

CONNECTION

Kelly's Market

The little market with
a big following

LOOKING INTO
LIBRARIES

CRUISES ARE
BACK!



By SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO

NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

Building the broadband workforce

Partnerships prepare for future growth

As we greet the new year, it's natural to look ahead to the next 12 months, which will again show our members supporting rural America by providing critical broadband internet service. It has been gratifying to see providers like yours working so furiously to build out broadband to communities still waiting for robust service while also serving existing customers. Yet, the work is never truly done.

Whether it is installations, upgrades or maintenance, there is certainly more than enough work to go around. That is why it is fitting that NTCA is stepping up to help broadband workers. Because retention and recruitment in rural markets is more challenging than urban areas, we are especially proud to work with some new partners to support the broadband providers we represent in creating a 21st century workforce.

We recently joined the White House's Talent Pipeline Challenge, a call to action for employers, education and training providers, and others to support equitable workforce development in critical infrastructure sectors like broadband. We have partnered with Northwood Technical College, the National Rural Education Association and the Communications Workers of America to expand training and job opportunities for rural America's broadband workforce.

These efforts seek to prepare for immediate growth in the broadband industry because of significant funding for network deployment in the Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act, as well as future demand for high-tech jobs.

It's an exciting time to work in broadband, and you are fortunate to live somewhere served by a committed community-based provider. As connections grow, so will the number and skills of broadband workers. Stay tuned for more information soon from your provider about these initiatives.

Happy New Year. 🍀

A nourishing change

FCC embraces new broadband labels

Rural broadband providers have a deserved reputation for openness, but not every national company can say the same — shopping for service can be trying.

The Federal Communications Commission, however, intends to require internet providers to prominently display a “nutrition label” clearly detailing the specifics of each plan. The FCC passed a rule late last year clearing the way for this change, although implementation may take time and require additional input.

The intent is to eliminate hidden fees, confusion about data caps and uncertainty about speeds and generally to shine a bright light on what can be a confusing choice.

Each label will show key information — details wise consumers should consider now:

- Monthly price and contract length
- Whether that price will change after a certain period and, if so, what it will change to
- A complete list of monthly and one-time fees, as well as any early termination fee
- Whether the company participates in the Affordable Connectivity Program and a link to check if the consumer qualifies
- Typical download and upload speeds
- Data cap and price for exceeding that cap
- And more

The FCC must complete additional steps before implementing this change, and internet service providers will have time to update websites and other sales material. 📱

THE INFORMATION YOU NEED

The FCC is working to limit confusion about broadband services by creating a “nutrition label” providers must display to consumers. While implementation might take time, the example label provided by the FCC offers a guide to information shoppers might consider now when choosing a service.

Broadband Facts	
Provider Name	
Service Plan Name and/or Speed Tier	
Fixed or Mobile Broadband Consumer Disclosure	
Monthly Price	[\$]
This Monthly Price [is/is not] an introductory rate. [If introductory rate is applicable, identify length of introductory period and the rate that will apply after introductory period concludes]	
This Monthly Price [does not] require[s] a [x year/x month] contract. [only required if applicable; if so, provide link to terms of contract]	
Additional Charges & Terms	
Provider Monthly Fees	[\$]
One-time Fees at the Time of Purchase	[\$]
Early Termination Fee	[\$]
Government Taxes	Varies by Location
Discounts & Bundles	
Click Here for available billing discounts and pricing options for broadband service bundled with other services like video, phone, and wireless service, and use of your own equipment like modems and routers. [Any links to such discounts and pricing options on the provider's website must be provided in this section.]	
Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)	
The ACP is a government program to help lower the monthly cost of internet service. To learn more about the ACP, including to find out whether you qualify, visit affordableconnectivity.gov .	
Participates in the ACP	[Yes/No]
Speeds Provided with Plan	
Typical Download Speed	[] Mbps
Typical Upload Speed	[] Mbps
Typical Latency	[] ms
Data Included with Monthly Price	[] GB
Charges for Additional Data Usage	[\$/GB]
Network Management	Read our Policy
Privacy	Read our Policy
Customer Support	
Contact Us: example.com/support/ / (555) 555-5555	
Learn more about the terms used on this label by visiting the Federal Communications Commission's Consumer Resource Center.	
fcc.gov/consumer	
[Unique Plan Identifier Ex. F0005937974123ABC456EMC789]	

GONE PHISHING

Don't get hooked by a ransomware attack



If you lost access to everything on your personal or work computer, how much would you pay to get it back? It's a question more people are asking themselves as ransomware attacks have continued to grow in number and severity.

About 21% of all cyberattacks in 2021 were ransomware attacks, according to IBM Security, costing individuals and businesses an estimated \$20 billion. From 2013 to 2020, the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center saw a 243% increase in ransomware reports. That growth comes thanks to services that offer ransomware-for-hire and the increased popularity of cryptocurrency, which make untraceable payments to these services easier than ever.

The FBI does not recommend victims of these attacks pay the ransom. Victims rarely see their data returned, and payment only encourages future attacks. Instead, the best protection against ransomware is to understand how it works, where it comes from and how to protect your data from the start.

WHAT IS RANSOMWARE?

Ransomware is a type of malware, or malicious software, which locks the victim

out of data on their computer until they pay for access to be restored. Most ransomware attacks target individuals, although attacks on large organizations with even bigger payouts have grown in popularity.

In the past, these situations largely involved attackers demanding a ransom to unlock the data. Today, most are "double extortion" assaults in which attackers demand payment for returning the data and to prevent it from being stolen again.

WHAT CAUSES IT?

Ransomware can infect your computer in many of the same ways as any other virus:


- **Phishing emails** — These emails trick users into downloading a malicious attachment disguised as a harmless file or visiting a website that can download the ransomware through their browsers.
- **Software vulnerabilities** — Hackers can find holes in a piece of software's cybersecurity protection or buy information on these flaws to download the malware onto a device or network.
- **Stolen logins** — Whether they're obtained through phishing, purchased on the dark web or hacked by brute force,

stolen credentials give cybercriminals direct access to download malware onto a device.

- **Repurposed malware** — Some ransomware is actually malware developed for other attacks like stealing bank information, and it's reworked to encrypt and lock personal data.

HOW CAN I AVOID IT?

Since paying attackers is not a reliable way to deal with ransomware, the best defense is to protect yourself and your devices before an attack can begin:

- Keep backups of any important data to eliminate most of the leverage an attacker might have.
- Update your computer's software and operating system regularly to protect against the latest threats.
- Update your computer's cybersecurity tools to help response teams detect and react to new ransomware attacks faster.
- Always be aware of phishing, social engineering and other strategies that can lead to a ransomware attack. 

TO LEARN MORE, visit www.stopthinkconnect.org.

Are you ready for the future?

Embrace 2023 and beyond

Happy New Year! This is always an exciting time, because in so many ways the months ahead seem like a fresh canvas waiting to be filled with plans, hopes, dreams, accomplishments and more. But if you're like many of us, a little bit of 2022 may linger.



RUTH CONLEY
Chief Executive Officer

Maybe it's that credit card bill showing holiday purchases, some unfinished to-dos or paperwork needed for the march toward filing taxes, but last year's odds and ends tend to stick around. Really, how things went in the previous 12 months can inform how you approach 2023 because we rarely start completely fresh.

For example, as a business, our past performance informs us about our budget, the status of our infrastructure and the well-being of our staff. That's just a start, too. I imagine it's the same for most of you.

But, what if you relied on future-proof tools and strategies as a foundation you know will work not only today but for the next year? Even better, what if that system adapted as the rest of your life changes — a bigger family, a more demanding job or whatever else comes your way? You're ready.

Well, for us at Foothills Communications that bedrock system does exist. We've invested in core technologies that are as future-proof as possible. Naturally, I'm talking about our fiber optic internet network, which is a true wonder woven throughout our community.

As you know, there are immediate benefits for every home and business connected to this lightning-fast internet network. From telehealth and work-from-home opportunities to digital music and streaming videos, fiber provides a conduit to the tools and resources you deserve.

Those are the realities of today. Now, what about tomorrow? This is where an already exciting technology becomes even more magical. Fiber optic technology is built to stand the test of time.

Our network already provides performance rivaling that found in metropolitan areas. That's today.

Changes happen fast. From connected TVs, appliances, home security systems and more, internet usage is only increasing. Fortunately, fiber has the capacity to grow along with the demand. Upgrades, maintenance and more will certainly be required, but that core technology is ready for the future.

Those fiber optic cables are tiny but powerful, which is why we've made a significant investment in the fiber serving you so well. We know it's also capable of growing to meet our needs. Faster speed. More overall capacity. We're ready for the online tools, services and new devices only now being dreamed up.

So, as Foothills heads into 2023 and we wrap up the final few details from last year, we know the foundation is solid. We can confidently go forward with excitement and anticipation. Our investments of the past will pay dividends.

Best of all, we are taking this journey with you. I hope you're as excited about what comes next as we are. 📺



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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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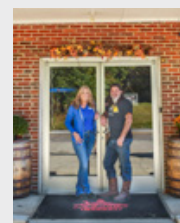
Foothills Mission Statement

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

Produced for Foothills Communications by:



On the Cover:



Kelly and Paula Conley have a hit on their hands with Kelly's Market, a butcher shop, grocery store and feed store all in one. See story Page 8.

Photography by
John Michael Laney

BUNDLE UP

- Blaze through the internet with a fiber-fast connection.
- Warm up with a crystal-clear call to friends or family.
- Snuggle in and enjoy the latest movie or show on digital TV.



606-297-3501 • foothills.net



A decade of storytelling

For 10 years, this magazine project has told the stories of co-ops like Foothills Communications as they bridge the digital divide separating rural and metropolitan America. By working with like-minded co-ops to share the costs, we bring you Connection as an affordable, high-quality magazine focused on our community. Together, we bring the cooperative spirit to life.

Need help paying for services?

Lifeline Assistance may be able to help!

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

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

To find out whether you qualify for Lifeline assistance, please visit checklifeline.org or call 1-800-234-9473.

**HEY
TELEMARKETERS:**



DO NOT CALL!

It's easy to add your number to the
Do Not Call Registry.

Register online at
donotcall.gov

or call 888-382-1222

For TTY, call 866-290-4236.

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

Brighten the winter

Plan now to cruise this year



Story by ANNE BRALY

When the days are cold, sun-down seems to arrive in the middle of the afternoon and skies are gray, there's no better time to turn daydreams of warm breezes, blue water and sand into reality. You might even save a little money while you're at it.

Cruising the Caribbean is a temptation thousands of people can't resist, and planning now can make a difference. "All of the major cruise lines have returned their fleets to full deployment," says Wes Rowland, president of cruiseexperts.com. "Cruising is back."

As a result, more cruise lovers are going to be on the water, and finding a deal for the best rooms and views is getting harder. There's so much to decide — dates, itineraries, cruise lines, room types and more. One of the first considerations is the port of origin. Fortunately, Southerners have options. In

Florida, you'll find ports in Tampa, Port Canaveral and Miami. Or, you can set sail from Charleston, South Carolina, or New Orleans. Even Galveston, Texas, can be a short, affordable flight away.

"It helps if you can find an experienced and trusted travel professional who can help you navigate the variables of a cruise purchase, understand your needs and expectations, help interpret value and give good guidance so you can make an informed decision in your best interest," Wes says.

The best cruise deals are not only about getting the lowest price. Cruise lines now offer attractive options, including amenities that once cost extra. Check out some of the top cruise sites online and you'll find that cruises now include more in the up-front price, such as beverage packages, tips, free specialty dining and Wi-Fi.

"It's a better value for the guest," Wes says. "Cruise lines took advantage of the unplanned downtime during the pandemic to retire the oldest ships from their fleets. With new ships coming on line, consumers have better choices of fabulous, amenity-packed ships than ever."

For example, Norwegian's 2023 schedule includes a seven-night cruise of the Western Caribbean, April 9-16, 2023, in a suite with a balcony for \$899 per person with double occupancy. The offer includes unlimited bar, a specialty dining experience, excursions and Wi-Fi.

CONSIDER 'SHOULDER SEASON'

Supply and demand determine rates, so if your travel dates are flexible take advantage of what budget cruisers consider the Holy Grail of deals — shoulder season. This window between the peak

blues




With cruises booking up for spring, planning now will help you find the adventure and pricing you want. So brighten the winter gloom with dreams of the sea.

and off-seasons, from late September through mid-November, offers the best deals and smaller crowds. “Sometimes it’s just the perception of when it’s better or worse to travel. You need to know what your priorities are,” Wes says.

TIPS FOR BUYING A CRUISE

If you choose to go it alone, do your homework. There’s no guarantee you’ll find the lowest rate, but these tips from cruiseexpert.com will help you be smarter about buying your vacation:

- Final deposits are due three months before the cruise. Usually, that’s the last date a cruise can be canceled without a penalty. This is when you can snag a good deal as cruise lines slash rates to try to fill empty cabins.
- Book for fall or spring when most families with school-age children cannot travel. There’s typically more availability, and lower pricing, during these times.
- If you’re willing to risk it, book a Caribbean cruise during hurricane season when prices are much lower. Just be sure to invest in travel insurance and make sure your prepaid deposits and other expenses are covered.
- Aggregate sites — independent websites offering trips on multiple cruise lines — allow you to check out many options at once. Sites include cruisecritic.com, gotosea.com, cruises.com and cheapcruises.com.
- If you’re new to cruising and want to see if it’s right for you, try taking a short, two- to three-night cruise first. Royal Caribbean’s recently refurbished Freedom of the Seas is one option. It makes short cruises between Miami and the Bahamas. 

Ready to set sail?

As cruise season is back and moving full steam ahead, here are some of the newest vessels sailing the high seas:

- ▶ Royal Caribbean's Odyssey of the Seas embarked on its first cruise in 2021 and is the first Quantum Ultra-Class Ship in North America offering bumper cars, glow-in-the-dark laser tag and virtual reality games. Passengers can kick back and relax beside the newly designed, resort-style pool. This ship is a game-changer for the cruise industry.
- ▶ Princess Cruises' Enchanted Princess launched in 2019 and offers a touch more sophistication than ships geared toward the teenage set. Dining options are excellent on all the cruise line's Medallion Class vessels, the category to which the Enchanted Princess belongs.
- ▶ MSC Cruises' Virtuosa set sail in 2019. There's a humanoid robot bartender in the Starship Club. The ship has the longest LED dome at sea, and it towers over a promenade of retail shops and restaurants. There are five pools that range from a waterpark for the kids to a quieter place to relax for adults.



Kelly's Market

UNIQUE OIL SPRINGS SHOP IS A FAVORITE FOR MEATS AND TREATS

Story by JEN CALHOUN



When customers pull up to Kelly's Market in Oil Springs, there's no telling where they came from. They might arrive from nearby Paintsville or Salyersville, but it's just as possible they've driven in from West Virginia and beyond.

"It's kind of crazy," says Paula Conley, who owns the store with her husband, Kelly. "People will come with their coolers and get a bunch of meat. We often sell in bulk, and we do bundles, so they like that."

Even more unique is that the meat is fresh and cut to order by professional butchers. "You can also come in and get it packaged in the quantity you like," Paula says. "If there's only two of you, you can get two pork chops. It's no big deal for us, because it's not sitting in a cooler when they come in. Whatever they ask us for, we cut it right then."

A DIFFERENT KIND OF STORE

The shop is a rarity these days, when most customers never see their butchers, let alone ask them for four pork chops at a good price and wrapped to the customers' specifications. "We do keep the cost down," Paula says. "That's because we're able to move so much, so fast."

Kelly and Paula Conley, owners of Kelly's Market, change and grow to meet their customers' needs.



Photos by John Michael Laney

The shelves of this unique shop include automotive supplies. Need a gift? Kelly's Market has got you covered there, too.

But it's not just the fresh meat that drives people to Kelly's. The shop also offers groceries and gift items, like Candleberry candles, car scents and tart warmers. "We have some automotive stuff and horse feed, cow feed, hay and straw," Paula says. "That's been big for us, and it grew out of a need from local farmers. That part of the store has actually grown quite a bit."

In addition, Kelly's sells deli foods, including pulled pork, coleslaw, chicken salad and bologna salad. The shop's Facebook page, which has more than 7,000 followers, is full of mouthwatering plates of ribs, chilis, pastas and beans.

STORIED PAST

While the market serves a need in the community and the surrounding region, it's important to the Conley family for other reasons. Paula's paternal grandfather, Payne Rice, founded the business as a drive-in decades ago. "Well, it was

mostly a drive-in, I think," Paula says. "I'm not 100% sure, but they served food. Then he made it a little bigger."

The store, which changed ownership two more times before Paula and Kelly bought it, allows shoppers to grab groceries without having to drive to Paintsville or Salyersville. "We're directly between those two cities, which have grocery stores," she says. "Paintsville has a big Walmart, but a lot of people tell us they like to come to us for their meat."

They even use the same bologna salad recipe that the second store owner's mother made famous in the region. "People just love it," Paula says.

WORKING IT

The store isn't the only thing that keeps the couple busy. Paula works a full-time job in admissions and administration with eKentucky Advanced Manufacturing Institute in Paintsville, which is widely known as eKAMI. The school started as an academy to train former coal workers in high-tech manufacturing jobs. Over the years, it's grown to train people of all ages for high-tech manufacturing careers.

Kelly owns and runs Kelly's Radiator Service, which has shops in Oil Springs and Huntington, West Virginia. The couple also owns the former Oil Springs School, which they rent to New Hope Christian Academy. The school's historic gymnasium is rented for parties and other special events. "We stay incredibly busy," Paula says with a laugh. "Maybe too busy. But it's been good."

GROWING WITH THE TIMES

But even with all that's going on, the Conleys continue to expand Kelly's Market to better meet the needs of the community. "We're building a whole section out back where the butchers will have some walk-in coolers and a lot better area to walk in," she says. "It will give them much more room."

At some point, they also hope to sell gasoline. "This area needs it really badly," Paula says. "Right now, they have to drive all the way to Paintsville or Salyersville just to get gas for their mowers or side-by-sides." 🚗

Meats and more

Kelly's Market is at 8084 Kentucky Route 40 in Oil Springs in the former Oil Springs Country Market. The store offers fresh, cut-to-order meats, as well as prepared foods, groceries, animal feed, gifts and more. To learn more, visit and like the Kelly's Market Facebook page, which is updated regularly with the store's latest offerings. You can also call Kelly's at 606-297-6424.

8 apps for every pet owner



Story by DREW WOOLLEY

New pets are always popular gifts around the holidays. But the new year is when the responsibility for all that feeding, walking and those never-ending bathroom breaks can really set in. Fortunately, technology is here to help you stay on top of all of your new best friend's needs, from training and wellness to games and socialization. Check out these apps to see how they can make pet care simpler, whether you're a new pet owner or an amateur zookeeper.



Puppr — Every new dog owner could use some help with training. With Puppr, you have access to training videos, over 100 lessons,

live chats with trainers, progress tracking and more. Celebrity dog trainer Sara Carson leads the programs, and your pup will be able to keep up with her “super collies” in no time.



Cat Training Tips — If you're looking to establish ground rules with a new feline friend, the more streamlined Cat Training

Tips app is a good reference for practical tips on common issues like litter box training and scratching.



Pet First Aid — Every pet owner worries about what to do in an emergency situation. The Pet First Aid app from the American Red

Cross has you covered. It offers step-by-step instructions for situations like your pet being attacked by another animal or eating something toxic. You can even learn how to give your pet CPR, check for warning signs and look up the closest veterinary hospital.



11pets — Keeping up with your pet's medical needs on top of your own can be a challenge, which is why it helps to have an app like

11pets to keep everything covered. Store your furry friend's medical history, medication and vet schedules, or track their weight and nutrition to make sure they're on the healthy path.



Cat Fishing 2 — Humans aren't the only ones who enjoy a good mobile game. Cat Fishing 2 from Friskies is designed specifically for

cats, and you can download it to your phone or tablet. Start it up, place your device on the floor and let your cat kill time swiping at colorful fish on the screen.



BarkHappy — If you're looking for dog-friendly people and places in your area, BarkHappy is the app for you. Use the interactive

map to find hotels, restaurants, bars and more where your dog will be welcome. You can also send out the call if your pup goes missing or find nearby dogs with whom to set up a play date.



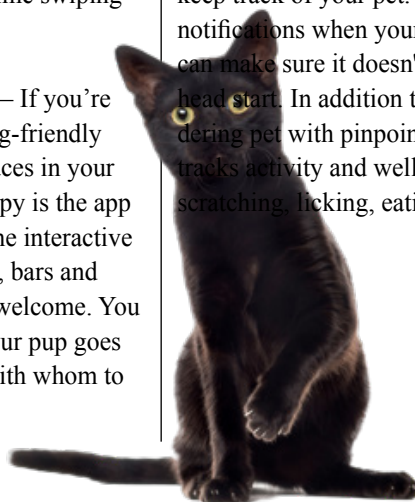
Rover — Rover is the top pet sitting app with over 200,000 caretakers in the U.S. and Canada. Rover's team handles the vetting,

and over 95% of reviewed services on the app have earned a five-star rating. Despite the name, Rover offers services for all kinds of pets, not just dogs. The app is also great for pet lovers looking for new job opportunities.



Whistle — You probably know an adventurous dog who likes to explore every chance it gets. With the Whistle app and accompa-

nying GPS tracker, it's never been easier to keep track of your pet. The app sends you notifications when your pet gets out so you can make sure it doesn't get too much of a head start. In addition to finding your wandering pet with pinpoint accuracy, the app tracks activity and wellness indicators like scratching, licking, eating and drinking. 🐾



SIT, STAY, BINGE

Your furry friends might fetch the remote for these programs



With more TV shows streaming every day, there is more entertainment than anyone can keep up with. But did you know your pet might enjoy a good binge as much as you?

Programming for pets is on the rise but it's not a new idea. In 2012, the dog food brand Bakers began running a 60-second commercial targeted right at their canine consumers, complete with barking dogs to get their attention and high-pitched sounds human viewers couldn't hear.

If you're worried that your pets might get bored while you're away at work, or you just can't give them your full attention 24/7, consider some of this programming that can help stimulate, relax and even train your pet throughout the day.

DOGTV

When it comes to man's best friend, there's a dedicated streaming service to keep your dog happy and occupied. Available on major streaming devices like Roku, Chromecast and Apple TV, DOGTV offers a variety of programming.

Some programs offer playful sequences to prevent boredom and provide mental stimulation, while others offer calming scenes to keep pooches relaxed. Training programs help dogs get used to common

noises like doorbells and car sounds. There are even a few shows available for their humans.

SQUIRREL!

Think your furry friends might be getting bored while you're away from home? Many cats and dogs respond to videos of birds, squirrels and fish. Cats, in particular, are visual animals, making them more likely to be entertained and mentally enriched by watching the quick movements of prey across a screen.

Because dogs rely more on their sense of smell, breeds with better eyesight are more likely to show interest in the TV. They tend to respond to images of other dogs running or socializing and might try to interact as they would in real life by barking or sniffing. Fortunately, no matter what grabs your pets' attention, there are plenty of videos available on sites like YouTube designed to keep them occupied for hours while you're out.

FOR THE BIRDS

Birds can be extremely smart and emotionally sensitive animals, making it especially challenging to keep them occupied. Many birds have a natural interest in new sounds and colors, making the TV a

good way to keep them engaged throughout the day.

If you're trying to expand your feathered friend's vocabulary, some programming might even help to train them while you're out. Repetition is key for helping any bird pick up a new word or phrase, and there are numerous videos available that will repeat common phrases for hours on end. Hit play and run, keeping your bird mentally engaged while you're away.

FUN AND GAMES

If your cat likes to curl up next to you during a gaming session, consider adding "Stray" to your list. When BlueTwelve Studio released its cat-themed adventure game last year, it was an instant hit with cat owners. But it turns out the game was just as interesting to their feline friends.

Videos and photos of players' cats being entranced by the digital kitty on screen became so popular that PlayStation even put out the call for submissions for a charity event with the hashtag #StrayReactions. The best ones went into a digital photo book presented to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals along with a \$25,000 donation. That's a win for everyone. 🐾

WISDOM WONDERLANDS

Local libraries offer digital delights and other treasures

Story by JEN CALHOUN



The Lawrence County Public Library recently reduced staff space, added a children's wing and made the whole place lighter and brighter.

Every month, about 10,000 people walk into the Lawrence County Public Library to attend an event, borrow a book, use the library's reference materials or experience one of the organization's many public services.

"In a community like this, with a population of a little over 15,000 people, that's a pretty big number," says Carlie Pelfrey, the library's director. "Before COVID-19, and before our renovation finished in 2020, we were probably only averaging about 5,000 visitors per month, which is still a lot."

The high numbers aren't really surprising to Pelfrey and other library directors in the region. With renovations, varied programs and increased public need for online access, public libraries have experienced a renaissance in the digital age.

MORE THAN JUST BOOKS

Sure, many patrons still come to borrow books or to catch up on their reading at the public libraries in Lawrence, Magoffin and Johnson counties. But an increasing number of people go for the programming and events. They'll attend the children's story hours and preschool skills classes. Others might come to research their family history with ancestry.com and local collections. Still others check out e-books or use language learning programs. Some people might print, make copies and send faxes. "Libraries were founded, obviously, with books and reading in mind," Pelfrey says. "That's our foundation, and it won't change. But many libraries have moved to a program service model that's heavy on events, fun, educational programs and community services."

For example, the Johnson County Public Library has offered a weekly chair yoga class for the last four or five years, Director Christy Terry says. Magoffin County partners with other community groups for movies in the park. Lawrence County's library runs a feeding program throughout the summer to make sure children are fed when school's out. And all the libraries focus on literacy and educational programming, while also offering free Wi-Fi, devices and research space in their buildings.

CHANGING PERCEPTIONS

But even with the increased need for libraries, some people don't realize just how important they've become in the digital age. "We've heard a few snide remarks that nobody checks out books anymore," Pelfrey says. "I know there are still some misconceptions among some people about the relevance of libraries."

Those misconceptions can cause problems with state and local funding. Pelfrey says staff collects data for everything they do, but it doesn't always reflect all the good things libraries offer, much less their impact on a community. "The people who use libraries understand how important they are more than ever, especially in an area like this," Pelfrey says. "There aren't as many cultural or educational opportunities in our region outside of the public schools, but libraries can bring so many opportunities here."

Terry, at the Johnson County Public Library, agrees. "It's just amazing the things you can access for free here every day," she says. "There are people who might pay \$15 a month or more to subscribe to audiobook services like Audible. But we can loan out audiobooks for free with your library card. We also keep all the bestsellers in stock, and we're part of an interlibrary loan service. So, if we don't have what you need, we can probably get it from other libraries."

Terry says libraries also partner with other community organizations in the county, including economic development groups, schools, tourism organizations, the health department and family resource centers. "We just do a lot together and try to spread out all the responsibility for making sure our communities are healthy and strong and our kids are well educated," she says. 🗨️



Photos by John Michael Laney



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: The Lawrence County library offers plenty of computers for research and studying.

The Lawrence County library's new space offers plenty of space to study, read and work on projects.

The Lawrence County Public Library set out to create a space that would ebb and flow with the community's needs.

CHECK IT OUT

If you haven't visited your local library in a while, it's time for another look. Not only are all of the local library buildings updated and refreshed, their resources and programs are more relevant to people of all ages than ever. As an added bonus, each of these libraries is powered by powerful fiber internet from Foothills Communications.

For example, did you know Lawrence County Public Library is developing a Memory Lab that will allow people to convert their home movies from VHS or DVD and other media into digital files? You might also be surprised that Johnson County Public Library holds chair yoga classes as a way to breathe life into the mind, body and spirit while also building community. And Magoffin County Public Library hosts a book club, annual book signings and so much more.

Find out more about all the opportunities at your fingertips by visiting your local library soon.

Johnson County Public Library

444 Main St.
Paintsville, Kentucky
Visit the website at johnsoncountypubliclibrary.org, find it on Facebook or call 606-789-4355.

Lawrence County Public Library

102 W. Main St.
Louisa, Kentucky
Visit the website at lcplky.org, find it on Facebook or call 606-638-4497.

Magoffin County Public Library

141 S. Church St.
Salyersville, Kentucky
Visit the website at youseemore.com/magoffinpl/, find it on Facebook or call 606-349-2411.



AIR FRYERS

can solve dinnertime dilemmas

The savior of simple dishes and leftover pizza

Air fryers have crisped their way into America's heart. Ranging from models with one knob and a basket to others with lots of bells and whistles, they've become as common in the American kitchen as toasters and coffeepots.

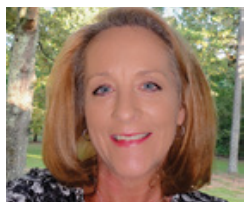
So how do you know which air fryer is the best fit for you?

You'll become a champion of the air fryer with the Ninja. Priced around \$150, it has a large basket and multiple settings that allow for dehydrating, reheating, baking and, oh yes, air frying. If you plan to do a good bit of cooking in your air fryer, this may be the model for you.

But if you're cooking for one, or just want to see if an air fryer is right for you, then a less-expensive option like Dash's air fryer — \$49.95 at online retailers — might be better. With just one setting and a compact size, it's perfect for one baked potato, a handful of French fries or a chicken thigh or two. It comes in multiple colors to add a little pizzazz to your kitchen counter.

It goes without saying that air frying is a healthier alternative to deep frying. Think of an air fryer as multiple appliances in one. It cooks quickly like a microwave, toasts like a toaster oven and fries like a deep fryer.

These kitchen wonders work magic on vegetables, proteins and baked goods because they're basically small convection ovens. They have a fan-and-exhaust system that blows hot air across your food for even cooking and browning. It works just as well whether you're making breaded onion rings from the freezer, roasting fresh broccoli or frying up some wings. Baking powder in the rub helps make air fryer wings crispy.



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AIR FRYER CHICKEN WINGS

- 12 chicken wings, whole
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper (optional)
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 cup Buffalo hot sauce

Cut the wings into pieces so you have 24 wings. Preheat the air fryer to 380 F. Spray the fryer basket after preheating. Place the wings in a large bowl and add olive oil, garlic powder, baking powder, salt, cayenne pepper and

black pepper. Toss wings until fully covered. Place the wings in a single layer — as many as will fit without overlapping — on the air fryer basket.

Air fry the wings at 380 F for 20 minutes, flipping them every 5 minutes. Increase the temperature to 400 F and cook an additional 2 minutes for extra crispy skin. Use a digital meat thermometer to ensure the internal temperature is 165 F.

Carefully remove the wings from the air fryer, cover with Buffalo sauce and serve with your favorite sides.



CRISPY AIR FRYER POTATOES

- 1 pound small Yukon Gold potatoes, halved
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- 1 teaspoon Cajun seasoning (optional)
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- Lemon wedge, for serving
- Freshly chopped parsley, for garnish

In a large bowl, toss potatoes with oil, garlic powder, Italian seasoning and Cajun seasoning, if using. Season with salt and pepper.

Place potatoes in basket of air fryer and cook at 400 F for 10 minutes. Shake basket and stir potatoes, and then cook until potatoes are golden and tender, 8 to 10 minutes more. Squeeze lemon juice over cooked potatoes and garnish with parsley before serving.

AIR FRYER EGG ROLLS

- 1 tablespoon sesame oil
- 1/2 pound ground pork or ground chicken
- 4 cups coleslaw mix
- 1/2 cup matchstick-cut carrots
- 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 3 green onions, sliced
- 2 teaspoons soy sauce
- 2 teaspoons rice or white vinegar
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/8 teaspoon Chinese 5-spice seasoning
- 12 egg roll wrappers
- Nonstick cooking spray
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- Sweet chili sauce, duck sauce or hot mustard sauce, for dipping

Heat sesame oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the pork and cook until crumbled and cooked through, about 4 minutes. Add the coleslaw mix, carrots, ginger and garlic. Cook 2-3 minutes or until the cabbage has wilted.

Remove from the heat; stir in the green onions, soy sauce, vinegar, pepper, salt and 5-spice seasoning. Transfer to a plate and let cool slightly.

Place 1 egg roll wrapper flat on a work surface with the points of the wrapper facing up and down (like a diamond). Place about 1/3 cup of the pork/chicken mixture in the middle of the wrapper. Dip your fingers in water and dampen the edges of the wrapper. Fold the left and then right points of the wrapper in toward the center. Fold the bottom point over the center just like you would a burrito, rolling the wrapper toward the remaining point to form a tight cylinder. Press edges to seal. Place on a plate and cover with a dry towel. Repeat the process with remaining wrappers and pork/chicken mixture.

Preheat the air fryer to 375 F and spray the air fryer basket with cooking spray. Brush the tops of the egg rolls with olive oil. Working in batches, place the egg rolls in the basket and cook 7 minutes. Flip the egg rolls over and brush with more oil. Cook for an additional 2 minutes. Serve with your favorite dipping sauce. 🍴





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