeking these large increases on the heels of getting double digit increases in rates just two or three years ago as well.

To be fully transparent, NineStar Connect itself is implementing a 3% increase in its electric rates beginning May 1st. So, what is causing Indiana's electricity rates to increase – sometimes quite rapidly – and driving the decline in electricity affordability?

To be sure, a number of factors have converged to create a perfect storm for rapidly rising electricity rates. Supply chain disruptions caused by the Covid pandemic - now over four years ago - greatly increased the

manufacturing lead times and costs of critical components to the electrical grid including wire, poles, and transformers. And although the lead time issues have somewhat lessened in recent months, the price of these items has not. Additionally, the inflation all of us have been living through over the last two and a half years has also impacted the cost of producing electricity through higher wages as well as maintenance and fuel costs. Again, while inflation has moderated over the last few months, these input costs have remained higher and have not decreased.

Despite a pandemic, supply chain issues and recent inflation, one of the single biggest contributors to the increasing electricity rates comes from the rapid decarbonization of electric generation within Indiana. Coal has been both plentiful and cheap throughout the Midwest and in Indiana in particular. It was the single biggest contributor to the state formerly being 5th in the nation in electricity rates. Only states that had a great deal of hydroelectricity generation ranked lower than us in rates. Times have indeed changed.

Over the last decade, coal generation plants have been rapidly decommissioned with newer investments in green energy like solar and wind. Many of these coal plants are being retired before the end of their useful lives and investors in these plants like banks who loaned power companies money and power company shareholders themselves still expect to be paid a return on the investments used to buy and maintain those coal power plants. Thus, power companies are paying investors for the stranded costs of these coal plants while also making new investments in green energy. All of this puts strains on revenues which leads to higher pricing for the consumer.

Additionally, investment in new power transmission is way up as well. Often the location of wind and solar transmission is nowhere near existing transmission lines so new transmission lines must be constructed concurrent with the aforementioned supply chain and inflation issues and simultaneous to the early retirement of coal plants and investments in green energy.

It should also be noted that green energy generation like solar and wind is not as reliable as a base-load coal plant. This has forced electric companies to make additional generation investments to cover these capacity shortfalls, particularly during peak usage periods, when the sun doesn't shine, and the wind doesn't blow. As I said, it is a perfect storm to create an environment of rapidly rising electricity rates.

Of course, none of what I write should be interpreted as either NineStar itself or other cooperative utilities are "anti-green" energy. Our nation's cooperative electric utilities have often been leaders in developing and adopting green energy alternatives over the last couple of decades. Indeed, the extreme upward



Michael R. Burrow

pressure on rates has less to do with a conversion to green energy than it does the rapid conversion to green energy. As any homeowner would know, if you hire a person to paint your house sometime in the next year, it is likely to be far less expensive than if you hire a person that must paint your house tomorrow. The quicker something must be done, particularly when infrastructure is involved, the more likely it will be much more expensive.

Over the last 15 years, I am proud to say that NineStar has increased electricity rates below the rate of inflation. We have been able to accomplish this because both NineStar and Wabash Valley Power Alliance, the generation and transmission company which supplies all the power NineStar provides our members have been making incremental investments anticipating the changes we are now experiencing in the electric industry. Both Wabash and NineStar are non-profit cooperatives (NineStar is a member of Wabash) and have always operated in ways to minimize rate shocks to their members.

Lastly, the NineStar board of directors, who set the cooperative's rates for all the utility services we provide, recognizes that over 90% of our members are residential households. As such, they have historically subscribed to a rate philosophy that small incremental annual rate increases when needed are much less impactful and more easily managed by household budgets than large, double digit rate increases. Put another way, most households can manage a \$3 or \$4 per month annual increase much better than a \$30 or \$40 increase every two or three years.

I always love to hear from our members and customers. Please feel free to reach out with any comments or questions. We may want to use some of them for future newsletter articles as we further engage and educate the members of our cooperative.



# OUT & ABOUT

## ANNUAL MEETING

Ninestar employees working at this year's annual meeting.

## ELECTRIC WORKSHOP

NineStar Energy Advisor and Hancock County 4-H Electric Project Advisor, Matt Strahl, hosted two 4-H Electric workshops for 4-Hers taking on an electric project this year. Several NineStar employees volunteered their time to help with the kids and their projects.



## TECHNOLOGY SEMINAR

NineStar hosted another Technology Seminar. This seminar was based on Linux Forensics.



## ANNUAL ECLIPSE

Employees enjoyed taking a break to view this year's eclipse.



## LINEMAN APPRECIATION DAY

On April 18th we celebrated Lineman Appreciation Day! Thank you to all of the hard working men and women who often work in challenging conditions to keep the lights on.



# 2024 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

Each year, NineStar gives out scholarships to graduating high school seniors in our service territory. This year, NineStar awarded fifteen, \$2,000 scholarships.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO THIS YEAR'S WINNERS!



**MCKINLEY BOLAND**  
Hamiton Southeastern High School



**MASON CHAMBERLIN**  
Pendleton Heights High School



**LAUREN GOODMAN**  
Cathedral High School



**BROOKLYN JACOBSON**  
Mt. Vernon High School



**ALEX KIEMEYER**  
Hamilton Southeastern High School



**JALYN KOPP**  
Knightstown High School



**SAMAIRA LEE**  
Fishers High School



**ALEXIS LEISTNER**  
Hamilton Southeastern High School



**ADDISON LOCKWOOD**  
Mt. Vernon High School



**JETT MASTERS**  
Greenfield-Central High School



**CARSON MATYANOWSKI**  
Hamiton Southeastern High School



**AIDEN O'CALL**  
Guerin Catholic High School



**MAKENZIE O'NEAL**  
Eastern Hancock High School



**ISABELLE PHILLIPS**  
Pendleton Heights High School



**ANDREW THOMAS**  
Fishers High School

## SIGN UP FOR PAPERLESS BILLING TO BE ENTERED INTO MONTHLY DRAWING FOR A BILL CREDIT

Starting in May, all members who sign up for paperless billing (and members currently enrolled) will be entered into a monthly drawing for a chance to win a bill credit -- NineStar will give away nine, \$100 bill credits and one lucky winner will receive a \$200 bill credit.

Not enrolled in paperless billing yet? First, you must sign up for SmartHub so you can connect with us electronically. SmartHub is a web and mobile app that allows you to take control of all aspects of your NineStar account. It allows you to pay your bill, manage your usage, and contact NineStar with service issues quickly and easily online or on your mobile device.

Once you have SmartHub, you can enroll in paperless billing, receive email notifications when your bill is available, and access your statement from anywhere, anytime. For even more convenience, you can even download the SmartHub app!

Additionally, members who wish to take all the hassle out of bill payment can also enroll in NineStar's Auto Pay program -- also through SmartHub. Through this program, your monthly due amount can automatically be deducted from a bank account or credit card on the due date of the bill.

SmartHub has always allowed you to access your account at your convenience. And now, enrolling in paperless billing may just put extra money in your wallet.

### Sign up for SmartHub

#### WHAT DO YOU NEED TO REGISTER FOR SMARTHUB?

You will need an email address and your account number. You can find your account number on your bill.

#### HOW WILL YOU REGISTER FOR SMARTHUB?

Getting started with SmartHub is as easy as 1-2-3.

##### STEP 1: Register your account in SmartHub

Whether through our mobile app or web portal, you can register your account, for free, in SmartHub.

Visit: [ninestarconnect.smarthub.coop](http://ninestarconnect.smarthub.coop)

Or

Scan for mobile app download (utility customers only)



##### STEP 2: Activate the features you want

Now is the time to take advantage of features like alerts/ notifications, Auto Pay, and Paperless billing to have more control over your account.

##### STEP 3: Managing your account at anytime from anywhere

The more features you take advantage of, the more time and money you can save!

You can find instructions for how to register and activate features on our SmartHub support page.

### Enroll in Paperless Billing

#### ACTIVATE PAPERLESS BILLING:

Activate Paperless Billing to reduce paper waste by accessing your bill through the web portal or mobile app. You can choose to receive an email or a text when your monthly bill is ready to view in SmartHub.

The eco-friendly way to access your bill.

#### ACTIVATE ON THE WEB PORTAL:

##### STEP 1: Click on "My Profile"

##### STEP 2: Click on "Update My Paperless Settings"

##### STEP 3: Choose your paperless preference.



#### NEED ASSISTANCE?

If you have any questions or issues, you may contact us by calling our office at **317-326-3131** or emailing [info@ninestarconnect.com](mailto:info@ninestarconnect.com).

## IN MEMORY James Daniel O'Connor



GREENFIELD – James Daniel “Dan” O’Connor, age 94, of Greenfield, passed away on Monday, January 15, 2024, at Morristown Manor. He was born on June 24, 1929, in Montgomery, Indiana to John Patrick and Cora Belle (Mudd) O’Connor. He graduated from Montgomery High School in 1947. He obtained his associates from Vincennes University and attended Evansville College. He served in the U.S. Army for two years during the Korean War. Daniel married A. Louise (Colvin) on November 26, 1953, at St. Patrick’s Church in Corning, Indiana

He spent 40 years serving Rural Telephone Co-Operatives throughout the State of Indiana. Dan started as a Daviess-Martin at Rural Telephone Co-Op and then went on to Pulaski-White County Rural Telephone Co-Op (Star City, IN). He also worked for Roachdale Telephone in Roachdale, IN as a manager. He was hired as a manager of Hancock Rural Telephone Corporation, currently known as NineStar, in 1960. He worked in that position until his retirement in 1999. After his retirement, Dan & Louise traveled all over the country visiting friends and family in their recreational vehicle. They spent most winters in Sarasota, FL for many years. Dan was a member since 1960 of St. Michael Catholic Church in Greenfield. He served in many capacities at St. Michael, including being part of the finance committee that built the church building that is used today. He was on the board of directors of The ARC of Hancock County and the Visitors Bureau of Greenfield. Dan served as the president of National Telephone Cooperative Association and Indiana Telephone Association. He was the past president for 5 years of the Rotary Club of Greenfield. He was also active in the Democratic Party.

Dan is survived by his loving wife of 70 years, A. Louise O’Connor of Greenfield; children, Stephen (Susan) O’Connor of Greenfield, Julie (Stan) Crider of Greenfield, Christine (David) Brokaw of Indianapolis, and Michael (Anne) O’Connor of Indianapolis; daughter-in-law, Paula O’Connor of Cincinnati, OH; 11 grandchildren; 9 great-grandchildren; and sister-in-law, Dorothy O’Connor. He was preceded in death by his parents, John & Cora O’Connor; son, Dennis Patrick O’Connor; seven brothers, Michael, Ernest, Paul, Robert, Tom, Austin, and Charles “Wimpy”; and two sisters, Camilla and Agnes.

Visitation will be held on Friday, January 19, 2024, from 4:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. at Erlewein Mortuary & Crematory, 1484 W. US Hwy. 40, Greenfield, IN 46140. A Mass of Christian Burial will be held on Saturday, January 20, 2024, at 11:00 a.m. at St. Michael Catholic Church, 519 Jefferson Blvd., Greenfield, IN 46140 with viewing one hour prior to the service. Father Bob Robeson will be officiating. Burial will take place on Monday, January 22, 2024, at 1:00 p.m. EST. at St. Peter’s Cemetery in Montgomery, Indiana.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made by mail to The Arc of Hancock County, 141 Green Meadows Drive, Suite 3, Greenfield IN 46140 or St. Peter’s Cemetery Association, c/o Saint Peter Catholic Church, 305 North 2nd St., Montgomery, IN 47558-0010. Envelopes will be available at the mortuary and church. Friends may share a memory or condolence at [www.erleweinmortuary.com](http://www.erleweinmortuary.com).

DANIEL'S  
FAMILY VINEYARD & WINERY

# SUMMER CONCERT SERIES

NineStar is proud to once again be the presenting sponsor of the 2024 Daniel's Vineyard Summer Concert Series. This year's series will run from June-September every Friday night. Join us for 18 amazing outdoor shows. Season and individual show tickets are available by visiting [www.danielsvineyard.com](http://www.danielsvineyard.com).

Follow us on social media for weekly ticket giveaways!



PRESENTED BY

**NineStar**<sup>®</sup>  
CONNECT

**Like, Comment or Share  
For Your Chance to Win!**

#### FEATURING BANDS:

MAY 31	TOY FACTORY
JUNE 7	DUDE!
JUNE 14	BIG 80'S
JUNE 21	CLAYTON ANDERSON
JUNE 28	THE FLYING TOASTERS
JULY 5	HOMETOWN CONCERT NIGHT
JULY 12	PRINCE TRIBUTE BAND
JULY 19	JAI BAKER
JULY 26	ELTON DAN & ROCKET BAND
AUGUST 2	MIXTAPE:90'S
AUGUST 9	THE DOO!
AUGUST 16	HAUTI YACHTYS
AUGUST 23	MILO
AUGUST 30	THE BISHOPS
SEPTEMBER 6	TOY FACTORY
SEPTEMBER 13	TAYLOR SWIFT TRIBUTE: A BEJEWELED BAND
SEPTEMBER 20	HAIRBANGERS BALL
SEPTEMBER 27	MY YELLOW RICKSHAW

**FRIDAYS JUNE-SEPTEMBER  
7-10PM**

[WWW.DANIELSVINEYARD.COM](http://WWW.DANIELSVINEYARD.COM)



## DONATION REQUESTS

Does your organization or school want to ask for a donation from NineStar?  
**SUBMIT YOUR REQUEST ONLINE.**

SCAN THE QR CODE OR VISIT [NINESTARCONNECT.COM/CHARITABLE-DONATIONS](http://NINESTARCONNECT.COM/CHARITABLE-DONATIONS).