



# CONNECTION

## SOARING TO NEW HEIGHTS

Pastors use  
internet to inspire  
churchgoers

## CUTTING EDGE

eKAMI trains for  
high-paying careers

## GROWING THE FUTURE

Broadband revolutionizes  
agriculture





— By SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO —  
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

## Taking the rural broadband story to the Senate

In mid-May, I appeared before the Senate Commerce Committee to discuss the status of broadband during this time of crisis that has so many Americans working, learning and socializing from home.

I have never been more proud of the broadband providers we represent, watching them move quickly and think outside the box to get the job done for their customers. It was a privilege to share with senators that NTCA's community-based broadband providers were well prepared to keep Americans connected during a crisis — thanks to their community commitment, their entrepreneurial spirit and the support of Congress, the FCC and RUS.

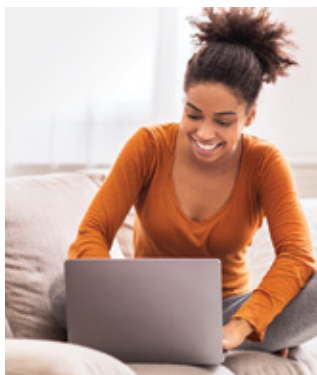
NTCA members have led the charge in building future-proof broadband networks for years and are doing all they can to keep everyone's internet lights on. But I reminded the committee that to do that, these providers need to keep their own lights on as well.

First, I reminded senators how important it will be to pass the "Keeping Critical Connections Act" to create a temporary emergency fund to keep Americans connected during the pandemic.

Moving forward, Congress should adopt a "Forever Connected" perspective when it comes to promoting broadband. No American should get second-class broadband service, or worse yet, no service at all.

I appreciated the opportunity to share with senators the story of NTCA members, the Smart Rural Communities they are helping to build, and what support they need to write the next chapter. 📺

# AMERICA'S RURAL BROADBAND PROVIDERS



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a changing  
world**



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Visit [ntca.org/smart](https://ntca.org/smart)

# The six-second commute

## Work from home policies boost productivity

Story by KALEIGH COX



According to a 2017 Gallup poll, 43% of employed Americans have spent at least some time working remotely. U.S. census data released in 2018 revealed that 5.2% of American workers are based entirely at home. Many employers, however, are reluctant to get on board with remote work. They worry that distractions at home and a lack of oversight could decrease productivity. But are those worries unfounded? One Stanford professor decided to find out.

In 2015, Nicholas Bloom conducted research as a Chinese travel agency tested a new work-from-home policy with half of its call center employees. Bloom found that productivity actually increased by an average of 13% thanks to fewer interruptions, shorter breaks and fewer sick days. With just a six-second commute to their laptop, employees were also less likely to start work late or leave early.

Little bits of time saved here and there added up to a big difference. Each employee completed roughly one extra shift's worth of work. And they were happier, too. Employee attrition, formerly a big problem at the company, decreased by an astounding 50%. The company in Bloom's study cut back on its office space in an expensive city and saved \$2,000 per employee.

Working from home is great for employers and employees alike, but there are challenges to keep in mind. At the end of the study,

over half of the work-from-home employees decided they wouldn't want to work from home 100% of the time, citing isolation as a challenge. Fortunately, there are several ways remote companies can help employees overcome isolation and reap the benefits of working from home:

- **Use technology to stay connected.** Video meetings allow for face-to-face time and are more engaging than audio-only conference calls. Platforms like Slack encourage steady communication, even between meetings.
- **Consider flexible policies.** Working from home doesn't have to be all or nothing. Some companies opt for a mix of in-office and at-home days or start new employees in the office for smoother onboarding. The key is to consider the unique needs of the team and experiment with creative options as needed.
- **Encourage team bonding.** A sense of community can combat feelings of isolation and encourage team cohesion. Non-work-related, group bonding activities — whether virtual or in person — can help teams feel connected and united even as they work from home.

Working from home can save companies time and money, improve employee satisfaction and improve retention rates — as long as they find ways to keep employees connected and engaged from wherever they call home. ☎

### Stay focused with the Pomodoro Technique

Named after the creator's tomato-shaped kitchen timer, the Pomodoro Technique is a simple time-management strategy widely used by work-from-home employees who need help staying focused. Here's how it works:

- » Select a task to focus on.
- » Set your timer for 25 minutes and work until you hear the "ding."
- » Take a short five-minute break to stretch or grab a coffee.
- » Repeat three more times, then take a longer break of 15-30 minutes.

Even large tasks feel manageable when you only have to focus for 25 minutes at a time. Set a kitchen timer, use your phone's timer or download a Pomodoro app to try this "time-tested" technique for yourself.

# Lycom purchase strengthens our cooperative and our neighbors

I think it's safe to say 2020 has not gone the way anyone expected. But even in a year of such unpredictability and turmoil, at least one thing has remained constant: Foothills is still just as focused as ever on improving the lives of those in our region by connecting them with outstanding telecommunication services.



**RUTH CONLEY**  
Chief Executive Officer

At Foothills, we'll also remember 2020 as the year when our cooperative continued to bring our world-class broadband to new communities outside our traditional service area, continuing the expansion that began earlier with the addition of Paintsville.

I wanted to take this space to inform you of this exciting and important investment and explain why it's the right move for our cooperative.

Earlier this year, Foothills purchased Lycom Communications, a cable company based in Louisa. We had negotiated the purchase for more than a year. Lycom had served Louisa, unincorporated parts of Lawrence County and across the state line to Prichard, West Virginia.

The acquisition of Lycom helps strengthen the cooperative's financial future, and it allows us to improve the economic prospects, educational opportunities and quality of life for people in our part of East Kentucky.

We receive requests daily to expand our fiber network from businesses, communities and individuals outside of our traditional service area. In a case like this, where it makes sense geographically and doesn't jeopardize the cooperative's financial future, we're choosing to offer a fiber optic lifeline to help out neighbors.

We firmly believe the economic future of communities like ours depends largely on the fiber optic broadband we offer. We also know from history that the big, national broadband providers won't build in our corner of the world because there's too little profit to satisfy their Wall Street investors.

Therefore, the board of directors and I believe it falls to us to help make sure our neighbors don't get left behind. I believe expanding broadband in Louisa and Prichard strengthens our entire region.

We're already working in Louisa to build fiber optics, and will continue to expand throughout the Lycom territory. Until the fiber is built, former Lycom customers will use the existing cable network for TV, internet and phone service.

Rest assured this is not a decision we took lightly. Our job is to ensure Foothills can offer vital connectivity today and for decades in the future. While our cooperative is on a strong financial footing, we feel this exciting expansion puts us in an even better position to continue serving members in the future.

We're able to do this because of the wise decision making from our board and the hard work of our employees and contractors. Our network allows all members in our original service territory to access industry-leading gigabit-per-second speed, which is something few providers in the country can claim.

Here in East Kentucky, we're neighborly people. And when the opportunity arises to both help our neighbors and strengthen our future by sharing this world-class network, I'm proud that our cooperative was in a position to make it happen. ☑



## CONNECTION

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The Foothills Connection is a bimonthly newsletter published by Foothills Communications, ©2020. 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 all 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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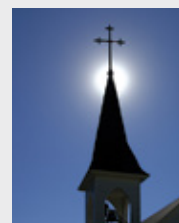
### Foothills Mission Statement

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

Produced for Foothills Communications by:



### On the Cover:



More and more local churches offer words of hope, healing and prayer through social media platforms. See story Page 8.

# Back-to-School entry form and contest rules



## Rules:

- Students in the Foothills Communications service area may enter one of three divisions: kindergarten-second grade, third-fourth grade and fifth-sixth grade.
- The theme for the drawing or writing is: Choose your favorite Foothills service — internet, home telephone through a landline, or TV. Then draw a picture or write one or two sentences about why you like it and why it's important to you.
- The drawing or story must be an original creation of the child.
- The entry form, signed by a parent or guardian, must be enclosed with the submission.
- Entries must be postmarked by Aug. 1.
- Only one entry per child is allowed.
- Winners will be notified by Aug. 15.
- The winners' names will appear in an upcoming edition of The Foothills Connection.
- Three winners will be chosen from each category to win a \$100 Visa gift card!

## Entry Form:

To enter, please fill out the form below and submit with your entry to:

**Foothills Back-to-School Art and Writing Contest**  
**Marketing Department**  
**P.O. Box 240, Staffordsville, KY 41256**

**PARENT:** By signing this form, I give permission for identification of my child and his/her picture and art or writing sample in The Foothills Connection. I also attest that the artwork is the child's original creation.

Student's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of parent or guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade in school for the 2020-2021 school year: \_\_\_\_\_



Foothills Communications will be closed Friday, July 3 in celebration of Independence Day. We wish our customers a safe and happy Fourth of July.



## FREE MOVIES!

Enjoy free premium movies July 4-12. Watch flicks on HBO, Cinemax, Showtime, STARZ and STARZ ENCORE. Check your local listings.



# SWEET & SIMPLE

*Gerbera daisies are a colorful burst of sunshine*



**T**hey start out so colorful and add such a happy touch to your outdoor setting, but with the heat of summer, gerbera daisies begin to lose their appeal. Their healthy, green leaves brown as the heat rises.

But all is not lost — your daisies can come back to life with a little love and flower power on your part.

Gerbera daisies are a popular flower for both the home and garden. You can cut them and make a stunning, multicolored bouquet. They put on quite a show with their rainbow of colors, which is one of the most distinctive qualities of gerberas. They range from beautiful reds, cheery yellows, bright pinks and vivid whites to perfect purples, soft peach and more. And while you may see blue and green gerberas, those are most likely victims of artificial coloring.

“They really are a customer favorite,” says Cole Webster, general manager of The Barn Nursery in Chattanooga, Tennessee. “They’re bright, fun and an iconic bloom. When I think of summer and warm weather, I think of gerbera daisies.”

With proper care, though, these blooms can last well past spring and through the heat of summer — and possibly through the cold of winter.





## HERE ARE SOME TIPS WEBSTER OFFERS TO ENSURE THEIR SURVIVAL:

- \* Gerbera daisies should be watered every couple of days. It's easy to tell if they're desperate for a drink. The leaves sag, and the blooms wilt. "I like telling people to water them whenever you think about it," Webster says.
- \* The best time to water is in the morning. But if you forget, water in the afternoon. Don't wait until the next day. If you're thirsty, you don't tell yourself you'll wait until tomorrow to get something to drink.
- \* Fertilize every three weeks. For container plants, Webster recommends a product like Scotts Super Bloom or some other plant food that has a high phosphorus level to help promote big blooms. If you plant your daisies in the ground, a slow-release fertilizer is your best bet.
- \* Gerberas are sun-loving plants, but sun is too much of a good thing when temperatures climb to 90 degrees and higher. This is the time of year you should limit their sunning to mornings, moving them into the shade in the heat of the afternoon.
- \* Gerbera daisies can come back next year if you winterize them. In the South, particularly those areas where mild winters prevail, mulch the daisies well, and they'll reappear next spring. In areas that suffer through freezing winter temperatures, bring the daisies inside and place them in a bright window or greenhouse, watering and fertilizing as needed. Note, however, gerberas are more likely to come back and rebloom if they are planted outdoors. They can last for two to three years.
- \* Use gerberas in an arrangement for a stunning, colorful showpiece. Their stems are hollow, allowing a wire to be inserted into them if needed for stability.
- \* If you plan ahead, you can start gerberas from seed, but it will take about six months for them to reach maturity. Plant seeds around Thanksgiving for spring blooms. 🌱

## A few things you might not know about gerbera daisies

Not only are gerbera daisies among the most popular flowers, but they also have an interesting history. They enjoy longevity, have medicinal uses and are made up of a surprisingly complex structure.

- \* Dutchman Jan Frederic Gronovius wished to honor a German botanist and physician, Traugott Gerber, when naming the genus *Gerbera* in the 1700s.
- \* Gerberas can last in a water-filled vase for two weeks, making them among the longest-lasting cut flowers.
- \* The plant is also believed by many to have health benefits, pulling carbon dioxide and other toxins found in the air and discharging oxygen. Some people even place gerberas by their bedsides.
- \* The structure of the gerbera is complex. At first, the flower seems to be a single flower head with many small petals. However, the gerbera flower actually consists of a huge cluster of hundreds of tinier flowers.
- \* Scientific researchers have examined the daisies as they study the formation of flowers. And the flower is resistant to fungal diseases.
- \* Similar to sunflowers, gerbera daisies track the sun. The flower turns as the light moves from east to west.
- \* About 40 documented species of gerberas exist.

Source: flowerweb.com





# *Keeping the faith*

Online outlets offer the faithful  
another way to pray

Story by JEN CALHOUN

Pastor Ronnie Spriggs of Hager Hill Freewill Baptist Church was wary of the new technology that kept cropping up over the last few years. “I’m 63 years old, and I’ve been guilty of being skeptical about cellphones and all these newfangled things,” he says.

But when Spriggs saw how virtual communication could change things for the better, he realized he might not be seeing the bigger picture. Now, he believes God may well have had His hand in all of it.

“I think God has literally been preparing the world for the last 30 or 40 years with this technology,” says Spriggs, who recently started holding live prayer sessions on his personal Facebook page three times a day. “God has prepared people through the internet and high-speed broadband access to connect with each other and share their faith. Even a few years ago, it was impossible on the scale that it is now.”

## **EVENING AND MORNING AND AT NOON**

Spriggs got the idea for his three-a-day community prayer sessions during the recent coronavirus pandemic. His church closed its doors temporarily in early March for the safety of its parishioners, but people seemed to need the solace of their faith community more than ever, he says.

Hager Hill Freewill Baptist may look empty,  
but Pastor Ronnie Spriggs uses online  
technology to preach to his congregation.

Spriggs noticed the need and decided to start an online prayer service from his study in his home. Using a gadget to hold his cellphone, he started broadcasting the 15-to-20-minute sessions at 8 a.m., noon and 6 p.m. They sometimes began with a song from Spriggs, a funny story or a quote. Then the group would start praying.

“The prayer sessions were modeled after something David said in Psalm 55:17,” Spriggs says. “David said, ‘Evening, and morning, and at noon, I will pray, and cry aloud; and He shall hear my voice.’ That was the inspiration.”

When he first started out, Spriggs didn’t know what the response would be. He figured a few members of his congregation would virtually attend the sessions, and that would be it. But that’s not what happened. Within three weeks of beginning the prayer sessions, Spriggs started getting audiences of about 600 — double the amount who regularly attend Sunday services at his church.


“The feedback I’ve been getting from just about everyone is it’s become a source of comfort, an avenue where they can find peace,” he says. “A lot of these people have been staying at home and doing the best they can. It’s easy for fear to raise up inside of you. They’d hear what was going on with the virus, which was important. But it can cause people to become anxious and fearful.”

### SPREADING HOPE

Spriggs says Hager Hill Freewill Baptist started airing its services and adult Sunday schools live through the church’s Facebook page about two years ago. Before that, the church offered videotaped recordings of the services for the congregation, a practice that continues today. “It’s another way to reach out to folks,” he says. “There were a lot of our folks who were up in age and unable to get out on a regular basis. This was another way to reach out and bring the service into their home.”

Other local churches and pastors are also broadcasting their services and messages of hope. They include Lakeville Baptist Church, Paintsville First Christian Church, Inez Free Will Baptist Church and many more. In addition, several area church programs are shown weekly on Foothills Communications’ Local Video Channel 4.

Spriggs says he plans to continue the daily prayer sessions because “God’s been a comfort to me, and He’s been a comfort to others.”

Spriggs also believes online ministries can offer an opportunity that churches and people of faith need. “Because of the technology in place, we are able to reach out to people we never have been able to before,” he says. “God was preparing the world. He sees what we don’t. He’s looking ahead and always looking out for our good. The folks I’m reaching right now, some of them I’ve never met, and yet we have a real bond. It’s hard to describe it.” 



When the coronavirus pandemic temporarily closed many church doors, Pastor Spriggs started an online prayer group.



## Know where to go

Many local churches offer ways to view church services online. Check your pastor’s or church’s Facebook page or website for more information. In addition, Foothills Communications’ Local Video Channel 4 offers weekly broadcasts of several local church programs. The channel also includes local city council meetings, school board meetings and more. Contact Foothills Communications for information on airing programs from your church or organization.



# Technology in the growing field

Innovations in automation help farmers work more efficiently

Story by LAZ DENES

**N**ever has technology been more important to the agriculture industry than it is today. As farmers and ranchers face challenges such as diminishing sustainable farmland, rising costs of supplies and equipment, workforce shortages, and ever-changing consumer preferences, they must find ways to produce more without breaking the bank.

Fortunately, technology enables farmers to shave hours, days and even weeks off some of the most time-consuming tasks to make their operations more efficient than ever.

Corey Poss, an agronomist with the Rutherford Farmers Cooperative in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, oversees an operation that offers satellite and drone technology to help map, monitor and analyze crop fields. Another solution is a forecasting tool that can predict the yield of a particular crop to within 10% — before seeds are even planted.

“Crop ground is getting swallowed up every day, and we’ve got more people to feed, so we have to apply technology everywhere we can to be as efficient

as possible and not waste time and money,” says Poss, who is in his sixth year with the Rutherford co-op after graduating with an agribusiness degree from Tennessee Tech University.

“A lot of our larger growers are participating with us free of charge,” he says. “The technology originated in the Midwest — the Corn Belt. I don’t ever have to step in the field. We can get a much more accurate look from above. We can identify problems with water, nutrient deficiency and disease on a wide scale, and we can advise the farmer so he can apply his fertilizer accordingly. With our satellite and drone technology, we can cover as much as 1,000 acres a day.”





Andy Hacker serves as operations manager for Bonanza Bean in Morris, Minnesota.



Bonanza Bean, which processes millions of pounds of product, relies on broadband to aid in sales and marketing.

## PRESCRIPTION FOR SUCCESS

Poss and his crew of four agronomists use the fast fiber optic network at their Woodbury and Smithville locations to process analytics that farmers then load into their automated equipment to enable a precise distribution of fertilizer, pesticides and nutrients on every square inch of a growing field.

It's a practice called "writing prescriptions," something with which Texas farmer Spence Pennington has become all too familiar. Five years ago, he returned to his family farm in Raymondville after serving as an Air Force aircraft maintenance officer. He and his family grow cotton, grain sorghum, corn, sugarcane and sesame seed. They also raise Brangus cattle in Willacy, Cameron and Hidalgo counties in the Rio Grande Valley. Pennington appreciates the ability to pinpoint the varying requirements of his family's farmland through technology.

"I have 10 to 12 systems — my tractors and all my equipment — and I can link them all together to make them all sync, thanks to the broadband at my house," he says. "I can run my agriculture systems, security systems, monitor my equipment. I can literally see the water temp in the radiator of one of my tractors, all from home. When I'm at home, I'm still connected to my farm."

Pennington and his wife, Emily, an Iowa native he met while on active duty in Ramstein, Germany, also rely on broadband technology to help them stay

on top of their continuing duties as Air Force reservists. Pennington is a lieutenant colonel and commander of the 433rd Maintenance Squadron at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio. His wife, a nurse practitioner at a local regional hospital, still serves as an Air Force major. Stationed at Scott Air Force Base near St. Louis, she is the chief nurse of the 932nd Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron.

"We live multiple lives, and we have to cover a lot of ground," Pennington says. "After working 12 to 13 hours a day on the farm, I come home and have to take care of business as commander of my unit. I'm responsible for 250 people remotely, and I'm logging into a very encrypted system."

"Having fast internet has literally changed our lives, and we've gotten so much family time back," he says. "No more headaches, and everything is so much quicker. We've been married just over three years, and we have two kids now, so we can really appreciate being able to take care of our military duties that much more quickly and efficiently."

## MAKING THE GRADE

Reliable broadband service also is a valuable tool for the Bonanza Bean farming operation headquartered in Morris, Minnesota. The company processes black beans and three varieties of kidney beans and sells to national and international companies from its state-of-the-art facilities in Minnesota and Arizona.



Drone technology allows Corey Poss, of the Rutherford Farmers Cooperative, to monitor fields.

The company touts its magnetic dirt separator, which uses magnets to remove dirt with high concentrations of iron from the beans. It also sells a state-of-the-art, infrared-camera technology for sorting that can differentiate a black bean from a dirtball.

"That machine has really changed our industry," says Andy Hacker, Bonanza Bean operations manager. "The needle machine picks out anything that has a sprout or a skin defect or anything that we can catch with a needle. At Bonanza Bean, we never let anything leave our facility that doesn't make USDA Grade No. 1. With our cleaning facility, we're able to accomplish that."

About 60 million pounds of beans roll through its processing plants each year, with particular emphasis on international sales. Broadband service allows its sales staff to monitor up-to-the-minute market data and communicate with its vast array of customers. ☎

# Reaching for the top

## Paintsville institute trains for high-paying jobs

Story by JEN CALHOUN

Coal mining jobs have dominated the lives of many Appalachians for more than a century. But as the coal industry changes, some workers in the region are taking advantage of new career opportunities offering high-paying jobs.

That's according to Kathy Walker, founder of the Haas eKentucky Advanced Manufacturing Institute in Paintsville, a facility that helps retrain workers for advanced manufacturing jobs through its four-month and nine-month courses. Known as eKAMI, the institute has certified hundreds of people for high-tech jobs.

### HIGH TECH, HIGH PAY

The skills learned prepare workers for the next generation of manufacturing jobs, such as computer numerical control machining. CNC machinists are highly sought in a wide range of industries, including aerospace, medical, robotics, and military and defense. Jobs can start at more than \$20 an hour, and many graduates earn annual salaries in or near the six-figure range.

"Manufacturers worldwide are in the market for high-skilled CNC machinists," says Walker, who spent years working in the coal industry. "Many jobs are going unfilled in these sectors due to the shortage of workers."


Currently in Kentucky, many of the jobs are in the Lexington, Georgetown, northern Kentucky or Louisville areas. But that could change. Since Walker started the institute in late 2017, interest has grown in the region and its potential for becoming home to high-end manufacturers.

"The word is getting out," she says. "We are blessed with a supply of exceptionally talented people from the region. Individuals from this and other rural areas have always had to be a little more innovative out of necessity. They're naturally mechanically competent, with skills that have been passed down for generations."

### RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS

People in this region also look out for their neighbors, she says. During the recent coronavirus pandemic, instructors at the institute decided to use 3D printers to design and produce plastic face shields for the region's health care workers and first responders.

"This also speaks to the adaptability of the people in this area,"



Students at Haas eKAMI in Paintsville observed social distancing requirements during a class in May.

## *“We take care of our own in Appalachia. That’s just how we roll around here.”*

— Kathy Walker, founder of the Haas eKentucky Advanced Manufacturing Institute in Paintsville, a training facility for advanced manufacturing jobs. School staff made and distributed hundreds of protective face shields to health care workers and first responders during the coronavirus pandemic.



Walker says. “We temporarily suspended instruction due to coronavirus, so the staff took it upon themselves to learn how to produce face shields. They identified a prototype, tweaked it, and ended up quadrupling production in a short time.”

eKAMI donated the face shields to hospitals, nursing homes, doctors’ offices, fire departments, correctional facilities and more. “We take care of our neighbors in Appalachia,” she says. “That’s just how we roll.”

### HOW IT STARTED

Walker started the eKAMI institute through a partnership with the Gene Haas Foundation, whose creator and namesake, Gene Haas, owns Haas Automation, one of the world’s largest machine-tool makers. Noticing a lack of skilled workers, Haas’ foundation developed a high-tech training program designed to prepare individuals for a new career path in CNC machining.

Walker heard about the program and sent three displaced coal industry workers to the flagship Gene Haas Training and Education Center at Vincennes University near Indianapolis. They got a late start, but instructors worked with them to catch up with the class.

“After the first week, the instructor called me and said despite joining late, they were already caught up and actually helping assist other students,” she says. “The instructor then asked me how many other available people I had like that. I said, ‘Right now? About 10,000.’”

Walker welcomed eKAMI’s first class in November 2017 to the institute’s 40,000-square-foot facility off U.S. Highway 23 in Paintsville. Its students train on state-of-the-art Haas CNC equipment, learning to program, set up and operate CNC machines that produce high-precision parts. They also learn soft skills, including punctuality, teamwork, adaptability and leadership.

The skills acquired, combined with the natural talents and aptitude of many Appalachians, are what’s setting eKAMI

graduates apart. “They all have job offers when they graduate,” Walker says. “Some of them have multiple job offers. Word is getting out about how good these guys and women are.

“Employers are beginning to pay attention to the reskilled workforce of Eastern Kentucky. The forward-thinking business that decides to locate in the area will undoubtedly enjoy the first-mover advantage by gaining access to an amazingly high-skilled, dedicated and hard-working workforce.”

## Want to know more?

For more information on eKAMI and the courses available, visit its website at [ekami.com](http://ekami.com). The institute offers a nine-month course for recent high school graduates and those new to the workforce, and a four-month accelerated program for those who have already been in the workforce. In addition to earning certifications, students learn technical and soft skills needed to succeed in the workplace. As of May 1, all students graduated with a 100% job placement rate. Scholarships are available.

# Chillingly delicious

## No one can resist ice cream

There was a time when ice cream came in just a few flavors — primarily chocolate, vanilla and strawberry. But step inside It's All So Yummy Cafe in Knoxville and you'll find that the quintessential summer treat we all know and love has gone rogue. Watermelon Chip, Roasted Golden Beet and the popcorn-flavored Movie Night certainly don't sound like ice cream flavors, but they're among the many Kim and Wade Wilcox have created since buying the cafe eight years ago.

The menu features sandwiches, salads and other foods typical of most cafes. However, with the purchase of the eatery came an ice cream machine, and the couple decided to use it. But there was a learning curve.

After they had been making ice cream for several years on a smaller scale than they do now, Wade Wilcox decided to learn more — so he went back to school. He didn't enroll in just one of many online courses, though. He took part in Penn State's prestigious ice cream course, an intense, weeklong program that draws people from around the world, teaching them all about the manufacturing of commercially sold ice cream. "It gave me a more rounded, in-depth knowledge of the chemistry that goes into making ice cream," he says. "And it gave me a good chance to make contact with other people in the industry and share ideas."

The Wilcoxes, originally from Iowa, have lived in Knoxville for 23 years. They started out selling about 30 flavors of ice cream. Now, that number has risen to well over 50, but not every flavor is available every day.

"Many of them are seasonal that we only do at certain times of the year," Kim Wilcox says, adding that making these

types available once in a while "keeps people wanting them more." For example, during Girl Scout Cookies season, they'll make ice cream with the treats right after the cookies are delivered. When it's gone, it's gone.

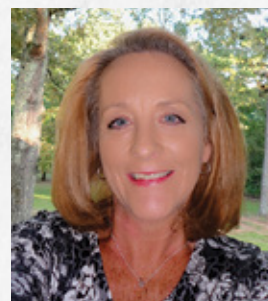
Popular year-round varieties are Death by Godiva Chocolate and Butterfinger. "My personal favorite?" she says. "I don't know that I have one. My favorites change all the time, but I do like all of our coffee-based ice creams."

Ice cream sold at It's All So Yummy Cafe goes by the name Hilton Head Ice Cream, and there's a story behind it. Years ago, the man who first opened the cafe went to Hilton Head and fell in love with the ice cream at the shop Hilton Head Ice Cream. He liked it so much, he convinced the owner to let him open a store in Knoxville. "Part of the deal was that he needed to call it Hilton Head Ice Cream, and that's how Knoxville has always known it," Wilcox says. "We use the same process that the original Hilton Head Ice Cream shop uses."

Now an expert in the field of frozen delights, she offers one important tip for those less skilled in the making of ice cream: "Don't be afraid to experiment with flavors. Ice cream should be fun."



Kim Wilcox and her husband, Wade, created the It's All So Yummy Cafe in Knoxville, Tennessee.



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

## LET'S GO TO THE FAIR

# Sundae

Cotton candy (available in many stores — or at the fair!)

Vanilla ice cream

M&M's

Chocolate syrup

Sugar wafer cookie

Rainbow sprinkles

Whipped cream

Maraschino cherry with stem

Make a bowl out of the cotton candy. Put the ice cream in the bowl. Working quickly, add M&M's, chocolate syrup and sugar wafer cookie. Top with whipped cream, sprinkles and a cherry on top. Serve immediately. Makes one sundae.

## PUMPKIN WHOOPIE PIE ICE CREAM SANDWICHES

- 3 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 2 tablespoons cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon ground cloves
- 2 cups packed dark brown sugar
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 3 cups pure pumpkin puree
- 2 large eggs
- 1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla

*Suggested ice cream flavors: pumpkin, French vanilla, butter pecan, cinnamon or dark chocolate.*

Heat oven to 350 F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper. In a large bowl, whisk the flour, salt, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, ginger and cloves. Set aside. In another bowl, whisk the brown sugar and oil until well combined. Add the pumpkin puree and whisk to combine. Add eggs and vanilla until well mixed. Add the flour mixture 1/2 cup at a time, and stir until combined. In 1/3-cup scoops, put the cookie dough

on the baking sheets. They will spread a little, so leave some space between them. Bake for 11-13 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean.

Remove from the oven and let cool before removing from the pan. Once cooled, wrap them individually and freeze.

When ready to serve, take one cookie and place a big scoop of your favorite ice cream on it. Then, top with another cookie and enjoy.

## SALTED SESAME CARAMEL

*A mouthwatering topping for most any ice cream.*

- 1 cup sugar
- Pinch of cream of tartar
- 3 tablespoons water
- 1/4 cup tahini

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2/3 cup heavy cream
- 1/4 cup toasted sesame seeds
- 3/4 teaspoon kosher salt

Bring sugar, cream of tartar and water to a boil in a medium pan over medium-high heat, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Boil until the sugar begins to caramelize in spots. Stir with a heat-proof spatula and cook until the color of honey, 5-7 minutes. Reduce heat to medium low and cook, stirring occasionally, until caramel is a deep amber color, about 5 minutes.

Remove caramel from heat and whisk in the tahini and butter. Then add cream, sesame seeds and salt.

Cool before serving. This sauce may be made ahead of time and refrigerated. 🍷





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