



Mountain Telephone

JULY/AUGUST 2024

CONNECTION

**2024 Annual
Report Issue**

DIGITAL FIXES

**SUMMER
SALADS**



By Shirley Bloomfield, CEO
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

Serious security

NTCA members are committed to protecting you

Everyone should take cybersecurity seriously, managing passwords and being aware of all the possible threats to your personal information, finances and more. That’s not meant to frighten you, because you do have help. NTCA member providers across the nation take your security as seriously as you do, and they work daily to secure the networks bringing you the critical internet-based services you need.

Recently, I had the opportunity to share more about NTCA’s cybersecurity efforts for both consumers and broadband providers, including CyberShare: The Small Broadband Provider ISAC, through a meeting with U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency Director Jen Easterly.

CISA recently launched the Secure Our World program to raise awareness about cybersecurity best practices and empower the public to take proactive steps to protect themselves online. Resources available to the public include a public service announcement, tip sheets on topics like phishing, multifactor authentication and the importance of creating strong passwords and updating software. And there is even a bingo board to make this critical topic engaging for the youngest internet users.

Also, Cybersecurity Awareness Month each October highlights these important issues and emphasizes that you’re also part of the team helping keep us all safe. While NTCA members work behind the scenes, you can help by recognizing phishing attempts, choosing strong passwords and more. Visit cisa.gov/secure-our-world for more.

Together, we’ll help keep everyone safe and secure online.

Password management


Essential tools to keep you safe



Adobe Stock graphic by Jemastock

From work and school to games and streaming entertainment services, access relies on passwords. The U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency suggests you consider using a reliable tool to manage these key bits of information – password managers.

Memorizing complex passwords for multiple accounts is difficult, or impossible. So, sometimes passwords are too simple and easily hacked. Password managers, though, can help.





THE BASICS:

A password manager is a software tool that organizes all your passwords. Then, a single master code unlocks this vault – encouraging use of long, complex passwords.

FREE BUILT-IN MANAGERS:

Web browsers, including Safari, Chrome and Edge, have built-in password managers, and these can be accessed across devices like computers and phones. These may suffice for those with only basic needs, but they are limited. For instance, passwords in Apple’s Safari aren’t accessible on an Android phone running Google Chrome.





PAID TOOLS:

For more robust options, there is software like LastPass, 1Password and Bitwarden. These work across multiple types of devices and have additional features, such as the ability to generate passwords and integration into your favorite web browser.

TWO KEYS FOR SUCCESS:

Make your master password long, reliable and unique. Sixteen characters is recommended. Also, regularly review your stored passwords to remove passwords for accounts you no longer use.



From pages to pixels

E-books are changing the way we read

Readers today can find themselves facing a technological conundrum. While many book lovers treasure traditional books, electronic devices, designed to make reading more comfortable and accessible, are hard to ignore.

For some, there's nothing like the sensation of holding a book and feeling the paper as the pages turn. Printed books will always have emotional, if not monetary, value as collectibles. And they certainly aren't going anywhere.

These days there are countless options of things to download and read on our phones and tablets, but dedicated, handheld electronic book readers, often called e-readers, offer text and lighting customizations and many other conveniences to enhance the reading experience. Nonreflective, electronic-ink displays give them a paper-like look and make it easier to read outdoors compared with reading on a phone or tablet. And, dedicated e-readers present fewer distractions — you won't be interrupted by notifications, calls or texts.

Over the past few years, the price of e-readers has fallen while the hardware has improved. High-end features, such as backlit, high-resolution screens and waterproofing, are standard. If you don't have an e-book reader, there's never been a better time to invest in one.

E-READERS' EDGE

- **Portability:** E-readers are lightweight and can store thousands of books.
- **Customization:** Most allow you to adjust the font and size, background

lighting, etc. They can make reading accessible for individuals with visual impairment by providing text-to-speech and other customizations.

- **Searchability:** E-readers' built-in search functions mean you can easily find a favorite quote or passage in the book.
- **Built-in resources:** Dictionaries and thesauruses allow for immediate definitions.
- **Environmentally friendly and affordable:** No trees are harmed in e-book production, and they usually cost much less than traditional books.

WHICH ONE IS BEST?

Amazon Kindle is synonymous with e-reader for good reason. According to both *Wired* magazine and *The New York Times'* *Wirecutter*, the Kindle is the most affordable, best and easiest choice for reading electronic books.

- **Amazon Kindle:** With a 6-inch screen and a high pixel density for sharper text, the least expensive Kindle — around \$100 on Amazon — offers just about all the advantages of the more expensive e-readers. If you're planning on reading outdoors this summer, it's worth the extra charge, roughly \$50, to upgrade to the waterproof Kindle Paperwhite with its better lighting options.
- **Rakuten Kobo:** Japanese retailer Rakuten currently offers six Kindle-comparable e-readers ranging from \$110 to \$400. The Libra 2 has a physical page-turn button and Bluetooth

support, so you can connect headphones and listen to audiobooks.

- **Barnes & Noble Nook:** The book retailer's e-reader features a touch screen and page-turning button, as well as the ability to annotate and highlight text. The devices start around \$100. As an added perk, Nook owners can read the complete contents of any book for free while in stores for one hour per day. ☑

What will you read?

Once you've settled on an e-reader, where do you find the books? Amazon, Barnes & Noble and Kobo all sell tomes to download to their specific e-readers. But you could read for years without having to spend another dime. Sources of free e-books include:

- **OverDrive.com**, used by 43,000 libraries and schools worldwide, allows anyone with a library card to pull e-books, magazines and audio books.
- **Project Gutenberg**, a library of more than 70,000 free e-books to download or read online. Thousands of volunteers digitize and proofread the books available at gutenberg.org.
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Photo by LightfieldStudios/Adobe Stock

Enjoying our summer traditions

A time we celebrate together

We're in the dog days of summer. Did you know that phrase dates back to the Romans? When I hear it, I always think about long, hot days perfect for a dip in a creek or pool, or a family gathering beneath a shade tree. It's a time of year flanked by two of my favorite holidays — the Fourth of July and Labor Day.



SHAYNE ISON
General Manager

One of the many things I enjoy about my role with Mountain is seeing all the ways our community comes together. We're more than a communications company. We not only want to provide you industry-leading services — like internet as fast as the summer is hot — but we also have a deep, lasting commitment to helping this place we call home thrive.

There's no better time than summer to experience the energy, bustle and cherished traditions that make being outdoors so enjoyable. From the Fourth of July with fireworks that light up the night sky to Labor Day and its laid-back barbecues, these holidays are benchmarks in the rhythm of the year. But they go beyond the festivities and events. They carry a deeper significance, a reminder of the values we hold dear and the ties that unite us.

For us, the Fourth of July isn't just about celebrating independence. It's about coming together as a community to honor our shared heritage and celebrate our freedoms. Whether it's family gatherings or a church potluck, these traditions are uniquely our own. We see family and friends often enjoying the same events and places as our parents, grandparents and even older generations. Throughout it all, we also remember those men and women who served our nation, because we would not be where we are as a community or nation without their service and sacrifice.

And then there's Labor Day, a time to pause and reflect on the hard work and dedication that built our community and the nation's economy. Workers play vital roles in our past, present and future, and we're proud our services make much of this work possible. Often the economies of rural places like ours are dismissed, but we see the work and commitment that make the businesses in our region possible. These efforts are worth celebrating every day.

But perhaps what's most remarkable about these holidays — really this entire summer season — are the connections we make along the way. In a world that often feels increasingly disconnected, the traditions tie us not only to this place but also to each other, and we're all the better for it.

At MRTC, we're acutely aware of the role we play in fostering this sense of community. It's a responsibility we welcome, whether that means providing access to high-speed internet, supporting our schools, sponsoring a game or any other service we can provide. Together, we make this place all that it is, and I look forward to seeing you out and about during the dog days. 📞

The Mountain Telephone Connection is a bimonthly newsletter published by Mountain Rural Telephone Cooperative, © 2024. It is distributed without charge to all member/owners of the cooperative.



Mountain Telephone

Mountain Rural Telephone Cooperative, Inc., is a member-owned cooperative dedicated to providing communications technology to the people of Elliott, Menifee, Morgan, Wolfe and a section of Bath counties. The company covers 1,048 square miles and supplies service to nearly 11,500 members.

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UTILITY RESOURCES

On the Cover:



In this annual financial issue, MRTC offers its members helpful tips to get the most out of their broadband connections.

See story Page 12.

Photo by Huntley.Design/Adobe Stock

WANT YOUR
Summer
TO SIZZLE?

Get Mountain's blazing-fast internet service today!

- ✓ FAST
- ✓ RELIABLE
- ✓ LOCAL

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HAPPY
Fourth
of July

We wish you a fun and safe Independence Day! Our office will be closed in observance of the holiday on Thursday, July 4.

Tired of robocalls?

The Do Not Call Registry can help reduce the number of unwanted telemarketing calls you receive.

Learn more at [donotcall.gov](https://www.donotcall.gov), or call **888-382-1222**. You must call from the telephone number you wish to register. For TTY, call 866-290-4236.



BEAT THE HEAT
 TAKE A GAME BREAK —
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MOUNTAIN'S FAST FIBER INTERNET GIVES YOU THE EDGE!

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PET-FRIENDLY ADVENTURES

Map out trips with furry friends

Story by KATHY DENES

Summer typically means travel time, whether scenic road trips or flights to vacation destinations. And more than ever before, beloved pets are tagging along for the ride.

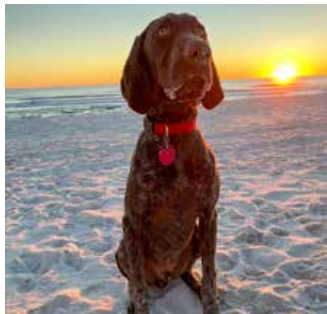
Pet-friendly travel is a hot topic. It's addressed by top vacation resources like Conde Naste Traveler, which has an online list of nationwide hotels and Airbnbs it deems best for accommodating pets, especially dogs. On [travelandleisure.com](https://www.travelandleisure.com), search "pets," and you'll unleash a wealth of helpful articles.

Even financial companies are weighing in. NerdWallet compiled a list of Best Hotels for Pets in 2024, based on factors like fees and amenities, and rated air travel options, topped by Alaska Airlines. But if you don't want to do the research yourself, there are travel agencies that specialize in planning and taking care of the details for you.

Hotels, resorts, parks and campgrounds usually post their pet policies, fees and amenities, as do airlines, trains and even cruise lines that allow passengers with paws. There are also numerous websites focused entirely on pet-friendly travel, across the nation and around the world. Just browse by city, state or destination at resources such as:

- bringfido.com
- petswelcome.com
- tripswithpets.com





EXPERT ADVICE

“Before deciding to bring your pet along on a trip, you need to ask yourself whether or not it’s in your pet’s best interest to do so,” says Dr. Rena Carlson, president of the American Veterinary Medical Association.

What’s a fun adventure for us might be overwhelming for our pets. “If you choose to include your pet, a pre-trip veterinary visit is a good idea, to make sure your pet is healthy and up to date on vaccinations and microchip registration, and to obtain a health certificate, which is required by law if you’re traveling to a different state with your pet,” Carlson says.

Your veterinarian can also provide vital information about the risk of parasites and other diseases that your pet may be exposed to at your destination, as well as possible preventive steps or treatments.

“Make sure to plan for their comfort in transit, whether by land or air, with regular breaks and by choosing the least stressful travel options,” Carlson says. “Confirm in advance that your destinations are pet-friendly, and try to maintain your pet’s routine as much as possible to help them feel secure. Your careful planning can ensure a safe and enjoyable trip for everyone involved.” 🗨️



For more great tips for traveling with your pet, check out:

- » pettravel.com
- » petfriendlytravel.com
- » avma.org

YOUR OWN MASSIVE BACKYARD

Whether taking your pooch along for a carriage ride in Charleston — child’s ticket required if Fido won’t fit in your lap — or entrusting it to doggie day care at Dollywood while you ride the Mystery Mine, the Southeast is loaded with places that welcome four-legged travel buddies. Here are a few destinations that receive high marks from people traveling with their pets:

• **Little River Canyon National Preserve** atop Lookout Mountain in North Alabama welcomes dogs parkwide, but they must be leashed.

• **Chattanooga** has inviting options, from downtown patio dining and parks to mountain trails and attractions.

• **Dinosaur World in Cave City** extends a Kentucky welcome to leashed dogs and provides water stations.

• **Barkwells, gated retreats in Asheville and Brevard, North Carolina**, have dog-centric cabin and cottage rentals, each with a fenced yard and a range of amenities to make it a haven for both pets and people.

• **For South Carolina excursions**, check sciway.net’s pet travel guide for info on rentals, parks, beaches, eateries and more.

• **St. Augustine, Florida**, gets a nod from AAA for pet-friendly options, like strolls, visits to popular attractions and perhaps a stay at the historic Bayfront Marin House.



Consolidated Balance Sheet

as of Dec. 31, 2023

ASSETS

Current Assets.....	\$	9,916,850
Other Assets		
Investments in Affiliated Companies (including cellular)		50,845,895
Miscellaneous Physical Property.....		4,562,254
Other Investments.....		38,884,911
Total Current/Other Assets.....		104,209,910
Telecommunications Plant.....		138,957,469
Less Accumulated Depreciation.....		(95,189,037)
Net Telecommunications Plant.....		43,768,432
TOTAL ASSETS.....	\$	147,978,342

LIABILITIES and MEMBERS' EQUITIES

Current Liabilities.....	\$	3,979,129
Long-Term Debt to U.S. Government.....		4,092,775
Long-Term Liability.....		(5,527,915)
Members' Equities:		
Membership.....		146,722
Patronage Capital.....		143,963,272
Retired Capital Credit Gain.....		1,324,359
TOTAL LIABILITIES and MEMBERS' EQUITIES.....	\$	147,978,342

YOUR CAPITAL CREDITS FROM 2023

Each year, Mountain Rural Telephone Cooperative's Board of Directors sets the capital allocation based on the financial well-being of the cooperative. This factor determines the amount that will be returned to each customer when capital credits are dispersed. The allocation factor for 2023 is 25.700290% or 26 cents on the dollar.

Keep in mind the more services you receive from Mountain Telephone, the greater the investment in the local network and therefore the greater your capital credit return.

SMOOTH STREAMING

TIPS FOR SEAMLESS ENTERTAINMENT



Photo by Kjelal/Adobe Stock



Photo by Alvaro/Adobe Stock

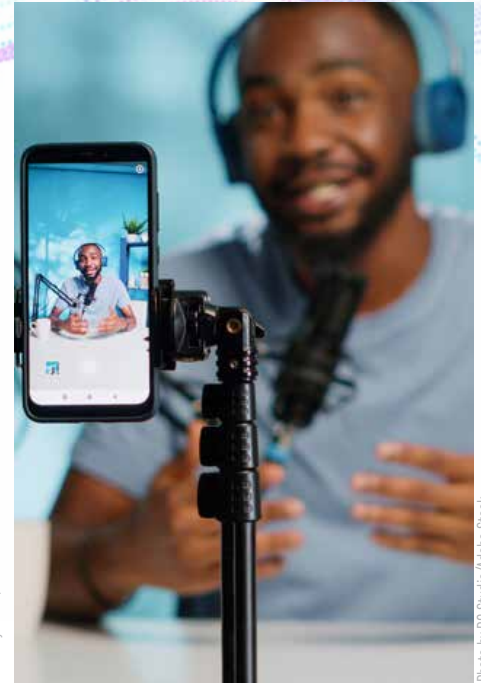


Photo by DC Studio/Adobe Stock

Whether it's music, movies, gaming or more, streaming and interactive online content is a part of daily life for many of us. With a little care and planning, you can have the smoothest experience possible. Also, keep in mind the professionals at Mountain are always ready to support you, answering your questions and offering the advice you need to make the right choices for you.

Here are a few items to consider:

1 ANTICIPATE HOW YOU WILL USE YOUR STREAMING SERVICES:

When assessing your internet needs for streaming, consider the number of people in your household and their activities. Will there be remote work, gaming or multiple streaming services involved? Once you understand your usage patterns, you can make sure your internet plan matches your needs.

2 DEVICE COUNT: Don't overlook the number of devices connected to your Wi-Fi network. It's common for households to have various smartphones, tablets and smart appliances online all at the same time. Remember, each connected device consumes bandwidth, which can affect the performance of all your devices.

3 WI-FI COVERAGE: Slow streaming can sometimes be attributed to Wi-Fi issues rather than insufficient bandwidth. Evaluate the placement of your router, and consider investing in a mesh Wi-Fi system to ensure comprehensive coverage throughout your home. This can significantly improve streaming performance, especially in larger homes or areas with signal dead zones.

4 UNDERSTANDING STREAMING: Streaming involves the continuous transmission of media

content from an online server to a digital device. It can include a wide range of content, from livestreams to recorded movies and TV shows. At times, it can seem like an endless stream of content possibilities. However, there are potential bottlenecks, so consider cataloging all the streaming services you use — including online gaming — to make sure you have the internet connection and Wi-Fi setup that's right for you.

5 TECHNOLOGICAL EVOLUTION: Streaming technology has rapidly evolved, revolutionizing how we consume media. Stay informed about advancements in streaming services and internet technology to make informed decisions about your streaming setup. For example, image resolution for some movies is now much higher than just a few years ago. And you need a faster connection to enjoy this rich content. 📺



Planting ideas

FARMER FROBERG USES SOCIAL MEDIA TO PROVIDE LESSONS, LAUGHS

Story by MELANIE JONES

Wearing a plaid shirt and a gray Froberg's Farm cap, Tyler Froberg shares a cool fact about a favorite fruit with youthful viewers. "Every strawberry in the world is picked by hand," he tells eager young minds. "And it takes half an hour to pick one row."

Most fruit and vegetables are harvested by machines, which helps the fourth-generation farmer talk about farming as a STEAM — science, technology, engineering, arts and math — career option he promotes in a video for Lego's education branch, known as Rebuilding the World with Agriculture.

Tyler has made a few videos for Lego, promoting school-based projects like building a strawberry-picking machine that won't destroy the delicate fruit. But his screentime isn't

limited to collaborations with Lego. As Farmer Froberg, Tyler has more than 780,000 social media followers learning about gardening, farming and life on a fruit and vegetable agritourism farm.

TEACHING THROUGH VIDEOS

When he first got out of the Army, Tyler worked on the family farm in Alvin, Texas. "I decided that I had my GI Bill, so I should probably go to college," he says.

After earning a degree in agriculture, he worked for a year as an agriculture science teacher. "I loved it, and when you love something, you tend to be good at it, and when you tend to be good at it, you get recognition for it," he says.



"I think I achieved something that I never thought I would through social media."

— Tyler Froberg
@farmer.froberg

Tyler Froberg, known to his 780,000 followers as Farmer Froberg, took to social media so he could educate people about farming and gardening.



LEFT: Tyler, right, and his uncle, Alfred Froberg, show off watermelons grown at Froberg's Farm.

BELOW: Tyler enjoys making social media videos with his sons, or, as he calls them online, "Little Farmer Frobergs." Tyler and his son, Dustin, have fun sharing gardening lessons.



A nonprofit recognized Tyler as the person it needed to run a program teaching farm skills to fellow veterans. "When I was there, though, I missed the spark that you got with young people, whether it was seeing a seed germinate or seeing an animal being born," he says. "While I was teaching adults, I didn't see the same spark."

Around that time, TikTok became popular, and Tyler got an idea. "I should make little videos, like ag lessons," he says. "I'm still a teacher, and maybe that will scratch that itch. And so, I did."

In the first two months, several of his videos got a respectable number of views. "I had a video hit 10,000 views, and then I had a video hit 250,000 views, and I was like, 'Huh, there might be something to this.'"

Tyler has posted a few poems, tried growing square watermelons and loofahs, and succeeded in growing star-shaped zucchini. He's even zipped layers of jackets to the tune of "Stand by Me" — which got over 5 million views the first time he posted it. But his favorite videos to make are any with his sons in them. "We just laugh and have fun," he says, talking about "Little Frobergs" Dusty, Carson Lee and Tommy "Tomcat."

"I'm not one of those content creator parents that are like, 'No, no, no. You have to say that this way,'" he says. "It's only been three years, and so, it's still kind of new for us. They get excited to go out and film with me." Tyler's wife, Kristi, known on social media as "Momma Froberg," also gets the occasional guest spot.

STAGES TO SUCCESS

Tyler's made plenty of silly videos. His personal favorite involves being a rubber duck farmer. "There were these rubber ducks everywhere, and it was just a lot of fun," he says.

Despite his following on social media, Tyler doesn't consider himself an influencer. "Influencers are putting on makeup trying to influence you to use this certain brand or product, or there are ag influencers who create content for people in the ag industry. They work with brands and influence followers to use certain brands or products, and I don't feel like I do that."

Tyler says there are a few stages every content creator goes through. The first step is embarrassment. "You don't want anybody you know to know that you're creating content," he says.

"Then comes, 'So you're still doing that thing?'" he says. "That's when you see your mom and she's like, 'Oh, you're still making the little videos. It's so cute.'"

The third phase is thinking content creation is a waste of time. "You're starting to take it more seriously," he says, "but you're not getting a lot out of it yet."

Then there's the final step — success. "For me, I got invited to give a commencement speech at a college graduation, and walking out on stage and realizing, 'oh wait, I think I did it.' I'm still not 100% sure, but I think I achieved something that I never thought I would through social media."

What about those strawberry-picking machines?

"I would like to think that Lego went as far as they could with that and got hundreds of thousands of submissions for strawberry-picking machines, but I don't know that to be true," he says. But he planted the seed of an idea. Now it's time to see what grows. 📺

CHECK IT OUT!

Tyler Froberg's videos are available on Instagram and TikTok at [farmer.froberg](https://www.instagram.com/farmer.froberg). His YouTube and Facebook accounts are under the name Farmer Froberg. For more on his family's farm, go to [frobergfarm.com](https://www.frobergfarm.com).

MAKING IT WORK

Mountain's experts answer your tech questions

Story by JEN CALHOUN | Photography by WILLIAM LEMASTER

When it comes to fiber optic technology, it's safe to say Mountain employees are experts. After all, Mountain started building its fiber broadband network long before many nationwide corporate telecommunications companies in large cities built theirs. Fiber optic technology is the most advanced broadband infrastructure available, and only about half the country has access to a 100% fiber network like Mountain's.

So, what does that actually mean? It means people using networks built with copper cables generally can't reach Gig upload and download speeds — even if the company that owns that network swears it's possible.

Also, copper networks aren't nearly as reliable as fiber, and your speeds can go up and down depending on how much bandwidth your neighbors are using at any given moment. If they're streaming movies and games, your own internet-related activities could be delayed.

But with all this cutting-edge technology from Mountain, questions are bound to arise. There are a few questions that Mountain employees get asked more than others. To answer them, our install/repair technicians made videos explaining some of the problems and how to fix them. You can find them on the Mountain Telephone – SpreeTV Productions YouTube channel, or you can scan the QR codes next to the photos below. 📺



Reboot: /rē'boōt/ restart or revive; refresh

Sometimes, we all need to take a beat. Digital equipment is no different. "Rebooting your router could solve a number of technical issues," says Tyler Adkins, a Mountain install/repair technician in Menifee and Morgan counties.

Scan here for the video:



Red light, green light, no light?

Often, the simplest answer is the right one. Remember to check your equipment's vital signs before pronouncing it dead. Is there a red light? Is the light off completely? "Seeing a red light or no light at all could mean your battery or equipment isn't properly plugged in," says Gene Cornett, a Mountain install/repair tech in Morgan and Wolfe counties.

Scan here for the video:



How to scan a QR code

QR codes, those black and white digital icons you see all over this article, offer a quick way to access websites and contact information without having to look it up.

If you're new to scanning QR codes, here's a quick tutorial. First, open the camera app on your smartphone or tablet, then point the camera lens at the QR code. When a notification appears on the screen, tap it. It should take you directly to the website.



One of these things is not like the other

Ever wonder why you get different results when you're using your cellphone as a hotspot than you do when you use a fiber broadband connection? Jason Oliver, a Mountain I/R tech in Wolfe County, explains. "Cellphone data and broadband data are not the same," he says.

Scan here for the video:



Secure connections

Investing in one of Mountain's Wi-Fi-enabled security systems means you can get live-streaming video of your home or business from anywhere. And while it sounds like tech magic, the setup is surprisingly simple. Mountain security and surveillance technicians Tyler Benton, left, and Garrett Howell guide you through it. "Connecting Wi-Fi to your security panels is a breeze," Howell says.

Scan here for the video:



Security and surveillance technician Tyler Benton says setting up a security system is surprisingly simple.



What lies beneath

Chances are, there's more equipment buried underground than you realize. To be certain, Tim Mays, a Mountain install/repair technician in Morgan and Menifee counties, reminds everyone to call 811 before they start digging in their yards. Tyler Adkins, in the background, shows how utility lines are located.

Scan here for the video:



Security and surveillance technician Tyler Benton says setting up a security system is surprisingly simple.



Security and surveillance technician Garrett Howell goes through the steps to connect a security system to Wi-Fi.

Sensational

SUMMER SALADS

Among summer's many charms are vegetables and fruit blooming with flavor, and it doesn't take a lot of effort to turn them into delicious salads.

These recipes cover all the salad bases. From crisp leafy tossed salads to sturdy mixes that can sit out for a couple hours while the kids play in the yard and you visit with friends. Keep it easy and choose a make-ahead recipe featuring hearty pastas, grains and beans that can work as a side dish or a full meal, or throw together fruit or vegetable combinations that hit sweet or savory notes.

Summer salads are versatile, so feel free to swap out lettuces, and use a variety of fruits instead of just one kind. After all, it's summertime, and the living — and cooking — should be easy.



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

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



BLUEBERRY PEACH SALAD

- 1 pint fresh blueberries
- 2 peaches, diced (leaving the skin on adds texture, vitamins and color)
- 2 cucumbers, sliced
- 1/2 cup crumbled feta cheese
- 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped basil
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

In a large serving bowl combine the blueberries, peaches, cucumbers and feta.

In a jar with a lid or measuring cup combine the lemon juice, Dijon, honey, olive oil, basil, salt and pepper. Whisk together until well combined.

Pour the vinaigrette over the salad and gently mix everything together. Taste for seasoning and garnish with extra basil. Serve or cover and refrigerate the salad until ready to serve.



SUMMER CORN SALAD

- 3 cups corn kernels (approximately 4 ears)
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, quartered
- 1 cup cucumbers, diced
- 1 cup crumbled feta cheese
- 1/4 cup red onion, diced
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 tablespoons rice vinegar
- 1 tablespoon fresh parsley
- Fresh basil ribbons
- Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil and add the corn. Cook for 3 to 4 minutes or until the kernels turn bright yellow. Drain the corn and cool completely. Use a sharp knife to remove the kernels from the corn cob, scraping the cobs to get all the "milk" from the cobs.

In a large bowl, combine the corn kernels, cherry tomatoes, cucumbers, feta cheese and red onion. Drizzle the olive oil and vinegar over the salad.

Season generously with salt and pepper, to taste, and toss well to combine. At this point, the salad may be made ahead. Just before serving, sprinkle with fresh herbs, and toss to combine.



MAIN DISH TORTELLINI SALAD

Grilled chicken heightens the flavor of this salad.

- 2 (10-ounce) packages cheese tortellini, prepared according to package instructions
- 2 cups shredded chicken
- 1 cup halved cherry tomatoes
- 8 ounces fresh mozzarella pearls
- 1 cup roasted red bell peppers, chopped into 1/2-inch pieces
- 1 cup basil pesto (store-bought or homemade)
- 1 1/2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- Fresh basil ribbons, for garnish

In a large bowl, combine the tortellini, shredded chicken, cherry tomatoes, mozzarella, roasted peppers, pesto and olive oil. Cover and refrigerate. Can be prepared up to a day ahead. When ready to serve, top with fresh basil.



SUMMER SHRIMP SALAD

- 2 pounds shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped red onion
- 1 rib celery, finely chopped

Dressing:

- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1 lemon, zested and juiced
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- Pinch of freshly ground black pepper

Bring a pot of water to a boil. Add the shrimp and boil for 2 to 3 minutes, until cooked through and pink. Plunge the cooked shrimp in an ice water bath to cool.

Meanwhile, make the dressing: Stir together the mayonnaise, lemon juice and zest, dill, mustard, garlic, salt and pepper.

In a mixing bowl, stir together the cooled shrimp, red onion, celery and dressing, until creamy. Serve plain or nestled on butter lettuce leaves garnished with fronds of fresh dill, if desired. 🍴



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JOIN US!

Mountain's 2024

ANNUAL MEETING

Mountain Rural Telephone Cooperative's Board of Directors and staff cordially invite you to MRTC's 2024 Meeting on Thursday, July 11.

▶▶ **FOR THE LATEST INFORMATION** and updates, visit mrtc.com or the Mountain Rural Telephone Cooperative Facebook page.



SAVE THE DATE!

WHAT: MRTC's 2024 Annual Meeting

WHERE: Elliott County High School Gym

WHEN: Thursday, July 11

REGISTRATION runs from 5-6:15 p.m.

BUSINESS MEETING starts at 6:30 p.m.