



Mountain Telephone

**BROADBAND:
MILLENNIAL EDITION**

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2019

CONNECTION



FURRY BUSINESS

Tibetan yaks are
at home in rural
Kentucky

A WORTHY PROJECT

A food bank in Menifee
County feeds the hungry

SIMMERING SATISFACTION

Slow-cooker recipes
warm winter tables



BY SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

What is your broadband story?

We just closed out a year when rural broadband was a continuing news item, and I believe that will hold true in 2019. This is good news for those of you reading this magazine, and even better news for the millions of rural Americans not served by a progressive broadband provider like yours.

It's easy to get caught up in the policy behind the issues. After all, the bills Congress debates become the laws that govern rural broadband. It's so important that rural broadband providers like yours stay involved in the process to ensure that public policy encourages investment in building reliable broadband service to our rural regions. That's a key function of NTCA as the unified voice of nearly 850 independent, community-based telecommunications companies.

But we must always remind ourselves that the reason we work for good public policy is to help communities build the networks needed to support an improved quality of life for real people. In every issue of this magazine, you read stories of people who are using broadband to make a difference in their lives, businesses, families and communities. That is what drives our work.

With funding programs in the news, USDA efforts and FCC initiatives — not to mention new providers getting into the telecom business — 2019 is going to be another big news year for broadband. Help us keep our eyes on the human impact by sharing your broadband stories on social media using the #ruraliscool hashtag. 🗨️



Fighting cyberthreats together

NTCA continues a collaboration with the Department of Homeland Security to provide telcos with critical cyberthreat information

Small telecommunications providers mount a strong defense against advanced security threats from criminal elements and overseas enemies. Beyond the professionals on its local staff, your internet provider benefits from the cybersecurity efforts of hundreds of similar companies across the U.S.

NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association represents nearly 850 independent, community-based telecommunications companies, helping them collectively work toward solutions to industry challenges and better serve their members and customers.

The association recently announced that, in partnership with the Department of Homeland Security and National Institute for Hometown Security, it will explore creating a forum for small, rural telecom operators from across the country to share and receive timely, actionable and relevant cyber information.

Bob Kolasky, director of the National Risk Management Center, presented NTCA with a National Infrastructure Protection Program Security & Resilience Challenge award for 2019 to support the project, which will include the creation and beta test of a daily cyber intelligence report. This will be curated to meet the unique needs and interests of community-based telecommunications broadband providers.

This new award follows NTCA's successful collaboration with DHS to create the 2018 Cyber Wise Program that provided free, industry-focused risk management training to rural telcos.

"NTCA is proud to support small, rural operators as they navigate an increasingly complex cyber landscape," says NTCA Chief Executive Officer Shirley Bloomfield. "As we all know, cyberattacks are truly a matter of 'when,' not 'if,' and this new partnership with DHS and NIHS will help explore a new forum to ensure rural broadband providers are both aware of threats and equipped with the information and tools that they need to respond. I'm grateful for this continued collaboration and look forward to seeing its results." 🗨️

Lifeline SERVICE

Lifeline is a government assistance program that can help pay a portion of your telephone, mobile phone or internet bill each month. Consumers are allowed only one Lifeline program benefit per household.

? How much will Lifeline save me?

If you qualify for Lifeline, you will receive a credit of \$9.25 each month on your bill.

? What services are covered by this credit?

You have the choice (where applicable) of applying your benefit to one of three types of service offerings:

- Fixed or mobile broadband
- Fixed or mobile voice-only
- Bundles of fixed or mobile voice and broadband

NOTE: Lifeline can only be used for one source of communication from the list above.

? Can I receive more than one Lifeline credit?

No, consumers are allowed only one Lifeline program benefit per household.

? How do I qualify?

You are eligible for Lifeline benefits if you qualify for and receive one of the following benefits:

- SNAP
- Medicaid
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Federal Public Housing Assistance
- The Veteran's Pension or Survivor's Pension benefit.

Additionally, consumers at or below 135 percent of the Federal Poverty

Guidelines will continue to be eligible for a Lifeline program benefit. (State determinations of income will no longer be accepted.) There are no changes to the eligibility criteria for Tribal programs.

NOTE: Some states have additional qualifying programs, allowances and stipulations. Check with your local telecommunications provider for information about benefits that may be available in your state.

? How do I enroll in the Lifeline program and start receiving this benefit?

To find out whether you qualify for Lifeline assistance, please visit www.lifelinesupport.org or call your local telecommunications provider.

NOTE: Your telephone company is not responsible for determining who qualifies for these programs or who receives assistance. Consumers must meet specific criteria in order to obtain assistance with their local telephone and/or broadband service, and qualifying is dependent upon government-established guidelines.



DO YOU QUALIFY?

Stay connected with a
Lifeline discount.

Apply today!



FRS YOUTH APP CHALLENGE

Students, it's time to start thinking about the Foundation for Rural Service's challenge and the app that could pave the way to your future.

WHO: Students enrolled in grades seven to 12. A single student, or teams with as many as five students, may compete.

WHAT: Develop a concept for a mobile app to address a problem or improve a process in your rural community or in rural America at-large. The challenge is concept-based only, and entries will be judged based on how well-researched and well-presented the app is. It must be possible and not already an app in existence.

WHEN: The submission deadline is March 1, 2019.

WHY: The winning team will receive \$1,000 in gift cards and Codecademy scholarships.

HOW: Visit FRS.org for more information about submissions.

Service for all generations

One thing that's great about our business is how our network can have a positive impact on so many people. Broadband benefits everyone from children to seniors — even if they use it for different things.



SHAYNE ISON
General Manager

In many instances, Mountain Telephone Cooperative has served several generations of families in our area. How many companies can say that? Obviously, times have changed, and the communication needs of your grandparents or great-grandparents were very different than yours are.

This issue of the magazine is focusing on one particular generation that seems to grab a lot of headlines: the millennials. While experts vary slightly on the parameters, “millennial” is the name given to people with birth dates from the mid-1980s through about 2005.

Depending on what article you've read, you may feel millennials are either ruining everything or likely to save us all. But I believe one thing is certain: With millennials becoming the largest

segment of our population, they are going to change the way companies operate and the way our society works.


One of the primary traits most millennials share is the pervasiveness of technology in their lives. In fact, most members of this generation — especially those in their teens and early 20s — have never known a world without internet-connected technology.

It may be easy to sit back and worry about the shifts this generation is already creating. But to me, it's important to remember that these millennials are the future of our community and of Mountain Telephone.

Think about it with me.

- Their complex lives frequently play out in a mix of social media and text messages, rather than face-to-face interactions.
- With the advent of digital photography and phones with cameras, they are the most photographed generation in human history.
- They desire jobs working remotely, like coding, web design or other careers that couldn't have existed a decade or two ago. And if they create their own companies, the business world — especially in rural America — doesn't present nearly as many obstacles for startups as it once did.
- For entertainment, many of us grew up with only a few channels on the television set, but millennials are accustomed to hundreds of channels and programming on demand right on their tablets.
- They take classes online, apply for jobs through mobile apps and often lead the way on digital innovation, whether smart home, telemedicine or other technology.

The tastes and preferences of millennials are already having an impact on Mountain Telephone. Millennials are some of the most frequent users of our advanced broadband services. They need a robust internet connection to handle all of their devices, and we are working hard to deliver and improve that service every day.

Personally and professionally, I'm excited to see the way these young people make an impact on Mountain Telephone, our community and our world. And we're going to adapt and work hard to continue meeting their communication needs just like we have for the generations before them. 

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Mountain Telephone

Mountain Rural Telephone Cooperative, Inc., is a member-owned cooperative dedicated to providing communications technology to the people of Elliott, Menifee, Morgan, Wolfe and a section of Bath counties. The company covers 1,048 square miles and supplies service to nearly 12,000 members.

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On the Cover:



Greg Dike hopes to bring yaks to the center stage of Kentucky agriculture with his farm, Zhi-ba Shing-ga Yaks.
See story Page 8.



You asked for it! **YOU GOT IT!**

Do you want high-speed internet without the extra services?
Check out our new broadband-only plan for residential customers.
It's everything you want without the extras.

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Mountain Telephone

*Offer is for residential customers only. Those in areas with poor cell service are encouraged to keep their landlines for safety and convenience.

Take a sip of history

Soda bottling tours offer a tasty treat



Ale-8-One is a signature Kentucky soda and part of a family-owned business dating to 1902. Tours are available at its plant in Winchester, Kentucky.

George Fletcher boarded a train in New York near his Long Island home and rode for hours until he arrived in Cincinnati. Then, he rented a car and drove 100 miles to his destination: the Ale-8-One plant in Winchester, Kentucky. He patiently waited until the start of the tour, which had also drawn parents with young children, grandparents and others who love Kentucky's favorite soda.

"I've wanted to do this for a long time," Fletcher says. "I've loved Ale 8 for so long, and it will be fun to see how it's made. Just to see the process will be so interesting."

Fletcher's quest is not unusual. Guests come from all around to see where and how their favorite soda is made, says DeAnne Elmore, the company's public relations and field marketing manager.

Crafting a destination

The building now housing Ale-8-One was originally part of a bowling alley. The first soda was produced in 1926, and the company moved its headquarters in 1966. In 1989, an addition enabled increased soda production. There are now four varieties of Ale-8-One: the original, diet, caffeine-free and cherry.

Tours began during the soda's 75th birthday celebration. "We are limited by space, so we try to keep groups at about 30 people," Elmore says. "That way, everybody gets a good experience and can see our production facility. People get to see up close and personal who's really making this brand."

The company embraced Kentucky's legacy of beverage production, which benefits from the popularity of bourbon and the Bourbon Trail tourism guide. "We are a member of the Kentucky Distiller's Association and an associate member of the Bourbon Trail as Kentucky's only soft drink," Elmore says.

Guests on the tour take a seat in a large room where they enjoy a video presentation hosted by the company's CEO, Fielding Rogers, who is the fourth generation of the Rogers family to hold the post. The video offers a history of the brand and the manufacturing processes that are not part of the tour due to OSHA safety regulations. Following the video, a vial of the secret formula that is part of every bottle of Ale-8-One is passed around for sniffing before the tour takes a turn

through the heart of the facility. Visitors see where bottles are filled, capped and prepared for shipping.

“We’re still an operating manufacturing facility, so we can’t guarantee that all the lines will be running, but we try to do our best to make sure they are when we have tours,” Elmore says.

Following the tour, guests are treated to tastes of Ale-8-One, and if you want to take some home — or a baseball cap, hoodie, koozie, salsa, barbecue sauce or other Ale-8 gear — there’s a gift shop near the entrance/exit.

For tours of Ale-8-One, offered on Thursday and Friday mornings, log on to www.ale8one.com.

HOW IT BEGAN

George Lee Wainscott started his soft drink company in 1902, making distilled water and flavored drinks. In 1906, he added Roxa-Cola to his inventory, named for his wife, Roxanne. Coca-Cola sued and lost, but even so, Wainscott wanted something new and unique to him, so he invented a new, unnamed soda — a pleasant blend of ginger and citrus. He introduced his creation at the Clark County Fair and sponsored a “name-that-soda” contest. The winning name was “A Late One,” meaning, in Southern vernacular, “the latest thing” or “something new.” The name “A Late One” was then created into a logo pun, Ale-8-One, that would eventually become the colloquial name. But every bottle still carries the original “A Late One” name above Ale-8-One.

Following Wainscott’s death, the company passed into the hands of his second wife, Jane Rogers; then to her brother, Frank Rogers; and on to his son, Frank Jr., who left it to his son, Frank III, who left it to his son and current CEO Fielding Rogers. He still uses his great-great-uncle’s handwritten notes to hand-mix the secret original formula.

Sodas around the South

TENNESSEE

Double Cola is as synonymous with Chattanooga, Tennessee, as Moon Pies. Double Cola has been made in the downtown area since 1933 by the company that also produces other soft drinks like Ski, Jumbo Chaser and Oranta. Buy a hoodie and other items online and learn more about it at double-cola.com.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Since 1903, Blenheim has produced ginger ale in Hamer, South Carolina. But the drink’s origins go back to the 1700s when a man lost his shoe in a water hole. Thirsty, he sampled the water and found it to be excellent. One hundred years later, ginger was added to the water and Blenheim Ginger Ale was born. The soda now comes in three varieties: mild, hot and diet.

ALABAMA

Buffalo Rock Ginger Ale was created in the late 1800s and is instilled in the hearts of Alabamians. The Birmingham company of the same name — Buffalo Rock — continues to make its famous ginger ale. It has added more sodas to its line over the years, including Grapico, Wham and Sunfresh. The company remains family-owned and is under the leadership of founder Sidney Lee’s great-grandson, James C. Lee.

Interesting fact: Buffalo Rock developed the first 3-liter soda bottles used by many soft drink companies today.

GEORGIA

Coca-Cola was created in Atlanta, and a visit to World of Coke teaches you all about the Coke phenomenon. Learn the story behind it, see Coke artifacts, enjoy interactive exhibits, get a behind-the-scenes look at the bottling process and more. For information, visit www.worldofcoca-cola.com.

NORTH CAROLINA

L.D. Peeler created Cheerwine in Salisbury, North Carolina, 102 years ago at the height of a sugar shortage in World War I. The wild cherry cola was an immediate hit and is now marketed across the country. The family-owned company is under the leadership of L.D. Peeler’s great-grandson. 📍



Yak-pot!

Wellington yak farmer finds beauty in a different kind of beast

BY JEN CALHOUN

Greg Dike and his wife were exploring Dharamshala, India, when he first learned about the virtues of the yak. For high-altitude dwellers in Asia, the shaggy-haired herd animals had long provided meat for food, milk for cheese, and fiber for clothing, tents, blankets and rope.

The usefulness of the beasts intrigued Dike, who believed those same traits could be of use to people in the United States. “So, when I came back to America, I bought a yak in Ohio just to find out more,” says Dike, who began his own yak farm in Wellington in 2013. “That got me hooked, and I bought a few more.”

Now, Dike owns 86 yaks on his 65-acre farm, Zhi-ba Shing-ga Yaks, which translates to “Peace Farm.” He’s grown to love the personality and curiosity of the hairy, horned animals. “They’re very smart,” he says. “Think of very smart teenagers. They know what you want. But they won’t do it unless they feel like it, or they’ll make you work for it. It’s all a game for them.”

Dike says they like to sneak up behind humans to watch what people are doing. They’ll be sure to jump on something Dike leaves in the field — a piece of equipment, say — just to see what it’s all about. If a gate is left open, they’re determined to explore.

But they’re useful animals, too.

A trip to India inspired Greg Dike to try his hand at raising yaks in rural Kentucky.



Mostly, Dike sells to others interested in starting up high-quality yak farms of their own. He also sells yak fiber — a durable wool product made from the down that grows beneath yak hair. The fiber can be refined through a combing process — the more refined the fiber is, the more expensive it becomes. In fact, a growing number of high-end clothing companies have started using it for expensive sweaters, socks and other accessories.

A BETTER MEAT, A GROWING MARKET

In the coming years, Dike hopes to sell yak meat, as well. “It’s a red meat — it’s not gamey, and it’s very lean,” he says. “It’s probably about 97 percent lean.” It’s also as healthy for humans as eating wild-caught salmon because the meat is high in omega-3 fatty acids, which help the heart, blood vessels, lungs, immune system and endocrine system function well, according to aboutyaks.com.

Like other grass-fed meats, such as bison or grass-fed cows, the lack of marbled fat requires some changes in cooking methods. Some people sear the meat to lock in the fat. Others might mix it with extra virgin olive oil to mimic fat content and prevent drying. And while the health benefits continue to create a strong market, raising grass-fed yaks for meat can take a while, Dike says. It will be nearly three years before his latest bull calves are ready.

Right now, yak farmers can’t keep restaurants and other buyers in supply, Dike says. “I recently went to a yak show, and all the people there wanted meat to take home with them,” he says. “One guy wanted to buy 1,000 pounds of it. Fortunately, I could direct him to someone else. But it does become a supply issue.”

YAK CURRENCY

That could be a good thing for eastern Kentucky farmers, says Dike, who also serves as director of Habitat for Humanity’s Morehead office and has spent much of his life helping others. He hopes more farmers in the region will gravitate toward the yak. He believes they could help those in rural Kentucky. “Yaks use about a third



of the land for grazing that cows do,” he says. “It’s an animal that survives on just a little bit of forage. It’s something about their metabolism. They grow extra down that insulates them during cold weather, so they don’t need as much food.”

But it’s also a growing market — especially in the eastern part of the U.S. where more and more restaurants and individuals are taking notice, Dike says. And much of that growth is due to the internet. “It’s slowly developing and taking off,” he adds.

Recently, Dike learned of a restaurant in Virginia that sold out of yak steaks and roasts in a day. A yak farmer in Virginia was able to quit his job in the IT industry to farm full time, Dike says. “There are a couple of other big farms developing, but it will be a couple of years down the road before they get established,” he says. ☞

Dike says yaks are smart, curious and sometimes stubborn creatures, comparing them to very smart teenagers.



ZHI-BA SHING-GA YAKS

To find out more about Greg Dike and his yak farm, or to purchase some wool, go to yakzz.com, clicking on the Yak Farms tab and looking up Zhi-ba Shing-ga in the keywords subject line. Or you can email them to nct1108@yahoo.com and call them at 606-776-0022. On Facebook, you can find them at Zhi-ba Shing-ga Tibetan Yaks.

The farm is at 159 Cub Run Road in Wellington.



Rethinking rural

How some
millennials are
re-evaluating
life in rural
communities

BY DREW WOOLLEY

Six years ago, Chase Rushing thought he had his future planned. Living in San Marcos, Texas, between San Antonio and Austin, he and his wife had access to all the entertainment a 20-something couple could want — not to mention a burgeoning tech scene.

“Our plan was to stay in the Austin area,” Rushing says. “That’s where the jobs were, and that’s what I was preparing myself for.”

That preference for metropolitan areas is typical for a generation that rural communities have had difficulty holding on to: millennials. But there’s reason to believe millennials may find more to like in rural communities as they age.

For many, the term millennial has become synonymous with the silly, and derogatory, stereotype of any young person eating avocados while staring at their phone. But the Pew Research Center works with a more precise definition. They define millennials as anyone born from the years 1981 to 1997.

That means even the youngest millennials have likely already entered the workforce, while the oldest probably have

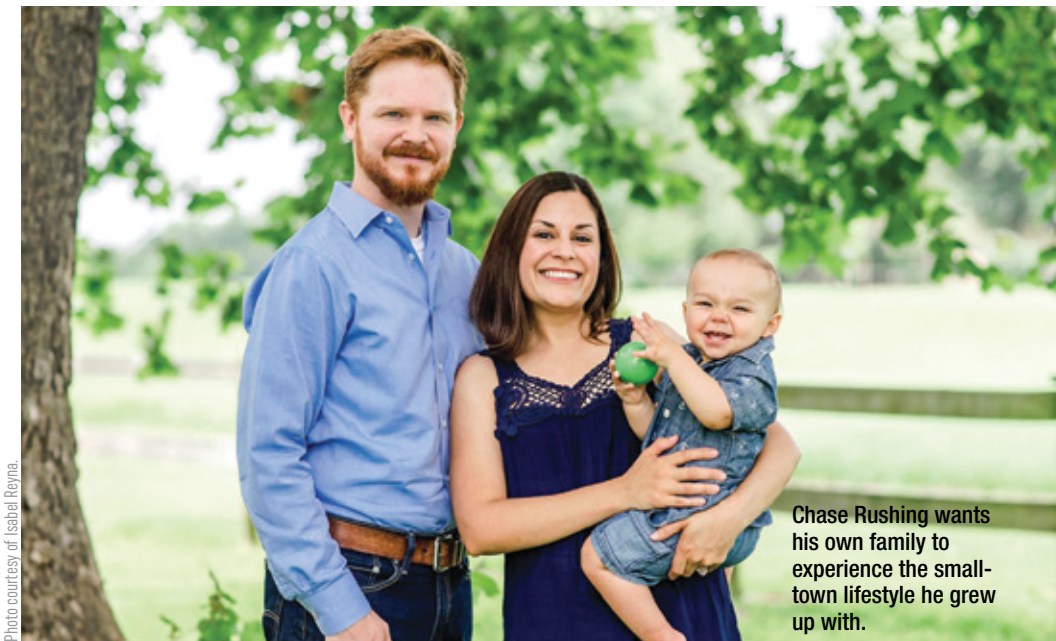


Photo courtesy of Isabel Reyna

Chase Rushing wants his own family to experience the small-town lifestyle he grew up with.

a mortgage and kids to raise. As Rushing and his wife began considering the latter, the idea of returning to his hometown of Yantis, Texas, lodged itself in Rushing’s mind.

“It was important for me that my son got to experience what I did growing up,” he says. “Being around all your family, the friendships, the bonds you form over that time. It’s like nothing else.”

WIDE-OPEN SPACES

Even if millennials are no longer the youngest generation, several characteristics set them apart from those before them. They tend to value experiences over

possessions, get their news online rather than from TV, and value work-life balance in their careers.

Perhaps most importantly, millennials are the first generation to grow up in the internet age, meaning they have a natural comfort with technology previous generations have not had. That could make them a predictor of how future tech-savvy generations will behave.

Millennial trends are of particular interest to Dr. Roberto Gallardo, assistant director of the Purdue Center for Regional Development. While the mainstream consensus has been that millennials are flocking to cities, Gallardo

believes improved internet connectivity could provide new opportunities in rural areas.

“If you have a young family, you may consider moving out of an urban area because of rising housing prices,” he says. “Rural areas have a natural ambiance that can attract younger families if their job allows them to telework.”

That draw depends heavily on rural communities building a high-speed internet connection, but there is reason to believe doing so could have a significant impact.

A population analysis by Gallardo and two colleagues published in *The Daily Yonder* shows that, while rural counties across the country are seeing declines in millennial populations, those with high-speed internet service saw millennial populations increase by 2.3 percent from 2010 to 2016.

That may not sound like much, but Gallardo points out that this is a process just getting started as millennials grow older.

“Younger folks always flock to cities, so if you’re a very rural community, broadband is not a silver bullet,” says Gallardo. “But it is a very key ingredient to attract or retain millennials or younger families.”

CROSS-GEN COMMUNITIES

John Larson moved to a rural community not because he wanted to work remotely, but because his work could only be done from there. As a ceramic sculptor living outside of Milan, Minnesota, Larson is able to run his own business with low overhead and access natural materials that would be costly or inconvenient in a larger city.

“Ceramics is a product of its location. If you use local materials, it will be a reflection of its place,” he says. “I’ve built my small business on reusing bent nails and foraging for materials.”

Larson’s work also gets a boost from the established market for ceramics in the Midwest, but finding a place in that market isn’t always easy for young artists.

Fostering more rural development programs is one step Larson believes communities like his could take to better promote the culture that already exists, as well as to help business owners collaborate and learn from one another.

As the generation that now makes up the majority of the workforce, millennials will have an important say in those efforts. But Rushing believes that if his generation is going to open up rural communities to more young people, they will have to do so without losing sight of what makes the rural lifestyle special. It may be necessary to break down generational divides altogether.

“I think we need to be asking what we can do to impact our community. What

are the challenges we face and what can we do to address them?” he says. “It’s not millennials versus baby boomers or anyone else. It’s about all of us as a community.”

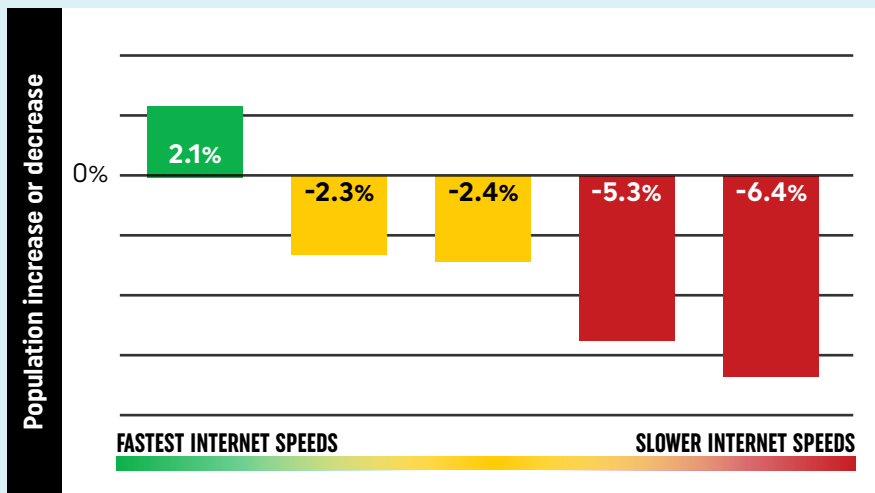


Living in a rural community gives John Larson the chance to share the countryside with his daughter.

Photo courtesy of Kristin Lindstrom.

Rural America online

Millennial population change in southeastern states



Nationwide population data shows that rural communities are losing younger residents to larger metropolitan areas. When looking at rural counties that have invested in high-speed internet connections, however, the picture changes significantly.

The graph above shows how millennial populations changed in the most rural counties in Alabama, Kentucky, South Carolina and Tennessee from 2010 to 2016. Counties were ranked based on their internet connection, with the column on the far left showing those with the fastest internet speeds and the column on the far right showing the slowest.

Over that time, counties with the fastest internet connections saw millennial populations grow by more than 2 percent, while counties with slower connections saw their millennial populations drop by more than 6 percent.

A HAND UP

PROJECT WORTH REACHES OUT TO THOSE IN NEED

BY JEN CALHOUN

Project Worth Director Samantha Ferrell says they rely on the generosity of the community to help feed those in need in Menifee County.



Samantha Ferrell knows God has blessed her, and she wants to pass those blessings on through her volunteer work at Project Worth.

As director of the nonprofit food bank in Menifee County, Ferrell helps feed about 330 people each month. She also helps provide clothing, school supplies, coats, shoes and other necessities to the county's most vulnerable residents. The organization even sponsors a Christmas gift drive for children in need.

"I was raised here, and I love this place," she says. "I can't imagine knowing how many people go hungry every day and not doing anything about it. That is just wrong. I think people see commercials on TV and think it's just a problem in Africa or Haiti. But we see that hunger is a problem right in our backyard. It's our neighbors."

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

The late Gail Mills, known in the region for her compassion and her strong drive to help people in need, started Project Worth in 1990. "She worked diligently to get grants," Ferrell says. "She'd provide clothes and school supplies at a time when the schools didn't have any of those resources to help their kids in need."

Ferrell says food is only one of the ways Project Worth helps the community. It also helps provide clothing, coats, school supplies and more.



A year or so after Mills' death, Ferrell, a former Project Worth board member, stepped into the role of director at the urging of her mother, Patty Johnson. Johnson had served on the organization's board for many years and still volunteers on Thursdays by helping recipients get their groceries.

"Mom called and said, 'We need you to be director,'" Ferrell remembers. "She said, 'I'll help you, because if you don't do it, then hundreds of people won't get food.'"

It was an offer Ferrell could not refuse despite her busy schedule running two businesses and serving as a foster parent. She took the job seriously. When she started as director in September 2017, she went through the organization's bills to make sure it was running as frugally as possible. "We're all volunteers here," she says. "And we want to make sure every cent goes to helping the people who need it in our county."

From there, she evaluated the organization's programs and fundraisers to find ways to improve. She loved the annual

Thanksgiving fundraiser, which gathers community members for an early Thanksgiving dinner to raise money for the food pantry. A small portion of the money also funds an annual Christmas program.

But Ferrell wanted to expand the organization's reach into other parts of Menifee County, instead of focusing primarily on Means and Frenchburg. She's also trying to work directly with the school systems to make sure all children get the help they need.

Drug addiction and a lack of work in the county create many of the problems. "I think where we're going as a society is that so many grandparents are now raising their grandchildren," Ferrell says. "If you're a grandparent raising your grandchildren, it really wasn't your choice. We want to help those folks and the elderly throughout the county."

And while the organization continues to run smoothly, it operates on the generosity of the community and a whole lot of prayers, Ferrell says. "The bad news is that we probably can't service all the people who need us," she says. 📞



THE SPIRIT OF GIVING

Project Worth needs your help. The food bank and resource center assists about 125 families in Menifee County each month, which amounts to about 330 people. The selection process is based on need. You can help by volunteering or by donating cash or food. To send money, write a check to Project Worth, 72 Industrial Park Road, Means, Kentucky, 40346. The money will be used strictly for things that help those in need in Menifee County — food, utilities and clothing. You can drop off your nonperishable and canned food items and gently used clothing at the same address on Thursdays between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. The food pantry also maintains a fridge and a freezer for foods that need to remain cold. For more information, contact Project Worth between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. on Thursdays at 606-768-6384. You can also find them on Facebook at Project Worth Menifee.



Project Worth helps provide food for about 330 people a month.



The joy of COOKING SLOW

In the South, when the weather turns cold and the days are short, we bring our slow cookers out of hibernation to blanket ourselves in comfort food. “Nothing beats a slow-cooked pork butt or roast chicken with all the trimmings,” says Sandra Corbin.

She lives on a farm in Clarksville, Tennessee, and she started using a slow cooker when her children were young and still in school. Her first slow cooker, purchased in the 1970s, was harvest gold with a brown lining and glass top that didn’t seal very well. “It was round and only had two settings — high and low,” she says.

But with work on the farm and children’s after-school activities, she appreciated the freedom of not spending time

laboring over the stove. “A momma is always full time, and a farm momma even more so,” she says. “When my youngest daughter was 16, I worked full time commuting to Nashville five days a week while attending college at night. The Crock-Pot certainly came in handy during that time of my life, too.”

Her daughter, Melissa Corbin, a Nashville-based food consultant and freelance journalist, says she remembers coming home to her momma’s



Melissa Corbin learned slow cooker secrets from her mother, Sandra.

cooking. The house would be filled with the smells of delicious foods that had slow-cooked for hours.

“There were always aromas to be savored in her kitchen,” she says. “She encouraged me from a very early age to cook alongside her. She didn’t

care what mess I might make. It was more important to her that I learn kitchen basics that, to this day, I can remember her teaching me.”

Though Sandra Corbin made much use of her slow cooker when she had children in tow, she appreciates it all

SLOW COOKER CANDY

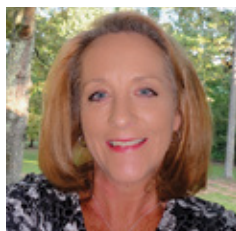
Sandra Corbin's slow cooker candy is adapted from several online sources, such as this favorite from country music star Trisha Yearwood.

- 2 pounds salted dry-roasted peanuts
- 4 ounces Baker's German's sweet chocolate
- 1 (12-ounce) package semisweet chocolate chips
- 2 1/2 pounds white almond bark

Put the peanuts in the bottom of a slow cooker. Over these, layer the sweet chocolate, chocolate chips and almond bark. Slow cook on low for about 3 hours. Do not stir the mixture while cooking until after the 3 hours is up. Then, stir with a wooden spoon until smooth. Drop the candy into cupcake pan liners and let cool.

the more as she's gotten older. "As I've aged, I prefer one-pot meals with simple ingredients, like a pot roast, cream of mushroom soup and a package of Lipton Onion Soup Mix with all the veggies simmered on low all day," she says.

As life changes, so do slow cookers. Many come with multiple bells and whistles. "Too many parts prone to breaking," Melissa Corbin says. "Rather, we have the same slow cookers in different colors from the original Rival Crock-Pot line. Mine is stainless and Momma's is red. She's drawn to bright colors."



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

POZOLE VERDE

A favorite go-to recipe from Melissa Corbin.

- 3 pounds pork butt, roughly cut into 1-inch pieces
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1-2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1/2 cup white wine
- 1 large onion, diced
- 3 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
- 1 poblano pepper, charred and chopped
- 1 jalapeno pepper, charred and diced
- 1 pound tomatillo, roughly cut into 1-inch pieces
- 2 (15.5-ounce) cans hominy, drained
- Sliced limes, chopped cilantro, freshly sliced jalapeno and chopped red onion for garnish

Generously season pork with salt and pepper. Sprinkle with cumin. Heat a large frying pan (preferably cast iron) with 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil, adding extra oil as needed. The pan should be screaming hot to sear the pork without cooking through. Make sure to work in small batches so you do not steam the pork. Look for caramelized edges to the pieces of pork as you brown. Transfer the pork directly into the slow cooker, and then reduce the heat and deglaze the skillet with 1/2 cup white wine and pour over pork. Add to the slow cooker the onion, garlic, peppers and finally tomatillos in the order listed. Cover and cook on high for 3 1/2 hours. Then, stir in the hominy for a final 30 minutes of cooking. Turn the slow cooker to its lowest setting to give the pozole time to rest before serving. Finish with lime, jalapeno, cilantro and red onion. Makes approximately 6 servings.

SLOW COOKER SOUP STARTER

This nutrient-rich soup starter recipe will be just what the doctor ordered in the cold months of winter.

- 3 yellow squash or zucchini, cubed
- 4 banana peppers or 1 bell pepper, chopped

- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 carrots, diced
- 4 cups chicken or vegetable broth
- 1 (16-ounce) can tomatoes or 3-4 fresh tomatoes roughly chopped
- 1/2 tablespoon onion powder
- 1/2 teaspoon thyme
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 2 bay leaves

Stir all ingredients into a 6-quart slow cooker. After cooking on high for 30 minutes, simmer on low for 4 hours. Remove bay leaves. The starter is ready for immediate canning. Otherwise, let cool thoroughly before freezing in freezer-safe bags.

Suggested additions:

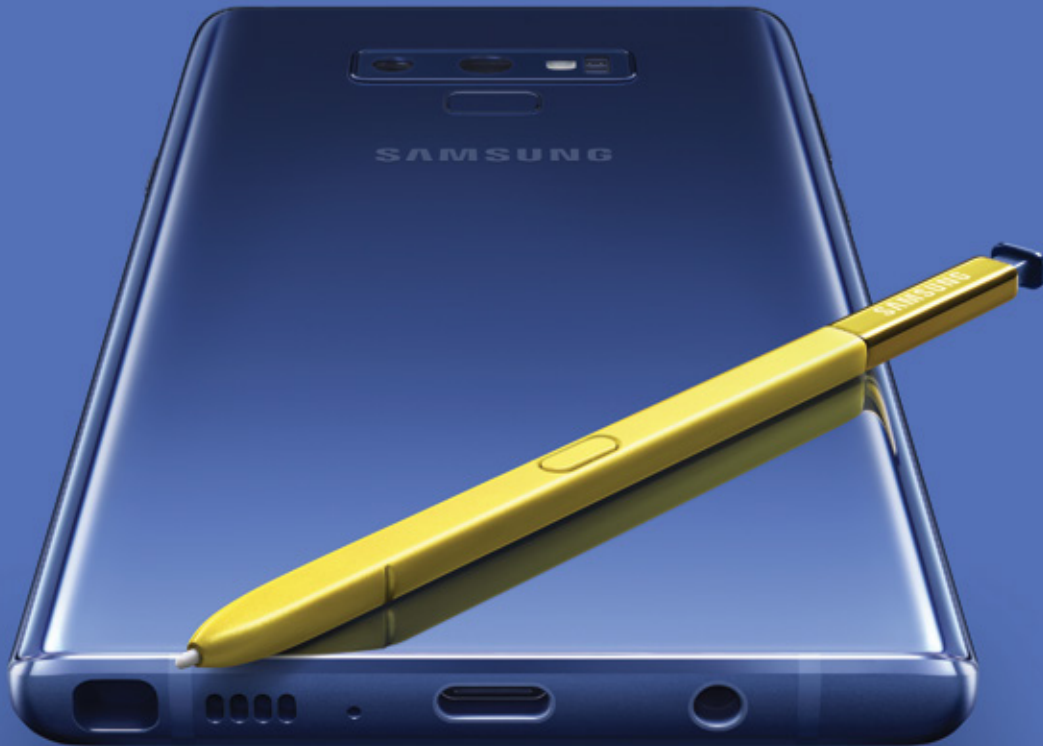
- ▶ Consider using this starter as a foundation for curry. Heat 1 1/2 cups of full-fat coconut milk with 1 tablespoon curry powder, 1/2 teaspoon powdered ginger, 1/8 teaspoon red pepper flakes, 1 stalk of lemongrass (optional), 1 diced potato and a protein of your choice, such as chicken or shrimp. Stir in 1-2 cups starter and simmer, uncovered, until desired thickness. Remove lemongrass before serving. Garnish with chopped cilantro or green onions. This soup is great on its own but is delicious over a bed of jasmine rice.
- ▶ Into a cast-iron skillet, add 1 cup shredded rotisserie chicken, 1/4 cup chopped kalamata olives and 1 teaspoon dried oregano to 1-2 cups of the soup starter. Spoon over grilled bread and top with fresh feta cheese for a Mediterranean twist on bruschetta.
- ▶ Minestrone is an Italian soup classic. Combine 1 cup cooked elbow macaroni, 1 (15-ounce) can of drained kidney beans, 2 cups chicken stock, 4 cups soup starter, 1 teaspoon dried oregano and 1 teaspoon dried basil. Simmer on low for 15-20 minutes. Garnish with freshly torn basil leaves and grated parmesan cheese. Drizzle a bit of extra virgin olive oil for the perfect finish. 📺



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