

# THE FIBER FOCUS

January 2026 Volume 2/ Issue 1



## A Letter From Our General Manager

2026 is going to be another exciting year of construction and growth! The NEMR construction crew has been hard at work this year installing drops for both new and existing homes. Our contractors continue to build fiber in Kirksville. The Kahoka town project, which was started last summer, is on track to be completed this spring. The rural Milan ARPA grant project wrapped up last spring, and our USDA-funded Downing project has now cleared environmental review. Construction is planned to begin this spring in Downing. We have also been awarded another USDA grant for the Glenwood area and are waiting on environmental clearance. The State of Missouri was awarded \$1.7 billion to bring high-speed internet to areas the federal government has identified as unserved or underserved through the BEAD Program. NEMR applied for several bordering areas and has been awarded portions of them, pending final NTIA approval. This summer, NEMR welcomed three local student interns, two working with our construction crew and one in the office. Two-year intern Brody Lunsford was hired as a full-time employee after he graduated from State Tech. Our internship program is a great opportunity for local students to explore future careers at NEMR. If you know a high school Junior or Senior who might be interested, please direct them to the application on our homepage. NEMR is also proud to support the FRS Youth Tour. The NEMR education committee selected three students for an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C. in 2025. If you know a student aged 15-17 who would like to apply for future tours, encourage them to visit our homepage to learn more. For the first time, NEMR submitted applications on behalf of two local nonprofits to the Foundation for Rural Services Community Grant Program. Congratulations to Putnam County Extension for being selected! Due to rising local retransmission agreement costs, TV rates will increase by \$4.00 starting in January.

A BIG thank-you to all NEMR employees for their hard work and dedication in keeping our members connected. Our commitment remains strong to deliver the highest-quality service at a fair, affordable cost.

NEMR's new mission statement: Powered by Fiber. Delivered by Neighbors. Focused on You.

From the NEMR board and employees, we wish you a healthy and happy 2026!

*-Michele Gillespie, NEMR General Manager*

# 2026

## Want to Help Lead Your Cooperative? Run for the Board!

If you're a NEMR co-op member, here's how to get started:

### Do You Qualify?

#### You can run if:

- You live in the zone that has a Board seat open
- You do not live in the same exchange as a Board member not up for election
- You have lived in that zone 240+ days in the last year
- You haven't worked for the co-op in the last 5 years
- You're not closely related to a Board member or co-op employee
- You don't work for a competing company



Zone 1: Green City, Lemons, Martinstown, Novinger, Omaha, Pollock, Queen City, Unionville, Winigan

Zone 2: Arbela, Brock, Luray, Memphis, Tobin Creek

### How to Get on the Ballot

Get at least 15 co-op member signatures on a petition.

Hand deliver your petition to the NEMR office in Green City at least 60 days before the 2026 Annual Meeting. The meeting will be Wednesday, June 17th.

### Election Time

Members vote by electronic ballot before the Annual Meeting.

Whoever gets the most votes wins the seat.

Board members serve for 3 years.

**More information is found at this link: [www.nemr.net/about](http://www.nemr.net/about)**

View our Bylaws under the "NEMR Polices" section

# NEMR

## Application Deadline Approaching Soon!



Students—don't miss this opportunity! Applications for the Foundation for Rural Service (FRS) Youth Tour are due January 23. The Youth Tour is open to freshmen, sophomores, and juniors whose parents or guardians are NEMR members. Selected students will travel to Washington, D.C. for an educational experience focused on leadership, rural advocacy, and technology.

**Apply today at [nemr.net/youthtour](http://nemr.net/youthtour).**



JBL Wireless Earbuds Winner: Tammy & Marty Jacques of Novinger



40 Inch Amazon Fire TV Winner: Joni Anderson of Martinstown



HP Laptop Winner: Haley Watt of Unionville

### Holiday Giveaway Poem Contest Winners

Congrats to our winners of the Holiday Giveaway Poem Contest! We received so many wonderful poems! Thank you to everyone who wrote one, NEMR appreciates the kind words! The winning poems and more favorites are showcased on our NEMR Facebook page!



### Holiday Cheer with the NEMR Family

On December 5, the NEMR Board of Directors, employees, and their families gathered to celebrate Christmas at Whippoorwill Acres Wedding and Event Venue. Guests enjoyed a delicious meal catered by The Store Building, LLC. Entertainment for the evening was provided by NEMR employees Kirk Lorence and Anthony Sims, who performed on guitar and vocals. Santa Claus was played by Destry Knupp, and Kyle Rogers brought some extra holiday fun as The Grinch.

### New Directory Listings:

- Dane, Julian- 660-883-5365
- Dane, Kendall- 660-883-5307
- Nerad, Cindy- 660-945-3115
- Weiler, Neil- 660-883-5508



NEMR is awarding one \$500 scholarship to each of the eight schools in our exchanges. The following schools are eligible: Green City, Milan, Novinger, Putnam County, Kirksville, Schuyler County, Scotland County and Clark County. Applications are due March 23, 2026. Apply Now: [www.nemr.net/scholarship](http://www.nemr.net/scholarship)

**Michele Gillespie, CEO**  
Board of Directors

- Rick Kent
- Shane Bradshaw
- Jim Kigar
- Scott Aylward
- Mark Grgurich
- Kenneth Hauk, Jr.
- Dennis Fechtling
- Junior Bertram



*It's Faster! It's Fiber! It's NEMR!*



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