

West Carolina Tel

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2016

# CONNECTED

## TIME TO HIDE AND SEEK

Enjoy a quest into  
high-tech adventure

## ABBEVILLE'S SMART 911

Status updates that can  
make a difference

## BIG-HEARTED BOSS

Owner of Jackie's Starr  
Mart helps community



# What is your broadband story?

The internet touches so many parts of our society, but how does it personally impact you? We are looking for stories of people who use their broadband internet connection in ways that enhance or improve their lives. Do you:

- ▶ Subscribe to monthly box services such as Blue Apron (food), Stitch Fix (clothing), BarkBox (dog goodies) or Made South (products made by Southern artisans)?
- ▶ Publish books online?
- ▶ Run a home-based business?
- ▶ Create or stream video through Facebook Live, Periscope, Blab or YouTube?
- ▶ Play online games such as Minecraft, Call of Duty or Destiny?
- ▶ Take online classes through a community college or university, or courses through Khan Academy, Lynda.com or Treehouse?



We want to hear from you! Visit [www.howdoyoubroadband.com](http://www.howdoyoubroadband.com) and share your broadband internet story with us. We may contact you to be featured in a story for this magazine.

## Broadband: It's a matter of health

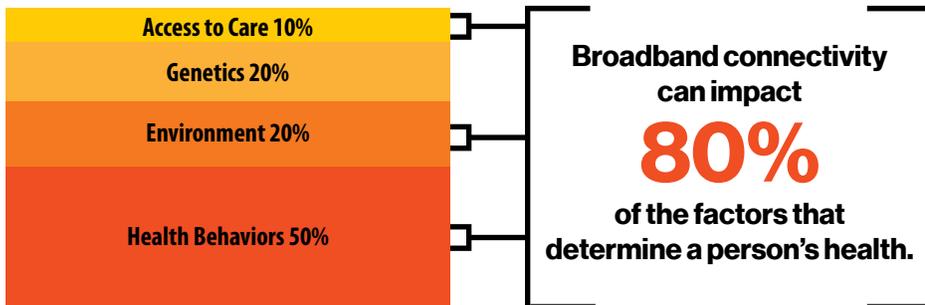
Rural health care is among the many important factors driving our commitment to build a robust broadband network.

Writing in The Huffington Post, health economist Jane Sarasohn-Kahn recently stated that “broadband is now a social determinant of health. Without connectivity to internet clouds, data platforms and telemedicine channels to specialists, rural health care providers and others in underserved communities will not be able to provide evidence-based care in ways that can scale in economically sustainable ways using 21st-century digital and telehealth technologies.”

Indeed, Maggie Elehwany, vice president of government affairs and policy for the National Rural Health Association, agrees, saying, “Not only do you need the appropriate internet connection, you need the appropriate bandwidth to do various types of telehealth.”

How much of an impact can broadband internet service have on a person’s health? Quite a bit, apparently. “Only a portion of the public’s health,” Sarasohn-Kahn writes, “is attributable to genetics.” A full 80 percent is attributable to access to care, environment and health behaviors, all of which can be impacted by broadband.

### FACTORS THAT DETERMINE HEALTH



Source: IFT; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



## RURAL CONNECTIONS

BY SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO  
NTCA—THE RURAL BROADBAND ASSOCIATION

## Talk to candidates about the impact of rural broadband

With just two months until Election Day, you have the attention of candidates for national office. Those running for U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives want you to know why they are best suited for the job, and chances are you will have an opportunity to attend a town hall meeting or similar gathering soon where you can hear them speak and share with them your concerns.

Earlier in the year, NTCA reminded both parties leading up to their national conventions that broadband is vital to enabling all Americans to participate in a vibrant national economy — and that it promotes civic engagement and critical access to essential services. Investments in rural communications touch all segments of the U.S. economy. In fact, the biggest benefit actually goes to urban America when a rural communications provider invests in their networks.

That message is even more powerful when it comes from you. It is so important to your communities that our national government supports rural broadband. NTCA has developed the fact sheet on the following page to help you share that message. Please use this information when communicating with candidates. Tell them your local telecommunications provider is dedicated to building a strong connected future, but they need their help to ensure continued success. See you at the polls! 🗳️

# KNOW YOUR NUMBERS!

Fact sheet for discussing the impact of rural broadband with your elected officials

## Economic Impact of Rural Broadband

Rural broadband companies have contributed

**\$24.1 billion** to the US economy in 2015, through their own operations and the follow-on impact of their operations.



## Over \$100 billion

in e-commerce was supported by rural broadband, with the largest share drawn from the manufacturing sector.

Rural broadband services expand access for the nearly



of Americans living in rural communities, enabling the use of new technologies such as:



Distance Education



Telemedicine



Security

Learn more at [NTCA.org](http://NTCA.org)



High-speed internet access improves lives and has a positive impact on the economy, education and health care, according to recently released research.

"The Economic Impact of Rural Broadband," a recent report released by the Hudson Institute and commissioned by the Foundation for Rural Service, reveals the many economic and social

benefits of rural broadband access.

With 20 percent of Americans living in rural communities, it's crucial to keep these areas up to speed. Luckily, advocates such as NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association are boosting the efforts of independent telecommunications and broadband providers nationwide to deploy high-speed services to schools, libraries and more.

# Customer service is always No. 1

In the telecommunications world, it's easy for a company to get so caught up in the fiber optics, cybersecurity, FCC rules and engineering maps that they forget the most important thing about our business: the way we treat our customers. But, that's not the case at WCTEL.



**JEFF WILSON**  
Chief Executive Officer

Despite the millions of dollars we've spent on network infrastructure and the years of planning that have gone into delivering our services to you, I know that your experience with us hinges on how you are treated when you need assistance. And while customer service is always an area of focus for us, companies around the country will highlight the service provided by their employees during Customer Service Week, Oct. 3-7.

With that in mind, I'd like to take a moment to salute our customer service staff. I believe we have one of the best customer service teams anywhere and they do a tremendous job making sure our customers' needs are met. I'd also like to thank the employees who make your needs their No. 1 priority, even

though their job title doesn't say "customer service." Our employees, acting as a team, work hard to provide service that is second to none.

There's a good reason we treat you differently. Locally based cooperatives like ours are owned by our members, which gives us extra incentive to make sure you're pleased with the service you receive. We have been a part of this community for decades, and many of our employees regularly serve their family members and friends.

From my experience, and from the stories I've heard, that's not the case everywhere. On national customer service surveys and reports, the huge, profit-driven corporate telecommunications companies routinely show some of the lowest customer satisfaction numbers of any company in any industry. Customers are made to wait for inferior service, are sold products that don't meet their needs and are led through a maze of 1-800 numbers, phone menus and ineffective or unfriendly employees when they need something.

At WCTEL, we have a staff that is committed to spending the time to learn about your needs and to offer services that match those needs. We have employees who will answer the phone and help solve your problems. We have a team that stands behind its work and puts in the time to get the job done right. And we have an organization, from top to bottom, that is committed to making sure you get the customer service you deserve — whether it's Customer Service Week or any other week of the year. ☎

The West Carolina Tel Connected is a bimonthly newsletter published by West Carolina Telephone, © 2016. It is distributed without charge to all members/owners of the cooperative.



is a member-owned cooperative dedicated to delivering advanced telecommunications technology to the people of Abbeville, Anderson and McCormick counties.

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#### On the Cover:



Three years ago, Sharon Nix learned to locate geocaches and has introduced the engaging hobby to several of her friends. See story Page 12.



## We've got your back

WCTEL now offers a new service to keep customers connected during unexpected power outages — battery backup plans.

Do you rely on a landline phone and never want to be out of touch — even during an electrical outage? Or, do you really need to protect and power not only your phone but also your wireless devices?

Don't worry, because WCTEL has you covered.

The basic backup system keeps landline phones connected for eight hours at only \$3.95 monthly.

Or, the advanced battery backup system maintains a 24-hour connection for phones and Wi-Fi for only \$6.95 monthly. Don't wait, sign up now.

→ **For more information, visit [wctel.com/batterybackup](http://wctel.com/batterybackup).**

## WCTEL helps local students



**FAITH THERRELL**, of Crescent High School, was the 2016 recipient of the FRS Youth Tour of Washington, D.C. She explored the museums and historic buildings, including the Washington Monument, in May.



**SARA SEARS** won the WCTEL scholarship for 2016. She will attend the University of South Carolina's pharmacy school in the fall. WCTEL's CEO Jeff Wilson presented the award.

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

► **The September TechLink will cover smartphone apps.**

- Sept. 12 at Abbeville office from 2:30-3:30 p.m.
- Sept. 13 at Iva office from 2:30-3:30 p.m.
- Sept. 15 at the River Grille in the Carolina Room from 2:30-3:30 p.m.

► **The October TechLink will discuss home automation/technology devices.**

- Oct. 10 at Abbeville office from 2:30-3:30 p.m.
- Oct. 11 at Iva office from 2:30-3:30 p.m.
- Oct. 13 at the River Grille in the Carolina Room from 2:30-3:30 p.m.

► **Scare on the Square** is 5-8 p.m. Friday, Oct. 28, in the Abbeville square.



The Hogs and Hens Festival will be a weekend of wonderful aromas and tasty treats. The event has grown each year and is moving to the downtown square to allow for more competitors. There will be 18 grillmasters who will compete in four categories, including ribs, pulled pork, chicken and hash.

### EVENT SCHEDULE

► **Friday, Oct. 14 — 4-9 p.m.**

- The Brian Collins Band kicks off the music from 4:30-6:30 p.m.
- Elovation takes the stage from 7-9 p.m.

► **Saturday, Oct. 15 — 11 a.m.-5 p.m.**

- Mac Arnold performs from 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
- Kristen Moore sings from 1:45-3 p.m.
- Poiz'n Whiskey closes the show from 3:15-4:30 p.m.

► **Crafts in the livery stable**

- Friday, 4-8 p.m., and Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

► **Wine Walk**

- Starts and ends at Natty's from 2-5 p.m.

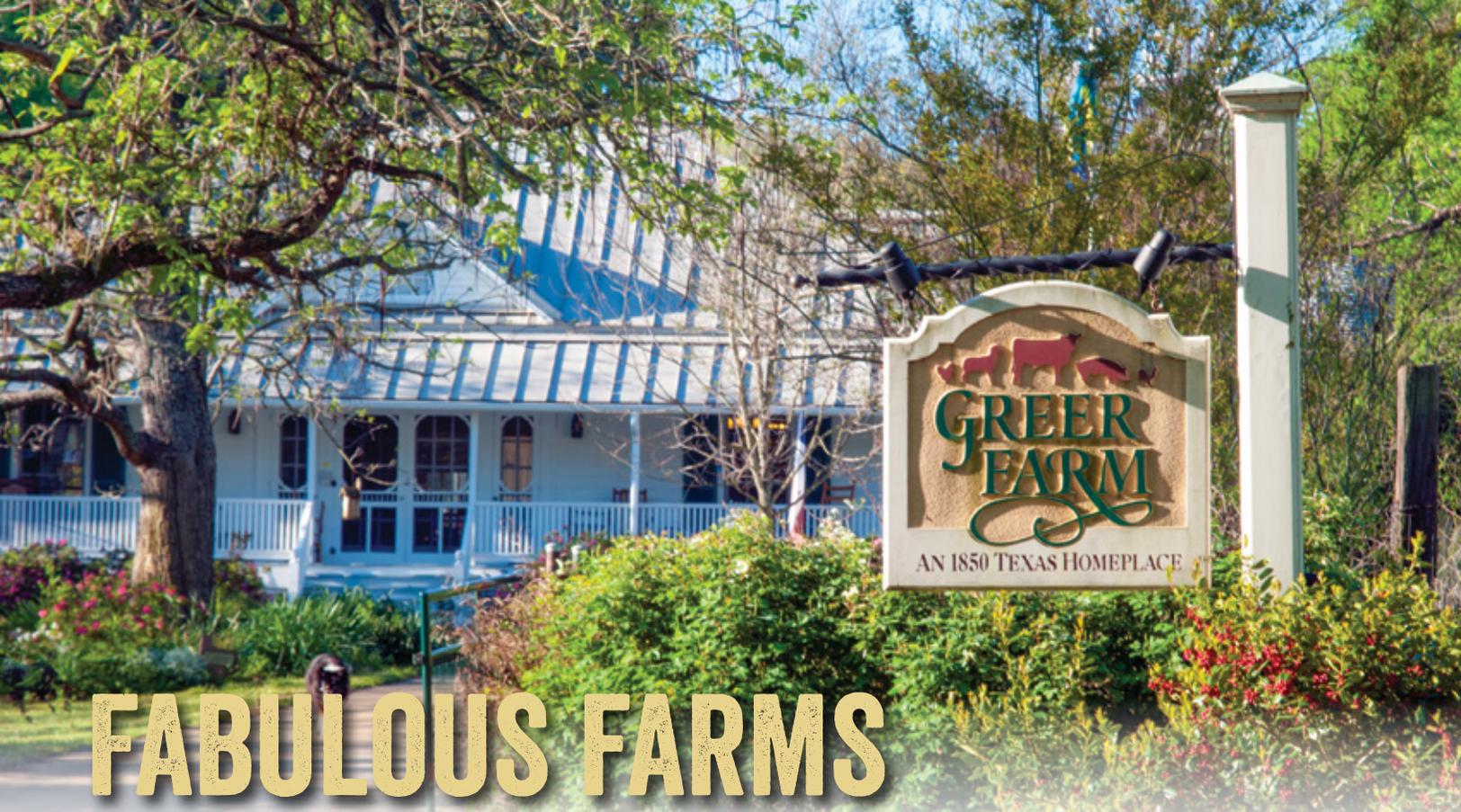
WEST SCAREOLINA TEL

## 2016 HALLOWEEN PHOTO CONTEST



All photos will be posted to Facebook! The 3 photos with the most "likes" will win a prize! (One gift card per family)

All WCTEL offices | October 28 & 31 | 3:30pm - 4:30pm  
Open to all kids age 12 & under!



# FABULOUS FARMS

*Go straight to the source for some of your favorite foods*

**F**arm-to-table food is a trend in the restaurant business, but now more than ever, farms are opening their gates to all. Take a tour and let your children learn where their food comes from, and then take it home and let the fresh flavors enliven your senses.

When you visit these farms, you get to experience that night's dinner from start to finish: No bar codes, no middle-man mark-ups and no tabloids in the check-out lines. Here are some places around the South that offer farm-to-table experiences that are deliciously fun.

## GREER FARM

1444 County Road 1125, Daingerfield, Texas

Everything's bigger in Texas, and at Greer Farm, things are no different. Stop by and you'll find big eggs — the best in the state, some say; packages of beef, pork, lamb and chicken; big jars of homemade jellies and jam; and trees laden with fresh fruits. Just take a walking tour and see for yourself what makes this farm such a popular destination for those wanting to know where their foods originate. There are nearly 400 acres to roam.

Want to stay a while? Rent one of the charming lakeside cabins.

Owners Sid and Eva Greer have been farming the land since 1999, but the restored farmhouse was built in the mid-1800s. "It's a very real farm — it's the way farms used to be," Sid Greer says.

- ▶ **Farm tours:** Self-guided walking tours during berry season; collecting eggs and feeding animals for overnight guests
- ▶ **Information:** 903-645-3232, 903-452-9738 or [www.greerfarm.com](http://www.greerfarm.com)



## TECH-SAVVY TRAVELER:

There are plenty of websites and apps to help you find recipes, but did you know these resources can also help you find fresh fruits and vegetables to make those dishes shine? For example, **Farmstand** ([farmstandapp.com](http://farmstandapp.com)) points you toward nearby farmers markets and **FarmStarLiving.com** helps you find farms and farm-to-table restaurants.





## SWEETWATER VALLEY CHEESE

17988 West Lee Highway  
Philadelphia, Tennessee

Just a short drive off I-75 brings you to a long driveway. Take a slight right at its end, and you'll arrive at the Sweetwater Valley Cheese plant and store. Continue straight, and pastures of dairy cows and milking barns come into view.

Sweetwater Valley produces 27 artisan cheeses and makes almost 300,000 pounds of cheese every year. You can view the operation through windows in the retail area, watching employees separating curds from whey as you shop for your favorite variety. Don't know which variety is best? There are plenty of knowledgeable staff on hand to help you through the "udderly" delicious process. John Harrison started making cheese in 1998, so with nearly 20 years in business, he knows his cheese.

"We want people to understand how the dairy industry contributes to feeding the world and how our farm, our cows and our cheese contribute to the local and world economies," Harrison says.

- ▶ **Farm tours:** Walking tours daily
- ▶ **Information:** 865-458-9192 or [www.sweetwatervalley.com](http://www.sweetwatervalley.com)

## JACK O' LANTERN FARM

Garage Road  
Muscle Shoals, Alabama

North Alabama has a variety of farms, but none is more popular this time of year than Jack O'Lantern Farm. Drive your car down Garage Road and park it in the lot. Outside the farm store, you'll be surrounded with orange orbs scattered around the parking lot and inside the farm store.

If you can find your way around all that orange, you'll discover that Jack O'Lantern Farm is about a lot more than pumpkins.

It's about free-range eggs, organic milk, beef, pork, lamb and chicken. And just last year, the farm received certification as Certified Naturally Grown for its produce. In the fall you'll find broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, spinach, lettuce and tomatoes.

Steve and Connie Carpenter went into the farming business in 1996 with nothing more than pumpkins. Three years later, they moved and expanded into what the farm is today.

- ▶ **Tours:** Self-guided walking tours only
- ▶ **Information:** 256-712-2383 or [jacko-lanternfarm.com](http://jacko-lanternfarm.com)

## GLENMARY GARDENS

224 Old Abingdon Highway  
Bristol, Virginia

Getting to know your farmer and seeing how your food is grown are the best things about buying local, says Michael Richard, owner of Glenmary Gardens. And it's at his farm where you can come and pick your own homegrown fruits and veggies, or you can buy them pre-picked in the small shop located on the farm property. The fall crop includes rhubarb, apples, watermelons, cantaloupes, eggplants, heirloom tomatoes, peppers, pumpkins, squashes and an autumn crop of strawberries. Or, for a taste of something sweet, try the homemade jams, jellies, Italian strawberry cheesecakes and fresh eggs by the dozen.

It's an afternoon of fun for people of all ages, with wagons available for hauling in your pick of pumpkins and a creekside picnic area for anyone wanting to dine outdoors on a beautiful fall afternoon in the Blue Ridge Mountains.

- ▶ **Farm tours:** For families (if time permits) and school groups (at a nominal charge)
- ▶ **Information:** On Facebook (Glenmary Gardens) and 276-644-4999

## SPLIT CREEK FARM

3806 Centerville Road  
Anderson, South Carolina

Once you're on the property of Split Creek in the foothills of the Appalachians, you can't help but notice the warning sign: Goat X-ing. And don't be surprised if



Split Creek Farm, Anderson, SC

there's an "ambassador" goat out to greet you. The kids will love it.

There are more than 400 goats on the farm at any given time. "You can never have too many goats," says owner Jessica Bell.

Bell and her husband, Pat, have won awards for their feta, chevre and fromage goat cheeses. Visit the farm store and taste for yourself. The most popular cheeses include marinated feta and jalapeno cheddar. Also, the store carries Greek-style yogurt, probiotic smoothies, dessert cheese balls and fudge.

- ▶ **Farm tours:** Offered throughout the week; call ahead to schedule
- ▶ **Information:** 864-287-3921 or [www.splitcreek.com](http://www.splitcreek.com)

## GARDNER GIRL FARM

1336 Highway 1275 N  
Monticello, Kentucky

The drive along Highway 92 is a scenic one that leads you to Monticello, bound by Cumberland Lake on one side and the Daniel Boone Forest on the other. And no time of year is better than fall when the leaves are at their peak, making it a splendid time to visit Gardner Girl Farm. Looking for that perfect pumpkin? Or what about squash to make an autumnal dinner? They have plenty, ranging from acorn and butternut to Pennsylvania Dutch and plenty of heirloom varieties, says Sherry DeBord, who, with her husband, Steve, has farmed the land for more than 40 years. "We also have Indian corn and hand-painted gourds and will probably have tomatoes through November," she says.

While shopping for your produce, don't forget to pick up a jar of homemade jam, jelly or relish.

- ▶ **Information:** 606-307-0020 📞

# A PROFILE IN PREPAREDNESS

Saving seconds can help save lives

BY MATT LEDGER

From vacation selfies to the latest video craze, social media updates are a great way to keep friends and family engaged in those day-to-day moments of fun. But, what if a secure, social media-style profile could help save a life or your valuables?

Well, it's possible. Abbeville County residents and businesses can enroll in a program to safeguard their families or employees. It's a tech-savvy way to prepare for an emergency.

The key is a Smart911 profile, which provides first responders with critical details. The profile automatically appears on the dispatcher's computer screen when receiving a 911 call, says Sharmel Miller, director for Abbeville County E-911. In the past two years, neighboring Beaufort, Charleston and Edgefield counties have also adopted Smart911.



Abbeville County E-911 Director Sharmel Miller encourages citizens to create a Smart911 profile to help first responders in the event of an emergency.

## SECURE STATUS

The free Smart911 system has been available to Abbeville citizens for nearly a year. It gives first responders a head start by providing valuable background details before they arrive on the scene.

Families can provide as much, or as little, information as they feel is necessary. Unlike social media profiles, personal information and photos remain private. "Some people may be hesitant about putting up a profile of their family," Miller says. "However, the profiles are on a secure database that is only accessible by 911 operators during the call."

If trouble strikes, the system may prove invaluable. For example, Smart911 profiles can help firefighters know the layout of a home and how many occupants may be inside. It's critical information for the first responders who are putting their lives on the line to make life-saving rescues.

For businesses, the program contains some of the same details already provided by the business to the fire marshal during annual inspections. Having that information available to all first responders is beneficial in the event of an emergency.

## STAYING ALERT

Information is linked to each person's phone number. Then, details are relayed to first responders as they are en route. "If we have a missing person, we could have that profile to first responders in a matter of seconds instead of having to get to the home and search for a recent picture," Miller says.

The profile can alert responders to critical information when a caller is panicked or unable to speak. "Smart911 is especially beneficial to those with a medical condition or disability. If the citizen has created a safety profile, we can respond to their emergency call with the proper equipment and with a better overall awareness," says David Porter, Abbeville County director. "Those valuable seconds or even minutes we can save by dispatching the appropriate response teams immediately can be lifesaving."

Vacationers and business travelers will further benefit from a Smart911 profile. The system geo-locates subscriber cell-phones, sending notifications if necessary. The system has been used by public safety agencies in 40 states and more than 1,500 municipalities. "We chose this free program so that we can enhance our communication with our citizens," Miller says.

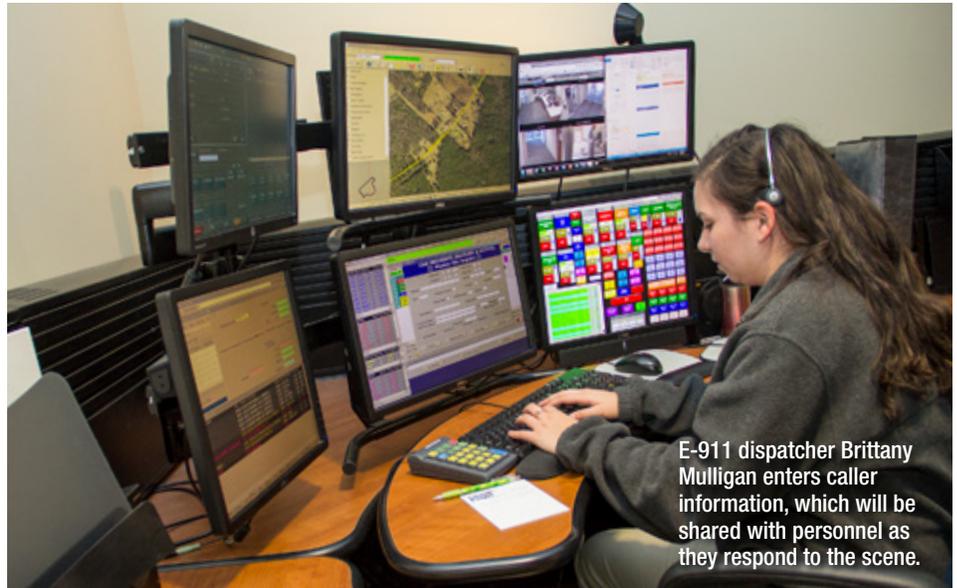
## YOU CAN HANDLE THE TRUTH

For Abbeville, emergency preparedness does not end with Smart911. A reverse notification system, one where the authorities can send information to residents, is also critical.

"We use CodeRED for weather notifications when there is a storm warning or to warn of a potential tornado in the area," Miller says. "We also send out messages regarding citizens' safety, like in the event of an evacuation."

The weather alerts, which are sent to CodeRED subscribers within the affected areas, are based on data from the National Weather Service. One unique benefit to CodeRED is that citizens can opt to get a phone call in addition to a text message or email.

The reverse 911 system can also be used to alert everyone about a missing person.



E-911 dispatcher Brittany Mulligan enters caller information, which will be shared with personnel as they respond to the scene.

Officials sent a "Silver alert" earlier this summer when an elderly lady was missing.

Again, Smart911 makes it all run more smoothly. Those alerts will happen quicker in situations where a Smart911 profile has been established. The CodeRED system can also send notifications of catastrophic accidents or any other unexpected events that impact citizen safety.

"Being a consolidated 911 center, we dispatch for law enforcement, emergency services and the fire department," Miller says. "We do a lot of networking with all of the agencies we serve."

The partnership includes many public education classes, ranging from first aid certifications to public safety demonstrations. 



## HOME SAFETY RESOURCE WEBSITES

- [smart911.com](http://smart911.com)
- [redcross.org](http://redcross.org)
- [abbeville911.com](http://abbeville911.com)
- [nsc.org](http://nsc.org)
- [safekids.org](http://safekids.org)
- [recalls.gov](http://recalls.gov)

## SIMPLE STEPS SAVE LIVES



- ▶ Every home should have a working **smoke alarm**, which cuts in half the odds of dying in a house fire. But that's not the only safety step to take.



- ▶ A **home fire safety escape plan** is the most critical preparation for surviving the smoke and confusion experienced during a house fire. But, only about 23 percent of families have created such a plan.



- ▶ Don't wait. Print and follow a **home safety checklist** from [www.usfa.fema.gov](http://www.usfa.fema.gov).

Jessica Bray

# MUSIC *is her* LIFE

A Q&A with Jessica Bray, a blogger from Kentucky who writes about her love of country music.

Check out her blog at  
**KENTUCKYCOUNTRYMUSIC.COM**



**Q: What will readers find at your blog?**

JB: Kentucky Country Music is a personal journey of stories, interviews, road trip adventures, music history, reviews and more from my perspective.

**Q: When did you begin blogging and how has it changed your life?**

JB: I started writing in high school and then at Berea College for its newspaper and national publication, "Appalachian Heritage." The blog started in 2009 as a way to share my travel and concert experiences. I wanted to be able to show a positive image of Kentucky and the Appalachian region. Because of the blog, I have been fortunate to have met and interviewed legendary artists like the Oak Ridge Boys and have been given opportunities to attend red carpet events for Derby Eve and the Kentucky Music Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony. WFKY also allows me to do a country music news segment each week.

**Q: What does music bring to your life?**

JB: I have gained a lot of close friendships through music. One of those friendships has been with Sunny Sweeney. Because of her, I was able to go backstage at the Grand Ole Opry and meet Little Jimmy Dickens. Music brings back memories to different points in my life.

**Q: Do you play an instrument?**

JB: I broke my wrist when I was 10, so it makes it hard to play anything. I do have a mandolin, but I ended up collecting autographs on it instead of playing.

**Q: Do you think it's important to raise children with an appreciation for all kinds of music?**

JB: It's important for children to be exposed to the different styles of music. Whether it's country, pop, rap or even polka, each style reflects a different culture or religion in our country. You also learn that the roots of country music come from bluegrass, Appalachian folk and even rock 'n' roll.

**Q: What's your favorite kind of music?**

JB: Country music with the deep influence of Appalachia. I grew up on a farm listening to Loretta Lynn, Tammy Wynette, Conway Twitty, George Jones and Waylon Jennings. During my college years, and even now, I loved researching the roots of country music, as well as the craft of a good song.

**Q: What was the first concert you attended and where?**

JB: My parents took me to see Conway Twitty at Tombstone Junction, an old-time amusement park that unfortunately closed.

**OTHER MUSIC BLOGS OF INTEREST:**

► **TWANGNATION.COM**

Praised by music veterans Roseanne Cash and Shooter Jennings, blogger Baron Lane looks to his Texas roots for inspiration when writing his blog.

► **BEAT-SURRENDER.COM**

Mix a little country with some folk, Americana, rock and indie and you'll have [www.beat-surrender.com](http://www.beat-surrender.com), a masterful combination of musical genres found in one single blog.

A lot of country music singers played there, including Johnny Cash and Dolly Parton.

**Q: What would be your dream concert if you could get a group of musicians together?**

JB: I have always said it would be neat to have Sturgill Simpson, Chris Stapleton and Angaleena Presley in concert. All three Kentuckians have made their mark recently in music. 📺

# SECURE YOUR ONLINE WORLD

Simple, smart strategies for password security



Remembering passwords for websites or online services can certainly be confusing — but not nearly as confusing as sorting out your life after identity theft.

In fact, bad passwords are one of the top ways that hackers and identity thieves gain access to private information. “It doesn’t matter if you have the best

firewall in the world; bad passwords can still make you vulnerable,” says Michael Ramage, director of the Center for Telecommunications Systems Management at Murray State University.

With that in mind, here are some ways to be sure your passwords aren’t leaving you open for a cyber attack.

## ▶ DON'T USE A COMMON PASSWORD

People want a password they can remember, but many people keep it too simple. Hackers know common passwords, and those are some of the first ones they try if they are cracking your accounts. “Most people want the convenience over the security because they don’t think it’s going to happen to them,” Ramage says. Avoid these simple, commonly used passwords:

- 123456
- 1234567
- password
- monkey
- 12345
- letmein
- 12345678
- abc123
- qwerty
- 111111
- 123456789
- mustang
- 1234
- access
- baseball
- shadow
- dragon
- master
- football
- michael

Top 20 Most Common Passwords in 2014  
Source: SplashData Inc.

## ▶ USE STRONG PASSWORDS

The best passwords are chains of letters, numbers and symbols, rather than words that can be found in the dictionary. Using a known word and replacing “o” with “0” or “E” with “3” isn’t hard for hackers to figure out. “Hackers know that people do that,” Ramage says. “Any word that’s in the dictionary will be broken in a matter of seconds.”

Ramage suggests making a string of letters that mean something to you, such as the first letters of words in your favorite quote, song or Scripture verse. For example, instead of “baseball,” try Tmottbtmottc9, which is the first letter from each word in the first two lines of “Take Me Out to the Ballgame” and 9 for the number of players on the field. “It doesn’t have to be random letters; it just has to look random to the bad guys,” Ramage says.

## ▶ USE DIFFERENT PASSWORDS

Once you have a strong password, it can be tempting to use it over and over online. But that’s a mistake. Ramage says there are many cases where a person’s social media account has been hacked, which leads to other accounts being compromised because the same password was used. If hackers steal a password and user ID, they know to go and try that same combination at other sites. “A lot of times people think, ‘I have a strong password, and I’m going to use it everywhere,’” Ramage says. “How many other things that matter share that same password?”

## ▶ BE CAREFUL WHERE YOU PUT YOUR PASSWORDS

With the need for multiple strong passwords, it can be tough to remember them all. Ramage has seen plenty of password lists taped to monitors or keyboards. Such lists, especially in places where plenty of people come and go, pose a significant risk.

“It has to be private, and it has to be secret,” says Ramage. He suggests using an encrypted password database program such as 1Password, Last Pass, Password Vault or Key Pass. The programs keep all of your passwords for you, and with a browser plug-in, they can even automatically fill out your login information when you pull up a page. 🗄️

# The search continues

## Using smartphone apps for scenic scavenger hunting

BY MATT LEDGER

**F**inding the baby food jar hidden at Savannah Lakes Country Club took Sharon Nix about 20 minutes. Then, she added her name to the log tucked inside the container.

That trip in 2013 was her first attempt at geocaching, an international, technology-driven scavenger hunt that caught her imagination.

While she first heard about geocaching years ago, curiosity and internet research convinced her to give it a try. “I went looking for the first one by myself because I thought people might think I was a little crazy at my age,” says Nix, a grandmother who is also retired. “It was just so exciting, just like a scavenger hunt for treasure.”

### HIDE AND SEEK

Geocaching began on May 3, 2000, one day after satellite-based global positioning data became accessible to anyone with the right technology. It was a change that opened the door for modern smartphone mapping programs and began long before the “Pokemon Go” craze that erupted this past summer.

And people decided to have

some fun — place an object, distribute the coordinates and then let the hunt begin. Now, all it takes is a geocaching smartphone app.

“These things can be hidden on benches, under stairs or magnetically hanging off a fence,” Nix says. “The original purpose of geocaching was to lead you to a scenic place of interest — some place you likely haven’t gone before.”

In September, Nix and friend Karen Sides will visit Seattle, Washington, home to geocaching.com headquarters.

They also plan to head to N 45° 17.460 W 122° 24.800 — in Viola, Oregon — where the first cache was found by Dave Ulmer. A commemorative plaque replaced the original cache, a buried bucket eventually destroyed by a lawn mower.

Not all caches, however, are hidden. Some, known as “virtuals,” are in plain sight.

During a trip to New York City, Nix found five geocaches



Sharon Nix has found over 900 caches and has introduced several friends to her hobby.

in Central Park. Her 900th geocache find was a virtual named “The Guardian,” a bronze statue of an animal life-like enough to scare occasional morning joggers. To earn credit for virtual caches, participants must answer questions on the smartphone app.

Geocachers communicate through the geocaching.com website to host events. One type of event — cache in, trash out — encourages members to spruce up public spaces while expanding the number of cache locations.

“Cachers are environmentally aware not to damage an area while going in and to leave an area better than how they found it,” Nix says.

A year ago, she found a fishing area in need of help. No trash cans were on the site. “It looked like a dump,” she says. So, she organized a gathering of other geocachers to spend

a few hours cleaning up the shoreline. After a picnic, they shared travel stories.

“It’s a great family activity,” Nix says. “It’s so exciting for the kids to learn how to use coordinates and go on this treasure hunt. It takes you to interesting places you’d never know about.”



### GEOCACHING: A GROWING TREND

*Last year was a busy one for geocaching, with the hobby posting these impressive numbers in 2015:*

- Number of geocachers — including couples and families — to find at least one cache: **1,917,144**
- Geocaches logged: **8,339,842**
- New geocaches placed: **548,794**
- Geocaching events: **31,320**
- People or families to attend CITO clean-ups: **32,902**

# Lending a helping hand

## A big-hearted business owner helps his community

BY MATT LEDGER

Jackie Harrell wanted to support the Homeland Park Fire Department, and his assistance allowed the “Heat Seekers” to start a fundraiser worthy of their nickname. Later, he extended his backing to the Starr Fire Department.

The connection that started it all began years ago at Harrell’s roadside stands. “When I started selling fireworks, there was a little kid who helped me out,” Harrell says. “Instead of paying him with money, I paid him in fireworks.”

The boy was Ronald Wood. “He always hung around the fire department whenever he shot them off,” says Harrell, joking about Wood. “Then one day he went off and became the chief.”

The relationship was the spark for the Homeland Park Fire Department’s annual Independence Day Celebration, which allows the department to thank residents for their support. Harrell, owner of Jackie’s Starr Mart and Cafe, was there at the beginning.

“We decided as a fire department to have a family night,” says Wood of the events that began in 2000. “He knew about our gathering and that we like to shoot fireworks. After a few years, it continued to get bigger, and we now do it as a fundraiser and as a way to give back to the community for their help throughout the year.”



The staff at Jackie’s Starr Mart rallied around employee Brenda Jones, not pictured, who was injured when a vehicle collided with the kitchen’s wall.

Harrell continues to donate fireworks for the daylong gathering, which now includes live music, traditional eating contests, children’s inflatables and a car show. Firefighters grill food to raise money for gear or other equipment. The family-friendly event grew to more than 3,000 attendees in 2016.

In 2011, Harrell extended the same gesture to the Starr Fire Department. “He has always supported the fire departments,” says Wood, explaining that the fundraisers make a real difference. “Each year we determine where we have a need, like a used fire truck that we bought. It helps us better serve the community, and now we’re working toward a new fire department.”



Aside from operating a convenience store, Jackie Harrell also sells fireworks at roadside stands.



Jackie Harrell, left, owns Jackie’s Starr Mart, his second convenience store in the area. Melvin Standrige, center, helped raise Harrell and his brother, Greg, right, and both now help run Harrell’s popular restaurant in Starr.

### EARLY START

For Harrell, helping firefighters is also a part of helping the businesses in the communities he calls home. “I started working at a convenience store when I was 8 years old,” Harrell recalls. “I worked standing on a milk crate at Eddie’s Mini Mart.”

Store owners Robert T. Foster and Eddie Orr mentored the young entrepreneur, and Harrell opened his own Starr store in 1998. He added a restaurant to his store after businessman Ken McGee suggested it would be successful.

“We’re all like family,” Harrell says of his crew. Much

like the fireworks display, he plans to build a larger convenience store in Starr. Harrell also belongs to the Starr-Iva Alliance and Freshwater Coast Community Foundation. And his support extends far into the community.

“Jackie has always helped us out with donations or even food for our players,” says Cade Gray, golf and basketball coach at Crescent High School. “He always puts a team in my golf tournament, even if they don’t play. He is such a huge supporter of the community, especially anything where kids are involved.”

# AN APPLE A DAY

In the fall, the Cumberland Plateau blossoms into a distinct shade of red as apple groves lined with trees — their limbs burgeoning with heavy fruit — are ready for harvest.

More than 100 years ago, Henry Wooden planted the first trees that would become the family's livelihood for decades. The family is now into the fourth generation of Woodens caretaking his legacy, providing the people of the Tennessee Valley and beyond with the quality apples they've come to expect.

Following the death of Henry's son, Oren, the apple business was passed on to his two daughters, Carole and Sandy, and their husbands, Chubby Smith and Mark Burnett, respectively. Nonivee Wooden, who married Oren Wooden 51 years ago, continues to be involved in many aspects of the business.

The Pie Shop and The Apple House, which sell apples as well as other tasty items — turnovers, fritters, dumplings, cakes, jams and jellies — has been a part of the orchard for 21 years. The adjacent Oren's Orchard Cafe opened in the fall of 2014 and serves a bevy of country staples, as well as what you might expect: apple-inspired dishes, such as apple-stuffed pork chops, apple cider glazed ham and pork barbecue with apple cider barbecue sauce.

There's something about the plateau's climate that makes it ideal for growing apples.

"The cooler nights help color the fruit, and the cooler daytime temps help out in the hot summer months," Chubby Smith says.

And this year, Mother Nature has done a fine job. The apples are big, juicy and so tempting that you might want to bite into them before getting them home. But there's nothing better than saving a few for

LaBron "Chubby" Smith operates Wooden's Apple Orchard — which includes The Pie Shop, The Apple House and Oren's Orchard Cafe — with his family in Pikeville, Tennessee.



making all the sweet delights that apples can provide.

And for those of you who, like the Wooden family, have apple trees in your yard or nearby, it's a gift. "It's something we sometimes take for granted," Smith says. "But it really is a blessing to be able to pick our apples anytime we want."

Located near Pikeville, Tennessee, Wooden's Apple Orchard is a large, 120-acre spread filled with 20 varieties of apples, among them red and golden delicious, Granny Smith, Pink Lady, Braeburn, Fuji, Ambrosia and Arkansas Black. But the most popular by far are the Honeycrisp and Mutsu, Smith says.

"We like Golden Delicious best for our pies, but lots of varieties are excellent for cooking," Smith says.

If Wooden Apple Orchard is out of reach, you can find the apples at Food City. Smith says the apples are also shipped to Atlanta, Knoxville, Chattanooga, Nashville and some as far away as Florida.

So how 'bout them apples? Here are some of the Wooden clan's favorite ways to employ — and enjoy — them. 🍏

## IF YOU GO

**Where:** Wooden's Apple Orchard, 6351 New Harmony Road, Pikeville, Tennessee

**Hours:** The cafe is open daily until Thanksgiving from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. The Pie Shop and neighboring Apple House, which sell apples, craft items, jams and jellies, are open 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily until Thanksgiving. If there are any remaining apples, both will remain open until Christmas or until sold out.

**Phone:** 423-447-6376

**Online:** [woodensapplehouse.com](http://woodensapplehouse.com)



Food Editor **Anne P. Braly** is a native of Chattanooga, Tennessee. Prior to pursuing a freelance career, she spent 21 years as food editor and feature writer at a regional newspaper.

## APPLE BREAD

- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 cups sugar
- 3 eggs
- 3 cups self-rising flour
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 2 cups apples, peeled and chopped
- 1 cup pecans, chopped

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Grease 2 (8- by 4-inch) bread pans. In a large mixing bowl, combine oil, vanilla, sugar and eggs. Mix until well-blended. Add flour and cinnamon and mix until well-blended. Add apples and pecans. Pour mixture into pans. Bake 40-45 minutes or until bread tests done. Let cool 10 minutes before removing from pans.

## PORK LOIN WITH APPLE STUFFING

- Pork loin (see note)
- Apple cider
- Honey
- Stale bread crumbs or cornbread
- 1 stick butter, melted
- 1 tablespoon ground sage

Seasoned salt

- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 3 apples, thinly sliced

Place pork loin in slow cooker. Fill with apple cider until about 2/3 of loin is covered. Brush the top of pork loin with honey. Cook on low 8-10 hours or until done. Cool in refrigerator, then slice into 1-inch thick pieces. In a large mixing bowl, crumble bread crumbs or cornbread into fine pieces. Pour 1 stick of melted butter onto crumbled bread. Add 1 tablespoon of sage, a pinch of seasoned salt and 1 teaspoon of onion powder. Mix until well-blended. Add thinly sliced apples to the mixture. Lay slices of pork loin onto a large glass or metal baking dish, along with 1 cup apple cider. Put a spoonful of stuffing mixture in the center of each slice of pork loin and bake for 15-20 minutes at 400 degrees or until stuffing starts to brown.

*Note: Buy a pork loin that fits in your slow cooker, or you can cut to fit and freeze the remainder.*

## APPLE ALMOND SALAD

- 1 bag of spring mix or baby spinach
- 6 ounces crumbled feta cheese
- 1/4 cup slivered almonds
- 2 apples, chopped (Spray with lemon juice to prevent browning.)
- Handful dried cranberries

Toss all ingredients together and serve immediately.

## APPLE CIDER VINAIGRETTE

- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/3 cup apple cider
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1/3 cup olive oil
- 1/3 cup honey
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Combine all ingredients, mixing until well-blended. Serve over salad greens. 🍷

# APPLE RECIPES



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