

CONNECTION



Salyersville Treasure

Travel through time at
The Keeping Room

JOHNSON COUNTY
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

IMAGINATION
LIBRARY



NTCA THE RURAL BROADBAND ASSOCIATION

RURAL CONNECTIONS

By SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO
NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association


Committed to service and security

I always love hearing stories from the NTCA members who are bringing fast, reliable internet service to communities throughout rural America. It's exciting to see our providers pave the way for new jobs, better health care, fresh educational opportunities and so much more.

But their commitment to serving you goes beyond simply providing an excellent broadband network — they also want to help you navigate that online world safely.

Much of that work happens behind the scenes on their systems before you ever turn on a computer or search for something on your phone. But that's just the first line of defense in a world where your personal data — and, yes, even your money — are targets.

The experts at the National Cybersecurity Alliance, a nonprofit organization devoted to creating a more secure interconnected world, can help you figure out where to begin.

Multifactor authentication is a valuable way to add an extra layer of security to your online accounts but many people are unaware. Password manager software makes using complex and secure passwords easier, while keeping software updated and being aware of phishing attempts are also wise strategies. 



Add a layer of protection to your online journeys

Photo by A Stockphoto/Adobe Stock

The nonprofit National Cybersecurity Alliance is focusing its efforts in four specific areas: multifactor authentication, password management, software updates and phishing awareness.

HERE ARE A FEW OF OUR TIPS FOR YOUR SECURITY:



Multifactor authentication: For your online accounts, you likely have a password. But if there's an option for using multifactor authentication, go for it. Once activated on an account, you'll still need a password. But access will also require a one-time code delivered by text message or email.




Password management: Rather than trying to remember long, complex passwords, consider using software designed to not only store passwords but also make them easily accessible. There are several options, and most work in a similar fashion. You only need to remember one master password to unlock the rest.



Software updates: Both hardware and software manufacturers prioritize protecting you. Often when there's a potential problem discovered, they roll out software updates. So, it's important to be mindful of those changes and install updates regularly.



Phishing awareness: Whether it is a fake website or a bogus email that seems reputable, there is a range of phishing strategies designed to capture your personal information, money or both. They can be convincing, too. So, be cautious when receiving unsolicited messages, and verify requests for sensitive information before responding.

To learn more about online safety visit the National Cybersecurity Alliance at staysafeonline.org. 

Capture the season

Learn to make your photos pop

Whether it's Apple or Android, the photo technology in modern smartphones can create stunning images, complete with automatic adjustments for lighting and other effects. You don't have to look hard in the world of social media to see the results.

But give those images a closer look. Are they as good as they can be? While mobile software can clean up many of the more technical trouble spots, a few tried-and-true tips from the world of traditional photography can upgrade your seasonal or holiday photographs from passable to truly memorable.

SEEK THE LIGHT: For photography, there's a magical time just before sunset or after sunrise — the golden hour. The warm, soft light adds a natural artistic element, whether you're shooting a landscape or a portrait. So, when possible,

avoid the harsh light of the hours around noon and seek the golden rays instead.

KNOW THIS RULE AND WHEN TO BREAK IT: The idea of the rule of thirds is an artistic standard. An image is framed using two horizontal and two vertical lines to create nine equal parts. One strategy is to place the subject of the photo at one of the intersections to create a balanced composition. But you can also use the idea to know when to break the rule, shift the frame and take a unique photo.

GET THE CLOSE-UP: Don't be shy. Most phone cameras have a zoom feature. But you've got a better choice. Physically get closer to your subject, whether it's a person, flower or delicious dinner dish. Proximity not only makes it easier to frame the image but it also adds a sense of intimacy.

STEADY AS IT GOES: The latest phone cameras do well even when light is scarce. But there are limits, and sometimes when you're shooting in a dim room or when the sun is fading the resulting image can turn out blurry. A small tripod — there are plenty of phone-sized options — can help keep your photos sharp.

GIVE 'EM A BOOST: There's nothing wrong with a little editing, and most phones have great software built in. There are options for automatic adjustments, but don't be shy about exploring the possibilities. A little creative cropping or adjustments to settings like brightness can make a difference. You can even consider converting a photo to black-and-white for a classic look. 📱



Photos by JenKoltaman and MayatiniStudio/Adobe Stock

Holiday connections

Thank you for trusting Foothills with your digital life

As the holiday season approaches, I wanted to take a moment to share a few thoughts. It's that wonderful time of the year for reflection, gratitude and spreading joy. While our world may have changed in many ways, the spirit of the season remains as vibrant as ever. It's a time when we come together — albeit sometimes virtually — to celebrate the warmth of our relationships, express our appreciation and make memories with loved ones.



RUTH CONLEY
Chief Executive Officer

We are truly thankful for your trust in Foothills throughout the year, and I want you to know that your trust is something we don't take lightly. We understand the vital role our services play in your lives, especially in these times when connectivity is the bridge to work, education, entertainment and staying close to family and friends. As we strive to provide you with a seamless online experience, we are continually investing in our infrastructure, improving our services and enhancing your digital journey. Your support motivates us to continually improve and exceed your expectations, and it's our privilege to serve you.

The holiday season also reminds us of the importance of giving back to our communities. At Foothills, we believe in making a positive impact not only in the digital realm but in the physical world as well. This year we are proud to be contributing to local causes close to our hearts. We invite you to join us in spreading kindness by doing the same to make this holiday season brighter for those in need.

In the spirit of giving, we have prepared some exciting offers and surprises for you. Check out the articles and promotions we have in this Connection issue, as well as our website and Facebook page, to see what we have coming as a token of our appreciation for your continued support.

As we enter this festive season, we want to express our heartfelt thanks to all of you. Your trust, feedback and loyalty have been instrumental in shaping Foothills, and we are committed to delivering even better services in the coming year.

From all of us here at Foothills, we wish you and your loved ones a joyful holiday season filled with laughter, love and precious moments. May you find peace, happiness and prosperity in the coming year.

Thank you for choosing Foothills as your trusted partner in a digital world. We look forward to continuing our journey together in the years to come. Happy Thanksgiving and merry Christmas! 📺



CONNECTION

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Foothills is a member-owned cooperative that has been serving residents and businesses in Eastern Kentucky since 1951. In the early days, we only offered telephone service over copper wires. Over the years, we have expanded our network and now provide broadband internet and cable TV services over fiber optic facilities to much of our service area, which includes Magoffin County and portions of Johnson County and Lawrence County. We love being part of the communities we serve. Our customers are our families, friends and neighbors.

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Foothills Mission Statement

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

Produced for Foothills Communications by:



On the Cover:



The Keeping Room in Salyersville sells unique gifts, art and decor. See story Page 8.

Photo submitted by The Keeping Room



WIN BIG just for being a Foothills customer!

To show appreciation to all of our customers this holiday season, Foothills Communications is once again excited to announce our annual prize giveaway! As long as you are an active customer, or have applied for Foothills services by December 31st, you will automatically be enrolled in a drawing to win the following prizes:*

Apple iPad • Fitbit Versa • Nintendo Switch

*Must claim prize within two weeks of being notified.

Watch premium movie channels for FREE

Heads up! Foothills Communications is unwrapping a few sweet gifts for our customers during the week of Dec. 24-30. We're offering our customers FREE premium movie channels that week as an extra gift to you. So, tuck in and catch up on some of the best movies, documentaries, television series and more from Showtime, Cinemax, Starz/Encore and HBO.



Holiday closing reminders



From all of us at Foothills Communications, we wish you and your family the happiest Thanksgiving, the merriest Christmas and the most prosperous New Year!

In observance of these holidays, we will be closed on the following days:

- Thanksgiving — Thursday, Nov. 23, and Friday, Nov. 24
- Christmas — Friday, Dec. 22, and Monday, Dec. 25
- New Year's Day — Monday, Jan. 1

ONLINE SECURITY



No phishing allowed!

Never give your personal information over email — even if it seems to be from a company you trust!



Not so fast ...

Never answer unsolicited texts or click on links in them. That text claiming to be from your bank or another big company just might be a scammer looking to steal your personal information.



Stop thieves in their tracks

Always protect your smartphone with a secure passcode or fingerprint login.



A scammer liked your survey!

Protect your personal information. If it's the answer to an account security question, it doesn't belong in a Facebook post.



If you can remember it, they can hack it

Use a secure password manager to generate and save random, unique passwords for every account you have online.

Seeking a dose of CHRISTMAS CHEER?

These towns embrace the holiday spirit

Story by ANNE BRALY

The annual tree-lighting is a favorite event during Christmas celebrations in Childersburg, Alabama.



Photo courtesy of the Alabama Tourism Department

Santa greets the crowds at the Christmas parade in downtown Franklin, Tennessee.



Photo courtesy of Visit Franklin

Southerners celebrate Christmas in a big way. Whether it's light displays so outrageous they'd impress the Griswolds or picture-perfect trimmed trees, no time or expense is spared to make sure the holidays are truly magical.

Every town celebrates the holidays a bit differently, but one thing they all have in common is an undeniable spirit of the season. Here are several Southern towns that roll out the red carpet during the holiday season.

CHILDERSBURG, ALABAMA

"There's something special about small towns in Alabama, like Childersburg, during the holiday season," says Brooklyn Lundy, public relations manager for the Alabama Tourism Department.

During the holidays, Childersburg takes advantage of its natural features, primarily the limestone caves found around this central Alabama town in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, including Majestic Caverns. It becomes a magical fantasyland during the holidays as it's transformed into Adventus, an event filled with Christmas shows, performances and holiday characters around every corner. It's a fun event for the entire family that happens for four evenings only — Dec. 9, 10, 16 and 17 from 5-9 p.m. Tickets can be purchased at majesticcaverns.com.

There's more to Christmas in Childersburg, though. The annual tree lighting, scheduled for Nov. 28 at 6 p.m. at the Butler-Harris Rainwater Museum, is a town favorite with hot chocolate and carriage rides offered to all those who attend. And the Christmas parade brings St. Nick to downtown on Dec. 21 starting at 6 p.m.

FRANKLIN, TENNESSEE

Franklin turns Christmas into a monthlong celebration. "Every weekend is a special event or festival in its own right in Franklin," says Matthew Maxey, director of public relations for the city of Franklin.

One of the most popular events, the two-day Dickens of a Christmas festival — set for Dec. 9-10 — draws at least 100,000 people to town each year.



Downtown Helen, Georgia, lights up for the holidays.

Photo courtesy of Helen CVB



The good citizens of Mercer County sing carols on the streets of Harrodsburg, Kentucky.

Photo courtesy of Harrodsburg-Mercer County

“Franklin’s charm, relaxed pace and Hallmark-movie feel throughout the historic downtown are a significant draw for visitors,” he says. “From window shopping the holiday displays along Main Street to catching holiday movies at our 1930s-era Franklin Theatre, visitors are able to step back in a simpler, classic holiday time.”

On Dec. 1 there will be a tree lighting, and the city will shine with local celebrity talent — this year hosted by popular Christian artist Matthew West — followed by the Christmas parade down the town’s historic Main Street on Dec. 2. For more ideas to fill your holiday weekends, log onto visitfranklin.com.

HELEN, GEORGIA

The population of this small mountain town in north Georgia swells from 256 to more than 2,500 during the holiday season as visitors clamor to enjoy an Alpine Christmas.

The Lighting of the Village will be held on Nov. 24 at 6 p.m., followed by the 16th annual Christkindlmarkt in downtown Helen on Nov. 25-26 and Dec. 2-3. The traditional German event features gifts, decorations and assorted foods, both sweet and savory. The Mistletoe Market is another favorite event and ideal for checking things off your Christmas list. It takes place Dec. 2-3 at the Helen Arts & Heritage Center.

And what would Christmas in Helen be

like without its annual Christmas parade? That takes place on Dec. 9. For a list of all Christmas happenings in Helen, go to whitecountychamber.org.

“Helen has quickly become one of the top Christmas towns in the United States,” says Jerry Brown, executive director of the Alpine Helen/White County Convention and Visitors Bureau. “During the holiday season, the town turns its amazing village into a Christmas wonderland with a sprinkle of Bavarian charm that heightens the Christmas spirit.”

HARRODSBURG, KENTUCKY

“Santa’s elves are busy this year in Kentucky’s oldest town, trying to make Harrodsburg feel as much like a Hallmark movie as possible,” says Daarik Gray, executive director of Harrodsburg-Mercer County Tourist Commission. “One of the special things about being in a small town is that it truly does feel like you’re stepping into a Christmas movie, as everyone’s spirits seem to be a little higher, and the overall general mood of the community is jolly.”

Stores come alive with their windows decorated for the season. This year, the season kicks off on Dec. 1 with Christmas on Main, an event with food trucks, caroling, live music and more, including the Christmas parade at Anderson-Dean Community Park. The annual tree lighting happens on Dec. 2.

For more on Harrodsburg’s holiday festivities, visit mercercountyky.com.

GREER, SOUTH CAROLINA

Downtown Greer, best known as Greer Station, transforms itself into a Christmas fantasyland come the holiday season. With brick-paved streets and lampposts wrapped in garland and twinkling lights, as well as the two main roads leading into town festooned with candy canes, Christmas trees and shooting star lights, the city looks like a movie set, says Lindsey Shaffer, tourism specialist for the city of Greer.

The holiday season kicks off with Christmas in Greer, a one-weekend celebration that begins with arts, crafts, roaming carolers, s’mores and more before Santa comes to town and reads “T’was the Night Before Christmas.” Then the countdown to the lighting of the tree begins. It all happens at Greer City Park on Dec. 1.

The City of Greer will host Breakfast with Santa on Saturday, Dec. 2, and the Greer Farmers Market will be open Dec. 2-3 with local artisans so you can check off some items on your gift list.

Christmas in Greer weekend comes to a close with its annual Christmas parade on Sunday, Dec. 3.

For a complete rundown of all holiday festivities, go to discovergreer.com. 📱

Somewhere in time

The Keeping Room in Salyersville offers the unexpected

Story by JEN CALHOUN

Just a few steps from the modernity of West Maple Street in Salyersville sits The Keeping Room, a unique shop that can send its customers on a journey through time. “People never know what to think of it,” says the shop’s owner, Debbie Connelley. “It looks like you’ve stepped into the 1800s.”

Set in a home built in the early part of the 20th century, the store sells everything from antique and reproduction furniture to original framed artwork and wreaths of dried herbs and flowers grown only a few feet away.

But for most of its loyal customers, The Keeping Room is more than a store. It’s a link to the loveliest parts of a bygone era.

A HEART FOR HISTORY

Debbie’s love of all things 1800s got its start when she was a kindergartner in Michigan. “My class was on a field trip to a living history museum,” she says. “It was one of those places where you walk into an old house and they were cooking on a fireplace. You could smell the wood smoke and candles were burning. There were women dressed in old-timey dresses and aprons, and they were spinning wool and working in the garden. I don’t know what it was that I loved about it so much. I just knew I loved it all, and that stuck with me.”

As a teenager, she saved money to buy antiques while her friends saved for cars. It was then that she started her collection by attending antique shows held at a fairgrounds near her home once a month. “I think I feel much more comfortable with things from the 1800s,” she says.

When Debbie returned to Kentucky, her passion for history took her on a new path. “We moved from Salyersville to Michigan when I was 3, because my dad found work as a pipefitter up there,” she says. “But we always considered Kentucky our home.”

In 1989, Debbie, her mother and her sister moved back and started building a new life in a house on the Magoffin-Johnson County line. “I was probably 28,” she says. “We enjoyed ourselves so much. We lived in a holler with a pond nearby.”

After a few years working at The Homeplace 1850s Farm, she opened a small shop in her apartment in Salyersville. Once she



Debbie Connelley, owner of The Keeping Room, has loved art and antiques her entire life.

outgrew that, she moved to her current location in 1999 and set up shop just below her living quarters upstairs.

For a while, she and her mother also ran The Garden Cottage Tea Room, a popular lunch spot located in a small house on the other side of her garden. “It opened in 2006, and it was supposed to be a little added attraction to this shop,” Debbie says. “But it took off and consumed our lives. It got busier than I had ever dreamed, and it made it hard to keep up with this shop.”

DEDICATED FOLLOWING

Today, Debbie sometimes works as a substitute teacher while running the shop. She makes many of the items she sells, including paintings based on the early watercolors of the 18th and 19th centuries. “I had seen an original one of these paintings, and the price was astronomical,” she says of the style that is sought after by antiques collectors. “I took a lot of art classes in college, but



Debbie shows off her favorite spot, the garden.

Photos by John Michael Laney

this style is oddly proportioned. I worried the people would think I didn't know how to paint."

She also creates wreaths made of dried herbs and flowers from her garden, Germanic folk drawings known as Fraktur art, reproduction stone pottery and hand-painted boards. She sometimes makes reproduction furniture or sells antiques.

The Keeping Room doesn't set regular hours of operation, because of Debbie's

side job and the time she spends in the garden and making things. Most people will either call her to open the shop or stop by, she says. Payments can be made by cash, check or credit cards. She also offers online payments via PayPal.

Despite her informal way of doing business, the quality and originality of Debbie's products give The Keeping Room a loyal and ever-growing fanbase. Currently, she maintains about 3,600 followers on her business Facebook page. "I don't really keep up with the number of followers, but I post every so often," Debbie says. "Most every time I do, I get a good reaction. For instance, I put a picture of a wreath up recently, and somebody bought it right away." 📱



Photo by John Michael Laney

CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: The Keeping Room is full of handcrafted items that include everything from soaps to art to wreaths.

Shop owner Debbie Connelley hand-painted this Santa ornament.

Painted wooden boards sell quickly at the shop, according to Debbie.



Photo contributed by The Keeping Room



Photo contributed by The Keeping Room

Step back in time

The Keeping Room sells unique, handmade gifts, artwork, herbal and floral wreaths and vintage pieces. It's at 374 W Maple St. in Salyersville. Operating hours vary, and the best way to make sure the shop is open is by calling 606-349-3358 or visiting The Keeping Room Facebook page and sending a message through the Messenger app. The Keeping Room will hold its Christmas Open House on Friday, Dec. 1, and Saturday, Dec. 2.

Passion project

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library program
inspires a love of learning



Story by JEN CALHOUN

Getting a book in the mail always made Andrea Robertson's children hop with joy. "Kids hardly ever get mail, so they just loved it," says the Lafayette, Tennessee-based educator and mother of three. "I think that excitement most definitely helped fuel their interest in reading and learning."

Andrea's children received the monthly books through Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, a program that sends free books to children from birth to 5 years old no matter the family's income.

Although her children have aged out of the program, Andrea believes it has had a positive impact on their futures. "Having books from an early age helps children build content knowledge that they might not get otherwise," she says. "It's helps give them a foundation that's so important when they get to school."

FOR THE LOVE OF BOOKS

Today, more than 2 million children are enrolled in Dolly Parton's Imagination Library.

The programs, which are established and maintained locally, are available in all 50 states, including 15 statewide programs — with more starting up every year.

The Macon County Education Foundation in East Tennessee was one of the earliest adopters of the program, says Linda McCrary, one of the founders of the foundation and its president at the time. "Our board was approached by a member of the Tennessee Library Association Board to be a champion for this new program that the library board was sponsoring," says Linda, a former educator and the program's local coordinator.

The foundation's board agreed readily, she says. Soon after in 2004, then-Gov. Phil Bredesen and the Dollywood Foundation partnered to create the Tennessee Governor's Books from Birth Foundation. The governor's foundation paid 50% of the program's costs while local organizations funded the rest in their communities. Today, the Macon County Education Foundation also receives help paying for the program from the county commission and school board.



Set it up!

If your city or county does not offer an Imagination Library program, there are ways to set one up. Visit [imaginationlibrary.com](https://www.imaginationlibrary.com) to learn out more or to find a program in your area.

POSITIVE PARTNERSHIPS FOR A BETTER COMMUNITY

These partnerships are good for the community at large, says Nora Briggs, executive director of the Dollywood Foundation, which launched the first program nearly 30 years ago. “Simply getting books into the home changes the trajectory of children, families and communities,” she says. “Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library is an accomplished, simple and effective way to make communities better places to live by supporting and nurturing a love of books, shared family time and early learning.”

While the goal is to inspire a lifetime love of reading to give children opportunities to succeed, research shows an even greater impact. The program has led to significantly stronger reading skills and a better understanding of letter and word concepts when children start school. In addition, the establishment of reading routines has been found to bring about increased stability, emotional well-being and an improved family atmosphere, according to summaries of research distributed by The Imagination Library.

ON A MISSION

Dolly Parton started the book-gifting program in Sevier County, Tennessee, in 1995, as a tribute to her father, Robert Lee Parton Sr., who worked as a sharecropper and went on to farm his own acreage. Despite his lack of education, he had a knack for turning a profit. “He was the smartest man I have ever known, but I know in my heart his inability to read probably kept him from fulfilling all of his dreams,” Dolly says.

Now, Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library has gifted nearly 200 million books to children in the U.S., Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia and the Republic of Ireland. More than 24 million books were gifted in 2022 — a nearly 12% increase over 2021.

And while the program started small, Dolly’s ambitions for it grew as other organizations and volunteer groups implemented the Imagination Library

concept in their own communities. “Inspiring kids to love to read became my mission,” she says.

WORKING ON A DREAM

Communities that invest in children from a young age show a commitment to bettering their cities and towns, says Linda, who was an educator for 37 years and founder of the Macon County Education Foundation.

To make sure education ranked high in children’s minds, they need a strong foundation from birth. Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library fit the bill. “Placing books in the hands of children is the basis of educating children,” Linda says. “It’s the basis for preparing them for school.”

The importance of the work done by volunteers, government officials and local businesses isn’t lost on Dolly. “The seeds of dreams are often found in books, and the seeds you help plant in your community can grow across the world,” Dolly says. 📖



Photos contributed by Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

Dolly's daddy



Robert Lee Parton, Dolly Parton's late father, never learned to read or write — not because he didn't want to, but because he needed to work to help his family survive. His parents raised 15 children in the mountains of East Tennessee, where food was scarce and the one-room schoolhouse was more than a mile away, Dolly wrote in her 2020 memoir, “Songteller: My Life in Lyrics.”

As an adult raising 12 kids of his own, Robert planted tobacco in the rugged and rocky hills of East Tennessee but often took on construction jobs to make ends meet. Money was always tight. When Dolly was born, he paid the doctor with a sack of cornmeal instead of cash.

“He was such a smart person. I always thought that if Daddy had an education, there's no telling what he could have been,” Dolly wrote. “Because he knew how to barter, he knew how to bargain. He knew how to make everything work, and he knew how to count money. He knew exactly what everything was worth, how much he was going to make from that tobacco crop, what he could trade and how he could make it all work.”

While he was embarrassed about his lack of literacy skills for most of his life, Robert took pride in Dolly's efforts with the Imagination Library. “I got him involved helping me with [the Imagination Library], and he felt so great about that,” she wrote. “I told him, ‘Daddy, there are probably millions of people in this world who don't know how to read and write, who didn't get the opportunity. Don't be ashamed of that. Let's do something special.’”

JOHNSON COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Strengthening from within

Story by JEN CALHOUN

When the Johnson County Community Foundation launched in the fall of 2022, its board members didn't waste any time. "They hit the ground running," says Kathy King Allen, community engagement director at the Foundation for Appalachian Kentucky, a nonprofit organization that offers resources and support to 11 affiliate community foundations, including Johnson County's. "They started a lot of amazing things in a short period of time."

In less than a year, JCCF has donated thousands of dollars to projects meant to improve the lives of all the county's citizens by supporting their health, well-being and economic prospects. The foundation has helped fund local organizations that provide food pantries, gifts for children at Christmas, flood recovery efforts, community sports teams and a local theater group. Even more donations are expected in the future, says Daffiny Trimble, chair of the foundation's advisory board.

"Our mission statement is to promote philanthropy in an impartial, unbiased, ethical way, and to bring together people and resources to identify and address present and emerging community needs," Trimble says. "We want to try to help the community grow and be more prosperous, but we also want to make it an even better place to live."

BEGINNINGS

JCCF got its start a few years ago when Johnson County Judge-Executive Mark McKenzie brought up the idea. "They did a community survey, and this was one of the things that was identified as a need," Allen says. "They've already stepped up, and I'm seeing a lot of projects they're working on."



The Johnson County Community Foundation Advisory Board members are, front row, from left, Connie Bayes, treasurer; Daffiny Trimble, chair; and Tammy Barker, secretary. Back row, from left, are Doug Pugh, Dewey Bocook, Vice Chair Jerry Price and Chris Slone.

The county's growth played into the formation of the organization, as well. Like other counties in Eastern Kentucky, increasing numbers of people from all over the country have moved in to take advantage of the beautiful scenery, slower pace and relatively inexpensive cost of living. Foothills Communications' high-speed fiber broadband infrastructure is a big part of that, too, because it allows for remote work, expanded industry and more jobs, says Trimble, a real estate agent who has seen the growth firsthand.

“We have an opportunity for things to grow here instead of getting smaller,” she says. “We’re even getting more stores — a T.J. Maxx and a Hobby Lobby, to name a few. That’s a big thing for such a small community.”

At the same time, local leaders wanted to take steps to address the community’s present and future needs. Since the county didn’t have its own nonprofit organization, it depended on regional allocations and grant funding. “We wanted to develop something that could give back and contribute directly to Johnson County,” Trimble says.

In addition to Trimble, JCCF board members include: Jerry Price, vice chair; Connie Bayes, treasurer; Tammy Barker, secretary; and Dewey Bocook, Doug Pugh and Chris Slone.

MAKING IT HAPPEN

JCCF functions with the help of the Foundation for Appalachian Kentucky, which provides background support that includes marketing, grant portals, online donation access, IRS guidelines, leadership development and more.

“We’re the hub that supplies tools and resources for our 11 affiliates, which represent 15 counties,” says Allen, adding that one of the affiliate foundations supports multiple counties. “We are an accredited community foundation, so we can act as an umbrella organization. Our affiliates are accredited under us. If they had to do it on their own, it would be a monumental undertaking and expense.”

GOOD WORKS

The board of JCCF hopes to increase its endowment so it can continue to fund the efforts that make Johnson County a strong, healthy community. To do that, they hope to raise money from community members through various means, including outright gifts, bequests, charitable trusts and more.

“It’s important that the community helps build that capacity,” Allen says. “That way, they can address their own needs and their own issues and create their own solutions.”

HOW TO INVEST IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Find out more about Johnson County Community Foundation by visiting the appalachianky.org website and clicking on the “Affiliate Communities” link. Scroll down to find Johnson County Community Foundation.



The foundation offers several ways to donate. To make an immediate one-time or recurring donation, click on the “Donate Now” button. The donation page allows contributions to specific funds, like the Johnson County Community Foundation, by tapping the “Donate to a Fund” link at the top and scrolling down to find your preferred affiliate. You can also join the foundation’s 264 Club, which is named for the 264 square miles of land that make up the county. If you have questions about the best way to donate, call 606-439-1357.

So far, JCCF has granted thousands of dollars to local organizations, including Christmas for Kids, Highland Church of Christ, 12 Basket Food Pantry, First Baptist Church, Mayo Methodist — Encounter Missions, Hands & Feet Ministry, the Veterans Referral Center, Paintsville Little League, Johnson County Cal Ripken and The Main Street Players.



TOP TO BOTTOM: After launching in late 2022, the foundation has already granted thousands of dollars to local community projects, including Christmas for Kids of Kentucky.

JCCF has contributed thousands to local youth baseball and softball organizations.

The foundation has also granted financial help to groups that helped restore the region after devastating floods.

The JCCF provided funding to the Main Street Players, a theater group in Paintsville.

A tasty tradition

Whether in your PJs or your Sunday best, holiday brunch hits the sweet spot

A holiday brunch has two musts: The time served — just a bit later than the usual morning rush hour. Then, there's the menu with dishes that put a little flair into the typical breakfast fare.

A brunch can be quiet and cozy or a grand seated affair that shows off all your culinary talents and best china. You can make it whatever you want it to be. After all, there's a special connection between brunch and the holidays — a wonderful combination that satisfies the stomach and the soul. Whether you're hosting or joining friends for brunch, the magic of this midmorning meal will weave its spell.



Food Editor Anne P. Braly is a native of Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Photography by **Mark Gilliland**
Food Styling by **Rhonda Gilliland**

STUFFED FRENCH TOAST

- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 1 tablespoon plus 1/2 teaspoon vanilla, divided
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans or walnuts
- 1 (16-ounce) loaf French bread
- 4 eggs
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
- Butter for frying
- 1 (12-ounce) jar apricot preserves
- 1/2 cup orange juice

Beat together cream cheese and 1 tablespoon vanilla until fluffy. Stir in nuts. Cut bread into thick, 1 1/2-inch slices. You should get 10-12 slices per loaf. Cut a pocket in the top of each slice and fill with 1 1/2 teaspoons of cream cheese mixture.

Beat together eggs, heavy cream, 1/2 teaspoon vanilla and nutmeg. Dip stuffed slices into egg mixture.

Melt butter in frying pan and fry slices until golden brown on both sides.

Heat together preserves and orange juice and serve alongside the hot toast. Makes 5-6 servings.



EGG BRUNCH

- 4 slices bacon, diced
- 2 packages (4 1/2 ounces each) sliced dried beef, cut into thin strips
- 2 small cans sliced mushrooms, drained
- 1/2 cup butter, divided
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper
- 4 cups whole milk
- 16 large eggs
- 1 cup evaporated milk
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

In a large skillet, cook bacon until almost done, then add dried beef, mushrooms and 1/4 cup butter. While hot, add flour, then stir in milk. Simmer sauce, stirring constantly, until thick and smooth.



In a large bowl, whisk eggs, evaporated milk and salt. In another large skillet, heat remaining butter until melted. Add egg mixture. Cook and stir over medium heat until eggs are completely set, but not dry.

Add all ingredients to a casserole dish and bake, covered, at 275 F for 1 hour.

Note: May be made a day ahead and refrigerated, covered, then baked as directed. Very good served with baked curried fruit.

MAMA'S CINNAMON ROLLS

Easy and delicious, these cinnamon rolls make a mouthwatering addition to your holiday table and are perfect for brunch or any meal.

- 5 tablespoons butter
- 3/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/4 cup water
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans
- 2 (8-ounce) cans crescent rolls
- 3 tablespoons butter, softened
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon

Heat oven to 375 F. In a 9-by-13-inch baking pan, melt the 5 tablespoons of butter. Stir in brown sugar, water and pecans.

Separate each can of crescent roll dough into four rectangles; seal perforations. Spread the rectangles with the 3 tablespoons of softened butter. Combine granulated sugar and cinnamon; sprinkle over butter dough rectangles. Roll up each rectangle from the short side. Cut each roll in four slices and place in prepared pan over butter-pecan mixture cut side down.

Bake for 20-25 minutes. Invert immediately onto rectangular serving platter or sheet of aluminum foil. Spoon any remaining sauce on top of rolls. Makes 32 small cinnamon rolls.



CURRIED FRUIT

Rich, buttery, sweet and savory, this baked fruit dish is a delicious change of pace as a side dish for brunch.

Maraschino cherries in green and red add a holiday touch.

- 1 can peach halves (see tip)
- 1 can apricot halves
- 1 can pear halves
- 1 can pineapple chunks
- 10-12 maraschino cherries (red or green or a combination of both)
- 1/2 cup pecan halves
- 1/3 cup butter
- 3/4 cup brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons curry powder

Drain fruits and arrange in baking dish. Add nuts. Melt butter and stir in brown sugar and curry powder. Bake, uncovered, at 325 F for 1 hour, basting every so often with drippings in dish. Makes 8-10 servings.

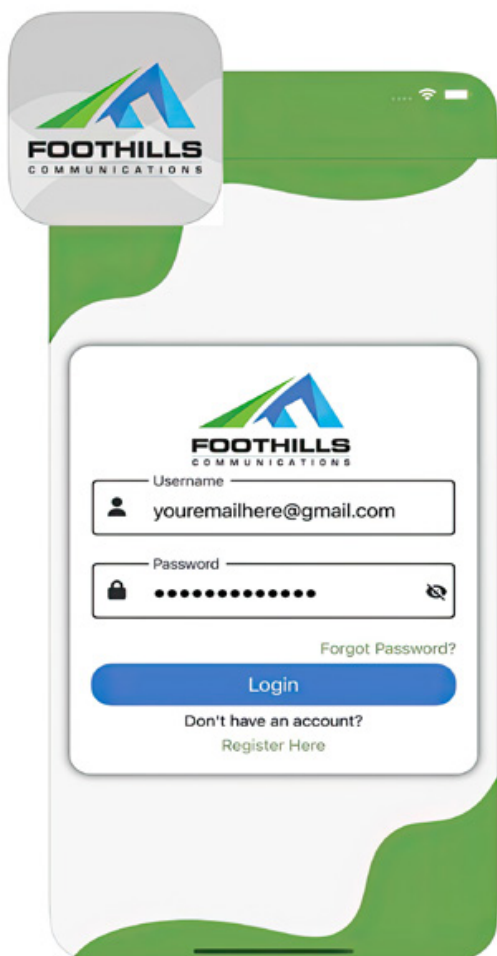
Tip: Whole fruit makes a lovely presentation, but cutting the fruit into bite-sized pieces makes it easier to serve and eat. 🍷



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