

# CONNECTED

## Fashion forward

Abbeville boutiques  
market to savvy shoppers

EMBRACING  
ABBEVILLE

GO GLAMPING





By SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO  
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

## Any room can be a classroom

Broadband opens a world of new educational opportunities

Soon, students will end summer break and return to classrooms and, in communities fortunate enough to be served by a member of NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association, they will have advantages once thought impossible in rural areas.

While fast, reliable broadband service creates opportunity for everyone, our students benefit significantly. Resources that were simply unavailable before are now only a few clicks away.

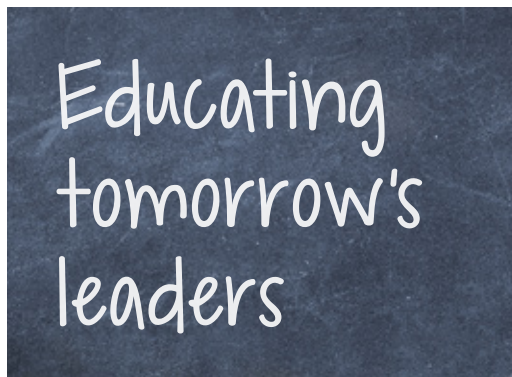
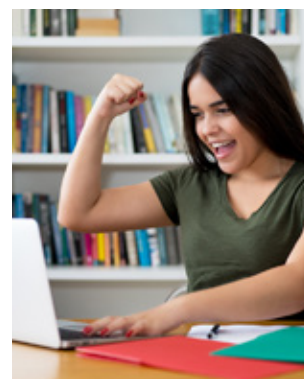
Once, learning about great art meant gazing at photos in a book. Now, students can take virtual tours through the greatest museums on Earth and, hopefully, find inspiration in the masters of the art world. Resources like Project Gutenberg make classic books a click and download away.

Digital resources also go far beyond virtual libraries and museums. Thanks to distance learning — real-time sessions connected through video — students in the most remote communities can tap into advanced or specialized classes otherwise unavailable in their area.

One key focus, and an acronym, you may have heard a lot about is STEM — science, technology, engineering and math. The skills learned in classes such as these are foundational. They can open the door to a range of jobs, higher education opportunities and more.

At the NTCA, we hear stories of these successes daily, because our members, including your communications provider, make a tangible difference in the lives of those they serve. The more tools we provide our students — the people who will become our future leaders and innovators — the richer our communities will become.

Every day, our NTCA members work to make that future a reality. 📶



# Welcoming clouds

Digital storage brightens the day



Whether sharing work files, snapping photos with your phone or dozens of other actions, your digital data most likely doesn't remain solely on your device. Instead, those files were probably shared through a cloud-based service. Similarly, most phones default to backing up your photos to the cloud.

In fact, the cloud is one critical presence in our digital lives, an experience often so seamless you might not even realize it's there.

But, exactly what is the cloud, and how does it work? Think of it as a collection of computers designed not only to store critical data, but also to back it up securely and deliver it on demand to whatever device you choose. That's how you're able to work on the same file at home as you would at school, at an office or just on the go with a mobile device.

## HOW IT WORKS

When you subscribe to a cloud provider such as Apple, Dropbox, Google, Microsoft or many others, you can upload files to a data server managed by that company. In some cases, the files are both on your device and in the cloud. Or, they may strictly be in the cloud, saving room on your device. These files can be photos, videos, documents with text, emails or more. As long as your device is connected to the internet and you are logged into the service, you can access this digital library. The cloud providers work hard to make it all as seamless as possible.

## CLOUD ADVANTAGES

Cloud storage saves space on your devices. It's also a good way to preserve files as a backup. Rather than keep one copy of

your data, cloud services keep multiple copies on many machines to create as reliable a system as possible.

Many businesses use cloud storage to offload the responsibility of managing physical servers or running complex software. Another benefit of using the cloud is that you can increase or decrease storage based on how much you need, matching the price of the service to your requirements.

## EXAMPLES

Apple's iCloud, Microsoft's OneDrive and Google Drive are popular cloud storage options for individuals. Cloud storage is also used by social media and entertainment companies to provide services to the public. For example, Facebook manages its own private cloud services and data centers. Instagram and Pinterest are also cloud-based. If you've ever used Netflix to watch movies, then you were also using a cloud computing service.

Popular personal use of cloud storage includes family photos and important financial documents such as tax returns. Businesses might use cloud storage for employee files, financial data such as payroll and to store customer data.

## BACK UP THE CRITICAL FILES

Cloud storage provides a range of benefits, but with vital information — anything from wills to family photos, digital art and beyond — consider the cloud as just one part good digital housekeeping. Consider creating three versions of these files: one in the cloud, a second on a computer hard drive and a third on an external drive. Rely on the cloud for convenience, but keep backup for, well, a rainy day. ☔



# 70 years and only getting faster

Welcome to Connected Magazine! This is a special edition for me, because it not only marks our 70th anniversary, but it also marks a major milestone in our history of service to you: We are now 100% fiber-based internet. That means that you have access to lightning-fast internet that rivals some of the most urban of areas.



**JEFF WILSON**

Chief Executive Officer

This feat was made possible only by you, our WCTEL members, who will always be at our core — the “why” behind every decision we make.

Our history is a rich one. It's rooted in our community, a story of individuals who came together and wanted to provide telephone service to the community, so they could have the same access that metropolitan areas offered. Together, we've grown, expanded our territory and innovated, driven by that same mission to connect you, so your homes, our communities and businesses could thrive.

We've often been asked why we have grown. Perhaps this question has been fueled by concern that we'll forget our roots, the people who formed us and the community that sustains us. Simply put, that will never happen. You drive our mission. You drive our success.

When I step back and look at our growth and our future projections, the scenario facing our original areas of Abbeville, McCormick, Starr and Iva is not unlike many rural areas across the country. The sustainability and growth of our communities is crucial. By expanding into Greenwood, Newberry and most recently in the Upstate, we are serving others who need our high-speed internet, but that's not all. This expansion opens up economies of scale that allow us to make needed investments in our infrastructure and develop more services, so that businesses will succeed and our economies can be developed, attracting new commerce and residents.

Yes, our history is a rich one. But, it's also a predictor of our future. The same mission drives us. The technology and scope of our services may have changed, but the heart behind it all remains the same. 📞

**JEFF WILSON**

Chief Executive Officer  
WCTEL



## CONNECTED

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### On the Cover:



Jessica Brown created an online business, which became the new boutique in the Abbeville business district.  
See story Page 9.



Join us for the

# 2022 ANNUAL MEETING

**Monday, Aug. 15, at 3 p.m.**

All WCTEL members are invited.

**Abbeville Civic Center  
404 N Main St, Abbeville**

*Meeting location subject to change. Please check the  
WCTEL Facebook page for the latest updates.*



# Glamping IN THE SOUTH: *a luxurious getaway*

Story by ANNE BRALY

The concept means all the comforts of home in a rustic setting

**G**lamping has become a huge trend for those who want the thrill of getting back to nature without the hassle of backpacking and sleeping on the cold, hard ground.

That experience is what you'll find at Wildwood Resort and Marina on Cordell Hull Lake in Middle Tennessee's Upper Cumberland region. A newly renovated resort, it offers glampers the best of both worlds — a place to enjoy nature but in resort-style accommodations with a full range of activities. It's summer camp all grown up, with horseback riding, hiking, canoeing, paddle boarding and kayaking, but a bed with luxury linens awaits at the end of the day.

Mornings begin peacefully at Wildwood in an area called The Woods. Glamping is the focus there in the beautifully appointed, fully restored retro Airstream trailers amid tall pines and

hardwoods with a view of Cordell Hull Lake. The trailers offer beds with nice linens, a Keurig to brew your coffee in the morning and a long list of things to do throughout the day. At night, light a fire — each Airstream has a fire pit — and enjoy the peace and quiet of your surroundings. Don't forget the marshmallows.

The Airstreams, six in all, are named for the queens of country music. There's Dolly from 1960; June, circa 1971; Emmylou from 1983; Patsy and Reba, both 2012 models; and Loretta, circa 1985. They have outdoor grills, microwaves and refrigerators, so you can prepare your own food if you desire. If not, Wildwood offers two dining venues. Grab a snack, breakfast or a quick lunch at Holston Cafe, open seven days a week. Timberloft Lakeside Restaurant, open on weekends, offers cozy seating inside and outdoor dining on a deck overlooking the water.

John and Natasha Deane and Kevin and Donna Jones bought the old marina in Granville, Tennessee, in 2018 and reopened it as Wildwood Resort and Marina. After some major renovations



©Marina/Adobe Stock





and additions, the resort now boasts a houseboat with two bedrooms, a new lakeside lodge with 14 guest rooms, lakeside cabins, a state-of-the-art conference center and the six vintage Airstreams.

You can tailor your stay at Wildwood any way you want. Hop on a paddleboard or in a kayak or canoe and make your way across Cordell Hull Lake to explore its nearby tributaries — Indian Creek and Martin's Creek. Or, let someone else do the driving by taking a breakfast, brunch or dinner cruise at sunset aboard a pontoon boat. Just make arrangements ahead of time with the staff. You can also simply wet a line and fish from the boardwalk along the jetty — bring your own bait and tackle.

Off-site, there's more to keep you busy. The area is known for its wineries and waterfalls, so grab a map and get moving. You can also arrange a guided tour. Trails abound through the area, so be sure to bring your hiking boots. Or hop on a horse and take a ride along a designated trail that skirts the lake. One-hour and two-hour rides are available. Tired muscles after a day of fun? Put your name down for a massage.

The town of Granville, Tennessee, has a population of 300 that swells to 10,000 during the Heritage Day Festival every Memorial Day weekend. It's one of seven festivals that take place in the small downtown. Granville is also home to T. B. Sutton General Store, established in 1880. Every Saturday night, the store hosts a bluegrass dinner with live music on the small corner stage. The music goes out to radios across the world in a broadcast.

"Granville has a ton of history, and the town has embraced it," John says, adding that visitors can take tours that showcase the history. Again, check with the resort for reservations for all activities.

Music is a part of life at Wildwood, too. There's live music on Fridays and Saturdays with bands playing covers May through September. Prominent Nashville musicians come in for singer-songwriter night the second Saturday of these months. Every Thursday night is Pickin' on the Porch, open to all who want to pick up an instrument and join in or just sit back and listen.

"Wildwood is an irresistible destination for discovering the Tennessee wilderness," John says. And glamping is a fun way to do it.

*Reservations: [www.wildwoodresorttn.com](http://www.wildwoodresorttn.com).*



**Far left: Lodging at Wildwood Resort and Marina in Tennessee includes restored Airstream trailers.**

**Left: Cummins Falls State Park creates a scenic destination for a daytrip.**

Kayaking on Cordell Hull Lake is another of the pastimes at the resort.



## Glamping around the South

**River Ranch, Florida** — Enjoy glamping at an authentic dude ranch in a rare, untouched piece of Florida wilderness. Westgate River Ranch Resort & Rodeo lies on 1,700 acres an hour south of Orlando. It can accommodate a couple's getaway, family bonding or a group of friends. Glamping includes a fully furnished, air-conditioned tent with access to a private bath, campfire with a s'mores kit, warm cinnamon rolls and personalized concierge service. Weekend guests can also return to the days of "Old Florida" by attending a rodeo in the 1,200-seat arena, followed by a variety of Florida cowboy-themed activities.

*Reservations: [westgateresorts.com/hotels/florida/river-ranch](http://westgateresorts.com/hotels/florida/river-ranch)*

**Gulf Shores, Alabama** — Gulf State Park is the perfect destination for exploring the white sand beaches of Gulf Shores. The campground is set up with three glamping-style safari tents that sleep up to four people. While glamping here is more rustic than in some other places, you'll still sleep in comfort off the ground on cots. A communal wash station is nearby, and there are full bathroom facilities a little farther away. It's all about combining backcountry camping with convenience and privacy — and a gorgeous beach.

*Reservations: [alapark.com](http://alapark.com)*

**Walhalla, South Carolina** — You'll need to make reservations early to sleep in a treehouse on a South Carolina farm that's a stone's throw from the Chattahoochee National Forest. Walls of windows will make you feel like a bird high in the trees with views all around. The property boasts gardens, forests of hardwood trees and trails galore. The treehouse has luxury bedding, a fireplace and dining room, a barbecue grill and a hammock for relaxing. Bring your own food or, for an extra fee, have dinner delivered to your door.

*Reservations: [boltfarmtreehouse.com](http://boltfarmtreehouse.com)*

# Sharing resources and purpose

The Greater Abbeville Chamber is bringing communities together

Story by JOHN CLAYTON | Photography by MATT LEDGER

Abbeville County stretches over 511 square miles in western South Carolina, and Anna LaGrone is trying to bring its business community together.

Anna, who took over as executive director of the Greater Abbeville Chamber of Commerce in August of last year, has been focused on strengthening connections within the county. “This is very much a time of growth and expansion for the chamber,” she says. “We’re building partnerships, and we’re really focusing on community outreach and providing new resources and services for our members.”

And that means all of the chamber’s members — from those in Due West, the home of Erskine College; to Honea Path, which borders Laurens and Anderson counties to the east; and over to Calhoun Falls, near the Georgia border. Anna, who grew up in Abbeville and graduated from Lander University in neighboring Greenwood, decided even before taking over the top leadership role at the chamber that outreach across all of Abbeville County was necessary to help the organization and business community grow. “I went into it seeing that there was a need



Members of the Greater Abbeville Chamber of Commerce gather during a ribbon cutting for a new business.

to evolve to fit the times and address the needs of the business community. At the end of the day, it’s our job to be there for businesses all over the county,” she says. “We bolster economic development by supporting and providing resources for the business community. A big part of that is being very connected with the businesses, but also with the community. The first step was to start reaching out and listening to what businesses and residents wanted.”

To that end, the chamber has increased its presence on social media, particularly on Facebook — where it advocates for and provides updates on chamber members. The chamber has also begun hosting community meet-and-greet events in areas like Due West, which are open to chamber members and nonmembers alike as a way to network, exchange ideas and hear the individual needs from different areas of the county. “It’s been a wonderful way for business owners from the downtown area and the county to connect in ways that build a sense of community and unity across Abbeville County,” says Anna.

A successful business community means new jobs and a thriving economy for the

county and its towns and rural communities, and bringing them together is a major focus for the Greater Abbeville Chamber of Commerce. “It’s our job to do everything we can to make our businesses more visible, to give them the tools for success and to promote what makes Abbeville special,” Anna says.

While Anna’s job description involves working with small businesses as well as Abbeville County’s largest employers and industries, she says the job, which also includes expanding and promoting tourism and manning the county’s visitor’s center in Abbeville, is a personal mission. “This is the only place that will ever feel like home to me,” she says. “I think because of that, I’ve always felt very strongly that when I was in a position to be able to give back to my community, I wanted to contribute to Abbeville County as much as I could. I think there’s so much potential here, and just being able to be a part of helping people realize that potential and help Abbeville grow and move towards a brighter future is what I want to do. Together, we can accomplish so much more.”



Anna LaGrone has served as executive director of the Greater Abbeville Chamber of Commerce for nearly a year.



# Lessons for a lifetime

Story and photography by MATT LEDGER

A teenager's first job can seem pretty ordinary, but the lessons about hard work and determination can pave the path for the future.

Just ask Jessica Brown, who parlayed the skills she learned as a young student into a business all her own. "I worked in family retail from a young age," says Jessica. "In high school, I worked as a key holder at Claire's."

After working her way through college as an assistant retail manager, Jessica headed back to the classroom — this time as a teacher. She taught at Westwood Elementary for 15 years. "I have always had a love for people and serving others," she says.

In February 2021, Jessica tapped into the entrepreneurial lessons of her youth, left teaching and opened her own business. From her home office, she created an online presence with [jessicasclosetllc.com](http://jessicasclosetllc.com), to test the fashion retail waters. "Social media has been a huge help with my business," Jessica says. "My customers find out about new arrivals, sales, events, etc. through my Facebook and Instagram pages, and get information through text, email, TikTok and my website."

The venture went so well that she soon moved into a brick-and-mortar shop at 101 Church St., right off the square in Abbeville. To help another local business, Jessica's Closet exclusively carries JEM jewelry, made by her friend Jessica Manley. The store also carries seasonal lines of clothing and Mixologie, a perfume line that allows the wearer to customize the scent.

Jessica is currently relocating her shop directly on the square. On July 16, she will welcome guests to the grand opening of the new location at 103 W. Pickens St.

"Since our shopping district is walkable, many people park and walk through the area to shop all of our wonderful retail businesses here in downtown Abbeville," says Jessica. 🗨️



Jessica Brown carries colorful comfy clothes and accessories at Jessica's Closet.



105 West owner Gina Beauford, right, teams up with her daughter Molly to make 105 West a stylish combination of boutique and hair salon.

## Creating a new style

Story by ANNE BRALY

Social media has been a boon for mother-daughter business partners Gina and Molly Beauford. The duo owns 105 West, a combination beauty salon and clothing boutique on Trinity Street.

Gina uses social media to showcase the latest styles in hair and fashion. "Our customers look forward to the daily posts that we share on Facebook and Instagram," she says, adding that online shopping at [shop105w.com](http://shop105w.com) has had a positive effect on the business. "It allows our customers from around the country to order, and locals can pick up their orders and avoid shipping costs."

The combination salon/boutique is a concept that fulfilled a dream for Molly, who worked at 105 West under its original owner. When the business went up for sale, Gina, a former dental hygienist, says it was too good of an opportunity to pass up. Molly then went to cosmetology school and opened Molly's Beauty Shop in the back of the boutique. "Ladies can get their hair styled and a spray tan and then pick out an outfit and jewelry for date night," Gina says. "It's a one-stop shop."

The local community and visitors alike have a fondness for the quaint shops that line Abbeville's historic district. "We love our hometown," Gina says. "Having the opportunity to own one of the beautiful historic buildings uptown brings us joy." 🗨️

# Back to School

Story by LISA SAVAGE



✦ **Make sure you have adequate internet speeds for students studying at home**

Many schools now offer more options for virtual days and online learning, whether it's for severe weather outbreaks, sick days or a family that has discovered that online learning works best for their child.

As a result, a reliable home internet service is more important than ever, whether it's for students who need to access online assignments, parents working remotely or for streaming movies and shows.

The Federal Communications Commission offers some tips to optimize your home network performance:

## CHECK YOUR INTERNET PLAN

Check with your internet provider to find out the speed in your plan. Make sure it's enough to handle all the devices that might be connected at the same time, as well as any additional devices that could be added, such as televisions for streaming, laptops and more. FCC consumer guides provide information about household broadband use and broadband speeds.

## TEST YOUR SPEED

In many cases, your internet provider has a speed test on the company website, or you can download broadband speed test apps or visit speed test websites, to check your current broadband download and upload speeds. Many providers, especially rural telecommunications cooperatives, strive

to keep download and upload speeds close to the same, which is important when it comes to online meeting platforms, which require higher upload speeds. Some national providers offer deals to get new customers, advertising high speeds. In reality, they may be referring only to download speed.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

In most homes, internet service comes to the house and then operates through a wireless signal called Wi-Fi, which distributes the broadband throughout the home on a device called a router. Using multiple wireless devices on the same Wi-Fi network can impact performance.

Sometimes, rebooting the router — turning it off and then turning it back on — can resolve the problem.

If your internet provider doesn't supply the router, make sure it isn't outdated. Check the model number on the router to see if it's capable of providing the speed you're paying for. If your internet speed seems slower than it should be, contact your provider for troubleshooting tips, or ask if there are any outages or disruptions that could impact speed.

Whether they're in the classroom or learning virtually, almost all students need access to the internet to reach their potential. Making sure your broadband network provides the speeds they need is a big step in the right direction. ☑



# Connected classrooms

Teachers maximize communication with students and parents

Story by LISA SAVAGE



How many times has this happened, parents?

You're running late as you get ready to leave home and drop the kids off at school as you rush to work.

As you go through your mental checklist, you think you're doing OK, and then your child says, "I forgot to study for my spelling test." The teacher sent the list of spelling words home on a note that's shoved deep into your child's backpack.

Now, the educational world is changing, using apps for classroom reminders, school activities and even payment in advance for athletic and other school events.

While many teachers still send notes and schedules home on paper, they also communicate the same information through apps.

Apps like Remind allow teachers and coaches to send out information about class assignments or practice schedules. Messages can be sent to a group or to individuals. About 80% of schools in the United States use Remind to connect students, teachers and families. It's designed for grades K-12 to communicate with everyone at once, and it has 20 million monthly active users across the United States.

Parents like the app because they receive early closing notifications instantaneously. All parents don't always see reminders that go out on social media.

The app reminds parents of homework assignments, dress up days and more.

It can lead to more participation in the classroom when parents get reminders because not all students show notes to their parents, and not all parents go through their children's backpacks to find them.

ClassDojo has typically been used for younger students and has group messaging and individual options, so the group may not necessarily see responses.

The app has messaging for group story posts, as well as individual student portfolios where teachers can assign work and students can turn in assignments. It also translates into over 35 languages.

Talking Points also features translation and options to communicate with families in their home languages to build strong partnerships during the school year.

Many school systems utilize platforms like Google Classroom, which also has access to such options as Google Voice for communication with students and their parents. For extracurricular activities like athletic events or stage performances, some school systems utilize GoFan, an app that offers online ticket purchases.

More and more schools are opting for the app purchase to avoid cash transactions. Some schools no longer even accept cash payments at the gate for events.

Since 2001, GoFan and its parent company, Huddle Tickets, have worked with over 10,000 schools selling over 20 million tickets — more digital high school tickets than any other company.

Other companies offer similar purchase availabilities through an app.

Parents, as another school year is about to begin, make sure you have the tools necessary to make meaningful connections with your child's teachers and school system.

Remind



GO FAN

TalkingPoints

From classroom reminders to athletic tickets, apps are increasingly essential.



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



### The Fujitsu ScanSnap iX1600

The Fujitsu ScanSnap iX1600 is for those who are looking for a home office scanner with plenty of bells and whistles. The duplex scanner can process up to 40 double-sided sheets per minute and features automatic image rotation and color cleanup. While it is Mac and PC compatible, it can also scan directly to any mobile device, a printer or a variety of cloud platforms, including Dropbox and Google Drive. MSRP \$495, but available for a lower price at several retailers.

# Speedy scanning

Conveniently copy any document



### PHYSICAL SCANNER

If you have to scan multiple pages and images or smaller text, even a high-quality app such as Adobe Scan can feel

underpowered — and try holding a smartphone steady for more than a few minutes. The best way to choose what kind of physical scanner you should buy is to consider your needs.

Think of what kind of documents you'll be scanning and how many. Flatbed scanners are great for photos and unbound documents — basically anything that can lay flat on the scanner glass and should be handled with care. Some flatbed scanners even have a lid that allows for easier scanning of bound books or magazines.

If you regularly scan multiple documents, you should opt for a scanner with a sheet feeder. Much like having to hold the phone steady, having to manually place page after page in a flatbed scanner can be difficult. For large jobs, you will want a scanner equipped with an automatic document feeder that can handle stacks of pages at a time.

One other consideration is whether you'll be scanning double-sided documents. In that case, look for a device that offers duplex scanning. The fastest options scan a document on both sides at the same time, but they are also usually a more expensive choice.

As for resolution, you don't need to worry too much. For most documents and photos, 300 dpi — or dots per inch — is enough. You may want to scan images at 600 dpi to capture smaller details but anything beyond that — unless it's for a very specific use — is overkill. Modern scanners have no trouble with any of these levels of resolution. ☑

With all-in-one printers that come equipped with scanning capability and the smartphone in your pocket getting better and better at capturing images and documents, fewer people need a dedicated scanner. Of course, there are tradeoffs with each option and as with any device, it's important to choose what's right for you.

Before you spend money on a scanner you don't need or find out too late that an app on your phone isn't enough, consider the following before deciding.

### SMARTPHONE APPS

There are more than a dozen apps available for your scanning needs, and the ever-improving camera on most smartphones means that results can rival a physical scanner. However, if you need anything beyond the occasional copy of a document or photo, you should consider looking beyond an app.

If your scanning is of the once-in-a-while variety, then you can't go wrong with a free app like Adobe Scan. The same folks behind Photoshop made it, and the app offers a simple interface and produces high-quality scans of documents, images, business cards and forms. It can export documents as PDFs and save them to the Adobe Document Cloud, or it can save them as a JPEG image file on your phone. It also offers good optical character recognition, or OCR, and allows you to copy and edit text taken from an image. It's available for iOS and Android devices.



# Growing trend

## Local farmers sell crops at Donalds Farmers Market

Story by LAZ DENES | Photography by MATT LEDGER

A dream of raising vegetables year-round finally became a reality and has turned into a family affair for Due West's Ozena Cunningham Harfield's family, including her brothers, William and Amos, and sister, Margaret, along with their spouses.

Thanks to a High Tunnel System Initiative grant from the United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service, a 120-by-20-foot structure in their family neighborhood on George Alewine Road went up last fall, and the Cunningham siblings went right to work. Ozena and her late husband, Robert Harfield, introduced the idea years ago. After several failed attempts, her grant application for a high tunnel — also known as a "hoop house," which is similar in concept to a greenhouse — was finally approved.

"Once the structure was built, we started planting shortly after that," Amos says. "We put down collards and cabbage just to try it out at first, and we sold out everything by the end of the year. We moved on to add string beans, tomatoes, okra and cucumbers. Many people have expressed interest in purchasing our vegetables. It's a family effort — we rotate. Everybody has a day they go in and take care of the plants, and on certain days we all work together when we have more to do."

Work in their high-tunnel greenhouse is a family affair for (front, from left) Amos Cunningham, Marvin Peoples, Margaret Peoples, (back, from left) Annie Cunningham, Joyce Cunningham, Ozena Harfield and (not pictured) William Cunningham.



Thanks to another government program — a Hometown Economic Development Grant from the state to the nearby town of Donalds — the Cunningham siblings and other area growers can sell their produce on Saturdays at the Donalds Farmers Market. "Our original intent when we applied for the grant was to relocate our town hall back to Grange Hall, which is a beautiful building that was built in 1935 that used to be the town hall. It's on the National Registry of Historic Places," says William Scoggins, a Donalds town councilman. "As part of the grant, we wanted to establish a farmers market and repurpose what was the town hall as the home office for the farmers market. We saw it as a really good opportunity for resilience and kind of building sustainability within the community and getting involved with the local network with a farmers market that covers Greenwood, Abbeville, McCormick — all the surrounding counties and areas."

The South Carolina Association of Farmers Markets and Wilder Ferreira, of the agribusiness program with the Clemson Extension, provided advertising and marketing support. Construction of the Donalds Farmers Market began this spring, including a 44-by-40-foot shelter near the busy intersection of US-178 and State Highway 184. William has also been active in promotional efforts, which include a Facebook channel and ongoing communications with the association and extension, all thanks to WCTEL's high-speed internet service. "Sustainability is a big thing for us, and COVID exposed a lot of things, including the national supply chain," William says. "So, if we could be more resilient at our local level, that was our main goal. The primary funding source for this is the South Carolina economic grant that we won, so we're not even charging vendors to come out for this. It's a win-win for everybody."

"Everybody" includes the Cunningham siblings from nearby Due West, who ventured all the way to Calhoun Falls for their first farmers market experience last fall. "We went down there and sold out everything we had," Amos says. "But Donalds is a lot closer, and that's a good thing for us and the community."



Donalds Councilman William Scoggins stands near Grange Hall. The building served as a town hall until 1980, when it was relocated to its current site.

# Relishing SOMETHING NEW FOR veggies?

## Extending shelf life may leave you in a pickle

For thousands of years, we've relied on pickling as a means of food preservation and storage. Since then, it's evolved into a culinary trend that extends well beyond the standard spears and slices that make up dill or bread-and-butter pickles. You can pickle almost any fruit or veggie to create briny snacks, colorful relishes and tasty garnishes.

We all know cucumbers can become delicious pickles. But watermelon rind is wonderfully sweet pickled. Turnips, asparagus, beets, bell peppers, parsnips, peaches and peppers can taste great after the process, too.

Pickling extends the harvest season well into winter when we long for the flavors of the summer garden. So, don't throw away the watermelon rinds from your summer picnic, and when you pick that peck of peppers, don't forget to pickle a few. 🥒

### PICKLED PEACHES

- 3 cups sugar
- 2 cups distilled white vinegar
- 12 cinnamon sticks, divided
- 36 whole cloves, divided
- 18 soft peaches

In a large stainless steel stockpot over medium heat, bring 1 cup water, sugar, vinegar, 6 cinnamon sticks and 18 cloves to a boil, stirring to dissolve sugar. Reduce heat to medium-low and add peaches. Gently simmer, without boiling, until peaches are heated through and a fork pierces the fruit with no resistance, 10 to 15 minutes.

Using a slotted spoon, divide peaches among six sterilized, 1-pint canning jars, placing peaches pit-side down. Add 1 of the remaining cinnamon sticks and 3 of the remaining cloves to each jar. Ladle cooking liquid into jars, filling each to within 1/2 inch of rim. Wipe the lip of each jar rim with a clean, wet cloth to remove any syrup or bits of fruit. Then, top each jar with a flat lid and screw on a threaded ring band without tightening completely. Roll jars on their sides to release any air bubbles that might be trapped in the peach cavities. Turn upright. Remove ring bands and lids, and add more cooking liquid, if needed because of settling, to fill jars to within 1/2 inch of rim. Replace lids and threaded ring bands, tightening completely to seal. Store pickled peaches in refrigerator for up to eight weeks.







## WATERMELON RIND PICKLES

- 2 pounds watermelon rind
- 1/4 cup pickling salt
- 4 cups water, divided, plus more for boiling
- 2 cups granulated sugar
- 1 cup white vinegar
- 1 tablespoon broken-up cinnamon stick
- 1 1/2 teaspoons whole cloves
- 1/2 lemon, thinly sliced
- 5 maraschino cherries, halved — optional

Trim the dark green and pink parts from the watermelon rind and discard. Cut rind into 1-inch cubes and measure out 7 cups.

Put the watermelon rind in a large container with the pickling salt and 3 cups of the water. Add more water to cover the rinds, if necessary. Soak overnight.

Drain and rinse watermelon rind.

Cover the rind with cold water in a large saucepan. Simmer just until tender, about 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, in a nonreactive 6- to 8-quart kettle, combine the sugar, vinegar, cinnamon, whole cloves and remaining 1 cup water. Simmer the mixture for 10 minutes. Strain and discard the solids.

Pour the strained liquid back into the pan. Add the drained watermelon rind, lemon slices and maraschino cherries. Simmer the mixture until the watermelon rind is translucent, about 30 minutes.

Fill half-pint jars with the hot watermelon rind and syrup mixture, leaving 1/2 inch of headspace. Add the lids. Process in a boiling water bath for 5 minutes, and remove jars. Let the jars cool on a rack. Serve and enjoy. Properly canned, watermelon pickles will keep in a cool, dark, dry place for at least a year.

*Note: If your jars didn't seal properly or you don't want to process them in boiling water, they will keep for about a month in the refrigerator.*

## REFRIGERATOR PICKLES

- 5 1/2 cups, about 1 1/2 pounds, thinly sliced (about 1/2-1/4-inch) pickling cucumbers
- 1 1/2 tablespoons kosher salt
- 1 cup thinly sliced sweet onion
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 cup white vinegar
- 1/2 cup apple cider vinegar
- 1/4 cup light brown sugar
- 1 1/2 teaspoons mustard seeds
- 1/2 teaspoon celery seeds
- 1/8 teaspoon ground turmeric

Combine cucumbers and salt in a large, shallow bowl. Cover and chill 1 1/2 hours. Move cucumbers into a colander and rinse thoroughly under cold water. Drain well and return cucumbers to bowl. Add onion to bowl and toss with the cucumbers.

Combine the granulated sugar, white vinegar, apple cider vinegar, brown sugar, mustard seeds, celery seeds and ground turmeric in a medium saucepan. Bring to a simmer over medium heat, stirring until the sugar dissolves.

Pour the hot vinegar mixture over cucumber mixture. Let stand at room temperature 1 hour. Cover and refrigerate 24 hours. Store in an airtight container in refrigerator up to one month.



## PICKLED BRUSSELS SPROUTS

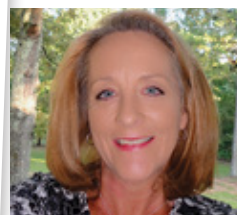
- 1 pound Brussels sprouts
- 1 1/2 cups apple cider vinegar
- 1 cup water
- 1 tablespoon pickling salt
- 20 peppercorns, divided
- 1/4 teaspoon yellow mustard seeds, divided
- 2 garlic cloves
- 2 bay leaves

Trim the sprouts and cut them in half. Set aside. Combine vinegar, water and salt in a stainless steel pot and bring to a boil.

Divide the peppercorns, mustard seeds, garlic cloves and bay leaves between two prepared pint jars. Pack sprouts into jars and pour brine over the sprouts. Use a wooden chopstick to remove air bubbles from jars.

Wipe rims, apply lids and rings and process in a boiling water bath for 10 minutes.

When time is up, remove jars from canner and let cool on a folded towel. When jars are cool, test seals. If seals are good, jars can be stored in the pantry (any unsealed jars should be refrigerated). Give pickles at least 48 hours before you eat them, so that the brine fully penetrates the sprouts. Sealed jars will keep up to one year on the pantry shelf.



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