

The Foothills

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2018

CONNECTION

TIMELESS FAMILY FUN

Pick your fresh
produce at
4 Got-N-Tymes

BRINGING HISTORY TO LIFE

One young man's
love of history
plays out

LIVE THE LOW-CARB LIFE

Enjoy a
delicious
way to drop
weight





BY SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

Working together for rural broadband

With few exceptions, we can accomplish more by working together than when we stand alone.

People impact others through churches and community organizations. Businesses support one another through chambers of commerce and trade associations. Your telecommunications provider joins forces with other independent and cooperative telcos through NTCA.

These examples show people acting jointly to ultimately improve the quality of life for those around them. Across the U.S. we are seeing this spirit play out in new ways to make real progress on the issue of rural broadband.

We have seen this before. Creating a nationwide electric grid and connected landline telephone network that included rural America was an enormous undertaking. The same was true for our network of highways that connects us from coast to coast and all parts in between. Now, our greatest challenge is connecting all of America — urban and rural — to a reliable broadband network.

NTCA member companies are uniquely positioned to tackle this challenge, and increasingly we are seeing them partner to develop creative solutions. For example, telecommunications providers are developing partnerships with one another to serve new areas and operate more efficiently. We are even seeing electric providers join with telecommunications companies to deliver broadband to unserved rural areas.

These efforts are encouraging, and NTCA is focused on supporting such cooperation among providers. After all, that spirit is the very foundation on which our industry is built. 

Farm bill will impact future of broadband for rural America

BY STEPHEN V. SMITH

The legislation known as the “farm bill” making its way through Congress affects far more than farmers. It will also impact access to internet service in rural America for years to come.

The farm bill, which is reauthorized every five years, governs how food is grown in America by legislating farm subsidies, trade, conservation, research and related issues. The Rural Development portion of the bill includes funding and guidelines for the Rural Utilities Service and its Rural Broadband Program.

This program makes funding available to help service providers bring broadband to rural areas.

The U.S. House of Representatives passed its Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018 on June 21, with the U.S. Senate passing its version a week later. There are many differences between the two bills on issues such as food stamps, conservation programs and farm subsidy payment limits. These will be addressed as part of the conference committee process.

In speaking with the publication Hoosier Ag Today in July, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue said, “The farm bill has always been bipartisan, and it will be so at the end.” He added that lawmakers “don’t want to go back and face midterm elections in November without having a farm bill” in place.

Members of NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association were among those testifying before Congress as the bills were debated. Shirley Bloomfield, CEO of the association, says rural telecommunications providers shared the importance of investing for the long term and “looking to providers with a proven track record of success deploying and maintaining services in rural communities.”

Bloomfield says rural broadband providers have deployed robust broadband networks in rural areas through a combination of community commitment, entrepreneurial spirit, private capital, the FCC’s Universal Service Fund and “critical programs like those made available through RUS.”

NTCA members will remain engaged in the process. “We look forward to building upon this early progress, and making the best possible use of the valuable resources through programs such as those contained in the farm bill to advance and sustain rural broadband,” Bloomfield says. 

What happens next?

1



The Senate and House versions go to a conference committee to work out the differences and create one bill.

2



This combined bill goes to the full House and Senate for a vote.

3

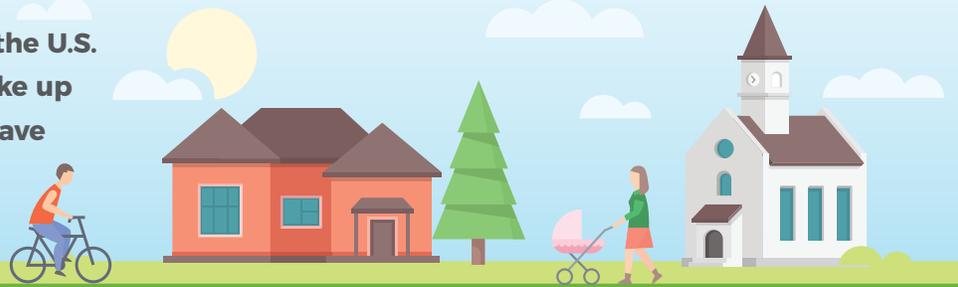


The final bill goes to the president for his signature.

Deadline for action: Before the current farm bill expires on Sept. 30

Rural Broadband Matters to America

Internet-based transactions drive half the U.S. economy, and rural residents—who make up almost 20 percent of the population—have the same vital need for internet access as urban dwellers.



Internet Usage

Compared to urban areas, rural residents:

- use Wi-Fi in their homes at the same rate
- use the internet for approximately the same amount of time each day
- connect the same types of devices to the internet
- use smartphones to connect at nearly the same rate
- use the same types of broadband access (although urbanites have greater access to fiber-based service)

Internet-Driven Commerce

The Numbers

→ **15.5%** ←

Rural America is responsible for 15.5% of all consumer, internet-driven transactions.

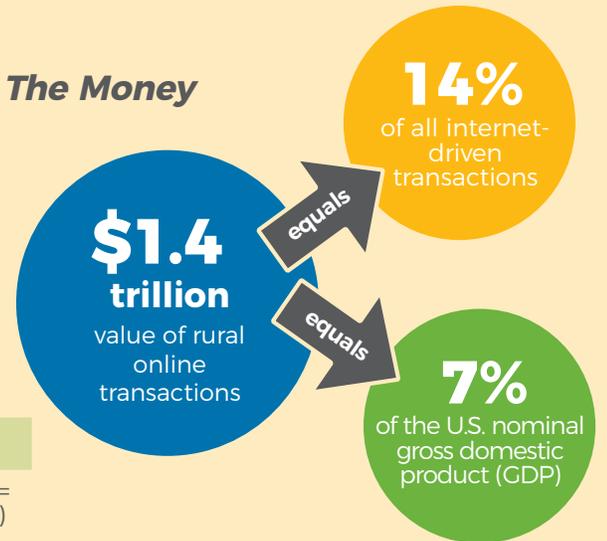
10.8 billion Rural transactions per year

The Future

TODAY **50% GDP**
Internet-driven transactions = 50% of U.S. GDP (\$9.6 trillion)

2022 **65% GDP**
Internet-driven transactions = 65% of U.S. GDP (\$14 trillion)

The Money



Rural Broadband Investment

Rural consumers depend on their broadband connection for online transactions, which drive the U.S. economy. This highlights the value of continued investment in rural broadband for the good of all Americans.



FOUNDATION FOR RURAL SERVICE

Source: Foundation for Rural Service white paper "A Cyber Economy: The Transactional Value of the Internet in Rural America," by iGR

Expanding to help our neighbors



RUTH CONLEY
Chief Executive Officer

East Kentuckians have a long history of helping our neighbors. Foothills is proud to continue that tradition.

Historically, our local communities are known for self-reliance and a willingness to help our neighbors. We do this not only because it is the right thing to do, but also because we often know no one else will come in and help.

Foothills owes its foundation as a cooperative to that community spirit, and it's a legacy that has led us to help our neighbors in Paintsville.

As you know, our history and structure as a cooperative make us different from other companies. October marks National Cooperative Month, recognizing companies, such as Foothills, that were started by grassroots community efforts. The farmers, miners, merchants and other area residents banded together to establish Foothills because they knew our area needed a modern communications network to thrive.

It's a fitting time of year for us to welcome our new customers in Paintsville and to begin delivering them the vital broadband service that so many of our longtime members have enjoyed. From the beginning, Foothills' mission has been to improve the quality of life and economic opportunities of the people in our area.

With the decision to expand our network into Paintsville — offering phone, video and broadband service — our board of directors has moved that mission forward. We're providing service to a community where many members already work, shop and visit friends or family. At the same time, the opportunity to add new customers helps us ensure Foothills continues forward on a solid financial footing, which enables us to continue serving and improving service everywhere.

I look forward to bringing fiber optic broadband to Paintsville, and I'm encouraged we already have a waiting list of residents and business owners signing up for the service. The network is built so customers can retain their existing phone numbers, which we felt was an important factor in the expansion.

At the end of the day, I firmly believe our communities are so intertwined that improving connectivity in Paintsville will benefit all of our members. Our founders knew that without a modern communications network, our region would be left behind, and that's as true today as it's ever been. I'm proud to work at a company like Foothills that is working so hard to make sure all of our region's residents have the opportunities they deserve. 📞

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:

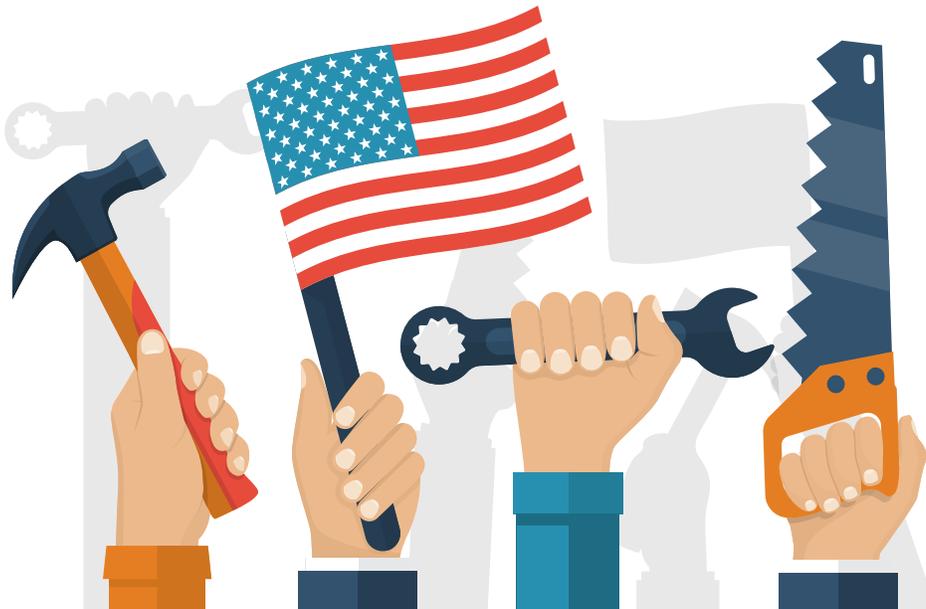


On the Cover:



Hannah Blevins, the daughter of Dawn and Mark Sexton, helps her parents run the 4 Got-N-Tymes pick-your-own farm.
See story Page 12.

== HAPPY == ★ LABOR DAY ★



In observance of Labor Day, Foothills Communications' office will close Monday, Sept. 3, and the cooperative would like to offer you something special! Watch channels 400-492 for a weekend full of FREE entertainment — Sept. 1-3!

Cinemax | HBO | Showtime | STARZ | StarzEncore

Each year, the Foundation for Rural Service gives \$2,500 scholarships to exceptional students from rural areas for their first year of college or vocational school.

Applications for the scholarships will be available on FRS.org beginning in October.



FRS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM



FRS YOUTH APP CHALLENGE

Students, it's time to start thinking about the app that could pave the way to your future.

WHO: Students enrolled in grades seven to 12. A single student, or teams with as many as five students, may compete.

WHAT: Develop a concept for a mobile app to address a problem or improve a process in your rural community or in rural America at-large. The challenge is concept-based only, and entries will be judged based on how well-researched and well-presented the app is. It must be possible and not already an app in existence.

WHEN: The submission deadline is April 2019.

WHY: The winning team will receive \$1,000 in gift cards and Codecademy scholarships.

HOW: Visit FRS.org for more information about submissions.

Patriots Point Naval and Maritime Museum draws visitors to Mount Pleasant, South Carolina.

Take time for Maritime Museums

Photo courtesy of the Patriots Point Naval and Maritime Museum.

Ahoy, mates! Landlubbers and seafarers alike will enjoy a trip through the South's maritime museums. They're filled with historic tales, ships, waterways to discover and more.



Visitors at the River Discovery Center in Kentucky can use a simulator to experience steering a boat.

Photo courtesy of the River Discovery Center.

Texas Maritime Museum

1202 Navigation Circle, Rockport, Texas

Hurricane Harvey devastated much of the Lone Star State's coastline, including the Texas Maritime Museum. But thanks to the efforts of the museum staff and volunteers, the museum reopened bigger and better than ever in April 2018, less than a year after Harvey. Texas has several museums dedicated to ships and other watercraft from days gone by, but this one is the largest.

There are exhibits focused on exploration of the ocean and waterways, but they are only the beginning. The museum also features information about the settlement of the area and oil and gas exploration in the Gulf of Mexico. And commercial and sports fishing, as well as shipbuilding, all receive attention.

- **Admission:** Adults: \$8. Seniors and active military: \$6. Ages 3-12: \$3. Children under 3: Free.
- **Information:** 361-729-1271 or texasmaritimemuseum.org.
- **Hours:** 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and 1 to 4 p.m. Sunday.

River Discovery Center

117 South Water St., Paducah, Kentucky

As a new country, America depended on its rivers for transportation, sustenance and communication. Rivers helped build our nation, and you'll learn about the history of America's waterways during a day at the River Discovery Center.

The museum focuses primarily on the Four Rivers Region around Paducah where the Tennessee River meets the Ohio River. It's just upstream from where the Ohio and Mississippi rivers merge, and it's a short distance downstream from where the Cumberland River meets the Ohio River. The area teems with life and history.

The museum houses artifacts and lots of exhibits. One features the workings of a lock and dam, and another lets kids explore the rivers' habitats and delicate ecosystems. Audio stations are located throughout, including one where you'll learn about notable past riverboat captains. Thanks to a live feed from a rooftop camera, the River Spy exhibit lets you see vessels moving past the museum on the river and even what cargo they are transporting.

- **Admission:** Adults: \$8. Seniors: \$7. Children under 12: \$5.
- **Information:** 270-575-9958 or www.riverdiscoverycenter.org.
- **Hours:** 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 1-5 p.m. Sundays April through November.

Patriots Point Naval and Maritime Museum

40 Patriots Point Road

Mount Pleasant, South Carolina

A beacon at the mouth of the Cooper River in Charleston Harbor, the USS Yorktown, a legendary aircraft carrier, stands proudly as the primary exhibit at Patriots Point.

Not to be missed during a tour of the ship is the Engine Room Experience, the latest exhibit to open aboard the Yorktown. The renovated space uses the latest technology to bring the story of the engine room to life, making it easier for guests to understand the duties and



Visitors check out a tugboat model in the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway Exhibit at the Texas Maritime Museum.

Photo courtesy of the Texas Maritime Museum.

purpose of this vitally important room in an aircraft carrier. There are also tours of a submarine that stealthily crept through the oceans during the Cold War, as well as a World War II destroyer and other watercraft that saw action in and on the seas. Be sure to check out the Vietnam Experience while you're there, too.

It's a full day of adventure that, for youth groups of 10 or more, can culminate in a night aboard the USS Yorktown. Overnight visitors sleep where the sailors did and eat in the crew's mess hall. Wear comfortable shoes and get ready for lots of walking.

- **Admission:** Adults: \$22. Seniors and active military: \$17. Children 6 to 11: \$14. Children under 6 and active military in uniform: Free.
- **Information:** 843-884-2727 or www.patriotspoint.org.
- **Hours:** 9 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. daily.

Mississippi River Museum

125 North Front St., Memphis, Tennessee

The Mighty Mississippi is a river of lore. Stories have been written about it. Men and women have died paddling its waters. And it marks a divide between the East and West. The Mississippi River Museum will teach you all about it. Located on Mud Island off the Memphis riverbank, the museum is accessible via a sky bridge.

There are 18 galleries with exhibits that tell of the early inhabitants of the Lower

Mississippi River Valley and describe modern-day transportation along the river. There are also two full-size boat replicas to tour.

Pack a picnic and head to the adjacent Mississippi River Greenbelt Park. There are two concession stands open during park hours where you can pick up a drink or snacks.

- **Admission:** Free for general admission and sky bridge access. Museum package includes museum admission, riverwalk access with optional tour and round-trip monorail ride. Adults: \$10. Seniors: \$9. Children 5-11: \$7. Children 4 and under: Free.
- **Information:** 901-576-7241 or www.mudisland.com.
- **Hours:** 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday-Sunday.

USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park

2703 Battleship Parkway, Mobile, Alabama

The USS Alabama arrived in Mobile Bay in 1964 and opened for public tours a year later. Now, more than 50 years later, millions have come to visit and pay tribute to a ship that served in the Atlantic and Pacific theaters during World War II. Tour the ship from stem to stern, then visit the USS Drum, a submarine that also saw action in World War II and is the oldest submarine in the nation on display.

Battleship Memorial Park is a voyage through time and will teach children and adults about the maritime happenings during World War II. This is an outdoor "museum" that also includes an extensive aircraft collection, along with tanks and artillery. There's a picnic area as well as a cafe, The Galley, indoors next to the ship's store.

- **Admission:** Adults: \$15. Seniors: \$13. Children 6-11: \$6. Children ages 6-11 of active military: \$5. Active military and Children 5 and under: Free.
- **Information:** 251-433-2703 or www.ussalabama.com.
- **Hours:** 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. April through September and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. October through March. ☏

John Martin Connelley was 5 years old the first time he landed on a mock battlefield as a Confederate flag bearer. After that, he was hooked.

John Martin, now 8, is one of the youngest members of the Friends of Middle Creek, a group of Civil War re-enactors whose purpose is to educate the public about the Battle of Middle Creek, the American Civil War and the history of Eastern Kentucky.

He takes the mission very seriously, too, says his mother, Michelle Connelley. "He loves history," she says. "It's fascinating to see how much respect he puts into it. Once he gets on the battlefield, he goes from an 8-year-old boy to a grown-up man. His attitude is just so different from what it is when he's just hanging out. He just grows right up."

GOING TO BATTLE

John Martin's first trip to a Civil War re-enactment was at 10 months old, says Michelle Connelley. She and her husband, Martin, had heard cannon shots at Gardner Farm near their home in Salyersville and decided to investigate.

What they found was a field full of soldiers in Civil War uniforms carrying rifles, Southern Belles in full dress, and tents scattered amid the smoke. "We didn't really know what was going on in the beginning," she says. "But once we saw it, we started going to more of them."

John Martin Connelley participates in an annual re-enactment of the Battle of Middle Creek every September.

MAKING *history*

BY JEN CALHOUN

Young re-enactor learns history on the battlefield

Eventually, the family became members of the Friends of Middle Creek, attending the re-enactments in various parts of the South and learning the ways of the re-enactors. The group, which is based in Floyd County, offered fellowship, good food and a real-life view of historical events.

THE BATTLE OF MIDDLE CREEK

The group gets its name from the January 1862 Battle of Middle Creek, a struggle that helped Union forces maintain control of Eastern Kentucky. The National Park Service recognized the battlefield as a National Historic Landmark in 1992.

The Middle Creek battlefield itself had returned to nature by the time the Friends of Middle Creek formed in 2005, says Patrick Davis, president of the group.

“There had not been a re-enactment since 1999, and the county decided they didn’t want to invest the money to keep it clean,” he says. “We started a letter-writing campaign and enlisted the help of historical organizations across the country.”

But they also decided the best way to convince the county to keep the site clean was to use it. So, the group performed its first re-enactment in 2006.

“After that, we made it an annual event,” he says. “To protect our assets, we decided to incorporate our group. So, that’s how the Friends of Middle Creek and the Battle of Middle Creek got started.”

Now, the event is one of the only functioning re-enactments in Eastern Kentucky, and it is a big tourist attraction for the region, Michelle Connelley says. The annual September event draws re-enactors from many surrounding states, as well as groups from as far as Texas and California. The viewing audience generally includes about 6,000 to 7,000 people. The Friends of Middle Creek also holds a school day for nearly 1,500 students.

A CHARACTER EMERGES

But if preserving the battlefield was a big win for Davis, so was meeting John Martin for the first time.

“John Martin is a character,” he says. “That’s the best way to describe him. He wanted to come out to a lot of events, and he would come even though he wasn’t able to carry a rifle or be a soldier on the field. But he’d still come and make sure he made himself known.”

In his free time, John Martin prefers studying the strategies of WWII generals over playing soccer. He enjoys learning about the Battle of Iwo Jima over memorizing football plays. He likes the stories and the valor, the heroism and the defeat. He enjoys learning the secrets of bygone times.

“I like to teach people about the past,” he says. “I just think people don’t think too much about the past. They think more about the future.”



John Martin Connelley is one of the youngest members of the Friends of Middle Creek.



Going to battle

The annual Battle of Middle Creek Reenactment is Sept. 7-9 at the Middle Creek National Battlefield in Prestonsburg. Those interested in becoming part of the Friends of Middle Creek can find out more by going to the group's Facebook page. Children are also welcome to join and will receive cadet training through the organization.

“He loves history. It’s fascinating to see how much respect he puts into it. Once he gets on the battlefield, he goes from an 8-year-old boy to a grown-up man. His attitude is just so different from what it is when he’s just hanging out. He just grows right up.”

— Michelle Connelley, mother of 8-year-old Civil War re-enactor John Martin Connelley



PAMPERED

THE BEST DOGGONE ONLINE SERVICES THAT WON'T BREAK THE BANK

BY PATRICK SMITH

From top-shelf food to all-organic goodies and toys galore, we love to spoil our pets. But if you're tired of outdated playthings and boring treats, look into an online subscription for your most cherished friends. Toys and treats help pets focus and develop to improve their mental and physical well-being.

And while online subscription boxes for dogs and cats are the most common, don't fret if you have another type of pet. The internet has thought of everything. Search online and you'll find boxes for horses (SaddleBox), fish (My Aquarium Box), birds (ParrotBox) and more.

More than anything else, online shopping means one thing: convenience.

That's what's great about rural living powered by high-speed internet. You have the benefits of rural, hometown life with the convenience of staying connected. Internet-based subscriptions can bring deliveries of the products you need most.

In the July/August issue, we featured several food subscription services — look back if you missed it. If you're curious about other online subscriptions out there, don't wait on us. Check them out for yourself. Everything from shaving products to jewelry and coffee to mystery boxes is shipping out daily. In the next issue, we'll feature a few popular online fashion subscriptions.



BARKBOX BARKBOX.COM

Put the pep back in Fido's step with BarkBox. It's a fun, dog-themed delivery service with unique toys, treats and more for your four-legged friend. Choose a theme for your box, like New York City. This one comes complete with a miniature fire hydrant and "I Love NY" T-shirt. A Chewrassic Bark box comes with dinosaur-inspired treats and a lava-spewing chew toy.



PUPBOX PUPBOX.COM

Not much is cuter than a young pup learning to navigate life. And with all the work we put into helping our kids succeed, why not help our puppies thrive? Based on your dog's age, PupBox has training guidelines to help them navigate puppyhood with a nonstop wagging tail. PupBox brings training tips, treats, toys, chews and more to your mailbox each month.

BULLYMAKE BULLYMAKE.COM

Is that old toy rope past its prime? Bullymake to the rescue! Billed as the box that's designed for "power chewers," Bullymake gives you durable toys and healthy treats to keep your dog entertained for hours and hours. They also specialize in goods specifically tailored to your dog's weight and allergies.



KITNIPBOX KITNIPBOX.COM

Don't turn your frisky kitty into a grumpy cat. KitNipBox keeps your cat entertained with several quality toys and all-natural treats in each box. It'll leave your friend purring for more. Best of all, KitNipBox helps support several animal welfare organizations with your purchase.

What's getting in the way of your

Wi-Fi SIGNAL?

Wi-Fi makes internet service available to a wide range of devices without physically connecting them to your router. However, it's important to remember that the strength and quality of your signal can be influenced by several factors:



The distance between the router and your device

A computer in a second-floor bedroom, for example, may have a weaker connection than a computer on the first floor where the router is located.



The age of your device and its capabilities

Some computers and gaming consoles may use older technology that can't take advantage of today's higher speeds.



The number of devices sharing your Wi-Fi connection

Every device connected to your Wi-Fi is sharing the total bandwidth of your home's internet connection. If people in your home are streaming a movie on a tablet, playing a gaming console, watching a smart TV, sharing photos online and searching the internet all at the same time, some users could notice slower performance compared to times when fewer devices are used.



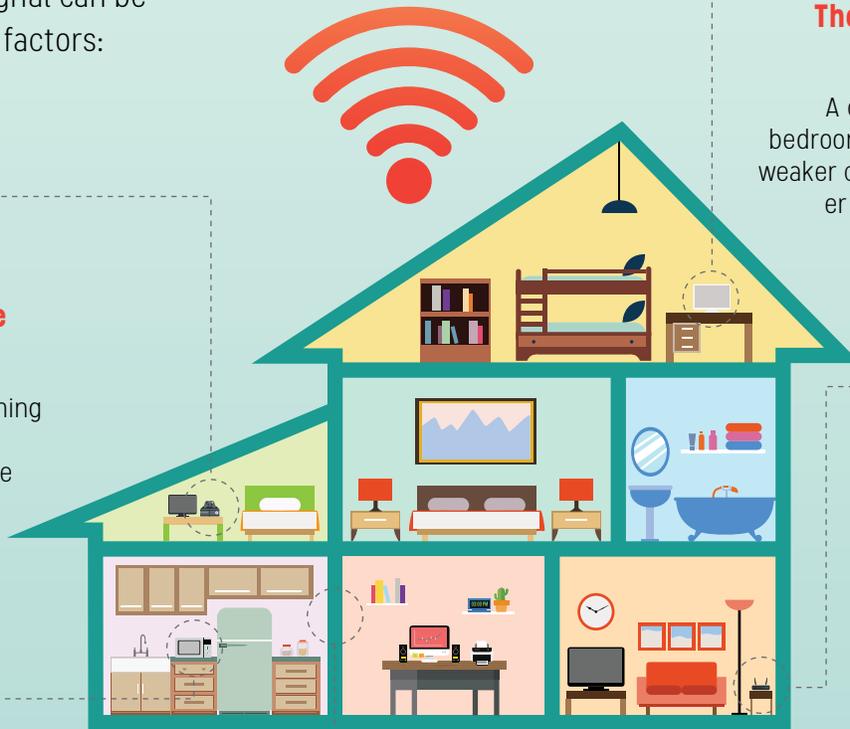
Other electronics in your home

Common, non-connected electronic items can sometimes interfere with your Wi-Fi strength. These include microwave ovens (the major offender), cordless phones, Bluetooth devices and even fluorescent lights.



Home construction materials between the router and your device

Some materials used in home construction can weaken your Wi-Fi signal strength. Metal in particular can cause interference because it can reflect and scatter Wi-Fi signals. Culprits include metal framing, ductwork, electrical panels and metal roofs.



Not Enough Speed?

If you have a number of devices fighting over your Wi-Fi signal, you may want to consider increasing your internet speed. Give us a call. We'll walk through how you use your broadband internet connection and talk about the right package to meet your needs.

Too Far Away?

If you use Wi-Fi enabled devices in rooms far away from your router, you may want to consider adding one or more network extenders to your home. Give us a call and we can discuss ways to boost your Wi-Fi signal strength to extend better connection speeds to more rooms — or even to a patio or deck.

Picking

A WINNER

Forget the world at 4 Got-N-Tymes Farm

BY JEN CALHOUN

When Mark and Dawn Sexton started their pick-your-own berry farm back in 2008, they wanted a place where families could gather and forget the rat race for a while.

That dream has come true at 4 Got-N-Tymes Farm, Dawn Sexton says. “I think people like to come out and forget about what’s going on in life,” she says. “But they also come to remember the things people forgot about, like picking pumpkins and strawberries.”

The Louisa farm sells strawberries in May and blueberries and black raspberries in June along with heirloom tomatoes, watermelons and various vegetables throughout the growing season. In the fall, they sell pumpkins of all sizes or let people pick their own. There’s also a corn maze, gourds of all shapes and sizes, mums and just about anything else customers might need for decorating fall porches and entryways.

About two years ago, the couple also opened the 4 Got-N-Tymes greenhouse near Cannonsburg, which offers unique and traditional hanging baskets and other items.

The name of the farm and greenhouse came about after the Sextons bought the 53-acre property. Dawn Sexton says the family who previously owned the land left old farm equipment and other artifacts that they still use today. The collection also brought a sense of history and connection to the land and the past that inspired the farm’s name and purpose, she says.



Dawn Sexton, left; her sister-in-law, Pam Ward; and her daughter, Hannah Bevins, enjoy having visitors at 4 Got-N-Tymes Farm.

LABOR OF LOVE

While the farm and greenhouse open with the seasons, the job is year-round. "I pretty much get up at the crack of dawn," Dawn Sexton says with a laugh. "I'm constantly thinking about what I'm going to do today or what I'm going to do next year."

Even in the heat of the summer, she is thinking about pumpkin seeds, mums and readying the corn maze for the Heritage Harvest Tour. The self-guided tour winds its way through Cannonsburg and Louisa and on through to Catlettsburg. Visitors can stop at a dozen or more historic churches, farms and other destinations. Purchases may include pumpkins, homemade jellies and jams, sorghum and syrup.

At 4 Got-N-Tymes, the tour highlights include pumpkins of all sizes and the corn maze, Dawn Sexton says. But they also offer mums, hay, homemade jams and jellies, and breads that include pumpkins and other items grown on the farm.

FAMILY AFFAIR

Dawn Sexton works full time at the farm, and her husband also puts in many hours when he's not at his own full-time job.

As the farm grows, help from the rest of the family is appreciated, Dawn Sexton says. Her son, Kyle Sexton, and daughters, Hannah Bevins and Jamie Sexton, pitch in when they're not working their own jobs. Hannah Bevins' husband, Braydon, also helps out, as does Jamie

Sexton's fiance, Cody Archer. Mark Sexton's sister, Pam Ward, mans the greenhouse.

Mark Sexton says the hard work plays into his family creed. "I call them the three 'self's': self-discipline, self-pride and self-motivation. If you've got those three things, you can go as far as you want in life."

And despite the long hours, Dawn Sexton says the farm and sense of family togetherness means everything to her. "At my last job, I would often work 50 to 60 hours a week," she says. "But even though I probably work more hours now, it's more relaxing for me to do this. I don't mind it because I like what I do. And I get to spend time with my family, which is really important to me." 🗨️

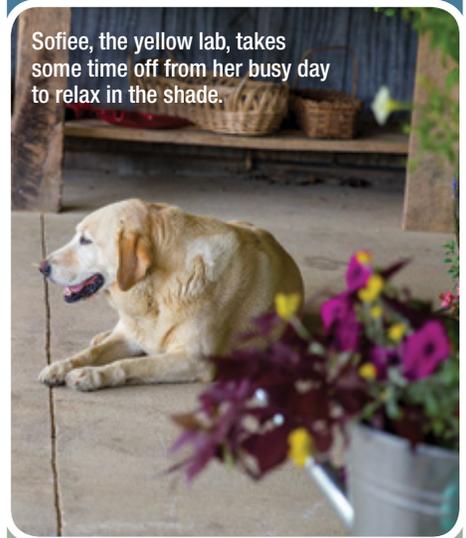


Dawn Sexton, left, and her sister-in-law, Pam Ward, look forward to working with the greenery and plants each year for customers.

If you go

The fields of 4 Got-N-Tymes offer pick-your-own strawberries, blueberries and black raspberries in late spring and summer. The farm also sells a selection of heirloom tomatoes and other vegetables and watermelons. In the fall, visitors can get pumpkins of all sizes, gourds, hay, mums and anything else needed for decorations. The farm also sells homemade jams, jellies, pumpkin bread and other breads. The greenhouse offers a large selection of unique hanging baskets. Group tours and hayrides can also be arranged. The farm is at 2770 Little Cat Fork Road, and the greenhouse is at 3209 Cannonsburg Road. For more information, call 606-465-4501 or 606-465-4502, or check out their Facebook page.

Sofee, the yellow lab, takes some time off from her busy day to relax in the shade.



Heritage Harvest Tour

The Heritage Harvest Tour takes place Sept. 29-30. For more information, go to the event's website at heritageharvesttourky.com or check them out on Facebook.

GO LOW

A low-carbohydrate diet can improve overall health

Jon Rector has always been a big guy. Now 48 years old, he can't remember a time when he didn't buy his clothes in the husky department at his local department store. As a preteen and teenager, he was teased about his size, too. "I had a good disposition, though," he says. "I played it off."



Jon Rector's low-carb diet is helping to improve his overall health.

But when he tipped the scales at 300 pounds, shortly before he married his wife, Donna, he knew he needed to make a change. He dropped 80 pounds in three short months.

But, he says, "married life happens." And it didn't take long for those pounds to return to his 6-foot-4-inch frame. Rector is a big man and carries his weight well. He never had medical issues. Physically, he was fine through his 20s, 30s and most of his 40s. But chasing his young grandson was hard on him. "I wanted to be around for him," Rector says. "I knew I had to do something."

Two years ago, he went to his doctor, and tests came back confirming that his A1C count, a test used to diagnose diabetes, was 6.4. Diabetes is indicated when results are 6.5 or higher. "That was when I got more serious about my weight," he says.

Rector lost about 30 pounds and lowered his A1C some by reducing calories. But after a few months, he went back to his old habits. His nemeses? Sweet tea, ice cream, candy — all sorts of sugary treats. Before he knew it, he put on all the weight he had lost, plus more.

Rector is executive director of Union Gospel Mission, an organization that offers a residential program in Chattanooga to homeless men with life-controlling issues. He does not get much exercise.

In December 2017, he

weighed 470 pounds, and his A1C was at 6.8. That was his wake-up call. "My doctor wanted to put me on medication, but I hate meds," Rector says. "So I told the doctor 'no.' I wanted to lose weight on my own."

His doctor was skeptical, but Rector gave it a try. He'd lost weight before, so he figured he could do it again, and he did.

"It was nothing for me to be eating 6,000 to 8,000 calories a day," he says. "I'm a stress eater, and my go-to places were Taco Bell and McDonald's. We like Mexican food, too. And the waiter at the restaurant we used to go to knew me, and he would automatically bring me a sweet tea in the largest beer mug they had."

Rector knew he was in for a lifestyle change, and he chose to focus on low-carb eating. It's an approach he can live with. He thanks registered dietitian Danielle Townsend, with Primary Healthcare Centers in Chattanooga, for her guidance.

"Low-carb diets can be a sensible way to lose weight," Townsend says. "They have been shown to benefit those with cardiovascular disease and diabetes and also to help diminish food cravings. I think people opt for the low-carb diet because it allows them to lose weight faster, and that is an important motivating factor for them."

Rector lost 30 pounds in his first two months following a low-carb lifestyle and is now

down about 50 pounds since December.

Most people, Townsend says, have difficulty eliminating or reducing items such as pizza, biscuits, hamburger buns, rice, pasta and potatoes. The diet puts emphasis on whole, unprocessed foods, such as vegetables, eggs and lean meats.

Donna Rector, Jon's wife, has had to change her lifestyle, too. No longer does she prepare pasta and rice dishes. "I cook a lot of turkey now," she says.

Rector doesn't miss all the high-carbohydrate foods too much. He's always liked vegetables. "It's the way our grandparents used to eat," he says. "I really like this kind of food. The hard part, for me, is not the pasta and rice. It's the sweets. But the bottom line is that what you take in, you have to take off."

That motto, along with his grandson, keeps Rector going. "I want to take him hiking, take him camping," he says. "A year ago, I couldn't have done that. Now that I've lost some weight, I think I might be able to. In another year, I know I'll be able to. It's just like the same thing I teach the guys at the mission. It's all about making the right decisions."



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



Low-carb recipes

BREAKFAST SCRAMBLE

- 1/2 pound ground turkey
- 1/2 pound ground pork sausage
- 1 zucchini (large dice)
- 1 yellow squash (large dice)
- 1 medium onion (chopped)
- 1 bell pepper (large dice)
- 6 eggs
- 1/4 cup of cheese (your choice)

In a skillet, brown the turkey and pork, add vegetables and cook about 5-7 minutes. Scramble in eggs and cook completely. Add cheese to top and serve warm.



TURKEY SLOPPY JOES

- 1 pound ground turkey
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 1 medium bell pepper, finely chopped
- 1 clove of garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 tablespoon Frank's Red Hot Sauce
- 3 cups crushed tomatoes
- 1 tablespoon honey

Salt and pepper, to taste
Low-carb buns

Brown turkey in skillet. Remove from skillet and add onions, bell peppers and garlic, sauteing until soft. Return meat to skillet and add tomato paste, mustard, hot sauce, tomatoes and honey. Taste and season with salt and pepper if needed. Simmer mixture till warmed through and thickened slightly. Spoon onto low-carb buns.

LOW-CARB VEGETABLE BEEF SOUP

- 1/2 teaspoon olive oil
- 1 pound lean ground beef
- 1/2 large onion, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 (15-ounce) can diced tomatoes, undrained
- 3 (15-ounce) cans beef or vegetable broth
- 6 ounces fresh green beans, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 1/4 head cabbage, chopped
- 4 ounces fresh mushrooms, chopped
- 1/2 medium zucchini, peeled and roughly diced
- 1 bay leaf
- Salt and pepper, to taste

In a medium to large pot, heat olive oil; brown ground beef, onion and garlic. Add remaining ingredients. Bring to a boil; simmer, cover and cook on low for 15-30 minutes. Discard bay leaf before serving. 🍴



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