

# CONNECTION



## Made from scratch

The Farmhouse Diner serves up quality

LOUISA'S  
MASTERPIECE

BACKYARD  
CHICKENS

By SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO  
NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association

## Agriculture thrives with broadband

Every day I hear examples of how the fast, reliable internet service provided by NTCA members brings telemedicine, rich entertainment resources, educational opportunities, jobs and far more to rural communities like yours.

But that's just the beginning. These internet networks also create a vital foundation needed by a range of industries critical to the nation's economy. While agriculture might not immediately come to mind when considering the internet, the \$4.4 billion ag tech market is a showcase for how broadband can bring farms and ranches the internet-connected tools that make agriculture more efficient, productive and sustainable.

Smart irrigation systems, farm management and automation software, drones and sensors that can remotely monitor factors such as soil moisture are just a few of the innovations used in modern agriculture. They make a real difference, too.

For example, consider just one part of the agricultural equation — water. Leveraging these high-tech tools can reduce water use by 4%. When considering the scope of the industry, that's a tangible difference, the equivalent of filling 750,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools.

Without reliable internet access, these tools wouldn't be possible, nor would the benefits to consumers. When agricultural production is less expensive and yields are higher, we can all enjoy more favorable prices.

So, when you think about all your internet service provider does for you personally, take a moment to appreciate they're making a difference for all of us, nationwide. 📶



Illustration by Olga Strelnikova/Adobe Stock

Internet-connected technology makes a bottom-line difference in agriculture, responsible for as much as an **8% increase** in the value of corn crops alone. That's an attention-getting result, and it makes it worth a closer look at ag tech.

### THE DETAILS:



Ag tech includes smart irrigation farm management software, drones, remote sensing, biotech, automation and more. Many of these tools rely on the internet to share access and store and share data.

Value of the U.S. ag tech market:  
**\$4.4 billion**

Value of agriculture, food and food-related industries:  
**\$1.26 trillion**

Agriculture supports **43 million jobs**, **\$2 trillion** in wages and generates **\$718 billion** in taxes.

### CURRENT AG TECH OFFERS:



**9% reduction**  
in chemical use



**6% reduction**  
in fossil fuel consumption



**4% reduction**  
in water use — enough to fill 750,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools



**30-million-pound**  
decrease in herbicide use

**THE BOTTOM LINE:** Ag tech enables farmers to lower costs while increasing yield and productivity.



# Truly personal fitness

Online fitness offerings bring workouts to wherever you are

Story by SARA D. PATTERSON

After an exhausting workday, heading to that boring fitness class that's way too expensive to skip sounds like about as much fun as a root canal. What if you could just click an app or website and join a class from home? Think of the time, energy and frustration you could save.

With live and prerecorded classes and a fast and reliable internet connection, it's easy to turn any space into a gym. Thanks to apps and an array of online workout programs, you have the ability to exercise whenever, wherever and with whomever you want.

Some apps create personalized daily workout programs, while others provide a library of on-demand classes. Take a live class and become part of a community where everyone feels the burn.

## PICKING THE PERFECT PLAN

As the popularity of online exercise programs continues to grow, so does the number of available options. Before choosing one, here are some factors worth considering.

**Cost:** Pricing can vary widely, but many apps and programs offer a free trial before requiring a subscription or financial commitment.

**Instructors:** Check their credentials to make sure they're certified in whatever they're teaching.

**Variety:** You'll maximize your results by

finding a program that keeps you interested while increasing the difficulty over time.

**Devices:** Make sure the program you choose works across all your devices. Compatibility is important since one of the biggest benefits of online fitness is the ability to take it with you anywhere.

## FITNESS TO GO

While the at-home workout might seem isolating, it's actually a gateway to a digital community of like-minded fitness enthusiasts. The classes can provide a connection to a new whole world.

**Onepeloton.com:** Most famous for its much-advertised, in-home bike revolution, the Peloton digital app features on-demand and live classes of all kinds — no equipment needed.

**Nike.com/ntc-app:** This free app provides a variety of classes and styles for folks with busy schedules.

**Apple.com/apple-fitness-plus:** These classes, including yoga and Pilates, are personalized and perfected for Apple Watch users.

**DailyBurn.com:** This site offers the opportunity for one-on-one instruction. You can discover a favorite series or search for a specific workout depending on your mood.

**Beachbody.com or BODi:** This platform features '80s-style bootcamp classes, progress-tracking and nutrition hacks. 📱

## Moving and grooving

Some mobile fitness fans are turning to more creative ways to work out at home. Harkening back to the days of Richard Simmons and Jazzercise, online dancing is fast becoming a personal fitness staple.

Online dance classes can be less expensive than in-person sessions and offer more style options. And, many people feel more comfortable staging a dance party in their own living rooms rather than in a studio full of strangers.

**Zumba.com:** The Latin-inspired cardio workout has motivated millions around the world to get moving since dancing into the spotlight in 2001.

**Obefitness.com:** With more than 8,000 classes and 20 different class types to choose from, there's something for everyone. Up to 22 live classes are available, seven days a week, starting at 6 a.m. Eastern time.

**Dancio.com:** Here you'll find hundreds of recorded classes covering various dance styles.

**Steezy.co:** Work out while learning a variety of urban dance moves.

# Exciting updates on the horizon

## Next-gen features and Multi-Gig speeds planned for 2024

**A**s the CEO of Foothills, I'm pleased to share some exciting news about the innovative offerings and features coming your way this year. Our commitment to providing you with the very latest technology and exceptional service is unwavering, and we believe these new developments will greatly enhance your overall experience.



**RUTH CONLEY**

Chief Executive Officer

### MULTI-GIG SPEEDS WITH OUR FIBER OPTIC TECHNOLOGY

One of the most anticipated upgrades we are rolling out is the introduction of Multi-Gig speeds through our advanced fiber technology.

In today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, the demand for higher speeds is continuously on the rise, fueled by the increasing sophistication of web applications, higher-resolution video and expansion of cloud services. These changes have led to a shift in how we interact with the digital world and, as a result, requirements for seamless online experiences have reached unprecedented levels.

At Foothills, we're committed to making sure each of you enjoys the same benefits as residents of the country's largest cities.

Our team has been hard at work to ensure that we meet and even exceed your expectations when it comes to internet speed. With Multi-Gig speeds, the possibilities are endless, and we're excited to bring this transformative experience to you.

### THE NEW Foothills EBILL APP

In our continuous efforts to enhance customer convenience, we're proud to introduce our expanded Foothills eBill app. This user-friendly app was introduced last year with the ability to view and pay your bill online as well as submit your own trouble tickets. It is now being expanded to provide you with greater control over your account, enabling you to manage your bills, and now services, with ease.

Key features include:

- Quick and secure payments: Make hassle-free payments with just a few taps.
- Real-time billing information: Know your charges in real time, enabling you to monitor and manage your expenses effectively.
- All-new service customization: Make changes to your services, upgrade/downgrade plans or add/remove features at your convenience.

At Foothills, we value your feedback and take it seriously. These enhancements are a direct result of listening to your needs and finding ways to better serve you. We are committed to providing an exceptional customer experience, and these new offerings are a testament to that commitment.

### STAY TUNED

In the coming weeks, we'll keep you informed about the specific details of the upgrades planned, including the rollout schedule and any necessary steps on your end to take advantage of them.

Thank you for choosing Foothills as your telecommunications partner. We're excited about the future and look forward to elevating your internet and customer experience to an even higher standard. 📺



## 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, Johnson and Lawrence counties, as well as parts of Boyd and Carter counties and Prichard, West Virginia. 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:



From left: Clara, Tony and Amanda Allen are co-owners of The Farmhouse Diner, a Salyersville restaurant serving up country cooking.  
See story Page 8.

Photo by John Michael Laney

# Cable TV costs are increasing

## WHY?

- Content providers and networks are demanding more money every year from the companies, like Foothills, that carry their programming. The most expensive networks charge providers a monthly fee of over \$10 per customer to show their programs.
- Providers like Foothills are required to buy a bundle of several channels — and often to place them in certain packages — to get the two or three most popular channels a programmer offers.
- Rising prices driven by ever-increasing demands from broadcast networks force us to pass the additional expense on to customers to keep from losing money.

## WHAT WE'RE DOING

- We are committed to providing you with the channel selections you want, while doing all we can to maintain package prices.
- With more cost-effective options, such as our customizable Essentials Plan, you can select up to 13 various "add-on" packages to personalize your viewing experience and minimize the number of channels you pay for that you simply do not watch.



## Big Prize winners announced

Foothills recently announced the winners of its annual holiday prize giveaway. These three lucky subscribers were drawn at random and went home with some amazing prizes!



Jeffrey Carroll, of Louisa, won a Nintendo Switch. Jeffrey was presented the prize by Foothills Marketing Coordinator Andrea Ferguson.



Toni Morman, of Tutor Key, won a Fitbit Versa.



Robert Wireman, of Gunlock, won an Apple iPad.

## Happy Easter!

We wish you a happy and joyful Easter. In observance of the holiday, Foothills' office will be closed on Good Friday, March 29.



Know what's below.  
**Call before you dig.**





# TOTALLY AWESOME

## APRIL ECLIPSE WILL WOW!

Story by KATHY DENES

**T**he Southeast boasts plenty of beautiful scenery, but the heavens get credit for two of the region's most spectacular sights in a span of less than six months. For three hours on Oct. 14, an annular eclipse created a "ring of fire" visible along its path from Oregon down through Texas. April 8 will bring yet another eclipse, this time plunging all beneath its route from Texas up to Maine and beyond into total darkness.

Except for Southwest Kentucky, very little of the Southeastern U.S. will be in the path of totality. The shadow will barely hit the northwest corner of Tennessee as it cuts through the Kentucky Bend region, skims Mayfield and then darkens Paducah and Henderson around 2 p.m. EDT.

For those not in the path of totality, even the partial eclipse will be awesome to behold. Starting around 1:55 p.m. in areas east of totality, the orbiting moon will obscure the sun's bottom-right section and make it look like a crescent by around 3 p.m. By about 4:20 p.m., the sun will again be a complete ball of fire.



Photo by Adil/Adobe Stock

Illustration by James Thew/Adobe Stock

*“And the moon  
in haste eclipsed  
her, and the sun in  
anger swore.”*

— Aristophanes, Greek writer, 450-385 B.C.,  
after observing an eclipse

## ECLIPSE 101

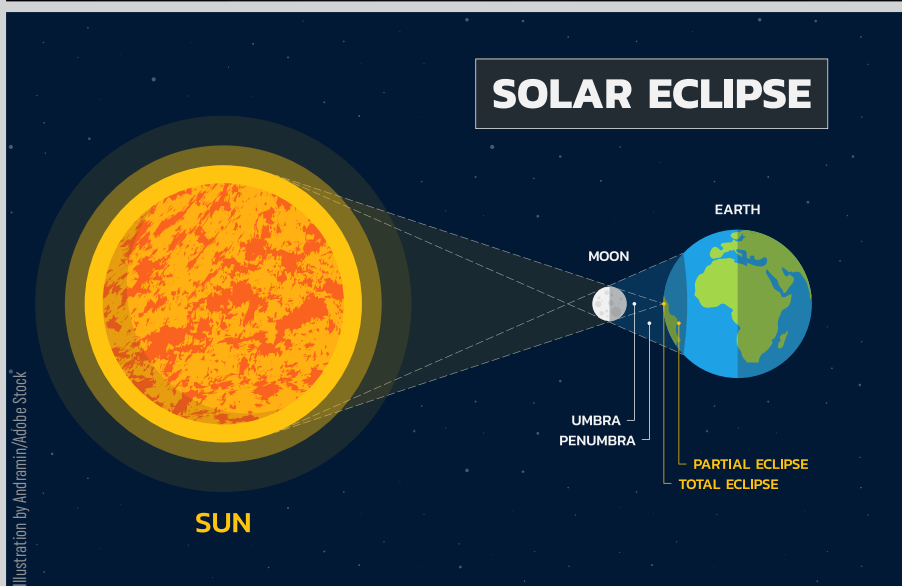
**TOTAL ECLIPSE:** When the moon passes between the Earth and the sun and briefly covers the sun’s disk completely, areas within the narrow path of the moon’s shadow will experience total darkness. Those outside the path of totality will see a partial eclipse. Go to [greatamericaneclipse.com](http://greatamericaneclipse.com) or [eclipse2024.org](http://eclipse2024.org) to see how the eclipse will look in your area and to find loads of other information.

**VIEWING AN ECLIPSE:** The only time it is safe to look at the sun with the naked eye is during the brief totality phase of a total solar eclipse, so that only applies to those directly in its path. At all other times, eclipse phases and locations, direct viewing of the sun is only safe through special solar filters and viewers. Look for the ISO 12312-2 standard, and make sure they are free of scratches or flaws. No. 13 or 14 welder’s glass also provides protection.

## EVENTFUL OPTIONS

Events for seeing and celebrating the eclipse include Paducah’s two-day downtown street fair and a viewing party at its National Quilt Museum. Louisville’s Kentucky Science Center is chartering buses to take eclipse fans to Evansville for a riverfront view of totality.

U.S. Space & Rocket Center in Huntsville, Alabama, home to the INTUITIVE planetarium, is setting up solar telescopes. Many educational activities are planned, including NASA’s livestream of the eclipse which will be shown throughout the center.



Of the 350-plus permanent planetariums in the U.S., six are in Alabama, eight in Kentucky, four in South Carolina and five call Tennessee home. Find one near you at [go-astronomy.com/planetariums.htm](http://go-astronomy.com/planetariums.htm).



# MADE *from* SCRATCH

## Food connects a community at The Farmhouse Diner

Story by JEN CALHOUN

Amanda Allen was about 12 years old when she started working in her grandmother's restaurant in Paintsville. It was a tradition in her family — nearly all Wilma Eldridge's children and grandchildren pitched in to help at the popular decades-old, country-cooking diner, Wilma's.

So, when Amanda, her husband, Tony, and their daughter, Clara, took a good look around their own town of Salyersville a few years ago, they knew something was missing. That's why they opened The Farmhouse Diner on Nov. 1, 2019 — a homey, full-service restaurant where all the food is made from scratch and menu items range from biscuits and gravy to roast beef and pizza.

"So much of our culture here in Eastern Kentucky revolves around food," Amanda says. "Before we opened, all that was available was fast-food from chain restaurants. It's easy to get burnt out on it, and there's nothing personal about it."

Some meals, she believes, should bring a sense of community to the table. "We still have the old-fashioned values here," Amanda says. "For example, if someone's sick, or if someone dies, you make food and you visit with them."

### FAMILY TRADITION

Amanda and Tony's culinary heritage runs deep. Not only did her late mother, Kimberly Griffith, teach her to can and to cook, Amanda can remember when her great-grandmother, Neva Caudill, would host family gatherings with dozens of people. Her resourcefulness and ingenuity, however, made it look easy.

"She had six children, and I was a great-grandchild, so you just imagine how many people were there," Amanda says. "She'd feed everyone like it was nothing. And I always remembered there was plenty. There was never a time I went to her house that she didn't have a pot of something cooking in case someone stopped by."

Tony's late mother, Janice Allen, could also make a delicious

Photos submitted by Teresa Ventresca



Clara Allen, co-owner of The Farmhouse Diner in Salyersville, makes a pan of homemade cornbread.

feast from meager ingredients and leftovers. "My mother-in-law was, hands down, the best at rough-grub country cooking that I've ever known," Amanda says. "She could take nothing and make something delicious."

Tony's aunt, Gloria Allen, also whips up a mean dish. She makes all the desserts at The Farmhouse Diner, including its highly sought-after pies and cakes. "She's amazing, but really all my husband's aunts are amazing like that," Amanda says.

### RISK AND REWARD

Starting The Farmhouse Diner was a risk for the couple even with their strong cooking connections and heartfelt belief in the project. When they opened their original location on the Parkway in 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic caused massive restaurant shutdowns just a few months later.

"At first, we didn't know what we were going to do," Amanda says. "We'd put everything into this business. We were so scared."

They'd been talking about it for five years, she says. They'd even quit their jobs and put all their savings into it. But COVID wasn't tough enough to kill The Farmhouse. "We stayed closed





Photos by John Michael Laney

The hot food bar is one of several buffets offered by the restaurant.

about eight months, then we reopened,” she says. “We’ve been going full force ever since.”

The restaurant is in a former pizza place on Royalton Road and gets much of its nonlocal traffic thanks to positive online reviews from resources like Yelp, Tripadvisor and Restaurant Guru. The eatery also maintains 6,800 followers on Facebook through its high-speed fiber broadband service from Foothills. Tony and Amanda even use their Foothills connection to offer streaming TV and free Wi-Fi at the diner.

“We have found that Facebook and the internet in general have been our most successful marketing tools,” Amanda says. “We were also voted the Best Mom & Pop restaurant by Restaurant Guru. That kind of attention allows us to attract people who aren’t familiar with Salyersville. When they start looking for the best place to eat here, our name pops up.”

### WARM AND FRIENDLY

Today, The Farmhouse Diner hosts regulars who might come in once a day or more just to sit, eat and socialize. “Yes, they eat here, but I think they also want to see people and visit and have a kind of camaraderie with other people in the community,” Amanda says.

The decor at the diner helps keep that atmosphere going, too. With farmhouse tables of different styles and galvanized



Amanda Allen, co-owner of The Farmhouse Diner, takes a call-in order.

tin accents, the restaurant feels authentic. Amanda also trains servers to welcome everyone with friendliness and warmth to double the appeal.

“Customer service is my No. 1 thing,” she says. “When I train my employees, I tell them they are the face of The Farmhouse. Well, actually, I tell them that all the time. Customers have a choice of where they spend their money and eat their meals. I appreciate it when they’re coming here, and I want to make sure they have a good experience.” 📞

## Made from scratch daily

The Farmhouse Diner is a country-cooking restaurant at 1506 Royalton Road in Salyersville. Operating hours are 8 a.m.-8 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday, 8 a.m.-10 p.m. Friday and Saturday, and 9 a.m.-6 p.m. on Sunday.

Guests can order off the menu, enjoy the salad bar or hot bars, or all three. Takeout and delivery are also available. The restaurant offers free Wi-Fi and streaming TV in both dining rooms.

For more information on daily specials and more, visit The Farmhouse Diner Facebook page. For catering and delivery orders, call 606-349-3276.





# FUNKY CHICKENS

Ornamental poultry are not your basic backyard birds



Story by SARA D. PATTERSON

Light Brahma bantams are Turner's favorite chickens to breed and show.



Joe, Meagan, Turner and Kaiser Holland have found a home in the world of exhibition poultry.

Seven-year-old Turner Holland wanted to keep busy outside of school, but he knew he wasn't athletic and couldn't stand sports. That's when his dad, Joe, brought home a half-dozen baby chickens from Tractor Supply.

Those first six chicks led to hundreds more as Turner and his family jumped into the world of backyard poultry at their home in Harrodsburg, Kentucky. Now known as Chicken Hill Farm, they are a go-to source of the rare blue Araucana, as well as several other breeds of ornamental chickens.

Their clientele is a growing group that finds joy in raising chickens. More than 12 million people — about twice the population of Arizona — share their yards with a flock, according to The American Pet Products Association's most recent national pet owner survey. The number of households with chickens rose from 8% in 2008 to 13% in 2020.

Many people choose to keep them as pets or as a steady source of fresh eggs.

But exhibition chickens like the Hollands' are often inconsistent layers. Instead, these flashy fowls have a different job — strutting their stuff.

The Hollands' signature Araucana chickens are recognizable by their poof of feathers — known as tufts — that grow at their ears instead of at their “rumpless” tail ends. While the “hilarious, friendly girls,” known for their pastel blue eggs, are Chicken Hill Farm's stars, they share the spotlight with many other funky chickens. There's the Muppet-like jet black Polish with their explosion of fluffy, white head feathers that often obscure their eyes. The Brahmas have abundant, soft feathers that cover their legs and feet. And then there are the small silkies, the most unique of all. Lacking the barbicels that hold a feather's shape, they look — and feel — like they're covered with fur rather than feathers.


Maintaining the chickens' genetics is fascinating, says Turner's mom, Meagan.



At first, she and Turner focused on breeding, but then they discovered the exhibition part of fancy poultry. They took a few of their favorites to a local county show in June 2022 and then to another one a week later. Turner is now 11 and a rising star on the exhibition poultry circuit.

"After that, it just snowballed, and he's all in," Meagan says. "He just fell into it and is obsessed. This is such a great activity for him and for us to do as a family."

The family now spends most weekends in the summer and fall traveling to exhibitions where Turner is making a name for himself. Meagan handles the birds. Joe, an Army veteran, drives. And younger son, Kaiser, is beginning to join his brother in the show ring.

"I don't know if my husband was as excited about our new lifestyle," Meagan says with a laugh. "He's not into the breeding like Turner and I are. But he enjoys the birds and the time we spend together as a family." 



ABOVE: Turner's light Brahma bantam cockerel won champion of the Feather Legged Class in the junior show at the Ohio National Poultry Show.

LEFT: As more people become involved with raising fancy chickens at home, the number of exhibition poultry shows and entrants continues to grow.



Photo by Sara D. Patterson

## Are you ready for backyard chickens?

Saving money and healthier eggs are the intent of many people who raise chickens, but those goals are often difficult to reach, says Gregory Archer, associate professor and extension specialist for Texas A&M Department of Poultry Science.

"I tell people it should be more about self-satisfaction and the desire to know exactly how and where your eggs came from. Chickens are also fun, and kids love them."

Possible challenges include bird medical care, waste management or strategies for excess eggs. Similarly, predators can quickly be an issue.

Also, there are geographic-specific considerations. "Often, people don't manage heat or get the correct breeds for Texas heat," he says. "You need to make sure you have fresh water, shade and maybe some fans."

A little research will help identify birds suitable for heat, cold or any environment.

## CHICKEN CONSIDERATIONS



If you're contemplating backyard chickens, consider these points before adopting the chicken lifestyle.

### LOCAL LAWS AND NEIGHBORHOOD REGULATIONS

- Check for the latest rules on chicken ownership in your town and county. Many cities limit the number of chickens allowed per household and prohibit roosters entirely.
- Often, cities require chickens to be kept enclosed and that the coop is well maintained and cleaned frequently.
- If you decide to sell your eggs, ensure it's legal where you live.

### EXPENSES

Even small-scale chicken farming requires ongoing expenses after buying or building a coop and fencing.

- A 40-pound bag of feed can cost \$25 or more, depending on the brand, nutritional value and other factors.
- Dietary supplements are typically needed, so budget for extra proteins and treats, like dried insects — a 5-pound bag can cost at least \$50.
- Chickens require fresh bedding, like pine shavings or chopped straw, every time the coop is cleaned.

### CARE

While caring for chickens isn't a full-time job, do expect to invest time.

- Most people adopt a daily or twice-daily routine for feeding and watering.
- Many times, chickens need to be let out of a small coop in the morning and herded back in at night for safety.
- Remember, chickens can fly. Some people prefer to clip their wings regularly, while others choose a run with fencing or netting overhead.

Source: Osceola County Extension Agent Jessica Sullivan



# Artful gatherings

Masterpiece Cafe & Painted Cow Art Gallery helps downtown Louisa shine

Story by JEN CALHOUN



Photos contributed by Masterpiece Cafe & Painted Cow Art Gallery

When Kylen Webb walks through downtown Louisa these days, there's a different feel. "Fifteen years ago, it almost felt like there was a cloud hanging over the town," says Kylen, enterprise marketing and sales manager for Masterpiece Cafe & Painted Cow Art Gallery. "Today, you can see the sun."

That's due in part to a downtown revival movement championed by Lelia and Tim Robinson. The Robinsons worked to revitalize old buildings and reopened shops like the art gallery, while adding the cafe to help sustain the business.

"We commission some paintings, but most of it is a place where local artists can show their pieces," Kylen says. "We sell everything from local honey and handcrafted jewelry to woodwork and paintings. It was important to the owners to encourage artists and artisans in the region. They want to preserve the heritage of our area and showcase the talents of the people who live here."

## FRESH AND HEALTHY

One of the cafe's draws is its freshly roasted coffee beans. Sourced from Bean Belt countries like Guatemala, Brazil and Costa Rica, coffee beans are roasted with the help of the shop's cutting-edge Bellwether roaster. The high-tech machine is environmentally friendly and easy to use. Best of all, it allows the shop to make its own blends, which are sold by the bag.

"When you walk in the cafe some days, you'll smell that great aroma of coffee being roasted," Kylen says. "We're





LEFT: The art gallery combines with the cafe to offer various gifts and made-from-scratch menu items.

BELOW: The shop's high-tech coffee roaster allows it to sell its own blends.



“Foothills is a great partner, because they’re bringing world-class technology to a small town. We get faster download and upload speeds here than even some of the larger cities in the state. It empowers individuals and companies on a local level.”

— Kylan Webb, Masterpiece Cafe & Painted Cow Art Gallery  
enterprise marketing and sales manager

unique in that we have one in house. A lot of coffee shops and cafes don’t have their own roasting machine.”

Also unique are the made-from-scratch soups, sandwiches, desserts and breakfast items. “One of Lelia’s missions with the cafe has been to provide made-from-scratch healthy food for our community,” he says. “We’re a smaller population here, so there’s more fast-food than anything else. There aren’t a lot of sit-down restaurant options in Louisa, especially when it comes to healthy alternatives. But if people choose to come here, they should know they’ll get a good, quality meal.”

In addition to fresh food and great coffee, the shop sells espresso drinks and cold beverages like smoothies and refreshers — juice and fizzy water concoctions that liven the palate better than sodas. During the summer and for special events, the cafe sometimes offers the popular Cincinnati-based ice cream Graeter’s.

One of the best parts about the cafe and art gallery is the service. “We want you to have a great experience,” Kylan says. “For instance, when you go get a latte, we’ll write little scriptures on the cup. We want you to leave feeling inspired. And we want to encourage a family atmosphere.”

### BUILDING A BETTER COMMUNITY

The owners also hope to foster a sense of community at the cafe, where people can

come together in a relaxed atmosphere.

“It’s a great place for people to come in on their lunch break,”

Kylan says. “They can bring their computer to do work and use our Wi-Fi. We also have live music on Saturdays, so we can shine a spotlight on local artists.”

Kylan knows the shop’s appeal — along with so many other downtown renovations — will lure more tourists to Louisa, especially those interested in the nearby wilderness activities. “I think tourism is going to be a huge thing in the future for Lawrence County,” he says. “We have a beautiful lake, beautiful scenery and a lot of places people want to come. If people start to realize all that we have here, I think they’ll start to invest in it and keep it going for many years to come.”

Part of that resurgence has already been made possible by the investment of local agencies and utilities in the area, like Foothills. With Foothills’ fiber broadband, the sky’s the limit. “Foothills is a great partner, because they’re bringing world-class technology to a small town,” Kylan says. “We get faster download and upload speeds here than even some of the larger cities in the state. It empowers individuals and companies on a local level.”

**Come for the coffee,  
stay for the art — or the  
other way around!**

Visit Masterpiece Cafe & Painted Cow Art Gallery at 103 S. Main Cross St. in Louisa. The shop features artwork and other handmade items from artists and artisans across the region. It also sells in-store roasted coffee, espresso and specialty drinks, like smoothies and refreshers, as well as made-from-scratch breakfast and lunch items. For more information, visit the gallery and cafe’s Facebook page. You can also purchase handcrafted items and artwork at PaintedCowArt online shop at etsy.com.



# Regional Accents

Local favorites are  
key ingredient of  
America's melting pot

**E**very local dish has a story behind it, history heaped with flavor. One of the best ways to discover these is by stirring the nation's culinary pot to see what's cooking.

Certain dishes are common to us Americans across the board. We'll fry just about anything. From Twinkies to turkeys, they all go in the deep fryer. But, when it comes to comfort-food classics, states and regions have their own distinct accents. U.S. culinary traditions form a giant melting pot with regional flavors blended in for extra deliciousness.

Regional foods are some of the most fascinating bites one can experience. Here's a look at some of the ones that are favorites across our nation.



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

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

## SMOKED GOUDA MAC AND CHEESE

*You'd be hard-pressed to walk into a diner around the South and not see mac and cheese on the menu. This recipe just takes it up a notch.*

- 1 pound short pasta, such as elbow macaroni or shells
- 1 pound smoked gouda cheese, grated
- 8 ounces extra-sharp white cheddar cheese, grated
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter
- 4 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 2 cups heavy whipping cream
- 2 cups whole milk
- 1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon ground white pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon ground mustard
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- Salt, to taste
- 4 slices of bacon, crumbled (optional)

Preheat the oven to 350 F. Cook pasta according to package directions to al dente stage, then set aside.

In a large Dutch oven or other deep pot, heat butter over medium-low heat. Once butter has melted, add in flour and whisk until all flour disappears, then slowly add in heavy cream and whole milk. Stir and let mixture come to a slight boil. Add in all spices and stir again. Lastly, add in 8 ounces of smoked gouda cheese and white cheddar cheese. Whisk until all cheese has melted.

Add in pasta and mix everything together to fully incorporate, making sure all pasta is coated with sauce. Add salt, to taste.

Transfer mixture to a large, lightly greased baking dish, then top dish with remaining smoked gouda. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes or until mixture is golden and bubbly.

Let cool for 15 minutes and serve warm topped with crumbled bacon, if desired. Makes 8 servings.





## WILD RICE CHICKEN CASSEROLE

*Wild rice is found throughout the Midwest, where this recipe originates.*

- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1/3 cup butter
- 1/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1 can (14 1/2 ounces) chicken broth
- 1 cup half-and-half
- 4 cups cubed, cooked chicken
- 4 cups cooked wild rice
- 2 jars (4 1/2 ounces each) sliced mushrooms, drained
- 1 jar (4 ounces) diced pimentos, drained
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh parsley
- 1/3 cup slivered almonds

In a large saucepan, saute onion in butter until tender. Stir in the flour, salt and pepper until blended. Gradually stir in broth. Bring to a boil. Boil and stir for 2 minutes or until thickened and bubbly. Stir in the half-and-half, chicken, rice, mushrooms, pimentos and parsley. Heat through.

Transfer mixture to a greased 2 1/2-quart baking dish. Sprinkle with almonds. Bake, uncovered, at 350 F for 30-35 minutes or until bubbly. Makes 6-8 servings.

## SALSA ROJAS

*Salsa is the condiment of choice throughout Texas and many of the Western states.*

- 1 can (28 ounces) whole tomatoes, drained
- 1 can (14 1/2 ounces) diced tomatoes with garlic and onion, drained
- 1 can (14 1/2 ounces) stewed tomatoes (with Mexican seasonings, if you can find them), drained
- 1 can (10 ounces) diced tomatoes and green chilies, drained
- 1 medium onion, quartered
- 2 banana peppers, seeded and coarsely chopped
- 2 jalapeno peppers, seeded and coarsely chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2 cup minced fresh cilantro
- 1/4 cup lime juice
- 2 ripe avocados, peeled and cubed
- Tortilla chips



Place the first 10 ingredients in a food processor; cover and process until chopped. Add cilantro and lime juice; cover and pulse until combined.

Transfer to a bowl; stir in avocados. Serve with tortilla chips or use as a condiment for your favorite Tex-Mex dishes.

## SALMON PICCATA

*This is a popular recipe in the Northwest where fresh salmon is easy to find. In other states, try to get your hands on the freshest fish possible to bring out the flavors in this dish.*

- 4 salmon steaks, 1 inch thick
- All-purpose flour (for dredging)
- 1/4 cup plus 3 tablespoons butter, divided
- 3 tablespoons onion, finely chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 heaping tablespoon capers, drained
- 1/8 teaspoon dried Italian seasonings, crushed
- 1/2 cup white wine
- 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons beef broth

Preheat oven to 400 F. Rinse salmon steaks under cool water, pat dry and roll in flour.

In a large ovenproof frying pan or saute pan, heat 1/4 cup butter until it melts. Briefly saute the salmon steaks, browning them lightly on both sides.

Bake, covered, 10 to 15 minutes until a meat thermometer registers an internal temperature of 140 F, or until salmon is slightly opaque in the thickest part. You may need to cut to test. During this time the meat continues to cook because the meat temperature will rise 5 to 10 degrees after it is removed from the oven and the juices will redistribute. Remove from oven. Reserve liquid in the pan, and transfer salmon onto a warm serving platter.

Using the same pan over medium heat, stir into the reserved liquid the onion, garlic, capers and Italian seasonings. Simmer for 5 minutes. Add white wine, lemon juice and beef broth. Stir until well blended. Turn off the heat, whisk in the remaining 3 tablespoons butter until blended. Remove from heat, pour sauce over salmon and serve immediately. Makes 4 servings. 🍴



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