

CONNECTED



A path forward

Finding hope at
Greenwood Pathway House

SHARON MANOR

ADVENTUROUS
FUN



By SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

Fresh opportunities

New funding supports rural broadband

Closing the digital divide is an ongoing effort and not a one-time mission. Every month the diligent work of NTCA members helps to bridge these gaps. Even in the most remote areas, telcos are building world-class broadband networks and enabling critical, life-altering technologies and applications.

Our leaders here in Washington, D.C., continue to notice the gains being made in communities like yours. While the 118th Congress is still getting its feet under it, so to speak, we are seeing interest in several broadband-related bills that could help our members and their customers, and federal agencies continue to implement and execute on various broadband funding programs.

As community-based providers with a long history of service and successful performance, telcos are in a good position to vie for critical financial support for broadband deployment, such as the \$42.5 billion Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program. This year, we expect the National Telecommunications and Information Administration to announce allocation of this money to the states and U.S. territories, and, eventually, grants could be given out to providers like yours to serve even more people.

In anticipation of these distributions, we spent much of 2022 on Capitol Hill and with local, state and federal agencies to urge them to work closely with NTCA members. We also brought key decision-makers to NTCA meetings, conferences and webinars, and we provided members-only tools to help position telcos.

Such efforts pay dividends. For example, NTCA member companies have already received more than \$1 billion in U.S. Department of Agriculture ReConnect loans and grants. Job one for NTCA and its members continues to be pursuing policies that will enable small rural providers to keep delivering on the promises of broadband connectivity every day and for decades to come. 🗨️

Fiber internet

It makes a difference



Fiber internet makes essential tools and services possible: commerce, education, entertainment, personal communication and more.

Here are a few examples, highlighted by the Fiber Broadband Association, offering a detailed look at how fiber networks make a difference:



1 FASTER INTERNET: Creating a network capable of keeping up with growing consumer demand for videos, music streaming and online gaming is no easy task. Fiber, however, consistently outpaces the fastest download and upload speeds of older technologies like cable, DSL and wireless.



2 INCREASED HOME VALUES: Studies have shown that fast, reliable broadband is rated as the single most important amenity for rented or multifamily homes. Access to fiber broadband increased rental and property values by as much as 8%.



3 FIBER NETWORKS HELP LOCAL ECONOMIES: There's growing evidence fiber connectivity not only encourages businesses to stay in their locations but also helps them grow and become more productive. It even attracts new businesses, particularly in high-tech industries.



4 SUSTAINABLE: The glass that makes fiber work so well is made from sand, which is plentiful and requires less energy and creates less pollution to acquire than older technologies.

This could have been an email

How digital literacy is shaping communication in the workplace

Story by DREW WOOLLEY



Clear communication can be a challenge at the best of times. But particularly for remote workers relying on digital chat and email tools, it's never been easier for wires to get crossed, even during simple exchanges.

ALWAYS ONLINE

In some cases, the generation gap can rear its head even before the first word has been typed or spoken. While baby boomers and members of Generation X tend to prefer doing business face-to-face or over the phone, younger generations are much more digitally inclined.

According to research from Purdue University, both millennials and Generation Z or Zoomers — people born between the mid-1990s and about 2010 — tend to prefer communicating by email, instant message, text and social media. Having grown up with access to high-speed internet, Zoomers expect a rapid response to messages, based on a survey by marketing company LeadSquared.

THANKS.

It's no secret periods at the end of lone sentences are falling by the wayside in texts, chats and social media. For some, it's a punctuational pet peeve. But for younger colleagues, the reappearance of that little dot can carry extra meaning.

For example, while some millennials and older generations might put a period after a short message like "Thanks" or "Good job," for Gen Z, that hard stop can imply coldness or sarcasm. Younger professionals are more likely to use exclamation points to express enthusiasm. So don't worry, they aren't yelling at you.

TBH, IDK

For those who came of age texting before phones could predict what you're trying to type, quick abbreviations for common phrases were a must. BTW (by the way), TBH (to be honest), IMO (in my opinion), JK (just kidding) and IDK (I don't know) are just a few examples.

While many of these abbreviations are now part of the internet's vocabulary, they can be a stumbling block for anyone who didn't grow up seeing them daily. When clarity is a priority, consider taking the extra few seconds to spell it out. 🗨️

A picture's worth a thousand words

As platforms like Slack and Microsoft Teams become more popular, emoji are rapidly invading work chats. Many are self-explanatory and can help add some extra expression to a message. Others can be confusing or misinterpreted. So be sure you know what message you're sending.



While many people use the **smile emoji** to denote, well, a smile, some younger professionals interpret it more ironically. That may seem confusing, but just ask yourself if there's any warmth in that smile's cold, dead eyes.



By and large, the **thumbs up** should be saved as a response to a clear yes or no question, or to acknowledge that you've seen a comment that doesn't require a longer reply. Offering a thumbs up in conversations that are any more nuanced could cause confusion about whether any follow-up is needed or suggest you aren't giving the exchange your full attention.



This one is just a public service announcement. Despite — or maybe because — the **crying laughing emoji** is the world's most popular, according to Adobe, Gen Z has officially dubbed it cliché and uncool. If you're looking to stay up on the trends, consider changing things up with the skull emoji to let them know their joke really killed.

Your WiFi experience. Our mission.

Your peace of mind. Our promise.

Greetings! We are inching our way toward warmer weather after a colder-than-usual winter. Many of you — our teams included — experienced burst pipes and power outages this past December during the cold.



JEFF WILSON
Chief Executive Officer

Times like these remind us how fragile our homes are in the face of Mother Nature's power. No doubt, we all took action to fix the broken pipes and protect our homes from future extremes.

I think of our home WiFi in much the same way. I'm not sure if you realize it, but with all the WiFi-enabled devices in our homes, we are essentially running our own home networks. In fact, the average home now has a minimum of 10 devices connected to WiFi.

These networks must be fortified, too. After all, we don't operate computers without antivirus software. We need to think about our total home WiFi network in the same way. Every device connected to your home WiFi represents access points for incoming threats. Cybercriminals are becoming more and more savvy, looking for any entryway into your home.

Think about the way you spray for insects around your house. What if you could put up a barrier around your home to keep threats from coming in before they even reach your devices?

And better yet, what if you could take control over your home WiFi network by noting every connected device, setting up guest networks and even having enhanced parental controls and bandwidth prioritization? And, what if the backbone of this system was a commercial-grade, state-of-the-art router, capable of WiFi 6 and so much more?

I'm excited to share that all this is available through our new managed WiFi plan, WiFi X, the replacement for our previous WiFi Standard service.

Enabled by our GigaSpire routers, which many of you already enjoy, WiFi X brings you the ultimate WiFi experience. Enhanced protections optimize this experience by monitoring and stopping threats, intrusions and viruses on your network. WiFi controls regulate which devices can connect to the network and allow you to block entire internet categories, enable safe searches and prioritize selected devices' bandwidth action. The best part is that WiFi X literally puts the control in your hands through an enhanced version of an app that many of you already enjoy.

This service is an evolution of our commitment to you: to deliver a stellar internet experience that provides you peace of mind and seamless access to the world. All new customers signing up for service who choose our WiFi plan will be on our WiFi X service. Existing customers who are interested in switching to WiFi X can call us at 864-446-2111 to sign up.

While we are proud of the quality and speed of our internet service, we are even prouder to be your internet partner. Your enhanced internet experience may be our mission, but your peace of mind is our promise. ☑



CONNECTED

MARCH/APRIL 2023

VOL. 11, NO. 2

The West Carolina Tel Connected is a bimonthly newsletter published by West Carolina Telephone, © 2023. 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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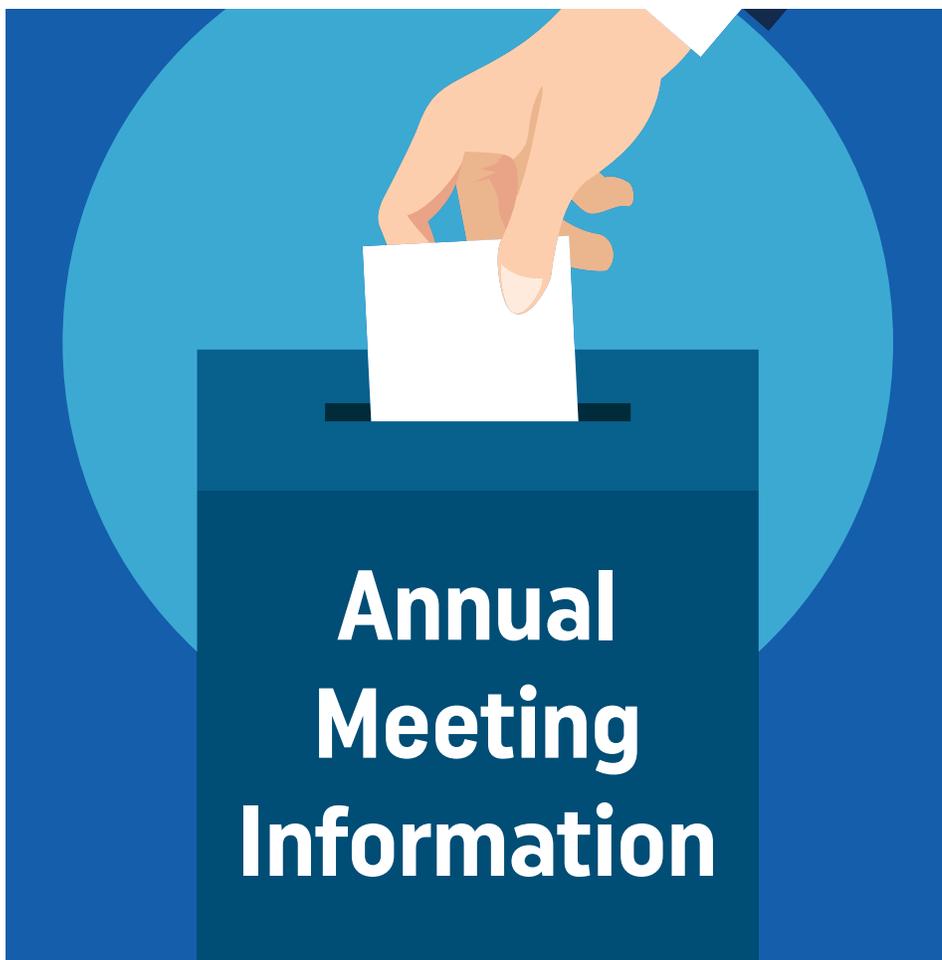
Pioneer
UTILITY RESOURCES

On the Cover:



The Greenwood Pathway House teaches residents marketable skills, including detailed woodworking, as part of the Homeless Art Therapy Program. See story Page 8.

Photo by Matt Ledger



At the WCTEL Annual Meeting, scheduled for Aug. 14, an election will be held to elect three members to the board of directors. The three seats up for election this year, which are due to normal rotations as per our bylaws, are as follows:

- » **Area 1 – Starr**
- » **Area 6 – Calhoun Falls**
- » **Area 9 – South McCormick**

The three directors who currently hold these positions all plan to seek reelection.

A nominating committee will be appointed and shall select one or more members from each of these three areas to be nominated for election to the board.

If you wish to notify the nominating committee of your interest in serving on the board, you may provide the company CEO a letter of interest. Letters can be turned into any WCTEL office during regular business hours no later than 5 p.m. EST on May 16.

Any member who submits a letter of interest to a cooperative office by the deadline and is not nominated by the nominating committee may file as a petition candidate. Petitions, as more specifically described in our bylaws, must be received by 5 p.m. on June 15 for petition candidates to be eligible for election and listed on the election ballot.

Materials on qualifications and how to file a letter of interest or petition are available upon request from any WCTEL office. Please remember you must be a member from the area where a board position is up for election and meet the qualifications outlined in the bylaws.

If you have any questions, you are encouraged to contact CEO Jeff Wilson at 864-446-2111.

This information is for notification of the process for board election only and is not the notice of the Annual Meeting.



Tired of robocalls?

The Do Not Call Registry can help reduce the number of unwanted telemarketing calls you receive. Learn more at donotcall.gov, or call 888-382-1222. You must call from the telephone number you wish to register. For TTY, call 866-290-4236.



OUTDOOR adventures

The Southeast is a treasure trove of thrilling nature excursions

Story by ANNE BRALY

Photo courtesy of Tennessee Department of Tourism

The Southeast harbors its own kind of magic when it comes to outdoor attractions among its ancient mountains and waterways.

“It’s no secret that the Southeast United States is a remarkable hot spot for adventure,” says Terri Chapin, program coordinator for Outdoor Chattanooga. “Thrill-seekers are cool with the variety of outdoor adventures in the abundant lakes, rivers and mountain streams.”

From the region’s national parks and forests to world-class whitewater and wind sports, there’s something for everyone. And when the day is done, Terri suggests balancing your nature fix with a little urban exploration. It’s not too far from the forest to good food. “Here is the secret sauce — the Southeast blends both urban and the wild to offer endless possibilities for multiple cool adventures in one day,” she says.



ABOVE: Kayaking along the Tennessee River is very popular.

LEFT: The South’s sandstone cliffs make for great rock climbing.

RUNNING THE RAPIDS

The Southeast is blessed with numerous rivers offering whitewater excitement. From the Nantahala and the Green River in North Carolina to Chattahoochie Whitewater Express in Georgia, you’re in for an adrenaline rush at every stroke of the paddle.

The **Ocoee River** in eastern Tennessee boasts some of the best freestyle kayaking in the U.S. It was once a dammed waterway, but the Tennessee Valley Authority has been releasing recreational flows since the 1970s, creating a 10-mile stretch of Class III whitewater.

Rapids like Grumpy, Broken Nose, Flipper and Tablesaw create challenges for even the most experienced paddlers. But if you have the skills, the Ocoee has thrills. And if you don’t? Consider rafting. There are several rafting enterprises that will give you the thrills in a more-protected type experience. For a complete list of outfitters, visit timetoraft.com.

The **Chattooga River** begins in the mountains of North Carolina before



Photo courtesy of Outdoor Chattanooga

heading south to form a natural border between South Carolina and Georgia. Though it has a reputation of being one of the most unforgettable whitewater experiences in the South — thanks, in part, to its inclusion in the film “Deliverance” — the Chattooga is actually a river for all, from families to experienced paddlers.

There are two distinct sections. The calmest, Section III, is recommended for kayakers ages 8 and older and has numerous swimming holes. Leave Section IV for those with more experience. It has heart-stopping, Class IV rapids. For a list of rafting outfitters and guides, log onto visitoconeesc.com.

PEDAL POWER

Whether you want a strenuous mountain ride or prefer to pedal through flatter terrain, great cycling trails snake through the forests of the Southeast.

The trail running through Alabama’s **Chewacla State Park** takes you along some of the most beautiful parts of the Southern Appalachian Trail — 696 acres of it, to be exact. Some of it is good for beginners, while other parts add more thrills for experienced cyclists. There are some hand-built trails, as well as the state’s only

wall ride — a 15-foot-high arc wall known as the Great Wall of Chewacla. For more information, visit aotourism.com.

With terrain ranging from flatlands to challenging mountain climbs, some of Kentucky’s best cycling trails are found in **Mammoth Cave National Park**. Mammoth Cave Railroad Bike and Hike Trail is one of those rails-to-trails experiences that offers a choice of adventures. Ride or hike the 9-mile graveled trail that, back in the 1880s, was the rail line of the Mammoth Cave Railroad. The trail offers scenic overlooks, historic sites and interpretive displays along the way. Find more excitement at kygetaway.com.

HANG TIME

Hang gliding is a heart-stopping thrill ride that gives you a bird’s-eye view of the landscape. And the mountains around the Southeast offer the perfect opportunity to take a flying leap.

If you want a beautiful hang gliding location that offers stunning views of the Tennessee Valley, **Lookout Mountain Flight Park** is where you can see the “Grand Canyon of Tennessee” spread out before you.

Experienced guides offer extensive lessons with beginners starting out in the valley below. Altitude and speed on these tandem flights are gained by a tow line attached to a small aircraft. Jumping off the mountain above is only for rated pilots. For more information, visit flylookout.com.

The Wright Brothers took to the air first in **Kitty Hawk, North Carolina**, and now you can, too. There are no mountains, but there is wind, dunes and lots of room to run and land in soft sand. There are schools to teach you how, and it’s a good way to learn the art of hang gliding. Fly on over to kittyhawk.com for more information.

ROCK OUT

When your adventurous spirit calls out to let you know it’s time to hit the rocks, the Southeast’s sandstone cliffs are made for the sport.

The Red River Gorge occupies 29,000 acres within the beauty of Kentucky’s

Daniel Boone National Forest. Its climbing routes are a favorite with some of the best climbs and bouldering options in the world. Log on to redrivergorge.com for more information.

Climbers flock to the **Tennessee Wall** just north of downtown Chattanooga for hundreds of routes for climbing and bouldering. The Tennessee Wall is about 2 miles of cracks, overhanging walls, roofs and other features in a beautiful setting overlooking the Tennessee River in the Tennessee River Gorge. Visit trgt.org for more information.

Go bouldering at **Horse Pens 40**, a privately owned recreation area near Steele, Alabama. It’s home to a highly concentrated boulder field scattered among deciduous trees and grasslands, and it’s been attracting boulderers for decades. There’s a small fee to enter, \$8-\$10, and camping is available for a few dollars more. Check it out at hp40.com. 📍

BELOW: Running the rapids on the Ocoee River.



Photo courtesy of Outdoor Chattanooga



Contractors work to complete the Pathway Village in late 2022.

Big hearts behind tiny homes

Greenwood Pathway House breaks new ground in helping the homeless

Story by JOHN CLAYTON

Greenwood Pathway House isn't really about the daily meals it serves or the beds it provides for hundreds of homeless people throughout the year.

In terms of beds, warm meals and a roof, Pathway House is, indeed, a shelter. But, more than a decade since its humble beginnings, it has become a model for addressing the problems behind homelessness.

The January groundbreaking for the new Pathway Village proves just how, well, groundbreaking, the philosophy behind Pathway House is. The concept centers on treating the deeper causes of homelessness rather than focusing on the symptoms. Pathway Village, an expansion at Pathway's 16-acre Panola Avenue campus, will include a dozen tiny cottages designed for families. The village will allow families to stay together with a central kitchen and a multipurpose dining area for everyone using Pathway House services.

"We're treating the root cause of the problem," says Anthony Price, Pathway House executive director. "Our goal is to actually help them overcome homelessness permanently. It's a calm, time-consuming process, but we're seeing it yield some results that are changing a lot of lives."

With the advent of the village, fewer people in need will be turned away. Price and Chief of Staff Chuck Taylor say it would not be possible without WCFIBER, which provides security and communications systems necessary to make Pathway Village viable. "There is no way we could've done this without WCFIBER," Price says. "All our buildings are hooked together with a fiber network — all of our security systems and our servers feed off of it. So, getting fiber installed was a critical piece in being able to build the village. It took a system capable of being able to run our security and our communications."



Photos by Matt Ledger

Greenwood Pathway House Executive Director Anthony Price oversees contractors building the tiny homes in the Pathway Village.



Pathway House Chief of Staff Chuck Taylor has been with the organization since 2014.

Such advances helped Pathway House grow and strengthened its ability to serve what is often a hidden need.

FINDING PATHWAYS

Greenwood Pathway House is living up to its name, creating pathways for the homeless toward better lives. “In 2020, we actually made an intentional transition. We don’t even call ourselves a shelter anymore,” Price says. “We are very intentional about helping people overcome homelessness. There’s a ton of research out there that helps us understand the root cause of homelessness.”

Those causes are varied, often starting with childhood trauma that leads to other obstacles, Price says.

The Pathway Village expansion is serving a need Taylor could hardly have imagined when the shelter started in part of the former Abney Memorial Baptist Church. At first, there were eight beds and no facilities for women or children. The shelter temporarily shared the premises with the church until its new facility was completed. “The hood system for our new building is bigger than the entire kitchen we had in the original,” Taylor says. “It was a meager beginning, and it’s something that’s grown a great deal since then.”

The good news is that Pathway House leaders found the resources to expand. The bad news is that growth was necessary to help a community in need.

Women and children — there were around 400 homeless children when the shelter started, according to Greenwood County Schools statistics quoted by Taylor — were being turned away until a women-only facility opened. The arrival of Pathway Village means even fewer will need to be turned away.

“What we had then was, of course, nowhere near equal to the need,” Taylor says. “We were able to collect enough data over a period of time so that we could demonstrate how many people we were turning away just for a want of space. One of the groups that we were turning away was women and mothers with children — and startling numbers of them.”

Taylor also learned there were needs beyond Greenwood as the only shelter in a seven-county region that also includes Abbeville, Laurens, Edgefield, Newberry, Saluda and McCormick counties. Being in a small community and accepting no government funds creates challenges for Pathway House, but its location also allows it to sell client-created art at the Main & Maxwell gallery in downtown Greenwood. It allows the facility to provide more than “three hots and a cot.”

It allows Pathway House to build a village. “Our clients develop coping skills and the other skills they need to never come back to Pathway House, and that’s what we want,” Price says. 📞

Stop by the Main & Maxwell store in Greenwood for a bread board or a cross that was created in the Homeless Art Therapy Program.



Over the past four years, Pathway House:

- Partnered with 223 organizations and agencies to help address the medical, educational and professional needs of its clients.
- Helped 108 people get jobs.
- Worked to get 102 people permanent housing.
- Referred 52 people into addiction treatment programs.
- Helped an average of eight people per year graduate from Piedmont Tech.
- Provided trauma treatment and therapeutic programs, including an art therapy program that is the only one of its kind on the Atlantic coast.
- Opened a thrift store that helps raise money for operations and provides job training for clients.

For every person who is able to find his or her footing, learn job skills, meet educational goals and get the help for mental, emotional, physical or other issues, the burden on other local agencies is lessened.

“We’re able to show the community that we’re making a positive impact,” says Anthony Price, Pathway House executive director. “We’re seeing a lot of positive things happen, but I think that’s because we’re dealing with the root cause of homelessness instead of just trying to treat a symptom.”

Family TV night

Great family binges for all ages

With the wealth of streaming services available today, there have never been so many viewing options available at the tap of a few buttons. But the constant barrage of new TV shows and movies can make it difficult to sort the wheat from the chaff, especially if you're looking for something the whole family can enjoy.

While services like Disney+ come ready with a huge catalog of family classics, other major streamers are still building up their libraries of kid-friendly content. Here are a few suggestions to help your family start exploring the latest offerings.





AGES 4+

“Bluey,” Disney+ — Inexhaustible Blue Heeler dog Bluey turns everyday life into amazing adventures that stimulate her imagination and emotional resilience. Broken up into short, nine-minute episodes, the Australian animated show has garnered praise for providing constructive messages while remaining engaging for adults.

“Motown Magic,” Netflix — This feel-good series celebrates music, has colorful, eye-catching visuals and instills positive messages about self-confidence. For lovers of oldies, the soundtrack is also a great introduction to Motown and soul classics.

“Sesame Street,” HBO Max — Starting with the show’s 51st season in 2020, HBO Max became the official home of “Sesame Street.” Get access to new episodes immediately so your kids can experience the fun and entertaining brand of education that “Sesame Street” has offered for decades.

“Madagascar: A Little Wild,” Hulu — Drawing on the humor and animation that made the Madagascar movies popular, this musical comedy series follows four young animals in a rescue habitat in Central Park. The show celebrates being yourself and pursuing your dreams, no matter how wild.

“Shaun the Sheep,” Netflix — Adults and young kids alike can enjoy a laugh in this clay-mation series from the makers of “Wallace and Gromit.” Shaun’s barnyard misadventures with his cousin Timmy, sheepdog Bitzer, cat Pidsley and fellow sheep Shirley have even spun off into several movies available exclusively on Netflix.

AGES 7+

“Just Add Magic,” Amazon Prime Video — When Kelly discovers her grandmother’s mysterious cookbook in the attic, she and her best friends, Darbie and Hannah, find out there’s more magic to the recipes than just a secret ingredient. Loosely based on Cindy Callaghan’s popular book by the same name, the show offers magical fun for the whole family.

“Pokemon Journeys,” Netflix — This Netflix series is action-packed enough to grab the attention of new viewers and based on the anime series some parents may have watched when they were kids. Follow young trainer Ash as he travels the world learning about new Pokemon.

“Gravity Falls,” Disney+ — If your little

ones aren’t quite ready for shows like “Stranger Things” or sci-fi classics like “The X-Files,” “Gravity Falls” might be just the ticket. This show offers Pacific Northwest weirdness for the whole family as twins Mabel and Dipper Pines spend the summer with their great-uncle Stan investigating strange mysteries in Oregon.

“Star Wars: The Clone Wars,” Disney+ — Before there was a Disney series for every character in the Star Wars universe, “The Clone Wars” was filling in the gaps between the canonical Star Wars movies. The continuing adventures of Obi Wan, Anakin and young Palawan Ahsoka Tano feature enough surprisingly deep storytelling that parents might be as eager as their kids to hit play on the next episode.

“TrollsTopia,” Hulu — Picking up after the movie “Trolls: World Tour,” “TrollsTopia” follows Poppy as she attempts to unite delegates from the Country Western, Classical, Funk, Techno and Hard Rock tribes in one harmonious city. Watch as they learn to celebrate their differences with a variety of catchy tunes.

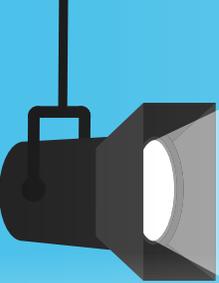
AGES 11+

“Raising Dion,” Netflix — Second grader Dion learns to balance super powers and villain battles with the everyday challenges of growing up. The mild violence and portrayals of bullying might be a little much for younger viewers, but tween audiences will find plenty to enjoy.

“The Hardy Boys,” Hulu — Based on the popular book series, this show follows Frank and Joe Hardy when they move from the city to their parents’ hometown of Bridgeport. When their dad takes on a secret investigation, it doesn’t take long for the Hardy boys to get drawn into the mystery.

“The Quest,” Disney+ — A new take on the reality competition series from the team behind “The Amazing Race,” “The Quest” drops eight teens into an immersive fantasy world where it’s their job to save the kingdom. Find out which contestant is The One while scratching that old “Legends of the Hidden Temple” itch.

“The Dark Crystal: Age of Resistance,” Netflix — This prequel to the 1982 dark fantasy movie from Jim Henson follows a group of Gelflings as they seek to stop power-hungry overlords from draining the life from their world. Parents who enjoyed the original will enjoy the shot of nostalgia, while younger viewers marvel at the stunning visuals. 🗨



WCTEL Spotlight: Board of Directors

The WCTEL Board of Directors is made up of nine members, elected from areas in our service territory. In the next few editions of Connected, we'll share the stories of each of these leaders.



WCTEL board member
Tag Bussey

TAG BUSSEY was born, and still resides, in Modoc. He joined WCTEL as a board director in 1987.

“In these 35 years, I have seen this company grow from a small telephone company to a well-known leader in the world of technology,” Tag says. “I am very proud to have been a part of this growth. Having fiber optic cable and cable TV in such a rural area as ours is huge.”

In 1984, Tag started a small construction company named Country Way Contracting with only a dump truck, a backhoe and two employees. Today, the company employs 40 people.

He married his high school sweetheart, Terri Gates, in 1970. They have four children: Karen, Ben, LeAnne and Amber, and seven grandchildren: Sara, George, Josh, Taylor, Jake, Karson and Dylan.

Tag is a lifetime member of Modoc Baptist Church, where he has been a deacon since 1975. He is also an active member of Modoc Fire Department. “I enjoy gardening, and I plant a big vegetable garden every year,” he says. “Family is very important to me, so spending time with them is a joy.” Tag and Terri spend many nights watching their grandchildren play a variety of sports.



WCTEL secretary
Jane Stone

JANE STONE is a lifelong resident of Donalds. She graduated from Dixie High School and then obtained a Bachelor of Science in business education from Erskine College. She furthered her education at Clemson University, where she earned a master’s degree in administration supervision.

After graduation, Jane taught at Greer High School, Ware Shoals High School, Manpower Development Training School, Dixie High School, Lander University and then retired after teaching at Piedmont Technical College.

“I’ve been on the board for 22 years, and I’ve enjoyed every minute,” Jane says. “One of the best decisions we made was in 2008 when the board approved management’s proposal to start laying the fiber optic cable. That has changed the whole perspective of the cooperative. I look forward to the future growth of WCTEL.”

Jane served on several other boards including approximately 25 years on the Donalds Town Council, the Abbeville County Development Board, the Abbeville County Library Board and the Heritage Corridor Board. She also is an active member of Greenville Presbyterian Church.

Jane enjoys cooking and is known in the community for her homemade bread. Her other hobbies include spending time with family and friends, walking and reading.

“I have enjoyed being associated with the WCTEL staff,” Jane says. “They are respected for their dedication and how they respond to the members’ needs.” 

Life lessons

Staying after class at Sharon Manor

Story by JOHN CLAYTON

Many people recall their years at the old Sharon School in Abbeville, but no one has memories of the place quite like Dail Grimm does.

Dail taught at the school in the late 1970s. After staying very late one night before beginning her maternity leave, she left to find her vehicle was out of commission. “There were no cellphones in 1979, and everyone was gone,” Dail recalls. “So, I crawled through this window — while very pregnant — to get to a phone.”

A few days later, she went into labor in Georgia Burris’ second grade classroom. Two hours after that, once the substitute teacher arrived, Dail went to the hospital and her son, Garret Grimm, was born.

Today, the 1920s-era schoolhouse — where students, teachers and staff made countless memories — has a new purpose. It’s now the Sharon Manor bed-and-breakfast and its new owners, David and Benita Chupp, embrace its legacy to create a unique destination.

Dail returned to Abbeville in September 2022 and shared her story with David and Benita. Naturally, she booked a night in her former first grade classroom. It’s now a guest room, furnished with a comfy bed where the chalkboard once was.

HISTORY LESSONS

Benita and David purchased the building in 2012 in an online auction, despite them both already having full-time jobs. Over a few years, David transformed the classrooms into guest suites. In 2017, the Chupps started hosting guests, relying



Benita and David Chupp bought Sharon Manor in 2012.

largely on word of mouth for promotion. “We wanted to create a peaceful place for guests to enjoy,” Benita says.

The building is a nostalgic place for many people, including Cole Wilson, who worked as a contractor renovating the building for two and a half years before the Chupps purchased it. His family’s ties to the old school span generations. “My daddy and his daddy drove the school bus,” Cole says.

Cole’s grandmother also worked in the lunchroom, and one summer, Cole’s father painted the entire interior of the 12,000-square-foot building with a 4-inch paintbrush. “It’s kind of a little ironic that many years later, I worked on the building,” he says.

FAMILY STYLE

Benita and David’s eldest daughter, Bridgette Yoder, creates the bed-and-breakfast’s social media posts. Her husband, Jason Yoder, created the original sharonmanor.com website.



Dail Grimm once crawled through this window when she was a Sharon School teacher.

Photos by Matt Ledger

In 2021, the Chupps decided to launch Sharon Manor as a full-time B&B, listing the rooms on travel app Airbnb.

Local referrals helped start the business, but Benita now relies on her broadband connection to reach a wider audience. Social media has helped Sharon Manor stay connected to guests and build a devoted following on repeat customers. One recent Instagram video has over 8,000 views, and counting.

Sharon Manor is located at 12 Firehouse Road, in Abbeville. For more information, visit sharonmanor.com, follow @SharonManorEvents on Facebook or call 864-378-9310. 📞

Morning blend

Benita and David Chupp know good coffee is key to a pleasant stay. Every guest at Sharon Manor can count on having a hot, fresh cup of joe waiting for them in the morning.

“We place a sample bag of coffee roasted by David’s company, Thru The Flame Coffee Roasters, in our guest rooms,” Benita says. “People love good fresh coffee in the morning. Guests often purchase more to take home with them.”

To learn more, or to purchase some coffee to brew in your own kitchen, visit throughtheflamecoffee.com.

MEALS

that will make you

SQUEAL



Ham-bitious ways to use your leftovers

While much of the rest of the world celebrates the arrival of spring with lamb, in the U.S. pink, salty-sweet slices of cured pork, slathered in a sugary glaze, will fill many tables.

The problem, however, is that unless you buy a boneless ham by the pound or one of those small canned hams, you'll probably bring home a large bone-in ham from the market or treat yourself to one from the honey ham store. And more likely than not, after you serve dinner with a couple of side dishes, you're going to have a lot of leftovers.

There are so many ways to use up that ham that go beyond deviling or as a salad topper.

Here are three ideas to make the most of your leftover ham. They're wonderful by themselves, or just make a day of it and make them all, using up most, if not all, of that leftover ham. There's nothing better than a bowl of creamy ham soup with cheesy ham-studded biscuits and a delicious ham sandwich — with a twist.



FOOD EDITOR
ANNE P. BRALY
IS A NATIVE OF
CHATTANOOGA,
TENNESSEE.

Photography by MARK GILLILAND | Food Styling by RHONDA GILLILAND

CREAMY POTATO HAM SOUP

- 4 strips of bacon
- 1/2 cup onion, finely chopped
- 3-4 medium potatoes, peeled and diced (2-3 cups)
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 4 cups chicken broth, preferably homemade (see note)
- 1 1/2 cups cooked ham, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 1 cup corn, canned (drained) or frozen (no need to thaw)
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- Salt (to taste)
- 1 teaspoon fresh parsley, finely chopped

Saute bacon in a large stockpot over medium-high heat until crisp. Chop the bacon and set it aside on a plate, reserving bacon drippings in the pot. Add onion and potatoes to the pot and saute for 1-2 minutes until fragrant. Stir in flour and mix well until the flour is fully incorporated. Stir in chicken broth and mix until the soup is smooth and uniform. Bring the soup to a boil over medium-high heat. Cover and let it continue to boil for 10-15 minutes until the potatoes are fork tender.

Mash half of the potatoes in the



pot with a potato masher to help thicken the soup.

Stir in ham, corn, heavy cream and black pepper. Let the soup simmer over medium heat and whisk occasionally until thickened to a desired consistency, 5-10 minutes. If the chowder gets too thick, add a little water to dilute it. Add salt to taste. Serve topped with reserved crispy bacon and fresh parsley. Makes about 4 servings.

Note: To make homemade chicken stock, boil a whole chicken in water to cover with some chunks of onion and celery added. Simmer the chicken until tender. You can tell if it's tender by pulling on the leg. If the leg comes out easily, the chicken is ready. Save the chicken for chicken salad or a chicken casserole. But save the stock, too. Salt it, to taste, and use it right away for this soup, or let it cool, pour it into a gallon-size freezer bag and freeze it.



CHEESY HAM BISCUITS

These biscuits pull double duty as a side to soup or cut them in half, add a fried egg and make a breakfast biscuit.

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 cup salted butter (1 stick)
- 1 1/4 cups buttermilk
- 1/2 cup chopped ham
- 1 cup shredded extra sharp cheddar cheese

Preheat the oven to 450 F.
Mix dry ingredients. Cut butter into thin slices and then cut it into the flour

until pieces of butter are small. Add in the buttermilk slowly and incorporate with the flour mixture. Don't overmix.

Sprinkle a small amount of flour on a work surface and place dough on top of it. Press down to make flat and then add the ham and cheddar cheese to the top. Knead dough a few times to incorporate the ham and cheese.

Press or roll out into 1/2-inch thickness. Use a biscuit cutter or rim of a glass to cut out biscuits.

Place biscuits on a baking sheet and bake for 10-12 minutes. Makes about a dozen biscuits.



BAKED HAM SANDWICHES

This is a favorite vintage recipe from Encore! Nashville, a Junior League of Nashville publication from the 1970s. Prepare ahead: These sandwiches are best made early in the morning or the day before to give time for the "custard" to soak into the bread.

- 8 slices bread
- 2 tablespoons butter, softened
- 4 slices ham
- 4 slices sharp cheddar cheese
- 1/2 teaspoon dry mustard
- 3 eggs, slightly beaten
- 2 cups evaporated milk or whole milk
- 1 teaspoon grated onion
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- Dash of Worcestershire sauce
- Dash of cayenne pepper

Trim crusts from bread and butter both sides well. Place 4 slices of bread

in a buttered baking dish. Place a piece of ham on each piece and cover with cheese, then top with remaining bread slices.

Combine remaining ingredients and pour over bread. Refrigerate all day or overnight. When ready to bake, spoon sauce over bread again and bake at 300 F, uncovered, until sandwiches are bubbly and golden brown on top, about 1 hour. Makes 4 servings.

Note: For a heartier sandwich, slices of tomato, avocado or bacon may be layered between the ham and cheese. 🗨️





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