

The Foothills

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2015

CONNECTION

A full-page photograph of a man with a long beard and a cowboy hat, playing an electric guitar on stage. He is singing into a microphone. The background is a warm, orange-red color with stage lights visible in the upper right.

MUSIC HERITAGE

Artist carries on local
legacy in Nashville

LIGHTHOUSE COLLISION

Faith and family bring success
to a Louisa business

YOUNG ARTISTS SHOW THEIR SKILLS

Foothills proudly displays youth
art contest results

Bringing Congress to Rural America

It's not often that rural telcos like ours get a chance to share our stories, struggles and successes with a busload of Congressional staff members.



RUTH CONLEY
Chief Executive Officer

So when the Foundation for Rural Service recently brought a group of legislative advisors on a bus tour through East Kentucky and Middle Tennessee, we at Foothills made the best of the opportunity.

These bright, young staffers — most of whom work for representatives and senators on key commerce, technology and communications committees — left Washington, D.C., to visit our part of the country and see what rural broadband looks like firsthand.

The staffers came from across the country, representing places such as Salt Lake City, the Dallas suburbs, Central Florida and the Research Triangle in North Carolina. Before moving to the

nation's capital, many of them lived in big cities, such as Chicago. For some, this bus trip may have been the first time they'd ever spent in an area that could be considered rural.

While on the trip they learned about splicing fiber in East Kentucky, toured the facilities of a number of small rural communication companies like ours and talked with local officials.

At one stop on the tour, I, along with other nearby rural broadband providers, made sure to catch the ear of a few of the staffers and explain how important our mission is to our local residents. It was important for them see how vibrant our communities are and to meet the great people in our region.

It was important for them to hear rural Kentucky businesses owners, hospital administrators and local officials talk about the importance of a broadband connection.

And it's important for them to understand the challenges cooperatives like ours face in building a network that may cost tens of thousands of dollars each mile, with as few as five customers per mile.

Long term, Congress and Washington regulators play a significant role in the strength of our telco and our industry, through issues such as the Universal Service Fund. As you've read in this space before, the USF provides funding that allows rural, high-cost providers like us a way to recoup the investments we've made in our communities and still provide telephone and broadband service at a price local residents can afford.

It was a great chance to tell them our cooperative's story: We are providing service in areas that for-profit companies will not serve, and local residents depend on our network to work, play, shop, learn and connect with friends and family.

I am proud Foothills could play a role in bringing the congressional delegation to rural Kentucky. And I'm proud every day that you've trusted Foothills to connect you to the world. 📞

The Foothills Connection is a bimonthly newsletter published by Foothills Communications, ©2015. It is distributed without charge to all customers of the company.



Foothills is a member-owned cooperative that has been serving residents and businesses in eastern Kentucky since 1951. In the early days, we only offered telephone service over copper wires. Over the years, we have expanded our network and now provide broadband Internet and cable TV services over fiber-optic facilities to much of our service area. Our service area includes Magoffin County and portions of Johnson County and Lawrence County. We love being part of the communities we serve; our customers are our families, friends and neighbors.

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Foothills Mission Statement

"To provide the latest in communications at affordable prices with exceptional service."

Produced for Foothills Communications by:



On the Cover:



Chris Stapleton is a rising artist in Nashville, but his heritage is pure Eastern Kentucky. See story Page 12.

Photo courtesy of
Becky Fluke.



Warm up with Foothills' Free Movie Weekends

- ▶ Nov. 26-29 — Starz
- ▶ Dec. 5-6 — HBO
- ▶ Dec. 12-13 — Cinemax
- ▶ Dec. 19-20 — Showtime
- ▶ Dec. 24-Jan. 3 — All movie channels



Give a toy – help a child

Foothills will hold a Christmas toy drive for needy children. Customers are asked to bring a new, unwrapped toy into the Staffordsville Foothills office at 1621 Kentucky Route 40, W. by Dec. 15. All participants will be entered for a chance to win a \$200 Visa gift card.



Holiday Closings

Foothills Communications will be closed the following days:

Thanksgiving: Thursday & Friday, Nov. 26 & 27

Christmas: Thursday, Dec. 24 - Closed at noon; Friday, Dec. 25

New Year's Day: Friday, Jan. 1, 2016



Foothills is offering
FREE ACTIVATION
during November and
December for customers who
add select additional calling
features or a premium movie
package.



HUGE GIVEAWAYS

Anyone who signs up for select
services before Dec. 31 will be
entered into a drawing to win a
special prize.*



CABLE CUSTOMER
55" Smart HDTV



INTERNET CUSTOMER
Xbox One



PLATINUM CUSTOMER
iPad Mini

*Items must be claimed within two weeks of being announced.

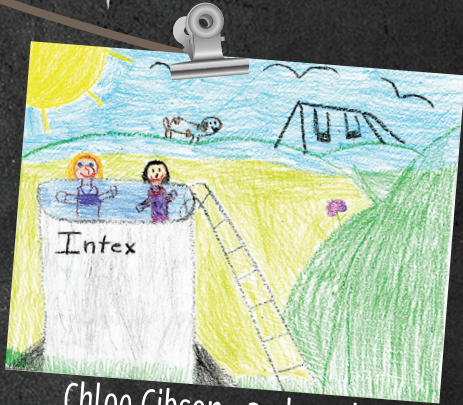
Flags, fireworks & fun

The first Summer Kids Art Contest featured wonderful examples of the wealth of talent found in our most valuable resource — our children.

Every entry brought smiles. We can't thank the young artists enough for showing how they view the joys of summer. As we head into winter, enjoy a colorful blast from warmer days.

And remember, all entries are displayed on the Foothills Facebook page.

Young artists show their talent



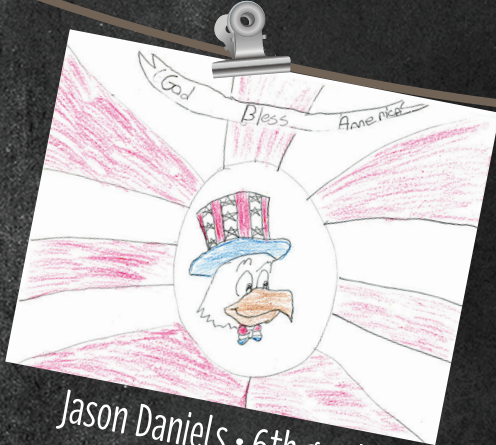
Chloe Gibson • 3rd grade



Luke Thomas Wireman • 1st grade



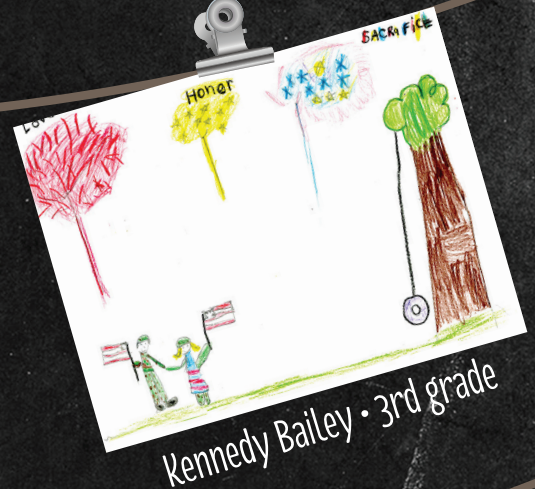
Haley Jenkins • 6th grade



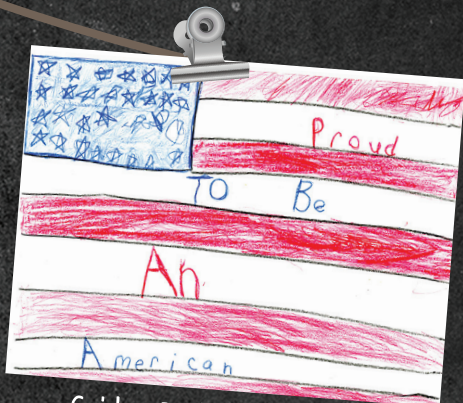
Jason Daniels • 6th grade



Alexis 'Lexi' Morrow • 4th grade



Kennedy Bailey • 3rd grade



Caiden Bailey • 1st grade



James Hall • 2nd grade



Carter Stephens • 1st grade

LIGHTHOUSE COLLISION

BY NOBLE SPRAYBERRY

Guiding customers to positive results



Kenny Aldrich combines faith and business at Lighthouse Collision.

A palm-sized New Testament Bible rests in the window of each repaired vehicle leaving Lighthouse Collision. And the gifts touch lives.

“One man was going to visit a friend who was in the hospital,” says Kenny Aldrich, the Louisa business’s owner. “He was testifying to the man, and he picked up that Bible and opened it to point out scripture.”

There are many similar stories, such as a brother who sent the Bible to a sibling serving in the military. Others simply welcome the unexpected gift.

Aldrich followed a path set by Olen Dodridge, a former employer. “He’s the best boss I ever had,” Aldrich says. Dodridge was a member of Gideons International, an evangelical organization known for distributing Bibles.

For Aldrich, being a Gideon and giving his customers a Bible is just one part of doing business. He opened the shop in 2008, but struggled to choose a name.

“I wanted it to signify something good, and my wife loves lighthouses,” he says. “I was praying on it when it came to me. A

lighthouse signifies guidance, and we want people to feel we’re guiding them right and doing a good job.”

BUILDING A KENTUCKY HOME

Aldrich grew up in Michigan, the home state of his father, John. But, his mother, Clotine, was from Magoffin County. They moved to Louisa, and in 1987, Aldrich went to work for Century Chrysler. Then, he spent 18 years in Huntington, West Virginia, working for Dodridge’s business — East End Body shop.

He now employs seven people. His wife, Anna, helps with accounting. One son, Timothy, works for Amazon in Huntington. His other son, Joshua, works at Lighthouse and embraces his father’s attention to detail.

“The plastic on headlights doesn’t always hold up to the sun, and they get foggy,” Aldrich says. “Joshua took it on himself to buff those headlights as best we can. Now, we do it on every one that needs it, and we don’t charge for that. It makes driving safer.”

Customer-friendly practices are a foundation of the business. Aldrich also credits

his church, Burnaugh Baptist, whose members offer support. “If someone hits a deer or has an accident, they bring the car to us,” Aldrich says.

GROWING THE BUSINESS

Collision repair ebbs and flows, so Aldrich turned to his accountant, James See. “I asked him how we could level it out,” he says. “He told me we could either go smaller or go bigger.”

In 2014, Aldrich added a building for repairs to recreational vehicles. One employee, Ray Rogers, is now the RV specialist.

The expansion also introduces them to people whose RVs might have broken down on long-distance trips. Sometimes those relationships reflect the beam from Lighthouse Collision back onto the Aldrich family.

“My mother died in August, and one of our customers from Illinois sent a card to tell us we were in their hearts and prayers,” says Aldrich, tearing up. “It just meant a lot to me. We’ve met so many wonderful people. God gets all the glory for anything good.”



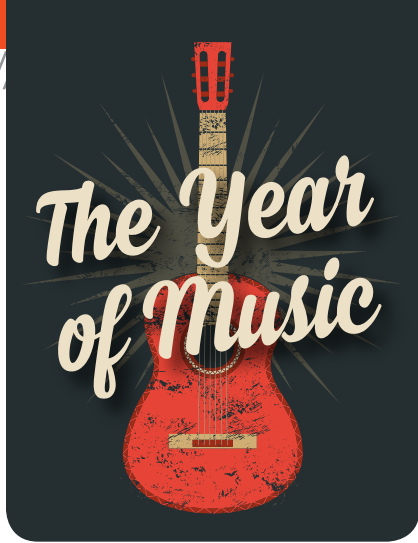
Michael Davis completes a repair.



Every car leaves Lighthouse Collision with a New Testament Bible.



Garrett Davis works to repair a vehicle in the Louisa shop.



Inspiration from the hills

A legacy of music that continues today

BY NOBLE SPRAYBERRY



Larry Cordle, from Blaine, Kentucky, made his mark in Nashville.

Larry Cordle wrote a song about home and music: “Black Diamond Strings.” He describes his first guitar, a loaner from a cousin. He tells of the first lesson from his father. He embraces the simple pleasure of learning to play long before he set out to chase his “make-it-big dreams.”

The man inducted this year into the Kentucky Music Hall of Fame caught up to some of those dreams, though. He traveled a well-used path from the hills of Eastern Kentucky down to Nashville.

And now, the tune about buying guitar strings at a drug store in Louisa is part of every set of music he plays. “There’s something about those songs that come

from your heart. If it means something to you, it will mean something to someone else,” he says. “Bill Monroe told me that years and years ago.”

Other musicians from Eastern Kentucky have embraced similar lessons. They are songwriters and musicians. They play bluegrass, country and rock ‘n’ roll. They claim spots on current music charts, appear on television and fill concert halls.

From music legends such as Loretta Lynn and Ricky Skaggs to modern artists like Rebecca Lynn Howard and Chris Stapleton, the region’s musical legacy is deep and wide. The U.S. 23 Country Music Highway Museum in Staffordsville, Kentucky, was even created to honor their work.

MUSIC OF TIME AND PLACE

Cordle made a mark as a songwriter, as well as a bluegrass artist. A duet between Alan Jackson and George Strait turned one Cordle song, “Murder on Music Row,” into an award-winning hit.

He didn’t start writing songs, though, until he was a little older, after a stint in

the military. His musical education, however, started early at his home in Blaine, Kentucky, a community he says now has fewer than 50 residents. When he visits, the roads are better, but it still reminds him of a place where mail delivery was a struggle until the 1960s. “You couldn’t get up to our house in the winter unless you had a Jeep, a log truck or a mule,” he says.

Rural isolation, a sense of family, hard work and some tough times likely play into the backstory of many of the area’s musicians. “I do have a theory,” Cordle says. “You couldn’t really go anywhere, to be honest with you. The transportation was bad. The roads were muddy. Especially in the wintertime, you were kinda locked in up there.”

And his family’s television, like many others, picked up one channel, so music provided needed entertainment. “People would have an old fiddle, an old guitar or an old banjo,” he says. “They got used to entertaining themselves, and I feel all the musicians were born out of that family thing — this is what we’re going to do Saturday night.” 📺



Eastern Kentucky’s musical heritage includes bluegrass, country, rock ‘n’ roll and gospel. Look for a music feature in each issue of *The Foothills Connection* in 2016.

Embracing country music's Kentucky roots

Chris Stapleton makes a mark in Nashville

The Country Music Association named five nominees in the competition for the year's best male vocalist. Four were mainstream Nashville favorites: Dierks Bentley, Luke Bryan, Eric Church and Blake Shelton.

Then came the newcomer — Chris Stapleton. Big beard. Long hair. And often seen sporting a cowboy hat. His look and music contrast to the slick, poppy productions common in today's country music.

Instead, songs from his solo album "Traveller" echo the traditional country and bluegrass that are rooted deeply in Eastern Kentucky. And that's appropriate. Stapleton was raised in hills and valleys around Paintsville and Staffordsville.

After a winning run as a songwriter, he has the potential for far broader success. "Chris Stapleton is fixing to have a humongous career," says Larry Cordle, a member of the Kentucky Music Hall of Fame and a successful songwriter himself.

When it comes to "Traveller," Stapleton knows it sounds different than much of what you hear on country radio. "If somebody tells me it sounds dated, I'd say that's great, as long as the date is 1978," he told "Rolling Stone" in an interview this year. "My favorite things are from



Chris Stapleton was first heard in Eastern Kentucky churches and performance halls. INSET: His first solo album.

Photo courtesy of Becky Fluke.

A few of his album's songs have down-home themes: a reflection comparing whisky to a relationship, for example. But like many of the artists produced by Kentucky, gospel music played a role in Stapleton's introduction to music.

KENTUCKY ROOTS

The Stapleton family moved to the area from Lexington. They met Kevin Conley. He says he was best friends with Herb, the older brother of Stapleton, who was about 9 at the time. The three hung out and sang, often performing as a gospel trio.

Sunday morning and Wednesday night services provided the first musical stage. "In this area, that's really your first exposure to music — in the church," Conley says.

Conley works for his family's business: Conley's Wrecker Service. He still sings gospel, and he recently caught one of Stapleton's sold-out concerts this year at the Mountain Arts Center in Prestonsburg.

"His voice is unlike any other I've ever heard," Conley says. "It's one-of-a-kind, and I think he'll have staying power, if the national audience ever gives him a listen. He has one those iconic voices that doesn't often come along." 📺

then, and why wouldn't you want to try to be like those things? Inevitably, it's just going to sound like me anyway."

BUILDING A CAREER

For Stapleton, a breakout album is not the first taste of success. He's been working the Nashville music scene, and succeeding, for 15 years. In fact, many people would likely take his songwriting success and call it a career. George Strait, Luke Bryan, Kenny Chesney, Darius Rucker and Josh Turner each took a Stapleton song to No. 1.

Others have also taken notice of Stapleton's talent. He was nominated for three Grammy Awards for his work with the bluegrass band The SteelDrivers. He also won an International Bluegrass Music Association Award for "Emerging Artist of the Year."



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CUSTOMER APPRECIATION DAY

TUESDAY, DEC. 15 • 9 A.M. - 4 P.M.



- ❄ Live radio remote with WSIP 98.9
- ❄ Door prizes
- ❄ Cookies, punch, popcorn, drinks
- ❄ Bring the kids to see Santa and get an ornament personalized by Santa's helper from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.
- ❄ Appalachian Wireless will help with your wireless questions
- ❄ Highlands Health Services will provide health screening
- ❄ Wal-Mart Vision Center will provide vision screenings

Merry Christmas
from the staff at



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