

# CONNECTION

## NATURE AND NURTURE

Holistic healing at  
The Natural Path

**BROADBAND:**  
HEALTH CARE EDITION

## MADE WITH LOVE

Angie's Cast Iron  
Grill serves a  
slice of home

## PALMETTO SWEETS

Pulling back  
the layers on  
Vidalia's cousin





BY SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO  
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

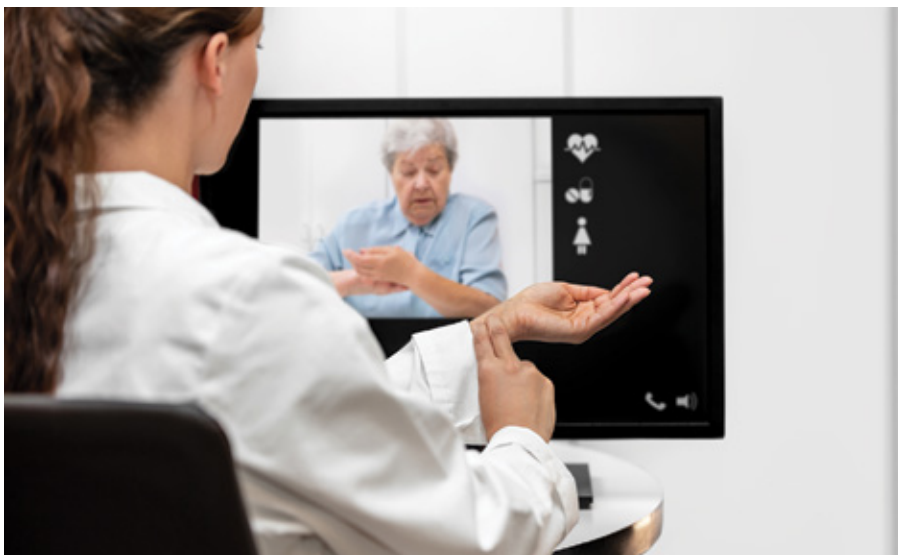
## Broadband and rural health care

This magazine brings you stories of businesses operating across the broadband network your telco is building. You read of people who are working from home or getting an online degree thanks to their connection. Stories like these are endless throughout your area, and across the rural landscape served by the members of NTCA.

In this issue there is a focus on a particularly powerful use of broadband — health care. Better health leads to stronger families and happier, more productive communities. With a reliable internet connection and technology such as smartphones, tablets and monitoring devices, people of all ages have the tools to improve their health, access physicians, age in place, and live better lives. Be sure to read this issue's special health care section.

Innovative approaches to solving the challenges of rural living are nothing new for your telco and others like it across the country. Recently, I was delighted to visit with hundreds of executives and board members who lead these companies at our association's national meeting and expo. I was encouraged — as always — to be around these women and men who face the challenges of serving rural America and do an incredible job delivering some of the best broadband service in the nation.

Your community-based provider is part of a national family creating new opportunities for your community and those like it from coast to coast. From health care to education to economic development and beyond, they are building the future of rural America. 📶



## Patients to have more access to telehealth services in 2020 under proposed Medicare Advantage changes

BY STEPHEN V. SMITH

The elderly and disabled who participate in Medicare Advantage programs could see more opportunities for telehealth services next year.

The proposed changes, announced in October, would remove barriers and allow Medicare Advantage plans to offer additional telehealth benefits starting in plan year 2020, according to a press release from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).

Seema Verma, administrator of the CMS, says these changes “give Medicare Advantage plans more flexibility to innovate in response to patients’ needs,” adding that she is “especially excited about proposed changes to allow additional telehealth benefits, which will promote access to care in a more convenient and cost-effective manner for patients.”

The key to providing telehealth services, including remote doctor visits and patient monitoring, is the availability of reliable broadband access. The research paper *Anticipating Economic Returns of Rural Telehealth*, published by NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association, states: “Highly advanced, state of the art telemedicine applications — including some not even yet developed — can only be possible when accessed via a high-speed, reliable broadband network. This is particularly critical in rural America, where the highest potential benefits from telemedicine — and the greatest challenges to deploying broadband — can be found.”

Rural telecommunications providers continue to expand broadband service to some of the most sparsely populated areas of the country. All of the nearly 850 NTCA member companies provide broadband service, many bringing gigabit internet speeds to their communities.

In remarks at a telehealth policy forum shortly after the CMS announcement, Verma said the proposed Medicare Advantage changes are “a major step towards expanding access to telehealth services because the rule would eliminate barriers for private Medicare Advantage plans to cover additional telehealth benefits for enrollees in MA plans.” 📶

# MULTITASKING

## CONSUMERS FIND NEW WAYS TO ENJOY MEDIA

**P**hones, tablets, streaming boxes, smart televisions, desktops, laptops and more provide consumers a wealth of opportunities to go online, resulting in increasingly complex and individualized habits for content consumption.

There is no better company to illustrate the trends than Nielsen, a global enterprise specializing in measuring and tracking consumer media trends. In December of last year, the company took a deep dive into how audiences are making use of the growing media world to create its Nielsen Total Audience Report.

Adults in the United States spent more than 10 hours daily with some form of media: live or time-shifted TV, nearly five hours; radio, nearly two hours; and digital devices, nearly three and a half hours. They often combine the tools they use. For example, someone might watch television while also surfing the web on an iPad.

Forty-five percent of those responding to a survey of Nielsen's Media Enthusiast Community watched TV while using digital devices "very often" or "always." Nearly a third reported using both platforms "sometimes," while only 12 percent never use both at the same time.

The report concluded that new digital platforms such as smartphones and tablets have changed how consumers interact with and consume media, often using multiple devices at once to create a better overall experience.

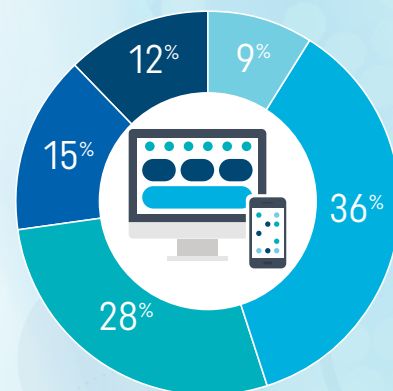
How often, for example, have you been watching a TV program, wondered what other shows an actor has appeared in and used a smartphone or tablet to find the answer? Well, you're not alone. More than 71 percent of respondents to the survey had looked up information about TV content they were viewing, and 51 percent reported the same habit for audio.

While some trends are changing as the technology landscape expands, others do not: Prime time still rules. Adult media usage still peaks from 9-10 p.m., with nearly 38 out of a possible 60 minutes spent consuming media.

The study reached a clear conclusion: Today's media landscape keeps consumers engaged. 📱



## SIMULTANEOUS USAGE TV + DIGITAL



How often do you watch TV and use a digital device simultaneously?



## SIMULTANEOUS USAGE OF DEVICES

### DIGITAL USAGE WHILE WATCHING TV

In what ways have you used your digital device to engage with the TV content you were watching?

71%

Look up info related to the content

41%

Email | Text | Message about the content

35%

Look up | Shop for product or service being advertised

28%

Write | Read post about content on social media

15%

Switch to different content after seeing something online

### DIGITAL USAGE WHILE LISTENING TO AUDIO

In what ways have you used your digital device to engage with audio content you were listening to?

51%

31%

25%

20%

14%



# Broadband opens new health care frontiers

When I talk to state and local leaders, they say they're pleased by what a broadband network can do in our homes, schools and businesses. But increasingly, the place where experts and leaders are most excited about broadband technology for rural America is at the doctor's office.



**RUTH CONLEY**

Chief Executive Officer

The American Telemedicine Association defines "telehealth" as "the remote delivery of health care services and clinical information using telecommunications technology." It's no overstatement to say that it can revolutionize health care across our country.

And since telehealth requires high-speed broadband, we're excited to be in the middle of that revolution.

As you'll read in the pages of this issue, telehealth is already helping doctors deliver improved care to patients on cases ranging from stroke to mental health. It's helping sick people eliminate trips to the emergency room. It may even encourage doctors to come to rural clinics and hospitals.

Based on studies, telehealth is already improving patient outcomes and satisfaction while also reducing costs and increasing

efficiency for health care providers.

Because of broadband technology, local residents can work with their physicians to connect with specialists around the country via virtual visits and consultations. Eliminating the hurdle of traveling to big-city hospitals has proven to make patients more likely to seek care when they need it, which translates into faster and more complete recoveries.

Telehealth can also increase the pace of care when minutes and seconds matter. Whether it's giving a stroke patient an immediate evaluation by a specialist or enabling a regional radiologist to read the X-ray of a broken arm in the middle of the night, health care providers can use technology to eliminate dangerous delays. Tapping into a regional telehealth network of experts over broadband could mean that patients don't have to wait for help from local medical professionals who may not have the expertise or simply can't be everywhere at once.

I find, however, that when explaining what telehealth is, it's also important to discuss what it's not. In my view, telehealth should not be a way to replace local physicians with robots or with doctors a patient never meets in person. Telehealth should be an essential tool and an important resource for your doctor to use in the care of his or her patients.

When we say our mission at Foothills Communications is to improve the lives of the people in our service area, I can't think of a better way to do that than by working with talented doctors and nurses to help local residents live longer and healthier lives.

As we've built and improved our network, we're happy for the convenience and entertainment it provides. But it is health care — along with economic development and educational opportunities — that drives us to invest the millions of dollars required to build a modern communications network in our rural area. ☎



## CONNECTION

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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, which 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:



Karin Byrd, a traditional naturopath and owner of The Natural Path, helps clients with various illnesses and diseases. See story Page 12.

# A ROUND OF APPLAUSE

Help us congratulate these winners! Customers who signed up for select services by Dec. 31, 2018, were entered for a chance to win a special prize.

Aleasha Barker,  
a platinum  
customer, won a  
Bose radio.



Christine  
Blanton,  
a cable  
customer, won a Sonos  
PLAYBAR system.



Darren Davis,  
an internet  
customer, won  
Beats wireless  
headphones.



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*It's that time again!*

Don't forget to move your  
clocks forward one hour!  
Daylight saving time begins at  
2 a.m. on Sunday, March 10.



*Have a Good Friday!*

Our offices will be closed on Friday, April  
19, in observance of Good Friday.  
We want to wish you and yours a  
wonderful Easter.

# Home

*is where the hope is*

BY ANNE BRALY

Laurel,  
Mississippi,  
finds the  
spotlight



Ben Napier and his wife, Erin, are the stars of HGTV's "Home Town" filmed in Laurel, Miss.

**B**rick-lined streets, century-old homes along avenues fringed with old-growth trees, cute shops, restaurants and heavenly bakeries all make Laurel, Mississippi, a charming Southern town. In its heyday, it was the lumber capital of the country. Somewhere in the 1980s, however, it became little more than a whistle-stop for people traveling between Birmingham and New Orleans.

But much changed when Erin Napier and her husband, Ben, returned to her hometown. They are the stars of the HGTV show "Home Town," now in its third season. And what they've done to bring Laurel back is nothing short of amazing.

The show's premise is this: Take an old Laurel home in need of restoration and bring it back to life with a bit of paint, some woodwork, drywall and lots of ingenuity. They turn a house in need of updates into a neighborhood showplace.

The success of "Home Town" brings people not only from around the country but also from around the world to Laurel. Visitors find renovated houses and some of the show's hot spots, including Laurel Mercantile Co. and The Scotsman General Store, both owned by the Napiers. Another stop is Pearl's, a lunch-only establishment highlighted in the show's first season. It's not uncommon to see a line at the restaurant, which features black-eyed peas and fried chicken.

## FINDING A PATH

Before becoming HGTV and local celebrities, Ben Napier was a youth minister and Erin Napier made wedding invitations so pretty that they caught the eye of Martha Stewart. Long story short: He is an eternal optimist, but she is just the opposite, which led her to some self-reflection and therapy in the form of writing down one positive thought daily. Those thoughts are now collected in a book, "Make Something Good Today," but her writings, which she posted on social media, also caught the eye of HGTV. The rest is history.

"There was a defeatist attitude that permeated the town, a kind of communal and contagious giving up," Ben Napier says.

# Small towns with allure



## BARDSTOWN, KENTUCKY:

With a population of just more than 13,000, the community offers small-town living loaded with Southern charm.

In the center of the Bluegrass State, Bardstown is Kentucky's second-oldest town, founded in 1780. It holds dear its claim as the Bourbon Capital of the World, and it has been named by USA Today and Rand McNally as the Most Beautiful Small Town in America.

Bardstown has nearly 300 structures on the National Register of Historic Places, including a stagecoach stop built in 1779 that now stands as the Old Talbott Tavern, a bed-and-breakfast and restaurant.

► **Details:** [www.visitbardstown.com](http://www.visitbardstown.com)

## BELL BUCKLE, TENNESSEE:

The name comes from a creek of the same name. The town, which dates back to 1852, exudes Southern hospitality. Its people are friendly, and it offers a laid-back vibe that appeals to the visitors who come for a day or overnight stays in one of several bed-and-breakfasts.

The downtown features a row of businesses with rocking-chair front porches covered by metal shed roofs. It's a place where fried green tomato sandwiches are the go-to meal at Bluebird Antiques and Ice Cream Parlor.

Only about 600 people live in Bell Buckle, but that number easily swells into the thousands every June during the Moon Pie Festival or during weekends in October when The Webb School plays host to its huge Arts and Crafts Fair.

► **Details:** [townofbellbuckle.com](http://townofbellbuckle.com)

## AIKEN, SOUTH CAROLINA:

This town boasts a thriving arts scene, is home to a number of equestrian events, has a dynamic restaurant presence and offers numerous choices for overnight stays.

Catch the three-day Antiques in the Heart of Aiken show and sale in February, horse shows throughout the year, a couple of steeplechase events during the year and bluegrass at the Aiken County Fairgrounds in May. But it doesn't have to be a special event that brings you to town. The Thoroughbred Racing Hall of Fame is open year-round, as are the Aiken County Historical Museum and the Center for African American History, Arts and Culture.

► **Details:** [www.visitaikensc.com](http://www.visitaikensc.com)



"The perception from the inside was that Laurel was a dying town and a relic of a once-booming past. I didn't see it that way at all. It was beautiful, but it wasn't putting its best face forward. Our mission was twofold: We wanted Laurel to be the way Erin remembered it, but at the same time, we wanted to bring a little big-city style and culture into it, because we wanted to change the perception of living in a small town. We wanted others to realize that coming home wasn't 'settling.' It could represent a deep connection to your roots and a commitment to preserving the goodness of a small, tightknit community."

Since the launch of "Home Town," tourism to Laurel has grown tenfold, says George Bassi, tourism chairman for the Jones County Chamber of Commerce. "It used to be we'd see maybe 10 people downtown. Now there are more than 100 on the streets every day," he says. "It's so much fun for us to see the town come alive."

While the homes featured on the show, including that of the Napiers, are not open for public tours, there are plenty of reasons for folks to linger in town. They can visit the Lauren Rogers Museum of Art and its exquisite collections of British Georgian silver and American works from the likes of John Henry Twachtman and Winslow Homer. They can walk through parks designed by Frederick Olmsted, the same man who designed New York's Central Park. Then they might lunch at Pearl's or dine at one of several restaurants, such as Mimmo's, known for authentic, made-from-scratch Italian, or The Loft for a good steak.

After three seasons of filming, the Napiers have found their rhythm in making "Home Town." "The show made sense as part of the overall mission," Ben Napier says. "With each house we saved, we felt we were putting Laurel back in its rightful place on the map." 🗺️

# Serving & satisfying **THE COMMUNITY**

## Angie's Cast Iron Grill features savory country cooking

BY PATRICK SMITH

**E**very restaurant has its regular customers, and Angie's Cast Iron Grill is no exception. Eat there often enough and Laura "Cil" Byers, sister of owner Angie Music, will learn your usual order in no time.

"Lots of people come in every day," Byers says. "I can tell you what they drink, what they eat, whether they like their cornbread on a different plate, or whether they want gravy or not on their roast beef. You learn them all pretty quick."

No one would be a repeat customer if it weren't for the made-from-scratch food prepared with love in the kitchen daily. On the menu, you'll find country cooking items like fried chicken, salmon patties, mashed potatoes, biscuits and gravy, meatloaf, fried apples, pork chops, catfish, sandwiches, hot dogs, liver and onions, countless desserts, and more. True to the restaurant's namesake, there are six iron skillets dedicated solely to baking cornbread each day.

Angie's Cast Iron Grill is beloved in the Paintsville community. It's where locals eat and where passersby wish they'd stopped while in town.

### GETTING STARTED, TWICE

For years, Music catered small parties, as well as family and work get-togethers. Each time, she'd inevitably hear someone say, "You should open up a restaurant." In 2015, she was presented with an opportunity. Music was asked to set up shop in the Paintsville Country Club and to bring her food to the entire community.

Two years later, it was time to put the restaurant on hold. Music's husband, Lee, is battling late-stage Alzheimer's. But, with her strong faith, Music knew everything would turn out all right. "She closed for one year, primarily because of his illness," Byers says. "But she's a great Christian woman who puts all of her faith in God first."

Then, the building owners of what would be her new location asked Music if she'd be interested in taking over the lease. "It was meant to be," Byers says. "Our sign went up, and people



Samantha Maynard plates a hot fudge cake — one of several desserts on the menu.



Down-home country cooking is the reason people frequent Angie's Cast Iron Grill.

would stop in asking when we'd be open, sometimes 15 or more people a day. It was exciting to know people were so excited for us to come back. We never knew how many people missed the restaurant."

Complete with seating for nearly 100, family photos and cast iron skillets hanging on the wall, and farmhouse decor throughout, Angie's Cast Iron Grill was ready to reopen in July 2018. The restaurant, set to serve its signature catfish, reopened on a Friday night. "We sold out of catfish in three hours," says Byers. "It was crazy."

Today, the verse Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me," is painted on the wall and written on the menus — just as it was in the former location. It's a favorite verse of Music's and a reminder that she's exactly where she needs to be.

### FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

While Angie's name might be on the sign, it's a family affair to keep the restaurant running. Helped each week by her parents, affectionately known at the restaurant as "Pap" and "Granny B"; her sister; her nieces; and others all work together to keep diners happy.



Angie's Cast Iron Grill is a popular spot in Paintsville for eat-in and take-out orders alike.

"I couldn't do it without them," Music told the Paintsville Herald in an article about the restaurant reopening. "I don't mean to sound mushy, but it really is the truth. It takes everybody, and this is the most awesome group of people you could ever work with."

Those special people are also vital to some of the restaurant's most coveted dishes. Though Music learned to cook from her mother, it's Pap's secret recipe that keeps customers coming back for catfish. Some even drive from as far away as Hazard on Friday nights.

Everyone has their strengths, and for Music it's cooking. Byers finds hers serving, handling payroll, scheduling and managing public relations. The restaurant is also active on Facebook with nearly 5,000 likes. Anyone who dines in will likely hear the phone ringing for a to-go order. "We have lots of people who call in an order so they can take food to the nursing home and have dinner with their parents each day," Byers says.

The restaurant also started opening the first Sunday of the month for a "fellowship buffet." In addition to the mouthwatering food, patrons are sometimes treated to live music, prayer and general updates about various community members.

"We have a lot of support from the community," Byers says. "Churches really support us. Our community is awesome. Without it, we wouldn't survive. It feels good to serve people good food. I always say that as long as you're feeding somebody, you're making them happy. I love it." 📺



Philippians 4:13 is Angie Music's favorite verse and can be found throughout the restaurant.



Kristen Curtis delivers drinks to customers.



# Closing the gap

## Broadband brings high-tech health to rural communities

BY DREW WOOLLEY

In rural communities, the local pharmacy is often more than just a place to pick up over-the-counter cold medicine and fill prescriptions. It's the first stop for all things health care.

"We've had trouble keeping doctors in our town," says Cole Sandlin, owner of Fred's Pharmacy in Hamilton, Alabama. "We are the first health care center for most people, and that goes for all independent pharmacies in small towns."

Fred's Pharmacy, independently owned since 1951, has been in the Sandlin family for three generations. Since he took over the business from his parents in 2014, Sandlin has seen people travel nearly an hour to cities like Jasper, Alabama, or Tupelo, Mississippi, just to visit a general practitioner.

So he jumped at the opportunity to install a telemedicine kiosk at his pharmacy as part of a pilot program with American Well. The company provides services connecting patients and doctors.

Installed in December 2017, the kiosk gave Hamilton residents the chance to consult with a remote physician without the lengthy drive.

The kiosk was equipped with devices to monitor blood pressure, oxygen levels, skin and ear health, and more. In short,



Cole Sandlin, left, works with the telemedicine kiosk installed in 2017 at his pharmacy in Hamilton, Alabama, as part of a pilot program with American Well.

Photo courtesy of Mandy Green.

it gave patients access to routine medical care right down the street.

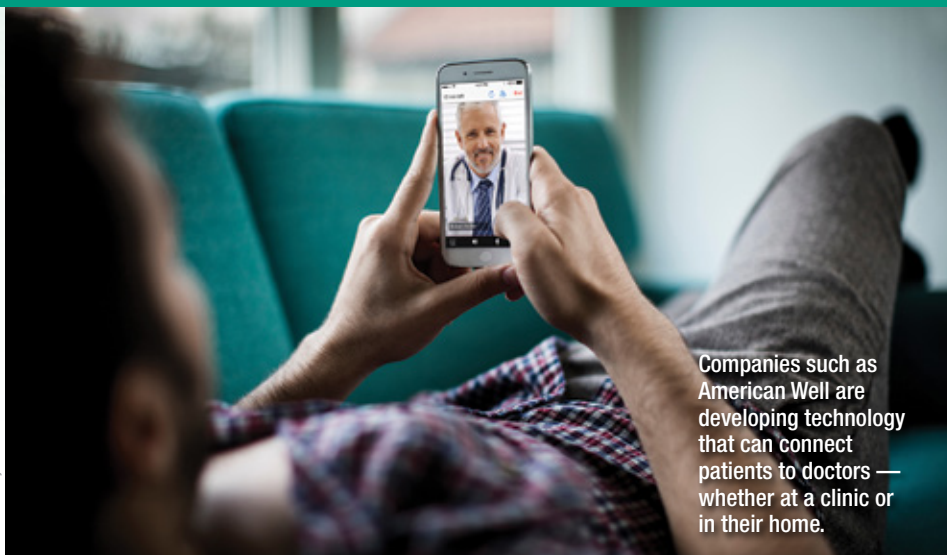
"For us, it just provides another avenue in our store to help patients," says Sandlin. "And in my little town of Hamilton, I want everybody to have the same amenities people have in bigger cities."

### A SMARTER APPROACH

That gap between health care access in rural and urban areas is a challenge not just in Hamilton but throughout the country — a problem largely brought on by the rapid advancement of medical technology over the last century.

"Seventy-five years ago, when doctors carried most of what we could do in a black bag, you could have about the same care in tiny towns as you did in the big city," says Dr. Nancy Dickey, executive director of Texas A&M's Rural and Community Health Institute. "The reality today is it takes a much bigger patient base to pay for high-tech care."

But thanks to modern broadband connections, patients no longer have to make a trip in person to benefit from the latest medical technology. Electronic medical records allow a specialist hundreds of miles away to stay apprised of a rural



Companies such as American Well are developing technology that can connect patients to doctors — whether at a clinic or in their home.

patient's condition while the patient has remote checkups at a local clinic or pharmacy.

"What we always try to tell people is that telemedicine is not meant to replace a physician," says Lloyd Sirmons, director of the Southeastern Telehealth Resource Center. "The whole goal behind telemedicine is to create access."

While some rural clinics may be deterred by the idea that telemedicine requires expensive technology beyond their means, Sirmons is quick to point out that flashy setups aren't always the answer. A remote mental health counseling program, for example, is relatively easy and inexpensive to establish.

"It doesn't take much in the way of equipment," he says. "I can take a laptop, one I use every day as a physician, and download software that gives me the ability to connect to a specialist. Then, I have a telemedicine unit."

### SUPPORT NETWORK

For larger health networks, broadband connectivity gives every hospital and clinic on their system access to the same quality of care. One such system is Essentia Health, which consists of 17 hospitals, about 70 clinics and eight nursing homes across Wisconsin, North Dakota and Northern Minnesota.

Since bringing on Maureen Ideker as a senior telehealth adviser six years ago, Essentia has installed videoconferencing

technology at each of its locations. "They wanted to stretch scarce specialist resources to bring their expertise to rural communities, and that's what we did," she says.

In all, Essentia clinics and hospitals have access to about 30 specialist programs, including stroke, psychiatry and neonatal care. Larger hospitals can even partner with local pharmacies to design prescription dosages to ease patients who struggle with opioids off their addiction.

Ideker estimates that Essentia specialists see around 5,000 patients via telemedicine annually, with patients' satisfaction improving as they have grown accustomed to the new technology. It also provides needed support for rural physicians.

"If you're the only health provider in a rural community, that can be a pretty isolated feeling," Ideker says. "I think they feel a lot of support from this, which makes for happier doctors who are likely to stay around longer."

### NEW SOLUTIONS

As broadband continues to open up health care opportunities in rural communities, new challenges also arise. Along with educating patients about the medical options available to them, Sirmons sees consistent insurance coverage for telemedicine and across the board as one of the biggest hurdles to its adoption.

That hurdle was enough to put an end to telemedicine at Fred's Pharmacy, at least for now. Despite hoping to continue offer-

ing consultations through the American Well kiosk, Sandlin was forced to end the service after the pilot program concluded due to a lack of insurance coverage for users.

"We were probably a little ahead of our time, but it was an opportunity we didn't want to miss," he says. "We learned a lot, and we plan to have telemedicine back as soon as it's covered."

In fact, according to experts like Dickey, as broadband internet becomes more widespread, telemedicine won't just be an option in rural communities. Patients will increasingly demand it. The rise of technology in medicine may be the source of the health care gap, but she believes it can close it as well.

"Not everything can be done by telemedicine," Dickey says. "But if we can provide medical care for someone in space using this technology, we can probably close the distance between your local clinic and the next big city." 📞

## Did you know?

Kentucky and Tennessee passed telehealth parity laws in 2000 and 2016, respectively, that require private insurance companies to reimburse telehealth services at comparable rates to in-person care. In 2016, Alabama also enacted a partial parity law to cover remote mental health services.

In South Carolina, live video consultations are covered by Medicaid in some circumstances, while Kentucky Medicaid recipients can be reimbursed for video consultations and teleradiology.

➔ To learn more about telehealth reimbursement in your state, visit [cchpca.org](http://cchpca.org).



# The nature of healing

## Local naturopath offers holistic health options for all

BY JEN CALHOUN

Health and nutrition were always important to Karin Byrd. But it wasn't until she experienced a health crisis of her own that she got serious about natural remedies to find a solution.

When she was in her mid-30s, Byrd received diagnoses of fibromyalgia, rheumatoid arthritis and lupus. These chronic autoimmune diseases arise when the body's immune system attacks and damages its own tissues. "I remember thinking, 'If I'm this miserable at 35, I just pray I don't live to be 60 or 70 or 80 because I can't imagine how I'll feel then,'" Byrd says.

Doctors prescribed several medications — some were for pain, and others helped stop the damage. But with every medication meant to help her, new symptoms sprang up. With those came more medications. "I finally realized one day, 'This is just ridiculous,'" she says. "I knew there had to be a better way."

### BACK TO THE BASICS

That's when Byrd started looking more deeply into natural remedies and healthy eating. Now, she's a traditional naturopath. She also owns and operates The Natural Path, a holistic healing practice with two locations. One location is near her home in the Paintsville area, and another is inside



Karin Byrd consults with client Margaret Castle.



Karin Byrd, owner of The Natural Path.

Wholi Moli, a health food store in Barboursville, West Virginia. She's seen a steady rise in clients looking for new ways to get healthy.

As a traditional naturopath, Byrd works with her clients to help restore their health balance. "I am not anti-doctor or anti-pharmaceutical," she says. "We have many friends who are amazing doctors, and we are blessed to live in an age where we have so many medical advances to save people. But I do think we are overprescribed medications and antibiotics. There's a Pandora's box there."

### HEALING STRONG

And while she tends to specialize in autoimmune diseases, which can run the gamut from Crohn's disease to alopecia, Byrd says she has a growing passion for

working with cancer patients. Her support information group, Healing Strong, helps cancer patients learn about food and alternative treatments.

Byrd's group does not offer any medical advice, but she and other members are there to provide a shoulder to lean on, some knowledge of what to expect in the coming months and natural ways to help deal with the disease. "It's amazing the number of people from every walk of life who are seeking me out for this," she says. "I don't even think they are referrals. I just think it's that God is bringing them to me or something. I don't know." 📞

## The Natural Path

For more information on The Natural Path or on Healing Strong, a cancer support and information group, call Karin Byrd at 606-792-7489. You can also message her on The Natural Path's Facebook page. The office is at 257 Hoot Owl Hollow in Tutor Key, but it's best to call ahead for an appointment. Byrd also keeps an office several days a week inside Wholi Moli, a health food store at 920 Lauren Christian Drive in Barboursville, West Virginia.

# Picture perfect

## Mommy & Me 4D Imaging gives families a sneak peek of joy

BY JEN CALHOUN

The only tears April Kirk accepts in her office are tears of joy. It's one of the first things she tells her clients, and it's a rule she intends to live by.

It's also a rule that's not hard to enforce, says Kirk, whose prenatal picture-taking business, Mommy & Me 4D Imaging, became a hit in Salyersville not long after it opened nearly two years ago. "People get so excited when they come here," she says. "They always love it, and everybody smiles."

### A DIFFERENT VIEW

By day, Kirk works as a registered diagnostic medical sonographer at a local OB-GYN office — in other words, she performs ultrasounds on babies before they're born. There, she scans for weight, anatomy irregularities and other health issues.

But at night and on weekends, Kirk uses those same skills to give families a snapshot of what their babies might really look like while they're in the womb. Through various packages offered by Mommy & Me, families can receive recorded heartbeats of their babies and 2D and 4D picture discs. Gender-reveal items are also available and include everything from confetti cannons to balloons that pop in a spray of pink or blue.

"This is more than just looking at the babies," Kirk says. "It's the fun stuff."



April Kirk shows the detail in a 4D ultrasound image.

Kirk grew up in a family connected with the medical field. Her mother and sister both are nurses, but Kirk worried she wouldn't enjoy certain aspects of that job. So, she decided to go another route — one without the messier parts of health care. "I knew I wanted to go into the medical field, but I've got kind of a weak stomach," she says with a laugh.

After starting her pursuit of a bachelor's degree at Morgan State University, she knew she'd like to start a 4D imaging business. But about a month into the program, she learned she was pregnant herself. The happy surprise delayed her goal for a few years. "I graduated in May 2012, but with the cost of the ultrasound machine and having a baby and work, it just wasn't realistic," she says.

The dream stayed alive, however, and within a few years, she was able to find a used ultrasound machine at a clinic that was closing. Now, she relishes being part of other people's excitement.

"People usually come in with crowds," she says. "The most I've been able to fit in my office is about 15 people. I just really enjoy what I do, and I take a lot of pride in it." 🗨️



April Kirk, owner of Mommy & Me 4D Imaging.

### WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Mommy & Me 4D Imaging offers a range of packages for expectant mothers hoping to get a glimpse of their babies. The office also stocks a variety of gender-reveal items and other accessories. Packages start at \$50.

For more information on packages or to schedule an appointment, contact April Kirk at 606-793-3640. You can also message her on the Mommy & Me 4D Imaging Facebook page. The office is at 2408 Mashfork Road in Salyersville. Appointment times are from 6-9 p.m. on weekdays and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays.

# Palmetto Sweets

## Spring onions bring a taste of the South

About this time every year, the gems of spring — Southern-grown onions — appear on grocery shelves, and they are certainly a long-awaited treat for onion lovers. Unlike those other onions that bring you to tears, these are so mild they're considered tear-free. Many people love them so much they bite right into them like an apple.

When people think of sweet onions, most envision Georgia's Vidalias. But South Carolina Palmetto Sweets, which entered the market about a decade ago, are gaining ground.

Dupre Percival is a caterer and restaurateur who is passionate about South Carolina products, including Palmetto Sweets. "We're known for our foods," he says of his home state. "Our grits. Our peaches. Our peanuts. And dishes like our Frogmore Stew. I add a lot of onions to that. When you think South Carolina, you think food."

Most Palmetto Sweets are grown in the state's Piedmont region, where the weather is just a bit cooler and the soil, much like that across the border in Georgia's Vidalia-growing counties, is rich and loamy. But, Percival notes, soil changes from place to place. "You can have two fields of onions on one farm and they won't taste the same," he says. However, no matter the sweetness, they're all good for cooking.

### A PASSION FOR FOOD

A good part of the 70-year-old restaurateur's early years was spent in real estate. He entered the restaurant business in the 1970s for a few years after assuming financial obligations for two sub and pizza restaurants. Within a month, take-out orders were coming in and a side catering business was established.

Fast-forward through a couple of decades: The two pizza restaurants are

closed, but Percival continues to cater through his Dupre Catering and Events. Five years ago, he opened The Market Restaurant at the State Farmers Market in West Columbia, South Carolina. "I'm a caterer who owns a restaurant now," he says from his home in Irmo, a bedroom community to Columbia.

Two much-loved items on his catering menu are his tomato pie and the onion dip. Both call for sweet onions, but Percival always adds more than the recipe calls for.

"Sweet onions have a gentler impact in recipes," he says. "If you put sweet onions in an omelet or in a dip, it gives it a good onion taste without overpowering it. Every recipe requires balance. I'll put onions in some recipes that don't call for them. But when you don't put onions in recipes that do call for them, they're not right. The dish is not good without them."



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



### CAROLINA SWEET ONION DIP

*This is a signature dish for Dupre Catering.*

- 1 cup finely chopped sweet onions
- 1 cup mayonnaise (preferably Duke's)
- 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- Paprika
- Pita chips

Heat oven to 325 degrees. Combine onions, mayonnaise and cheese and place in baking dish. Lightly dust top with paprika and bake for 20-30 minutes or until bubbly and brown on top. Serve with pita chips.

**Tip:** Add collard greens that have been cooked, mashed and very well-drained to this dip for a taste explosion.

## SWEET ONION TOMATO PIE

*Dupre Percival says using Duke's mayonnaise and Sunbeam bread makes a big difference in the outcome.*

- 1 1/4 cups shredded sharp cheddar cheese
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1-2 tablespoons finely minced sweet onion
- Kosher salt, to taste
- Pepper, to taste
- 15 slices day-old bread, divided
- 10 medium ripe tomatoes, washed, cored and sliced (the freshest and ripest you can find)

Heat oven to 375 degrees. Prepare cheese spread by combining cheese with mayonnaise, onion, salt and pepper.

Grease a 9- by 12-inch casserole dish with butter, olive oil or cooking spray. Layer the bottom evenly with 7 slices of bread cut into medium-sized cubes.

Create a layer of tomatoes by overlapping them in a single layer on top of the bread cubes. This usually can be done with 5 of the tomatoes making 4 rows. Season liberally with salt and pepper.

Trim the crusts from the remaining slices of bread and place the slices over the top so that they completely cover the tomatoes. Spread the slices with the cheese spread. Cover well, but don't be tempted to use too much cheese spread or the pie will be soggy. Arrange the remaining tomatoes in slices in the same manner as before. Then, season with salt and pepper. Dollop the rest of the cheese spread in rows across the top or in whatever design you want.

Bake, uncovered, for 25 minutes or until the cheese mixture becomes golden brown. Makes about 15 servings as a side dish.

**Note:** The pie can be dressed up by adding fresh herbs such as basil, oregano and marjoram to the cheese mixture.



## ROASTED BALSAMIC ONIONS

*Always a sweet way to enjoy the sweet onions of the South.*

- 2 large sweet onions, peeled
- Coarse salt and coarsely ground pepper, to taste
- 4 tablespoons butter
- Good-quality balsamic vinegar

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Butter a baking dish just large enough to hold the onions. Slice off the top and the bottom parts of the onions so they sit flat in the baking dish; cut the onions in half.

Arrange the onion halves, cut side up, in the prepared baking dish. Season with salt and pepper, and place 1 tablespoon of butter on each half.

Cover the baking dish with aluminum foil and bake 50 to 60 minutes or until onions give slightly when the edges are squeezed together between your fingers. Remove from oven. Uncover and sprinkle each onion half with balsamic vinegar while using a fork to spread the onion layers apart so that the vinegar can dribble down between them. Serve hot or at room temperature. Makes an excellent side dish to a juicy grilled steak. 🍷



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