



Mountain Telephone

JULY/AUGUST 2023

CONNECTION

Climbing high

MRTC's annual
meeting issue

**VOLUNTEER
DEPARTMENTS
GET A BOOST**

**SWASHBUCKLING
DESTINATIONS**



By SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

Take a BOLD step

A new toolkit opens doors


Summer is finally here! That means barbecues, days at the pool and, if you have kids, reminding them to tackle their dreaded summer reading list before it is too late.

As they are doing their homework, I have an assignment for you. But don't worry, it's only a dozen pages.

The past few years have shown the world that broadband access is a necessity, not a luxury. As the demand and investment in broadband increases across rural America, so does the need for a skilled workforce to build and maintain these broadband networks.

NTCA's Smart Communities program recently teamed up with the National Rural Education Association to create the Broadband Opportunities and Leadership Development (BOLD) K-12 Career Awareness Toolkit, which is chock-full of new and creative ways to engage students and get them excited about careers in the broadband industry. Whether your student is interested in computer science, engineering and even accounting or marketing, there are opportunities for everyone in the broadband industry.

From guidance on organizing hands-on internships and site visits, to working with schools to develop curricula, or even ways to get involved with local esports and robotics teams, this toolkit is a wonderful resource for parents, educators and community-based broadband providers alike.

Summer may be in full swing, but back-to-school season will be here before you know it. Make sure you add the Smart Rural Community K-12 Career Awareness Toolkit to your summer reading list today! Read it here: ntca.org/BOLDToolkit. 




Avoid QR mischief

Scammers co-opt this handy code

QR codes — it stands for Quick Response — pop up frequently. TV ads, restaurant menus and much more rely on these little squares of blocky lines to quickly link a smartphone user to handy information, a download or as a way to digitally send money to someone.

The FBI, however, has warned that cybercriminals may tamper with the codes. The FBI offers a few tips so you can take advantage of QR codes while staying safe and secure:

- After scanning a QR code, check the URL to make sure it is the site you want. A malicious domain name may be similar to the intended URL but with typos or a misplaced letter.
- Be cautious when entering login, personal or financial information.
- If scanning a physical QR code, ensure the code shows no signs of tampering, such as a sticker placed over the original.
- Do not download an app from a QR code.
- If you receive an email asking you to complete a payment through a QR code, call the requesting company to verify. Look up the company's number on a trusted site — don't use a number from the email.
- Do not download a QR code scanner app — the built-in phone camera is a safer option.
- If you receive a QR code you believe to be from someone you know, contact them through a known number or address to verify.
- Avoid making payments through a site navigated to from a QR code. Instead, manually enter a known and trusted URL to complete the payment. 



Seeding the future

THE CLOUD UPLIFTS EDUCATION

The arrival of fast, reliable internet service in rural areas sparked innovation across businesses, health care providers and government resources, leading to more options and richer services. When it comes to education, how students interact now with schools and each other has evolved at a similarly blistering pace.

First, there was the growth of cloud-based services — multiple remote networked computers that handle storage and processing of information. Then, since the cloud was doing the heavy computing work, an entire class of low-power, lower-cost devices sprang up.

Together, this combo — low-cost Chromebooks, as well as similar devices, and cloud-based tools — have changed how many students learn.

Collaboration: The cloud allows students to work together on group projects after school or other times they're not physically in the same room. Cloud-based storage systems, such as Google Drive, Microsoft's OneDrive and others, allow the creation and sharing of documents, spreadsheets and presentations in real time — you can see the work of other members of your team as they're making changes.

Collaboration and brainstorming are easier than ever.

Accessibility: With their Chromebooks or similar devices students can access their work from any location, at any time. All their work is saved on the cloud, making it easily accessible and organized.

Efficiency: In many school systems, teachers use the cloud to grade assignments more efficiently and even easily share the results with parents. Students might receive immediate feedback, allowing them to improve their work and better understand the material.

Personalization: These cloud-based systems create the option for personalized learning experiences. Students can access online resources and tools that cater to their specific needs and learning styles. For families that home-school, online communities with similar educational interests and other resources also become more accessible.

Productivity: Thanks to the cloud and low-cost computing devices, students can be more productive, organized and collaborative. And because the tools are far less expensive than traditional computers, more people can affordably access them. 🗨️

Looking ahead to a new school year?

Make sure you're prepared.

- **The essential computer:** If your student needs a basic laptop to do homework and access online learning platforms, try the Lenovo Flex 5i Chromebook. "It's comparatively inexpensive, and it offers fast performance plus an excellent keyboard and trackpad. The Flex 5i is also compact and light, and its 1080p touchscreen is vivid and bright," according to a review by Wirecutter, a website operated by The New York Times offering reviews of a range of devices. Prices vary, but expect to pay about \$350.
- **Quality web cam:** From education to work, video calls are common. If your computer isn't already equipped, consider adding a camera. The Logitech C270 HD, often available for less than \$30, is a good choice for students required to attend lessons online. It delivers quality and clarity.

Is your Wi-Fi getting walloped?

Your home network might be busier than you think

Would you mind answering a question for me — how many devices connect to your Wi-Fi? It may be more than you realize.



SHAYNE ISON
General Manager

Consider starting in the room where you watch television. Do you have a smart TV or a device like a Roku that lets you stream services such as Netflix? If you're streaming music or podcasts, do you have a smart speaker like the ones from Google, Amazon or Apple? If you enjoy online gaming, please count those devices, too.

Next, let's move to the kitchen. Many appliances — everything from refrigerators to pressure cookers — have the option of using your Wi-Fi to connect to an app. Even some outdoor grills let you check in wirelessly. While you're thinking about the outside, do you have a security system, smart locks or smart devices? They use Wi-Fi, too.

Also, don't forget about the major systems of your home, such as heating and cooling. Smart thermostats can help you customize settings to your needs and schedules while helping you save money. Even large appliances such as water heaters, washers, dryers and cooking ranges have smart options so you can monitor and manage usage.

Finally, count the obvious ones. How many computers connect to your Wi-Fi? What about tablets like iPads? Does your mobile phone use Wi-Fi for calling, texting, internet searches or as a speed boost over the cellular connection?

The numbers add up, don't they? In fact, there are studies that indicate the typical U.S. household has more than 20 Wi-Fi-connected devices.

Just a few years ago, many of the now-common devices simply didn't exist. I suspect if you do this same exercise a few years from now you'll find more devices, and likely even entirely new classes of technology, using your home network.

This connected world is the reason we've committed to bringing you a fast, reliable internet connection, one not only capable of managing your needs today but also powerful enough to accommodate the demands of tomorrow. It's the type of forward-thinking innovation and investment at the heart of how MRTC has always operated.

You see, the more connected devices added to your network, the more robust it needs to be. Imagine that instead of cables moving bits, your internet is a large water pipe. Then, each device on your network is a faucet. Every faucet you turn on reduces available volume and water pressure. Also, the bigger the faucet, the more resources that specific pipe uses.

That last point becomes critical when considering your internet service — not all devices are equal. An intense gaming session or uploading large work files requires more speed and bandwidth than someone streaming music on a smartphone or checking in on social media. So, it's important to match your internet service not only to the number of devices connected to your network, but also to how they're used.

Did you count more connections than you anticipated? Well, if this exercise left you with questions about your service or what you need to do to get the most out of your internet connection, our team at MRTC is always available to help.

Thank you for letting us serve you. 🗨️

The Mountain Telephone Connection is a bimonthly newsletter published by Mountain Rural Telephone Cooperative, © 2023. 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 over 12,000 members.

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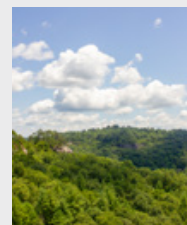
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UTILITY RESOURCES

On the Cover:



Shadows of clouds pass over the Red River Gorge. MRTC's annual meeting issue starts on Page 8.

Photo by Melissa Gaines

Fiber internet

It makes a difference



Fiber internet makes essential tools and services possible: commerce, education, entertainment, personal communication and more.

Here are a few examples, highlighted by the Fiber Broadband Association, offering a detailed look at how fiber networks make a difference:



1 FASTER INTERNET: Creating a network capable of keeping up with growing consumer demand for videos, music streaming and online gaming is no easy task. Fiber, however, consistently outpaces the fastest download and upload speeds of older technologies like cable, DSL and wireless.



2 INCREASED HOME VALUES: Studies have shown that fast, reliable broadband is rated as the single most important amenity for rented or multifamily homes. Access to fiber broadband increased rental and property values by as much as 8%.



3 FIBER NETWORKS HELP LOCAL ECONOMIES: There's growing evidence fiber connectivity not only encourages businesses to stay in their locations but also helps them grow and become more productive. It even attracts new businesses, particularly in high-tech industries.



4 SUSTAINABLE: The glass that makes fiber work so well is made from sand, which is plentiful and requires less energy and creates less pollution to acquire than older technologies.



Big BACK TO SCHOOL savings

Save \$10/month for three months by upgrading to a higher speed – just switch in July or August.

Give your student a leading edge this year while saving money. Call now and don't miss this deal!

*Offer applies to MRTC landline customers currently using 10 Mbps internet service. Offer available during July and August.



Mountain Telephone
mrtc.com | 606-743-3121



Happy Fourth!

Mountain Telephone wishes you a happy and safe Independence Day. In observance of the holiday, our office will be closed on Tuesday, July 4.

SHIVER ME TIMBERS!

Family fun sets sail at pirate-themed attractions



The American Star pirate ship sets sail from Orange Beach, Alabama.

Photo courtesy of Gulf Shores & Orange Beach Tourism

Story by ANNE BRALY

For generations, kids and adults alike have been captivated by legendary tales of pirates' treasure-hunting and swashbuckling adventures. If your family loves the story of Peter Pan and the misadventures of Captain Kidd, you're in luck! There's a bounty of places around the South where your crew can get its pirate on.

PARADISE LAGOON

Lexington, Kentucky

Woodland Aquatic Center's brand-new Paradise Lagoon, which opened in May,

is a pirate ship and water attraction that brings high seas adventures to Kentucky.

While the Paradise Lagoon pirate ship is new, it replaces the USS Woodland that generations of people grew up with. That ship sailed the waters of Woodland's pool for decades before being decommissioned when it was no longer seaworthy. The folks from Lexington's Parks and Recreation Department let the public vote on what they wanted to see replace the old vessel.

"Those results clearly indicated that the public wanted to keep the theme of

a pirate ship," says Michelle Kosieniak, parks and recreation superintendent of planning and design.

The new USS Woodland reimagines pirate life by letting kids and adults climb aboard — they can try to find a hidden periscope. They can also use a waterslide to make a quick getaway into the pool while sea creatures look on. The design offers fun sprayers and water cannons, too. But, Michelle says, "It has more gentle play features than the old USS Woodland, so that our youngest visitors can also interact without being overwhelmed."

- ▶ Admission: \$6 for adults, \$4 for kids 15 and under
- ▶ Information: lexingtonky.gov/neighborhood-pools

BLACK DAGGER PIRATE CRUISE

Hilton Head, South Carolina

Board the Black Dagger and set sail for a memorable day of adventure. Get your own pirate name, learn some pirate lingo, find sunken treasures, get a temporary tattoo and defeat Stinky Pete in a water cannon battle. It's an action-packed experience that lets kids live their pirate fantasies on the water while using their imaginations.



Visitors have a chance to play pirate aboard the American Star's pirate cruise in Orange Beach, Alabama.

The pirate ship cruises the calm waters of Calibogue Sound, so seasickness is rare. Wear comfortable clothes — bathing suits are not needed, but sunblock is wise. Reservations are strongly recommended.

- ▶ Admission: \$39 for adults and children, infants 11 months and younger are free
- ▶ Information: piratesofhiltonhead.com

CANOE THE CANEY

Silver Point, Tennessee

It's said treasure abounds on the banks of the Caney, a river that flows deep in the mountains of East Tennessee. There's a legend about a crew of pirates who stole a cursed treasure belonging to dastardly Captain JaBez and fled, spreading his ill-gotten gains across the water as they went.

Now, boaters — wearing pirate hats and carrying swords — can travel the river in canoes, searching for JaBez's gold coins and sparkling jewels, while keeping their eyes peeled for the captain and his crew who may be disguised as local fishermen.

The Pirate Adventure is one of two pirate-themed trips offered by Canoe the Caney. The Pirate's Dinner and Sunset River Cruise is new this season. The youngest allowed in a canoe or kayak solo is 8 years old, depending on experience. The youngest age for a child with a parent on board is 3 years old.

- ▶ Admission: Starts at \$29
- ▶ Information: canoethecaney.com

Pirates battle on ship at the Pirate's Voyage Dinner and Show in Pigeon Forge.



Photo courtesy of Hollywood Company

PIRATE VOYAGE DINNER SHOW

Pigeon Forge, Tennessee

You'll have a four-course feast that even the pickiest of pirates will enjoy. The menu includes Cracklin' Pan-Fried Chicken, Swashbucklin' Sugar-Cured Ham, Cob-O' Butter Corn, Pirate Herb-Basted Potato, Walk the Plank dessert and unlimited Coca-Cola, tea or coffee. And just to make sure all pirates are satisfied, gluten-free, vegan and vegetarian meals are available.

While you dine, Blackbeard and his quartermaster, Calico Jack, will lead the Crimson and Sapphire crews in a battle on land and sea in full-size pirate ships.

- ▶ Admission: \$29.99 for kids, \$49.99 for adults and free for children under 3
- ▶ Information: piratesvoyage.com

PIRATE SHIP CRUISE

Orange Beach, Alabama

Bring your buccaneers aboard the American Star for a Pirate Adventure on Terry Cove, where they can get their faces painted, learn a little pirate lingo and even sing a sea shanty or two. Visitors get to help defend the ship in a "gun" battle, hear true stories of pirate and privateer attacks in the legendary Pirate's Cove and hunt for the captain's lost gold and treasure chest while keeping their eyes out for any surprise attacks! As an added bonus, you may see some dolphins, too.

- ▶ Admission: Starts at \$29, free for children 1 and under
- ▶ Information: hudsonmarina.net/Pirate-Adventure.htm



Pirates circle the treasure map aboard the American Star's pirate cruise in Orange Beach, Alabama.

Photos courtesy of Gulf Shores & Orange Beach Tourism



Mountain Telephone

Consolidated Balance Sheet

as of Dec. 31, 2022

ASSETS

Current Assets\$ 7,271,465

Other Assets

Investments in Affiliated Companies 49,621,509
(including Cellular)

Miscellaneous Physical Property 3,607,017

Other Investments 38,409,823

Total Current/Other Assets 98,909,814

Telecommunications Plant 135,942,420

Less Accumulated Depreciation (89,760,910)

Net Telecommunications Plant 46,181,510

TOTAL ASSETS\$ 145,091,324

LIABILITIES and MEMBERS' EQUITIES

Current Liabilities\$ 4,282,169

Long-Term Debt to U.S. Government 4,527,657

Long-Term Liability (4,652,948)

Members' Equities:

Membership 142,908

Patronage Capital 139,467,563

Retired Capital Credit Gain 1,323,975

TOTAL LIABILITIES and MEMBERS' EQUITIES\$ 145,091,324



Putting community first

MRTC gives \$33,000 to local fire and rescue

Mountain Rural Telephone Cooperative recently presented their annual donations totaling \$33,000 to all the fire and rescue units in its coverage region. The donations went to fire and rescue departments in Bath, Elliott, Menifee, Morgan and Wolfe counties to fund supplies, equipment and more.

“The fire and rescue units in our region do remarkable and lifesaving work on shoestring budgets,” says Lisa Fannin, director of marketing and public relations for MRTC. “All of these folks are volunteers who spend their spare time braving dangerous situations to keep the rest of us safe. We are all better for having them here, and Mountain Telephone is grateful for all they do.” 📞



From left, Justin Welch, of the Olympian Springs Volunteer Fire Department, MRTC's Lisa Fannin and Randy Crouch, of the Salt Lick Fire/Rescue Department.



From left: Lisa Fannin, Steve Newell, with the Isonville Volunteer Fire Department, Alan Kuehner, with the Route 504 Fire Department, and Ethan Adkins, with the Sandy Hook Fire-Rescue.



Lisa Fannin and Jason Hunley, of the Menifee County Fire Protection District.



Front row, from left: Cody Hutchinson, with Morgan County Rescue Squad; Drexel Patrick, with 519 and Wrigley volunteer fire departments; and Casey Helton, with Morgan County Rescue Squad. Back row, from left: Chris Adams, with the White Oak Volunteer Fire Department; Jody Oldham, with Caney Valley Volunteer Fire Department; Donnie Keeton, with Highway 172 and Peddler Gap volunteer fire departments; Jamie Phipps, with West Liberty Fire Department; and Kent Cole, of the Blackwater Volunteer Fire Department.



From left: Lisa Fannin; Arthur Vest, with Hazel Green Volunteer Fire Department; Jennifer Caldwell, Jerry Harris and Jerry Brush, all with Wolfe County Volunteer Fire Department; and Mike Hackett, with Wolfe County Search & Rescue.



FELLOW TRAVELERS

Digital communities keep travelers connected on the go

Story by DREW WOOLLEY



The internet was a much different place when Peter Daams started Travellerspoint.com with his brother, Samuel, in 2002. Back then, they were looking at sites like FriendsReunited and classmates.com for inspiration — places for people who had lost touch to reconnect.

“We wanted to make something similar for travelers who had lost track of people they met on trips,” Peter says. “Our tagline was ‘Travel Friends Reunited.’ Our initial launch included a service to help with that, as well as a very basic trip log and a basic travel diary feature.”

The site attracted some attention, but it soon became apparent that Travellerspoint wasn’t giving visitors many reasons to hang around after they had searched for or found their missing travel buddies. The next year, the brothers added travel forums to the site, with a little extra help from a Geocities project that was about to be shuttered.

“That really kick-started the community side of the site and has set the tone for how it’s grown since then,” Peter says. “The owner of that project agreed to let us take it over, so we instantly were able to kick-start our forums with a great group of users who were experts on many travel destinations.”

Today, the site has grown into one of the largest and most active travel communities on the internet with more than 1 million users sharing photos, blog posts and mapping trips. Travellerspoint and other online travel communities like it are also the perfect hubs for the growing number of travelers looking to share their adventures with other enthusiasts.

NEW DESTINATIONS

Since the end of travel restrictions around the COVID-19 pandemic, Americans have been eager to get out and see more than their backyards. Data from the U.S. Travel Association showed that travel spending in March 2023 was up nearly 10% over the previous year and 5% over spending in 2019.

That enthusiasm shows no sign of slowing down as more than half of Americans say they plan to make travel a priority this year. But how they travel is starting to change. More travelers are putting an emphasis on finding destinations that are off the beaten path, family-friendly and environmentally responsible.

Online communities provide the perfect place for travelers to research these new adventures and get recommendations from others who have tried them. Many of these communities have migrated to social media platforms like Facebook, where they can cater to the specific needs of different groups.

Communities like Wanderful and Girls Love Travel, for example, provide a network of women who can support and even join other women in their travels. The TravelAwaits community offers stories, deals and advice geared toward travelers ages 50 and up. Digital Nomads Around the World, on the other hand, offers inspiration and advice for younger travelers living and working on the go.

While many of these groups rely on social media to maintain their communities, Peter still sees sites like his playing an important role for dedicated travelers. The rise of Facebook initially saw some of the more off-topic banter on Travellerspoint forums shift to the social media channel. But as other communities have shut down, Travellerspoint has become a haven for hardcore travelers looking for a place to discuss their passion.

“Many of those members are now very active on Travellerspoint,” Peter says. “We became something of a refuge for the people who lost their previous online communities.” 🗨️



TRAVEL TROUPES

Whether you never stop traveling or you're planning each course for your next foodcation, you can find a community that has the same passions.

Digital Nomads Around the World — Digital nomads are people who travel freely while using the internet to work remotely. They tend to travel light and live out of temporary housing while they're on the move. It isn't a lifestyle for everyone, but if it piques your interest this group can answer your questions.

TravelAwaits — Traveling in your 50s and beyond often comes with the benefit of more time and resources to explore your interests. But it can also present unique challenges. TravelAwaits is a community by and for older travelers, so you can trust that every deal, recommendation and discussion keeps your needs in mind.

Wanderful — Whether you're a woman eager to explore solo or looking for a supportive group of fellow travelers, Wanderful has everything you need. Learn about safe travel practices, pick up inspiration for your next excursion or connect with other adventurous women at online and offline events.

Food Travelist — Everyone loves a great meal on vacation. But for some travelers, the food is the point. If that's you, Food Travelist has your back with tasty recommendations and mouth-watering photos. When your wanderlust kicks in back home, you can even find recipe ideas to take your taste buds on a trip instead.

Meet the people who

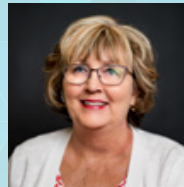
BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND STAFF



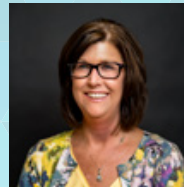
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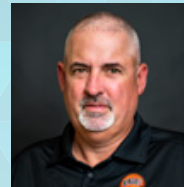
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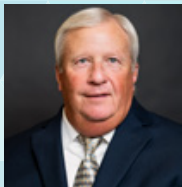
Chris Dickerson
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Jack Howard
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John Nickell
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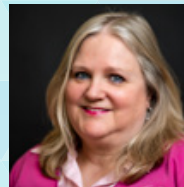
Mike Helton
768 exchange



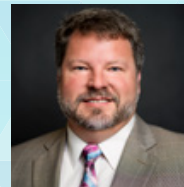
Robert V. Bradley
522 exchange



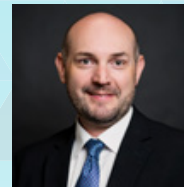
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Attorney

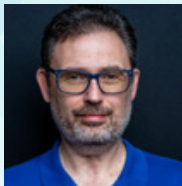


Shayne Ison
CEO/GM



Quentin Murphy
Assistant General
Manager

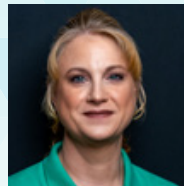
MRTC EMPLOYEES



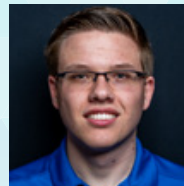
Adam Mann



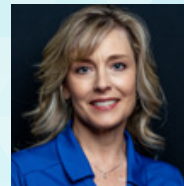
Alicia Walter



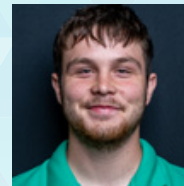
Amie Wheeler



Andrew Bailey



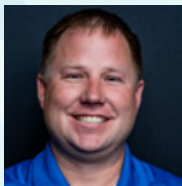
Angie Pennington



Austin Murphy



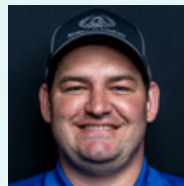
Brad Nickell



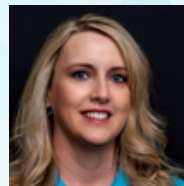
Brandon Wilson



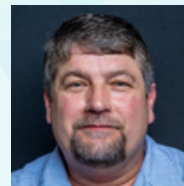
Brian Cox



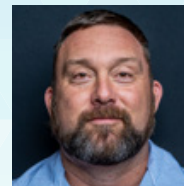
Caleb Caudill



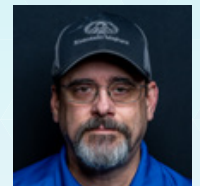
Carla Hileman



Carter Bolin



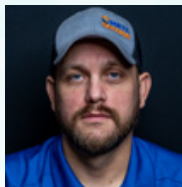
Courtney Rice



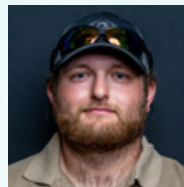
Curtis Howell



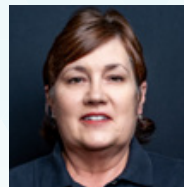
Dale Brown



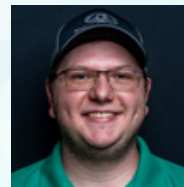
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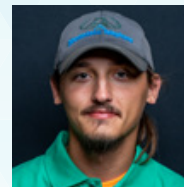
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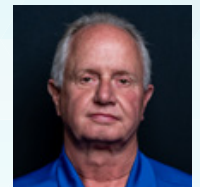
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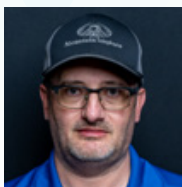
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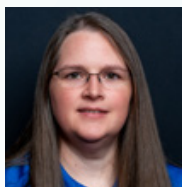
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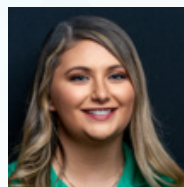
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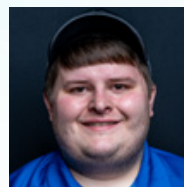
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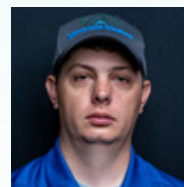
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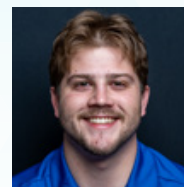
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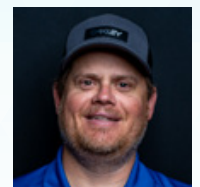
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Jacob Preece

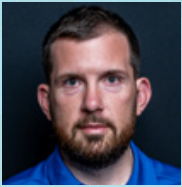


Jake Henry



James Lane

make Mountain work



Jason Oliver



Jason Sargent



Jerry Hampton



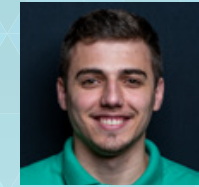
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John Michael Gibson



Johnathan Keeton



Josh Adkins



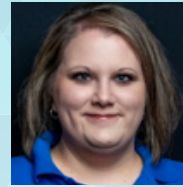
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Kent Cole



Kerrick Kidd



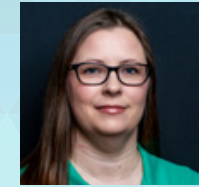
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Kirstin Beculhimer



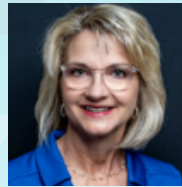
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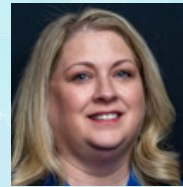
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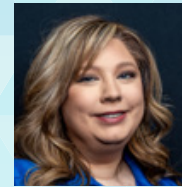
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Lisa Fannin



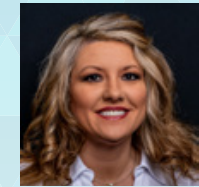
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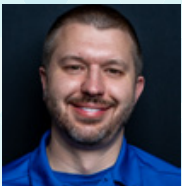
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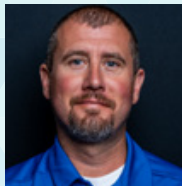
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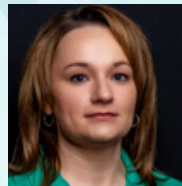
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Michael Bradley



Michael Keeton



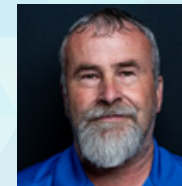
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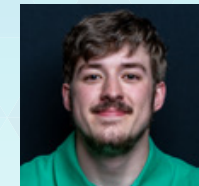
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Missie Preece



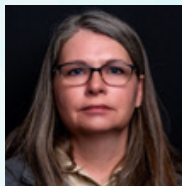
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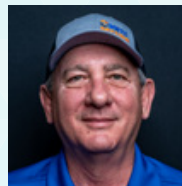
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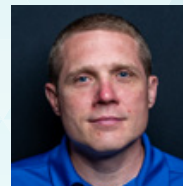
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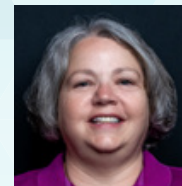
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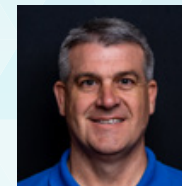
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Ricky Pennington



Rose Howell



Steven Gullett



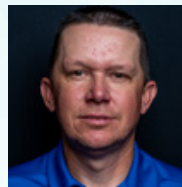
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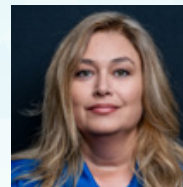
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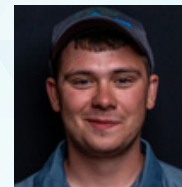
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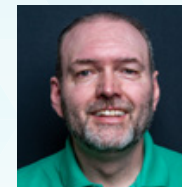
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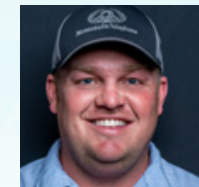
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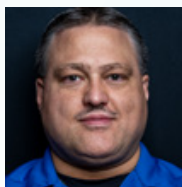
Travis Keeton



Tyler Adkins



Tyler Benton



Wes Collett

Not pictured:
Denver Williams

Photos by William LeMaster



Mountain Telephone

Time-saving devices

Gourmet gadgets can make meals manageable

Instant pots became a “thing” in the 2010s, and people fell instantly in love with them. Combining an electric pressure cooker, slow cooker, rice cooker and yogurt maker in one, multicookers save space and cook meals quickly. What better time to hop on the bandwagon than now, when summer produce is at its height?

If you’re old enough to remember your grandmother’s pressure cooker, you may know horror stories of it blowing up and causing injuries. But don’t worry! Today’s electric pressure cookers have a slew of safety features, including sensors to monitor temperature and pressure.

The price of multicookers has come



down from north of \$500 to under \$65, an excellent price for beginners. If you want more functions or higher wattage, expect to spend upward of \$100. Here are some recipes to get you started.



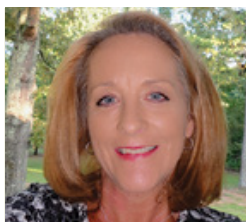
SUMMER VEGETABLE SOUP

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 4 teaspoons minced garlic
- 3 medium ears fresh corn, kernels removed (or 2 1/4 cups frozen corn)
- 2 pounds tomatoes, peeled, seeded and chopped
- 1 sweet bell pepper, seeded and diced
- 2 medium zucchini, diced
- 1 cup fresh or frozen lima beans
- 8 ounces sliced mushrooms
- 1 small eggplant, peeled and diced
- 4 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- 1 tablespoon vinegar (red wine, balsamic or white)
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 tablespoon Italian seasoning
- 1 teaspoon salt, or to taste
- Ground black pepper, to taste

Press the saute button. Add olive oil to the stainless steel insert. Wait 2 minutes for it to preheat.

Add onion and garlic. Saute, stirring frequently, just until onion is tender (about 5 minutes). Press off/stop button. Add remaining ingredients. Place lid on the cooker and make sure the valve is set to sealing. Press soup and set the timer for 12 minutes.

The cooker will beep and start cooking. It may take about 20 minutes for it to come to pressure before the timer starts. When the cooking is done, allow the pressure to naturally release for about 5 minutes, then quick release any remaining pressure by switching the valve to venting. Carefully remove the lid, away from your face, and set aside. Stir and season with salt and pepper. Let cool a bit before serving.



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

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

VEGGIE TOMATO SAUCE

Using canned tomatoes rather than fresh in this recipe from Instant Pot makes this recipe a breeze.

- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 2 small to medium carrots, diced
- 2 celery sticks, diced
- 3 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon thyme leaves
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 small beets (canned or fresh), diced
- 1 cup diced red bell pepper
- 5 mushrooms, diced
- 1/2 of a medium zucchini, diced
- 2 cups fresh spinach leaves
- 5 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 jalapeno red chili (Use half or less if you don't like some heat.)
- 3 cans whole tomatoes in juice
- 1/2 cup water

Turn the multicooker on and press the saute key. Once hot, add the olive oil, onions, carrots and celery and cook for 5 minutes, stirring a few times.

Add the rest of the ingredients. Press cancel to stop the saute process. Stir the contents and pop the lid on top.

Lock the lid, making sure the top valve points to sealing. Set to manual/pressure cook on high pressure for 10 minutes. The cooker will take 5-10 minutes to build up the pressure and the timer will begin.

Once finished, allow the pressure to release naturally for 10 minutes and then move the top valve to venting to quickly release of the remaining pressure.



Open the lid and stir. Using an immersion blender, puree into a thick sauce. You can also do this in a blender or a food processor, but make sure to cool the sauce down slightly and do this in batches. Pour the sauce into containers or mason jars for storage or use right away as a sauce for pasta, pizza, enchiladas, meatballs and more.

INSTANT POT ROAST

This recipe from Instapot is a cooker full of comfort.

- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- 1 (4-4 1/2-pound) boneless chuck roast, excess fat trimmed and cut into 6 pieces
- 1 cup beef stock
- 6-8 jarred pepperoncini salad peppers, plus 1/4 cup liquid from jar
- 1 (1-ounce) package dry onion soup mix
- 2 tablespoons dried parsley flakes
- 1 tablespoon dried chives
- 2 teaspoons dried dill
- 1 1/2 teaspoons onion powder
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 3 tablespoons cornstarch

Set a 6-quart cooker to the high saute setting. Heat oil then add beef and cook until evenly browned, about 2-3 minutes per side. Set aside.

Stir in beef stock, scraping any browned bits from the bottom. Stir in pepperoncini and liquid, onion soup mix, parsley flakes, chives, dill, onion powder, garlic powder and pepper. Return beef to the pot.

Select manual setting, adjust pressure to high, and set timer for 45 minutes. When finished cooking, naturally release pressure according to manufacturer's directions, 20-30 minutes.

Remove beef from the pot, then shred, using two forks.

In a small bowl, whisk together cornstarch and 3 tablespoons cold water and set aside.

Select high saute setting. Bring to a boil, stir in cornstarch mixture and cook, stirring frequently until slightly thickened, about 3-5 minutes. If the mixture is too thick, add more beef stock as needed until desired consistency is reached. Serve immediately. 🍴





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Mountain Telephone's
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MEETING

Thursday, July 6
Menifee Central Elementary School

Registration: 5-6:15 p.m.
Business meeting: 6:30 p.m.



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