

CONNECTED

FRESH-BAKED GOODNESS

Swartzentruber's
Bakery is an
Abbeville staple

BROADBAND:
JOBS EDITION

COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Mennonite
families offer
service and skills

BUILDING BUSINESSES

A faster internet
grows the economy
job by job





BY SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

Broadband drives rural and urban jobs

With this issue's focus on the impact of broadband on jobs, I was reminded of a report our Foundation for Rural Service and the Hudson Institute released three years ago. Entitled "The Economic Impact of Rural Broadband," this report estimated the direct and indirect economic effects of the rural broadband industry on gross domestic product.

The report showed that rural broadband companies like yours contributed \$24.1 billion to the economies of the states in which they operated. Even more interesting is the fact that \$17.2 billion of that total was through their own operations. The rest, \$6.9 billion, was through the follow-on impact of their operations. Those are impressive numbers under any financial index.

Sixty-six percent, or \$16 billion, of that total economic impact actually flows to urban areas. That means the U.S. jobs market needs rural broadband to remain strong and healthy.

The impact of rural broadband goes far beyond the service areas of rural telcos. The study showed that the rural broadband industry supported 69,600 jobs in 2015 — and I'm sure those numbers are even higher today. These jobs not only come from broadband providers themselves, but also from companies that supply goods and services to the industry. And more than half of those jobs, 54 percent in fact, are actually in urban America.

The truth is in the numbers. Rural broadband creates jobs and helps drive our economy — in rural and urban America alike. 📞

Fighting robocalls

BY STEPHEN V. SMITH



TRACED Act would help stop unwanted, illegal calls

Your phone rings. Even though you're in the middle of dinner, you answer because the Caller ID information shows the call is coming from a local number. Maybe it's someone you know.

"Congratulations!" the recorded voice exclaims. "You have been selected to receive a free cruise."

You just answered one of the estimated 130 million automated calls placed every day.

While there are legitimate uses of autodialing, illegal robocalls have become a plague that impacts everyone with a phone. Lawmakers have worked on the issue for almost three decades. Yet despite laws and fines designed to stop the practice, criminals — armed with ever-advancing software and technology — continue to find ways to flood our nation's phone network with unwanted calls.

Earlier this year, Sen. John Thune, R-S.D., and Sen. Ed Markey, D-Mass., introduced the TRACED Act, short for Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence Act. It gives the FCC and other agencies more power in enforcing existing laws governing robocalls.

"Unwanted robocalls that utilize spoofed phone numbers or falsify information are a problem in urban

and rural America alike," says Shirley Bloomfield, CEO of NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association. She says the TRACED Act "seeks to tackle this problem while also recognizing the transitions necessary to implement new technologies and network connections that will help achieve this goal."

In March, the attorneys general of all 50 states, plus four territories, signed a letter in unanimous support of the TRACED Act, sending it to the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee. A group of 10 U.S. senators representing several states and both political parties later issued a press release pledging their support for the bill as co-sponsors.

"With bipartisan support growing, the time to pass legislation to stop the scourge of robocalls has come," said senators Markey and Thune in that press release. "The groundswell of support for our TRACED Act — from state and territory attorneys general, to FCC and FTC commissioners, to leading consumer groups, to major industry stakeholders — shows just how much the American people want Congress to act to stop harassing robocalls."

As of press time, the bill remained in committee. Before becoming law, it would require support by both houses of Congress and the president. 📞



**HEY
TELEMARKETERS:**

DO NOT CALL!

The Federal Trade Commission and the Federal Communications Commission established a National Do Not Call Registry. Joining this registry can drastically reduce the number of telemarketing calls you receive.

JUST THE FACTS ABOUT DO NOT CALL:

- Once you've registered, telemarketers have 31 days to stop calling your number.
- Register as many as three nonbusiness telephone numbers. You can also register cellphone numbers — there is not a separate registry for cellphones.
- 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 with whom you have an existing relationship.

Strict Federal Trade Commission rules make it illegal for telemarketers 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



IT'S EASY!

Add your number to the
Do Not Call Registry

Register online at
www.donotcall.gov
or call 888-382-1222.
For TTY, call 866-290-4236.

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

**ATTENTION LOCAL
BUSINESS OWNERS:**

**MAKE SURE YOU FOLLOW
THE DO NOT CALL RULES**

No matter if you're a one-person shop or a beloved company, local business owners should remember that National Do Not Call Registry rules and regulations apply to you. After all, you don't want to upset a loyal customer, or frustrate potential new customers, with unwanted phone calls.

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.

OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION:

The Do Not Call initiative, regulated by the Federal Trade Commission and the Federal Communications Commission, requires telephone service providers to notify customers of the National Do Not Call rules and regulations. 📞

Broadband builds business

At WCTEL, our daily business is providing reliable service for our customers — but in the big picture, we're also in the jobs business.



JEFF WILSON
Chief Executive Officer

Our broadband network is foundational to our area's economic well-being and crucial to keeping and growing job opportunities locally. We all want fulfilling and meaningful jobs that provide for ourselves and our families, and broadband is becoming critical to making them possible.

Reliable, high-speed internet access allows our region to remain competitive and viable in four major economic areas.

INDUSTRY

Whether it's an agricultural operation, an industrial plant or a hospital, businesses rely on broadband to order materials, coordinate logistics, manage supply chains and communicate with other facilities. When a manufacturer or other big business considers a

rural area like ours for a new facility, they are always concerned about broadband access. I've seen more than a few companies surprised by the quality of connections we provide.

I'm happy to say that WCTEL can provide fiber optics to our area's main industrial parks. We frequently work with local officials to recruit new businesses and to help existing businesses expand.

SMALL BUSINESSES


It's no stretch to say small businesses are the backbone of our community. Whether it's providing Wi-Fi for their customers, giving access to online marketplaces or just ordering supplies online, those same small businesses benefit from our broadband and our phone network. In an age where it's easier than ever for small businesses in our community to reach a national or worldwide audience, WCTEL is proud to support them as they grow.

TELECOMMUTERS

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, nearly a quarter of Americans do at least some of their work from home. Rural areas like ours are increasingly attractive to telecommuters who may not want the expense and stress of living in cities. While it's easier to overlook the impact of telecommuters compared to a manufacturing plant spread over several acres, these remote workers play a role in our area's economy. These talented folks are able to have the best of both worlds, with good-paying jobs from top companies while living a rural lifestyle. Most of these jobs are only possible because of the broadband and phone networks we provide.

ENTREPRENEURS

Many of the brave souls who chase the dream of starting their own business used to face steep disadvantages by launching their startups in rural areas. Entrepreneurs would frequently have to move to cities to find customers, workers or the communications infrastructure to help them launch and grow their businesses. Now, with our broadband, they can engage remote workers, network with other entrepreneurs and reach distant markets like never before.

Those four groups of employees and employers make up a significant portion of our local economy. They do great work producing quality products and services for their customers throughout the ups and downs that any business or economy will have. But as they move forward, I'm happy that they can be confident in having a reliable, supportive communications partner growing right along with them. 



CONNECTED

MAY/JUNE 2019

VOL. 7, NO. 3

The West Carolina Tel Connected is a bimonthly newsletter published by West Carolina Telephone, © 2019. It is distributed without charge to all members/owners of the cooperative.



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

West Carolina Telephone
233 Highway 28 Bypass
Abbeville, SC 29620
Telephone: 864-446-2111
www.WCTEL.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Westley "Wes" McAllister, President
North McCormick, Area 8

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 Robert Hester
Calhoun Falls, Area 6

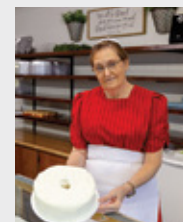
William "Billy" Bauman
Abbeville, Area 7

Lee W. Logan
Due West, Area 4

Produced for West Carolina Tel by:

WORDSOUTH
— A CONTENT MARKETING COMPANY —

On the Cover:



Loretta Swartzentruber carries on her family's traditions at a community favorite: Swartzentruber's Bakery.
See story Page 8.

WEST CAROLINA RURAL TELEPHONE COOPERATIVE

Board Member Elections for 2019

There will be an election at the annual meeting on Aug. 19, 2019, to elect three members for the board of directors. The three seats up for election this year, due to normal rotations as per cooperative bylaws, are as follows:

Area 2 – Iva
Area 4 – Due West
Area 7 – Abbeville

The three directors who currently hold these positions all plan to seek re-election.

An appointed nominating committee will select one or more members from each of these three areas to be nominated to the board. Those who wish to notify the nominating committee of their interest in serving on the board may provide the company CEO a letter of intent which can be turned into any of the company offices during regular business hours no later than 5 p.m. on May 31, 2019. Materials on qualifications and how to file are also available upon request from any of our offices. Please remember you must be a member from the area where the vacancy is occurring and meet the other qualifications outlined in the bylaws.

A person not nominated may file as a petition candidate through a process the bylaws more specifically describes. In accordance with bylaw requirements, petition candidates will have a period following the nominating committee's meeting to file and be listed on the election ballot, provided they have met the bylaw qualifications to be board members. Petitions must be received no later than 5 p.m. on July 5, 2019.

Those with questions may contact CEO Jeff Wilson at 864-446-2111.

This information is for notification of the process for board election only and is NOT the notice of the annual meeting.



**Featuring news and events
around the WCTEL service area**

Abbeville

Mark your calendars! This year's Spring Festival is from Thursday, May 2, through Saturday, May 4. Since its kickoff in 1981, the Spring Festival has drawn thousands to charming Abbeville. The festival brings craft vendors, live music, food vendors, amusement rides, an antique car show and more to downtown Abbeville. General admission is FREE! For more information, visit abbevillecitysc.com or on Facebook/cityofabbeville.

Calhoun Falls Events

May 4 – Youth Fishing Derby, Blue Hole,
FREE, 7:30 a.m.-noon

May 17-18 – Springtime in the Falls,
townwide yard sale

May 25 – Paddlefest at Blue Hole,
FREE, 11 a.m.-3 p.m.

June 29 – Freedom Blast at Blue Hole,
FREE, 6 p.m.-9 p.m.





Seagoing majesty

Visit the centers working to protect sea turtles

BY ANNE BRALY

Sea turtles are some of the most majestic, long-lived animals in the ocean. However, hundreds of thousands of them die each year after being tangled in fishing nets and other man-made gear. They also suffer as a result of climate change, lack of food, contaminated seas and other hazards.

They're among the most imperiled groups of animals that swim our seas, says Dr. David Steen, a research ecologist at the Georgia Sea Turtle Center in Jekyll Island, Georgia. If the baby turtles can make it to adulthood — which is an accomplishment in itself, as most perish before they reach that critical stage — they can live for decades and reproduce many times.

"This offsets the high mortality they experience in early life," Steen says. "But the big problem arises when adults experience higher death rates than normal. It's tough for populations to recover."

The Georgia Sea Turtle Center is one of several such centers located in coastal states around the South. It opened in 2007 and has educated hundreds of thousands of visitors on the hazards sea turtles face, as well as the important role they play in our ecosystem.



Crowds gathered for the release of a sea turtle on Jekyll Island, Ga., which is home to the Georgia Sea Turtle Center.

Photos courtesy of the Jekyll Island Authority.



Conservation efforts are helping to increase the number of loggerhead sea turtle nests in Georgia.

The center is a one-of-a-kind experience, Steen says. Visitors can learn about sea turtles in an interactive learning center, peer into a hospital window to see turtles being treated by a veterinarian, and stroll through a pavilion to view turtles as they are rehabilitated in tanks. And during the nesting season, which runs from May to July, visitors can join educators and researchers on night searches for nesting sea turtles.

Educating the public about the importance of sea turtle recovery is a focus of the center's mission.

"If your ecosystem has missing pieces, there will inevitably be cascading effects, many of which we can't even predict," Steen adds. "There are many philosophical, ecological and spiritual reasons one might consider when discussing why we need to save sea turtles, but there are legal reasons, too. All sea turtles are protected by the Endangered Species Act, and that means we must work to recover their populations."

The effort appears to be working, as the number of loggerhead sea turtle nests in Georgia is gradually increasing, Steen says. "Their numbers are increasing due to a variety of individuals, agencies and organizations in the region, and also because of the state and federal legislation like the Endangered Species Act that protects them." 🐢

See more sea turtles

IN SOUTH CAROLINA:

Zucker Family Sea Turtle Recovery at the South Carolina Aquarium
100 Aquarium Wharf, Charleston, S.C.

Online: scaquarium.org

Zucker Family Sea Turtle Recovery allows guests who visit the South Carolina Aquarium to experience and learn about sea turtles. It's both a hospital and a guest experience, making the real-life rehabilitation of sick and injured sea turtles visible to all guests through windows into the surgical suite. Experience a turtle's remarkable journey from rescue to rehabilitation and release.

To date, the South Carolina Aquarium has returned 265 rehabilitated sea turtles to the ocean.

IN FLORIDA:

Navarre Beach Sea Turtle Conservation Center
8740 Gulf Blvd., Navarre, Fla.

Online: navarrebeachseaturtles.org

The Navarre Beach Sea Turtle Conservation Center is a small operation with a giant mission to educate the public and protect the beautiful turtles that call the Gulf of Mexico home and nest on its white-sand beaches. Visitors to the center can see Sweet Pea, a green sea turtle that cannot be returned to the wild due to her injuries. Also, guests can take a virtual "journey" through Northwest Florida to learn about the region's natural resources and the importance of protecting coastal and marine ecosystems critical to sea turtle survival.

IN NORTH CAROLINA:

Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Rescue and Rehabilitation Center
302 Tortuga Lane, Surf City, N.C.

Online: www.seaturtlehospital.org

Hundreds of loggerheads, leatherbacks, ridleys and green sea turtles come to the beaches of North Carolina to lay eggs before returning to the Atlantic Ocean, leaving thousands of hatchlings to potentially emerge and follow their instincts toward the sea.

Visitors to the Topsail Beach area can visit the Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Rescue and Rehabilitation Center to learn about turtles' lives from beach nest to the sea and the center's effort to improve their odds of survival.

The center offers tours to the public during the warm months, beginning in April.

Sea turtles are also visible at all three North Carolina aquariums, which are involved in rescue, rehabilitation and release.

- **The Aquarium on Roanoke Island on the Outer Banks features a Sea Turtle Rescue exhibit.**
- **Visitors to the Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores on the Crystal Coast can follow the journey of loggerhead sea turtles in the Loggerhead Odyssey exhibit.**
- **In the Wilmington area, The Aquarium at Fort Fisher features turtle exhibits and Turtle Talks at the adjacent Fort Fisher State Recreational Area.**

Baking

FOR THE LORD

Swartzentruber's Bakery is a community staple

BY PATRICK SMITH

Loretta Swartzentruber can sum up her business in a simple phrase that hangs on the wall: “Our business is to serve the Lord. We bake cakes to meet expenses.”

She has lived by that sentiment since opening Swartzentruber's Bakery with her parents, Norman and Mary, in 1982.

Walk in the bakery and you'll be greeted by the dozens of fresh-baked items sold daily — the signature pound cake, layered cakes, sourdough bread, dinner rolls, cream pies, baked pies and fruit pastries — all made from scratch and delicious. There are also shelves of vegetables, candies, dips, jellies and jams, popcorn, honey, Amish peanut butter spread, granola and more.

While her parents have passed away, their heartfelt presence is still clear in the Mennonite bakery. Many of Swartzentruber's recipes were passed down through the family for more than 50 years, and she recalls baking with her mother from an early age. “Cooking is one of the everyday things we learned from Mom,” Swartzentruber says. “I learned to bake by watching her. I was blessed to be able to work with my mom and dad for 25 years at the bakery.”



Cinnamon rolls are one of the delectable goodies Loretta Swartzentruber offers at her bakery.

FAMILY BUSINESS

For some companies, there's in-depth planning, pages of business plans and hefty investments, but Swartzentruber never had business intentions. For the family, it started by selling homemade whoopie pies at a local farmers market. After selling out in a few hours on the first day, they decided to add pound cakes the next week. They found the same result with each item they added.

“We decided we were either going to get into it right with a business license or get out completely,” says Swartzentruber. “We enclosed the two-car garage behind the house and opened the bakery. After six months we expanded.”

You can still find the bakery in the same location today. “You have to look for the lighthouse out on Highway 28, and then you drive around back to the garage,” she says.

Inside, you'll often find Swartzentruber and her staff of five baking at all hours of the night, making homemade icing and getting ready for the dozens of customers coming in for the day ahead.

“Mom would often say she knows

God led us into the bakery business,” Swartzentruber says. “I feel the same way, and I want customers to feel blessed when they come in, and especially when they leave.” 📞



If you go

SWARTZENTRUBER'S BAKERY

139 Hwy. 28 Bypass

Abbeville, SC 29620

Hours: Thursday and Friday 7 a.m.-6 p.m.

Saturday 7 a.m.-5 p.m.

Phone: 864-446-2992

“Swartzentruber's Bakery” on Facebook



HI! I'M AMANDA CLARK.

This column, which appears in each issue, will allow you to read about technology and learn simple tips to get the most out of your electronics. For more tips or help with your devices, be sure to read this column in future publications. I'm always happy to help!

DEVICE OF THE MONTH

Toshiba Canvio Basics 1 TB



Remember when computers used floppy disks? A standard 3.5-inch floppy disk held 1.44 MB of information. Today's storage options allow for much larger amounts of information, in a much smaller way. In fact, the Toshiba Canvio Basics 1 TB will hold the contents of approximately 728,000 floppy disks. That's a lot of information! The Canvio Basics 1 TB model, which is phantom powered by your computer through a USB 2.0 or 3.0 port, gives you the space and flexibility to store all the information you need for months or even years to come.

Digital spring cleaning

Springtime is a great time to clean and freshen up your home. You may not realize it, but your computer may need to be cleaned up as well. Not just in a literal sense, but also digitally. There are a few quick-and-easy steps you can take that, if done routinely, can really change the performance and speed of your computer.

GET ORGANIZED

Saving documents on your desktop not only clutters the look of your screen and makes things difficult to find, but it can also take up space on your computer. Consider this: Think of your computer as a filing system in an office. To better know where things are located, create a folder structure that makes sense to you. Start by compartmentalizing things that are important: photos, financial documents, school work and other items. Make a folder,

name it something intuitive, then make subfolders and appropriately name them, including dates. For instance, you may have a "Photos" folder that has subfolders for each year or special events like a wedding or Christmas.

DELETE UNWANTED DATA

As you browse the internet, each site you visit stores data on your hard drive. These files can really add up over time and slow down your computer. Luckily, they're easy to get rid of. Open your favorite browser and find the settings or preferences. From here, deleting these temporary data files should be straightforward and is something you should do regularly. Every operating system is different, but with the click of a button, you can find how to delete these files online.

CALL FOR BACKUP

Photos, music and videos take up a lot of space on a computer's hard drive, and even the best hard drives eventually fail. It's best to always have a backup of your important files. Consider

investing in an external hard drive, or look into a cloud-based storage system like Dropbox or Google Drive. Both programs work similarly, but Google Drive can be programmed to periodically back up your files automatically.

SAY NO TO JUNK MAIL

It's easy to let email mes-

sages pile up in your inbox. Over time, these messages (and especially their attachments) take up space on your computer. Go through regularly and delete any unimportant messages. Unsubscribe from promotional emails that may no longer be useful to you, and use folders to organize your inbox to separate priority, social and promotional mail.

KEEP IT CLEAN

Keeping the physical parts of your computer clean will also benefit its performance. Keep a bottle of compressed air and spray the crevices periodically. Dust can build up in small spaces and cause overheating, especially in laptops. Purchase some specialized wipes to keep your keyboard sanitary and your screen clear. ☑





Bringing Economic

HOPE

Broadband networks recharge rural communities

BY JEN CALHOUN

When Bud Layne engineered a new design for conveyor belts back in 1989, the internet was hardly a thought in most people's minds. Relatively few had heard of it, and even fewer used it. So, as technical as his Glasgow, Kentucky-based company may have been, internet access didn't matter.

"But all that's changed. Today, the Span Tech CEO and founder depends on high-speed internet from his local rural telecommunications cooperative to send engineering design files across the world in the time it takes to sip coffee.

Without that kind of access, Layne couldn't sell his conveyor belts to multi-national food producers like Kraft. He also couldn't employ between 80 and 90 people in a town of less than 15,000. "Every design layout we do has to be redone, on average, five times," he says. "All this stuff moves back and forth digitally over our network. These are some big drawings I'm talking about."

Rural-based companies like Span Tech are still an exception, however. The U.S. Census Bureau's 2016 American Community Survey found that only 17 percent of businesses operate in rural communities, defined as nonurban towns of fewer than 50,000 residents and sparsely populated

High-speed internet allows Span Tech, a conveyor system manufacturer, to transfer engineering designs across the world.



regions. The number of companies working in rural areas, however, could increase if high-speed internet networks continue to appear in all regions of the country.

GOING COUNTRY

Entrepreneurs are taking note of rural success stories, according to a June 25, 2018, story from the business website Fundra.com. Survey data from the 12 Federal Reserve Banks found that rural communities outperform urban centers on many metrics of successful entrepreneurship.

"Rural businesses are smaller and grow

more slowly, the data from the Small Business Credit Survey shows," the article says. "But they're also more likely to be profitable than their urban counterparts and have longer survival rates. Plus, entrepreneurs in rural areas have an easier time getting business financing, which is an important factor in scaling a business."

Small and large companies have either popped up in rural regions across the country or, like Span Tech, stayed put thanks to expanded digital access. One example is Above All Aerial in rural Minnesota. The company uses drone technology to

help farmers across the country scout crops and provide damage assessment. Another is Big Tex Trailers, based in Mount Pleasant, Texas. With a workforce of about 2,000, it serves clients throughout the United States and as far north as Western Canada. Also, a U.S. Army veteran turned his love of pop culture into his business, Tennessee Toys and Comics, in a town of about 5,000 people. Now, he sells to collectors around the world.

THE HIGH COST OF DIGITAL DARKNESS

If high-speed internet access fails to expand in rural areas, however, jobs and the economy can't grow, says Wally Tyner, an agricultural economics professor at Purdue University. Tyner is one of the authors of a detailed 2018 policy brief that shows the economic benefits gained from installing broadband networks in rural areas of Indiana. Through intensive research, Tyner's team found that the economic benefits outweighed the costs of fiber networks at a ratio of 4:1.

"I always like to ask my audience this question when I'm presenting this policy brief: 'Is there anybody in this room who thinks rural electrification was a bad idea?'" Tyner says, referring to the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 that offered low-cost government loans to rural electric cooperatives so people outside of the nation's cities could have access to safe, reliable and affordable electricity.

The answer, Tyner says, is always no. "I don't care how conservative or how liberal you are. No one will say it was a bad idea, even though it's the government getting involved," he says.

Without the initiative, large areas of the country — as well as millions of people — could have gone without electricity for decades, leaving them literally and figuratively in the dark as their city-dwelling counterparts progressed without them.

So what does this have to do with high-speed internet access? Everything, says Tyner, who headed a detailed 2018 policy brief that shows the economic benefits gained from installing broadband networks in rural areas of Indiana.

The Purdue brief found that if rural communities can access the type of broadband networks available in larger cities, there will be more jobs, more industry, better education, more medical opportunities and a host of other benefits.

And while installation of this kind of fiber optic equipment is expensive, the result is that the fiber networks end up paying for themselves many times over. "Today, the economy runs on digits," Tyner says. "If you're on the other side of the digital divide, you're up that creek without a paddle. It's really important for rural areas to have." 🗨️

Digital dollars

It's no secret that almost every business and government entity relies on high-speed internet. Farms, manufacturing firms, schools and cottage industries depend on the internet for everything from relaying and retrieving information to marketing and sales. But high-speed internet also brings money to local, state and federal economies. The Hudson Institute, a research organization, released a report in 2016 called "The Economic Impact of Rural Broadband." The report found that rural broadband providers across the country directly added \$24.1 billion to the states in which they operated in 2015 alone. Of this, \$17.2 billion was through their own operations and \$6.9 billion was through the follow-on impact of their operations, the report says.

ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF THE RURAL BROADBAND INDUSTRY BY STATE IN 2015

Alabama	Kentucky	South Carolina	Tennessee
DIRECT IMPACT	DIRECT IMPACT	DIRECT IMPACT	DIRECT IMPACT
\$241 million	\$312 million	\$618 million	\$532 million
INDIRECT IMPACT	INDIRECT IMPACT	INDIRECT IMPACT	INDIRECT IMPACT
\$87 million	\$102 million	\$230 million	\$247 million
TOTAL IMPACT	TOTAL IMPACT	TOTAL IMPACT	TOTAL IMPACT
\$328 million	\$414 million	\$848 million	\$779 million
EMPLOYMENT	EMPLOYMENT	EMPLOYMENT	EMPLOYMENT
1,014 jobs	1,239 jobs	2,725 jobs	2,606 jobs

→ Source: The Hudson Institute's "The Economic Impact of Rural Broadband," 2016.

NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR

BY JOHN CLAYTON

Mennonites are
an important
part of Abbeville
community

The forecast for March 31, 1973, called for thunderstorms across Abbeville County. The weather instead delivered a deadly tornado that left neighbor leaning on neighbor in its wake.

Four years earlier, a group of new neighbors had arrived in the county from coastal Virginia, bringing with them their own customs and religion that were unfamiliar to the residents of the Upstate. To many in the community, their new Mennonite neighbors had remained a mystery — or at least a curiosity — until the storm came.

“My father told me this story,” says Abbeville County Council Chairman Hal Prince. “When we had the tornado in ’73 and people got out a couple of days later to start clearing debris and the roads, there were already men out there with chainsaws doing the work. It was the Mennonites.”

Prince says the relationship between the Mennonites and the other residents of the county began to change after those sad days as neighbors worked and mourned together. The massive, powerful tornado killed seven people and injured more than 30. The path of destruction was 25 miles long and 100 yards wide, according to Associated Press reports.

Steve Swartzentruber, whose family moved to Abbeville with a handful of other Beachy Mennonite families in 1969, was 10 years old when the tornado struck, but he understands now why the group was met early on with skepticism.

“The thing the young people can’t fathom now is having a world without the internet,” says Swartzentruber, who serves as a minister at Cold Springs Mennonite Church and a partner in Ray’s Plumbing, the family business his father started. “When I was a kid and we moved here, people had no idea who the Mennonites were unless they went and looked it up in an encyclopedia or something like that. They didn’t know who we were, and our culture is a bit different — we’re not a cult, but we do have our own culture. People here didn’t know if we were standoffish or friendly or what we were.”

GETTING STARTED

Dennis Stoll was a teenager when he arrived in Abbeville with his family in 1969. He had attended a Mennonite school, as is typical among Mennonite youth, but the small band of Mennonites in their new home of Abbeville had neither a church nor a school. So, Stoll became one of Abbeville High School’s first Mennonite graduates.

“It was quite exciting,” Stoll says. “It seemed like a large vacation, moving down to a new farm. We had some horses in those early years. From my perspective at 16, it seemed like an exciting time of my life. The excitement of it outweighed anything else. I look back at it as a neat time.”

Stoll says the Abbeville School District worked with the family so that he and his brother, Robert, could attend night classes as they helped build the family business now known as Stoll Industries. While Stoll was finishing high school, Swartzentruber says he was facing a different challenge as a

second-grader at Greenville Street School. “I’ve always struggled with spelling,” he says. “With a name like Swartzentruber, that can be tough, and for whatever reason, the teachers at my old school never made me learn to spell my last name, and that’s always puzzled me. But the teacher here made me learn to spell it.”

Swartzentruber’s father, Ray, took the year following the move from Virginia to build the family’s home. Then, Ray’s Plumbing was born.

The original Mennonite families had begun looking for a new home because of concern over rising land prices and urban sprawl near Virginia Beach. They had been scouting other locations in the early 1960s, but an automobile accident killed Jake Hershberger, a prominent bishop in the Mennonite church. “Everything was kind of put on pause after that,” Swartzentruber says. “I don’t really remember the accident, but I remember seeing my grandfather, who was in the wreck, with a broken leg.”

Still, the group stuck to its original plan, choosing Abbeville and establishing Cold Springs Mennonite Church in 1969. It is one of a dozen Mennonite churches in South Carolina. Stoll recalls the small congregation meeting in members’ homes, the Cold Springs Community Center and in the meeting room at Little River Electric Cooperative. “I remember people being very accommodating for us,” Stoll says.

About half of the Mennonites who have come to South Carolina are part of a group involved in a centuries-old split from the Amish. In some ways, a group of devout Christians with lives centered around faith and family was easily relatable for the largely conservative protestant South, despite some cultural differences. “My parents and some other parents visited other churches in the community just to fellowship together and get to know them and let them get to know us,” Stoll says.

Just two weeks after the Swartzentruber family arrived in the Upstate, they added to the Mennonite and Abbeville populations with the birth of son Kevin. “Kevin is my younger brother,” Steve



Swartzentruber says. “We always said he’s the original Abbeville Mennonite.”

50 YEARS

In the half-century since arriving in Abbeville, Prince says the Mennonites have become valuable members of the community with both business and civic contributions. “They supply services that we need and operate businesses. Some are family businesses, and some employ a lot of people.”

Stoll Industries, Ray’s Plumbing, Hershberger Cabinets, Swartzentruber’s Bakery, and Overholt Builders are a few of the businesses in the Abbeville area that Mennonites own and operate. Swartzentruber says the Mennonites have brought more than business to Abbeville. He is a former EMT, and his father, Ray, was a founding member of the Cold Springs Volunteer Fire Department, where

(Top) Cold Springs Mennonite Church is the heart of the Mennonite community in the Abbeville area.

(Bottom) Darris Stoll, operations manager of Stoll Industries, speaks at the dedication of the company’s new building.

a large number of Mennonites still train and serve.

Though the Mennonite community has grown over the past 50 years, faith and family remain at its center. Cold Springs Mennonite Church serves a congregation of about 175 members, and Cold Springs Mennonite School has an enrollment of 85 students, including Mennonites and those from other denominations. “Over the years we’ve tried to merge as much as possible just to be a part of the Abbeville community,” Swartzentruber says. “We may do things differently, but we’re normal people.” 📺

The beautiful simplicity of hummus

A few basic ingredients create a healthy favorite

Hummus is proof that the best things in life are often simple. “I make mine with garbanzo beans, lemon, salt, tahini and some olive oil. That’s it,” says Solomon Babylon, owner of Babylon Gyros in Richmond, Kentucky. “It’s really the tahini — sesame paste — that makes it.”

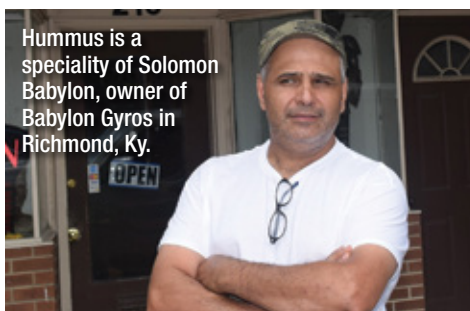
Since opening his restaurant 10 years ago in the charming home of Eastern Kentucky University just a few miles south of Lexington, Babylon has seen a marked increase in the amount of hummus he prepares daily. He serves it as a dip with whole rounds of grilled pita bread or as a garnish for falafel.

“It’s interesting,” he says. “In the 1980s, it was Chinese food. In the ’90s, it was Mexican. In the early 2000s, it was Indian food. There were Indian restaurants everywhere. But now, in the 2010s, people have started turning to Middle Eastern food.”

Hummus includes lots of good nutrients, such as calcium, folate, fiber, healthy fats and magnesium. When it comes to good-for-you ingredients and foods to make our lives better, hummus is a tasty option. “You go into any grocery store and see hummus all over the place,” says Babylon, a native of Jordan.

At the eatery in downtown Richmond, though, hummus is made from scratch. The restaurant goes through about 50 pounds of dried garbanzo beans every week, and Babylon makes hummus three to four times daily, Monday through Saturday. “I make it batch by batch, every two to three hours,” he says.

Though his restaurant serves traditional hummus only, Babylon says there are a number of ingredients you can add to it. “One of the best I’ve ever had is avocado hummus,” he says. “But there’s eggplant hummus and others. You can add spinach



Hummus is a speciality of Solomon Babylon, owner of Babylon Gyros in Richmond, Ky.

to it, red peppers. But remember, you can’t be stingy with the tahini. Tahini makes the hummus. Taste as you go.”

And, he advises, if the recipe calls for it, be sure to add enough lemon. You want a slightly sharp edge to your hummus.

“And you know what’s one of the best tastes you’ll ever have?” he asks. “Hummus topped with rice. Hummus is a base for anything you might want to put on it. That’s why I serve hummus with whole pieces of pita. That way, people can tear off a piece of pita, spread some hummus on it and add some gyro meat or shawarma (roasted meat cooked on a spit and shaved) and make a sandwich.”



FOOD EDITOR
ANNE P. BRALY
IS A NATIVE OF
CHATTANOOGA,
TENNESSEE.

TRADITIONAL HUMMUS

- 3 cups dry garbanzo beans, soaked overnight
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 3/4 cup tahini paste, or more, to taste
- 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice, or more, to taste
- Salt, to taste
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil, for drizzling

Rinse the beans and place in a pot. Fill with enough water to cover by at least 1 inch. Allow to sit overnight. Drain beans. Then add water to cover by at least an inch. Bring to a boil; then reduce heat and simmer over medium heat until the beans are very soft, 1 to 2 hours.

Drain the beans, reserving some of the water to use later. Transfer the beans to a blender and blend the beans until smooth, adding 1/2 cup of olive oil gradually. Add some of the reserved water if needed to help it blend. Add the tahini and blend in along with the lemon juice. Add salt. Taste and correct seasonings, adding more tahini, lemon and salt, as needed.

Spread the hummus into a flat serving dish and garnish with a drizzle of olive oil. Serve with pita bread, pita chips, carrots, celery, cucumbers or a combination of any or all of them.

AVOCADO HUMMUS

When in a pinch, Solomon Babylon uses canned garbanzo beans, but he recommends using the best you can find, preferably beans from Turkey.

- 1 (15-ounce) can garbanzo beans, well-rinsed and drained
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 1/2 tablespoons tahini, or more, to taste
- 3 tablespoons fresh lime juice

Traditional Hummus



Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

- 1/8 teaspoon cumin
- 2 medium, ripe avocados, cored and peeled
- Red pepper flakes, for garnish

In a blender or food processor, pulse garbanzo beans, olive oil, tahini and lime juice until smooth, about 2 minutes. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Add cumin and avocados and pulse mixture until smooth and creamy, 1-2 minutes longer.

Serve topped with more olive oil and sprinkle with red pepper flakes, if desired. Serve with pita or tortilla chips.

RED BEET HUMMUS

- 2 pounds red beets, scrubbed (about 2 large beets)
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 2 tablespoons ground coriander
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2-1 cup tahini, or to taste
- Kosher salt

Heat the oven to 425 degrees. In an oven-proof Dutch oven, cover the beets with water and bring to a boil on the stovetop. Then keep covered and braise in the oven for about 2 hours, until very tender. Use a knife or fork to test for tenderness.

With a slotted spoon, transfer the beets to a cutting board. When cool enough to handle, slip off the skins and cut the beets into small, 1-inch pieces, spread them on a baking sheet and refrigerate until cold, about 1 hour.

In a food processor, combine the braised beets with the garlic, coriander and lemon juice and pulse until finely chopped. With the food processor on, slowly drizzle in the olive oil until incorporated and the beet puree is smooth. Scrape into a bowl and whisk in the tahini. Season with salt and serve with pita bread or pita chips. 🍷



233 Highway 28 Bypass
Abbeville, SC 29620

Presort STD
US Postage PAID
Permit #21
Freeport OH

MAKING STREAMS COME TRUE

Enjoy a **\$40
Netflix gift card**
when you add
or upgrade
your internet.



(864) 446-2111
wctel.com

Some restrictions apply. One-year agreement.
Offer expires 6-28-19. Speeds may not be
available in all areas. Residential only. Gift card
will be emailed once service is installed.

