

West Carolina Tel

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2013

CONNECTED

SOARING SUCCESS

'Peter Pan' set to
be newest hit
for opera house

STAYING SAFE

West Carolina rolls out
security service

TV AT 10

DE service reaches
decade mark

Living in a time of transition

The final weeks of the year hold special meaning for me. It's a time of thanksgiving, to reflect on our blessings; a time of celebration, to focus on our family, friends and faith; and a time of hope, to look toward the new year with a sense of renewal.



As we move toward the end of 2013, the word that I think best describes this year is "transition." For me personally, my family and I were blessed with the opportunity to join you at West Carolina Tel. I'm excited to serve as your new CEO, and I look forward to working with the employees and board members here to navigate the challenges every company like ours is facing.

I come to South Carolina from Dickey Rural Networks in North Dakota, a cooperative formed in 1950 that has grown to offer advanced telecommunications services to thousands of homes

and businesses in North and South Dakota.

Not only has it been a transition for me, but it has also been a transition for West Carolina Tel as a company. Advances in technology, changing consumer demands and shifts in federal regulations are moving us away from being a traditional telephone company to becoming a technology company. The ways you choose to connect with people and enjoy entertainment are changing, and it is our mission to provide the technology to make it all happen.

We are not alone. All across the country, rural service providers like West Carolina Tel are changing their business models to adapt to the new industry reality. These are indeed challenging times, but they are also exciting times. By refining our focus and looking for new ways to do business, we are improving the quality of life for people in this region.

One approach is to look for ways to work with other telecommunications companies in order to benefit our members. The magazine you are reading now is a perfect example of that approach. Because of all that is changing at your cooperative and the industry itself, we knew we needed to increase our efforts to keep you informed. Through these pages we will update you on network upgrades, share information about our services and shine a spotlight on local people and organizations who are using technology to create something special. You'll also find helpful tips, industry news and interesting feature stories from across the Southeast in these pages.

This magazine is the result of a collaborative publishing effort among rural providers across several states. This collaboration allows us to do a better job of keeping you informed, in a very cost-effective manner.

As we head into a new year of unknown challenges and opportunities, I would like to welcome Billy Bauman and Mike Thomas to our board of directors. Members elected them to the board at our annual meeting in August, and I know they will be an asset to West Carolina Tel. They replace two of the finest men I ever had the pleasure of working with: Sam Gilliam and Walt Thomas (see Page 8). Their insight and leadership will certainly be missed. We all wish Sam the best in his retirement years. To the Thomas family, we extend our sympathies; the passing of "Mr. Walt" not only left a void at this cooperative, but also in the entire community of people who knew him and loved him. ☎

JEFF WILSON

Chief Executive Officer

West Carolina Tel
YOUR TECHNOLOGY COOPERATIVE

is a member-owned cooperative dedicated to delivering advanced telecommunications technology to the people of Abbeville, Anderson and McCormick counties.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Due West, Area 4

Stanley H. Keaton, Vice-President
Antreville/Lowndesville, Area 5

Jane U. Stone, Secretary
Donalds, Area 3

Talmadge R. Bussey
South McCormick, Area 9

L. Ned McGill
Starr, Area 1

John Michael Thomas
Iva, Area 2

James T. Hester
Calhoun Falls, Area 6

William "Billy" Bauman
Abbeville, Area 7

Westley "Wes" McAllister
North McCormick, Area 8

West Carolina Tel

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CONNECTED

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On the Cover:



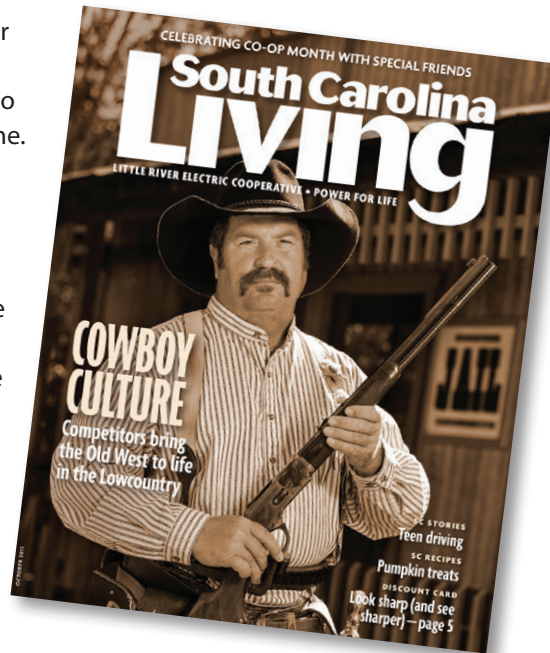
Michael Genevie takes a break from watching a rehearsal at the Abbeville Opera House.
See story Page 13.

Cooperative cooperation and fiber network featured in electric magazine

The October issue of Little River Electric's South Carolina Living magazine had some nice things to say about West Carolina Telephone.

As part of celebrating October as National Cooperative Month, General Manager Roland White took time in his column in the issue to underscore the way Little River and West Carolina work together to better serve the people in the region. He also praised West Carolina's fiber network as important for growth.

We are happy to work with great partners like Little River Electric and appreciate their support!



DE Plus has Christmas covered

It won't be long before communities in our service area hold their annual Christmas parades, and West Carolina will once again be helping spread that holiday spirit. Most of the parades, as well as other fall and winter events, will be available for viewing on Video on Demand a short time after they happen.

To access the Video on Demand features, press the VOD button on your remote.



Channels changing

DE Plus customers have probably noticed a few channels going through a name change and a new HD option.

FOX has introduced its own 24-hour sports network called FOX Sports 1, plus a new general entertainment network aimed at young men called FXX. The new channels replace the Speed Channel and FOX Soccer World. These changes were made by FOX; West Carolina Telephone had no say in the decision.

For football fans, West Carolina is upgrading NFL RedZone to high definition to provide scoring drives with dazzling picture quality. This new HD channel, and other upgrades in the coming months, are part of the cooperative's commitment to serving you!

Two new board members take the reins



Billy Bauman



Mike Thomas

West Carolina's annual meeting in August saw two new members elected to the board of directors for the first time in decades.

The cooperative welcomes Billy Bauman and Mike Thomas to the board. They replace Sam Gilliam and Walt Thomas, respectively.

"We're excited about the addition of these two gentlemen to our board," said board president Lee Logan. "They are going to contribute very quickly and very significantly to the work of the cooperative."

For more about the outgoing board members, see stories on Page 8. The January issue of Connected will include more information about these new board members.

Saying goodbye to longtime leaders

After decades of service, two board members leave big shoes to fill

It's hard for Sam Gilliam to believe how much West Carolina Telephone has changed in the four decades he served on the board of directors. "I've seen a lot of growth — from two-party lines to wireless phones," says Gilliam, who turns 84 in December. "I never would have guessed it would grow this much."

Gilliam, who represented much of Abbeville on the board, retired on Aug. 14.

His peers on the board say Gilliam has had a lot to do with that success.

"Sam was very dedicated to the work of West Carolina and considered service to the members to be of the utmost importance," says board president Lee Logan. "When he made comments and shared opinions, we all paid attention because we knew he had put a lot of thought into it."

Fellow board member Jim Hester says the cooperative's employees owe a lot to Gilliam. "He really appreciated all of the employees and looked out for them," he says.

Gilliam, a Clemson graduate who worked at a bank, the county tax office, his cattle farm and the university's regulatory office, was a member of the board's audit committee.

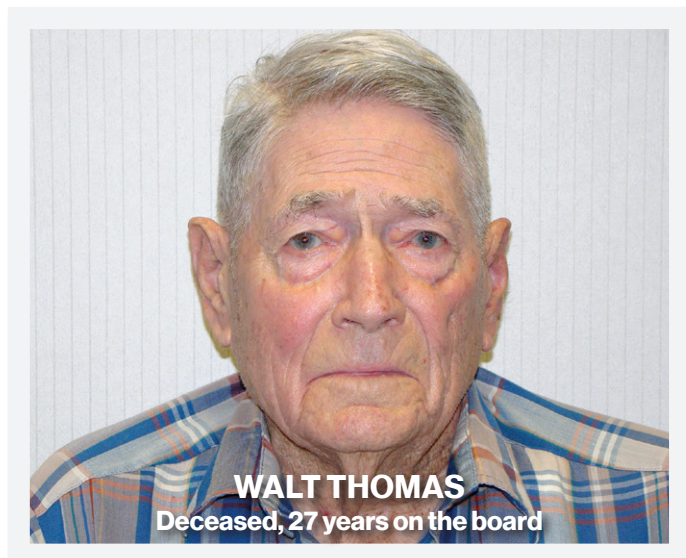
He says he's proud of the way the board members got along, even when they had disagreements. "One of the things that will stand out in my mind is how well we worked together," he says.



Gilliam says he would have liked to stay, but felt it was best for the cooperative for him to step down.

"With my age and health, I felt like it was time for me to step down," he explains. "I already miss it." 📞

The news of Walt Thomas's passing affected the community far beyond his work on the West Carolina board. That's because almost everyone in the community knew "Mr. Walt," either through the cooperative, his hardware store or the boards for People's Bank of Iva and the Starr Iva Water Company.



"Mr. Walt's surely going to be missed," says board member Ned McGill. "He's already being missed."

Board president Lee Logan said he was always impressed by how in tune the 90-year-old World War II veteran was with the community. "He knew almost all of the members in his area by name and could represent their needs and concerns well," Logan says.

Thomas passed away on July 31, days after he was involved in a car accident.

"Walt was just an overall good fellow," adds McGill, a friend of 50 years. "He was the kind of person who would help pick someone else's cotton before he picked his own."

Mike Thomas, one of Mr. Walt's sons who was recently elected to his father's seat on the board, says his dad served as an excellent example, both on the board and at the hardware store. "He basically had the same attitude in both places," the younger Thomas says. "He didn't look at people as just being customers. If someone walked in his hardware store, he wanted to be sure they left with what they needed. I think he carried that over to the phone cooperative, too. He always had a genuine passion and desire to see it prosper." 📞

New West Carolina security systems are in high demand

Installation crews ready to whittle down waiting list

One thing that makes a cooperative different from other types of businesses is that the customers are member owners. Essentially, you are the cooperative's boss.

And the bosses have made it very clear that they are ready for West Carolina Tel to offer security services.

"We've had plenty of members ask about security service in the past, but for something as critical as personal safety, we weren't going to jump in until we knew we could do it right," says Commercial Manager Gary Tilley. "With recent advancements in home security technology, we are thrilled to have another way to meet our members' needs."

Earlier this summer, West Carolina Telephone cleared the final licensing hurdles to begin offering security service. As managers prepared to launch the new product, customer service representatives began adding members' names to a waiting list.

"We never imagined we would need a waiting list of members so eager to get our security service," says CEO Jeff Wilson. "To me, that is a testament to the good work and great service our team has been providing for years."

TRUST MEETS TECHNOLOGY

Kristen Turner, West Carolina's security specialist, says members feel comfortable with the cooperative staff members and trust them to carry their commitment to service over to security. "We're local," she says. "Many of our members know everybody in this office."

But beyond the local connection, West Carolina's security technology is top-notch. The new system will include industry standard alarms and sensors, as well as a cutting-edge control center that will allow expansion for home automation. With an Internet connection, it won't be long before West Carolina members can raise or lower their home thermostats from their computer at work. The new system will also eventually allow members to check their home camera feeds and turn on lights from miles



Kristen Turner says security service is a natural step for West Carolina.

away on their smartphone.

"West Carolina has a tradition of offering state-of-the-art products, and it is important to us for that to carry over to our security service," Wilson says.

From a business perspective, Tilley says once the new fiber network provided adequate bandwidth to run the security system, the service became "the next logical step."

"Our phone service and broadband network already connect members to their community, and our DE-Plus connects them to hundreds of entertainment options," he explains. "It only makes sense that we are now able to connect them with something even more important — safety for their families and homes." 📞

NEW SYSTEMS INCLUDE:

- ▶ LCD control panel
- ▶ Wireless door and window alarms
- ▶ Wireless motion sensors
- ▶ Audible alarm
- ▶ 24/7 monitoring



FUTURE EXPANSIONS MAY INCLUDE:

- ▶ Remote thermostat control
- ▶ Realtime mobile video feed
- ▶ Lighting controls through a mobile app



Say **YES** to security and peace of mind!

West Carolina Security is offering a special introductory rate of **\$99** for initial setup. This includes a control unit and installation.

To sign up, call 864-446-2111 or visit your local customer service center.



10 Years of TV

2013 marks milestone for Digital Entertainment service

Ten years ago in the world of television, Ty Pennington first told the bus driver to “move that bus!” and two former Hollywood stuntmen got together to bust commonly-held myths for Discovery Channel.

In prime time, the first “Bachelorette” was looking for love through a reality show, while Charlie Sheen first played a bachelor just looking to cope with his brother and nephew.

In daytime TV, Ellen DeGeneres launched her talk show, while Jimmy Kimmel debuted his in late-night.

Meanwhile, in South Carolina, West Carolina Telephone Cooperative began offering DE, or Digital Entertainment service, giving members a new, better option to keep up with those shows and others.

“To last 10 years in television, a show has to really deliver for its audience,” says Chuck Nash, West Carolina’s Digital Entertainment consultant. “We feel the same way about our DE service — we’re proud to have satisfied our members for this long, and hope to continue for years to come.”

GROWING LOCALLY

When DE service debuted, it didn’t take long for area residents to jump on board.

When Digital Entertainment started in September 2003, 43 subscribers signed up for service in the first month. In December 2004, there were about 1,500 subscribers, and now approximately 8,000 households enjoy DE+ TV service.

Nash believes one of the key reasons for the growth is the cooperative’s commitment to local programming that is not available from any other provider.

In 2007, West Carolina employees began filming parades and other events to air on a local cable channel. In 2011, when the cooperative upgraded its video platform, the local programs were moved to the Local Video on Demand service. Local VOD offerings now include high school sports such as football, baseball and softball, as well as community events such as Christmas parades, Abbeville Spring Festival and Iva Depot Days.

“I think our local content is what sets us apart,” Nash says. “Focusing on local events like we have is something only a member-owned cooperative is going to do. It’s just another reminder of how connected we are with our community.”

In 2012, West Carolina produced and aired 198 local events, not including the weekly church services submitted by area congregations.

STAYING AHEAD FOR THE FUTURE

Just like a sitcom writer that has to continually add fresh jokes to stay popular, West Carolina managers know they have to continue adding features to keep up with demand.

DE service has gone from 108 channels in 2003 to 257 video and 45 music channels in 2013. Many of those channels are available in HD with more added each year. HD service is free to customers that subscribe to a qualifying TV package.

The cooperative offers industry-leading features like whole-home DVR, on-screen caller ID, remote DVR and the fastest channel change of any provider. But there are other features like RewindTV and the WatchTVEverywhere mobile app. These features are still rare, not just among rural television providers, but in the entire industry.

RewindTV gives viewers the option to pause and rewind broadcasts on certain channels, even without a DVR. West Carolina’s WatchTVEverywhere app debuted with expanded coverage of the 2012 Olympics. Now, the app — which allows members to view live and pre-recorded TV programming on their smartphones, computers and tablets — offers 20 networks including A&E, Fox News, The History Channel and The Golf Network.

“We try to be on the cutting edge,” Nash says. “That was true 10 years ago, and it’s true today.” 📞





Michael Genevie says 'Peter Pan' has as much to offer adults as it does children.

Peter Pan and the Opera House *Soar again*

BY ANDY JOHNS

Abbeville landmark will turn into Neverland for six shows

In one of the most famous scenes in Peter Pan, the main hero manages to revive a dying Tinkerbell by getting enough other people to believe in her.

Take out the flying and the imaginary Neverland, and the story isn't that far off from what supporters of the Abbeville Opera House have done.

By convincing others to believe in a cause, they have revived the landmark theater, which will play host to Pan, Tinkerbell and the rest of the cast beginning Nov. 1.

"I think there's as much in Peter Pan for the adults as for the kids," says Opera House Executive Director Michael Genevie. "The story is incredible."

West Carolina Telephone is proud to underwrite the show, a sponsorship that helps defray the cost of production for the non-profit opera house.

"The Opera House is a big part of Abbeville's identity, just like West Carolina Telephone," says Jeff Wilson, the cooperative's CEO. "We are thrilled to not only support the opera house but also to bring a classic story like Peter Pan to the Upstate area."

The opera house played host to the musical versions of Peter, Wendy, Captain

Hook and the Lost Boys in the 1980s. But this year's show will use J.M. Barrie's original 1904 script. That script, without the songs and musical numbers, has time to develop the plot and personalities.

"We're able to focus more on the characters and on telling their stories — Hook, the Lost Boys, the Indians," Genevie says.

But the play is not without its challenges. Since the opera house doesn't have an actual flying fairy, Tinkerbell will be portrayed by a light that will move around the stage. "There are some tricks and some magic you have to use," Genevie explains.

The best trick of all will be the signature effect of the play — making Peter Pan fly.

"The rigging is already built in to the opera house, so it's the perfect theater for it," he says. "It will be a spectacle on stage telling the story."

BOX OFFICE MAGIC

The magic Genevie and others use on stage is almost as impressive as the kind they use behind the scenes to keep the Opera House thriving.

Theaters and opera houses across the country are having to close their doors because revenues are not keeping up with expenses.

Studies have suggested that in light of the recent recession, one in 10 arts organizations around the United States is in financial trouble, and theaters and opera houses from California to Connecticut have had to close their doors.

Many theaters face shrinking audiences and increasing royalty fees for big-name plays. When the Opera House actors put on "Annie" in 2012, it cost \$9,000 just for permission to use the script. Tack on costumes, sets and other expenses and it becomes clear why a theater with empty seats is in trouble.

But in Abbeville, performances are bucking the trend.

"We're on an upswing," Genevie says. "Our three shows this summer have been our biggest back-to-back-to-back shows in years."

While there is plenty of hard work involved, Genevie and other theater supporters are showing that, like Peter Pan, the most important thing is to just believe. ☎

"Peter Pan"
Abbeville Opera House
Nov. 1, 2, 8, 9, 15 and 16

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and 200 Minutes FREE Long Distance

✓ **New Internet Service**

30 Mbps or Higher Service

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Upgrade from 15 Mbps to 50 Mbps or 30 Mbps to 100 Mbps



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#ruraliscool

Use hashtag to share what you love about rural living

What do you enjoy about living in a rural area? Is it the pace of life? The open spaces? The sense of community?

As your telecommunications provider, we are joining with NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association in a national movement to highlight what is so special about living in rural America. You can get involved, too, by sharing your thoughts, stories and photos through social media using the hashtag #ruraliscool.

“Rural America is a leading provider of food, energy, minerals and even the military workforce that our nation really needs,” says Shirley Bloomfield, CEO of NTCA. “Sometimes we forget where all of these resources come from.”

Bloomfield adds that the Rural Is Cool movement is also “taking a look at the side of rural America that brings about innovation — innovation in technology, in art, in sciences and agriculture, and that whole renaissance of what rural America really means to the country as a whole.”

People who live in urban areas are sometimes surprised, says Bloomfield, when they learn how much broadband Internet access is available in rural areas, and how rural telecommunications providers are delivering the technology to connect schools, health care facilities, businesses and other community institutions. “The Rural Is Cool movement is a fun opportunity to change the perspective,” she adds. ☎



GET INVOLVED!

Use the hashtag **#ruraliscool** to tag your posts on all your favorite social sharing sites:



GET INSPIRED!

- Post photos of your friends and family enjoying the rural lifestyle
- Post stories of how a broadband connection helps you live in a rural area while still having access to quality education, health care, business services, etc.
- Post videos that illustrate what you love about your community
- Your posts will help spread the word that our region offers a great lifestyle supported by modern technology. Don't forget to add **#ruraliscool** to your post!

GET PUBLISHED!

As we monitor **#ruraliscool**, we will look for photos and story ideas for possible use in future issues of this magazine!

Have you outgrown your Internet speed?

Remember when your two-door car became too small when you started having children? Did that 512 MB hard drive in your PC seem to offer plenty of space, until you started saving digital photos to it? Like many things, lifestyle changes can also impact our need for Internet speed. If your Internet connection is no longer as fast as you'd like, it's time to do inventory. *Compared to one year ago, how many of these devices are you connecting to your home's wireless network?*



COMPUTERS



GAME CONSOLES



LAPTOPS



SMARTPHONES



TABLETS



Stay Safe Shopping

Tips for protecting your money and your identity while shopping online

By Carissa Swenson

As the wife of a rural rancher living in a town without even a store to get groceries, I am reminded every Christmas of how lucky we are to have broadband Internet at home. Each year, my husband and I order and wrap a gift for one another — made possible by the power of broadband.

As thankful as I am for online shopping, I also know there are risks involved in making purchases on the Internet. We should all support our local merchants whenever possible; but when you do turn to the Internet as a shopping destination, the rewards can outweigh the risks when you take a few precautions.

Don't use debit cards for online shopping.

If your debit card is compromised, it is much harder to get your money back because it comes directly from your checking account. Credit card companies generally have policies in place to protect you from paying for something you didn't buy. Still, be sure to check your account balance frequently. The earlier you catch a charge on your account that you didn't make, the easier it is to resolve it.

Purchase from retailers you know and trust.

While there are countless retailers on the Web, the safest bet is to buy from companies with which you are already familiar or already do business. Most well-known major online stores are safe, but be sure you are on an official website and not a fake site that is trying to steal your personal and banking information.

Use a separate email account for online shopping.

With a specific email address you use only when signing up for websites or shopping online, your work and personal inboxes won't get filled nearly as fast with ads, coupons and offers. You will still have access to these promotions if you want them in your "shopping" email account.

Use caution when accessing free Wi-Fi in public.

Hackers and identity thieves sometimes target connections in airports, malls and such, looking for those who are checking bank accounts, entering credit card information and conducting similar transactions. It is fine to use public Wi-Fi when you are just

killing time, but avoid making transactions on this type of connection.

BONUS: When traveling, leave your extra credit cards at home.

Travel with the essentials. If you don't plan to use specific credit cards or store credit cards, leave them at home. When I travel, I only take the credit card I need, driver's license and insurance card. If I lose my wallet or if my purse is stolen, I know exactly what company to call to cancel my card.

Yes, shopping online has its risks — but so does shopping in a crowded mall. Regardless of how you prepare for the holidays, know the risks, limit your exposure and monitor your accounts. Then come January, your biggest concern will simply be paying off those balances! ☎



Carissa Swenson is the owner and technology specialist of TechTECS, a technology training, education, consulting and support company.

The need for more speed is a trend that shows no signs of stopping. By 2016 ...

20%

of Internet traffic will come from non-PC devices (tablets, smartphones, e-readers, appliances, etc.)

the number of devices connected to the Internet will equal

3x
the global population

1.2 million

minutes of video will cross the Internet every second

Do you have a need for more Internet speed?

See Page 4 for our phone number and website, and contact us about increasing your Internet speed to match your growing needs.

SOURCE: WWW.STATETECHMAGAZINE.COM

BROADBAND through the holidays

By Elizabeth Wootten

With the holiday season approaching, it is a great time to review your Internet speed and set up a Wi-Fi network. A fast connection will allow your family to share photos, try out new gadgets, stream Christmas movie favorites and maybe finish a little shopping — all at the same time. Here are a few ways you and your family can enhance your holiday traditions through broadband Internet and a home Wi-Fi hotspot.

► GADGET FEVER

PLAYSTATION 4

If you've been waiting to upgrade to a new gaming system, now may be the best time. Scheduled to release Nov. 15, PlayStation 4 is both an advanced game system and an entertainment console. In addition to breathtaking graphics and a world of entertainment apps, PS4 allows players to share gaming experiences in real time. Entertaining through the holiday season is simple with this new console. <http://us.playstation.com/ps4>

TILE

Have you ever lost your keys? What about your phone? Check out Tile, a virtual lost-and-found tool. Tiles can be placed on a keychain, dropped in a bag or purse or attached to a phone or computer with adhesive. The Tile app

on your iPhone shows you when you're getting closer or farther from your device, the last GPS location of your Tile and more.

Tile is scheduled to release this winter. www.thetileapp.com



TABLETS



Tablets like the Kindle, iPad and Nexus have topped many Christmas lists for young and old alike. These portable computing devices allow you to entertain kids through gaming and video streaming, store music, photos and videos for easy sharing at holiday parties and

access the Internet through a powerful browser. For those who prefer a physical keyboard, check and see if the tablet you like supports a wireless keyboard. With the variety of tablets on the market, you are sure to find one that suits your needs.

SMART TV

Smart TV technology connects television to the Internet through Wi-Fi and Ethernet ports. These TVs have built-in processors and operating systems which allow you to customize the device to suit your own preferences. You can run apps, chat with friends, play games, check the weather, listen to music and more all while watching your favorite TV shows. Social networking is available through the TV as well, and you can add your own content or video to broadcast online.

SPHERO 2.0

The original Sphero took gaming to an all-new level. The smartphone-controlled ball kept everyone entertained — from kids and adults to cats and dogs. Now, the second-generation device offers even more features. Sphero 2.0 can roll at speeds of up to seven feet per second. That's twice the speed of the original device. Its multicolor LEDs are brighter, and it comes with ramps to add to the gaming experience. You can even choose from 25 apps to expand your mobile gameplay. www.gosphero.com/sphero-2-0



► MOVIE FAVORITES

Sometimes it takes a holiday movie to get into the holiday spirit. Grab some popcorn or hot chocolate and check your channel guide to see when one of these classic movies are scheduled.

ELF

Join Buddy the Elf as he spreads Christmas cheer through the U.S. while searching for his true identity.

IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE

This 1946 American classic is one of the most-loved Christmas films and continues to warm the hearts of young and old alike.

MIRACLE ON 34TH STREET

Both the original and the remake will leave you smiling as Susan and Kris uncover the truth of what Christmas is all about.

THE POLAR EXPRESS

In this heart-warming film, a doubting boy takes a magical train ride to the North Pole to discover the power of believing in the wonder of Christmas.

RUDOLPH, THE RED-NOSED REINDEER

Your children will love this short claymation film about a reindeer and his friends who are looking for a place to fit in.



► SHOPPING THROUGH APPS AND WEBSITES

Overwhelmed from the seemingly endless holiday shopping? Apps and websites can help! From creating budgets to comparing prices, these resources take some of the stress out of Christmas.



BETTER CHRISTMAS LIST

\$1.99

Create separate shopping lists for loved ones, and keep track of your budget through the holidays.



BFADS.NET BLACK FRIDAY

FREE

Plan your Black Friday shopping in advance with early access to the season's sales.



SLICE

FREE

Track your packages and receive notifications if your item's price has dropped — which sometimes means you can get the difference back.

WWW.RATHER-BE-SHOPPING.COM

Find online coupon codes, printable coupons and bargains to your favorite stores. Download the app for on-the-go shopping.

WWW.EBATES.COM

Earn cash back on your online purchases. You don't have to request your cash — it will come via check or PayPal.

WWW.PRICEWATCH.COM

Compare prices, find sales, read vendor reviews and more to find the perfect item for someone on your Christmas shopping list.



► PHOTOS ON THE WEB

Photos are a fantastic way to capture and keep alive the spirit of Christmas for years to come. Instead of trying to mail photos to your family and friends, use your broadband connection to upload your photos to the Web for easy viewing.

If you don't want to publicly share your photos, don't worry.

With many websites, you can adjust the privacy settings on your albums to suit your needs. Some websites require the viewer to access a unique URL, while others ask for a password to view the photos. Try one of these websites to share your Christmas memories with out-of-town relatives and friends.

● DROPBOX - www.dropbox.com

● FACEBOOK - www.facebook.com

● FLICKR - www.flickr.com

● PHANFARE - www.phanfare.com

● PHOTOBUCKET - www.photobucket.com

● SLICKPIC - www.slickpic.com

● SMUGMUG - www.smugmug.com

● SNAPFISH - www.snapfish.com

► CONNECT WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

Even though major department stores have apps and websites that allow you to purchase online, consider shopping locally this holiday season. When you support local merchants, your money keeps working for you, stimulating your community's economy and supporting local schools and organizations.

Check the websites of your chamber of commerce or local downtown association to find holiday deals in your area. Forget the bumper-to-bumper traffic and mall crowds. Instead, look for the perfect holiday gifts in shops around your town. You could save a lot of time and energy — especially on those last-minute gifts. ☎

Pin like a pro

Pinterest.com is a hugely popular website, attracting more than 50 million monthly unique visitors. It enables users to find and organize all manner of things that reflect their interests. During the holidays, Pinterest can help you find ideas for new seasonal traditions, tasty recipes, activities for kids and more. Here's how to make Pinterest part of your holiday celebrations.

HOW TO DO IT

Create a board for the holiday — then explore the “Holidays & Events” category for recipes, decor, activities for kids, wardrobe ideas and more. When you find something you want to try, pin it to your holiday board. You could also create a private board for gift ideas and include prices in the description.

WHO TO FOLLOW

When you follow a user's board, new pins will show up in your main feed when added to that board. Find boards with styles similar to yours and find inspiration from others' pins. Or, follow your family and friends to find gift ideas for them. Search for local shops or department stores that have a page and get ideas from their pins. They might even feature a holiday deal!

WHAT TO PIN

Pin anything that inspires you. If you see a holiday recipe, craft, game or Christmas card idea that you would like to try, pin it to your board for quick access. You can repin items from your main feed or from searches. You can also create your own pin from something you find on the Web. To create a pin, take a picture of it and upload the image from your computer.

Pinning Tips

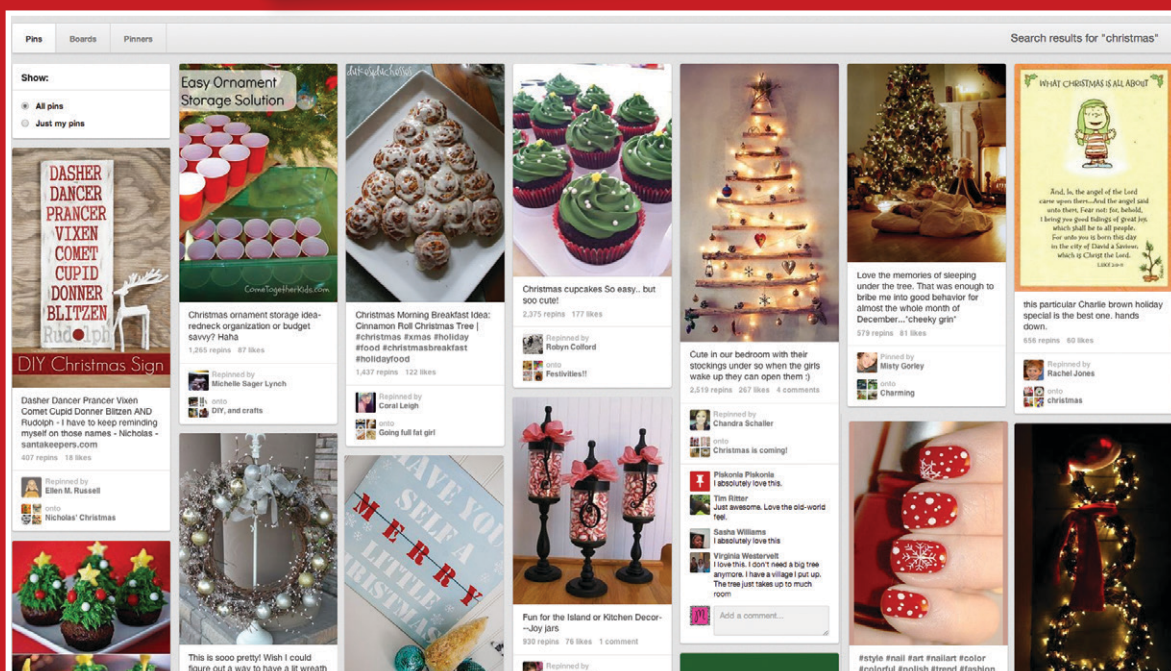
- Download the Pinterest mobile app for on-the-go searches.
- Add specific keywords to pin descriptions, to let others easily find your pins.
- Comment on pins to let others know what worked or what did not.
- Install the browser “Pin It” button to quickly pin items from your favorite websites.
- “Like” items that you do not want to pin, but that might interest you later.

Speak the Lingo

- **BOARD:** collection of pins
- **PIN:** image or video added to a board
- **FOLLOW:** keep in touch with the boards of your favorite pinners
- **LIKE:** mark a pin without attaching it to a board

Something for almost everyone

Looking for a new cookie recipe for the Christmas party? How about a do-it-yourself project to create with the kids over the holiday break? Pinterest.com is an endless source of inspiration for food, fashion, home decor, family fun and more.





Businesses can be penalized for not following FCC rules

Businesses that make phone calls to customers or potential customers should be aware of National Do Not Call Registry rules and regulations.

The Do Not Call initiative, regulated by the U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and the U.S. Federal Communications Commission (FCC), requires telecommunications companies to notify customers who use their service for making telephone solicitations and telemarketing calls of National Do Not Call rules and regulations. We recognize that only a few customers utilize our services for telemarketing purposes; however, to ensure that our customers adhere to these rules and regulations, we are issuing this advisory to all business customers.

If you are a company, individual or organization that places telemarketing calls, it is very important that you familiarize yourself with the operations of the National Do Not Call Registry.

Unless you fall under one of the established exceptions, such as telemarketing by charitable organizations or for prior business relationships, you may not make telemarketing calls to numbers included in the National Do Not Call Registry.

For information regarding National Do Not Call regulations, visit the National Do Not Call Registry at www.telemarketing.donotcall.gov. You can find the Federal Communications Commission and Federal Trade Commission rules governing telemarketing and telephone solicitation at 47 C.F.R. § 64.1200 and 16 C.F.R. Part 310, respectively.

Easy steps to permanently **STOP** telemarketing calls!

If you are like most consumers, you are tired of being disturbed by telemarketing calls. There is help.


The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and the U.S. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) have established a National Do Not Call Registry. Joining this registry can drastically reduce the number of telemarketing calls you receive.

Here are some important facts about the list:

- Once registered, telemarketers have 31 days to stop calling your number.
- You can register up to three non-business telephone numbers. You can register cell phone numbers; there is not a separate registry for cell phones.
- Your number will remain on the list permanently unless you disconnect the number or you choose to remove it.
- Some businesses are exempt from the Do Not Call Registry and may still be able to call your number. These include political organizations, charities, telephone surveyors and businesses that you already have a relationship with.

Strict Federal Trade Commission rules for telemarketers make it illegal to do any of the following regardless of whether or not your number is listed on the National Do Not Call Registry:

- Call before 8 a.m.
- Call after 9 p.m.
- Misrepresent what is being offered
- Threaten, intimidate or harass you
- Call again after you've asked them not to



Adding your number to the Do Not Call Registry is easy!

Register online at
www.donotcall.gov

or call 888-382-1222
For TTY, call 866-260-4236

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



Beware of sales calls disguised as surveys

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) says they have received numerous complaints from individuals who report receiving deceptive sales calls. The callers identify themselves with Political Opinions of America and ask you to participate in a brief survey, usually consisting of about three questions. After answering the questions, the individual is transferred to someone offering them a bonus for participating in the survey — usually a sales pitch for a time-share disguised as a “free vacation.”

The FTC warns that if the purpose of the call is to try to sell something — even if it includes a survey — it is telemarketing and all Do Not Call Registry rules apply.

If you believe a call violates the FTC rules against telemarketing, you can file a complaint by calling 888-382-1222 or go to donotcall.gov. 📞

Warning: Cakes may be habit-forming

I'm not one to advance conspiracy theories, but in recent years, I've become convinced that certain foods have been infused with drugs to induce craving. Take cake, for example. Who can resist a moist cake crowned with inches of creamy frosting? I know I cannot. It's a simple fact that I've learned to accept. To me, there's simply nothing better. And during the upcoming holiday season, I know I'll have plenty of chances to indulge in my cake craving because cakes abound during the weeks between Thanksgiving and Christmas.

My favorite cake is and always will be one made from chocolate with lusciously thick chocolate frosting. No, wait a minute. It's the apple cake with cream cheese frosting embedded with pecans. That's it. On second thought, it's my sister's prize red velvet cake, perfect for the holidays. Or is it my carrot cake with its layers of delicious moist cake oozing with cream cheese frosting? See what I mean? It's hard for any cake lover to pick out a favorite with so many cakes from which to choose.

So this Christmas season, I hope you'll have your cake and eat it, too. I know I will!



Anne P. Braly
Food Editor

Email Anne Braly at apbraly@gmail.com.

Baker passes secrets along to new generation

From savory hams to turkeys dressed with scrumptious stuffings, the holidays are filled with an abundance of decadent foods. But cakes take the cake. And many people think Deanne Fender makes the best cakes of all.

The art of cake-making has been a multigenerational thing in her family, she says.

"It goes back three generations," says Fender. "My mom, who's still living, my grandmother and great-grandmother all loved to put a smile on someone's face by surprising them with a cake. If someone was sick or shut in, they would make their day when they delivered one of their homemade treats."

Fender now carries on the sweet tradition, even down to the baking pans that have been handed down. And you can recognize her cakes anywhere, she says, because they are square, not round, which makes them much easier to slice. In fact, it's such a good family custom, she's shown Pressley and Holden, two of her six nieces and nephews, how to make the family cakes.

"They now know most of the 'secrets,'" she says. "I love to bake cakes because it makes people happy and complements the occasions they may be celebrating."

Fender, who has worked as the administrative assistant at Coastal Electric Cooperative in Walterboro, S.C., for more than 15 years, has been married to her husband, Donny, for 30 years. The couple enjoys living the country life in Smoaks, S.C., where her parents also live and own a barbecue restaurant, B&D Bar-B-Que.

"The closeness of family is very dear to my heart," Fender says. And particularly at this time of year.

"I don't think there is enough of that these days," she says, referencing the lack of time families spend together due to the busy lives they lead. "We don't have time like the generations before to pass things down to children, grandchildren and even great-grandchildren. This is how things, such as baking, continue from one generation to the next."

In addition to baking cakes for friends, Fender helps out her parents by making cakes in their restaurant kitchen for those who want something sweet after a big plate of barbecue.

"I had to start baking more and more cakes for B&D to make sure they didn't run out," she says. After getting a taste of her cakes, customers often end up wanting more, so they place an order for a cake of their own.

Fender says she doesn't have a favorite cake. "I just make what people want to complete their holiday meals or special occasions. It makes me proud to know that something that was handed down can still bring a smile to people's faces."

But one thing is standard for all of her cakes, she says.

"A lot of love goes into each one." 📞



Deanne Fender

Hope, Joy and Pieces of Cake



Chocolate Pound Cake

Chocolate Pound Cake

- 2 sticks margarine
- 1/2 cup Crisco® shortening
- 2-3/4 cups sugar
- 6 eggs
- 3 cups flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 cup cocoa
- 1-1/4 cups milk
- 2 teaspoons butter flavoring
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon almond extract

Preheat oven to 325° F. Spray a 10- by 3-inch round cake pan with Baker's Joy®. (Fender typically uses a round cake pan because she says that the mixture can sometimes overflow a Bundt pan.) Cream together margarine, shortening

and sugar until fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating until mixture is creamy and fluffy. Sift together flour, salt, baking powder and cocoa; add to egg mixture alternately with milk, beating between additions. Beat mixture 2-3 minutes or until creamy. Add butter flavoring and extracts. Pour into prepared pan and bake for 1-1/2 hours or until cake tests done. Remove from oven and let cool completely before removing from pan.

Sour Cream Caramel Frosting

- 1 cup (2 sticks) butter or margarine
- 1 cup butterscotch morsels
- 1 cup firmly packed brown sugar
- 2/3 cup sour cream
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 (2-pound) bag confectioner's sugar

Combine margarine, morsels and brown sugar in a heavy 2-quart pot and bring to a boil. Boil for 1 minute. Remove from heat and let cool for 15 minutes. Add sour cream and vanilla and mix for a few seconds. Add confectioner's sugar and beat until creamy. Frost between cake layers and sides of cake.

Note: If mixture seems a little thin, put the mixer bowl in the freezer for 5-10 minutes to bring the frosting to a more spreadable consistency.

Deanne's Six-Layer Cake

- 1-1/2 cups butter-flavor Crisco®
- 2-1/2 sticks margarine
- 1/2 cup Crisco® shortening
- 3-1/2 cups sugar
- 6 eggs
- 3-3/4 cups flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1-1/4 cups milk
- 2 teaspoons butter flavoring
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract

Preheat oven to 400° F. Spray six (8- by 8- by 2-inch) cake pans (see note) with Baker's Joy®. Cream together margarine, shortening and sugar. Add eggs, one at a time, beating until mixture is fluffy. Sift together flour, salt and baking powder. Add flour mixture alternately with milk to egg mixture, beating between additions. Beat mixture 2-3 minutes or until creamy. Add butter flavoring and vanilla. Bake for 18 1/2 minutes or until cakes test done. Cool cakes completely before frosting.

Note: This cake may be made in stages if you do not have six cake pans. Cool cakes completely when you remove them from oven, then remove from pans so that the pans may be washed, greased and floured to use again. However, Fender says she usually makes five-layer cakes and saves the sixth layer for another cake. ☎