

CONNECTION

BROADBAND:
JOBS EDITION

FAMILY TRADITION

Blair's Body Shop
keeps cars
rolling along

PIG ON WHEELS

Jack's BBQ goes
the distance

ALGER ISLAND OASIS

A family's farm creates
an event paradise





BY SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

Broadband drives rural and urban jobs

With this issue's focus on the impact of broadband on jobs, I was reminded of a report our Foundation for Rural Service and the Hudson Institute released three years ago. Entitled "The Economic Impact of Rural Broadband," this report estimated the direct and indirect economic effects of the rural broadband industry on gross domestic product.

The report showed that rural broadband companies like yours contributed \$24.1 billion to the economies of the states in which they operated. Even more interesting is the fact that \$17.2 billion of that total was through their own operations. The rest, \$6.9 billion, was through the follow-on impact of their operations. Those are impressive numbers under any financial index.

Sixty-six percent, or \$16 billion, of that total economic impact actually flows to urban areas. That means the U.S. jobs market needs rural broadband to remain strong and healthy.

The impact of rural broadband goes far beyond the service areas of rural telcos. The study showed that the rural broadband industry supported 69,600 jobs in 2015 — and I'm sure those numbers are even higher today. These jobs not only come from broadband providers themselves, but also from companies that supply goods and services to the industry. And more than half of those jobs, 54 percent in fact, are actually in urban America.

The truth is in the numbers. Rural broadband creates jobs and helps drive our economy — in rural and urban America alike. 📞

Fighting robocalls

BY STEPHEN V. SMITH



TRACED Act would help stop unwanted, illegal calls

Your phone rings. Even though you're in the middle of dinner, you answer because the Caller ID information shows the call is coming from a local number. Maybe it's someone you know.

"Congratulations!" the recorded voice exclaims. "You have been selected to receive a free cruise."

You just answered one of the estimated 130 million automated calls placed every day.

While there are legitimate uses of autodialing, illegal robocalls have become a plague that impacts everyone with a phone. Lawmakers have worked on the issue for almost three decades. Yet despite laws and fines designed to stop the practice, criminals — armed with ever-advancing software and technology — continue to find ways to flood our nation's phone network with unwanted calls.

Earlier this year, Sen. John Thune, R-S.D., and Sen. Ed Markey, D-Mass., introduced the TRACED Act, short for Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence Act. It gives the FCC and other agencies more power in enforcing existing laws governing robocalls.

"Unwanted robocalls that utilize spoofed phone numbers or falsify information are a problem in urban

and rural America alike," says Shirley Bloomfield, CEO of NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association. She says the TRACED Act "seeks to tackle this problem while also recognizing the transitions necessary to implement new technologies and network connections that will help achieve this goal."

In March, the attorneys general of all 50 states, plus four territories, signed a letter in unanimous support of the TRACED Act, sending it to the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee. A group of 10 U.S. senators representing several states and both political parties later issued a press release pledging their support for the bill as co-sponsors.

"With bipartisan support growing, the time to pass legislation to stop the scourge of robocalls has come," said senators Markey and Thune in that press release. "The groundswell of support for our TRACED Act — from state and territory attorneys general, to FCC and FTC commissioners, to leading consumer groups, to major industry stakeholders — shows just how much the American people want Congress to act to stop harassing robocalls."

As of press time, the bill remained in committee. Before becoming law, it would require support by both houses of Congress and the president. 📞



**HEY
TELEMARKETERS:**

DO NOT CALL!

The Federal Trade Commission and the Federal Communications Commission established a National Do Not Call Registry. Joining this registry can drastically reduce the number of telemarketing calls you receive.

JUST THE FACTS ABOUT DO NOT CALL:

- Once you've registered, telemarketers have 31 days to stop calling your number.
- Register as many as three nonbusiness telephone numbers. You can also register cellphone numbers — there is not a separate registry for cellphones.
- Your number will remain on the list permanently unless you disconnect the number or you choose to remove it.
- Some businesses are exempt from the Do Not Call Registry and may still be able to call your number. These include

political organizations, charities, telephone surveyors and businesses with whom you have an existing relationship.

Strict Federal Trade Commission rules make it illegal for telemarketers to do any of the following, regardless of whether or not your number is listed on the National Do Not Call Registry:

- Call before 8 a.m.
- Call after 9 p.m.
- Misrepresent what is being offered
- Threaten, intimidate or harass you
- Call again after you've asked them not to



IT'S EASY!

Add your number to the
Do Not Call Registry

Register online at
www.donotcall.gov
or call 888-382-1222.
For TTY, call 866-290-4236.

You must call from the telephone
number you wish to register.

**ATTENTION LOCAL
BUSINESS OWNERS:**

**MAKE SURE YOU FOLLOW
THE DO NOT CALL RULES**

No matter if you're a one-person shop or a beloved company, local business owners should remember that National Do Not Call Registry rules and regulations apply to you. After all, you don't want to upset a loyal customer, or frustrate potential new customers, with unwanted phone calls.

If you are a company, individual or organization that places telemarketing calls, it is very important that you familiarize yourself with the operations of the National Do Not Call Registry. Unless you fall under one of the established exceptions, such as telemarketing by charitable organizations or for prior business relationships, you may not make telemarketing calls to numbers included in the National Do Not Call Registry.

For information regarding National Do Not Call regulations, visit the National Do Not Call Registry at www.telemarketing.donotcall.gov. You can find the Federal Communications Commission and Federal Trade Commission rules governing telemarketing and telephone solicitation at 47 C.F.R. § 64.1200 and 16 C.F.R. Part 310, respectively.

OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION:

The Do Not Call initiative, regulated by the Federal Trade Commission and the Federal Communications Commission, requires telephone service providers to notify customers of the National Do Not Call rules and regulations. 📞

Broadband builds business

At Foothills Communications, our daily business is providing reliable service for our customers — but looking at the big picture, we're also in the jobs business.



RUTH CONLEY
Chief Executive Officer

Our broadband network is foundational to our area's economic well-being and crucial to keeping and growing job opportunities locally. We all want fulfilling and meaningful jobs that provide for ourselves and our families, and broadband is becoming critical to making them possible.

Reliable, high-speed internet access allows our region to remain competitive and viable in four major economic areas.

INDUSTRY

Whether it's an agricultural operation, an industrial plant or a hospital, businesses rely on broadband to order materials, coordinate logistics, manage supply chains and communicate with other facilities. When a manufacturer or other big business considers a rural area like ours for a new facility, they are always concerned about broadband access. I've seen more than a few companies surprised by the quality of connections we provide.

I'm happy to say that Foothills can provide fiber optics to our area's main industrial parks. We frequently work with local officials to recruit new businesses and to help existing businesses expand.

SMALL BUSINESSES

It's no stretch to say small businesses are the backbone of our community. Whether it's providing Wi-Fi for their customers, giving access to online marketplaces or just ordering supplies online, those same small businesses benefit from our broadband and our phone network. In an age where it's easier than ever for small businesses in our community to reach a national or worldwide audience, Foothills is proud to support them as they grow.

TELECOMMUTERS

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, nearly a quarter of Americans do at least some of their work from home. Rural areas like ours are increasingly attractive to telecommuters who may not want the expense and stress of living in cities. While it's easier to overlook the impact of telecommuters compared to a manufacturing plant spread over several acres, these remote workers play a role in our area's economy. These talented folks are able to have the best of both worlds, with good-paying jobs from top companies while living a rural lifestyle. Most of these jobs are only possible because of the broadband and phone networks we provide.

ENTREPRENEURS

Many of the brave souls who chase the dream of starting their own business used to face steep disadvantages by launching their startups in rural areas. Entrepreneurs would frequently have to move to cities to find customers, workers or the communications infrastructure to help them launch and grow their businesses. Now, with our broadband, they can engage remote workers, network with other entrepreneurs and reach distant markets like never before.

Those four groups of employees and employers make up a significant portion of our local economy. They do great work producing quality products and services for their customers throughout the ups and downs that any business or economy will have. But as they move forward, I'm happy that they can be confident in having a reliable, supportive communications partner growing right along with them. 📶



CONNECTION

MAY/JUNE 2019

VOL. 6, NO. 3

The Foothills Connection is a bimonthly newsletter published by Foothills Communications, ©2019. 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, 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.

Foothills Communications
P.O. Box 240
1621 Kentucky Route 40 West
Staffordsville, KY 41256
www.foothills.net
606-297-3501

Foothills Mission Statement

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

Produced for Foothills Communications by:



On the Cover:



Kevin Blair, owner of Blair's Body Shop, is the third generation of his family to run a car-care business in Staffordsville. See story Page 9.

We've got a secret ... That we're sharing with you.

During the week of Mother's Day and Father's Day, visit the Foothills Communications Facebook page. Confirm you've liked the page. Write a post containing the secret code below, and you'll automatically be entered to win our extra-special giveaway!

Mother's Day Secret Code:

"Motherhood is the greatest thing and the hardest thing." - Ricki Lake

Father's Day Secret Code:

"My Dad is my hero." - Harry Connick Jr.



Take time for **YOU!**

Snuggle up to your favorite flick or show with IPTV* from Foothills Communications. And with three different plans, you're sure to find one that's perfect for you.

Family Basic

- 128+ channels
- Up to two set-top boxes

Expanded

- 179+ channels
- Up to two set-top boxes

Digital

- 223+ channels
- Up to two set-top boxes

**And with Whole Home DVR, you can record a program
from one device but playback on another TV.**

- 250 Gig — 30 hours HD
- 500 Gig — 60 hours HD
- 750 Gig — 95 hours HD
- 1,000 Gig — 125 hours HD

As an IPTV subscriber, be sure to ask about Caller ID on TV** and Restart TV***.

* A set-top box is required for viewing premium movie channels. Parental control is available.

** Must have Foothills Communications telephone service to qualify.

*** Available on select channels.

HAPPY FATHER'S DAY

Make the most of Father's Day
with these special features.

- Free Cinemax (channels 420-432) from June 15-16
- Free activation when adding premium channels from June 16-23
- Free activation when upgrading internet speeds

Happy Mother's Day!

Make the most of Mother's Day
with these special features.

- Free HBO (channels 400-410) from May 11-12
- Free activation when adding premium channels from May 12-19
- Free activation when upgrading internet speeds

MEMORIAL DAY CLOSING

Foothills Communications will be closed on Monday, May 27, in honor of those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice for our country. Enjoy Free Starz and Starz Encore from May 25-27.



Seagoing majesty

Visit the centers working to protect sea turtles

BY ANNE BRALY

Sea turtles are some of the most majestic, long-lived animals in the ocean. However, hundreds of thousands of them die each year after being tangled in fishing nets and other man-made gear. They also suffer as a result of climate change, lack of food, contaminated seas and other hazards.

They're among the most imperiled groups of animals that swim our seas, says Dr. David Steen, a research ecologist at the Georgia Sea Turtle Center in Jekyll Island, Georgia. If the baby turtles can make it to adulthood — which is an accomplishment in itself, as most perish before they reach that critical stage — they can live for decades and reproduce many times.

"This offsets the high mortality they experience in early life," Steen says. "But the big problem arises when adults experience higher death rates than normal. It's tough for populations to recover."

The Georgia Sea Turtle Center is one of several such centers located in coastal states around the South. It opened in 2007 and has educated hundreds of thousands of visitors on the hazards sea turtles face, as well as the important role they play in our ecosystem.



Crowds gathered for the release of a sea turtle on Jekyll Island, Ga., which is home to the Georgia Sea Turtle Center.

Photos courtesy of the Jekyll Island Authority.



Conservation efforts are helping to increase the number of loggerhead sea turtle nests in Georgia.

The center is a one-of-a-kind experience, Steen says. Visitors can learn about sea turtles in an interactive learning center, peer into a hospital window to see turtles being treated by a veterinarian, and stroll through a pavilion to view turtles as they are rehabilitated in tanks. And during the nesting season, which runs from May to July, visitors can join educators and researchers on night searches for nesting sea turtles.

Educating the public about the importance of sea turtle recovery is a focus of the center's mission.

"If your ecosystem has missing pieces, there will inevitably be cascading effects, many of which we can't even predict," Steen adds. "There are many philosophical, ecological and spiritual reasons one might consider when discussing why we need to save sea turtles, but there are legal reasons, too. All sea turtles are protected by the Endangered Species Act, and that means we must work to recover their populations."

The effort appears to be working, as the number of loggerhead sea turtle nests in Georgia is gradually increasing, Steen says. "Their numbers are increasing due to a variety of individuals, agencies and organizations in the region, and also because of the state and federal legislation like the Endangered Species Act that protects them." 🐢

See more sea turtles

IN SOUTH CAROLINA:

Zucker Family Sea Turtle Recovery at the South Carolina Aquarium
100 Aquarium Wharf, Charleston, S.C.

Online: scaquarium.org

Zucker Family Sea Turtle Recovery allows guests who visit the South Carolina Aquarium to experience and learn about sea turtles. It's both a hospital and a guest experience, making the real-life rehabilitation of sick and injured sea turtles visible to all guests through windows into the surgical suite. Experience a turtle's remarkable journey from rescue to rehabilitation and release.

To date, the South Carolina Aquarium has returned 265 rehabilitated sea turtles to the ocean.

IN FLORIDA:

Navarre Beach Sea Turtle Conservation Center
8740 Gulf Blvd., Navarre, Fla.

Online: navarrebeachseaturtles.org

The Navarre Beach Sea Turtle Conservation Center is a small operation with a giant mission to educate the public and protect the beautiful turtles that call the Gulf of Mexico home and nest on its white-sand beaches. Visitors to the center can see Sweet Pea, a green sea turtle that cannot be returned to the wild due to her injuries. Also, guests can take a virtual "journey" through Northwest Florida to learn about the region's natural resources and the importance of protecting coastal and marine ecosystems critical to sea turtle survival.

IN NORTH CAROLINA:

Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Rescue and Rehabilitation Center
302 Tortuga Lane, Surf City, N.C.

Online: www.seaturtlehospital.org

Hundreds of loggerheads, leatherbacks, ridleys and green sea turtles come to the beaches of North Carolina to lay eggs before returning to the Atlantic Ocean, leaving thousands of hatchlings to potentially emerge and follow their instincts toward the sea.

Visitors to the Topsail Beach area can visit the Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Rescue and Rehabilitation Center to learn about turtles' lives from beach nest to the sea and the center's effort to improve their odds of survival.

The center offers tours to the public during the warm months, beginning in April.

Sea turtles are also visible at all three North Carolina aquariums, which are involved in rescue, rehabilitation and release.

- **The Aquarium on Roanoke Island on the Outer Banks features a Sea Turtle Rescue exhibit.**
- **Visitors to the Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores on the Crystal Coast can follow the journey of loggerhead sea turtles in the Loggerhead Odyssey exhibit.**
- **In the Wilmington area, The Aquarium at Fort Fisher features turtle exhibits and Turtle Talks at the adjacent Fort Fisher State Recreational Area.**

Open-air invitation

Alger Island Farm hosts events in a natural setting

BY JEN CALHOUN

Kim Alger was working outside on her family's Catlettsburg farm one day when she had a thought: "This is so beautiful. I'd like to share it with people." Nestled just off U.S. Highway 23, the newly dubbed Alger Island Farm — a former alpaca farm — seemed like the perfect spot for family reunions, weddings and birthday parties.

But the idea felt more like a dream than anything for Alger. Still, she knew she was ready for the challenge. So, when her husband, Mark, gave her the go-ahead, she started hosting events in August 2018. Within a few months, more than a half-dozen events, including birthday parties and a wedding, have taken place at the farm.

PARTY ON THE FARM

The picturesque spot features a man-made pond, a gazebo and a 1,500-square-foot metal building for inside events. "It used to be the alpaca barn," Kim Alger says. "We cleaned it up and renovated so people can throw parties. We have tables, chairs, a little kitchen, two bathrooms and a small bridal room."

Outside, the building includes covered porches with grills and picnic tables and a fenced-in area for children to play. "There's just a lot of things we can do out here," Alger says.

In addition, Alger Island Farm offers rentals like inflatables for children, a snow-cone machine, a popcorn machine, wedding arches and other accessories. Tables and chairs accommodate up to 50 people, but additional tables and chairs are available.

In the future, Alger hopes to host field trips, which will include trailer rides, a pumpkin patch and other activities for schoolchildren. But for now, she says she's just excited to be sharing the beauty of the farm with others. "I tell Mark all the time that this was the first time that one of my visions had actually come through," she says. 📷

Rent a farm

Got a special event coming up and love the outdoors? Give Kim Alger a call at Alger Island Farm. The venue features an inside area for events, a kitchen, two bathrooms and a bridal room. The covered patios offer a gas grill, picnic tables and a fenced-in area for children. Firefly Photography offers discounts on photos for Alger Island Farm events. Most events are do-it-yourself, but farm staff is happy to help any way they can.

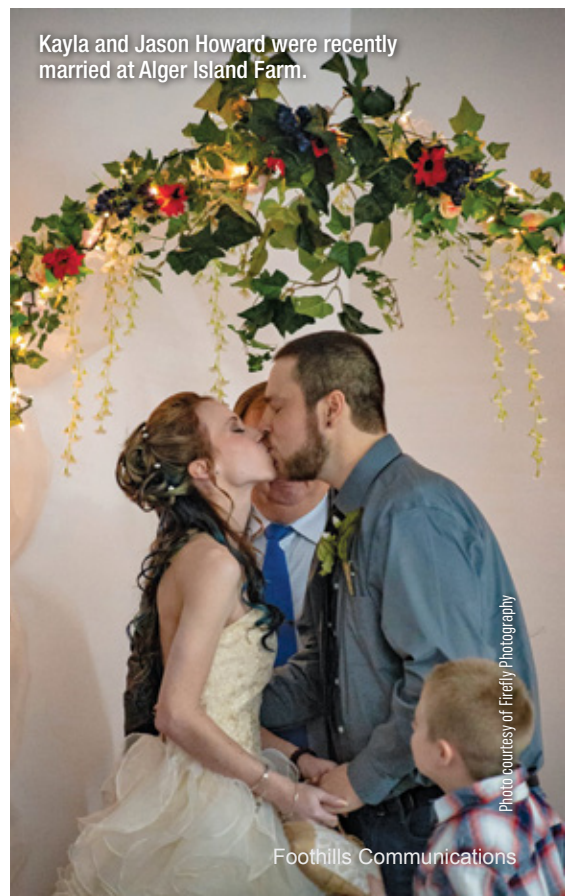
For more information, call 606-686-2267 or 859-806-3540. You can also check out pictures of the farm and contact them on Facebook. The farm is located in Lawrence County at 9190 Highway 707 in Catlettsburg. Take Junction 707 off U.S. Highway 23. The farm is six-tenths of a mile on the left.



Kim Alger has transformed her family's property into an event venue destination.



The gazebo at Alger Island Farm offers a great setting for weddings and other events.



Kayla and Jason Howard were recently married at Alger Island Farm.



Cars and tradition

A three-generation business keeps Staffordsville residents on the road

BY LIZ CRUMBLY

Customers needing something automotive-related can count on the same thing they've known for years now when they enter the shop at 392 Route 172: There will be a Blair there to help them.

Kevin Blair's grandfather, Chalmer Blair, opened an Ashland Oil station in 1952 on the property that is now Blair's Body Shop in Staffordsville.

Kevin Blair's father, Benny Blair, took over a couple of years later and began to steer the operation toward bodywork. Then, at the age of 18 and just out of high school, Blair began working for his father. Now, at 46, he's still serving his community through collision repair.

A SIMPLE GOAL

Blair's interest in taking over the shop blossomed as he approached adulthood. "I kind of grew that way through high school — that's what I wanted to pursue," he says.

Now that he runs the shop, Blair oversees a team of three employees: Garry

Tackett, Brandon Powers and Braxton Blair. Projects might include changing body components on cars that have come through accidents and repainting vehicles with cosmetic damage.

"We may not be able to do one start to finish in a day. We've got multiple bays, multiple areas to be able to do different types of work to the vehicles," Blair says.

Although the process of assessing damage, waiting for replacement parts and perfecting paint jobs can be demanding, the final goal, Blair says, is a simple one: "getting them back like they were originally."

The shop's telephone and high-speed broadband service with Foothills Communications is helpful in fulfilling that goal. The staff uses the internet often to support its estimating software and to order parts.

'GREAT QUALITY WORK'

Blair credits the longevity of the family business to "great quality work" and a genuine interest in the repairs and the

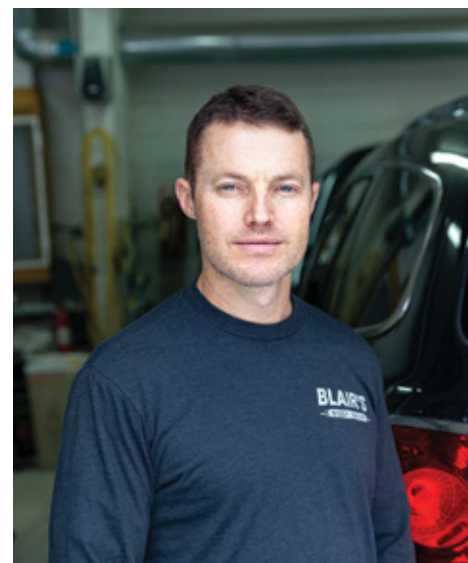
people requesting them. Reputation still means a lot in a small-town atmosphere like Staffordsville's. Blair knows his customers' reviews are valuable to his shop's continued growth.

"Word of mouth is mainly the biggest provider (of new business)," he says. "All the insurance companies know who we are and recommend that people bring their vehicles out."

His wife and son are active in the business, too. Blair's wife, Kristi, helps with bookkeeping and other company paperwork. Their son, Braxton, helps repair cars and is attending Morehead State University. The 22-year-old plans to teach and is already coaching basketball at Johnson County Middle School.

The couple spends time watching Braxton coach, and they support their daughter, Kelci, 16, a sophomore at Johnson Central High School, at her basketball and soccer games.

Between family life and a thriving business, there's little time for much else, Kevin Blair says. "We love being able to repair vehicles," he says. "We enjoy the work. It's something different every day." 🗨️



WANT TO STOP BY?

Blair's Body Shop
392 State Route 172, Staffordsville
606-297-4124
7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday



Bringing Economic

HOPE

Broadband networks recharge rural communities

BY JEN CALHOUN

When Bud Layne engineered a new design for conveyor belts back in 1989, the internet was hardly a thought in most people's minds. Relatively few had heard of it, and even fewer used it. So, as technical as his Glasgow, Kentucky-based company may have been, internet access didn't matter.

"But all that's changed. Today, the Span Tech CEO and founder depends on high-speed internet from his local rural telecommunications cooperative to send engineering design files across the world in the time it takes to sip coffee.

Without that kind of access, Layne couldn't sell his conveyor belts to multi-national food producers like Kraft. He also couldn't employ between 80 and 90 people in a town of less than 15,000. "Every design layout we do has to be redone, on average, five times," he says. "All this stuff moves back and forth digitally over our network. These are some big drawings I'm talking about."

Rural-based companies like Span Tech are still an exception, however. The U.S. Census Bureau's 2016 American Community Survey found that only 17 percent of businesses operate in rural communities, defined as nonurban towns of fewer than 50,000 residents and sparsely populated

High-speed internet allows Span Tech, a conveyor system manufacturer, to transfer engineering designs across the world.



regions. The number of companies working in rural areas, however, could increase if high-speed internet networks continue to appear in all regions of the country.

GOING COUNTRY

Entrepreneurs are taking note of rural success stories, according to a June 25, 2018, story from the business website Fundra.com. Survey data from the 12 Federal Reserve Banks found that rural communities outperform urban centers on many metrics of successful entrepreneurship.

"Rural businesses are smaller and grow

more slowly, the data from the Small Business Credit Survey shows," the article says. "But they're also more likely to be profitable than their urban counterparts and have longer survival rates. Plus, entrepreneurs in rural areas have an easier time getting business financing, which is an important factor in scaling a business."

Small and large companies have either popped up in rural regions across the country or, like Span Tech, stayed put thanks to expanded digital access. One example is Above All Aerial in rural Minnesota. The company uses drone technology to

help farmers across the country scout crops and provide damage assessment. Another is Big Tex Trailers, based in Mount Pleasant, Texas. With a workforce of about 2,000, it serves clients throughout the United States and as far north as Western Canada. Also, a U.S. Army veteran turned his love of pop culture into his business, Tennessee Toys and Comics, in a town of about 5,000 people. Now, he sells to collectors around the world.

THE HIGH COST OF DIGITAL DARKNESS

If high-speed internet access fails to expand in rural areas, however, jobs and the economy can't grow, says Wally Tyner, an agricultural economics professor at Purdue University. Tyner is one of the authors of a detailed 2018 policy brief that shows the economic benefits gained from installing broadband networks in rural areas of Indiana. Through intensive research, Tyner's team found that the economic benefits outweighed the costs of fiber networks at a ratio of 4:1.

"I always like to ask my audience this question when I'm presenting this policy brief: 'Is there anybody in this room who thinks rural electrification was a bad idea?'" Tyner says, referring to the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 that offered low-cost government loans to rural electric cooperatives so people outside of the nation's cities could have access to safe, reliable and affordable electricity.

The answer, Tyner says, is always no. "I don't care how conservative or how liberal you are. No one will say it was a bad idea, even though it's the government getting involved," he says.

Without the initiative, large areas of the country — as well as millions of people — could have gone without electricity for decades, leaving them literally and figuratively in the dark as their city-dwelling counterparts progressed without them.

So what does this have to do with high-speed internet access? Everything, says Tyner, who headed a detailed 2018 policy brief that shows the economic benefits gained from installing broadband networks in rural areas of Indiana.

The Purdue brief found that if rural communities can access the type of broadband networks available in larger cities, there will be more jobs, more industry, better education, more medical opportunities and a host of other benefits.

And while installation of this kind of fiber optic equipment is expensive, the result is that the fiber networks end up paying for themselves many times over. "Today, the economy runs on digits," Tyner says. "If you're on the other side of the digital divide, you're up that creek without a paddle. It's really important for rural areas to have." 🗨️

Digital dollars

It's no secret that almost every business and government entity relies on high-speed internet. Farms, manufacturing firms, schools and cottage industries depend on the internet for everything from relaying and retrieving information to marketing and sales. But high-speed internet also brings money to local, state and federal economies. The Hudson Institute, a research organization, released a report in 2016 called "The Economic Impact of Rural Broadband." The report found that rural broadband providers across the country directly added \$24.1 billion to the states in which they operated in 2015 alone. Of this, \$17.2 billion was through their own operations and \$6.9 billion was through the follow-on impact of their operations, the report says.

ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF THE RURAL BROADBAND INDUSTRY BY STATE IN 2015

Alabama	Kentucky	South Carolina	Tennessee
DIRECT IMPACT	DIRECT IMPACT	DIRECT IMPACT	DIRECT IMPACT
\$241 million	\$312 million	\$618 million	\$532 million
INDIRECT IMPACT	INDIRECT IMPACT	INDIRECT IMPACT	INDIRECT IMPACT
\$87 million	\$102 million	\$230 million	\$247 million
TOTAL IMPACT	TOTAL IMPACT	TOTAL IMPACT	TOTAL IMPACT
\$328 million	\$414 million	\$848 million	\$779 million
EMPLOYMENT	EMPLOYMENT	EMPLOYMENT	EMPLOYMENT
1,014 jobs	1,239 jobs	2,725 jobs	2,606 jobs

→ Source: The Hudson Institute's "The Economic Impact of Rural Broadband," 2016.

Cue-ing up

Retired coal worker makes barbecue his new business

BY JEN CALHOUN



Jack and Sandy Prater operate Jack's BBQ & More.

After 37 years working in the coal business, Jack Prater surprised himself by taking on an entirely different profession — owner and head barbecue chef at Jack's BBQ & More in Salyersville. "I didn't expect to be doing this at all," says Prater, who, along with his wife, Sandy, runs a takeout shop on Burning Fork Road and a traveling food wagon that serves up all types of pork barbecue and sides, including baked potatoes, coleslaw, baked beans, hot dogs, chili and nachos.

GETTING STARTED

The couple first got the barbecue bug more than a decade ago when Jack Prater offered to cook barbecue at a church event. "We used to have an old-fashioned day at my church," he says. "Women would dress up in their bonnets and long dresses and men in their bib overalls. I guess I just started doing the cooking for it."

But it wasn't until about two years ago that he got serious about the barbecue business and brought his wife along as a partner. And while Sandy Prater has cooked most of her life for family and friends, working at Jack's BBQ was the first time she used her skills professionally. "We like to eat, so we just started going by what we liked," she says. "Also, I just wanted to help him. However he wanted to do it, that was fine with me."

Now, the couple owns and operates a state-certified kitchen that accompanies their 18-foot-long custom-made wagon, which includes a refrigerator, stainless steel tables, a deep freezer, microwave, stoves, sinks and a warmer. The couple caters weddings and political events, but they also take the wagon to festivals, at least one trail ride for horseback riders, and other functions where barbecue and country cooking are customary.

However, they're happy to take their concessions wagon down to the Hometown True Value Hardware parking lot in Salyersville on Thursdays. That's where people can choose from plate dinners, sandwiches and drinks. Still, they're willing to travel farther. "We are certified by the state to go anywhere in Kentucky," Jack Prater says,

BARBECUE BACKGROUND

So far, the business has seen success, despite a relatively slow start because of family illnesses and a slight learning curve while perfecting their own barbecue rub. "It probably has 10 to 12 different things in it," says Sandy Prater, who, in addition to helping perfect the rub, makes all the side dishes. "I kind of had a recipe, and then I'd add in whatever extra flavors we needed in it."

Growing up, Jack Prater says he never really ate much barbecue. It just wasn't part of his upbringing. "I mean, I've eaten pork all my life," he says. "I grew up on a farm, and I still farm. But I never ate a piece of beef until after I was probably in high school. My dad would kill hogs, but not cows. And the pork we had was for other things, not barbecue."

And while he still doesn't make any beef barbecue, he turned out to be a quick study when it came to ribs and pulled pork. "You learn," he says. "You learn things as you go along. I have something that goes with the rub that makes it taste better. You experiment. I have people tell me that they've eaten barbecue all over the country and mine's the best. I'm not saying that's correct, but I have had people tell me that." 🗨️



The Praters enjoy serving the local community with good 'cue.



Sandy Prater often serves customers from the window of the Jack's BBQ & More food trailer.



WHERE TO FIND JACK'S BBQ & MORE

Jack's BBQ & More is at 3239 Burning Fork Road in Salyersville about one day a week. Call ahead at 606-349-3661 or 606-496-8503 to find out what day they'll be cooking, or use those numbers to schedule Jack's to cater your next special event. The Burning Fork Road shop also sells canned goods from Jack's garden. You can also find the Jack's wagon in the parking lot of Hometown True Value Hardware in Salyersville most Thursdays from about 10:30 a.m. to about 3 p.m. True Value is at 258 Parkway Drive.

JACK'S BBQ & MORE MENU ITEMS

Jack and Sandy Prater say they like to switch up the menu a little from week to week. But most days you can find the following items and prices:

Rib dinner with a baked potato, baked beans, homemade coleslaw and a drink \$8

Pulled pork sandwich, baked potato, homemade coleslaw and a drink \$7

Nachos \$5

Pulled pork sandwich \$4



The beautiful simplicity of hummus

A few basic ingredients create a healthy favorite

Hummus is proof that the best things in life are often simple. “I make mine with garbanzo beans, lemon, salt, tahini and some olive oil. That’s it,” says Solomon Babylon, owner of Babylon Gyros in Richmond, Kentucky. “It’s really the tahini — sesame paste — that makes it.”

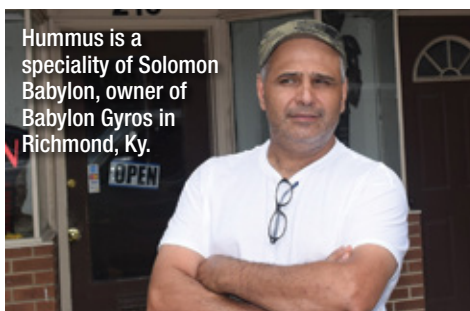
Since opening his restaurant 10 years ago in the charming home of Eastern Kentucky University just a few miles south of Lexington, Babylon has seen a marked increase in the amount of hummus he prepares daily. He serves it as a dip with whole rounds of grilled pita bread or as a garnish for falafel.

“It’s interesting,” he says. “In the 1980s, it was Chinese food. In the ’90s, it was Mexican. In the early 2000s, it was Indian food. There were Indian restaurants everywhere. But now, in the 2010s, people have started turning to Middle Eastern food.”

Hummus includes lots of good nutrients, such as calcium, folate, fiber, healthy fats and magnesium. When it comes to good-for-you ingredients and foods to make our lives better, hummus is a tasty option. “You go into any grocery store and see hummus all over the place,” says Babylon, a native of Jordan.

At the eatery in downtown Richmond, though, hummus is made from scratch. The restaurant goes through about 50 pounds of dried garbanzo beans every week, and Babylon makes hummus three to four times daily, Monday through Saturday. “I make it batch by batch, every two to three hours,” he says.

Though his restaurant serves traditional hummus only, Babylon says there are a number of ingredients you can add to it. “One of the best I’ve ever had is avocado hummus,” he says. “But there’s eggplant hummus and others. You can add spinach



Hummus is a speciality of Solomon Babylon, owner of Babylon Gyros in Richmond, Ky.

to it, red peppers. But remember, you can’t be stingy with the tahini. Tahini makes the hummus. Taste as you go.”

And, he advises, if the recipe calls for it, be sure to add enough lemon. You want a slightly sharp edge to your hummus.

“And you know what’s one of the best tastes you’ll ever have?” he asks. “Hummus topped with rice. Hummus is a base for anything you might want to put on it. That’s why I serve hummus with whole pieces of pita. That way, people can tear off a piece of pita, spread some hummus on it and add some gyro meat or shawarma (roasted meat cooked on a spit and shaved) and make a sandwich.”



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

TRADITIONAL HUMMUS

- 3 cups dry garbanzo beans, soaked overnight
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 3/4 cup tahini paste, or more, to taste
- 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice, or more, to taste
- Salt, to taste
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil, for drizzling

Rinse the beans and place in a pot. Fill with enough water to cover by at least 1 inch. Allow to sit overnight. Drain beans. Then add water to cover by at least an inch. Bring to a boil; then reduce heat and simmer over medium heat until the beans are very soft, 1 to 2 hours.

Drain the beans, reserving some of the water to use later. Transfer the beans to a blender and blend the beans until smooth, adding 1/2 cup of olive oil gradually. Add some of the reserved water if needed to help it blend. Add the tahini and blend in along with the lemon juice. Add salt. Taste and correct seasonings, adding more tahini, lemon and salt, as needed.

Spread the hummus into a flat serving dish and garnish with a drizzle of olive oil. Serve with pita bread, pita chips, carrots, celery, cucumbers or a combination of any or all of them.

AVOCADO HUMMUS

When in a pinch, Solomon Babylon uses canned garbanzo beans, but he recommends using the best you can find, preferably beans from Turkey.

- 1 (15-ounce) can garbanzo beans, well-rinsed and drained
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 1/2 tablespoons tahini, or more, to taste
- 3 tablespoons fresh lime juice

Traditional Hummus



Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

- 1/8 teaspoon cumin
- 2 medium, ripe avocados, cored and peeled
- Red pepper flakes, for garnish

In a blender or food processor, pulse garbanzo beans, olive oil, tahini and lime juice until smooth, about 2 minutes. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Add cumin and avocados and pulse mixture until smooth and creamy, 1-2 minutes longer.

Serve topped with more olive oil and sprinkle with red pepper flakes, if desired. Serve with pita or tortilla chips.

RED BEET HUMMUS

- 2 pounds red beets, scrubbed (about 2 large beets)
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 2 tablespoons ground coriander
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2-1 cup tahini, or to taste
- Kosher salt

Heat the oven to 425 degrees. In an oven-proof Dutch oven, cover the beets with water and bring to a boil on the stovetop. Then keep covered and braise in the oven for about 2 hours, until very tender. Use a knife or fork to test for tenderness.

With a slotted spoon, transfer the beets to a cutting board. When cool enough to handle, slip off the skins and cut the beets into small, 1-inch pieces, spread them on a baking sheet and refrigerate until cold, about 1 hour.

In a food processor, combine the braised beets with the garlic, coriander and lemon juice and pulse until finely chopped. With the food processor on, slowly drizzle in the olive oil until incorporated and the beet puree is smooth. Scrape into a bowl and whisk in the tahini. Season with salt and serve with pita bread or pita chips. 🍷



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