



Mountain Telephone

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2022

CONNECTION



Victory

Rescue group
wins online

SCAM ALERT

MAKING
SCIENCE FUN



By SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

An investment for the future

Expanded broadband access will lift rural communities

In order to thrive, all communities — especially those in rural America — require opportunities and the modern communications tools so vital for jobs, education, health and so much more.

Thanks to the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, the NTCA's nearly 850 rural, community-based broadband providers now have fresh help as they work to complete their essential mission. This historic investment will go a long way to connecting all Americans, even in areas of the country that are the hardest to reach for service providers.

Of course, the work now truly begins to deliver on the promise this law offers. The FCC must prioritize areas of the greatest need. Also, we will work with all key parties to support state leaders as an unprecedented amount of resources flow into their broadband initiatives.

Care is needed to vet those seeking funding, to ensure they can truly supply the infrastructure and services they promise. Throughout the effort, we must remember that we need to do more than simply build networks. Our commitment must also be to sustain these vital communications systems and to ensure the services offered over them are affordable and will meet customer demands well into the future.

We're confident NTCA members will continue to serve their neighbors by solidifying existing networks and expanding service. No matter where they live, all Americans should have the same opportunity to access vital communications services needed not only today, but also for years to come. 📡

Communication at the speed of light

Fiber optics make it possible

At the end of the 1970s, Corning Inc. developed a technology that would reshape communications — fiber optics. Today, it's a critical component in the networks making our hyperconnected world possible. Streaming entertainment, social media, video calls, telehealth, online education, work-from-home jobs and so much more depend on this technology.

▶▶ DID YOU KNOW?

- Each fiber strand is made up of a glass core thinner than a human hair.
- Light signals are transmitted through the glass, just as you might send a signal down the tunnel.
- To keep the light from simply passing through the glass when it changes direction, the core is surrounded by a cladding that reflects light back into the glass.
- The process is similar to mirrors in a tunnel, bouncing the signal from side to side until it reaches its endpoint.
- A single fiber cable — each fiber is much thinner than copper wire — can bundle hundreds, or even thousands, of fiber strands.
- While incredibly thin, fiber is not brittle. A single strand is three times stronger than steel and more durable than copper.
- The glass core of a fiber cable is so pure that if the ocean was made of the same glass, you could stand on the surface and clearly see the ocean floor miles below. 📡





Take a **STAND!**

Avoid back and neck pain while working from home

Over the past couple of years, working from home has gone from a perk — one that only a few employers offered — to the norm for many. The benefits for employees range from having your dog as a co-worker to adding pajama pants to the professional wardrobe. But working from home can also come with hazards.

Whether you're camped out at a kitchen table, sprawled across the couch or luxuriating in bed all day, odds are your home setup isn't as ergonomic as that of an office. This may not be a big deal when you're working from home for short periods. But when those workdays add up to weeks or even months, poor posture and sedentary behavior can create serious back and neck pain.

The good news is that with the right furniture and a little daily activity, it's easy to strike a healthy balance with your work-from-home routine.

► GET ON YOUR FEET

Most people tend to hunch forward while sitting, which can put a lot of pressure on your lower back. Standing and

looking at a monitor at eye level, on the other hand, puts little strain on your neck and back, while also burning more calories than sitting.

That said, it isn't comfortable to stand for hours at a time. That's why the UPLIFT Standing Desk V2 is a good option for any remote office. The design enhances durability and comfort, and easy height adjustment encourages users to keep moving without settling into any position for too long.

► LOOK FOR SUPPORT

When you do decide to take a seat, getting the proper support can make a big difference. If you don't have an office chair, try putting a small pillow behind your lower back to maintain an arched posture. This practice will help put your upper body weight on the chair instead of your spine.

If you're ready to invest in a new chair, the Steelcase Gesture has been Wirecutter's pick for more than five years. However, if you're looking to spend less, the HON Ignition 2.0 is a more affordable option that makes few sacrifices in comfort.

► STAY ACTIVE

It's a good idea to take breaks throughout the day to move around and get the blood circulating. While you're at it, try some simple exercises like backbends, hamstring stretches and planks that can help strengthen your core and provide additional support for your lower back.

If you're looking for a guided workout, the Seven Home Workout app offers a wide variety of seven-minute routines that you can squeeze into a busy day. Or explore the Yoga Studio app to unwind with yoga classes for all levels of experience and guided meditations that take as few as five minutes.

► MOVE AROUND

Time can get away from you during a busy workday, so it always helps to have a reminder when it's time to take a break. If you have an Apple Watch, you set the frequency of these reminders in the Activity app. For everyone else, apps like Stand Up! will schedule notifications throughout your workday to get up and move around. The Wakeout app will even suggest quick exercises for every room of the house. 🏠

Are you ready for the high-tech fast lane in 2022?

We're here to help you navigate the upcoming year

Happy new year! From everyone at Mountain Telephone, we hope 2022 is off to a great start. After a season of celebration, the new year gives us a welcome break from weeks of holiday hustle and bustle. It also is a good time to pause and contemplate what's ahead, whether that's an upcoming vacation, a new job or major milestones like graduations or weddings.



SHAYNE ISON
General Manager

All that potential can be a little daunting. When looking forward, I often find it helpful to look back and appreciate the road that brought us where we are today, whether it's my own personal journey or the rapid evolution of the communications industry.

Consider the internet. Fifty years ago, only researchers had the first inkling of what was to come. In 1972, "All in the Family" was the top-rated TV show in the country. Roberta Flack's "The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face" was at the top of the music charts. And researcher Ray Tomlinson had recently sent the world's first email to himself using ARPANET, a network of computers linked by phone lines to help Pentagon-funded research stations communicate.

Just a decade later, companies like Apple and Microsoft were already leading the personal computer revolution that put desktops in homes and offices. By 1992, people were receiving the first of many AOL software CDs. The squawk of computer modems soon filled homes as people used dial-up internet to connect to email and online message boards.

Nineteen years ago, the internet became even more of a social space with the launch of Friendster, a precursor to Facebook. Social networks wouldn't become fixtures on phones and mobile devices until the arrival of the iPhone in 2007 and the iPad three years later. Even then, the ability to bring medical expertise home with telehealth, take college-level classes from your couch or stream high-quality movies, music and TV shows — things we can take for granted today — would have seemed far-fetched.

In just five decades, we have seen online technology grow from computers that could only send a few characters of text into being the center of a deeply interconnected world. At Mountain Telephone, we're proud to be a part of that story, because we have seen firsthand how the service we provide benefits lives and connects communities.

So, as you look ahead to the many possibilities a new year brings, take a moment to consider how far we've come. From staying connected with distant friends on social media to planning your next big adventure, how many of your goals wouldn't even be possible without fast, reliable internet service?

And, just as importantly, what innovation will be the next to transform our lives? I don't expect the pace of innovation to slow down, which is why we'll be here to make sure the services, tools and connections you need are always up to speed.

Here's to a wonderful 2022 as we all keep our eyes on the road ahead. [📞](#)

The Mountain Telephone Connection is a bimonthly newsletter published by Mountain Rural Telephone Cooperative, © 2022. It is distributed without charge to all member/owners of the cooperative.



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 11,500 members.

Send address corrections to:

Mountain Rural Telephone Cooperative
P.O. Box 399 • 425 Main St., Suite A
West Liberty, KY 41472
Telephone: 606-743-3121

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jimmie Jones, 743 exchange
President

Katie Ison, 738 exchange
Vice President

Jodi Lawson, 768 exchange
Secretary

Susan Cable, 668 exchange
Treasurer

Jack Howard, 725 exchange
Director

Randy Halsey, 743 exchange
Director

Robert V. Bradley, 522 exchange
Director

Chris Dickerson, 738 exchange
Director

Mike Helton, 768 exchange
Director

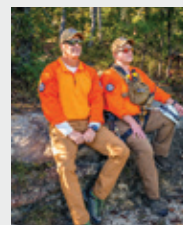
John Nickell, 662 exchange
Director

D. Joleen Frederick
Attorney

Produced for MRTC by:

WORDSOUTH
A CONTENT MARKETING COMPANY

On the Cover:



Wolfe County Search & Rescue's Chief John May and Drew Stevens celebrate after winning a Land Rover Defender.
See story Page 8.

*Free Money
for College*

Scholarship
applications now
being accepted

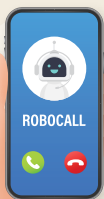


"The biggest mistake that students and their family make is they feel they wouldn't qualify — they opt out."

— James Lewis, president and co-founder of the National Society of High School Scholars

For more than 70 years, Mountain Telephone has made a commitment and a promise to our community and its future. With that in mind, we are excited to announce the following ways for students from our region to win money for postsecondary education. Our scholarships include the Mountain Telephone Morehead State University scholarships. We are also pleased to announce our participation in the Foundation for Rural Service scholarship. Apply at moreheadstate.edu/scholarships and frs.org/scholarships. For more information, call Lisa Fannin at 606-743-3121.

**HEY
TELEMARKETERS:**



DO NOT CALL!

**It's easy to add your number to the
Do Not Call Registry.**

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

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

LIFELINE SERVICE

LIFELINE IS A FEDERAL PROGRAM TO HELP LOW-INCOME AMERICANS PAY FOR PHONE OR BROADBAND SERVICE.

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
- VA Veterans Pension or Survivors Pension

Additionally, consumers at or below 135% 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.

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

Note: Your telephone provider 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.

Ancient treasures

Museums showcase geologic adventures



Story by ANNE BRALY

Entertaining kids while traveling isn't easy. But there are places just a smidge off the beaten track, outside the glitz and glamour of big cities, that will spark your child's interest. Here are some spots around the South that mix history and science in fun and interesting ways.

Falls of the Ohio State Park Clarksville, Indiana

Jump over the Kentucky state line into Indiana and hike across one of the world's most accessible Devonian-age fossil beds.

The 390-million-year-old fossil beds are among the largest exposed Devonian beds in the world. The park features a spectacular interpretive center, which features interactive, immersive exhibits.

While fossil collecting is prohibited on the beds and river bank, the park staff encourages visitors to explore and discover the many different fossils that can be found on the ancient sea bottom. And you can collect from rock piles

with fossils from the quarries behind the interpretive center, which is open Monday through Saturday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday 1 to 5 p.m. The park grounds are open 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. Fishing, hiking, fossil viewing, bird watching and picnicking are among the most popular activities. Admission is \$9 for ages 12 and up, \$7 for ages 5 to 11, and under 5 is free. Parking is \$2. For more information, visit fallsoftheohio.org.

Coon Creek Science Center Adamsville, Tennessee

Tennessee was once home to giant mosasaurs, sharks, crabs and clams when

the Gulf of Mexico spread its waters across the Volunteer State. Fossils of these early inhabitants reside at Coon Creek in rural McNairy County, one of the most important fossil sites in North America.

The Coon Creek Science Center is a great place for kids to visit and discover some amazing things. There are hands-on displays and activities, which allow them to learn through experiments in which they use their senses while having fun. There's a treasure trove of artifacts on display, so allow enough time to see everything. To learn more, visit memphismuseums.org.

Children learn about the dynamics of science in the Discovery Lab, one of several exhibits at the Hands On Children's Museum. At right, children can play while learning about science and discovery in the museum's Scheu Family Exhibit Hall & Art Studio in the General Shale Learning Center.



Folly Beach, South Carolina

Finding shark teeth on Folly Beach is a great way to learn about the giants that once roamed the seas — and the many that continue to do so — and Folly Beach is one of the best places to find their teeth and learn how to identify all the different species.

Wade into the water and start your hunt, sifting through the sand with special tools for shark teeth — maybe even one from a megalodon. For more information, or to book a tour, visit chsossiladventures.com.

Cook Museum of Natural Science Decatur, Alabama

Kids can learn all about the birds, the bees, the flowers and the trees and more by spending a day in Decatur at the Cook Museum of Natural Science, a museum that began with a small collection of insects from John Cook, the founder of Cook's Pest Control. It's now grown into a state-of-the-art museum with numerous exhibits including cave systems, the weather, outer space, rivers and streams, oceans and forests and more, including — yes — insects. Many exhibits include hands-on elements to keep kids busy and entertained. Log onto cookmuseum.org for more information and tickets.

Gray Fossil Site Gray, Tennessee

There was a time — some 5 million years ago — when small horses, mastodons, alligators, tapirs, rhinoceros, camels, saber-toothed tigers and other creatures roamed the hills and meadows

— sometimes peacefully, others not — around the South. And one of their favorite gathering places was a watering hole in what would become Gray, Tennessee, outside Johnson City.

Fast forward a few million years, and today, paleontologists are unearthing a massive amount of bones at the Gray Fossil Site. Experts say they could dig for another 100 years and still not find everything that lies beneath. Now, kids, parents, grandparents and others can come and see what paleontologists have found and learn so much more in the neighboring Hands On! Discovery Center.

“The fossil site itself offers an up-close experience where children of all ages can see an active dig site,” says Andy Marquette, the Discovery Center's president and CEO. “They can come within inches of giant fossils and learn about the process from finding a fossil to putting it in collections.”

Hands On! Discovery Center Johnson City, Tennessee

The center grew from a small children's museum in downtown Johnson City to what it is today: a beautiful, new building with numerous interactive exhibits like the “dig pit” in the Paleo Hall where visitors can dig for themselves and see what actual paleontologists experience. Life-size replica skeletons of many of the creatures that once called the Gray Fossil Site home now surround the hall.

In addition to the paleo exhibits, the Main Exhibit Hall is the place where kids can make their own air rockets and air cars

If you go

- » **Where:** Hands On! Discover Center and Gray Fossil Site, 1212 Suncrest Dr., Gray, Tenn.
- » **Hours:** 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday; 1-5 p.m. Sunday. Also, open on Mondays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. during March, June, and July only.
- » **Information:** visithandson.org or 423-434-4263.

and see how fast these creations can go or spend time at the Bernoulli table while exploring the science of how objects are able to fly. They'll be having so much fun they may not realize they're learning many of the same things about energy that they learn in school, says the center's Director of Operations Keith Maultbay. “It makes science fun,” he says.

The second floor of Hands On! Discovery Center is all about the dig. Large glass windows allow views of the paleontologists at work, piecing together the intricate bones of a massive mastodon discovered in the center's backyard several years ago. Also on view in the collection room are more bones and tusks.

Buy a ticket and take a paleo tour of the dig site. Another ticket gets you into the Tesla Theater to witness an electrifying, Guinness record-holding experience that honors the great inventor Nikola Tesla. Watch in amazement as the world's most powerful, musical, bi-polar Tesla coil turns 240 volts into 200,000 volts of pure electricity. 📺



AGAINST ALL ODDS

Wolfe County Search & Rescue wins big with social media campaign

Story by JEN CALHOUN

Photography by WILLIAM LEMASTER

When Chief John May and the Wolfe County Search & Rescue team decided to try to win a rescue vehicle in an online voting contest, they knew it would be a long shot.

Search and rescue teams from all over the country would be competing for the prize, a custom-outfitted Land Rover Defender. Many of those teams would come from places with giant metropolitan districts in their backyards — cities like Denver and Portland. After Land Rover USA selected the five finalists, it would go to an online vote. Winning a popularity contest with a small population could be tricky.

But Drew Stevens, the rescue team’s public information officer, felt confident. The Wolfe County Search & Rescue team had long cultivated a strong internet presence and had maintained one of the largest followings in the U.S. for a group of its kind. “I thought we had a good chance if we could just get to the finals,” Drew says. “We have a really great tool for that on social media.”

FINAL COUNTDOWN

To get there, however, they needed a compelling, three-minute video to propel them to the finals. After learning about the contest from a friend in South Carolina less than two weeks before the submission deadline, Drew asked his friend Mike Wilkinson with Wilkinson Visual Photography and Video in Lexington to help them out.

The video starts by showing the visual drama of the Red River Gorge and then moves to scenes of climbers, hikers and off-roaders enjoying the terrain. “The thousands of miles of sandstone cliffs draw over a million hikers and climbers per year,” Drew says in the film’s narration. “And the numerous four-wheel-drive roads serve as a magnet for the off-road and overland communities. But along with all this opportunity for adventure comes a great risk and a great need for a capable, dependable search and rescue team.”



Drew Stevens, Chief John May and the rest of the Wolfe County Search & Rescue team conduct an average of 60 wilderness rescues annually.



Left: The team's volunteers often provide their own gear.

Below: The team's truck, purchased with grants, carries equipment but can't negotiate some of the more treacherous mountain roads.

The film goes on to make a case for the Wolfe County Search & Rescue team's all-volunteer, 24/7 service, which covers over 400 square miles of territory and includes an average of 60 wilderness rescues per year — by far the most in the state. The team finds lost hikers, saves injured climbers and conducts high-angle rope rescues hundreds of feet off the ground. During the historic floods of 2021, its swift-water team members also helped save people all over the region who experienced entrapment due to swollen streams and rivers. And all these rescues happen despite a next-to-nothing budget.

THE OLD BLUE JEEP

Despite the need for Wolfe County Search & Rescue, the team is largely on its own when it comes to funding. They apply for applicable grants, hold fundraisers and accept private donations, Chief May says. But they receive little to no regular money from state or local government.

Last year, with the help of a USDA grant, they were able to replace a 2002 Ford truck with a newer box truck that

carries equipment. But the truck is too big to safely maneuver some of the one-lane roads and hairpin curves the team faces. And they are holding together their other vehicle, a 2003 Jeep Cherokee, basically, with duct tape, Chief May says.

THE POWER OF THE INTERNET

When the team reached the finals in the search and rescue division, they pushed their online presence even harder. They shared daily reminders to their social networks, along with short videos of people they had rescued. Drew says they were also able to get the attention of social media influencers in the overlanding community — people who use vehicles to explore rugged terrain.

Then, in October, they got the news: The long-shot team of hardworking volunteers won. Chief May says the total price of the Land Rover Defender hovers in the \$90,000 range, and that includes customization for the team's equipment. "We appreciate everyone voting for us online," he says. "Without them, we had zero chance. We will certainly put this thing to use and save lives." 📱



➤➤ **So that others might live**

Wolfe County Search & Rescue is made up completely of volunteers who risk their lives to rescue people from woods, cliffs and swift waters. The team is dependent on grants and private donations to save lives. It does not charge the people rescued, and they don't receive an annual budget from the counties and communities they serve, nor from the state of Kentucky.

To give, visit wcsart.com and click on the "Donate" button, or make checks payable to Wolfe County Search & Rescue Team and send to Wolfe County SART, P.O. Box 822, Campton, KY 41301. It is a 501(c)(3) organization.

Watch the video

Check out the video that won Wolfe County Search & Rescue a Land Rover Defender by visiting the group's Facebook page. You can also view other videos about the group and its work and watch the announcement of the award. To see all winners' videos, visit landroverusa.com.

Locator apps

Connected for safety and security

With the help of a locator app on a mobile phone, parents can be aware of just about anywhere their family members roam — assuming families have reviewed and accepted the app's policies.

While some might find this concept intrusive, these apps can be helpful for busy schedules or a comfort during troubling times, late nights or long trips. Here are a few of the top locator apps on the market and what they can do.

>> Life360


The premium version of Life360 can tell you where your family members' phones are at any given moment. Notifications

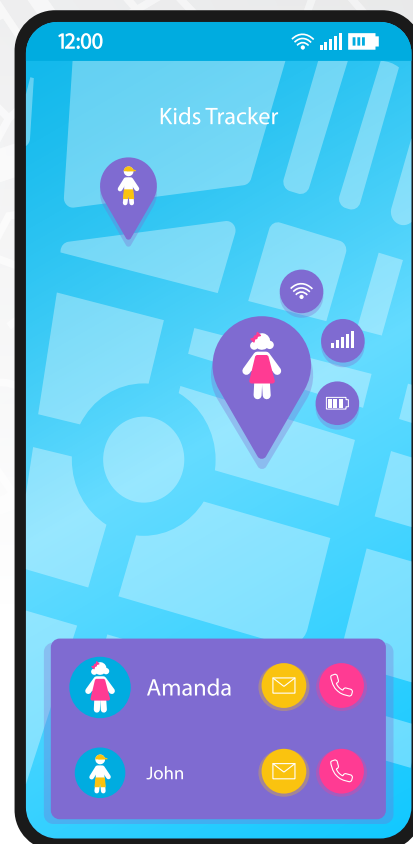
about events like a child arriving at school are easy to receive.

>> Glympse

The free Glympse app lets friends and loved ones know your travel status, so you never have to worry if you're running late. They'll know. Users can send a Glympse alert to anyone with a web-enabled device.

>> iSharing

Know where your friend or family member is at any moment. The iSharing app provides real-time alerts when someone leaves home, work or school. In-app messaging is just one of the features, some of which are only available in the premium version. 



Money wise

Financial education with digital tools

Fewer than half of U.S. states require students to complete personal finance education, although there have been recent efforts in many states to focus on this form of education.

There is, however, a wealth of online resources and apps to help parents teach children to safely navigate the financial seas. Here are a few of the sites and apps available to parents looking to teach their kids real-world money lessons:

CONSUMER FINANCIAL PROTECTION BUREAU

The role of the CFPB, which Congress established in 2010, is to hold financial institutions accountable for following federal financial laws and to protect and educate consumers.

The bureau's website, consumerfinance.gov, has a section dedicated to youth financial literacy and offers more than 200 educational activities designed for kids of all ages. The list of topics is extensive and includes entrepreneurship, budgeting, managing credit and preventing fraud and identity theft.


FAMZOO

FamZoo is a comprehensive finance app for families. It creates a virtual family bank with parents in the banker's seat. Through the app, parents can pay their children's allowances, track their spending and savings and even encourage charitable giving.

FamZoo isn't free — the cost ranges between \$2.50 and \$5.99 a month depending on which option you choose. One- and two-month free trials are available at famzoo.com.

GOHENRY

GoHenry, aimed at kids as young as 6 years old, provides parents with a prepaid debit card for their children and an app the whole family can use to keep track of spending, savings and progress toward financial goals.

GoHenry offers a one-month free trial, after which, the service charges a monthly fee of \$3.99 per child. For more information, visit gohenry.com. 

Which MUSIC STREAMING SERVICE is right for you?



It's never been easier to discover a new favorite band or find that hidden gem of a song you can't stop playing on repeat. A wealth of music streaming apps boast exhaustive libraries, classic hits and new buried treasures all at your fingertips. Whether you're looking for crystal clear audio, curated playlists or a soundtrack to keep up with your runs, there's something for everyone if you know where to look.

SPOTIFY

Spotify is synonymous with music streaming for a reason. Its interface is easy to navigate and always has new recommendations based on what you're already listening to. If you have friends on the service, you can share your listening activity and see what others are playing from Spotify's library of 70 million tracks. Audio quality, on the other hand, varies based on your account. Free users can stream at decent qualities if they're listening on standard headphones or a Bluetooth speaker. Premium users can stream at higher quality for \$10 a month, and Spotify has announced plans to roll out a hi-fi tier with lossless audio quality in the future.

APPLE MUSIC

Apple Music's social options are similar to what you'll find on Spotify, even if there are fewer curated options for discovering new favorites. But the real selling point is audio quality.

Audiophiles can enjoy lossless tracks at the base tier of \$10 a month with about 20 million tracks currently available at the highest quality. Apple says the rest of its 70 million-plus track library will be available in that format by the end of the year.

TIDAL

TIDAL used to have the crown when it came to lossless audio, but at \$20 a month it's now a tough sell against other more affordable options. If you can't wait for Apple Music to update its library, TIDAL's catalog is already fully available in lossless format, with a few even streaming at "Master" quality up to 9,216 Kbps. And while TIDAL may have made its name with major hip-hop artists, the genres available now are about as diverse as other top streaming apps.

AMAZON MUSIC

The biggest benefit of Amazon's music service is that it's already available to anyone with a Prime subscription. But that may not get you as much as you think. Despite having access to more than 75 million tracks, ad-free tier users may notice certain albums and artists are off-limits without a paid subscription. At least that buys you access to lossless audio, but if you're looking for easy access and discoverability, there are probably better options. 📱

WHAT IS LOSSLESS AUDIO?

Most music streaming services compress audio files to save space. That means some data has to be discarded, and audio quality suffers. Lossless audio still compresses these files but retains all the details of the original audio recording. You can hear the difference most often in frequencies like those from the crash of a cymbal in a rock song or the bass of a hip-hop track.

Higher-quality audio tracks are also much larger than lossy audio formats. So make sure you have the necessary data coverage if you're streaming on the go and adequate bandwidth if you're listening over the internet at home.

BY HOOK OR BY CROOK

Scammers continue to thrive online and on the phone



Story by JEN CALHOUN

Alan Graham knows a thing or two about phone scams. He's wise to telemarketers, and he avoids answering phone calls from unfamiliar numbers. But, like many people, when he saw a local number flash on his caller ID, he answered it.

"It had a name on it, too," says Alan, a Wellington resident who pastors at Church of God New World Ministries in Paintsville. "I thought it was someone from around here."

The caller on the other end of the line claimed he was with Medicare, and that Alan had a problem. "He told me he needed to verify a few things on my Medicare card," Alan says.

Alan pulled out his card for reference, but one of the man's questions stopped him in his tracks. "He asked me to confirm the spelling of my middle name," he says. "I don't have a middle name."

Over the next few minutes, Alan asked to speak with one

supervisor, then another. Each time, the men on the other end of the line grew more impatient and more demanding. They told Alan he would have to pay \$55 for a new card if he didn't comply with their requests for information. "When I told them I didn't have that information right now, they got frustrated with me," Alan says. "They told me they knew the card was in front of me."

At that point, Alan hung up and called the local health department. He didn't know how to report Medicare fraud, which is what he suspected this situation was. The health department gave him a phone number. Within the hour, Alan had canceled his Medicare card and ordered a new one.

A customer representative at Medicare told Alan that the organization almost never calls members, and important information and requests are usually sent by mail. This scam was a plan to use Alan's insurance information to bill Medicare for services he never received. "They'd rack up a bunch of charges and get paid for a while before anyone even noticed," Alan says.

**SCAM
ALERT**

SCAMS GALORE

The number of people scamming and getting scammed has increased in recent years, according to fraud reports from the Federal Trade Commission. In 2020, reports of scams nearly doubled over the previous year. The FTC chalks this up to new and improved ways of getting personal information, as well as increasingly sophisticated technology.

While many scammers seem to target people over 50, they're just as likely to go for younger people. No one should think they're immune based on education level, age or income, because it could harbor a false sense of security, the FTC warns.

INFO GRAB

How the scammers got Alan's name and phone number in this instance isn't clear. But scammers are good sleuths. Anyone can legally pull information from public records on the federal, state and local levels, including census data and property information.

Scammers also gather additional information from social media sites like Facebook, or they'll buy lists from companies that sell targeted marketing data. Anyone who has entered a contest, mailed in warranty cards, filled out a survey, or offered up names, phone numbers and addresses for other reasons could become a target. Unshredded mail and obituary notices are other ways they collect personal information.

Because of these factors, it's important that people narrow the scope of who can view their social media posts, while also being wary of what they're posting. Never post personal information or real-time updates. In addition, make sure the information you're posting can't reveal passwords.

SPOOFING NUMBERS

When caller ID lists a scammer as local, it's likely a spoofed number. Spammers employ spoofing services in an effort to get more people to take their calls. Some work like a prepaid calling card. A scammer will pay for a PIN number to place their calls. After dialing a number, they enter their pin, then enter their target's phone number and the number they want to appear on the caller ID.

SCAM SCHOOL

Alan says he was almost fooled, but the experience has sharpened him. "Don't give anybody your personal information over the phone," he says. "And if you get a call from a scammer, make sure to report it. I called as soon as I hung up." 📞



POPULAR TRICKS



Impersonation

Scammers will say anything and do anything. Common scams use the Social Security Administration, the IRS, Medicare or an official-sounding utility or charity company.



Scare tactics and free stuff

Scammers like to say there's a problem so they can gain access to your information. Other times, they'll say you've won a prize, like a laptop, an iPad or money.

DON'T GET SCAMMED



Never give out personal information over the phone.



Don't click on links in emails or text messages, unless you are positive of where it came from.

AARP offers tips and tricks to avoid becoming a target, including lists of scams and a podcast that discusses the latest fraud efforts: "The Perfect Scam Podcast." The Federal Trade Commission website offers a fraud and scam map to view popular scams by location. To report scams to the FTC, visit ftc.gov and click on "Report Fraud."



ROUX the day

It's a given that pretty much everything is improved by the addition of a sauce. That's why we put mustard on hot dogs and ketchup on fries. Good sauces cling to food, which means they need body.

There are many ways to achieve this, including making a roux, the foundation for wonderful sauces for meats, fish, poultry and vegetables. But it's also the beginning of many pots of gumbo, and roux is the underpinning for unbelievably creamy Creole dishes.

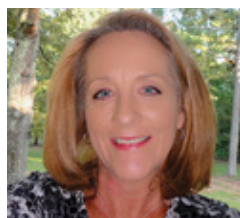
Roux is nothing more than equal parts of butter or oil and flour. The addition of warm liquid, whether water, stock or milk, works to swell the small granules of flour, which trap the liquid to thicken the roux. Careful though — one of the most important things to remember when making a roux is to avoid adding the flour to a hot liquid. The result is something every cook dreads: a lumpy sauce.

In French cuisine, roux is cooked to one of three stages: white, blond or brown. In New Orleans, where roux is the beginning

of so many dishes, roux becomes a chameleon. It can change from brown to red and to black. The longer the roux cooks, the darker and more intensely flavored it gets.

Cooking the roux has two main benefits. First, it gets rid of the raw, starchy flavor of the flour. Second — and this is with darker roux — it adds color to a dish. White and blond roux are used for light-colored sauces, such as cheese sauce and bechamel. Brown roux is used for darker sauces, such as stews and gravies.

Here is a recipe for basic roux. Add milk and shredded cheese for a lovely cheese sauce for vegetables. Or, use roux as the foundation for gumbo or mac and cheese. It's a versatile concoction that's an important step in making so many good foods.



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



BASIC ROUX

- 1 stick (8 tablespoons)
unsalted butter or 1/2 cup
peanut oil
- 1/2 cup flour

In a large pot or skillet, warm the butter or peanut oil to medium heat and then stir in the flour. Cook for 10 minutes, constantly stirring, to make a lightly browned roux, or continue stirring and cooking for up to 30 minutes for a dark roux. The roux will darken as you stir, from very light brown to copper or peanut butter brown, then to light chocolate brown, then dark chocolate brown and then very, very dark brown.



SEAFOOD GUMBO

- 1 recipe basic roux (dark brown)

Vegetables:

- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 1 cup chopped green onions
- 1 green bell pepper, chopped

Tomato sauce:

- 6 cups water
- 1 (8-ounce) can tomato sauce
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 teaspoons salt, or to taste
- 1 teaspoon hot pepper sauce, or to taste
- 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme

Seafood and okra:

- 1 pound fresh or frozen chopped okra
- 1 pound white fish such as catfish, cut into 2-inch pieces
- 1 1/2 pounds peeled and deveined shrimp

Final seasonings:

- 1 tablespoon gumbo file powder, or to taste
- 1/2 teaspoon salt, or to taste

In a large pot, make a basic roux, allowing it to cook to a dark brown stage.

In a separate skillet, melt the tablespoon of butter over medium heat. Add and stir the celery, green onions and bell pepper, cooking until tender, about 10 minutes. Add the cooked vegetables to the pot with the roux.

Stir the water, tomato sauce, Worcestershire sauce, garlic, salt, hot pepper sauce and thyme into the vegetable mixture. Bring the mixture to a gentle boil, reduce heat to medium low and simmer for 1 hour.

Stir okra into the vegetable mixture and cook it until tender, about 15 minutes. Add the fish, stir gently, and cook it until the flesh is easily flaked with a fork, about 5 minutes. Gently stir shrimp into the mixture and cook until the shrimp are bright pink, about 3 minutes. Season with the file powder and more salt; stir. Makes about 8 servings.



©Mark Gilliland

THREE-CHEESE MAC AND CHEESE With Bechamel Sauce

- 1/3 cup butter
- 1 shallot, finely chopped
- 3 cloves garlic minced
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 tablespoon cornstarch
- 2+ cups whole milk
- 1 cup heavy whipping cream
- 1/4 teaspoon white pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1/8 teaspoon dry mustard, preferably Colman's
- 8 ounces Gruyere cheese, shredded
- 6 ounces sharp white cheddar cheese, shredded
- 2 ounces Monterey Jack cheese, shredded
- 1/2 tablespoon salt
- 2 pounds macaroni, cooked

Melt the butter and saute the shallot, then whisk in the flour and cornstarch to a thick paste. This is your roux. Cook the roux on medium-low heat until it is light brown. Add the milk and cream and cook it, stirring, until the sauce comes to a simmer. Remove from heat and keep stirring about 4 minutes. The sauce will thicken as it cools. This is your bechamel sauce.

To the sauce, add and stir in the white pepper, cayenne pepper and dry mustard. Test the temperature with your finger. If it's too hot to touch, let it cool longer. If it's just uncomfortably warm, it's the perfect time to add the cheeses in stages, stirring constantly. Add extra milk if it's too thick. Taste the sauce, and add salt if it's needed. Pour the sauce over the cooked and drained pasta and stir. Serve immediately. Makes 12-14 servings. 🍴





Mountain Telephone

P.O. Box 399 • 425 Main St.
West Liberty, KY 41472

PRESORT STD
US POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT #6
RAINSVILLE, AL



SAMSUNG
Galaxy Z Flip3 5G

Appalachian
WIRELESS
An **East Kentucky Network** Company

appalachianwireless.com 1-800-438-2355