

West Carolina Tel

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2014

CONNECTED

WATCH MAN

McCormick jeweler
known for his work

FAMILY CONNECTION

Broadband keeps family in
touch during holidays

TECH TOYS

Your guide to this year's top
gadgets, gizmos and gifts





B2B Marketing

Business leaders are looking at your social media channels before deciding to buy

When you think of the Internet's role in commerce, you probably think of consumers with credit cards in hand making purchases directly from a website. But a recent study of business leaders found that social media is also an important research tool for companies who make purchases from other companies.

The Social Buying Study from International Data Corporation (IDC) found that 75 percent of business-to-business (B2B) buyers and 84 percent of C-level/vice president executives use social media to support purchase decisions.

For business owners, this study highlights the importance of using social media tools to establish credibility online. In the final stage of the purchasing process, when stakes are highest, online professional networks have become an important source of information for companies looking to purchase goods and services from other businesses.

"As the use of social networks expands, the gap between companies that use social networks for buying and selling and those that do not will widen, creating a significant disadvantage for companies that lag behind," says Michael Fauscette, who leads IDC's Software Business Solutions Group.



WHAT TO DO:

Your business customers are looking beyond your website when deciding to buy from you. To help position your company to earn their business:

- 1. Create or revisit your profile on LinkedIn.com.** Make sure it contains details on your qualifications and your company's offerings.
- 2. Invite former and existing customers to join your LinkedIn network.** Ask them to submit recommendations.
- 3. Create or revisit your Business Page on Facebook.** Provide details about your company.
- 4. Create or revisit your business Twitter account.** Write a short bio that accurately reflects what you do.
- 5. Develop a plan to regularly share informative articles, helpful tips and news about your industry on each of these social media channels.** Create your own content, but also share links to articles on the Internet that your customers will find helpful. This provides opportunities for prospects to engage with your company, and portrays you as an expert in your field.
- 6. To drive this online activity, turn to your local telecommunications provider for fast, reliable broadband service and dependable, local support.** 📞

How do you >>>>>>>> **BROADBAND?**

Across rural America, people are putting the power of broadband to work in smart, inspiring and creative ways. They are connecting with groups who share hobbies and passions. They are supporting causes and making a difference. They are learning new skills and going places they've never been.

We want to hear your story. What exciting ways are you using broadband to make life richer, fuller or more convenient? Visit www.HowDoYouBroadband.com and tell us how you're harnessing the power of broadband for yourself, your family and your community. You could be featured on the website, or even in a story for this magazine.

YOUR STORY COULD WIN YOU A PRIZE!

An independent panel will select the best stories submitted to the website between now and the end of the year. You could win a gift card, or even an iPad mini!

Visit www.HowDoYouBroadband.com and share your story today!



Rural economies grow when citizens adopt broadband

Having a robust broadband network is important for rural communities, but a new study shows that the real impact comes when citizens learn how to put the power of broadband to work in their homes and businesses.

Brian Whitacre, an associate professor of agricultural economics at Oklahoma State University, led the study, which was funded by the National Agricultural and Rural Development Policy Center. "We found that rural counties that did a good job of adopting broadband had higher rates of income growth and lower rates of unemployment growth," he says.

For example, counties with a high level of broadband adoption — those in which 60 percent or more of the households had a wired high-speed Internet connection — experienced higher income growth and saw a smaller increase in unemployment rates than did counties that did not reach the 60 percent threshold.

The findings are among the first to show broadband's impact specifically on rural U.S. economies.

Source: National Agricultural and Rural Development Policy Center



Lifeline Service

When you need help paying for telephone service

Is your annual household income at or below 135 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines for a household of its size? Do you or someone in your household participate in any of the following low-income government assistance programs? If so, you may qualify for Lifeline Service.

- Medicaid
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Section 8 Federal Public Housing Assistance (FPHA)
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- National School Lunch Program's Free Lunch Program

To find out whether you qualify for Lifeline assistance, customers must fill out standard forms, available at your local telephone company's office, as mandated by the Federal and/or State government. Your telephone company is not responsible for determining who qualifies for these programs or who receives assistance. Customers must meet specific criteria in order to obtain assistance with their local telephone service, and qualifying is dependent upon government-established guidelines. To qualify for Lifeline credit, each customer must apply and provide proof that he/she, or a household member for whom he/she is financially responsible, participates in at least one of the programs listed above or that the customer meets the income-based requirements. Additional eligibility requirements may also apply. Customers must choose to apply the Lifeline discount to a landline or a wireless number, not both.

For more details about Lifeline Service and to apply for assistance, please contact your local telephone company.

Focused on doing the right thing

As a community-based telecommunications provider, our focus is on meeting the needs of those we serve. To us, that means being ready to do the right thing every day for the communities we serve, no matter what challenges may come along.



As we prepare to celebrate Veterans Day, I am reminded of a story that serves as a powerful illustration of that ideal. It was Feb. 19, 1945, when American forces landed on Iwo Jima, a Pacific island some 750 miles south of the Japanese mainland. The island was a strategic stronghold for the Empire of Japan. If the U.S. could secure the island, it could stop the Japanese from interfering with bombing raids on Tokyo and ultimately use Iwo Jima's airstrips to launch an invasion of the mainland.

After four days of intense battle, during which hundreds were wounded or killed, U.S. forces took control of Mount Suribachi, a 554-foot-high mountain on the southwest tip of the island. Marines scaled to the top and planted an American flag. The Secretary of the Navy, James Forrestal, wanted that flag as a souvenir, so a second flag was brought up to erect.

What happened next changed history.

Associated Press photographer Joe Rosenthal was not present for the first flag raising, and almost missed the second one as he was piling up rocks to stand on for a better vantage point for a photo. When he saw the five Marines and one Navy corpsman beginning to raise the flag, he grabbed his camera from where he had set it on the ground and took the shot without even looking through the viewfinder.

It wasn't until later that Rosenthal knew what he had captured. And neither he nor anyone in the photograph could have imagined the impact that single image would have on the overall war. The photo became an icon, a symbol of American victory. To a country growing weary of a world war, the sacrifices on the homefront and the loss of sons and husbands, the photo served as an inspiring confirmation that good would prevail.

It also became the central image of the Seventh War Bond campaign, which would raise billions of dollars to help fund the successful end of World War II. Rosenthal and the flag raisers were serving their country and doing what was right in the midst of incredible challenges. And the impact of their work will be felt for generations.

Though what we face today pales in comparison to the sacrifices of that generation, rural telecommunications providers like us have our own set of challenges. Industry changes, market forces and regulatory action are putting pressures on us unlike anything this industry has ever seen. But we are committed to doing the right thing, to serving you to the best of our ability. And we know that if we remain focused on the task at hand, good things will happen — for your telco, for your community, for all of us.

This holiday season, I encourage us all to take a few minutes to thank a veteran for his or her service, to count our blessings as Americans, to cherish the time we have with our families and to recommit ourselves to being ready to do what is right for our community and those around us. I wish you and your family many blessings this holiday season. 📞

JEFF WILSON
Chief Executive Officer

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Lee W. Logan, President
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

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On the Cover:



Neal Crapse works on a watch at his shop in McCormick. See story Page 13.



The West Carolina Board of Directors held its annual member meeting at the Abbeville Civic Center on Aug. 18.

After a brief welcome and opening prayer, Board President Lee Logan provided highlights of actions the Board of Directors has taken at the cooperative this past year. The board authorized the retirement of \$2.4 million in capital credits and modified the cooperative bylaws to help facilitate greater participation from the membership by using mail-in ballots. Additionally, the board supported the creation of the Freshwater Coast Community Foundation, which included pledging a matching grant of \$300,000 over a three-year period.

Logan also highlighted West Carolina's ongoing support of various projects in the service area, such as the new West Carolina Tel Pavilion at the Blue Hole Recreation Area and the Abbeville campus of Piedmont Technical College.

In the board election, incumbent board members Ned McGill, James Hester and Talmadge Bussey were re-elected to represent Starr, Calhoun Falls and South McCormick, respectively. West Carolina's CEO and General Manager Jeff Wilson gave an overview of forthcoming broadband-driven applications and discussed building a gigabyte community and what that will mean for the development of future service. He then closed the meeting with the recognition of the loyal employees.

Following the Annual Meeting, the board elected Jane Stone as secretary and treasurer, Stan Keaton as vice president and Lee Logan as president.

The board would like to thank each and every member who makes up our cooperative and especially those who were able to attend the meeting.



WestCarolinaCom
Digital Entertainment
Plus



has your **ALL-ACCESS PASS**
to the **SEC Network**



TAKE IT ALL IN.

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GADGET-GIVING GIFT GUIDE

BY MATT LEDGER

Remember the spellbinding childhood experience of thumbing through the toy pages of the old Sears and Roebuck Wish Book catalog? As well organized as that was, kids nowadays are tapping on an iPad to check product availability of Princess Elsa's Castle Playset even before the TV commercial is finished. For parents looking for gifts for "kids" of any age, or anyone trying to give that perfect present this season, here's a guide to the latest tech toys.



STREAMING TV PLAYER

Amazon Fire offers a streaming player comparable to the Apple TV or Roku, with some Amazon-only options. The popularity of streaming TV shows and movies at your convenience led several manufacturers to develop streaming devices. While Apple's and Amazon's boxes have some unique features, the Roku 3 offers the most features for the price. Send the Xbox One — and your kids — to their bedrooms after you install this device in the living room to reclaim your recliner.

GOPRO HERO4

The camcorder seems destined for the same fate as the VCR, relegated to our memories of how challenging it once was to make home movies during the holidays. The technological ease of cell phone video clips and this mind-blowing minuscule HD recorder have revolutionized and simplified the process of digitally documenting our lives. Released last month, the GoPro Hero4 has a wide-angle fixed lens capable of capturing sprawling landscapes or extreme close-up selfies with a 13 megapixel sensor.





NETATMO JUNE BRACELET

Tan lines and toes in the sand are mere fantasies this time of year, but that doesn't stop us from dreaming about sunny days and splashing in the pool. Netatmo has created a bracelet that helps ladies know when they have had enough sun. Consistent use of the stylish device, which pairs with a smartphone app, will help reduce the risk of sunburns, premature aging of the skin and long-term damage from lengthy exposure to UV rays.

WI-FI CAMERA CARD



To share and protect your photos from Christmas morning, Eye-Fi has developed Wi-Fi camera cards that allow amateur

and professional photographers to connect certain cameras to other devices. Pairing the quality photos of your camera with the connectivity of your phone, the cards eliminate the time-consuming process of downloading photos. Quicker than the development of a Polaroid picture, the Wi-Fi camera card wirelessly transmits the images to your computer, tablet or phone for storage or sharing via social media.



ORAL B SMARTSERIES BLUETOOTH TOOTHBRUSH

You may want to give this gift a bit early since there are many reasons to smile this season and you're destined to be in a few photos. Your teeth could be gleaming for a white Christmas with the Oral-B SmartSeries Bluetooth Toothbrush. The high-tech toothbrush cleans your teeth, warns you of bad brushing habits and even sends reports back to your dentist wirelessly.

WEMO LIGHT SWITCH

No one has ever written a carol about getting a light switch for Christmas, but this little upgrade will certainly come in handy with shorter days and extra travel this winter. The WeMo light switch offers the same basic function as a timer, but neatly replaces the wall switch and lets you control it from your smartphone from anywhere. Maybe you're arriving home later than anticipated — simply switch those exterior lights on to safely arrive at your front door. A quick entry of your zip code and the device will turn on at sunset and off at sunrise. You could also install it to replace the ceiling fan remote that the dog ate or fire up that hot tub at the weekend cabin.



LEAPPAD 3



Digital devices are now being used at younger ages, with school systems making the leap to interactive smartboards and iPad labs. Leap Frog's LeapPad3's protective screen and shock-absorbing frame are designed to endure whatever a preschooler or first grader can throw at it. The LeapPad3 is a colorful tablet device that offers a Wi-Fi enabled library of educational games to jumpstart their learning at home or while riding in the car. Parents can manage the security controls and the device features a peer-to-peer mode for competitions with classmates or siblings.

FITNESS BANDS



Fitbit Flex

Withings Pulse O2

Jawbone UP24

To counter the tiered towers of Christmas confections, clever new wristbands aim to motivate you to be more active throughout the day. The fitness bands use an accelerometer sensor to track activity with apps to configure daily goals and online competitions with active friends. The Fitbit Flex is a highly popular version that is reasonably priced. The Withings Pulse O2 and Jawbone UP24 offer a few more features, but for a higher price.

MEET THE BOARD:

Cooperative cooperation

Board members say working together is the key to success

JIM HESTER: 42 YEARS OF SERVICE

After finishing his time with the U.S. Army in the Pacific and marrying his wife, Sally, in Japan, Jim Hester decided to return home to Calhoun Falls in 1957 for three reasons.

“It’s a good place to raise cattle, pine trees and children,” Hester says.

In the 57 years since returning, he’s put down deep roots in farming, the pulpwood business and through 42 years of work on the Board of Directors for West Carolina Tel.

“It’s been a good group to be with,” he says of the cooperative.

Hester credits good employees and continuity on the board as major reasons for the cooperative’s success. Hester says he’s particularly proud of West Carolina’s DE-plus video service and the overall commitment to customer service.

“When customers call, they’re usually talking to someone they know,” Hester says. “I think the operation has worked well over the years.”

Away from the cooperative, Hester is a former scout master, an elder and clerk of session at Calhoun Falls Presbyterian Church, a 50-year member of the Abbeville County Forestry Board, a member of the Lions Club, American Legion, VFW and the Abbeville



Jim Hester is at home on his farm.

County Cattlemen’s Association.

“Dealing with all the other businesses I have, I’ve been able to bring that experience to the board,” Hester says.

Looking ahead, he knows the telecommunications industry is changing and says it’s important for West Carolina to stay on top of its game. “You’re going to have to give good service and offer good products to stay in the business,” he says.

WES MCALLISTER: CARRYING ON THE FAMILY LEGACY

The name McAllister has been associated with West Carolina Tel literally since the cooperative began. Board member Wes McAllister’s father, John, was one of the instrumental founders who brought West Carolina Tel into being.

The younger McAllister, who joined the board in 2006, stands on his own, but he does keep his father in mind. “I know how important the cooperative was to him,” McAllister says. “I could

see it in his eyes.”

McAllister holds the founders’ ideas close to his heart. “There are people out here in rural America that deserve great telephone and broadband service,” he says. “The cooperative system has been a win-win for our area.”

But even with the cooperative’s history and his family’s legacy of service in mind, McAllister says he’s proud of the way the cooperative has evolved. “You have to adapt,” he says. “You’ve got to be willing to change or you might not be around very long.”

McAllister is proud of how West Carolina has adapted and credits the leadership of the board and the commitment to excellence from employees for making improvements like the fiber optic network successful.

“It used to be water, power and sewer were the infrastructure,” McAllister says. “Now, we consider fiber part of that infrastructure. It will be an economic driver.”

Like his father, McAllister is involved in many aspects of the community, serving as president of the Lander University Foundation, past chairman of the Upper Savannah Council of Governments, past chairman of the board at John De La Howe School and a board member at Erskine College, his alma mater. ☎



Wes McAllister runs his family’s store.

Christmas from Afghanistan

BY ANDY JOHNS

Last year Jerry and April Sutton had a Christmas like they've never had before.

The Suttons and their three children exchanged presents on Christmas Day, just like always. Jerry got a Georgia Bulldogs t-shirt and flag, along with candy.

The only difference was that Jerry was 7,500 miles away in Kandahar, Afghanistan, and the children watched their dad open his gifts online via video chat.

"They actually were able to see him open the presents, and he was able to see them open theirs," April says. "Seeing his face and hearing his voice made it easier."

Jerry, who returned home to Abbeville in July, was serving with the National Guard's 14th Engineering Company as a sergeant and engineer tasked with deconstructing and scaling back American bases to sizes that the Afghan troops could operate and maintain. The Georgia gear was to offset all of the Gamecock paraphernalia his roommate had already placed around their room.

He said he and other soldiers eagerly anticipated their chances to video chat with loved ones at home.

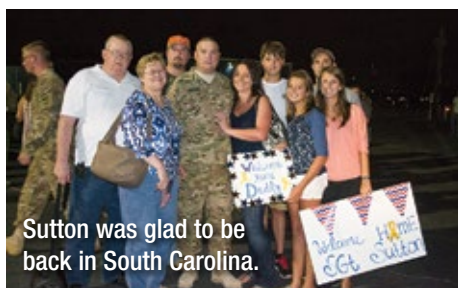
"You could tell the mood changed every time we were able to communicate with our families," he says.

April and the children — Samantha, 23, Devin, 17, and Sydney, 13 — would crowd around the computer and log onto Skype, a free service that allows users to stream a live video conversation with another user, over their West Carolina Tel Internet connection.

The time difference between where he was and where they were drove home just how far away he was. "When we were going to bed, he was getting up," April says.



Devin, left, Samantha, and Sydney Sutton kept in touch with their dad via video chat.



Sutton was glad to be back in South Carolina.



Sutton's home away from home.



His family was excited to have Sutton home.

“The mission I can handle. They train us how to do that. Being away from home is something you have to figure out on your own.”

—Sgt. Jerry Sutton, National Guard

CONVERSATION CONNECTION

From Afghanistan, Sutton sent letters and cards back home. He acknowledged that in past conflicts, soldiers, sailors and Marines had to rely only on the mail to keep in touch with home.

"Video made it a lot easier on my being away from home," he says.

The Suttons weren't the only ones in the unit keeping in touch via video chat.

Sometimes, the soldiers had to take turns using their Internet connections. Many of the men in the unit left pregnant wives at

home and got their first glimpses of their sons and daughters online.

"A lot of them came home to babies they'd never seen before except on Skype," April says.

Even though his youngest kids are teenagers, Sutton says he cherished the chance to see their faces on birthdays and check in with them about school work.

"The mission I can handle," Sutton says. "They train us how to do that. Being away from home is something you have to figure out on your own." 📞

I'm dreaming of a BRIGHT CHRISTMAS

BY MATT LEDGER



Festival of Lights, Grand Rivers, Ky.

If you're planning a very Griswold Christmas and feel compelled to have the best light display in the neighborhood, then it's already time to get out the ladder and start stringing lights. Or, you could just leave it to the professionals and make a trip to one of ten dazzling destinations of Christmas cheer.

GALAXY OF LIGHTS • Huntsville, Ala.

256-830-4447 • www.hsvbg.org

The always-impressive Huntsville Botanical Gardens features a seasonal tour that allows visitors the choice of driving or walking the grounds on certain nights, including two designated for people with dogs. The festival, which lasts from Nov. 14 to Jan. 3, features a panoramic view of Santa soaring above the winter village and other scenes that celebrate characters from nursery rhymes. A Galaxy of Lights 5K Run and Fun Run — routed through twinkling snowflakes and the icicle forest — are also scheduled for December.

FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS • Grand Rivers, Ky.

270-362-8844 • www.pattis-settlement.com

Any visit to Patti's Settlement is a feast for the senses, and the holidays are no exception. The 1880s-style village features two restaurants in historic buildings that were relocated to the property. Eight gift shops await those in search of that unique decoration or cherished collectible. Each dining room has a unique holiday theme, as diners tackle the house special, a legendary two-inch-thick 16 ounce pork chop. Starting Nov. 7, families can enjoy the free holiday spectacle of more than 500,000 lights.



LIGHTS OF HOPE • Anderson, S.C.

864-940-9371 • www.andersonlightsofhope.org

Marching soldiers, a dancing ballerina and a nativity scene are among the many scenes at Lights of Hope in Darwin Wright Park. For 20 years it's been a holiday destination, all for the family-friendly price of \$8 per car. More than 49,000 vehicles drove through the grounds in 2013, enjoying more than 3.5 million lights and a magical Santa's Village that would even put Scrooge in the holiday spirit. Old Ebenezer would be aghast that the event proceeds are donated, with \$1.4 million dollars given to local charities since 2004.



SOUTHERN LIGHTS Lexington, Ky.

859-255-5727 • [www.kyhorsepark.com/
events/southern-lights-stroll](http://www.kyhorsepark.com/events/southern-lights-stroll)

The Kentucky Horse Park has hosted its annual light show for 20 years, adding new features along the way. From Nov. 21 to Dec. 31, visitors might mistakenly think they're in Kansas, as this year's featured display will include

Dorothy, Toto and the full cast of characters from "The Wizard of Oz." Guests can also visit with the live reindeer, except during the week of Christmas. That's a busy week for reindeer.

LIGHTS UNDER LOUISVILLE • Louisville, Ky.

502-855-3580 • www.louisvillemegacavern.com/attractions/5/lights-under-louisville

The bluegrass state is home to the MEGA Cavern, a unique underground cave that comes to life in holiday splendor for a 30-minute ride along 17 miles of passageways. More than 850 characters await the family, during a festive thrill ride unlike any other. Lights on the cave walls and ceiling allow the lights to completely surround guests in flashing stars and stockings hung with care. Families drive through the seasonally decorated sections of the subterranean trails, including one featuring children in the midst of a snowball fight, from Nov. 21 to Jan. 4.

SMOKY MOUNTAIN WINTERFEST Pigeon Forge, Gatlinburg and Sevierville, Tenn.

www.smokymountainwinterfest.com

These three towns offer more exciting events than the number of items on your kids' wish list. Dollywood's Smoky Mountain Christmas features millions of lights and a Christmas parade, while Ober Gatlinburg creates a winter wonderland for sledding adventures. A trolley ride is a colorful and carefree way to view the lights along Pigeon Forge Parkway and spot vendors with seasonal concoctions. Gatlinburg's Festival of Trees features a festive man-made forest that benefits a rescue ministry. A Christmas arts and crafts show provides gift options from talented artisans.

SANTA LAND • Lindale, Texas

903-882-1518 • www.santalantexas.com

Everything is bigger in Texas, or so it seems, with 2.5 million lights throughout the 24-acre adventure known as Santa Land. The unique drive-thru experience runs Nov. 1 to Jan. 4 with a one-of-a-kind display of characters that adds a bit of humor to the holidays, including handcrafted scenes of a bucking bronco, leaping frog and other animated animals.

FANTASY OF LIGHTS • Sumter, S.C.

800-688-4748 • www.sumtersc.gov/fantasy-of-lights.aspx

The picturesque Swan Lake Iris Gardens is illuminated with more than 1 million lights and 150 holiday characters. City of Sumter employees erect the custom creations each year, which is the largest free display in the state. A Poinsettia Festival will help provide decorations for the home, and the Santa Express will expedite those letters to Kris Kringle.

SANTA'S WONDERLAND • College Station, Texas

979-690-7212 • www.santas-wonderland.com

Santa's Wonderland allows families to take a nostalgic trip down memory lane, by hayride or horse-drawn carriage, along the colorful Trail of Lights. For the fifteenth year, this charming Christmas experience blends those quintessential holiday figures with a wide-open Texas style and a lone star upon every tree. From Nov. 14 to Jan. 4, the event features live music performances and a cozy campfire for guests to roast hot dogs, and kids will marvel at the live reindeer.

SHADRACK'S CHRISTMAS WONDERLAND Asheville, N.C., Sevierville, Tenn. & Myrtle Beach, S.C.

888-321-7547 • www.shadrackchristmas.com

Many holiday displays are held at parks, but Shadrack's Christmas Wonderland has used some unique locations over the years, starting in the shadow of a famous racetrack in Bristol, Tenn. Four extended family members followed their personal fascination with Christmas lights to create Shadrack Productions. Seeking a winter project for their boat dealerships, their concept continues to grow with massive custom-built display figures — such as 12 different types of drummers that measure 25' tall — and a rotation of precisely synchronized light shows, with Santa's Beach Party in Asheville and Santa's Mountain in Sevierville for 2014. ☎



Christmas Angels

BY ANDY JOHNS

Christmas angel tree ministry touches hundreds of kids

Lori Glace has spent 26 years organizing and coordinating the local Christmas Angel Tree gift drive every holiday season, but that doesn't mean she's in charge.

"God's in charge of the angel tree," says Glace. "It's far beyond anything that any of us could have envisioned. Seeing how God works, it's amazing."

But even with divine leadership, it still takes an army of volunteers and weeks of hard work to pull together such a far-reaching ministry.

The angel tree delivers as many as eight gifts to each of the 600 children on the angel tree list. Glace coordinates the gift drive through the Main Street United Methodist Church, but volunteers and donors come from school groups, other churches, businesses, civic organizations and industries. "It takes a lot of people to make this happen," Glace says.

Each of the 600 recipients — up from 78 children during the angel tree's first year 26 years ago — is a child who might not have any other gifts on Christmas morning. And the joy the angel tree gifts bring often sticks with them.

Glace recently heard from a local Sunday school teacher who gave a lesson on gifts. She asked her class about their favorite gift they had ever received and was surprised when one 14-year-old student raised her hand immediately and recounted getting a bicycle from the angel tree when she was 8. "The girl said, 'It's not hard; I remember exactly what my favorite gift was,'" Glace says. "It makes so many children happy. It's just confirmation that we're doing God's work."

BICYCLE BUYERS

For many kids, a bicycle is the ultimate Christmas gift. The speed and freedom a bike offers puts it at the top of a lot of Christmas lists.

Last year, West Carolina employee Tim



Lori Glace, left, has coordinated the Angel Tree for 26 years.

Simpson worked closely with the Abbeville Rotary Club and other volunteers to deliver nearly 100 bikes to local kids. "Working with groups like the Rotary Club helps us expand this project and reach more kids," Simpson says.

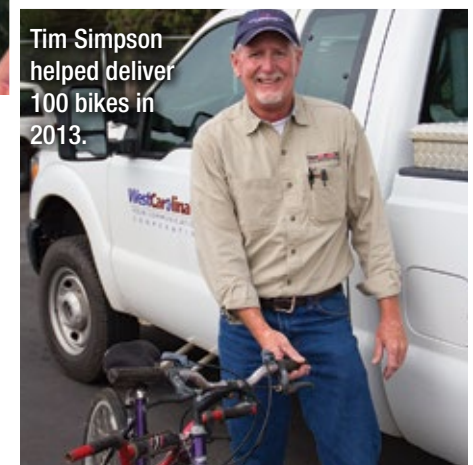
Simpson leads a group of volunteers who focus on raising money for bicycles. "Some people might donate \$20 or \$30; some might give you enough to buy a whole bike," he says. "We are appreciative of everything."

Most of the gifts come from families or individuals, but many local companies, including West Carolina Tel, which matches employee donations, also contribute.

"West Carolina's donations make a big difference," Glace says.

Seeking donations, then buying, storing and delivering 100 bikes is an ordeal. But the work is worth it, Simpson says.

"The first house you deliver to, it wipes all that out," he says. "When those kids



Tim Simpson helped deliver 100 bikes in 2013.

light up, they just explode. They're just running and jumping."

Glace, Simpson and other volunteers keep those kids and their faith in mind during the gift drive.

"It's just amazing how it all works together," Glace says. "There have been so many times that we just need a little more money, and God has provided it. It's the reason we've done it for 26 years, and until God says it's done, we're going to keep doing it." 📞

SPONSOR YOUR OWN ANGEL

Anyone interested in contributing a gift or money for the Angel Tree can get angels from the trees at Main Street Methodist and Edward Jones in Abbeville or by contacting Lori Glace at 864-378-1944 after 3:30 p.m. Gifts will be due at the beginning of December, but volunteers will be needed throughout the month.



Neighborhood Watch Man

J&N Jewelry goes local with security

By ANDY JOHNS

Where jewelry is involved, security is important.

So when Janice and Neal Crapse of J&N Jewelry heard West Carolina had started offering security monitoring and installation, it got their attention.

“Security is a big thing for us,” Janice says.

The shop, located in downtown McCormick, is one of a dwindling number of full-service jewelry shops in South Carolina. While J&N carries a variety of jewelry, watches and clocks, their specialty is repair and reconditioning.

At the Augusta Street shop, Janice focuses on the business and bookkeeping side of the operation, along with some jewelry repair. Neal, who worked at shops in Charleston, Rockhill and Greenwood as a watchmaker and jewelry repairman before opening the shop in McCormick, handles the majority of the jewelry and clock work.



The Crapses both have an eye for details.



Neal and Janice Crapse say West Carolina Tel's security system runs like clockwork.

“I'd rather keep my dollars here in town with a local company.”

—Neal Crapse

Word has gotten around, and the couple routinely gets repair orders from as far away as Atlanta.

“A lot of people ask why we are in a small town,” says Janice, whose grandparents are from McCormick. “We say, ‘Because that’s where we want to be.’ It’s good to do work for local folks.”

For their phone, Internet, TV and now security service, the Crapses are happy to have found a partner who shares their commitment to the local community.

For more than 20 years, the couple has trusted their communications services to West Carolina.

The Crapses first got West Carolina

phone service at their shop in 1990 and added TV and Internet service shortly after they became available. They particularly, like the DE-Plus feature that allows them to see the caller ID information on the television screen.

So dropping their distant national security provider for a trusted local company made sense.

When they looked into the service and compared prices and features, they determined West Carolina was the way to go.

Beyond price and service, the couple says they wanted to stay with a local company. “I’d rather keep my dollars here in town with a local company,” says Neal. ☎

TAKE PRIDE IN YOUR SIDES

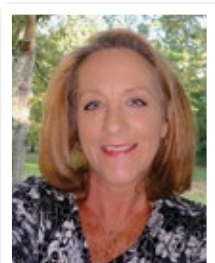
Like a movie produced with no supporting actors, a holiday meal produced with no supporting sides would be left on the cutting-room floor.

“Sides are as important as the entree, if not more so,” says Jason Evans, now in his 12th year as executive chef at Evins Mill, a 40-acre resort along the Cumberland Plateau in Smithville, Tennessee. “The side dishes can set the mood for the meal. A beautifully roasted turkey or ham can be part of an elegant, formal dinner or a comforting, traditional holiday feast, depending on what the sides are.”

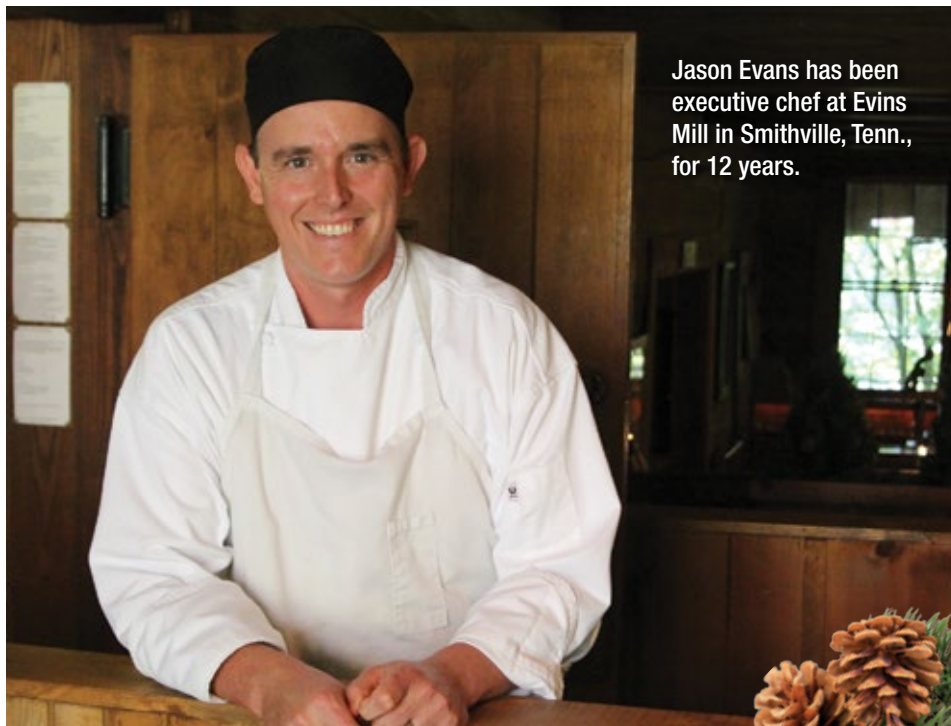
Evans can’t name a favorite side. It all depends on the season, he says. But for holiday meals, he admits to a traditional craving for mashed potatoes, fresh cranberry relish and deviled eggs — sides for many Thanksgiving and Yuletide feasts. “I try to avoid having all starches like potatoes, corn, and mac and cheese,” he says. “Make sure you have a nice variety with lots of colors.”

For example, go with mashed potatoes, cranberry relish and honey carrots. Or try corn pudding, roasted sweet potatoes and green beans.

Offer as many side dishes as you are comfortable preparing without making yourself too busy to enjoy the meal. Three sides is a good rule of thumb, Evans notes. And to make the meal a family event, ask guests to bring their favorite side dishes, while you prepare the turkey or roast. 🍽️



Food Editor **Anne P. Braly** is a native of Chattanooga, Tenn. Prior to pursuing a freelance career, she spent 21 years as food editor and feature writer at a regional newspaper.



Jason Evans has been executive chef at Evins Mill in Smithville, Tenn., for 12 years.

SOME OF EVANS' FAVORITE PAIRINGS ARE:



- ▶ Serve sweet potatoes with pork. Try roasting the sweet potatoes in a little coconut oil for something different.
- ▶ For beef, Evans likes a side that contains cream or cheese, or a side with a smooth consistency. It makes for a nice combination in the mouth to serve as almost a sauce for the hearty steak or roast. Some suggestions are potato gratin, mashed cauliflower, cheese grits or fresh broccoli casserole.
- ▶ Evans says roasting a chicken makes him want to “kill two birds with one stone, so to speak. If you already have the oven on for roasting the bird, throw some winter root vegetables in the pan with it. Cooking in all those natural juices and fat from the chicken is heaven. Rutabaga, turnip, parsnip, carrot and onion make a delicious and hearty vegetable combination.”
- ▶ Casseroles are usually on the creamy, cheesy side, which is why Evans loves them. “I like contrast in my meals,” he says, “and this is a great time to have something sweet and sour, or a lightly sauteed vegetable medley on the side. Something simple so everyone can still gorge on the casserole, but a side that is going to have a different mouth feel in texture and flavor.”
- ▶ Keep in mind the importance of using the freshest of vegetables and other ingredients for your side dishes. Evans finds local foods to be the best and is committed to the farm-to-table movement, supporting nearby farmers and other food purveyors. “They’re harder to come by in the holiday season since the growing season is all but over for most items,” he says, “but we still try to get as much as we can. We still get local eggs in the winter. I can source local nuts, winter greens, some root veggies, and a few other odds and ends from our local farms. It is just as important for the holidays, just a little harder.”



The holidays at **EVINS MILL**

All decked out in its holiday finery, Evins Mill welcomes guests from around the country looking for the perfect spot to relax and enjoy the sights and tastes of the season. Visitors to this Tennessee resort enjoy hiking trails, a 90-foot waterfall and a fishing pond, as well as the historic gristmill and lodge. If you want to go for dinner only, you're welcome as long as the proprietors know you are coming. Make reservations for dinner, as well as visits to the property, by calling 615-286-2090. The inn and its restaurant are open year-round.

The Thanksgiving menu, priced at \$60 per person, will feature such dishes as turkey with all the trimmings, along with

numerous side dishes — fresh asparagus, baked apples, sweet potato casserole, mashed Yukon gold potatoes, salads and made-from-scratch desserts.

The inn's restaurant will be closed on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, but will pull out all the stops and bring in the New Year in great taste. The New Year's Eve dinner, priced at \$60 per person, includes heavy hors d'oeuvres and a five-course dinner. Special drinks and champagne will be flowing and live music will fill the air. There will also be a New Year's brunch served on Jan. 1, with select dishes to start your new year off in delicious fashion. The brunch is \$35 per person.

► *For more information, log onto www.evinsmill.com.*

CRANBERRY RELISH

This side dish is most often served with braised duck at Evins Mill, but works just as well with any of your holiday meals.

- 1 bag fresh cranberries, washed (substitute with dried cranberries if out of season)
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 Granny Smith apple, roughly chopped, with peel
- 1 fresh orange, roughly chopped, with peel

Combine all ingredients in food processor, pureeing until smooth. Refrigerate until chilled through. Makes about 1 quart.

AU GRATIN POTATOES

The perfect accompaniment to pork, beef, fish and chicken, and a standard favorite at Evins Mill.

- 4 Idaho potatoes or sweet potatoes
- 2 1/2 cups heavy cream (if using sweet potatoes, reduce cream by 1/2 cup)
- 2 cups shredded Parmesan cheese
- 2 tablespoons roasted garlic, chopped (optional)
- Salt and fresh cracked pepper, to taste

Wash potatoes and allow them to dry. Slice potatoes as thin as you can, enough to layer bottom of baking dish. Spray baking dish with non-stick spray. Layer the potatoes on the bottom of dish by shingling. Season with salt and pepper and



1/4 of roasted garlic. Sprinkle with 1/4 of the Parmesan cheese. Pour 1/4 of cream over layer. Repeat process for the next three layers. Cover dish with foil. Bake at 325° for 1-1/2 hours or until tender all the way through when testing with knife. Uncover and return to oven to brown top for about 10-15 minutes. Makes 16 (1/2-cup) servings.

STONE-GROUND CHEESE GRITS

Stone-ground grits make the difference in this recipe. Use your favorite, or like they do at Evins Mill, use local grits, such as those ground at The Old Mill in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee.

- 4 cups 2 percent milk
- 1/4 cup butter (1/2 stick) or olive oil
- 1 cup stone-ground grits
- 1 cup grated cheese, preferably sharp cheddar
- Salt, fresh cracked pepper & crushed red pepper flakes, to taste

Bring milk, butter or oil, salt, pepper and crushed red pepper to boil. Add grits and reduce heat to a simmer. Stir often until grits are tender and thickening. This will take 30 to 40 minutes. Stir in cheese and enjoy with eggs at breakfast or steak at dinner. Makes 4-6 servings. ☎

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