

CONNECTED

Layers of Flavors

Regina's Savannah Grill
delivers classics

RENEWING
CALHOUN FALLS

ROASTING RULES



By SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

Strengthening ties

Rural internet providers gain ground


No matter the challenges, NTCA members have a long history of stepping up to extend fast internet service to rural America, allowing residents to work, learn and engage with family and friends online.

Recently, we released our 2021 Broadband/Internet Availability Survey Report, reaffirming the commitment to rural broadband as the industry stands on the cusp of once-in-a-generation investment to bring connectivity to all Americans.

NTCA members responding to the survey indicated that nearly 76% of their customers can receive downstream speeds of at least 100 Mbps. That's up from 67.8% in 2020. Similarly, 55.4% of customers have access to gigabit downstream speed, up from 45.1% in 2020.

A year earlier, 28% of respondents subscribed to services with 100 Mbps broadband or better. Last year, that number was 37%.

These gains appear throughout the communities NTCA members serve, including in critically important broadband service to libraries, community colleges, state universities and extensions. There are 911 call centers and medical facilities that benefit, as well as nearly all primary and secondary schools, along with police and fire departments.

Despite the successes, NTCA members continue to face pandemic-related supply chain issues, leading to slowdowns in installing services for customers and delayed network construction. Still, these companies serving rural America continue to put your needs first, building networks that can change lives and communities for the better. As the 2021 Broadband/Internet Availability Survey Report shows, they're making a difference. 



Back it up

It's as easy as 3-2-1

The reliability of technology, from computers to smartphones, is steadily increasing, which is good because we depend on it more now than ever. From personal photo libraries to essential financial records, digital archives have replaced physical filing and storage systems.

In fact, this information is so important, consider taking a lesson from corporations and data-intensive industries — back it all up with multiple copies in strategic locations.

3

Your goal should be to have at least three copies of your important data — but you'll put each copy in a different location.

2

Two copies of your data should be stored at your home or office. Separate them, though. Keep one copy on a device such as a computer. But keep the second version on an external hard drive. Prices begin at less than \$100 and then go up, based on the amount of data you need to store.

1

Send the final copy to the cloud, which can be both convenient and a hedge against a disaster damaging your home or business. Apple, Google, Microsoft and many other companies offer cloud-based storage solutions. For a few dollars a month, you can get digital peace of mind.

Coordinating those steps is also easier than ever. Modern computer operating systems offer options to automate most of the details.



Are blue light glasses hype or help?

According to the American Optometric Association, the average office worker spends seven hours a day in front of a computer — and that's only when they're on the clock. In our off-hours, we're often squinting at our smartphones, using tablets to catch up on the news or following the twists and turns of the latest best-seller on an e-reader.

After so much time staring at screens, many people experience digital eye strain, also known as computer vision syndrome. Symptoms can include everything from dry and tired eyes to blurry vision, neck pain, headaches and more.

Some folks are turning to blue light-blocking glasses for relief. Available in a variety of styles and a wide range of prices, these glasses purport to reduce eye strain by filtering out the blue light emitted by digital screens.

But are these lenses really all that they're cracked up to be? According to experts, maybe not.

WHAT IS BLUE LIGHT?

All visible light contains the entire spectrum of wavelengths, from red to violet, and each wavelength has its own specific energy level. Blue light has the highest energy level in the visible spectrum.

The sun is the source of most of the blue light we encounter, but blue light is also emitted by fluorescent and incandescent light bulbs and the screens of electronic devices. However, no measurable harm done by the light from digital devices has been documented.

Studies have shown that it's not the screens themselves that are causing eye strain but, rather, how we use them. We blink less frequently when looking at screens and we tend to hold electronic devices, particularly mobile phones, much closer to our eyes than paper documents. Also, glare, reflections and existing uncorrected or undercorrected vision problems can contribute to discomfort, as does focusing on screens for extended periods of time.

So, if blue light glasses won't help, what will? Believe it or not, taking breaks. Most symptoms of eye strain will resolve themselves when you stop using the computer. When you have to be in front of a screen for an extended period of time, experts like those at the American Academy of Ophthalmology recommend the 20-20-20 rule — after every 20 minutes of continuous screen time, look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds.

BLUE LIGHT AT BEDTIME

While there isn't scientific evidence that blue light is responsible for digital eye strain, experts say there isn't any harm in wearing blue light glasses, and they may help at bedtime.

Blue light affects the body's natural waking and sleeping cycle, known as circadian rhythm. During daylight hours, blue light wakes us up and keeps us alert. But when it's time for bed, the blue light from screens can stimulate the brain just when you're trying to wind down for the night. This is why many devices have nighttime settings to minimize blue light exposure after dark. Experts recommend limiting screen time two to three hours before bed, but if you must use your devices in the hours leading up to bedtime, blue light glasses could help ensure a solid night's rest. 📺



Better connected

Why rural broadband outshines the big guys

A high-tech web threads its way throughout our region, extending to homes, businesses, government offices, medical facilities and more. WCTEL is at the center of that web, the hub linking you to the power of the internet. Together — because you're very much a part of this success — we've created an amazing resource.



JEFF WILSON

Chief Executive Officer

But have you ever wondered how we stack up against other service providers? I'm sure you see advertisements for national communications corporations, and you may be curious if your local company keeps pace. Truthfully, there's a vast separation between how WCTEL and corporate-owned businesses operate. Rather than a focus on returning value to faceless shareholders, we prioritize giving you, our neighbors, the best service possible at the most reasonable price.

When you consider the technological wonder of it all, it really is amazing. A global system of computers shares digital information, whether it's something as large as a streaming movie or as small as a few lines of text in a social media post. Physical cables link the servers, and some cables even run beneath the ocean.

WCTEL is the local stop on this system, and we maintain the networking equipment needed to tap those massive streams of information. Then, we provide you access through the lines we've installed across the community — our community.

The differentiation between us and those national companies accelerates as we translate that amazing infrastructure into packages of services you can obtain. As you can see, there are plenty of moving parts, but we work hard to boil all of them down into straightforward, understandable service plans.

Here's one example. Our fiber optic internet network is designed to allow you to upload information as fast as you can download it, a balance so important for how we communicate. Maybe you work from home and share files with the office or rely on videoconferencing. Or, perhaps you're a gamer who wants an edge on the competition. In both cases, that two-way speed is essential. Can performance vary at times? Certainly. Wi-Fi router settings and other variables in the home and at work can make a difference, but our network is designed to serve your needs as consistently as the technology allows. Can all the national companies say the same thing?

Similarly, it can be easy to promise one thing and deliver another. When you do business with WCTEL, we strive to provide what we promise. We want you to take full advantage of our services, and we do not put a cap on your use. Many of the corporate-owned companies do not work that way. In fact, it's common for those national providers to either slow down service or charge additional fees to customers who exceed usage limits. That's just not how we do business.

While we enjoy the advantages of living in a rural community — and there are many — rest assured you have access to a communications network comparable to that of most metropolitan areas. In fact, many of those people living in cities would be envious, not only of the internet services available to you, but also the friendly customer support and honest communication WCTEL provides. In the end, we are neighbors helping neighbors, and that makes all the difference. 🗨️



CONNECTED

MARCH/APRIL 2022

VOL. 10, NO. 2

The West Carolina Tel Connected is a bimonthly newsletter published by West Carolina Telephone, © 2022. 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

John Michael Thomas, Vice-President
Iva, Area 2

Jane U. Stone, Secretary
Donalds, Area 3

Vacant
Starr, Area 1

Lee W. Logan
Due West, Area 4

Eric McCall
Antreville/Lowndesville, Area 5

James Robert Hester
Calhoun Falls, Area 6

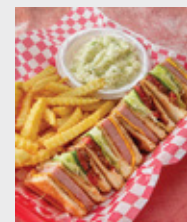
Darren Campbell Lewis
Abbeville, Area 7

Talmadge R. Bussey
South McCormick, Area 9

Produced for West Carolina Tel by:



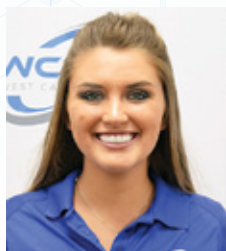
On the Cover:



Regina McKellar has grown her Savannah Grill restaurant into a family business, with help from her daughter and granddaughter. See story Page 13.

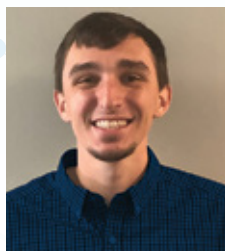
Growing to meet the needs of our members

Over the past several months WCTEL has experienced tremendous growth in both residential and business clients, which has allowed us to expand our team to further serve our members. Please help us welcome these new employees:



Jess Tollison
Marketing Assistant

She lives in Iva with her husband, Colby. They have three dogs — Lettie, Vana and Sue — and a cat, Mango. Her hobbies include photography, cookouts with friends and going to the lake.



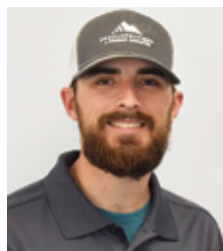
Brandon Smith
Business Solutions Consultant

He is a native of Seneca, where he lives with his wife, Hannah. Brandon enjoys hunting and fishing. He received an MBA from Clemson.



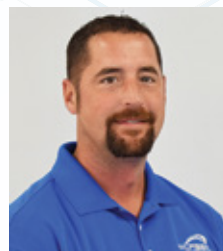
Drayton Epps
Network Ops Field Tech

He is from Anderson, where he lives with his wife, Lauren, and three dogs — Tank, Samson and Nova. Drayton's hobbies include cooking, spending time outdoors and being a Gamecock fan living in a Clemson world.



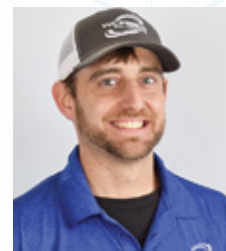
Jacob Cook
Network Ops Field Tech

He lives in Abbeville with his wife, Katie, their daughter, Paigelee, and two dogs. Jacob's hobbies are fishing and hunting.



Josh Haney
Network Ops Field Tech

A year ago, he and his wife, Sarah, moved from Ohio to Grovetown, Georgia, along with their sons, Kaden, 9, and Cooper, 4, and a 95-pound goldendoodle named Urban. Josh's hobbies include family fun, fishing, trail riding, surfing and hunting.



Bret Bush
Network Ops Field Tech

Originally from Abbeville, Bret now lives in Saluda and works in Newberry. He and his wife, Sadea, have one child, Zak, and five dogs — Vera, Nelson, King, Percy and Delilah. Bret likes spending time with family, and his hobbies include fishing, riding motorcycles and building models.



Justin Bladon
Network Ops Field Tech

He lives in Abbeville with his wife, Beth. They have two dogs, Hallie and Nash, and are expecting their first child, due in April. Justin's hobbies are grilling, golfing and traveling.



Cody Johnson
GIS Technician

He lives in Abbeville with his wife, Kristen, their 1-year-old daughter, Scarlett Elyse, and two dogs, Dani and Miley. Cody's hobbies include hunting, riding SxS's and spending time with family and friends.



Kendall Ryans
Logistic Specialist

Kendall lives in Greenwood and enjoys fishing, traveling, working out and spending time with family.



Stephen Taylor
**Community Affairs/
Economic Development Strategist**

He lives in Calhoun Falls, likes riding his bike and enjoys spending time with his three children — Kate, 13; Alivia, 9; and Caroline, 7.



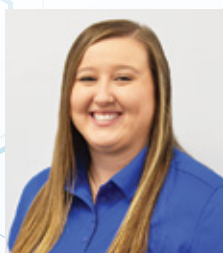
Genesis Abadia
GIS Technician

She lives in Abbeville with her husband, Justin, and their three dogs — Muhammad Ali, Spartina and Spartacus the Second. Genesis enjoys hiking with Justin, playing video games with her best friend Kaleigh, amusement parks, watching movies and working on DIY projects.



Shannon Lusk
**Construction-
Engineering Assistant**

She lives in Honea Path with her husband, Cody. They have fun with his daughters, Makenzie, 18, and Meghan, 16; and their son, Ryan, 8. The family has a boxer, named Tyson after the chicken nugget. Shannon enjoys camping, fishing, vacationing at the beach, weekend family date nights and singing on her church's praise team.



Kaleigh Price
GIS Technician

She lives in Abbeville with her dog, Mazi. Kaleigh likes to cook, watch "Grey's Anatomy" and play video games with her best friend and WCTEL co-worker, Genesis Abadia.





© iulienk/Adobe Stock

Here's how the small Alabama town attracted major recording artists

Muscle Shoals

a musician's mecca

Story by ANNE BRALY

Alabama is steeped in music history with greats like W.C. Handy, Jimmie Rodgers, Nat King Cole, the band Alabama and Hank Williams, who all left their marks on the state's list of native sons.

But those names became just a drop in the bucket when a group of musicians got together in the small Northwest Alabama town of Muscle Shoals and charted a course that would explode on the music scene and have a huge impact on American music.

Spencer Coats, a young musician and tour guide for FAME studios in Muscle Shoals, says back in the 1950s and '60s, many of the local musicians didn't care about giving live concerts, focusing more on jamming and, a little later, recording.

Now, the recording industry in North Alabama reads like a playlist of the legends of music, and it all started with three hometown men — Rick Hall, Billy Sherrill and Tom Stafford.

Hall and Sherrill were in their teens when they recorded their first song in the back of a bus station in Florence, Alabama.

One of their songs, "Sweet and Innocent," became a hit, primarily around North Alabama, but

it struck a chord with Stafford. After hearing it, he built a recording studio above City Drugs in Florence and, to make a long story short, went into the recording business with Hall and Stafford, creating Florence Alabama Music Enterprise. The business quickly took root, and Stafford soon picked up stakes and moved to what he thought were greener pastures in Nashville. Big mistake.

Hall became the driving force behind Florence Alabama Music Enterprise. He was soon forced out, but he never looked back. He took the name with him — eventually shortening it to FAME — and opened a new studio at 603 Avalon Ave. in Muscle Shoals. The sign above the door as one enters Studios A and B says it all:

"Through these doors walk the finest Musicians, Songwriters, Artists, and Producers in the World."

Chase Brandon is a tour guide at Muscle Shoals Sound.



Studio A at Florence Alabama Music Enterprise, or FAME, hosted some of music's biggest recording stars.



Hall's new venture began producing a string of hits, with artists like Otis Redding, Percy Sledge and Aretha Franklin, that would become known as the "Muscle Shoals Sound." Hall soon brought in a house band that consisted of bassist David Hood, guitarist Jimmy Johnson, drummer Roger Hawkins and keyboardist Spooner Oldham, later adding keyboardist Barry Beckett to the mix. The group would become known as the Muscle Shoals Rhythm Section, or The Swampers, as mentioned in Lynyrd Skynyrd's "Sweet Home Alabama."

History lesson over. Today, FAME Recording Studios is one of two recording studios in the Muscle Shoals area. Muscle Shoals Sound Studio in Sheffield is the other, and Cher made its address popular after recording her hit album, 3614 Jackson Highway, there.

Tours of the studios take visitors back in time. Photos of musicians who have recorded there line the walls. "If only these walls could talk," Coats says, pointing to a photo of Gregg Allman, who, with brother Duane, recorded at FAME.

Tours of both studios allow guests to see many of the instruments, spaces

and iconic items used during recording of so many familiar songs. The green sofa where the Rolling Stones sat down for a break while recording "Wild Horses" still remains at Muscle Shoals Sound. Next to it hangs the original bill for the studio's services: Dec. 4, 1969 — \$1,009.

One can just picture the mood in the studio at Muscle Shoals Sound when Aretha belted out her hit "I Never Loved a Man the Way I Love You." Or when Percy Sledge recorded "When a Man Loves a Woman." But what is it about The Shoals area that attracted these artists when there were bigger studios in larger nearby cities like Nashville and Memphis?

Coats thinks the vibe along the swamps of North Alabama may have played a part. "The same magic wouldn't have happened elsewhere like it did here," he says.

Both FAME and Muscle Shoals Sound remain active studios with artists coming in to record several days a week. Would-be visitors to Muscle Shoals Sound Studio can make reservations for tours by calling 256-978-5151 or visiting muscleshoalssoundstudio.org. Make FAME tour reservations at famestudios.com. 📞

Hit RECORD

The South is a haven for recording artists who take to studios in towns large and small. Probably the best known of these are in Muscle Shoals, home of Rick Hall's FAME Recording Studios. Nearby Florence, Sheffield and Tuscumbia have also witnessed an explosion of talent, but some other studios beyond The Shoals where artists tell their story through song include:

- Royal Studios in Memphis, where artists including Al Green, Ann Peebles and Mark Ronson, in collaboration with Bruno Mars, recorded their hits.
- Sun Studios in Memphis, where Elvis Presley recorded hits including "That's All Right" and Johnny Cash cashed in on "Folsom Prison Blues."
- Quad Studios in Nashville — a one-hit wonder that saw the recording of "Margaritaville."
- Miami's Criteria Recording Studios, which produced such hits as "Layla" for Derek and the Dominos, James Brown's "I Got You (I Feel Good)" and the Bee Gees' "Nights on Broadway."
- Stax Records headquarters in Memphis, which turned out hits from Otis Redding and Isaac Hayes, but today also features the state-of-the-art Museum of American Soul Music.
- RCA Studios A and B in Nashville, where the Everly Brothers recorded "All I Have To Do Is Dream" and Dolly Parton immortalized "Jolene."
- PatchWerk Recording Studios in Atlanta, which, though not a familiar name, has produced big sounds, including Usher's "You Make Me Wanna."
- American Recording Studio in Memphis, which flies under most radar but produced such major hits as Elvis' "In the Ghetto," Dusty Springfield's "Son of a Preacher Man" and Neil Diamond's "Sweet Caroline."
- Sea-Saint Studios in New Orleans, which became a major player in the recording industry with Patti LaBelle's "Lady Marmalade" and Paul McCartney's "Listen to What the Man Said."

‘Where Southern hospitality meets business opportunity’

Local chamber and leaders opening doors for Calhoun Falls

Story by JOHN CLAYTON | Photos by MARK GILLILAND



Rebecca McCaslan joined the Calhoun Falls Chamber of Commerce to help revitalize her community.



Rebecca McCaslan at Molly's Salon in Abbeville, South Carolina.



Rebecca McCaslan's part-time job is a full-time boost for Calhoun Falls' small business community.

As executive director of the Calhoun Falls Chamber of Commerce, she works with a volunteer board of directors and about 40 members to promote and grow local businesses. "Our main objective is to draw people to Calhoun Falls," she says.

Most of the chamber's membership consists of individuals who, like Rebecca, want to make a difference in a small town still trying to reinvent itself since the demise of its once-thriving local textile industry. North Cox Avenue, the town's main business thoroughfare, isn't teeming with activity as it once was, but Rebecca hopes it will be again someday soon. "We don't have a whole lot of businesses here in town, so we work with the ones that are here," she says.

The chamber tries to bring more businesses, at least temporarily, to Calhoun Falls to create shopping opportunities for residents. Rebecca recruits vendors for local events, including the town's busy farmers market and annual Christmas sale. "I try to get vendors who are local and from other towns to come in with their handmade crafts, goodies and boutique-style things," she says. "We welcome any sort of gift ideas and crafts. That way, we give our locals in town and in the community a way to shop without having to leave town."

Rebecca, a Calhoun Falls native, says combining her jobs as a mom and hairdresser with her duties as head of the chamber has revealed her hometown in a different light. Now, she sees possibilities for this small town that lies beside Calhoun Falls State Park and Lake Russell, and she wants other people to see those prospects, too. "We're trying to utilize our farmers market and our pavilion to draw people here," Rebecca says. "We are always just trying to draw others in. We want to let them see what we've got to show them. We want to show them some hospitality, and maybe they'll want to open up a business here in our little town."

The chamber recently adopted a new logo and motto reflecting a Calhoun Falls community that welcomes new residents and business owners — permanent and visiting ones — with open arms: "Where Southern hospitality meets business opportunity."

Making sure people are aware of both the potential and hospitality of Calhoun Falls is the biggest part of Rebecca's job as the leader of the chamber. Perhaps even more, though, she feels a duty to her hometown, her friends and neighbors. So she makes it her business to see that she and her husband, Robbie, stay involved. "Right now, we are both pretty active in the community," Rebecca says. "We decided that if we're going to live here, we want to do our best to make this place prosper." 📞

More than a store

Pettigrew Hardware and Supply has become a Calhoun Falls institution

Story by JOHN CLAYTON

Photos by MARK GILLILAND

Reels of the Calhoun Falls High School football game film arrived sometime last year at Pettigrew Hardware and Supply — the Blue Flashes immortalized in black and white. But you won't find those half-century-old treasures just sitting on a store shelf collecting dust.

After 56 years in Calhoun Falls, Pettigrew Hardware and Supply is an institution that goes well beyond its name and role as a hardware store. It has become something of a catchall for the locals and a must stop for visitors who regularly take advantage of fishing and camping at Lake Russell and Calhoun Falls State Park.

Need to sell plants for the Future Farmers of America? There's space on the sidewalk out front. Have some long-lost game film and an 8 mm projector? Drop them by, and the staff will get them to wherever they need to be.

"We have people bring in old newspapers or old photographs or anything," says store owner Stephen Pettigrew. "We try to identify them until we have someplace that's secure to keep them. A family brought me an old 8 mm projector with film of the Blue Flashes from the 1970s.



The family hardware store that Stephen Pettigrew runs is a vital building block for the future of Calhoun Falls.

We found a place at the new charter school to keep it safe and secure. We're just trying to keep it alive and make some progress."

In 1981, after graduating from Clemson University and spending several years on the faculty there, Stephen took on his father's role in running the family store, along with a feeling of responsibility to the local community. "My parents, Gaines and Jeanette, started the business, and, of course, they were involved in things in the community. So, when I came back to Calhoun Falls, I just kind of fell into some organizations," says Stephen, who serves on the board of the Calhoun Falls Chamber of Commerce. "There was a civic improvement association, and then they reorganized the chamber."

Chamber Executive Director Rebecca McCaslan says Stephen is a person she

and the chamber count on to help get things done. "Well, that's good and bad, I guess," he laughs.

While other businesses along North Cox Avenue have faltered over the past half-century, Pettigrew Hardware continues to serve Calhoun Falls and the surrounding communities in much the same way it did when it opened in 1965. It has outlasted its original suppliers, as well.

Stephen and the couple of employees in this mom-and-pop establishment pride themselves on the kind of personal service big-box stores can't deliver. Friends and customers still come in every day, first thing in the morning. The store provides chairs, benches and room for good conversation with familiar faces.

"But I don't make them coffee," Stephen says. "They have to bring that in themselves." ☞

HIT *the* TRAIL

These apps can help you plan your next outdoor adventure

Looking for new adventures this spring? A good internet connection can come in handy when you're planning your next excursion into the great outdoors. From discovering your next destination to sharing every step of the journey, these digital tools make it easier than ever to get out there and start enjoying our world.

Yonder

Yonder helps people find nature-rich destinations off the beaten path. Search the more than 20,000 locations across the United States to find your new favorite hidden gem. Each listing puts just as much focus on the experiences guests can expect during their stay as it does on the price tag. Those experiences can include trekking through a canyon, sampling grapes off the vine or enjoying nearby views. Travelers can book online or in the Yonder app available for iOS and Android.

Tripcast

Share more than just the highlights of your trip with the people who matter most. With Tripcast, available on iOS and Android, you can add friends and family to an interactive photo album that puts every traveler's pics in one place. Post notes, photos and real-time updates that are all automatically added to a trip map. Make your trip public or only invite those who want to share in every step of the journey.

AllTrails

You might be surprised how many great trails there are right in your own community, and AllTrails can help uncover them all. Whether you're looking for a relaxing hike, an invigorating trail run or a challenging, off-road bike ride, you're bound to find something that fits your needs. Browse nearby trails based on their length, difficulty and popularity to find exactly what you're looking for. You can even search for trails that are dog-friendly, have great views or are suited to a fun family outing. You can download the app in iOS or Android.

Star Walk

Make a night under the stars even more exciting with this augmented-reality star chart that tracks over 200,000 celestial objects. Open the app and point your phone at the night sky to see constellations traced right before your eyes and learn about the mythology behind them. Track planets or the International Space Station, and even get notifications for major astronomical events on iOS and Android devices.

Recreation.gov

For those seeking an extended stay in the wild, Recreation.gov is a great starting point. The site and its official app are both built to help travelers find and reserve campsites at national parks, forests and other federally designated properties across the country. Browse amenities and nearby activities for each site, as well as ratings and reviews from those who have stayed there.





Find your Little Free Library

An online map guides readers to book boxes

Take a book. Leave a book. That's the simple, powerful idea behind more than 100,000 Little Free Libraries scattered across the globe.

Todd H. Bol, who created the first Little Free Library in 2009, founded a nonprofit of that name to help people access books at no cost, no matter where they live. A key goal of the Little Free Library organization is the promotion of literacy.

The effort is driven by volunteers who build small, waterproof library boxes, find the libraries a home in their yards or other appropriate spots, and seed them with books. You don't have to share a book before taking one, and you don't even need to return the book you take. It's all on the honor system. But, please do consider contributing a book or two, because that's how the library system grows.

**Do you want to find a Little Free Library near you?
For a searchable map, visit littlefreelibrary.org/ourmap.**

E-READERS

Are you the type of avid reader who enjoys keeping a couple, or maybe even a couple dozen, reading options handy at all times? E-readers were made for you.

E-readers' screens are more eye-friendly than those of do-everything tablets like iPads. And there's another key advantage to e-readers — fewer distractions. There are no notifications, social media, games or email.

While the screens of phones and tablets emit light to create bright, clear images, those of e-readers, such as the Kindle, direct light toward the screen instead of sending it outward. Eye strain is lessened, and the e-readers typically are easy to view even when in direct sunlight.

Amazon remains the e-reader leader. The company is on the 11th version of the Kindle Paperwhite, which was updated late last year. The price is about \$140, with slightly more expensive and less pricey versions also available.

With a Kindle, you can tap into the Amazon library to purchase and store online books. While companies such as Apple offer bookstores, those are not available on Kindle devices.

There are also non-Kindle e-readers, like the Clara HD by Kobo. The company has its own e-book store. You can't reach the Amazon bookstore through a Kobo device, but you can get books through software such as OverDrive, which is used by many library systems. A Clara HD is available for about \$118 from online sites such as Walmart.



Bonus tip: Do you ever want to read the classics, for free? Project Gutenberg makes it possible, providing digital versions of books whose copyrights status allows free distribution. Visit gutenberg.org for details and to browse the library.



Hi! I'M AMANDA CLARK.

With this column, we're going to explore the digital world, specifically how you can get the most out of everything from computers and mobile devices to online services and apps. The possibilities are endless, and I'm here to help.

DEVICE OF THE MONTH



WobbleWorks 3Doodler

Although it's more 3D sculpting than 3D printing, the WobbleWorks 3Doodler is an inexpensive way for kids and teens to expand their projects into another dimension. With intuitive controls and plenty of templates and tutorials available online, the pen-like device allows them to create three-dimensional objects out of liquid plastic. The Start+ model, recommended for ages 6-13, starts at \$49.99, while the Create+ for ages 14-plus is available for \$79.99 at www.the3doodler.com.

End printing hassles



Select the right option for your needs

Even as more and more of our documents and information are stored digitally, a physical copy can be a convenience or an essential for school or work. Home printers offer great quality at an affordable price. But, with so many options on the market, how do you decide what works best for you?

Below are some quick tips on how to make the right choice and to start printing in no time.

INKJET OR LASER

The biggest decision you will make is whether to pick an inkjet or laser printer. Inkjet printers create images by shooting nearly microscopic drops of ink onto the page, with most consumer models featuring separate ink cartridges for black and color ink. Laser printers use toner, which is ink in powder form, and static electricity to melt the ink onto the paper.

While laser printers were once confined to the office due to their high cost, there are now plenty of reasonably priced models, although they continue to be more expensive than inkjet printers — at least initially.

The biggest concern with inkjet printers is the cost of the ink. Although you can buy a cheap printer for around \$60, it usually comes with

only a small amount of ink. The cost of replacing the ink cartridges can quickly add up, and some inkjet printers won't even allow you to print in black and white if the color ink is low.

If you're looking to only print in black and white, then a laser printer is the clear choice, even if the upfront cost is higher. However, while there are laser printers that can do color, they typically do not perform as well as comparably priced color inkjet printers.

In short, an inkjet remains the cost-effective choice for printing the occasional photograph or colorful school project. A laser printer does a better — and faster — job overall with text.

OTHER CHOICES

Once you've decided between inkjet or laser, consider if you want a printer with an included scanner or the ability to print on both sides of the paper automatically.

Also, if you want to print from multiple devices, consider buying a printer with wireless connectivity through Bluetooth or Wi-Fi. But if you're just going to set up your printer next to a desktop, then a simple USB cable will do the trick.

Happy printing! 🖨️

A family pursuit



Regina McKellar, right, learned to cook from her family. She has passed those skills to her daughter, Hali McConnell, and now her granddaughter and budding chef, Mylah McConnell.

Regina's Savannah Grill delivers comfort food classics with a smile

Story by ANNE BRALY | Photos by MATT LEDGER

In your quest for the best pie and the friendliest servers, Regina's Savannah Grill is the picture of a quintessential diner. It's a place where across-the-counter banter is as important as the mingled smell of burgers on the grill and fries in the fryer.

Located at the four-way stop where East Savannah Street meets North Cox Avenue in Calhoun Falls, the grill has been at its current spot since 2017. The cafe, opened in 1995 by owner Regina McKellar, previously operated in Lake Russell One Stop across the state line in Elberton, Georgia.

Prior to opening her diner, Regina didn't have much experience in the food industry aside from working in a small cafe in high school. Like so many restaurateurs without formal training, Regina came by her knowledge of Southern cooking, the kind so beloved and expected in hometown diners, by way of a family member — her aunt. "She put in time with me on weekends when I stayed with her, and I learned a lot just being a wife and mom," she says.

Regina's Savannah Grill is open Monday through Saturday serving breakfast, lunch and dinner. It's a short-order grill with daily lunch specials on weekdays. These include offerings like salmon patties with crowder peas and mashed potatoes, along with grilled pork chops with mac-and-cheese pie and green beans. The menu is posted on the chalkboard, and you'll find that

the most expensive thing is the two-piece catfish dinner with fries and coleslaw for \$10.49. Specials appear on the Coca-Cola menu board and will run you just under \$8.

Friendly conversation and service as pleasing as a glass of sweet tea are on the house. "I think people just love having our business here," Regina says. "They can come in and sit around and socialize and eat. The schools, churches and individuals depend on us for a lot of cooking."

Just as Regina learned about cooking from her family, she passes along recipes and knowledge to her daughter, Hali McConnell, and now her granddaughter, budding chef Mylah McConnell. "Hali puts in a lot of time with letting Mylah help cook at home, so when she comes to work with her, she wants to help out in the kitchen," Regina says.

And 10-year-old Mylah is just as enthusiastic about cooking for the public as her family members are. "I just love to cook and bake cakes and the money I get paid for them," she says.

Over their long history, diners have been a subtle part of our environment. They don't stand out with lots of glitter and glamour, but they're a piece of Americana as familiar as the comfort food we eat. Everyone likes a hometown diner, including those who run them. "I love to cook, and I love to meet different people," Regina says. "I just love the atmosphere in a small, local restaurant." 🍷

Roasting

can yield the perfect taste and texture

Explore the nuances of a common cooking technique

A perfectly roasted cut of beef is a thing of beauty. A deliciously roasted chicken surrounded by colorful roasted vegetables is Instagram worthy. But how do you get these cuts of meat to reach these levels of perfection?

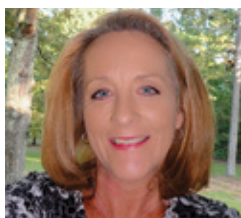
Roasting is an age-old culinary technique that takes relatively tough cuts of meat and, like magic, turns them into tender, mouthwatering bites. It all has to do with cooking low and slow. There's a marked difference between roasting and baking. Baking transforms liquid — batter — into solids like cakes and cookies. Roasting does the opposite, taking meats and vegetables and breaking down their sinewy fibers into a near-gelatinous state.

Here are some simple tips to consider when roasting.

Bring food to room temperature before roasting: Tempering food is a simple but critical step that involves bringing an ingredient to room temperature so that it cooks more evenly. When roasting whole chickens, turkeys, Cornish hens and other birds, keep in mind that white and dark meat are best cooked to different temperatures.

To ensure your bird is roasting properly, position different parts toward hotter or cooler parts of the oven, or cover the breast with foil. It's important to rest meat after roasting, particularly larger cuts that continue to cook after you take them out of the oven. Letting the meat rest for 10 to 20 minutes is usually sufficient. Rested meat will cut more easily.

Remember that size matters: When roasting vegetables, cut veggies into pieces of the same size to ensure even cooking. The best meats to roast are large, tough cuts, such as pork shoulder. Don't roast thinner, less fatty cuts of meat such as boneless, skinless chicken breasts — they'll dry out. Good vegetables to roast are the heartier ones like beets, carrots, potatoes, squashes, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts and sweet potatoes. 🥘



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

PERFECTLY ROASTED RIB-EYE

- 1 (4- to 5-pound) rib-eye roast
- Olive oil, optional
- 1 tablespoon kosher salt
- 1-2 teaspoons black pepper, crushed or ground

Before roasting, bring the meat to room temperature. Preheat the oven to 325 F. If the roast is very lean, you may want to drizzle 1 to 2 tablespoons of olive oil over it. Sprinkle salt and pepper over the roast, then place it on a wire rack on a baking sheet. Keep in mind that your cooking time depends on the size of your roast.

Bake for approximately 25 to 30 minutes for every pound of meat for the roast to be cooked to medium. Adjust accordingly for your preferred level of doneness.

You should use a meat thermometer to determine when the roast is done. Push the thermometer all the way into the center of the roast. The ideal temperature for medium is 140-145 F, and the meat may become tough if cooked to well done, which is 155 F and above. Remove the meat from the oven when the inside temperature is about 10 degrees less than your desired level of doneness, because it will continue to cook as it rests.

Let the roast rest for at least 15 minutes, tented in aluminum foil to keep it warm, before carving to serve. Makes about 10 servings.

GARLIC BUTTER ROASTED CHICKEN

- 1 (4-pound) whole chicken, at room temperature, giblets and neck removed from cavity
- 1/4 cup unsalted butter, melted
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/2 cup dry white wine
- 1 lemon, halved
- Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste
- 2 tablespoons fresh chopped parsley
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 whole head of garlic, roughly peeled and cut in half horizontally through the middle crosswise
- 3 fresh whole rosemary sprigs

Preheat the oven to 425 F. Line a baking tray with foil, or lightly grease a roasting pan. Pat the chicken dry with paper towels.

Pour the melted butter, olive oil, wine and juice squeezed from one of the lemon halves over the chicken, under the skin and inside the cavity. Season the chicken liberally with salt and pepper on the outside and inside the cavity, then sprinkle the parsley over it. Rub the minced garlic over the chicken, mixing all the ingredients together over the chicken and under the skin.

Stuff the garlic head into the chicken cavity, along with the rosemary sprigs and the squeezed lemon half. Tie the legs together with kitchen string. Place the chicken, breast-side up, onto a baking sheet or roasting pan and roast for 1 hour and 15-20 minutes, basting halfway through cooking time, until its juices run clear when you pierce the chicken thigh with a skewer.

Baste again, then turn on the broiler to high and broil the bird for 2-3 minutes or until the skin is crisp and golden. Keep an eye on this process, because it can burn quickly.

Remove the chicken from the oven, cover it with foil and allow it to rest for 10 minutes before serving. Drizzle it with the pan juices, and serve it with the remaining lemon half cut into wedges or slices.



Roasted Vegetable Medley

- 3 zucchini squash, cut lengthwise into fourths, then sliced into bite-sized pieces
- 3 yellow squash, cut lengthwise into fourths, then sliced into bite-sized pieces
- 1 red bell pepper, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 red onion, cut into wedges
- 8 ounces whole mushrooms
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar, or more to taste
- 1 tablespoon rosemary leaves
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt

Preheat the oven to 450 F. Spray a large baking sheet with cooking spray.

Mix all of the cut-up vegetables and garlic in a large bowl. Add olive oil and balsamic vinegar. Toss until all the vegetables are covered. Add rosemary leaves and salt, and toss again.

Roast the vegetables for 30-40 minutes, stirring once, until they are brown on the outside edges and tender on the inside. Makes 6-8 servings.





233 Highway 28 Bypass
Abbeville, SC 29620

PRESORT STD
US POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT #6
RAINSVILLE, AL

AFFORDABLE CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM

WHAT IS IT?

The Affordable Connectivity Program is an FCC program that helps connect families and households struggling to afford internet service.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

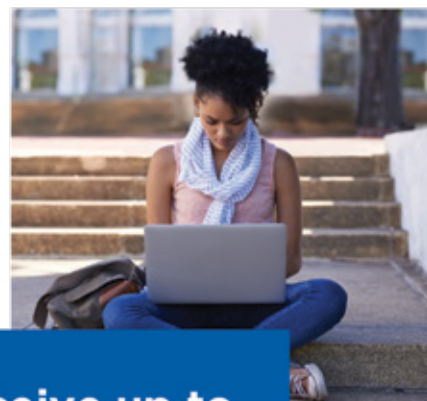
A household is eligible if one member of the household meets at least one of the criteria below:

- Has an income that is at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guide lines;
- Participates in certain assistance programs, such as SNAP, Medicaid, Federal Public Housing Assistance, SSI, WIC, or Lifeline;
- Is approved to receive benefits under the free and reduced-price school lunch program or the school break fast program, including through the USDA Community Eligibility Provision;
- Received a Federal Pell Grant during the current award year; or
- Meets the eligibility criteria for a participating broadband provider's existing low-income program.

Learn more at:
wctel.com/acp

(864) 446-2111 | wctel.com

Only available to South Carolina residents.



Receive up to
\$30/month
discount for
internet service

