

The Foothills

MAY/JUNE 2018

# CONNECTION

## GRIFFITH FAMILY FARM

Organic food  
providing healthy  
options

## CONNECTED REAL ESTATE

Fast fiber internet  
increases home values

## SWINE SO DIVINE

Regional approaches vary  
on going hog wild





# NTCA THE RURAL BROADBAND ASSOCIATION

## RURAL CONNECTIONS

BY SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO  
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

### Sustaining our rural broadband dollars

It's exciting to see the attention rural broadband has received the past several months. But as we explore ways to extend broadband to unserved rural areas, it is important to consider how those dollars are spent.

The Agriculture and Rural America Task Force in the U.S. House of Representatives held a briefing in March. I was honored to be one of their participants and share insights into rural broadband challenges. We hear a lot about the digital divide, but I spoke with the group about the rural-rural divide — the investments being made by locally-owned broadband providers and the areas where larger carriers are not making the investments their rural communities need.

We have seen several promising steps taken by Congress and the FCC in recent months. Our industry applauded the inclusion of \$600 million for a new rural broadband pilot program to be administered by RUS in the omnibus funding bill that was signed by President Trump. And the FCC recently acted to address some of the immediate budget shortfalls in the commission's High Cost Universal Service Fund (USF), the primary support that allows rural broadband providers to make the business case for sustained deployment and service.

Telecommunications providers like yours have done a great job delivering broadband to rural America with the help of USF. There is still much work to do, and it will take partnerships as well as reliable, sufficient USF funding to ensure the availability and affordability of robust broadband for unserved areas. 📶

# Youthful trends

## A survey spots the habits of rural teens

Participating in social networks, streaming more than five hours of content weekly, and reliance on mobile devices for photos and messaging are some trends defining how rural high school students use modern communications tools and services.

Every two years, participants in the Foundation for Rural Service Annual Youth Tour and applicants to the foundation's College Scholarship Program complete a study about their telecommunication habits.

A total of 1,706 high school students, with 80 percent between the ages of 14 and 19, completed the survey. Here are a few of the conclusions:



### PRICE AWARENESS

**Seventy-two percent** of respondents have their monthly cellphone bill paid by someone else, and **25 percent** have no concept of the size of that bill.

When these young people enter the "real world," they will likely face sticker-shock as they shop for cellphone service.

### STAYING SOCIAL

Participating in social media is, by far, **the most popular online activity** among those surveyed.

While a mobile phone is still important for the basics, such as personal safety and education, the primary draw is the ability to connect to those similar to themselves. Also, online interaction is the preferred means of personal communication, and losing that link is unthinkable to most.



### TEXTING AND DRIVING

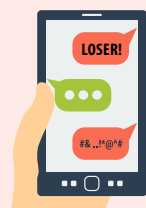
Young people need more convincing about the dangers of texting while driving — **22 percent** of respondents admitted they occasionally texted while driving.

While **95 percent** have seen at least one public service announcement about the dangers of texting while driving, **75 percent** have seen multiple such announcements.

The report concluded that "this informational onslaught needs to continue, and should be supplemented by additional, proven methods of getting this life-saving message across, whether in schools, churches or other places where young people can be counseled."

### BULLYING ONLINE

Cyberbullying is a significant concern, and more than half of all survey respondents know of a cyberbullying incident involving a personal acquaintance. **More than 25 percent** reported being personally affected by cyberbullying. 📱



For more information, visit [FRS.org](http://FRS.org).

# New law aims to improve the quality and reliability of calls made to rural America

BY STEPHEN V. SMITH

**R**ural residents and business owners scored a major legislative victory in February, one that should reduce the rural call completion problems that have long plagued those who live and work in America's small towns and communities.

The Improving Rural Call Quality and Reliability Act was signed into law by President Trump and gives the Federal Communications Commission additional tools to combat call completion failure.

For years, rural citizens have reported problems receiving calls that originate outside their area and from wireless callers. Some calls have poor quality, while other calls simply never come through. A leading cause of these issues is substandard service from third-party, intermediate carriers, known as "least-cost routers," which originating carriers use to route their calls into rural areas. This is done in an effort to lower the costs of delivering a call into a rural community, where terminating costs are higher.

The new law gives authority to the FCC to require providers to register with the agency and to meet quality standards. "I will be working closely with my fellow

commissioners to ensure that rural Americans have what every American expects: a telephone system that works," says FCC Chairman Ajit Pai.

Passage of the act was the result of a bipartisan effort in the U.S. House and Senate. "For too long, rural communities across the country have been suffering from unreliable phone service. Without consistent and dependable service, it is challenging to stay connected to loved ones, run a business, and reach first responders in an emergency," says U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn, who sponsored the bill in the Senate. "Enacting these common-sense standards for providers will ensure that every family can trust that their calls will be completed, regardless of where they live."

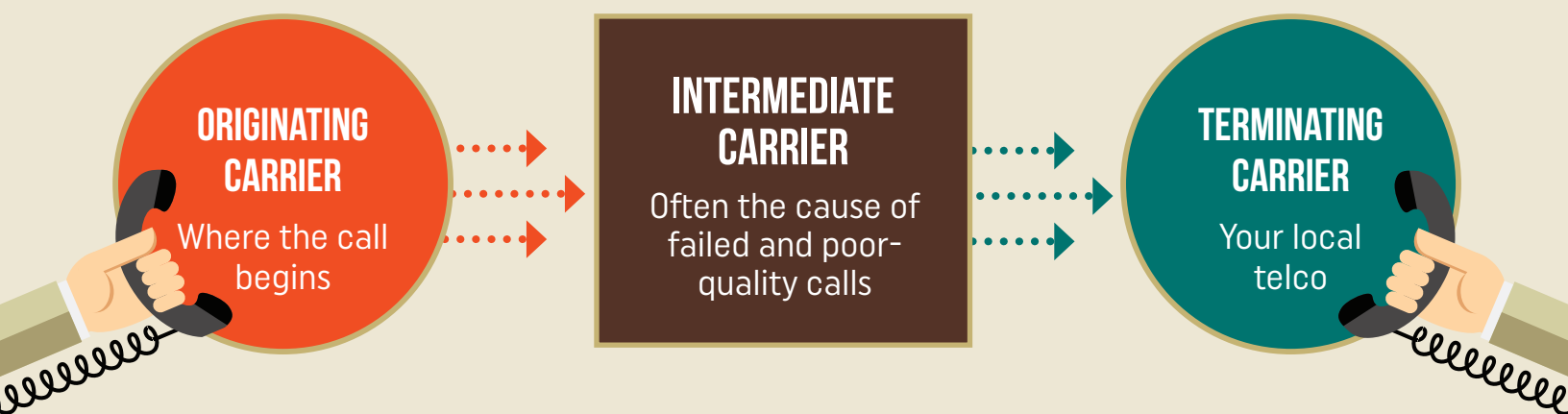
U.S. Rep. David Young, R-Iowa, sponsored the bill in the House. "Improving rural call completion rates and quality

are important to ensuring the survival of small towns and granting Americans the choice to live and thrive in whatever community is best for them and their family, rural, urban, or anywhere in between," says Young.

The legislation came in part due to combined efforts of America's rural telecommunications providers, who have worked the past several years with elected officials and regulators to solve the rural call completion problem. "Passage of this bill reaffirms the power of advocacy," says Shirley Bloomfield, CEO of NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association, which represents nearly 850 cooperative and independent telcos in rural and small-town America.

"Rural providers do more than deliver technology to their customers; they take their concerns to Washington and educate lawmakers on bills that impact their lives and livelihoods," Bloomfield says. "This measure will bring greater transparency to the call routing marketplace and send a bipartisan message about the importance of on-going efforts to solve call completion problems that threaten the general well-being of countless Americans." 📞

## Legislation targets cause of many rural call completion problems



# Counting on small businesses



**RUTH CONLEY**  
Chief Executive Officer

**H**ave you ever thought about what our community would be like without small businesses?

For starters, half of us would be out of work because small businesses employ 48 percent of U.S. employees, according to the Small Business Administration.

On a national scale, without small businesses the economy would grow stagnant. According to estimates, 64 percent of new private sector jobs come from small businesses.

The downtown areas of our communities would certainly look very different if they were completely shuttered, as small businesses make up the heart of most business communities.

And while it may not be so obvious, think of the sports teams, community events and charitable organizations that count on donations and sponsorships from our small-business community.

In short, we need our small businesses. The U.S. Small Business Administration has declared April 29-May 5 as National Small Business Week. It is a designation that goes back to 1963, aiming at celebrating small businesses locally and around the nation. Please join me in supporting them and commending them for the long hours, dedication and commitment to their customers that have made them a part of the fabric of our communities.

At Foothills, we're proud to be one of those small businesses, but we're also proud to support many small businesses throughout our region with our advanced broadband network.

As you've seen in the pages of recent magazines, there are plenty of examples where local small businesses rely on a broadband connection to place orders, send emails, interact with customers on social media, improve efficiency in their operation and stay competitive regionally and globally.

Broadband helps make the world a smaller place, which helps small businesses. Did you know that 98 percent of the companies that export products overseas are small businesses? In fact, according to the Department of Commerce, one-third of U.S. merchandise exports are from small and mid-sized businesses. I think it's safe to assume that when small businesses communicate with customers or suppliers overseas, they aren't sending letters — they're using their broadband connection from providers like Foothills.

A recent report revealed small businesses that access global markets over the internet have a 30 percent higher survival rate than similar businesses that aren't connected.

We live in an exciting time when a small startup company or even a longtime family business has access to a local, regional, national and even global market because of broadband.

Our community counts on small businesses, and small businesses count on Foothills. We are proud to support them with the technology needed to thrive in today's economy. 📶

The Foothills

## CONNECTION

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The Foothills Connection is a bimonthly newsletter published by Foothills Communications, ©2018. 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:

**WORDSOUTH**  
— A CONTENT MARKETING COMPANY —

*On the Cover:*



The Griffith family spends time together in their greenhouse where they have added flowers in addition to produce.  
See story Page 12.

# Save green by

# GOING GREEN

In a continuing effort to go green, Foothills offers members who use both paperless billing and auto bill pay services a **\$1 discount on each monthly bill**.

Not only will you save time and money when you sign up for a Foothills' E-Account, but you will also have access to your account 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

View your information — such as your bill, payment history and details about long-distance charges — quickly and easily.

Use your E-Account to sign up for auto bill pay, giving you the freedom to never have to remember to pay your bill.

**To set up your new E-Account, visit the "Pay Bill Online" section of Foothills.net. Make sure you have your most recent statement when registering a new online account.**

## Happy Mother's Day!

Celebrate Mother's Day with some special Foothills Communications features!

- **FREE HBO** (Channels 400-410) from May 12-13
- **FREE activation** when adding premium channels from May 13-19
- **FREE activation** when upgrading internet speeds



## Happy Father's Day!

Celebrate Father's Day with some special Foothills Communications features!

- **FREE Cinemax** (Channels 420-434) from June 16-17
- **FREE activation** when adding premium channels from June 17-23
- **FREE activation** when upgrading internet speeds



## AN EXTRA-SPECIAL GIVEAWAY!

*Share the secret code for the chance to win this year's giveaway.*

During the week of Mother's Day and Father's Day, visit the Foothills Communications Facebook page, confirm you've liked the page and write a post containing the secret code below.

You'll automatically be entered to win!

### Mother's Day Secret Code:

"Motherhood: All love begins and ends there." – Robert Browning


### Father's Day Secret Code:

"One father is more than a hundred schoolmasters." – George Herbert

## Happy Memorial Day!

All Foothills Communications offices will be closed Monday, May 28.  
**Enjoy FREE Starz and Starz Encore from May 26-28.**





Lake Jocassee,  
South Carolina

# Enjoy a refreshing dip

Southern lakes offer a break from the heat

If you're only looking to the Southern coasts to wiggle your toes in the sand and cool off this summer, you're missing out on glorious watering holes: our lakes. Not only do lakes make the perfect swimming spots with their calm waters, but they're also often ideal for wetting a line, canoeing, kayaking or camping. Try some of the best lakes in the South. Jump on in, y'all.

## Lake Jocassee, South Carolina

Lake Jocassee may not be the largest lake in South Carolina, but what it lacks in size, it makes up for in thrills. Jump off a high cliff, stand beneath a magnificent waterfall, or take a hike along a mountain path. Or, just take it easy and set up your lounge chair on the beach at Devils Fork State Park while the kids swim in water made crystal clear by mountain streams that feed the lake.

"With the clarity of the water, the beaches can resemble the Caribbean," says Ken Sloan, president and CEO of Mountain Lakes Convention and Visitors Bureau.

To fully appreciate all the lake has to offer, rent a pontoon boat and take the family on a tour. Or, rent a canoe, paddle board or kayak and take off on your own. The primary outfitter for watercraft rentals is Eclectic Sun ([eclecticsun.com](http://eclecticsun.com)).

While the lake is secluded — you gain entrance through Devils Fork State Park — there are several restaurants within a short drive. One of them is Keowee Towne Market, a five-minute drive away, where you can order a pizza or a plate of great barbecue and chow down there or pick up the fixings for a picnic to enjoy along a mountain trail. The state park offers villa-style lodging and two campgrounds for both RV and primitive camping. The lake's clear water also makes it a destination for scuba diving.

**For more information:** [lakejocassee.com](http://lakejocassee.com).

## Douglas Lake, Tennessee

Douglas Lake winds its way through four scenic Tennessee counties — Jefferson, Cocke, Sevier and Hamblen — all in the Smoky Mountains.

Less than 20 percent of the 40-plus miles of shoreline have been developed, making the lake a paradise for boaters and water skiers. It is one of the most popular lakes in the country for fishing for crappie and largemouth bass.

Jump in from your boat for a deep swim, or take the family to the sandy beach at Douglas Dam Headwater Campground on the western side of the lake. It not only has more than 60 campsites with water and electricity, but it also boasts a public swimming beach. About 30 acres of hardwood forest back up to the beach and campground. Trails lead to views of the dam, birding areas, wildflower-strewn meadows and limestone sinkholes. There are restrooms and picnic tables at the beach.

With the close proximity to Dollywood and Gatlinburg, your restaurant and hotel choices are numerous. However, there are also lake and mountain cabins for rent by the night or the week, allowing you to make your own meals and save some cash.

**For more information:** [www.douglaslakeinfo.com](http://www.douglaslakeinfo.com) or [visitsevierville.com](http://visitsevierville.com).

## Lake Guntersville, Alabama

Lake Guntersville is an ideal aquatic playground close to home for Northeast Alabama residents.

With 67,900 acres and nearly 900 miles of shoreline, the lake is known for its fishing, but it also offers activities such as pleasure boating, kayaking and eagle watching.

Guntersville Lake Hydrofest, a popular power boat racing event expected to attract thousands to the area, is set for June 22-24. Visit [www.guntersvillelakehydrofest.com](http://www.guntersvillelakehydrofest.com) for more information.

Lake Guntersville State Park, a 6,000-acre natural playground, offers camping, lodging, hiking, horse trails, boat rentals, zip lines, fishing, swimming at the beach and an 18-hole golf course.

The park lodge — with a full-service restaurant, hotel rooms and convention center — overlooks the lake and provides a beautiful view.

Goosepond Colony Resort near Scottsboro has two 18-hole championship golf courses, lakeside cottages, a lodge, a waterfront campground and a full-service marina. The Docks, a popular restaurant at Goosepond, features waterfront dining. Guntersville's Top O' The River is known for some of the best catfish around.

**For more information:** [www.alapark.com](http://www.alapark.com).

## Lake Texoma, Texas

The name alone will tell you that this favorite lake lies in two states — Texas and Oklahoma — making it one of the largest reservoirs in the country, as well as one of the most developed. And with a spread of 89,000 acres, there's room for the more than 6 million people who head to its shores each year. Eisenhower State Park's beach, tucked away in a beautiful cove surrounded by cliffs, is the ideal spot for swimming.

Fish for more than 70 species, golf at one of several nearby courses or sail on an 1800s-style pirate ship. Hike or watch wildlife at Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge, one of two refuges along the lake.

When you get hungry, there are a number of restaurants — some on the waterfront — as well as eateries at most of the local marinas. When it's time for bed, overnight choices range from cabins at marinas to hotels and resorts dotting the lake.

Lake Texoma is an hour's drive north of Fort Worth.

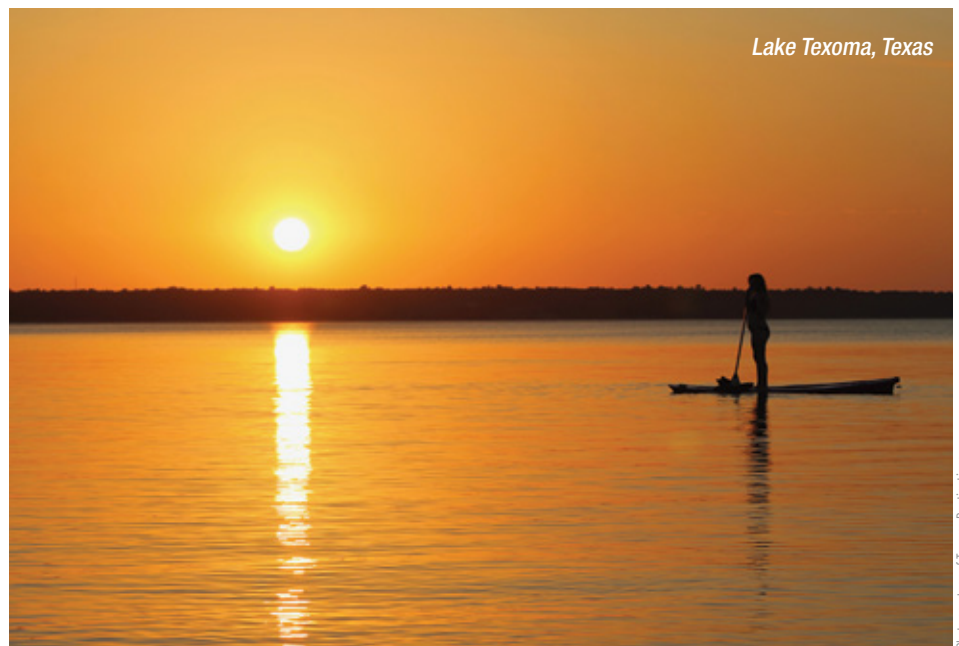
**For more information:** [www.laketexomaonline.com](http://www.laketexomaonline.com).

## Rough River Lake, Kentucky

The lake at Rough River Dam Resort State Park is open to all during the warm months of summer. The name, Rough River, may sound scary, but fear not. The waters are mostly calm with gentle waves rolling in thanks to a nice breeze on most days. There is a bathhouse open for public use. When hunger strikes, the park restaurant, Grayson Landing, serves massive plates of catfish and other local Kentucky dishes.

The neighboring woods offer birding and hiking, or you can wet a line in the lake — the fishing is great this time of year. Overnight accommodations include lodge rooms with views of Rough River Lake and two-bedroom cottages near the lake and in the woods. Resort guests have use of the pool overlooking the lake, too.

**For more information:** [parks.ky.gov](http://parks.ky.gov). 



Lake Texoma, Texas

Photo courtesy of Texoma Destinations.



# Find the perfect home

## Online tools revolutionize home shopping

BY JOHN CLAYTON

Homebuyers still sign on the dotted line, and many still follow tradition and celebrate when holding the keys to their new homes for the first time. But as a result of the internet, the process of finding a house to buy is now vastly different than even two decades ago.

"It's definitely changed over the years," says Cathy Brown, a real estate agent and appraiser with Redd, Brown and Williams. Real estate sales have evolved with the internet as a sales tool. "We used to depend on newspapers, radio and that kind of thing, but now it's much more internet-based."

The company has a long lineage, with offices in Louisa, Paintsville, Pikeville and Prestonsburg. Cathy Brown's late father-in-law, Paul Brown, was a co-founder in 1950. His son, Paul David Brown Jr., is now the agency's president, CEO and principal broker.

Through the years, the company has adapted. Its website — rbandw.com — is a one-

stop shop with a slideshow of featured properties and contact information for the agency's 20 agents and other employees. The site also features links to the company's Facebook page and other information for potential homebuyers.

"I think most of our call-ins now come from the internet," Cathy Brown says. "We're connected to Realtor.com and Trulia and all the offshoots of those sites, so there's a lot more access."

The use of Facebook and other social media sites makes it easy for potential homebuyers from anywhere in the country to take a tour of the real estate market in Eastern Kentucky.




Thom Deskins, left, Jim Thomas and Cliff Bennett work for Redd, Brown and Williams Real Estate Services, where they have found that the internet has had a significant impact on real estate.

"We have to advertise, and we do what's required by Kentucky state law. But we're also allowed to advertise through social media with Facebook or something along those lines," Cathy Brown says. "Then, our posts keep being shared by other people, so it gets out there a lot farther."

While internet access can help bring potential homebuyers to the doorstep, the availability of high-speed internet can also be an amenity sought by those shopping for a home.

High-speed fiber internet availability is being called the fourth utility in tech circles because it is now viewed as a necessity for both entertainment and work. A 2015 study

conducted by researchers from the University of Colorado and Carnegie Mellon University, which was funded in part by Fiber to the Home Council Americas, found that the values of properties with high-speed fiber connections increased by an average of 3.1 percent. The study also found that the faster the connection speed, the more value increased.

Cathy Brown believes good internet connectivity can be a selling point for a home. "I think it helps," she says. "It's so common now; I think it's expected, but saying you have a good internet connection really helps. I can see that, definitely." 

Cathy Brown, an appraiser and real estate agent at Redd, Brown and Williams Real Estate Services, says that most of their call-ins now come from the internet.





# Canned goodness

Extension classes offer tips on preserving favorite foods

BY JOHN CLAYTON

For nearly as long as there have been gardens, so have there been the challenges of food preservation. But the University of Kentucky Extension Service is ready to help. The extension service's county offices are offering learning opportunities that go beyond old family recipes and knowledge passed down from generation to generation.

Kentucky Extension Service offices in Lawrence, Johnson and Magoffin counties will present classes on food preservation this summer and offer year-round tips and assistance as well. The class sessions are usually scheduled for three or four days and cover canning, dehydration and freezing.

"We try to touch base on all the major aspects of food preservation," says Alivia Faris of the Lawrence County extension office in Louisa. "But we spend a lot of time on pressure cooking."

Pressure cooking and the use of proper and current recipes are at the center of some of the classes, says Brenda Cockerham of the Johnson County office.

Cockerham urged potential canners to gain an understanding of the preservation of low-acid foods.

"If not processed correctly, they can become tainted," she says. "So, it's important to learn about low-acid foods (most vegetables) and to pay attention to the recipes and follow them exactly."

The family consumer science agents from the local extension offices offered tips for food preservation and for the upcoming classes:

- If you're interested in taking a class, have a clear idea of what you hope to gain from it.
- Make sure any recipes you have are up-to-date and still applicable. Extension offices offer free recipes upon request. They are available via email or regular mail.
- Check your equipment, especially pressure cookers. The extension services offer free checks of pressure cookers and other equipment. Agents will make sure all gauges work properly and all seals are in good condition.

"A lot of people may be working with older equipment or may come across a good deal at a yard sale, but it's very important to make sure your cooker is in good shape," Faris says. "Just bring it in, and we will take a look at it for you."

Keep the factory guides for canning equipment like pressure cookers and food dehydrators, or find the guides on the

internet, for a better understanding of how to operate them properly. ☞



**All of the hands-on classes are free of charge and usually run four to five hours each day. Check with your local extension office for information about upcoming classes.**

**For Lawrence County:**

Alivia Faris | 606-673-9495  
lawrence@email.kyu.edu.

**For Johnson County:**

Brenda Cockerham | 606-789-8108  
johnson@email.kyu.edu.

**For Magoffin County:**

Courtney Jenkins | 606-349-3216  
magoffin@email.uky.edu.



# LIFELINE SERVICE

**Lifeline is a government assistance program that can help pay a portion of your telephone, mobile phone or internet bill each month. Consumers are allowed only one Lifeline program benefit per household.**

## DO YOU QUALIFY?

**Stay connected with a Lifeline discount.**

**Apply today!**

## LIFELINE IS A FEDERAL PROGRAM TO HELP LOW-INCOME AMERICANS PAY FOR PHONE OR BROADBAND SERVICE



### How much will Lifeline save me?

If you qualify for Lifeline, you will receive a credit of \$9.25 each month on your bill.



### What services are covered by this credit?

You have the choice (where applicable) of applying your benefit to one of three types of service offerings:

- Fixed or mobile broadband
- Fixed or mobile voice-only
- Bundles of fixed or mobile voice and broadband

NOTE: Lifeline can only be used for one source of communication from the list above.



### Can I receive more than one Lifeline credit?

No, consumers are allowed only one Lifeline program benefit per household.



### How do I qualify?

You are eligible for Lifeline benefits if you qualify for and receive one of the following benefits:

- SNAP
- Medicaid
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Federal Public Housing Assistance
- The Veteran's Pension or Survivor's Pension benefit.

Additionally, consumers at or below 135 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines will continue to be eligible for a Lifeline program benefit. (State determinations of income will no longer be accepted.) There are no changes to the eligibility criteria for Tribal programs.

**NOTE: Some states have additional qualifying programs, allowances and stipulations. Check with your local telecommunications provider for information about benefits that may be available in your state.**



### How do I enroll in the Lifeline program and start receiving this benefit?

To find out whether you qualify for Lifeline assistance, please visit [www.lifelinesupport.org](http://www.lifelinesupport.org) or call your local telecommunications provider.

**NOTE:** Your telephone company is not responsible for determining who qualifies for these programs or who receives assistance. Consumers must meet specific criteria in order to obtain assistance with their local telephone and/or broadband service, and qualifying is dependent upon government-established guidelines.



# Web Crafty

## Try online tools for creative hobbies

I have been sharing my stories of technology and doling out advice on how to be more tech-savvy. I hope you feel as if you have gotten to know my family and me during the past couple of years. So now it only seems right to admit the other side of my personality that you may not guess. Whenever I have a free moment, I am usually at my sewing machine working on a quilt, bag or purse. I may also be working away on a cross-stitch wall hanging or embroidering a household item. I'm an old-fashioned, low-tech crafter whenever I get the opportunity.

So, how does that fit into this technology column? Well, I suspect many of you reading this article may have similar hobbies. If it isn't sewing, it may be baking, woodworking or jewelry-making. What I've been discovering is there are lots of websites, apps and technology tools available to help you create and sell your masterpieces! Here are some of my favorite "crafty" websites and why I love them:

### CRAFTSY

Craftsy is one of my newest favorites, accessible through both a website and an app. It gives you access to patterns for



many types of crafts but also includes video instructions. I'm working on a project that takes me step by step with video, written instructions and a pattern. This is a wonderful site if you are looking to learn something new. You'll find instructions on lots of topics, such as sewing, painting, cooking, cake decorating, photography, gardening and much more!

### CUSTOM MADE

I've promoted this site for many years. If you are looking to sell your craftwork, or if you are looking to buy a very

specific, specially made item, I encourage you to take a look at this website to see if it would be a good fit for you to sell your skills to potential buyers.

### CRAFT GOSSIP

Craft Gossip is a website that hosts a collection of blogs from crafters in all sorts of categories. You can find fun ideas for oodles of projects no matter what your skill set is. You can also find projects based on holiday themes. New content is added all the time, so you can always find a new project.

I believe that technology is


going to help revive the craft and hobby lifestyle. So many of these skills, once passed down through the generations, have been abandoned or forgotten. Now, one person can share his or her skills with millions by putting the instructions online. So try something new today! 📱



**CARISSA SWENSON**  
IS A TRAINING  
AND EDUCATION  
CONSULTANT  
FOR CONSORTIA  
CONSULTING.



Don't forget about the most common sites, such as **YouTube**, **Pinterest** and **Etsy** for tutorials, patterns and craft buying and selling. These sites are frequented by crafters for a reason!



Six-year-old Emma Griffith spends time on her family farm.

# BUILDING ON A LEGACY

Paintsville's Griffith Family Farm is poised for expansion

BY JOHN CLAYTON

**G**enerations of family history exist in the rolling hills of Eastern Kentucky for Chester Griffith. But so does a bright future as Griffith Family Farm in Paintsville takes big steps forward this year.

Last December, Griffith was reminded of his history as he planned an expansion to grow the farm to 500 acres and, perhaps, add more potential than ever before. His wife, Melissa, dug through the Johnson County archives and found the farm's original deed, a document from 1849 that granted ownership of the farm to Griffith's great-great-grandfather Jilson Payne Patrick.

"We don't put a lot of emphasis on materialistic things. I drive an old, beat-up '88 Buick, and come Christmas, I don't want the family to get me anything," Griffith says. "I feel like I'm the most blessed man in the world. I don't need a gift or something to reiterate that, but Melissa always finds ways to wiggle around that.

"To me, it was worth more that she went down there and did some research and found the original deed, had it printed real nice and framed it. It was just a great gift, and I loved it. There's a lot of family history here, and to be able to keep that all together is something we're losing more and more."

Chester and Melissa Griffith are the sixth generation of the family, since Patrick, to live on the farm. Their daughters, Emma, 6; Ella, 4; and Eliza, 2 — all old family names — mark the seventh generation to live there.

In January, Griffith was able to reunite a portion of the original farm with the tract he bought at the age of 17 from his father. He has worked the land since that initial purchase. This most recent acquisition brings the total acreage to 500 and gives Griffith more options and potential for the future.

## HERE AND NOW: GOOD FOOD

The Griffith Family Farm opened its produce stand in March 2017 in downtown Paintsville and was met with an overwhelming response. As a result, it stayed open until early December, Griffith says.

"It grew a lot faster than we thought it ever would," he says. "We've done really well, and it's just encouraged us to do more this year. We put a greenhouse up last year to increase our vegetable production and get started with flower production. Now, we probably do more flowers than we do vegetables."

Griffith sold produce through a Community Supported Agriculture agreement until the logistics became too difficult. He also networked with other farmers across the region to bring in beef and other products not grown on the Griffith Family Farm.

"We built a network of like-minded farmers who aren't going to spray everything full of chemicals and inject the beef with growth hormones," Griffith says. "We've built a real good network of local farmers to help supply the demand."

Selling organic, chemical-free food is of the utmost importance to Griffith, whose mother and father both died in their 40s after illnesses.

"People are unhealthy, and it seems like an epidemic," he says. "There used to be no such thing as childhood diabetes several





The Griffith family spends time together at their farm, where they raise flowers and produce.

years ago. With all the advancements in medicine, people are still getting sick; it has to be the food we eat.”

Griffith found that he is not the only person who feels this way, as people flocked to the produce stand all of last year for organic meats, eggs and produce.

“People are becoming more aware of the industrial food system, and there’s more of a movement to eat local food and know where your food is coming from,” he says. “Fifty or 60 years ago, they grew their own food and took extras into town to sell it. That’s what everybody did, but nobody does that anymore.”

The farm is still very much a family enterprise. Griffith’s brother, grandmother and two sisters each play a role in its operation.

“Some of our stuff, I think we’re competitive with grocery stores. Some of the stuff we have is a little more expensive, but good food is worth more in my opinion,” Griffith says. “The greenhouse is full right now — you have to get past the frost before people start buying the flowers and the vegetable plants, but come May, it’ll be so busy we’ll just be lucky to keep up. That just goes to show you the demand is there for good food and good products.”

## THE FUTURE: GROWING A FARM

When Griffith purchased the neighboring farmland in January, it made the Griffith Family Farm truly whole again — as it was when Patrick owned it in the mid-19th century.

“It was exactly what we needed — we needed more bottomland for crop production, and we want to raise our own beef,” Griffith says.

But that’s just one of the possibilities Griffith sees for diversification and the future of the old family farm.

The Dawkins Line Rail Trail, which is operated under the auspices of the Kentucky State Parks system, runs through the newly reacquired property and will provide 36 miles of recreational walking, cycling, hiking and horseback riding trails when completed. It’s the largest rail-to-trail in the state and winds through Breathitt, Johnson and Magoffin counties.

“The premier trailhead of the entire trail is in the middle of the property we just bought, and I think we’ll be able to take advantage of that piece of tourism,” Griffith says. “Our customers can actually come out and see the farm, see how the food is actually produced and form a more intimate relationship with the people who are growing their food.”

But Griffith says he sees more than beef cattle grazing on the hillsides and corn stalks swaying in the breeze on the new acreage.

“We’re hoping to do some expansion before too long,” he says. “We’re hoping to build a storefront and an event barn. We want to make it one of the nicest facilities in Kentucky. It’ll be a place where you can come and shop for good food; you can have a wedding or pretty much anything you want. We’ve got a lot of plans.”



Chester Griffith carries his 2-year-old daughter, Eliza, as he surveys a section of land he will soon be planting on his family farm.



The Griffith family grows poultry, flowers and produce to sell to area residents.



# The art of low and slow

## BBQ Boot Camp grads now smoked-meat experts

There are few foods as American as barbecue, and for true meat lovers, the only question is how to save room for seconds. But when firing up the grill this summer, let's get one thing straight: Merely throwing meat on a grill does not produce barbecue. Newcomers to the grill may believe that anything covered in barbecue sauce counts, but the real thing is cooked in a smoky universe for a really long time, and that factor, says Chris Huffman, is key to smoking meats.

"The name of the game is patience," he says.

Huffman is executive chef at Blair House Inn, a charming bed-and-breakfast in Wimberley, Texas. The inn offers intensive, three-day cooking classes every month, drawing both experienced cooks and novices into the kitchen. They work to improve their culinary skills at barbecue, as well as cuisines from around the world, depending on the month they choose.

Barbecue varies by region, and in Texas, it's all about the beef. "Brisket is big around here in the Hill Country," Huffman says.

But side dishes are also a regional thing in Texas, he adds. "My wife is from South Texas, and her family serves pico de gallo, borracho beans and Mexican rice," he says.

A recent BBQ camp at Blair House Inn drew folks with varying backgrounds from all around, but all came with a common interest: to learn how to properly smoke meats.

"I'm going to make barbecue sumo wrestlers out of you, so pace yourselves," Huffman told the class during their first few minutes in the kitchen. "I want you all to come and do all of this yourselves. It's not a dog and pony show."



Chef Chris Huffman's monthly three-day cooking classes provide an intense introduction to the techniques that make barbecue a favorite dish throughout the country.

The menu for the three-day class included eggs Benedict with smoked pork tenderloin as well as cherry cola-glazed pork ribs and other meats. Sides included chayote and jicama salad with mango vinaigrette and warm potato salad with bacon and mustard.

BBQ camp began early each morning with students taking on a different element of each recipe, working as a team to prepare their daily meals. "This class is all about me showing you how to make things and having you go home and play and

experiment and have many happy accidents," Huffman says.

Students started out as strangers in the kitchen and ended as friends in the dining room, sharing meals and stories.

The next BBQ camp is scheduled for June 18-20 and again Aug. 6-8. Here are some of the recipes you may learn to make at home.

### CULINARY CREATIONS

Interested in learning more about cooking classes at Blair House Inn? For a complete list of classes offered, as well as other information, log on to [blairhouseinn.com](http://blairhouseinn.com).



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





“Brining is an important first step for your smoked meats. It imparts flavor and tenderness to chicken and pork.”

—Chris Huffman

## ALL-PURPOSE BRINE

- 1 gallon water
- 1 cup sea or kosher salt
- 1/2 cup dark brown sugar
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme or 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1/2 teaspoon whole black peppercorns
- 2 cloves
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper

Place all ingredients in a large, nonreactive pot and bring to a boil over medium heat while stirring. Reduce heat to simmer, and simmer for 5 minutes. Remove from heat and let cool. After cooling, stir well to ensure that all ingredients are evenly mixed. Make sure meat or poultry is completely

submerged, weighing it down with a plate if necessary. Let soak for at least 2 hours but no more than 8. Lightly rinse meat before placing in smoker.

## SMOKED BRISKET

- 1 (12-pound) brisket
- 3 tablespoons kosher salt
- 2 tablespoons chili powder
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 2 tablespoons black pepper
- 1 tablespoon granulated garlic

Prepare smoker, heating to 225 F. Rub spices on brisket and place fat side down in smoker for 8 hours. Add wood chips and more charcoal as needed. Remove from smoker and wrap in heavy-duty aluminum foil; return to smoker or place in 225-degree oven, fat side up, for 8 more hours. Let brisket rest for 30 minutes before slicing. Slice against grain of meat. Makes 8-10 servings.

## CHERRY COLA-GLAZED PORK RIBS

- 2 racks of ribs
- 4 (12-ounce) cans cherry cola

- 2 cups cherry jam
- 2/3 cup Dijon mustard
- 1/4 cup soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 1 tablespoon sriracha sauce

Remove silver skin from underside of ribs, if desired. Salt and pepper ribs. Boil cherry cola in a heavy saucepan over medium-high heat until reduced to 1 1/2 cups, about 45 minutes. Stir in remaining ingredients, reduce heat to medium, and simmer for 5 minutes. Makes about two cups of glaze. Place ribs onto smoker rack. Do not stack directly on top of each other. Fill the smoker pan with wood chips and bring to 270 F. Smoke for one hour. Brush the ribs with the glaze and continue doing so every 30 to 45 minutes until the meat is no longer pink and begins to shrink back from the bones, 3 to 4 hours. Brush the sauce on the ribs for the last time 30 minutes before the ribs are ready to be taken off the smoker. Once the ribs are done, wrap them in aluminum foil and allow to rest 10 to 15 minutes to allow juices to reabsorb into the meat and make the ribs moist. 🍷







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