



# CONNECTION



## RESOURCEFUL RECYCLING

Wrigley Elementary  
steps up for the  
environment

## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHTS

Meet two exceptional  
Mountain team members

## DINNER TO YOUR DOOR

Meal delivery kits make  
evenings tastier



BY SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO  
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

## Telemedicine is key to rural health

**B**roadband internet access is making a real difference in the lives of people across rural America. I see it whenever I travel to the states where telecommunications companies like this one are building advanced networks to reach those in hard-to-serve regions.

Broadband supports efforts that are vital to a community's well-being, such as economic development, education and small-business growth. But broadband's greatest impact is perhaps seen in the delivery of health care.

Robust and sustainable broadband infrastructure is necessary for expanding access to health care in rural America. NTCA has been looking into telehealth applications for a number of years. We have hosted events on our own. We have worked with health care groups to learn about their challenges and to introduce them to our member telcos' capabilities. We have assisted our members in launching pilot projects of their own.

Telemedicine in rural America is truly a win-win proposition. Access to advanced services in a local community brings greater health care options to its residents. As a bonus, telemedicine also makes it easier to attract high-skilled labor, industry and economic development. NTCA is passionate about the role that our member telcos play in telemedicine — and I think we have only scratched the surface of possibilities.

Your local telecommunications provider, like hundreds of similar companies across rural America, is building the advanced broadband network that makes telemedicine possible. [📧](#)

# Money from home

## Using the internet to start cottage industries

**E**ver been told you can sell those knit caps or great jewelry pieces you've made but don't want to invest the money it takes for a brick-and-mortar location? Look to the internet.

More and more people are finding ways to earn a living by building online businesses from their homes. According to Forbes, more than 52 percent of all small businesses in the U.S. are home-based, and most rely on the internet. These jobs can offer flexibility, independence and a way to skirt the traditional 9-to-5.

As more Americans board the microbusiness train, the economy is taking notice. While small, these microbusinesses employ 55 million people in the U.S. They also contribute more than \$1 trillion in earnings to the U.S. economy, according to Etsy, a global online marketplace for handcrafted and vintage pieces.

Many of these entrepreneurs are young, female and live in rural areas, too. Etsy recently polled its network of 1.7 million sellers around the world, and the results are eye-opening. Check out a few of these statistics from the 2017 Etsy Seller Census:



# STUDY: Social media use is growing

## But so are privacy concerns

BY JEN CALHOUN

About seven out of every 10 American adults use some kind of social media, but it doesn't mean they don't have worries about it.

A recent Pew Research Center study found that more Americans than ever use Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other social media platforms as part of their daily lives. They keep in touch with friends and family. They participate in civic and political activities. They even use social media for work or to share health and science research.

But the study found that as the number of likes and shares grows, so do concerns about privacy.

### PRIVACY ANXIETY

Last year, only 9 percent of social media users were "very confident" that social media companies would protect their data, Pew research found. In fact, about half of the users polled "were not at all or not too confident their data was in safe hands."

And while many users said they wanted to do more to

protect their privacy, nearly two-thirds worried that current laws weren't good enough to do the job. In addition, nearly 65 percent said they support more regulation of advertisers.

It's not just privacy that worries them either. Pew research found that only 5 percent of users trust all of the information that comes to them on social media. They also don't like the harassment, political bickering, disrespect and incivility that can come with a day in the life of Twitter or Facebook.

### HARD HABIT TO BREAK

But if social media is so troublesome, why are people sticking with it?

Maybe it's because they feel like they have to, Pew experts suggest. Let's face it; social media is an easy and convenient way to stay connected to our friends, families and the organizations we love. As a



result, some users find it hard to stop. Social media is part of their everyday lives.

### NEW RULES

However, some privacy advocates say change is coming. One example is the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation, which was adopted in April 2016 and went into effect in May of this year.

The regulation offers data protection and privacy for all those in the European Union, but it could also have a positive effect on U.S. social media users. Pew experts say the GDPR "will give users — even Americans — greater protection about what data tech firms can collect, the data that can be used and how consumers can be given more opportunities to see what is happening with their information." 🗨️

### Social media use has grown dramatically

Percent of adults who say they use social media sites, by age

#### 18-29 year olds

56% → 88%  
2008 2018

#### 30-49 year olds

18% → 78%  
2008 2018

#### 50-64 year olds

6% → 64%  
2008 2018

#### 65+ year olds

2% → 37%  
2008 2018

SOURCE: PEW RESEARCH CENTER

# Are you well-connected?

Stop and count with me for a moment. How many internet-connected devices do you have in your home?



**SHAYNE ISON**  
General Manager

For many of us, smartphones and computers are the first obvious devices that come to mind, but what other devices are there? How about tablets? Any smart TVs or streaming boxes like Roku or Amazon Fire TV? If you have children at home, what about their game systems, computers and other devices? Maybe you've gotten into the smart home technology and have some of the bulbs, security cameras or outlets.

When you think about all of the things we use regularly that depend on the internet, the answer to my question can grow quickly.

In fact, depending on which source you use, most North American households have between five and 10 connected devices. Some experts believe that number will grow to as many as 50 devices in less than five years!

Whatever your number of connected devices happens to be, know this: There is no better network to handle a family using multiple connected devices than the type of fiber optic network Mountain Telephone has built for our members. We have invested millions of dollars in our region to build a world-class fiber optic network. But in order to get the most out of our network, we need to make sure you have the right size connection for your household.

While there are many benefits to a fiber connection — including reliability and increased home value — I'd like to discuss the capacity your fiber connection will afford your family.

While we often talk about an internet connection's speed, we really mean the speed at which things download. The bits and bytes are moving at the same speed no matter your connection, but it's the capacity (how many bits and bytes can pass through each second) that matters.

I often tell people to think of internet service like plumbing. Each file you are trying to download is like a bathtub filling up. The bits of data that make up the file flow through your router just like water into a tub. Filling a tub from the spout is much faster than filling it with a sink sprayer because the spout has more capacity to let more water through. Similarly, a smaller connection is going to limit the amount of data that can pass through when compared to a bigger connection.

To follow that analogy, it's also important to consider how many faucets you're going to be using at the same time. If you open all of your faucets, the water pressure is going to dip significantly, and it's going to take a lot longer to fill each tub or sink. For broadband, the same thing happens with multiple devices on a network. If you have three tablets, a game system, two computers, four phones and a streaming TV using your connection, each one is going to be slower — unless you have a high-capacity connection via fiber optics.

As we continue to improve our network, we're looking down the road at the future. We see families in our area continuing to add the latest technology in their homes, which drives up the demand for broadband capacity. The fiber network we've built is the only way we can be sure we have the capacity to serve you today and in the future. [🔗](#)

The Mountain Telephone

## CONNECTION

JULY/AUGUST 2018

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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:



Led by the school's Lighthouse Team, children at Wrigley Elementary collected 449 phone books during a recent recycling project. See story Page 12.

Are you suffering  
from buffering?

Try one  
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- ▶ An existing internet customer?  
Try a faster speed for one  
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Get your first month of  
internet FREE\*\*

Call us today to get the  
speed you need

\*No additional agreement required  
\*\*New six-month agreement required



Mountain Telephone

606-743-3121 | MRTC.com



## FCC cracking down on robocalls

Over the past year, Kentucky residents have started noticing an influx of spoofed robocalls coming from numbers looking eerily similar to their own. These calls are a national phenomenon called neighbor spoofing, where a caller uses a fake caller ID, mimicking the first six digits of the recipient's phone number. And according to the Federal Communications Commission, this is illegal.

The Truth in Caller ID Act prohibits callers from deliberately falsifying caller ID information with the intent to harm or defraud consumers or unlawfully obtain something of value.

While local telecoms do not have the resources to shut down the illegal activity, the FCC is doing its part to protect consumers. In what could be considered a landmark case, the commission imposed a fine of \$120 million against Adrian Abramovich for spoofing 96 million robocalls with the help of companies he controlled. The significant fine is the largest forfeiture ever imposed by the agency.

The Florida-based robocalling operation sold timeshares and other travel packages, indicating that they were from well-known travel or hospitality companies such as Marriott, Expedia, Hilton and TripAdvisor.

According to the FCC report, consumers were prompted to press 1 to hear about "exclusive vacation deals." Once someone complied, they were then transferred to foreign call centers where operators attempted to sell vacation packages. The packages often involved timeshares in locations unrelated to the originally named travel or hospitality company.

These and other complaints to the commission about neighbor spoofing more than doubled in the first few months of 2018.

## Mountain Telephone announces a new call center Your calls will soon be answered by local employees

When you have questions or need help with your Mountain Telephone service, speaking directly with a friendly, knowledgeable and local representative is the best option. Mountain Telephone is proud to announce that a new in-house call center will open Oct. 1. All calls to 606-743-1100 received between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. will be answered by the local office to better serve you. Check out the next issue of the Mountain Connection to read more about this new department.



Mountain Telephone offices will be closed on  
Wednesday, July 4, in observance of Independence  
Day. Have a safe and happy holiday!



*A Republic P-47 Thunderbolt from the Tennessee Museum of Aviation.*

Photo courtesy of Tennessee Museum of Aviation.

## ✈️ Flying High ✈️

**F**light museums around the South take us into the sky, celebrating the history, as well as the future, of flight. Some exhibits immerse us in active simulations, and others challenge us with interactive designs. Still others tell impactful stories. All share a common mission, though, offering insights into how American history is inextricably linked to the early pioneers of our skies. Here are some of the museums that soar high in offering education and fun for children and adults.

### Tennessee Museum of Aviation

135 Air Museum Way • Sevierville, Tennessee

Children will love being the pilot as they climb in the cockpit and get their hands on the controls of an authentic A-4 Skyhawk from the Vietnam War era. Aviation enthusiasts will appreciate the massive, 35,000-square-foot hangar with all of its aircraft engines, cockpits, military vehicles and restored vintage Warbirds. These aircraft make up the foundation of the Tennessee Museum of Aviation and were flown on missions during World War II.

"They are most impressive, and a number of the Warbirds are still airworthy," says Rhonda Melton, operations coordinator.

Among the aircraft within the museum are two Republic P-47 Thunderbolts — there are less than a dozen of these World War II fighters remaining in the world. Another favorite exhibit is the Douglas A-1H Skyraider, complete with battle scars received from its service during Vietnam.

A new "Faith and Courage" exhibit pays tribute to U.S. Military Chaplains from World War II through the present. And a 52-foot display traces milestones in the history of pre-Wright Brothers aviation,

including timelines of military aviation. The wall also features the Volunteer State's contributions to flight, making the Tennessee Museum of Aviation Tennessee's official repository and archive of aviation history.

- **Admission:** Adults: \$12.75. Seniors: \$9.75. Ages 6-12: \$6.75. Children under 6: free.
- **Information:** 866-286-8738 or online at [www.tnairmuseum.com](http://www.tnairmuseum.com).

## Southern Museum of Flight

4343 73rd St. N • Birmingham, Alabama

A visit to the Southern Museum of Flight is a walk through time. Learn about a pilot in 1953 who defected from North Korea to an air base in South Korea. Or see a 1925 crop duster flown by Huff-Daland, the company that would become Delta Airlines.

The level of detail in the exhibits, combined with their scale — the Korean defection exhibit spans 150 feet — provides visitors with an immersive experience, says museum curator Wayne Novy. And there are a number of activities for children, including sitting in aircraft cockpits, operating the controls of a full-size airplane, and building and flying their own balsa glider.

- **Admission:** Adults: \$7. Seniors and students: \$6. Kids under 3 and active military and their families: free.
- **Information:** 205-833-8226 or online at [www.southernmuseumofflight.org](http://www.southernmuseumofflight.org).

## The Aviation Museum of Kentucky

4029 Airport Road at Blue Grass Airport  
Lexington, Kentucky

The Bluegrass State is well-grounded in aviation history. Matthew Sellers, of Carter County, Kentucky, invented retractable landing gear, and Solomon Van Meter, of Lexington, is responsible for the creation of lifesaving pack parachutes. These men and others are honored for their contributions and service in the Aviation Museum of Kentucky's Hall of Fame, one element of the 23-year-old museum.

History buffs will enjoy seeing restored barnstormers and vintage airliners, such as a Lockheed L-12 that was used as a



Photo courtesy of Lone Star Flight Museum.

spy plane before World War II broke out. But the museum also looks toward the future of aviation with exhibits such as "Women in Aviation," which, while telling of women in the past, encourages young women of today to pursue their aviation dreams as pilots and aerospace engineers. Kids will enjoy getting in the cockpit of a Cessna 150 and turning the control wheel to learn about the relationships between control surfaces on the aircraft, such as rudders and stabilizers.

- **Admission:** Adults: \$8. Veterans and seniors: \$6. Ages 6-16: \$5. Members and children under 6: free.
- **Information:** 859-231-1219 or online at [www.aviationky.org](http://www.aviationky.org).

## Carolinas Aviation Museum

4672 First Flight Drive at Charlotte  
Douglas International Airport  
Charlotte, North Carolina

Flight had its beginnings in the Carolinas, and for the past 25 years, the Carolinas Aviation Museum has told its story. Exhibits include the Wright Brothers on the coast of North Carolina at Kitty Hawk and the Airbus A320 that became Flight 1549, the "Miracle on the Hudson." This is the museum's signature exhibit, and it leaves people in awe.

"Many visitors don't realize that we have the actual Flight 1549. It's not a replica," says museum spokeswoman Jessica Mallicote. "Visitors can see the actual aircraft, hear passenger stories and experience the event in a powerful way."

Visitors will come face to face with an F-14 Super Tomcat, a DC-3 commercial airliner and a CH-46 helicopter transport.

They can also create a new adventure when they get behind the controls of a Cessna 150 to get a feel for what it's like to pilot an actual aircraft.

The museum is located in North Carolina, but it's an easy road trip from South Carolina.

- **Admission:** Adults: \$12. Seniors 60-plus: \$10. Veterans: \$9. Ages 4-18, college students with ID and active military: \$8. Kids 3 and under: free.
- **Information:** 704-997-3770 or online at [www.carolinasaviation.org](http://www.carolinasaviation.org).

## Lone Star Flight Museum

11551 Aerospace Ave. at Ellington  
Airport • Houston, Texas

History and the future of aviation meet at the new Lone Star Flight Museum, opened less than a year ago at Houston's Ellington Airport. This is one museum that takes you into the skies — literally. With a battery of more than 20 restored planes, you can buy a ticket and take a ride. Or, stay grounded and tour the two 30,000-square-foot hangars housing historic aircraft, such as a Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress or a North American B-25 Mitchell.

The Aviation Learning Center, the second of its kind in the U.S., immerses visitors in the energy and excitement of flight through a hands-on learning adventure. Designed for students in grades 5-12, the center uses the universal wonder of flight to engage kids in the exploration of science, technology, engineering and math. Students have come from around the world to get a taste of aviation training. There are three replica cockpits, two hang glider simulators and a theater featuring a film about the principles and history of flight development.

- **Admission:** Adults 18-64: \$20. Ages 12-17: \$18. Seniors 65-plus and kids 4-11: \$16. Members and children 3 and under: free. Additional discounts given for advance online purchases.
- **Information:** 346-708-2517 or online at [www.lonestarflight.org](http://www.lonestarflight.org)



# Mountain Rural Telephone Cooperative

## BALANCE SHEET

December 31, 2017

### ASSETS

Current Assets .....	\$	8,927,299
<b>Other Assets</b>		
Investments in Affiliated Companies..... (including Cellular)		40,659,908
Miscellaneous Physical Property .....		2,796,230
Other Investments.....		30,391,457
Total Current/Other Assets .....		82,774,894
Telecommunications Plant.....		126,518,018
Less Accumulated Depreciation .....		(72,999,240)
Net Telecommunications Plant.....		53,518,778
<b>TOTAL ASSETS .....</b>		<b>\$ 136,293,672</b>

### LIABILITIES and MEMBERS' EQUITIES

Current Liabilities.....	\$	5,576,637
Long-Term Debt to U.S. Government .....		17,813,506
Long-Term Liability .....		(4,117,798)
Members' Equities:		
Membership.....		129,332
Patronage Capital.....		115,568,193
Retired Capital Credit Gain .....		1,323,802
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES and MEMBERS' EQUITIES .....</b>		<b>\$ 136,293,672</b>





Lineman Teddy Creech spends his days installing internet in homes or burying fiber optic network lines.

## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT: **Teddy Creech**

### Lineman farms cattle and auctions in his spare time

BY JEN CALHOUN

**T**ime is a luxury for Teddy Creech. During the week, he works as a lineman on the construction crew at Mountain Rural Telephone Cooperative. But after that, it gets complicated.

At 27, Creech keeps busy. His full-time job could involve burying underground fiber optic networks one day and installing internet at a home the next. When he isn't tending to his Mountain Telephone duties, he's seeing to his auctioneering business, raising about 30 head of cattle and maintaining three rental homes.

"I don't want to work all my life," Creech says with a laugh. "I guess I'm just hoping to retire at some point and not worry about it one of these days."

#### GOING, GOING

Creech, who co-owns Phipps and Creech Real Estate and Auctions with Mary "Liz" Phipps, started auctioneering in his early 20s after taking a two-week course in the skill at A-Pass-Weikel Institute in Lexington.

He'd been interested in the vocation as a child, but it wasn't until he was older that he had the guts to give it a go, he says.

"As a kid, I went to auctions a lot," he says. "Farming was our main income, and

we didn't buy new equipment, so we'd go to auctions to get deals. I've been around auctions for as long as I can remember."

He had never tried the fast-voiced trade on his own, but the two-week course in Lexington gave Creech the tools to get started. "They teach you the basics, like counting, and the breathing techniques and a little bit of the chanting," he says. "The rest is kind of on you to learn it and practice it."

#### BIDDING ON SUCCESS

Around that time, he also started working as an apprentice at what was then Phipps Real Estate and Auctions under the late Mike Phipps. But Creech's apprenticeship was cut short. "Not long after I started, Mike Phipps passed away from cancer," he says. "I kind of got shoved into the head auctioneer job. I guess I learned the tough way."

Creech eventually joined as a co-owner of the company, which is now named Phipps and Creech Real Estate and Auctions. It's a job he enjoys because it allows him to give back to the community he loves.

"Auctioneering is not work at all," he says. "I volunteer myself a lot. I do auctions for people who lost their house to a fire or lost a family member. I donate my time on weekends for benefits."

During the week, he takes pride in his work at Mountain Telephone. "It's just an all-around good company," he says. "In my opinion, it's the best place in this area to work. They're just good people — good, down-to-earth people." 📺



Teddy Creech auctions in his spare time, often donating his time for charitable causes.

# Good & EASY EATS!

Subscription services provide first-class meals and convenience

## BLUE APRON

Blue Apron delivers everything you need for a gourmet-quality meal you can cook at home. The step-by-step recipes are paired with unique ingredients to help you feed your family for a fraction of restaurant prices without sacrificing taste. Menu items include spicy smoked trout sandwiches, Caribbean chickpea curry and Mexican-spiced pork.

As low as  
\$9.99  
per serving!



## HELLO FRESH

Much like Blue Apron, Hello Fresh is a competitor with a twist. While you'll still find high-end meals, Hello Fresh specializes in simple home cooking. But the meals don't skimp on flavor. The plates include tasty recipes for winner winner chicken orzo dinner, pineapple poblano beef tacos and slow cooker smoky beef chili.

As low as  
\$8.74  
per serving!



## FRESHLY

If you're tired of cooking on the stove but still want to put a satisfying meal on the table every night, Freshly is the perfect option. Packed with protein, Freshly meals can be cooked in the microwave. The natural ingredients are also gluten free. The options don't disappoint; each chef-prepared meal is ready in under three minutes. You'll find Sicilian-style chicken parmesan, homestyle meatloaf, and spaghetti squash and meatballs on the menu.

As low as  
\$8.99  
per serving!



## MUNCHPAK

If you're not in the mood for a full meal but you're curious about what our neighbors across the pond reach for in their pantries, MunchPak is the answer without the cost of the flight. With snacks from around the world, you choose the size of your delivery and customize its contents. Try out Japanese hard candy, wacky new potato chip flavors, drink options and more.

As low as  
\$9.95  
per serving!



Subscription shopping online can save you time and money. In fact, it's so easy to get a quality meal delivered that you may cut down on long trips to the grocery store.

There are subscription services that will provide fresh, healthy ingredients straight to your door. From turkey shepherd's pie to garlic and herb shrimp, these meals are only a few clicks away from your doorstep.

But these services wouldn't be possible without a high-speed internet connection. That's what's great about the World Wide Web: It's truly international. From your living room, you're connected to recipes inspired by the world's greatest chefs. And with online subscription services, you can get regular deliveries of the meals you like most.

In the next few issues, we'll feature several online subscription services ... but don't wait on us. Check them out for yourself. Everything from chic skincare products to children's toys and vintage vinyl records ship daily.

# Your personal 'techtionary'

## Learn the internet lingo basics

Sometimes the language of technology can seem complex, but it's an increasingly common, and important, part of day-to-day life. Hopefully, this column will make your use of technology a little smoother.

I often describe myself as a translator, and I want to help you create your own "techtionary." I'll define some common words associated with the internet and related services, and, hopefully, this will give you a simple reference you can keep handy.

► **BROADBAND:** This term is meant to define fast internet. The fastest broadband services come from providers that rely on fiber optic networks, although some companies do offer broadband plans through networks reliant on copper cables. I like to think of broadband as a garden hose delivering water. The higher the water pressure — how many megabits per second your plan provides — the faster the speed!

► **OVER-THE-TOP (OTT) VIDEO:** This term refers to media delivered through an internet connection — often with the help of a smart TV, Roku, Apple TV or other streaming device — as opposed to your standard cable TV or satellite TV.

► **WI-FI:** This is the way you can connect a computer, television or other device to the

internet without using a wire. From your home to the coffee shop, Wi-Fi is increasingly essential as more and more people rely on mobile devices or connected devices, such as a Roku, Amazon Echo or gaming box. Keep in mind, Wi-Fi can be either open for all to access or protected with a password. If you have a home Wi-Fi network, consider using a secure password.

► **WIRELESS ROUTER:** This device converts a broadband connection into a Wi-Fi signal. Routers need to be maintained and updated regularly to have the best connection. Many broadband providers sell routers or offer plans where they manage the router. Using a router recommended by your broadband provider is a good idea because they typically help

maintain the device and keep it updated. I think of a router as a sprinkler head attached to the end of the garden hose. It distributes the broadband signal to a wider area, much like a sprinkler distributes water.

► **STREAMING:** This term refers to accessing content, such as television shows or music, over the internet. If you like to watch a video using applications such as Netflix or YouTube, you are streaming video. If you listen to music online through Pandora or Spotify, you are streaming audio. The content is stored online as opposed to you downloading it to your device.

► **VOICE OVER INTERNET PROTOCOL (VOIP):** While the phone seems to work as it always has, VoIP technology is very different from that used

when copper wires transmit phone calls. With VoIP, calls go through your internet connection. VoIP is becoming more and more common, and in most cases you don't even know you are using an internet-based phone.

These are just a few of the words you may hear in regards to your internet service. Don't hesitate to ask questions when speaking to your internet service provider, which is a great resource. The internet network can seem like magic at times, but it's not as mysterious as it may appear. ☎



**CARISSA SWENSON**  
IS A TRAINING AND EDUCATION CONSULTANT FOR CONSORTIA CONSULTING.



Wrigley Elementary School Lighthouse Team members are the proud recipients of a check for \$112.50 in return for collecting 449 phone books.



Students sort phone books collected for recycling.

# A winning team

## Wrigley Elementary shines in Mountain's recycling contest

BY JEN CALHOUN

Students at Wrigley Elementary School know a thing or two about leadership. So, when Mountain Rural Telephone Cooperative invited every elementary school in Elliott, Menifee, Morgan and Wolfe counties to participate in a project to collect old phone books for recycling, Wrigley students took charge.

They gathered 449 phone books and were guaranteed 50 cents per book, totaling \$112.50 for their school, says Lisa Fannin, director of marketing at Mountain Telephone. "It was a worthwhile project for these students," she says. "And the Wrigley kids went above and beyond."

### THE LIGHTHOUSE TEAM

Wrigley Principal Amber Adams says the school's Lighthouse Team led the project.

The group of third- to fifth-grade students were selected through an application and interview process. They serve as school leaders, offering innovative ideas and implementing projects.

Adams says the team spearheaded the recycling project by asking students to bring in all the phone books they no longer needed. The team also helped coordinate the collection and the counting of the books.

"We take a lot of pride in our student Lighthouse initiative because it allows the students to take responsibility," Adams says. "They're the ones who register people at our parent-teacher conferences. If we have programs, they're the ones who lead the programs instead of the adults. We want our students to know what it is to lead because, ultimately, they're our future. They're going to be our next leaders."

### ALL-SCHOOL EFFORT

But the Lighthouse Team was just part of the project's success, says Kadence Sahay, a fifth-grader and a member of the team. "The whole school collected them," Kadence says. "We told them we wanted to recycle them and do our part to help the Earth."

Adams says the money will

be used to help buy an outdoor trash can for the school. "The Lighthouse Team wanted to do something that would help us keep the school free of litter," she says. "The trash can we need costs about \$100."

Currently, the school is unable to recycle on its own because of the lack of recycling facilities in the area. However, the 58,000-square-foot building was designated as an Energy Star school and uses solar panels to generate energy for part of the building, Adams says. The school also features a TV screen tracking energy usage.

"We are trying to be environmentally friendly and energy efficient," she says. "So, Mountain's recycling project fit in well with those goals." ☎



Central office supervisor Matt Daniel makes sure the network runs smoothly.

## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT: Matt Daniel

### Central office supervisor lends time and talents to the community

BY JEN CALHOUN

**M**att Daniel happens to be one of those rare souls who can juggle many tasks. And for the last 17 years at Mountain Telephone, he’s been doing it well.

As central office supervisor, Daniel works hard to serve his company and his community with distinction. Given that he is in charge of the core technology, he makes sure the network is running smoothly from the satellite in the sky to the TV in the home.

Often described as the “Energizer Bunny” of the cooperative, he likes to seek out new opportunities and keep things working, his co-workers say. Recently, the audio-visual techie even set out to film a

days-long adventure race in the mountains as a way to promote the region and help people with cancer.

But that’s not all. Not nearly.

#### SERVICE COUNTS

During his nearly two-decade tenure at Mountain, he has opened his arms to the community with the same kind of devotion he displays in his work. He serves as an elder at West Liberty Christian Church, where he also plays bass guitar in the band

and engineers the sound. He is involved with the local Boy Scouts and has served as an assistant scoutmaster and committee member off and on for the past 10 years. He’s also coached T-ball, soccer, baseball and basketball while helping grow some of the soccer leagues.

Daniel’s accomplishments keep rolling. The 1997 graduate of Eastern Kentucky University in Richmond also donates his time to local food drives, charity basketball games and community events like Relay for Life.

“I feel that part of my Christian walk is to do what I can to help,” he says. “I mean, you never know what someone else is going through. If I have the opportunity to fill a void, whatever that might be, then I want to do it. I want to be an encouragement to other people and help them with what’s going on in their lives. It just feels like the right thing to do.”

#### STRONG FOUNDATIONS

But with all his obligations, family comes first. Daniel says the shining points of his life are his wife of 21 years, Amilyn McKenzie Daniel, an elementary school teacher, and his sons, McKenzie Lane, 17, and Trent Matthew, 14.

“My wife is my rock,” he says. “Without her, most of these things I do would never have happened. She has been my support, my prayer warrior and my peace in the storm, always.”

The family enjoys finding time to travel across the country as well, Daniel says. Some of those excursions are mission trips with his church, while others are more adventure-oriented.

But Daniel’s passion for traveling will never outshine his love of home.

“I’ve been to 33 U.S. states, and I think they’re all beautiful,” he says. “They all have their charm. But no place feels like home. The mountains here aren’t too tall to get over, and the valleys aren’t too deep. I can travel, or I can access all kinds of things through our wonderful internet service. But you know what I love about here? I love that if I want to go off grid, I don’t have to go far.” 📶

# Canning 101

**D**o you want to get started with canning vegetables, fruits and more? Well, it's best to pay attention to a few fundamental rules.

Ruth Sarro, a former extension agent for the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, says you will need some basic equipment, including a wide-mouth funnel, tongs, a ladle or dipper, a jar lifter and a water bath canner with a rack inside.

The best foods for canning have good structure and won't fall apart during the process. High-acid foods and pickles don't need to be pressure canned, but low-acid foods — like vegetables, meats, soups and broths — do.

Inspect your fruits and vegetables before canning. “The quality of the food going in determines the quality of the canned product,” says Sarro.

Glass jars and rings may be sterilized and reused, but you must purchase new flat lids each time. The “USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning” is available through the National Center for Home Food Preservation's website.

## FOND MEMORIES

Sarro recalls childhood summers spent gathering wild blackberries and plums and fresh figs, pears, persimmons and pecans on the family dairy farm in South Alabama.

“With seven children to

feed on a farmer's wages, my mother taught each of us to harvest, freeze and can fruits and vegetables,” she says. She became a member of her local 4-H club; food preservation was one of her many projects.

After college, she worked as an agent for the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. Although she primarily handled 4-H programs, she also answered consumers' questions about canning and food safety.

Now retired, she teaches nutrition classes part time at Jacksonville State University, and she continues to enjoy canning at home. She makes berries into jams, freezes them to use throughout the year or eats them fresh.

That's the beauty of food preservation, she says. Canning and freezing let you enjoy the taste of summer in the dead of winter.

“My family prefers home-canned jams and jellies because the taste is more like fresh fruit,” Sarro says. “Home-canned peaches taste much better than commercially canned peaches. Sometimes I make peach jam, too. My daughter calls that ‘liquid gold.’”

## HOMEGROWN

Retirement has allowed Sarro time to garden, and she's harvested okra, tomatoes, hot peppers and cucumbers. She grows corn, squash and eggplant, too. What she doesn't grow she buys at the local farmers market in Anniston, Alabama, or she shops at pick-



Ruth Sarro prepares strawberry jam in her home in Wellington, Alabama.

your-own farms in her area.

Canning also frees up freezer space. However, there's no room in the house for all the full jars, so the Sarros store them on shelves in their workshop.

“They'll stay above freezing temperatures out there in the winter but not too hot in the summer; then we'll bring them inside and keep them in the pantry as we need them,” she says, adding that she tries to use the food within a year of canning.

The following recipes are some of Sarro's favorites. They are ones she found in the publication “Food Safety in Alabama” but she says she's tweaked them through the years.



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



Anything from watermelon rind pickles to tomatoes and pepper jelly can be canned and preserved.

## WATERMELON RIND PICKLES

- 2 pounds (about 4 cups) prepared watermelon rind
- 1 tablespoon pickling lime
- 4 cups white vinegar, divided
- 1 cup water
- 5 cups sugar
- 1 tablespoon whole allspice
- 1 tablespoon whole cloves
- 6 small pieces stick cinnamon

Prepare the watermelon rind by trimming all green and pink portions off. Cut into desired shape or size. Mix pickling lime in a quart (4 cups) of water. Soak prepared watermelon rind in the lime-and-water mixture for 2 to 3 hours. Drain and rinse well, then rinse again to make sure all lime is off the pieces of watermelon rind. Cover rinsed watermelon rind with fresh, cold water and boil for 1 hour or until tender. Drain watermelon rind. Cover with a weak vinegar mixture of 1 cup of vinegar to 2 cups of water. Allow to stand overnight. Discard the liquid the next morning. Make syrup of the 3 cups of vinegar, 1 cup water, sugar and spices by combining and heating to a simmering point. Remove syrup from heat, cover

and allow to steep for 1 hour so flavors of spices can be absorbed. Strain out spices. Add drained watermelon to the syrup and cook gently for 2 hours until syrup is thicker. Using a slotted spoon, pack watermelon rind into prepared standard canning jars. Pour syrup over the watermelon rind in the jars to cover it. Leave 1/2-inch head space in the jar. Wipe jar rims. Adjust jar lids and bands. Process in a boiling water bath canner for 15 minutes for pints and half-pints.

## CHILI SAUCE


- 1 peck (about 2 gallons) large ripe tomatoes
- 6 large onions
- 3 large bell peppers
- 1 1/2 pints (3 cups) cider vinegar
- 2 tablespoons cinnamon
- 1 tablespoon mustard
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 2 1/2 tablespoons salt
- 1 tablespoon ginger
- 1 teaspoon nutmeg

Peel, core and slice tomatoes. Chop onions and peppers. Put into a large saucepan. Add remaining ingredients and cook on top of range, stirring

frequently, until sauce reaches consistency of ketchup (about 4 hours). Pack in hot, clean standard pint jars. Remove air bubbles. Wipe jar rims. Adjust jar lids and bands. Process in a boiling water bath canner for 10 minutes.

## BREAD-AND-BUTTER PICKLES

- 10 cups sliced cucumbers
- 2 cups sliced onions
- 1/4 cup salt
- 2 cups cider vinegar
- 2 teaspoons celery seed
- 2 teaspoons powdered turmeric
- 1 (3-inch) cinnamon stick
- 3 cups sugar

Combine cucumbers and onions, sprinkle with salt and set aside for 1 hour. Drain off all liquid. Put in a saucepan with vinegar, celery seed, turmeric, cinnamon and sugar. Bring to a boil and simmer 20 minutes. Put into clean standard pint canning jars. Remove air bubbles. Wipe jar rims. Adjust jar lids and bands. Process in a boiling water bath canner for 10 minutes. 



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**THURSDAY NIGHT, JULY 5, 2018**  
Menifee County High School Gym

**Registration, entertainment & dinner  
5 TO 6:15 P.M.**

*Entertainment by Ole Stump Kickers*

**Door Prize Drawings  
6:15 P.M.**

**Business Meeting  
6:30 P.M.**

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