

# CONNECTED

SERVING  
A NEED

EXPLORING  
MINDFULNESS

## Growing Greenwood

Festival of Flowers brings visitors from afar





— By SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO —  
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

## A partner to support RURAL AMERICA

The Foundation for Rural Service makes a difference

**O**ur members work hard to serve our nation's rural communities, but they do not do it alone. I'd like to shine a spotlight on an organization whose work I respect, appreciate and support.

The professionals of the Foundation for Rural Service, known as FRS, deserve praise for all the benefits they provide to thousands of people. Established as a nonprofit in 1994, they have made a positive difference for nearly 30 years.

Many of you may know their efforts to help educate young people in rural communities through scholarships and the popular Youth Tour trip to our nation's capital. FRS also annually takes key congressional staff out into our communities to see the challenges faced when deploying broadband.

In particular I want to give a special nod to the annual FRS Community Grant Program designed to benefit communities served by NTCA members. The goal is to support local efforts committed to improving and sustaining rural America. The grants have four areas of concentration: business and economic development, community development, education and telecommunications — the last is a chance to highlight a local plan to support broadband resources for telehealth, education and more. For more information about these programs, visit [www.frs.org](http://www.frs.org).

Just like the NTCA member serving you, a remarkable community partner where you live, FRS combines the resources and visibility of all NTCA members to benefit communities like yours across the country. ☺



# Get your free annual credit report

## Spot scammers early

A free credit report is one of the quickest ways to spot identity theft — someone taking your name, date of birth, address, credit card or bank account information, Social Security or medical insurance numbers.

Scammers can quickly drain a bank account, run up charges on a credit card, get a new credit card in your name and more.

### What is a credit report?

A credit report is a summary of your personal credit history, including identifying details such as an address, date of birth and information such as whether bills were paid on time or someone has filed for bankruptcy.

Three national credit bureaus — Equifax, Experian and TransUnion — collect and update this information.

### The credit bureaus must:

- ▶ Make sure the information they collect about you is accurate
- ▶ Give you a free copy of your report once every 12 months
- ▶ Give you a chance to fix any mistakes

**How do I order my free annual credit reports? The simplest solution is to visit [AnnualCreditReport.com](http://AnnualCreditReport.com). It's fast and easy.**

# Cryptocurrency 101

## A beginner's guide to the new currency

For many people, the idea of cryptocurrency, or digital money, is downright mysterious. Still, cryptocurrency has been around more than a decade, and a growing number of people are starting to use and invest in the world of virtual coins and tokens.

But what, exactly, is it? How does it work? And how do you get it?

### CRYPTO BASICS

Put simply, cryptocurrency is digital money. There are no physical coins or paper dollar bills you can pull out and put in a billfold. But it's also not backed up by any asset. According to bitstamp.net, cryptocurrencies are a tradable asset in and of themselves. Their price is determined by demand and the supply available.

Like gold, cryptocurrency's value is in its scarcity and its uses — or potential uses in crypto's case, according to an Investopedia article in December 2021. Bitcoin, which is the most valuable of the different cryptocurrencies, is limited to a quantity of 21 million bitcoins. And while gold is often useful for industrial applications and in valuable jewelry, crypto might be of service in a number of retail transactions one day.

### HOW TO GET IT

Most people buy it online and store it in a virtual wallet. The easiest way to buy cryptocurrency is through one of many centralized exchanges that come up on an online search. There are several types of cryptocurrencies, including the three top ones: Bitcoin, Ethereum and Tether.

### CRYPTO AND TAXES

The banking system and the government do not oversee cryptocurrency transactions. Instead, these transactions are supported by blockchain, a technology that tracks who owns what. But that doesn't mean cryptocurrency isn't taxable. In fact,

the Internal Revenue Service taxes cryptocurrency as either property, investment or earned income. Because of this, crypto dabblers should keep careful records of all their transactions.

### UPS AND DOWNS?

Cryptocurrency is known for its volatile market. In one day in 2021, Bitcoin dropped by 30% — a huge fluctuation in any other trading market. As a new currency that's not legal tender and which any government can issue, crypto can move wildly up or down based on just about anything — perceptions, news articles or, most notably, a tweet from tech entrepreneur Elon Musk.

### RESEARCH AND START SLOW

To find out more about cryptocurrency, make sure to do your research. Seek out sources crypto advertisers or others with vested interests in particular products aren't backing. Those determined to try it out should invest conservatively while learning more about the market along the way. ☰

### Crypto lingo

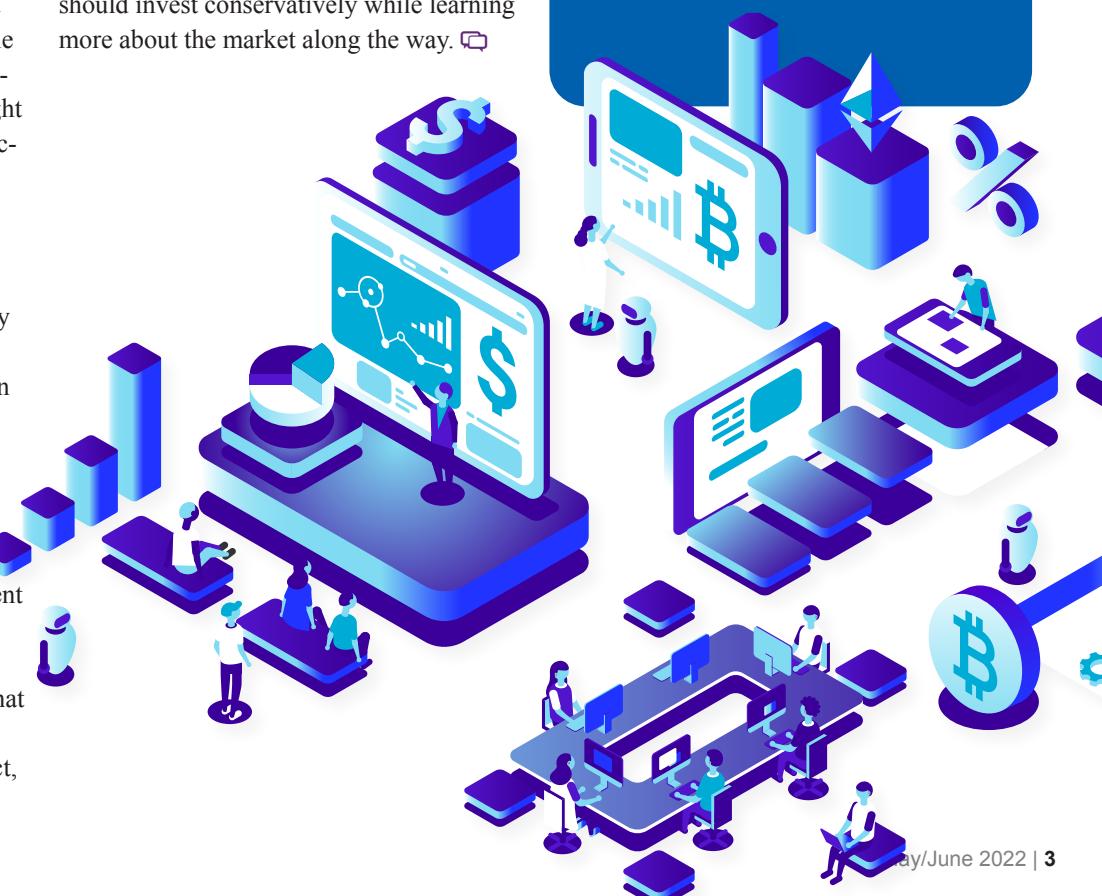
Knowing more about cryptocurrencies requires learning new words and phrases. Here are a few that are sure to pop up frequently:

**FUD** — FUD is an acronym that stands for "fear, uncertainty, doubt." In the crypto world, FUD is negative information that can deter investors.

**HODL** — HODL is an acronym for "hold on for dear life," but internet lore jokes that its origins came from a typo for the word "hold." Either way, cryptocurrency investors use it to caution others against selling when the market is volatile.

**NFT** — NFT stands for non-fungible tokens. NFTs are pieces of digital content linked to the Ethereum blockchain. Non-fungible basically means that the digital content is unique and cannot be replaced. Because of this fact, NFTs make digital works of art and other items into one-of-a-kind assets.

**Sats** — Short for Satoshi, sats are the smallest fraction of a bitcoin that you can send — 0.00000001 of a bitcoin. Hardcore bitcoin traders look at sats, not the dollar amount of bitcoin. Note: Satoshi Nakamoto is the made-up name of the person or people who created bitcoin.



# Congratulations, graduates

## A bright future awaits

Throughout our community, young adults are experiencing a milestone — they're about to begin their first post-high school summer. It's a moment that deserves celebration — a cap on 12 years of hard work and accomplishment.



**JEFF WILSON**  
Chief Executive Officer

Even if you're like me and the high school years have been in the rearview for a while, the memories can still seem fresh. After all, this is such a vivid time, one often filled with excitement, hope and, quite possibly, trepidation. Each of these young people will soon make choices, many of which have been years in the making. Some of them will go on to higher learning. Others may breathe a sigh of relief to leave school behind and enter the workforce, start families or explore countless other possibilities. All graduates must choose their own paths.

Some of our young people have already faced adult challenges, working jobs or carrying responsibilities that, in an ideal world, would have waited until they were older. Life isn't the same for everyone, and it's often difficult. We appreciate that the circumstances for each high school graduate are unique, and we hope we can offer one consistent thread of support to all members of the communities we serve. At WCTEL, we often discuss the principles that are the bedrock of what we do, one of which is concern for the community.

Our communications network — our fast, reliable internet service in particular — can open doors that didn't exist just a few years ago. Online learning, work-from-home jobs, support for employers and so much more are now available. We are in a rural area, but we have an immediate connection to resources needed to thrive in a modern world. The playing field is more level than ever between cities and communities like ours.

One example of success is the young people leaving high school today and the link they have, not only to the online world, but also to real-world resources once unheard of in rural communities. Imagine moving away for school or a job and being able to use a video call to connect with family back home. No matter how far our graduates roam, there's a convenient link to the people who have supported them every step of the way.

We believe, however, that helping the community goes beyond the services we provide, and we know many other local businesses feel the same. Scholarships, internships, support for athletic programs and first jobs are just a few ways we work to help students attending our schools and this current group of young graduates about to strike out on their own.

While this is a time of celebration for the Class of 2022 and their families, I believe it's also a time for us to celebrate as a community. Life will bring hurdles and triumphs. Many of these former high school students will go on to become part of the fabric of our communities, and others will venture away, carrying the values and lessons they learned here with them for the rest of their lives.

I wish to congratulate all the graduates and their families. Thanks to you, the future is bright, exciting and filled with possibilities. ☺



# CONNECTED

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

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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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South McCormick, Area 9

Produced for West Carolina Tel by:



On the Cover:



The Greenwood Chamber hosts thousands of visitors in the Lakelands during the annual Festival of Flowers. See story Page 8.

# Lunch and Learn Social Media for Businesses

WCTEL is partnering with the chamber to host a social media for business class. If you are interested, please contact the McCormick Chamber of Commerce.

May 25 from 10 a.m. – noon

Location: Talmadge Fitness & Wellness Complex,  
1319 South Main St., McCormick

Please bring any questions you may have.  
We look forward to seeing you there!



## WCTEL 2022 BOARD ELECTIONS

WCTEL has three Board seats up for election due to normal rotations as outlined in our Bylaws. Election results will be announced at the WCTEL Annual Meeting on Aug. 15, 2022. The three seats are as follows:

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

Incumbent Directors of these areas all plan to seek reelection.

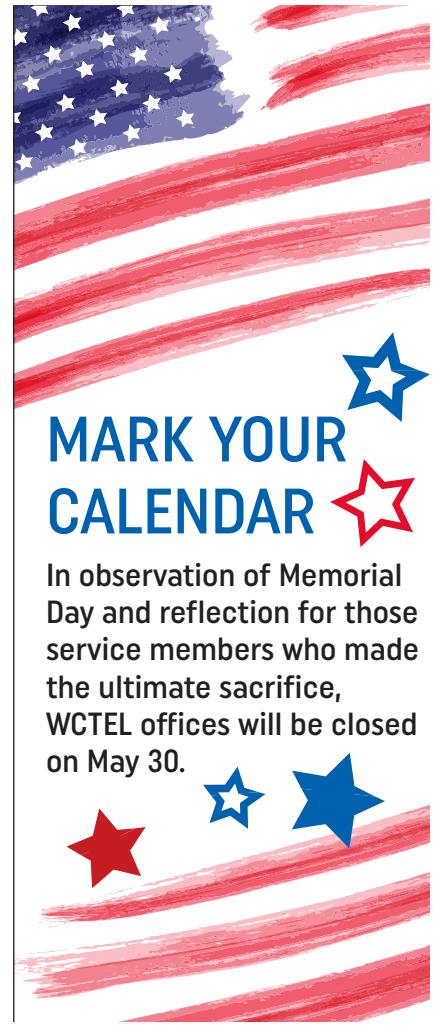
A Nominating Committee will be appointed and shall select one or more members from each of these three areas to be nominated for election to the Board. If you wish to notify the Nominating Committee of your interest in serving on the Board, you may provide WCTEL CEO Mr. Jeff Wilson a letter of interest which can be turned into any of the cooperative offices during regular business hours no later than 5 p.m. EST May 17, 2022.

Any member who submits a letter of interest to a cooperative office no later than 5 p.m. EST on May 17, 2022, and is not nominated by the Nominating Committee, may file as a

petition candidate. To be eligible as a petition candidate, the member must submit a letter of interest to a cooperative office no later than May 17, 2022. Petitions, as more specifically described in our Bylaws, from petition candidates must be received no later than 5 p.m. EST June 16, 2022, for petition candidates to be eligible for election and listed on the election ballot.

Board application packets are available upon request at our offices. The packet contains information regarding the requirements, qualities, and experience the Board is seeking in a potential candidate. The packet also provides the instructions for submitting a letter of interest and petition. Please note, you must be a member from the area where a board position is up for election and meet the qualifications outlined in the Bylaws. If you have any questions, you are encouraged to contact WCTEL CEO Jeff Wilson at [jeff.wilson@wctel.com](mailto:jeff.wilson@wctel.com) or (864) 446-2111.

This information is for notification of the process for Board election only and is NOT the notice of the Annual Meeting.



# Relaxing DESTINATIONS

## Yoga retreats offer an escape from daily realities

Story by ANNE BRALY

**W**hen thermometers begin to rise, it's natural to think about a beach vacation, but during summer months, crowds are less than ideal. Instead, head toward the country and the mountains where you can get away from it all and reconnect with nature.

Here are five picturesque properties around the South to consider, each one far from your noisy neighbors and the stresses of everyday life. Some offer yoga, others a chance to hike new paths, while one is ideal for sitting back to catch up on your quilting or scrapbooking.



### GRAND OAK RETREAT • SCOTTSBORO, ALABAMA

Grand Oak Retreat is located on a large stretch of land overlooking Lake Guntersville, cradled in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains. It's open to all, but caters to scrapbookers, quilters and other crafty folks.

The large lodge with a beautiful, wraparound porch has five bedrooms with multiple beds to accommodate most families or groups. There's a large work area where crafters can spread out and work while enjoying panoramic views of the lake. Snacks and drinks are available 24 hours a day in a well-stocked kitchen, and guests get three home-cooked meals with a menu that uses local ingredients depending on the season.

For a fully relaxed retreat, guests may arrange massages at an extra cost.

For reservations or more information, visit [grandoakretreat.com](http://grandoakretreat.com).

### TENNESSEE FITNESS SPA • WAYNESBORO, TENNESSEE

Think of a retreat to Tennessee Fitness Spa along historic Natchez Trace as a summer camp for adults. There's swimming, racquetball, a gym, sauna, hot tub and hiking trails around the picturesque Natural Bridge, a geologic formation thought to be the only double span natural bridge formation in the world. It's a short walk from the spa's dining hall and makes for a beautiful meditative experience.

The center places a strong focus on getting guests back in shape, whatever their goals: losing weight, quitting smoking, detoxing or simply relaxing by the pool. It's a good opportunity to shed that excess weight, whether it be physical or mental, through fitness training, yoga, meditation, water aerobics and more. Just let the staff know what you want, and they'll tailor a routine to meet your needs.

Accommodations range from standard rooms to penthouse suites and private cottages. Most people stay for one week, but guests can arrange for shorter stays, depending on availability.

For more information, visit [tennesseefitnessspa.com](http://tennesseefitnessspa.com).

## THE RED HORSE INN LANDRUM, SOUTH CAROLINA

This hidden gem tucked into South Carolina's Blue Ridge mountains is an adults-only getaway offering an elegant escape from everyday routines. It's a chance to relax, recover and rejuvenate — all the things you want from a resort vacation. Leave the cooking, cleaning, kids and work behind. Disconnect from everyday life and reconnect with your partner.

Reserve a room in the inn or in one of a half dozen cottages, all with luxury bedding and other appointments. Breakfast is served daily, and afternoons can be spent on the terrace with a glass of wine from the award-winning wine bar.

The inn is located just north of Greenville, South Carolina, a town known for its food scene, and also an area folks looking for majestic waterfalls and nature trails visit.

For more information, visit [theredhorseinn.com](http://theredhorseinn.com).

## ART OF LIVING RETREAT BOONE, NORTH CAROLINA

Meditation and yoga are two powerful tools for bringing on health and happiness, and at Art of Living Retreat, high in the Blue Ridge Mountains overlooking Boone, North Carolina, you'll rediscover yourself. The center offers getaways focused on happiness and meditation, along with silent retreats. There's also Sri Sri yoga, an ancient, holistic method that integrates body, mind and spirit, targeting internal organs, circulation and body alignment.

Weekend retreats might also include artmaking and journaling or a girls-only time with nature trails, meditation and yoga. Packages at Art of Living include

accommodations at the center's Shankara Wellness hotel with meditation and yoga classes daily, along with one treatment like massage or relaxation therapy, and three meals a day. Snag a seat outside with views of the mountains if the weather allows.

For more information, visit [artoflivingretreatcenter.org](http://artoflivingretreatcenter.org).

## CLIFFVIEW RESORT CAMPTON, KENTUCKY

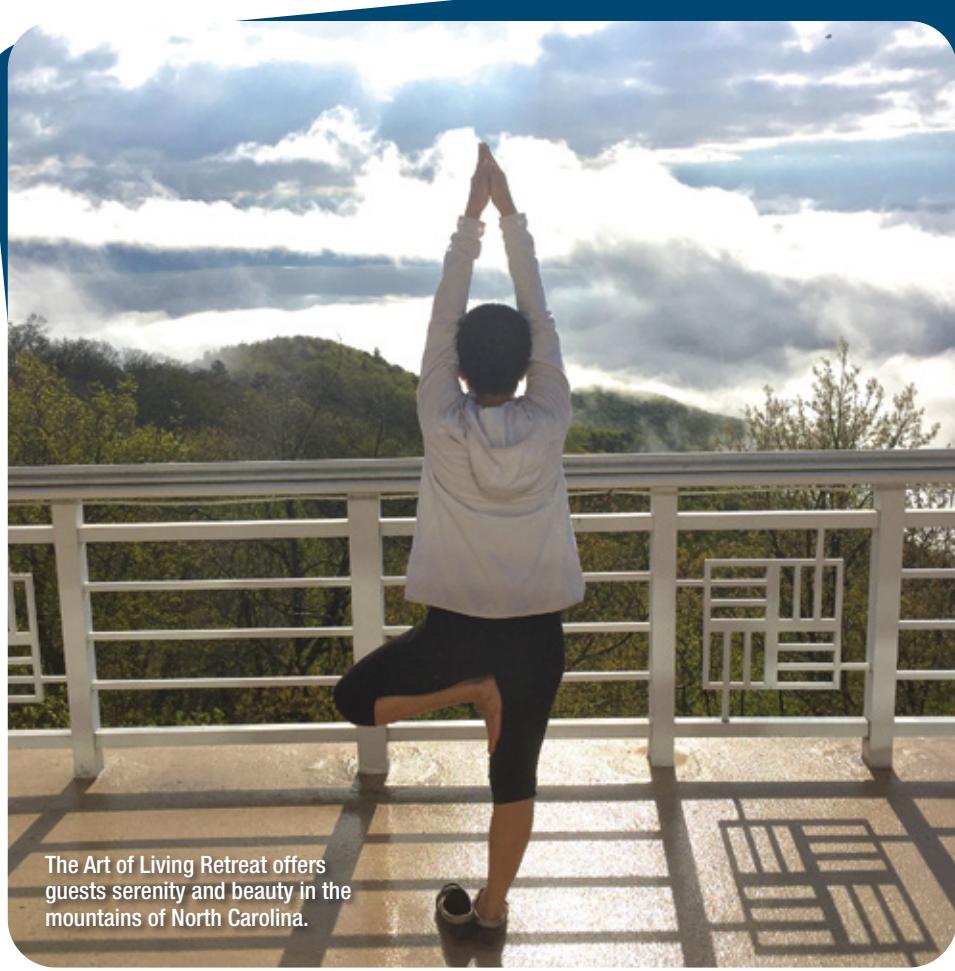
Come for stunning views of the Red River Gorge, and stay for the adventure you'll experience at Cliffview Resort.

There's plenty to do off the beaten track — a chance to get away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life and connect with nature on a grand scale. Go rock climbing on the cliff high above, take a kayak and explore life in an underground cave beneath the gorge, or zip line above it to experience the magnificent Red River Gorge from a different perspective.

For a more relaxing retreat, take a leisurely walk on well-traveled paths, or wet a line and fish for your dinner from a stocked pond located on the resort property. Or venture over to the Red River and test your skill against smallmouth bass and sunfish.

Book a room in the lodge where you'll find a comfortable place to rest your head with breakfast the next morning. There are 16 rooms in the lodge, plus two cabins, each with 11 to 12 bedrooms and full kitchens to cook your own meals. Don't want to cook? You're on vacation, after all. Red River Gorge and nearby Daniel Boone National Forest have a number of restaurants with offerings ranging from pizza to hot dogs and barbecue to brew pubs.

For information, log onto [cliffviewresort.com](http://cliffviewresort.com) or call 606-668-5204. ☎



# Growing the green in Greenwood

## Annual Festival of Flowers draws in visitors and new residents

Story by JOHN CLAYTON



**T**here might not be another place in South Carolina where one can find topiary versions of the mascots of the state's two largest universities.

But the USC Gamecock and Clemson Tiger have been the stars of the show at the South Carolina Festival of Flowers. The event will celebrate its 55th year, with the main weekend of events June 10 and 11 in uptown Greenwood.

The annual SC Festival of Flowers has grown from humble roots into an event that draws thousands annually to the Lakelands from across the state and region. Barbara Ann Heegan, president and CEO of the Greenwood SC Chamber of Commerce, says the festival is an annual attraction for visitors while also being a truly local festival featuring area artisans, vendors, sporting activities and entertainers.

"Historically, our local residents and families have supported the festival and, in fact, they invite guests and visitors to our community to see all we have to offer and participate in any of the many events and activities," Heegan says. "Our local dollars are able to stay here within the community, and having visitors come from across multiple states helps increase our tax revenue and supports other programming here within our county." She calls the growth the festival has experienced "phenomenal." A record 128,000 people visited Greenwood for last year's event, which averages about 90,000 attendees, and the Greenwood Chamber of Commerce reports that the festival's economic impact is annually \$4.2 million.

The festival began as Park Seed Company's annual Flower Day in 1968 but has grown in size, scope and stature in its 54 years thanks to the involvement of the entire community and the Greenwood Chamber. "Our topiaries are a crowd pleaser for sure with 44 in

and around our uptown area," Heegan says. "Our social media, along with our website, scFestivalofFlowers.org, shows what we are all about, especially to people who've never been here before."

For 2022, the festival is set to include a variety of events, including an arts and crafts show, a 5K run/walk, a "Bee Buzzin' Bike Tour," a Kidfest and a wine walk or beer garden. In addition to food vendors and musical performances, organizers have scheduled a garden symposium for this year's festival. The symposium will feature local master gardeners, garden clubs and horticulturists.

But the topiaries on exhibit each year, which take the form of collegiate mascots, vehicles and dinosaurs, have been the event's highlight for the past 15 years. "The topiaries get better and better each year," Heegan says. "To have master gardeners and the local and city horticulture teams work on these living sculptures to bring them to life for all to enjoy is truly a feat. Some are as high as 20 feet and as wide as 15 feet. We have virtually every size and combination of foliage. People love to see these topiaries, and are in awe of the detail, unique plants and design of each one. They are on display for all to enjoy the whole month of June."

In addition to the festival's growing number of annual visitors, more than 250 volunteers from the community help put on the event, while local businesses and civic organizations take on vital roles and support it as sponsors each year. "It's all hands coming together to put on this community event," Heegan says.

And there's something for everyone at the family-oriented festival. "We invite everyone to visit our community, stay over and experience all the SC Festival of Flowers in Greenwood has to offer, no matter how young or old," Heegan says. ☀



Visitors to the Burton Center experience a range of activities during adult day programs, opportunities that help them reach their full potential.

# Burton Center celebrates 50 YEARS of helping

**S**ince the 1970s, Burton Center for Disabilities and Special Needs has filled a critical role in and around the Lakelands, including in Greenwood, Abbeville and McCormick counties.

This year, Burton Center, which provides an array of services for those with intellectual disabilities, head injuries, spinal cord injuries and related disabilities, celebrates a milestone. “We are celebrating 50 years of serving individuals with special needs in our community in Greenwood and in the six counties we serve,” says Laurie Cordell, executive director of Burton Center. Cordell worked at Burton Center for 34 years and understands its mission very well. “It is definitely a ministry,” she says. “To be able to assist and serve our individuals has been a blessing.”

The center currently serves around 500 people, with 146 in its residential program and 308 in adult day services programs. “Each individual we serve is assessed, goals are established and we assist each individual in reaching their full potential,” Burton Center’s website says.

The center sponsors day services for adults in Greenwood, Lexington, Saluda and Ware Shoals.

With fiber internet and phone services from WCTEL, Burton Center’s THERAP electronic documentation system has proven invaluable in handling client records as has the ability to participate in online conferences and webinars during COVID-19. The center is also able to reach out to those in need and communicate with job candidates with its comprehensive website, burtoncenter.org, and its Facebook page.

Burton Center operates under the auspices of its board and employs professional staff, while volunteers assist with fundraising events, maintain the Greenwood campus’s Sensory Park and share talents like art, reading and photography with clients.

As part of its 50th anniversary celebration, the Museum in Uptown Greenwood is set to feature Burton Center this June during the annual Festival of Flowers. “What an honor,” Cordell says. ☎

## BURTON CENTER FAST FACTS

- Burton Center supports four day programs and 26 residential homes.
- Employs over 350 staff members who also support local businesses in the process of utilizing WCTEL for telephone systems and internet services.
- Provides local businesses with reliable employees both within the business and through contract work at the centers.
- Gives support to families by providing a safe place for their loved ones each day so they can work.
- Provides activities throughout communities and supports local needs (individuals collect items for homeless, hurricane/tornado victims, food banks, etc.)
- Provides shelter for coastal agencies during hurricanes.
- Miracle League field for baseball and accessible sensory park located on campus in Greenwood.
- Provides internships for local colleges.
- Day program locations include Greenwood, Ware Shoals, Lexington and Saluda.
- Supports and funds services and events in Abbeville, McCormick, Greenwood, Edgefield, Lexington and Saluda counties.
- Anyone requiring information about Burton Center can call 800-289-7012.

# GAMING on the GO

## Your mobile devices have plenty to offer

**S**ure, mobile games may be a distraction many of us turn to while waiting in line or during a slow episode of our favorite TV binge. But that doesn't mean they have to be bad. As our mobile devices have evolved into tiny computers in our pockets, the visuals and clever design of mobile games have grown right along with them. If you're burned out on Angry Birds and Candy Crush, try one of these games to keep your idle thumbs busy.

### Good Sudoku

There are plenty of sudoku apps available but only one that puts goodness right in the name. The game's designers set out with the goal of helping players fall in love with the familiar Japanese logic puzzles. Clear difficulty levels, helpful hints and coaching for new techniques at each level make it the perfect entry for the sudoku-curious out there. If you're already a logic master, it also has more than 70,000 puzzles to be conquered and a global leaderboard to chase.

### THREES

You'd be hard-pressed to find a better puzzle game than Threes. It's easy to pick up since there are only four directions a player can swipe. But the task of pairing numbers into ever greater multiples of three can quickly become a challenge requiring players to think at least three moves ahead. Whether you're looking to pass 5 minutes or chase high scores on the leaderboard, Threes is worth checking out.

### Among Us

Among Us became wildly popular in 2020 in part because it's easy to understand. A group of players attempts to prep their spaceship for takeoff while one imposter tries to pick the others off while no one is looking. It's a simple premise that can lead to chaotic hijinks as players try to smoke out the saboteur. Lying to your friends has never been so fun.

### DEVICE 6

Who knew your phone could be the perfect platform for a clever noir story? Device 6 puts players in the role of Anna, a woman with amnesia trying to figure out how she woke up on a mysterious island. The game infuses the classic text adventure genre with modern style and engaging visuals as words move around the screen in unexpected ways. If you're looking for something a little different from the typical mobile experience, Device 6 is bound to have a few welcome surprises in store.

### NYT CROSSWORD

Sure, you could pull out the newspaper and pen to fill out your crossword the old-school way. Or you could save yourself the ink stains and errors by tackling the daily crossword on your phone. The app offers Mini and Midi puzzles for a challenge you can knock out in minutes. Or take on the full crossword each day, along with the archive of over 10,000 puzzles. Now there's no excuse not to stay sharp.





©iStockphoto/Adobe Stock

# Make the CONNECTION

The video game industry remains scorching hot, and not just because people turned to a virtual distraction during the pandemic. Certainly, they did. However, the trajectory of the gaming industry continues a yearslong trend of increased popularity.

Nielsen, a company tracking how various audiences use media, provided some insight last year into video game usage.

At one point during the pandemic, 55% of U.S. consumers reported playing video games. In fact, people were buying games at a fast clip, with sales rising about 14% during 2020.

There's a twist with modern gaming, too. People use it to connect with each other. The game Fortnite became famous for in-game live events, and more and more people began using services like Twitch to watch others play games, according to Nielsen.

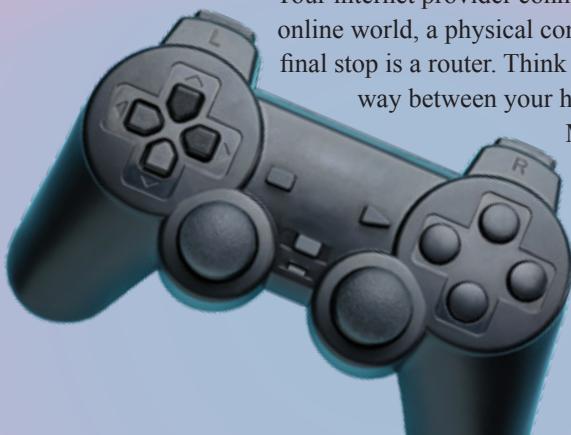
Simply, gaming goes beyond, well, just a game. It's an experience, one made possible by fast, reliable internet.

But are you maximizing your connection for how you experience gaming?

## THE CONNECTION

Your internet provider connects your home to the online world, a physical connection where the final stop is a router. Think of this as the gateway between your home and the internet.

Most modern routers allow two types of connections: Wi-Fi and Ethernet.



### BENEFITS OF WI-FI

Wi-Fi uses radio waves to connect the router to your devices, eliminating the clutter of cables. Devices ranging from televisions to refrigerators can use this technology to connect online.

#### Gaming-related benefits of Wi-Fi include:

- Convenient for mobile games on phones and iPads.
- The ability to connect multiple devices without cables.
- Most devices, including computers, set-top boxes and more, have Wi-Fi connectivity. The same can't be said for wired Ethernet connections. Even some laptops lack the option for an Ethernet connection.
- For watching streaming content such as Twitch, Wi-Fi wirelessly takes devices ranging from TVs to tablets online.

### BENEFITS OF ETHERNET – WHEN GAMING GETS SERIOUS

An Ethernet connection is a physical link between your device and router. With modern online gaming, success can depend upon how fast the twitch of a finger on a controller can be translated into actions in an online world living on a faraway computer server.

#### When speed matters, an Ethernet is often the right option.

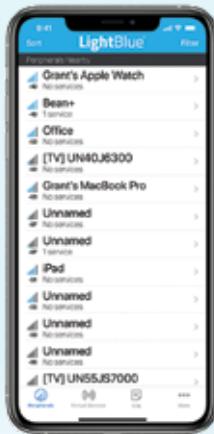
- Consistency: Unlike Wi-Fi signals, which can be affected by walls or even signals from other devices, the wired connection's speed should remain consistent with that provided by your internet service.
- Lower latency, which is the time it takes a bit of data to leave your device, reach its online destination and then complete the round trip. With gaming, lower latency is critical, and Ethernet is a difference-maker.
- Simple and secure: Connect an Ethernet cable to your device and to your router and get playing. It's that simple. Unlike with Wi-Fi routers, you typically do not need to enter a password to connect.
- The downside is that cable clutter is real. Serious gamers in particular, though, will benefit from devices connected via Ethernet.



## 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



### LightBlue

For those, hopefully, rare occasions when you can't find your Fitbit, earbuds or other Bluetooth-enabled devices, the LightBlue app can help. As long as your device has some charge left and was on when you lost it, the app can scan for Bluetooth devices and even tell you the signal strength, allowing you to pinpoint a more exact location. The app is available for free for Apple and Android devices.



**W**hen you're shopping for a speaker, earbuds, headphones or even game controllers, if they have wireless connectivity, the odds are it will be through Bluetooth. But what is Bluetooth, and how can you get the most out of the technology?

### BLUE RADIO

Put simply, Bluetooth is a short-range wireless technology standard that transmits data using radio waves.

Whether it's taking a call from your iPhone on your AirPods, pairing your Amazon Echo to a Windows PC or sending a document from your Android device to a waiting printer, Bluetooth is a generally secure way to send data or voice over short distances. Connections are encrypted, and the devices periodically switch radio frequencies to prevent easy interception.

The name for this pervasive technology comes from King Harald "Bluetooth" Gormsson, who, according to the official Bluetooth website, was known for two things: uniting Denmark and Norway in 958 and having a dead tooth, which was the dark, blue-gray color that gave him his nickname.

Bluetooth developed to allow products from different manufacturers to connect. Just as the Danish king united competing factions, so, too, did his namesake technology. In 1998, Ericsson, Intel, Nokia, Toshiba and IBM were the original Bluetooth adopters.

King Harald not only inspired the standard's name, but his initials — in runic form — also became the distinctive Bluetooth logo.

### BLUE TIPS

While Bluetooth is an inexpensive, highly compatible wireless standard, it has some limitations. Follow these tips if you're having trouble with your connections or want to improve their quality.

- **Keep a clear signal:** While its low-power signals and frequency hopping abilities generally allow Bluetooth devices to avoid interference, it can still run into trouble from a host of devices, including baby monitors, cordless phones and microwaves.
- **Stay within range:** The Bluetooth range for most consumer devices is about 30 feet. Make sure you stay within range for uninterrupted transmission.
- **Expand that range:** If staying within 30 feet is not practical, Bluetooth routers can extend the range up to 1,000 feet in open air. With a router, you can leave your phone charging inside and still have a Bluetooth speaker going in the backyard.
- **Charge up:** This may seem obvious, but a device's charge impacts its ability to transmit wireless signals. Keeping your device properly charged will help keep a steady connection. ☺

Greenwood Mills CEO Jay Self stands in the spinning department.

# Supporting our troops

Greenwood Mills has supplied the military with fabrics for decades

Story by ANNE BRALY | Photos by MARK GILLILAND

**G**reenwood Mills has been making quality fabrics for all sorts of clothing, including uniforms for all branches of the military, for 132 years. Seeing armed forces members wearing uniforms made of fabric from his mills never ceases to fill CEO James “Jay” C. Self III with a sense of accomplishment. “I feel a lot of pride in that,” he says.

Fabric from the Greenwood, South Carolina, plant goes into the manufacture of caps, shirts, trousers, coveralls and suits that protect against deadly chemical exposure. “The fabric is used primarily for basic-issue uniforms, though,” Jay says. “When soldiers go through basic training, they are issued four uniforms: two regular uniforms and two for hot weather. But some of our fabric is made for specialty uniforms, such as chemical protective suits only issued to deployed troops.”

## HUMBLE START

Greenwood Mills began in 1889 with a group of businessmen that included William Durst, the president of the local bank where Jay’s great-granddad, James C. Self Sr., was a cashier. Needing extra capital, the mill’s founders sold shares, and James C. Self Sr. bought some.

Times were tough, and the mill faced foreclosure, but the cashier convinced the bank president that the mill could survive and encouraged him to buy new looms from the Draper Corp., one of the top manufacturers of looms at the turn of the 20th century. “My great-grandfather then started buying back shares, and I believe it was in 1938 when he took out the last investor,” Jay says.

## DIGITAL PRINT CAMO

From torn rags to shiny, spit-polished boots and scratchy wool to high-tech fabrics, military uniforms have made dramatic changes since George Washington crossed the Delaware.

“Prior to Desert Storm, the uniforms were 100% cotton,” Jay says. “Now, they’re a blend of cotton and nylon. The nylon gives the fabric strength and durability. The weave of the fabric has changed, as well. The fabrics used to be a twill weave, and now they’re primarily a rip-stop weave.”

However, he adds, the Marines continue to use twill fabric. “Over the years the uniforms have gone from olive green to many different camouflage patterns, too,” he says.

Making fabrics for the U.S. military

has garnered recognition for Greenwood Mills. During World War II, the company was awarded an Army/Navy “E” for excellence for its poplin fabric. “Being able to continue making fabrics for the military now 75 years later means a lot to us,” Jay says.

But they’re not resting on their laurels.

“We’re always looking out for new opportunities,” Jay says. Traveling with a team to Natick, Massachusetts, where the military’s research and development facility is located, happens regularly so they can see what the military is looking for. “We work with them to design fabrics to meet their needs,” Jay says.

But the military is not the mill’s only client. Greenwood Mills manufactured personal protective equipment masks during the pandemic. It also makes fabrics for workwear and numerous consumer apparel brands using cutting-edge spinning and weaving machinery and quality cotton and other natural fabrics.

Broadband plays a role in operations. “Modern machinery is much more efficient,” Jay says. “The production speeds are much greater. The internet has allowed us to get our story out and showcase our people, our company and attract talent.”

# So fresh and so

## A unique technique locks more flavor in your veggies

The profusion of fresh vegetables coming our way this spring means it's time to learn a bit about blanching, a technique that brings out the beautiful flavors that only fresh produce can bring — a taste explosion.

Blanching can be a cook's best friend. It destroys enzymes that make green veggies turn brown and mushy, so it's ideal when you want to add green vegetables, such as peas and asparagus, to your risotto. Blanching also removes bitterness from some of our more bitter vegetables, like broccoli rabe. It's also a great way to skin tomatoes, as blanching loosens the skins without cooking the fruit, something that also works for peaches and plums. And if you're planning to prepare and serve a veggie platter, blanch the carrots, broccoli, pea pods and cauliflower. The veggies will retain their color, but your guests will find them much easier to chew.

Blanching is nothing more than boiling vegetables until they're just crisp-tender, then plunging them in an icy bath. It sounds like a simple process, and it is, but there are just a few steps to follow to bring out the best of spring and summer's bounties.

If you're a vegetable gardener, think ahead for the cold days of winter when the flavor of fresh vegetables is just a memory, that is, unless you've blanched in advance of freezing them. Not only does blanching preserve the color and texture of your vegetables, it will also preserve their nutrient content.



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

Now that you know why you should blanch, here's how:

In order to stop the enzyme action that breaks vegetables down, the food must reach 180 degrees.

The time spent in boiling water and time spent in ice water should be roughly equal. If you're not able to prepare a cold immersion for your vegetables, putting them in a colander under cold running water will work.

Adding salt to your boiling water will help make green vegetables even greener. Steer clear of lemon juice or other acids, though; these will react with the

chlorophyll and turn your greens brown. And don't use baking soda — it will damage the nutrients found in vegetables.

Use 1 gallon of water for each pound of food to be blanched. If you overload the water with vegetables, it will lower the water's temperature and slow the cooking process, defeating the purpose.

Once the vegetables are crisp-tender, move them from the boiling water and into a large container of ice water. This will stop the cooking process. Then you're ready to bag them for freezing or use them right away in your spring and summer meals. ☺



# clean

## SALAD NICOISE

- 2 hard-boiled eggs
- 1/2 pound of small potatoes
- 1/2 pound of green beans, blanched
- 1/2 head of green lettuce, washed and torn into bite-sized pieces
- 1 (7-ounce) can of tuna fish
- 4 ounces of tomatoes, diced, or cherry tomatoes
- 10 black olives
- 2 tablespoons of capers
- 1/2 cup of vinaigrette dressing (your favorite)

Cook the potatoes until tender and let cool.

Build each salad starting with a layer of lettuce, then add half the vegetables, including potatoes, tuna, eggs and olives to each plate. Sprinkle with capers. Serve with vinaigrette dressing. Makes 2 servings.



## RISOTTO WITH BLANCHED ASPARAGUS

- 1 pound asparagus, trimmed, cut into 2-inch lengths
- 5 cups canned or homemade chicken broth
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1 1/2 cups arborio rice
- 1/2 cup dry white wine
- 6 tablespoons butter
- 3/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese (about 3 ounces)

Blanch asparagus pieces in a large pot of boiling, salted water for 2 minutes. Drain. Rinse asparagus under cold water. Drain asparagus well.

Bring chicken broth to a simmer in a small saucepan. Reduce heat to low and keep broth hot. Heat olive oil in a heavy large saucepan over medium heat. Add chopped onion and saute until translucent, about 4 minutes. Add rice and stir for 3 minutes. Add dry white wine and cook until liquid evaporates. Continue cooking until rice is tender but still slightly firm in center and mixture is creamy, adding chicken broth 1 cup at a time and stirring almost constantly, about 20 minutes. Add blanched asparagus pieces and stir until heated through, about 2 minutes. Remove from heat. Add 6 tablespoons butter and stir until incorporated. Stir in grated Parmesan cheese. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Makes 4-6 servings.

## WALNUT BROCCOLI SALAD

- 2 pounds broccoli florets
- 1/2 cup toasted walnuts
- 1/2 cup jumbo mixed raisins
- 8 strips bacon cooked and crumbled
- 1/2 red onion thinly sliced
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon rice vinegar
- Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

Bring a big pot of water to a boil and season it liberally with salt. It should taste like the ocean. Add the broccoli florets to the water and cook for 60 seconds, until they're bright green in color. Immediately drain the broccoli florets, then rinse with cold water for 2 minutes or place in an ice-water bath until the broccoli has cooled down.

Transfer the broccoli to a salad spinner, and spin the broccoli dry or drain well if you don't have a spinner. Then blot dry further with a kitchen towel to prevent any excess water from diluting the dressing.

Combine the broccoli with the toasted walnuts, raisins, bacon, onion, mayonnaise, vinegar and salt and black pepper, to taste. Stir well. Chill for at least 30 minutes, preferably an hour, before serving to allow the flavors to marry. Makes 6 servings.



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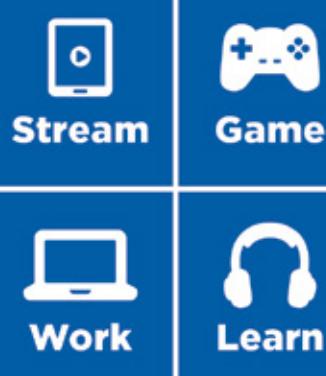
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