



JULY/AUGUST 2023

CONNECTED

Arts for all

The mission and progress
of the MACK

POPULAR
PIT STOP

GOURMET
GADGET



By SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

Take a BOLD step

A new toolkit opens doors


Summer is finally here! That means barbecues, days at the pool and, if you have kids, reminding them to tackle their dreaded summer reading list before it is too late.

As they are doing their homework, I have an assignment for you. But don't worry, it's only a dozen pages.

The past few years have shown the world that broadband access is a necessity, not a luxury. As the demand and investment in broadband increases across rural America, so does the need for a skilled workforce to build and maintain these broadband networks.

NTCA's Smart Communities program recently teamed up with the National Rural Education Association to create the Broadband Opportunities and Leadership Development (BOLD) K-12 Career Awareness Toolkit, which is chock-full of new and creative ways to engage students and get them excited about careers in the broadband industry. Whether your student is interested in computer science, engineering and even accounting or marketing, there are opportunities for everyone in the broadband industry.

From guidance on organizing hands-on internships and site visits, to working with schools to develop curricula, or even ways to get involved with local esports and robotics teams, this toolkit is a wonderful resource for parents, educators and community-based broadband providers alike.

Summer may be in full swing, but back-to-school season will be here before you know it. Make sure you add the Smart Rural Community K-12 Career Awareness Toolkit to your summer reading list today! Read it here: ntca.org/BOLDToolkit. 




Avoid QR mischief

Scammers co-opt this handy code

QR codes — it stands for Quick Response — pop up frequently. TV ads, restaurant menus and much more rely on these little squares of blocky lines to quickly link a smartphone user to handy information, a download or as a way to digitally send money to someone.

The FBI, however, has warned that cybercriminals may tamper with the codes. The FBI offers a few tips so you can take advantage of QR codes while staying safe and secure:

- After scanning a QR code, check the URL to make sure it is the site you want. A malicious domain name may be similar to the intended URL but with typos or a misplaced letter.
- Be cautious when entering login, personal or financial information.
- If scanning a physical QR code, ensure the code shows no signs of tampering, such as a sticker placed over the original.
- Do not download an app from a QR code.
- If you receive an email asking you to complete a payment through a QR code, call the requesting company to verify. Look up the company's number on a trusted site — don't use a number from the email.
- Do not download a QR code scanner app — the built-in phone camera is a safer option.
- If you receive a QR code you believe to be from someone you know, contact them through a known number or address to verify.
- Avoid making payments through a site navigated to from a QR code. Instead, manually enter a known and trusted URL to complete the payment. 



Seeding the future

THE CLOUD UPLIFTS EDUCATION

The arrival of fast, reliable internet service in rural areas sparked innovation across businesses, health care providers and government resources, leading to more options and richer services. When it comes to education, how students interact now with schools and each other has evolved at a similarly blistering pace.

First, there was the growth of cloud-based services — multiple remote networked computers that handle storage and processing of information. Then, since the cloud was doing the heavy computing work, an entire class of low-power, lower-cost devices sprang up.

Together, this combo — low-cost Chromebooks, as well as similar devices, and cloud-based tools — have changed how many students learn.

Collaboration: The cloud allows students to work together on group projects after school or other times they're not physically in the same room. Cloud-based storage systems, such as Google Drive, Microsoft's OneDrive and others, allow the creation and sharing of documents, spreadsheets and presentations in real time — you can see the work of other members of your team as they're making changes.

Collaboration and brainstorming are easier than ever.

Accessibility: With their Chromebooks or similar devices students can access their work from any location, at any time. All their work is saved on the cloud, making it easily accessible and organized.

Efficiency: In many school systems, teachers use the cloud to grade assignments more efficiently and even easily share the results with parents. Students might receive immediate feedback, allowing them to improve their work and better understand the material.

Personalization: These cloud-based systems create the option for personalized learning experiences. Students can access online resources and tools that cater to their specific needs and learning styles. For families that home-school, online communities with similar educational interests and other resources also become more accessible.

Productivity: Thanks to the cloud and low-cost computing devices, students can be more productive, organized and collaborative. And because the tools are far less expensive than traditional computers, more people can affordably access them. 📧

Looking ahead to a new school year?

Make sure you're prepared.

- **The essential computer:** If your student needs a basic laptop to do homework and access online learning platforms, try the Lenovo Flex 5i Chromebook. "It's comparatively inexpensive, and it offers fast performance plus an excellent keyboard and trackpad. The Flex 5i is also compact and light, and its 1080p touchscreen is vivid and bright," according to a review by Wirecutter, a website operated by The New York Times offering reviews of a range of devices. Prices vary, but expect to pay about \$350.
- **Quality web cam:** From education to work, video calls are common. If your computer isn't already equipped, consider adding a camera. The Logitech C270 HD, often available for less than \$30, is a good choice for students required to attend lessons online. It delivers quality and clarity.

Seasons of service

Working daily to help our community thrive

Hello! Summer is here, and with it comes so many memories. Family reunions. Fourth of July celebrations. Lake time. Grilling. Fireflies. Vacations.



JEFF WILSON
Chief Executive Officer

It also means extra insects, extreme heat and humidity. With all things in life, there is a flip side. It's where you put your focus that makes all the difference.

These early mornings are when I walk to beat the heat. It's a time of reflection, the setting of intentions and thoughts for how we continue to make progress. It's easy to get caught up in day-to-day operations and focus on what could be improved, where efficiencies could be gained and the day-in and day-out hum of life.

But that isn't how innovation is born, and that isn't how excellence is achieved.

Late in the spring, our board and leadership team held a strategic planning retreat. This year's retreat was different. Instead of focusing on operations and financials, we focused on the one thing that drives everything we do — YOU. Philosophically and tangibly, how can we serve you better?

We kicked off the meeting with each board member sharing what it means to serve on the WCTEL/WCFIBER board:

"It makes me proud to serve this organization that offers service that rivals, if not exceeds, urban areas."

"We do important work and get to do it with joyful people. I love being a part of that."

"What we do matters. It is a privilege to be a part of something that matters."

"We work with and serve some of the finest people I've ever met."

"Loyalty. Legacy. Longevity. I will never take serving on this board lightly."

"I am in alignment with people of integrity. Serving this board has done more for my personal development than what I can ever give back."

"I'm proud and honored to be a part of this history and legacy, and to be trusted to give back to it."

"This is a family atmosphere."

Simply put, your board is working for you. Every single day.

During our time together, we assessed what it means to serve you. There is a deep knowing within collective DNA that service extends far beyond our internet, voice and TV. We are committed to not only the sustainability of our communities, but we are also determined to work with you to strengthen them.

Through the Freshwater Coast Community Foundation, we are giving back. We are investing in our youth through a variety of programs, including the Abbeville Promise, our scholarship program and the Foundation for Rural Service Youth Tour. We are investing so our youth stay here, get an education here and hopefully build a life right here.

Through our enhanced WiFi X service, we're now able to protect your homes from cyberthreats and intrusions and offer enhanced parental controls that help give you peace of mind.

Through community education classes, we're working to give you tools to ease your day-to-day lives.

But we're not complacent. Our board doubled down on our commitment to enact and enhance programs to better serve you and ALL of our communities.

We have a few action items. Stay tuned, and know this: We are committed to a spirit of continued service excellence. It is an honor to serve you. [📧](#)



CONNECTED

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West Carolina Telephone
233 Highway 28 Bypass
Abbeville, SC 29620
Telephone: 864-446-2111
www.WCTEL.com

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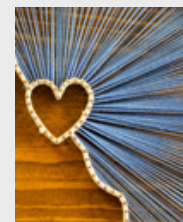
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UTILITY RESOURCES

On the Cover:



The MACK Artisans Guild & Gift Shop sells the work of local artists, including the string art of Leyna Rose. See story Page 8.

Photo courtesy of Robert Vance

Partnering with our community

In May, WCTEL hosted the Freshwater Coast Community Regional Business Plan Competition for High School Entrepreneurs. The goal of this competition is to encourage creative and entrepreneurial thinking. We hosted a total of eight students from Abbeville High School, Calhoun Falls Charter School, Crescent High School and Dixie High School.



The students who presented the top three business presentations were awarded Visa gift cards. Leilany Diaz was the first-place finalist and received \$300. Lilly Cook finished in second place, winning \$200, and Zayana "Zeze" Reeves took third, claiming a \$100 prize. WCTEL also gave a \$25 Amazon gift card to each participating student.

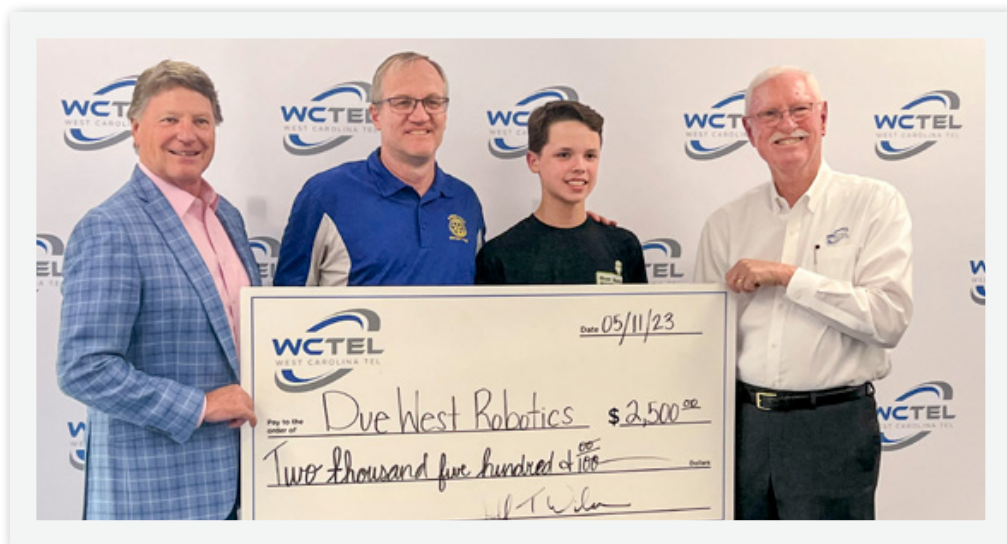
From left, Leilany Diaz, Zayana Reeves, Crescent High School business teacher Joseph Long and Lilly Cook attend the Freshwater Coast Community Regional Business Plan Competition for High School Entrepreneurs.

— HAPPY —
Fourth of July!

WCTEL offices will be closed on **Tuesday, July 4**, in observance of Independence Day.

**ALWAYS
CALL
BEFORE
YOU DIG**

811



Helping STEM bloom

WCTEL recently awarded \$2,500 to the Due West Robotics team. The team's mission is to educate and inspire young people in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math.

The Due West group of fourth through eighth graders competed at the South Carolina First LEGO League state championship and qualified for the Worcester Polytechnic Institute's International Invitation. They competed against 96 of the world's top FLL teams. Learn more about this event at roboticsforeveryone/fll-open.

SHIVER ME TIMBERS!

Family fun sets sail at pirate-themed attractions



The American Star pirate ship sets sail from Orange Beach, Alabama.

Photo courtesy of Gulf Shores & Orange Beach Tourism

Story by ANNE BRALY

For generations, kids and adults alike have been captivated by legendary tales of pirates' treasure-hunting and swashbuckling adventures. If your family loves the story of Peter Pan and the misadventures of Captain Kidd, you're in luck! There's a bounty of places around the South where your crew can get its pirate on.

PARADISE LAGOON

Lexington, Kentucky

Woodland Aquatic Center's brand-new Paradise Lagoon, which opened in May,

is a pirate ship and water attraction that brings high seas adventures to Kentucky.

While the Paradise Lagoon pirate ship is new, it replaces the USS Woodland that generations of people grew up with. That ship sailed the waters of Woodland's pool for decades before being decommissioned when it was no longer seaworthy. The folks from Lexington's Parks and Recreation Department let the public vote on what they wanted to see replace the old vessel.

"Those results clearly indicated that the public wanted to keep the theme of

a pirate ship," says Michelle Kosieniak, parks and recreation superintendent of planning and design.

The new USS Woodland reimagines pirate life by letting kids and adults climb aboard — they can try to find a hidden periscope. They can also use a waterslide to make a quick getaway into the pool while sea creatures look on. The design offers fun sprayers and water cannons, too. But, Michelle says, "It has more gentle play features than the old USS Woodland, so that our youngest visitors can also interact without being overwhelmed."

- ▶ Admission: \$6 for adults, \$4 for kids 15 and under
- ▶ Information: lexingtonky.gov/neighborhood-pools

BLACK DAGGER PIRATE CRUISE

Hilton Head, South Carolina

Board the Black Dagger and set sail for a memorable day of adventure. Get your own pirate name, learn some pirate lingo, find sunken treasures, get a temporary tattoo and defeat Stinky Pete in a water cannon battle. It's an action-packed experience that lets kids live their pirate fantasies on the water while using their imaginations.



Visitors have a chance to play pirate aboard the American Star's pirate cruise in Orange Beach, Alabama.

The pirate ship cruises the calm waters of Calibogue Sound, so seasickness is rare. Wear comfortable clothes — bathing suits are not needed, but sunblock is wise. Reservations are strongly recommended.

- ▶ Admission: \$39 for adults and children, infants 11 months and younger are free
- ▶ Information: piratesofhiltonhead.com

CANOE THE CANEY

Silver Point, Tennessee

It's said treasure abounds on the banks of the Caney, a river that flows deep in the mountains of East Tennessee. There's a legend about a crew of pirates who stole a cursed treasure belonging to dastardly Captain JaBez and fled, spreading his ill-gotten gains across the water as they went.

Now, boaters — wearing pirate hats and carrying swords — can travel the river in canoes, searching for JaBez's gold coins and sparkling jewels, while keeping their eyes peeled for the captain and his crew who may be disguised as local fishermen.

The Pirate Adventure is one of two pirate-themed trips offered by Canoe the Caney. The Pirate's Dinner and Sunset River Cruise is new this season. The youngest allowed in a canoe or kayak solo is 8 years old, depending on experience. The youngest age for a child with a parent on board is 3 years old.

- ▶ Admission: Starts at \$29
- ▶ Information: canoethecaney.com

Pirates battle on ship at the Pirate's Voyage Dinner and Show in Pigeon Forge.



Photo courtesy of Hollywood Company

PIRATE VOYAGE DINNER SHOW

Pigeon Forge, Tennessee

You'll have a four-course feast that even the pickiest of pirates will enjoy. The menu includes Cracklin' Pan-Fried Chicken, Swashbucklin' Sugar-Cured Ham, Cob-O' Butter Corn, Pirate Herb-Basted Potato, Walk the Plank dessert and unlimited Coca-Cola, tea or coffee. And just to make sure all pirates are satisfied, gluten-free, vegan and vegetarian meals are available.

While you dine, Blackbeard and his quartermaster, Calico Jack, will lead the Crimson and Sapphire crews in a battle on land and sea in full-size pirate ships.

- ▶ Admission: \$29.99 for kids, \$49.99 for adults and free for children under 3
- ▶ Information: piratesvoyage.com

PIRATE SHIP CRUISE

Orange Beach, Alabama

Bring your buccaneers aboard the American Star for a Pirate Adventure on Terry Cove, where they can get their faces painted, learn a little pirate lingo and even sing a sea shanty or two. Visitors get to help defend the ship in a "gun" battle, hear true stories of pirate and privateer attacks in the legendary Pirate's Cove and hunt for the captain's lost gold and treasure chest while keeping their eyes out for any surprise attacks! As an added bonus, you may see some dolphins, too.

- ▶ Admission: Starts at \$29, free for children 1 and under
- ▶ Information: hudsonmarina.net/Pirate-Adventure.htm



Pirates circle the treasure map aboard the American Star's pirate cruise in Orange Beach, Alabama.

Photos courtesy of Gulf Shores & Orange Beach Tourism

MACK Renovation

Furthering the vision of 'Arts for All'

Story by JAMIE BIESIADA



ABOVE: When the project is completed visitors will be able to book a room at the historic Hotel Keturah.

LEFT: Heather McNally, MACK director of programs and development, reviews the blueprints for the renovations at the historic Hotel Keturah.

Since it was established on Dec. 6, 1984, the McCormick Arts Council at the Keturah, or the MACK, has operated with the goal of bringing the arts, culture and education to its community.

Now, ongoing rehabilitation will ensure the historic Hotel Keturah, the MACK's headquarters, will be even better suited to further that mission and enable the organization to serve its McCormick community when it reopens.

In fact, the MACK's new vision is Arts for All, and its expanded mission statement is "advancing the arts for all of our communities," says Heather McNally, director of programs and development for the MACK.

HISTORIC HOME BASE

At its height, the MACK served around 20,000 community members a year through programs, exhibitions, art classes, workshops, community events and more. The MACK hotel site stopped operating in March 2020 due to the pandemic and has remained closed for the renovations.

Despite the closure, the organization has still been serving the community by providing programs in alternate spaces.

The MACK operates out of the historic Hotel Keturah, and first opened the doors to provide programs to the public in 1985. It's centrally located in McCormick's historic downtown, at the center of McCormick County.

The property has actually been home to two hotels, with the original structure destroyed by fire. The Hotel Keturah that stands today was constructed around 1910 by W.J. Conner, whose wife was the hotel's namesake. It was operated by the Conner family. The hotel served travelers and train passengers passing through the area and remained in operation until the 1960s. Eventually, the town took ownership of the property, and the MACK moved there in the mid-1980s.

BRINGING BACK THE MACK

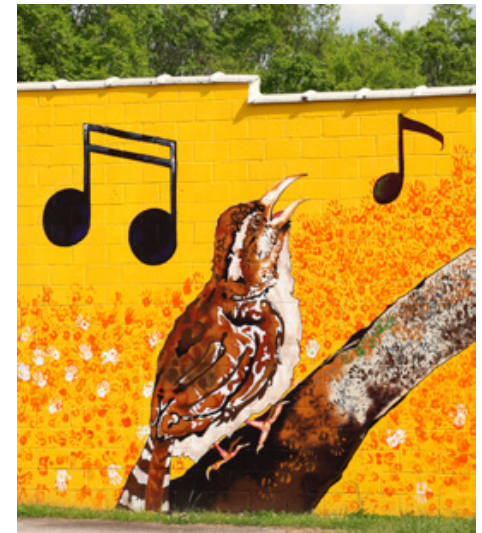
Grants and donations have enabled the MACK to do some piecemeal work on the building over the years, Heather says. For



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: From left, Heather McNally shares the progress of the MACK projects with Artisan Guild & Gift Shop manager Linda Schoppe and customer Natoyia Key.

Artist Damion Johnson created this mural program on the new Paul Dennis Youth Center with the Painting a Brighter Future program. Community members added their handprints as a symbol of support.

“Alice in Wonderland” is the first all-student production by the McCormick Elementary School Drama Club, under the direction of Jordan Cook.



instance, 100,000 bees had to be relocated from the third floor at one point. The roof was restored, and the back deck was reinforced.

Historically, the MACK only operated on the first floor. The installation of an HVAC unit helped open up the second floor, but accessibility was still a challenge.

In February 2021, the MACK contracted an architectural firm to create a plan to shore up the building and its infrastructure, and improve accessibility. Construction work began in May 2022. “We really do want this building to be fully accessible. We need to meet the federal marker for it,” Heather says, especially considering the fact that it serves a larger proportion of citizens with mobility needs. “But it is critical that we retain the historic character of the building, so we’ve been really careful about each step.”

Considering the scope and cost of the project, it’s been broken down into a few phases. Initially, the rehabilitation will address accessibility needs, increase gallery space, create larger classrooms and a new reception room and make its spaces flexible to suit many uses. The current work is expected to be completed by the end of the summer with intentions to continue until the project is complete and ready to serve the community.

Further out, the MACK is looking at installing a commercial kitchen, an



Photo courtesy of MACK. All other photos by Matt Lediger.

elevator to enhance access to all areas of the building, a youth center and art studio. “We’ve never been able to open up the third floor, which will have a future youth center and young adults studio for the arts,” Heather says. “We’re really excited about that.”

Also on the list for potential improvements are an off-site kiln room for pottery and ceramics classes and climate-controlled storage in the basement.


“The reason for a lot of those investments is we are trying to expand the use of opportunities,” Heather says. “We want to be a catalyst facility for new partnerships. Meeting rooms, rentals, a destination site, weddings, for example. We really want to be able to not only increase our revenue capacity, but use of that beautiful building in a safe and innovative way to serve our deserving rural community.”

A BRIGHT FUTURE

There was an unexpected bonus to the ongoing work at the Hotel Keturah — an artisan shop previously located in the building relocated to a storefront on Main Street and renamed itself the MACK Artisans Guild & Gift Shop. It serves around 35 local artisans.

“They’ve been doing wonderfully as a retail location site for McCormick, and I really think it has enhanced that entire block of Main Street,” Heather says.

Heather’s vision for the MACK’s future is bright and includes gallery space to exhibit artwork, expanded classes in more classroom space, new and innovative programs and more partnerships within the local community. “Everybody in our whole community should feel as though the building and the organization is there to serve them,” Heather says. “I can’t wait for that day to come.”

Anyone interested can donate to the MACK’s Capital Fund for the rehabilitation project at mccormickarts.org. 



FELLOW TRAVELERS

Digital communities keep travelers connected on the go

Story by DREW WOOLLEY



The internet was a much different place when Peter Daams started Travellerspoint.com with his brother, Samuel, in 2002. Back then, they were looking at sites like FriendsReunited and classmates.com for inspiration — places for people who had lost touch to reconnect.

“We wanted to make something similar for travelers who had lost track of people they met on trips,” Peter says. “Our tagline was ‘Travel Friends Reunited.’ Our initial launch included a service to help with that, as well as a very basic trip log and a basic travel diary feature.”

The site attracted some attention, but it soon became apparent that Travellerspoint wasn’t giving visitors many reasons to hang around after they had searched for or found their missing travel buddies. The next year, the brothers added travel forums to the site, with a little extra help from a Geocities project that was about to be shuttered.

“That really kick-started the community side of the site and has set the tone for how it’s grown since then,” Peter says. “The owner of that project agreed to let us take it over, so we instantly were able to kick-start our forums with a great group of users who were experts on many travel destinations.”

Today, the site has grown into one of the largest and most active travel communities on the internet with more than 1 million users sharing photos, blog posts and mapping trips. Travellerspoint and other online travel communities like it are also the perfect hubs for the growing number of travelers looking to share their adventures with other enthusiasts.

NEW DESTINATIONS

Since the end of travel restrictions around the COVID-19 pandemic, Americans have been eager to get out and see more than their backyards. Data from the U.S. Travel Association showed that travel spending in March 2023 was up nearly 10% over the previous year and 5% over spending in 2019.

That enthusiasm shows no sign of slowing down as more than half of Americans say they plan to make travel a priority this year. But how they travel is starting to change. More travelers are putting an emphasis on finding destinations that are off the beaten path, family-friendly and environmentally responsible.

Online communities provide the perfect place for travelers to research these new adventures and get recommendations from others who have tried them. Many of these communities have migrated to social media platforms like Facebook, where they can cater to the specific needs of different groups.

Communities like Wanderful and Girls Love Travel, for example, provide a network of women who can support and even join other women in their travels. The TravelAwaits community offers stories, deals and advice geared toward travelers ages 50 and up. Digital Nomads Around the World, on the other hand, offers inspiration and advice for younger travelers living and working on the go.

While many of these groups rely on social media to maintain their communities, Peter still sees sites like his playing an important role for dedicated travelers. The rise of Facebook initially saw some of the more off-topic banter on Travellerspoint forums shift to the social media channel. But as other communities have shut down, Travellerspoint has become a haven for hardcore travelers looking for a place to discuss their passion.

“Many of those members are now very active on Travellerspoint,” Peter says. “We became something of a refuge for the people who lost their previous online communities.” 🗨️



TRAVEL TROUPES

Whether you never stop traveling or you're planning each course for your next foodcation, you can find a community that has the same passions.

Digital Nomads Around the World — Digital nomads are people who travel freely while using the internet to work remotely. They tend to travel light and live out of temporary housing while they're on the move. It isn't a lifestyle for everyone, but if it piques your interest this group can answer your questions.

TravelAwaits — Traveling in your 50s and beyond often comes with the benefit of more time and resources to explore your interests. But it can also present unique challenges. TravelAwaits is a community by and for older travelers, so you can trust that every deal, recommendation and discussion keeps your needs in mind.

Wanderful — Whether you're a woman eager to explore solo or looking for a supportive group of fellow travelers, Wanderful has everything you need. Learn about safe travel practices, pick up inspiration for your next excursion or connect with other adventurous women at online and offline events.

Food Travelist — Everyone loves a great meal on vacation. But for some travelers, the food is the point. If that's you, Food Travelist has your back with tasty recommendations and mouth-watering photos. When your wanderlust kicks in back home, you can even find recipe ideas to take your taste buds on a trip instead.

The mysterious cloud

And other internet storage enigmas



You've likely heard: "That document is in the cloud." Or, "I saved those pictures in the cloud." But what exactly is the cloud?

Simply, the cloud is the concept of using someone else's computer server to store, host or process data. If you use a computer, smartphone, smart TV or other devices that connect to the internet, you've likely taken advantage of cloud services. Netflix is one example. So are Google Drive, Apple iCloud, Yahoo Mail, Dropbox and Microsoft OneDrive. There are many, many more.

WHY DOES THE CLOUD MATTER?

The cloud allows us to access large amounts of information on any device with an internet connection. Think about streaming a movie or episode of a Netflix show. Now, imagine trying to store every movie or show available on Netflix on your home computer. It would stop working! So, cloud technology is how we can choose from tens of thousands of movies to watch at the touch of our remote.

Cloud services also allow a child to write a paper on a laptop in a Google Doc that can be edited by a parent or teacher from anywhere with an internet connection. The cloud's remote servers handle most of the computing and the storage.

The cloud also allows you to store and back up data. For instance, you can store and view documents, videos and your entire photo collection on a cloud service without overloading your computer or smartphone's internal storage. If you use cloud services, anything you save is backed up and accessible from anywhere, provided you remember your usernames and passwords. A fire, network outage or even a power surge might destroy your devices, but your information can still be secure in the cloud.

WHERE IS THE CLOUD?

The cloud is not actually in the clouds. Cloud services are right here on Earth on

computer servers inside giant, temperature-controlled facilities full of computers that store and transmit information. Think of rows of huge black boxes with blinking lights.

NOT-SO SILVER LININGS

There can be downsides to storing and accessing information remotely, however. Cloud services cost money. Some devices, like iPhones, offer free cloud storage for up to a certain amount of data. After that, you'll need a subscription. Business cloud services often charge per gigabyte of storage.

Also, cloud services only work with internet access. Without the internet, you can't connect to the cloud — a fast, reliable connection is essential. ☑



Fuel up and go

Panoramic lakeside views at a Lake Greenwood favorite

Story by ANNE BRALY

What better way to end the day than dining along the waterfront with a sunset view?

Whether it's sipping a glass of wine as the setting sun casts rosy hues, or enjoying a craft beer and a juicy burger next to Lake Greenwood, few dining experiences can match savoring the flavor at Break on the Lake.

As the water rises and warms, a new dimension in dining opens up at the waterfront restaurant in Greenwood. "Once the lake is back to full pond in April, the boats start rolling in," says restaurateur and co-owner Kevin Prater.

Now in its fifth year of business, Break on the Lake attracts diners from as far away as Augusta, Simpsonville, Spartanburg, Newberry and Abbeville. Most diners come by car, but others arrive by boat, anchoring at the dock right outside the eatery and taking a seat on the deck outside to enjoy a bite and cold drink and, when offered, live music. Regardless of how guests arrive, a good time is always on the menu.

PUTTING DOWN ROOTS

Kevin, a native of Joanna, graduated from Greenwood's Lander College in 1984, then "kind of stuck my roots in the Emerald City," he says. His restaurant career began with a job managing Knickers, now closed. He went on to strike out on his own, opening his first restaurant, Sports Break, in 1990.

Kevin describes the menu at Break on the Lake as "American continental," with a variety of appetizers, soups, salads, sandwiches, steaks and seafood choices. "People really enjoy our home-cooked meals, too," he says. "I make a chicken stew that is my Mom's recipe, and lots of people enjoy it when I make it."

Other favorites include the popular shrimp dip, marinated pork steak, the mahi



Kitchen manager Patrick Hensarling, left, and co-owner Kevin Prater display some of restaurant's offerings.

club sandwich and Club'n At the Lake — a massive club sandwich best enjoyed with a side of warm, crispy fries. The restaurant offers monthly and nightly specials, and the menu changes seasonally.

And now diners don't have to wait until lunchtime to pull up a seat. Break on the Lake serves breakfast on weekends with a full complement of sweet and savory items, from shrimp and grits to big platters of pancakes.

GETTING THE WORD OUT ONLINE

The internet — and social media in particular — plays a vital role in keeping Break on the Lake regulars informed of the latest goings-on at the restaurant, as well as in attracting new customers. "It's our driving force for our marketing," Kevin says.

The restaurant is constantly using its fast and reliable WCFIBER internet connection. For example, diners can use the restaurant's free WiFi to scan the QR codes posted at all tables to peruse the menu on their phones and share photos of their favorite cocktails and dishes. Guests who sign up for Break on the Lake's VIP program receive emails with news about exclusive events, discounts, loyalty rewards, secret menus and more.

"People in our society today are strapped to their phones, so WCFIBER allows plenty of speed for customers to keep up with their social life via the internet, too," Kevin says. 📱



Photos by Matt Ledger

See for yourself!

BREAK ON THE LAKE

300 Lake Greenwood Blvd., Greenwood

864-943-1001

breakonthelakegw.com

Instagram: [breaklake300](https://www.instagram.com/breaklake300)

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Time-saving devices

Gourmet gadgets can make meals manageable

Instant pots became a “thing” in the 2010s, and people fell instantly in love with them. Combining an electric pressure cooker, slow cooker, rice cooker and yogurt maker in one, multicookers save space and cook meals quickly. What better time to hop on the bandwagon than now, when summer produce is at its height?

If you’re old enough to remember your grandmother’s pressure cooker, you may know horror stories of it blowing up and causing injuries. But don’t worry! Today’s electric pressure cookers have a slew of safety features, including sensors to monitor temperature and pressure.

The price of multicookers has come



down from north of \$500 to under \$65, an excellent price for beginners. If you want more functions or higher wattage, expect to spend upward of \$100. Here are some recipes to get you started.



SUMMER VEGETABLE SOUP

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 4 teaspoons minced garlic
- 3 medium ears fresh corn, kernels removed (or 2 1/4 cups frozen corn)
- 2 pounds tomatoes, peeled, seeded and chopped
- 1 sweet bell pepper, seeded and diced
- 2 medium zucchini, diced
- 1 cup fresh or frozen lima beans
- 8 ounces sliced mushrooms
- 1 small eggplant, peeled and diced
- 4 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- 1 tablespoon vinegar (red wine, balsamic or white)
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 tablespoon Italian seasoning
- 1 teaspoon salt, or to taste
- Ground black pepper, to taste

Press the saute button. Add olive oil to the stainless steel insert. Wait 2 minutes for it to preheat.

Add onion and garlic. Saute, stirring frequently, just until onion is tender (about 5 minutes). Press off/stop button. Add remaining ingredients. Place lid on the cooker and make sure the valve is set to sealing. Press soup and set the timer for 12 minutes.

The cooker will beep and start cooking. It may take about 20 minutes for it to come to pressure before the timer starts. When the cooking is done, allow the pressure to naturally release for about 5 minutes, then quick release any remaining pressure by switching the valve to venting. Carefully remove the lid, away from your face, and set aside. Stir and season with salt and pepper. Let cool a bit before serving.



Food Editor, Anne P. Braly
is a native of Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Photography by *Mark Gilliland*
Food Styling by *Rhonda Gilliland*

VEGGIE TOMATO SAUCE

Using canned tomatoes rather than fresh in this recipe from Instant Pot makes this recipe a breeze.

- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 2 small to medium carrots, diced
- 2 celery sticks, diced
- 3 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon thyme leaves
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 small beets (canned or fresh), diced
- 1 cup diced red bell pepper
- 5 mushrooms, diced
- 1/2 of a medium zucchini, diced
- 2 cups fresh spinach leaves
- 5 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 jalapeno red chili (Use half or less if you don't like some heat.)
- 3 cans whole tomatoes in juice
- 1/2 cup water

Turn the multicooker on and press the saute key. Once hot, add the olive oil, onions, carrots and celery and cook for 5 minutes, stirring a few times.

Add the rest of the ingredients. Press cancel to stop the saute process. Stir the contents and pop the lid on top.

Lock the lid, making sure the top valve points to sealing. Set to manual/pressure cook on high pressure for 10 minutes. The cooker will take 5-10 minutes to build up the pressure and the timer will begin.

Once finished, allow the pressure to release naturally for 10 minutes and then move the top valve to venting to quickly release of the remaining pressure.



Open the lid and stir. Using an immersion blender, puree into a thick sauce. You can also do this in a blender or a food processor, but make sure to cool the sauce down slightly and do this in batches. Pour the sauce into containers or mason jars for storage or use right away as a sauce for pasta, pizza, enchiladas, meatballs and more.

INSTANT POT ROAST

This recipe from Instapot is a cooker full of comfort.

- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- 1 (4-4 1/2-pound) boneless chuck roast, excess fat trimmed and cut into 6 pieces
- 1 cup beef stock
- 6-8 jarred pepperoncini salad peppers, plus 1/4 cup liquid from jar
- 1 (1-ounce) package dry onion soup mix
- 2 tablespoons dried parsley flakes
- 1 tablespoon dried chives
- 2 teaspoons dried dill
- 1 1/2 teaspoons onion powder
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 3 tablespoons cornstarch

Set a 6-quart cooker to the high saute setting. Heat oil then add beef and cook until evenly browned, about 2-3 minutes per side. Set aside.

Stir in beef stock, scraping any browned bits from the bottom. Stir in pepperoncini and liquid, onion soup mix, parsley flakes, chives, dill, onion powder, garlic powder and pepper. Return beef to the pot.

Select manual setting, adjust pressure to high, and set timer for 45 minutes. When finished cooking, naturally release pressure according to manufacturer's directions, 20-30 minutes.

Remove beef from the pot, then shred, using two forks.

In a small bowl, whisk together cornstarch and 3 tablespoons cold water and set aside.

Select high saute setting. Bring to a boil, stir in cornstarch mixture and cook, stirring frequently until slightly thickened, about 3-5 minutes. If the mixture is too thick, add more beef stock as needed until desired consistency is reached. Serve immediately. 🍴



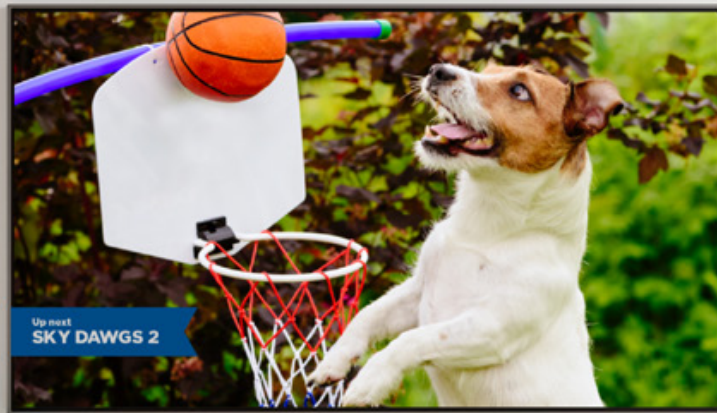


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