



Mountain Telephone

MARCH/APRIL 2021

CONNECTION

TURTLE FARM POTTERY

Local company creates beautiful, useful wares

HIGH TECH GOES RURAL

Cornett's Grocery keeps tradition alive

CONNECTING CREATIVES

Artists and artisans unite through broadband





By SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO

NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

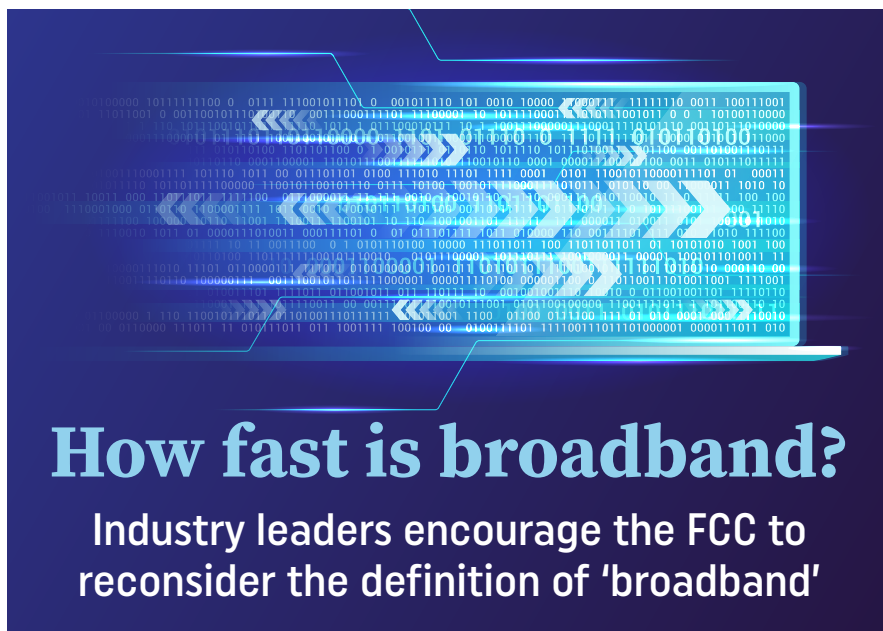
Here's to hope in 2021

The pandemic has made it clear that every American needs broadband to thrive. We need it for work, for school, for health. And we need it for accessing government services, for growing businesses and for building communities. If there is a silver lining to 2020, which was a hard year for so many, it's that more people are now acutely aware of the essential nature of broadband services.

The new year brought new challenges, many of them playing out at our Capitol, a building I've had the honor of visiting many times to talk to members of Congress about the need to support broadband for all of America. But I choose to have hope that better angels of our nature will guide us to rebuild, and I believe NTCA and our members have an opportunity to help that rebuild with the work that we do supporting broadband connectivity and other critical services for rural communities.

The hard-working members of NTCA have made so much progress in the past decade toward solving the rural broadband challenge. There is much work yet to do, but I have hope in the progress they are making. Through federal and state funding programs, coupled with local investments by providers themselves, we are on our way as a country to connecting everyone.

There is a day in our future when we can say that everyone who needs or wants a broadband connection has access. That day is coming, sooner than later. I have hope. 📶



By STEPHEN V. SMITH

We as a nation need to rethink what is considered true broadband connection speeds. That's the message telecom industry leaders recently sent to the Federal Communications Commission.

NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association joined with the Fiber Broadband Association in sending a letter to the FCC in December addressing the definition of broadband. The letter came as the FCC prepares its next report to Congress on the state of broadband deployment in America.

For the past five years, the FCC has considered any connection speeds of 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload to be the benchmark for broadband.

“By any measure, this benchmark does not reflect what American consumers need today, let alone tomorrow,” wrote NTCA CEO Shirley Bloomfield and Fiber Broadband Association President and CEO Gary Bolton.

In urging the FCC to redefine what speeds are considered broadband, Bloomfield and Bolton wrote that “while all Americans would be best

served by the Commission adopting a gigabit symmetric benchmark ... it should at least raise the minimum broadband performance benchmark for the Sixteenth Broadband Deployment Report to 100/100 Mbps.”

Raising the definition, a benchmark that impacts funding decisions and technology choices, would put the country on a path toward ensuring all Americans have broadband access that actually meets their needs, the letter states. With millions of people using broadband at home to work, participate in school and attend doctor appointments, broadband has become essential to everyday life.

Bloomfield and Bolton further concluded that redefining broadband would allow the FCC to “keep pace with broadband service that Americans both need and want,” while providing “a benchmark the Commission can then use to ensure that we build our networks right the first time by driving investment in future-proof broadband infrastructure.” 📶



To hear an interview with Gary Bolton on this and related topics, visit www.RuralBroadbandToday.com, or search for “Rural Broadband Today” on your favorite podcast app, Spotify or Amazon Music.

The price of entertainment

Consumers can tap into a rushing stream of content delivered across devices ranging from TVs to smartphones. Sports, news, movies, comedies, dramas, music — the list of options is seemingly endless.

But there is a cost. And for many consumers that price increases each spring. If you have it handy, take a moment to review a bill for your TV programming from three years ago. Compare it to today, and in most cases the difference is obvious — television programming is pricier.

The increases are not limited to traditional cable TV providers either. Streaming services have seen prices spike, too. When Google launched YouTube TV, the monthly price was about \$35. Now, it's \$65.

In cases such as Google, as well as other providers, adding new, desirable content channels helps drive the increases. For traditional networks, investment in higher-quality programming has become essential to compete with streaming services like Netflix, Amazon and HBO Max. Those costs are then passed on to cable providers and their customers.

But more content is not always the root

cause of the higher prices. In fact, for many providers, such as the rural communications companies serving much of America, the increasing cost of content is an annual struggle to hold prices down. It's not a push to increase profits, and their efforts to control prices illustrate the give and take behind what you see on your bill.

For these companies, only a small portion of a monthly television subscription fee goes to personnel costs, equipment upgrades and tasks such as equipment maintenance. So, where does all the money go?

Much of the cost is wrapped up in agreements allowing TV providers to bring content to you. Networks like ABC, NBC, CBS and Fox regularly renegotiate these agreements. In many cases, these are annual negotiations.

A 2019 analysis of cable TV rates by Consumer Reports found that while advertised rates generally increased by 3% to 4% annually, fees for the major networks and channels airing live sports climbed between 8% and 10% each of the previous four years.

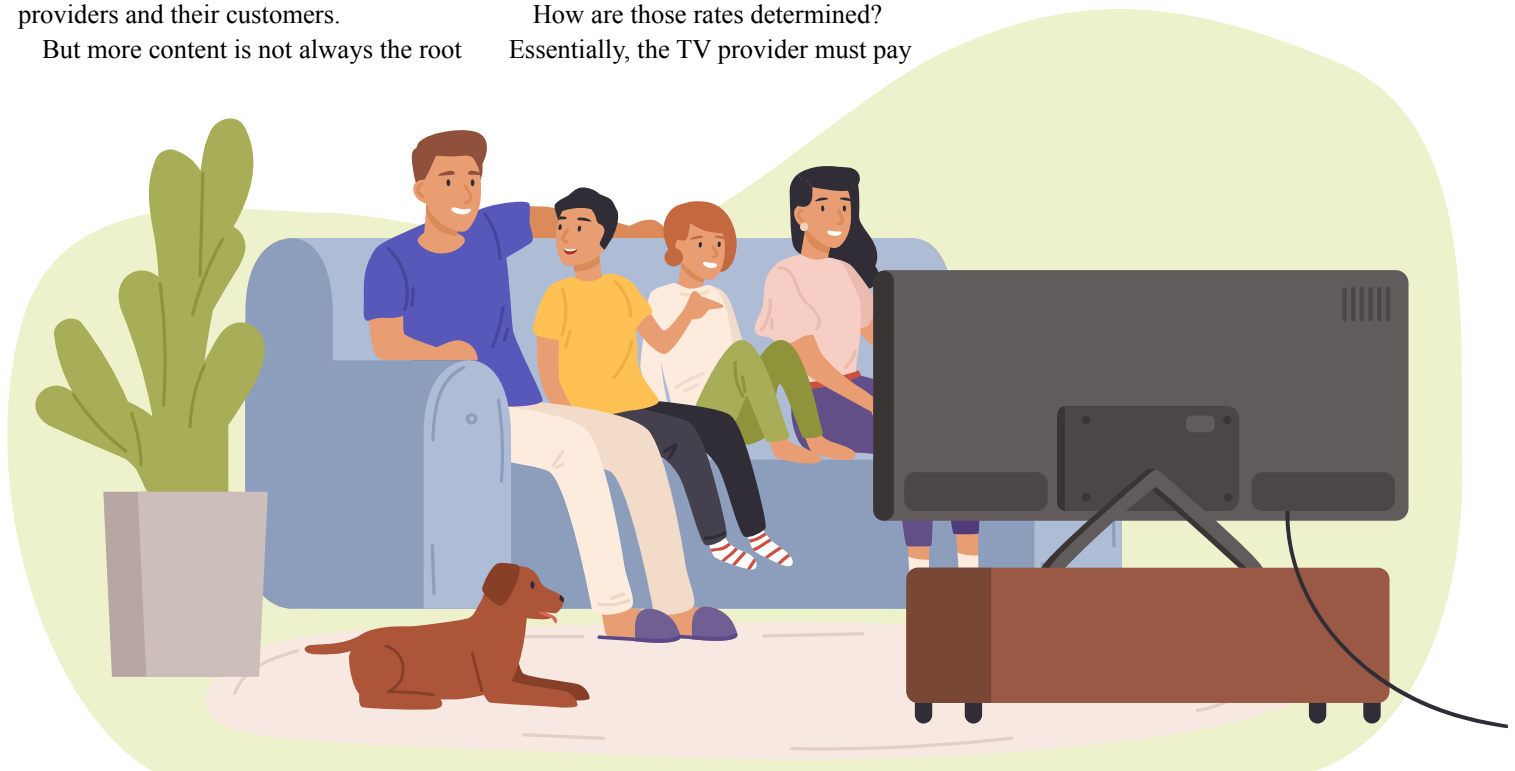
How are those rates determined? Essentially, the TV provider must pay

networks a fixed fee for each subscriber of the service. But each year there are fewer traditional TV subscribers to carry that load. In 2020 alone, about 6.3 million people dropped their cable or satellite TV service, according to investment research firm Moffett Nathanson.

Without an expanding subscriber base to offset these increasing costs, TV providers often pass the expense on to consumers in the form of fees added to advertised prices, according to the FCC's 18th Annual Video Competition Report.

When it comes to these hidden costs, there is one bright spot for consumers. The Television Viewer Protection Act passed at the end of 2019 requires cable and satellite companies to disclose the total monthly price of subscribers' TV bills, including all individual fees and charges, when they sign up.

That transparency won't make your bill any lower. But it will give you an accurate picture of the full cost of your monthly TV bill. 🗨️



Equipping and enabling vibrant rural communities

The 2020 census data will be coming out this year — and despite what the headlines may say, I'm here to tell you that rural America is meeting its challenges.

As you may remember, I urged everyone to participate in the 2020 census. The population counts go a long way in determining our representation in Congress and the statehouse, as well as funding for state and federal programs.



SHAYNE ISON
General Manager

According to the 2020 census website, 2020census.gov, the census will shape the future of our community for the next 10 years. While that timeframe may be a bit of an overstatement, there's no doubt that an accurate population count is critically important.

While census numbers will contribute to the allotment of funding and political clout, they will also help to tell the story of rural America. The 2020 census should provide definitive evidence of the trends shaping communities like ours. But as you probably know, I'll be the first to say that whatever trend lines on a graph from the U.S. Census Bureau suggest, parts of rural America are more vibrant and offer more opportunities today than ever with the ability to work from home via broadband connection.


Some communities have no doubt fallen on hard times. According to experts at places like the USDA and the National Council of State Legislators, about one-third of rural counties are growing, one-third are stable and one-third are shrinking. Researchers point to 2016 and 2017 as years where many rural areas began showing growth after many years when the number of residents diminished.

Will all the news and research taken from information contained in the census be positive for everyone in rural America? Most likely, it will highlight some of the challenges communities like ours face. Events such as the pandemic, though, have left some city dwellers intrigued by the many benefits of living in rural areas.

We'll know for sure once the data is released, but the 10-year scope of the census may well show a continuation of the gradual, decades-long shift to fast-growing cities and suburbs from small towns and rural areas. It's possible statewide and national news outlets will use a broad brush to highlight this demographic trend as they cover the census statistics over the next few months.

A few troubling statistics, however, should not be sufficient to raise concerns about the future of rural America and our small-town way of life. Census numbers — a comparison across decades that may not fully acknowledge recent positive changes — do not tell the whole story. In many ways, the people of rural America have more opportunities now than ever before for business, education, health care, entertainment and overall quality of life. And I'm proud to say broadband makes many of those chances possible, although I'm not sure how much coverage they'll see.

In fact, our confidence in that vitality and belief in the future is why we've invested millions of dollars into improving the telecommunications infrastructure in our communities. You'll never find a stronger group of advocates for our communities than our team here at Mountain Telephone.

We're proud of the rural areas and small towns we connect to the world — and we work hard every day to make our communities even stronger. 

The Mountain Telephone Connection is a bimonthly newsletter published by Mountain Rural Telephone Cooperative, © 2021. 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.

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On the Cover:



The Turtle Farm Pottery team set up shop in Wolfe County, and business is booming online and off.
See story Page 12.

NOTICE TO MOUNTAIN TELEPHONE CUSTOMERS

The fiber telephone service in your home requires commercial power to operate. Therefore, at no additional cost to you, an eight-hour battery backup power supply was installed with your service to allow for emergency operation during power outages. This means that emergency phone service is anticipated to function for at least eight hours in an extended power outage. The ability of the battery to power your phone service can be affected by many factors, including the age of your battery, improper home wire grounding, unprotected power surges, manufacturer defect, improper storage conditions or failure to keep the power pack plugged in. Our batteries do not power self-owned phone handsets that require separate power. You must have a phone capable of being plugged into a Mountain Telephone jack to use the backup battery.

If a longer backup battery operation is desired, we now have 24-hour battery packs available for an additional fee. Should longer operation be required, we suggest you look at vendors for commercially available backup power options such as a generator, UPS, etc. For additional information, please call us at 606-743-3121.



Happy Good Friday & Easter!

Mountain Telephone offices will close on Friday, April 2, in observance of Good Friday. May you and yours have a wonderful Easter.



Know what's below CALL BEFORE YOU DIG

It's that time of year again when many members will be in their yards digging gardens, laying sod or planting flowers. If you are going to be tilling or digging in the soil, Mountain Telephone asks that you call 811 before you dig. There may be lines buried in your yard that could cause service outages if they are cut. The 811 service will notify Mountain Telephone that you are digging and can prevent service interruptions by letting you know where lines may be buried. You can also call Mountain Telephone at 606-743-3121.



*Attention,
shutterbugs!*

Have you captured a breathtaking snapshot that shows the beauty of Bath, Elliott, Menifee, Morgan or Wolfe County? If so, we want to hear from you.



Mountain Telephone is accepting photos for its 2022 directory and calendar. We are **no longer accepting printed photos**. Each submission can include up to two photos, which must be digital high-quality JPEG images. Submit images to Lisa Fannin at lfannin@mountaintelephone.com. Photos will be selected on the basis of creativity, quality and portrayal of the service area. Deadline for submission is June 1. Winners will be announced on or before Sept. 30. All entries must be submitted by the original photographer who has sole ownership of any copyright. By entering the contest, you agree to have your photograph displayed on the MRTC directory or annual calendar without any fee or other forms of compensation.

For more information on the photo contest, please visit www.mrtc.com.



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.

A rider navigates the Tunnel Trail in Sumter National Forest.

TAKE PRIDE IN YOUR RIDE

How to safely blaze the ATV trails

Story by ANNE P. BRALY

In coming weeks, ATVs and other off-road vehicles will come out of hibernation, and riders will be hitting the trails more than any other time of year. There's something about early spring that makes for great riding — cool mornings, mild afternoons, pleasant evenings, new growth appearing all around you. They all come together to make an ideal day as you ride trails through the forests of the South.

"I think the best part about riding is getting to see so much of the forest and so many different habitats in a short period of time," says David Baldwin with the U.S. Forest Service at South Carolina's Francis Marion National Forest. There's one main thoroughfare, the Wambaw Cycle Trail, that's 40 miles long with two different loops — one north and the other south.

"Within a 19-mile section of the north section, you'll witness Carolina Bay trees, hardwood ponds, longleaf pine stands and a variation in terrain that is rare in the low country," Baldwin says.

But if you're new to the sport, how do you know which all-terrain vehicle is best for you? Alice Riddle, an outdoor recreation planner at Sumter National Forest, says it's important to ride vehicles that are age- and size-appropriate. One size does

not fit all. ATVs come with a warning label, clearly stating the minimum age of the rider. Not sure where to look? The label is affixed so riders can easily read it when seated in the proper operating position.

If you're new to the sport, talk with local shops and other riders, and do your homework ahead of time. The internet is a good resource, Riddle says. There are also training courses for both ATV and dirt bike riding. Check with your local bike shop.

It may seem as though the sounds of motorized vehicles are incongruous with

the peaceful sounds of nature, but it's all part of the plan the Forest Service offered when the trails first went in, says Riddle. "National forest lands provide a wide variety of recreational opportunities," she says. "Motorized trails are one of these opportunities. There are many hiking trails or general forest areas that one can go to in order to find a peaceful hike or solitary experience. Motorized trail bikes are only allowed on designated trails for motorized use on National Forest Lands. With national forests encompassing many thousands of acres, there are opportunities for all to enjoy." 🗨️



Choosing an ATV properly fitted to you is a key for safety.



TOP TRAILS

There are two national forests in South Carolina open to the public with well-maintained trails: Sumter National Forest in the Piedmont region offers a gently sloping topography with elevations up to 400 feet, and Francis Marion National Forest in South Carolina's low country — a flat sandy environment with many bogs that the trails skirt. Both offer trails for different levels of ability.

- **Cedar Springs Trail at Sumter** is 11 miles long and offers moderately challenging trail loops.
- **Parsons Mountain Trail** at Sumter is 10.3 miles long and easy — a good one for beginners.
- **Francis Marion has one main trail** — the 40-mile Wambaw Cycle Trail — with two loops. The north loop has more technicality in terrain and is best for more advanced riders than the south loop. On each of the loops, riders will approach signage where the trail forks and have the ability to choose to continue on or head back to the trail head.

MAP IT



One of the primary rules for off-road safety is carrying a trail map with you.

You'll find maps for Sumter and Francis Marion National Forests online at fs.usda.gov.



Volunteers groom trails by pulling a cluster of tires to flatten the path.

SAFETY FIRST

On nice days, trailheads can fill up quickly, says David Baldwin with the U.S. Forest Service. The Forest Service maintains the trails in South Carolina's two national forests. And since there are different loops and trails that riders can take, they do not get terribly congested, he adds.

Keep in mind, though, the trails are not race tracks. "Riders need to be aware there could be hazards that occur along the trail, and they need to be ready to stop on a moment's notice," warns Alice Riddle, an outdoor recreation planner at Sumter National Forest. "Riders must be in control of their bikes at all times. They are responsible for their safety and others. All trails have passing areas, so wait for those opportunities and don't create new impacts to the trail. If it's your first visit to a trail, start off with the loops closer to the parking area until you become familiar with the trail system."

Here are some additional rules of safety and etiquette to be considered when riding the trails.

- Keep in mind that there are going to be riders of all different skill levels around you. So, whether you are a seasoned professional who is training for your next race or a first-time rider who is learning to ride, everyone shares the trail.
- Do not ride above your ability. This practice prevents you from getting injured and keeps other riders safe, as well.
- There are spots on the trails where other riders may pass if they need to, so slow down, let them pass, or pull over if need be. This safety rule keeps the trail flowing nicely during busier days.

Denniston delight

Cornett's Grocery balances local charm and modern necessity

Story by JEN CALHOUN

Photography by WILLIAM LEMASTER

When Sheila Cornett bought the little convenience store on Highway 460 East about four years ago, time was passing it by. The building needed repairs, and an old cash register served as the shop's primary point of commerce.

Since then, the little shop now known as Cornett's Grocery has flipped a switch. Sure, it still serves as a gathering spot for locals to catch up with the latest news over a sausage biscuit and a cup of coffee. Eggs and hash browns are definitely on the menu, and you can still get your car gassed up while picking up a loaf of bread, some sugar and hot, fresh pizza for dinner.

But these days, the little shop sports a fresh look and the conveniences that 21st century shoppers expect. Manager Cory Cornett, Sheila's son, chalks part of it up to Mountain Telephone's plans for small businesses. The plan takes into account the special internet and phone service needs of smaller companies without breaking the bank. With the increased bandwidth, Cory Cornett says credit and debit card transactions go faster, ordering runs more smoothly, and security devices operate more effectively.

"The big selling point for us was that Mountain's plans for small businesses was a lot cheaper than what we were doing," he says. "These times are so uncertain. It helps us to save money wherever we can."




Cory and Sheila Cornett run Cornett's Grocery in Denniston, a place where shoppers can find a little bit of everything.

THE ORIGINAL SOCIAL MEDIA

Cornett's Grocery is a dying breed. The other mom and pop grocery stores that used to dot the ridges on the way to bigger cities have mostly closed their doors for one reason or another. But shops like Cornett's serve a genuine need in the community, Cornett says.

"I think we're kind of like the cornerstone of the community," he says. "Up

until a couple of years ago, we were the only place that sold gas or food or groceries for miles. We feed the people in the community, including the churches and the teachers. We help schools and clubs and organizations and sports teams. When times get hard, our community bands together. It's what I love best about this place." 



Popular stop in Denniston

Cornett's Grocery is at 6969 Highway 460 E. in Denniston. Along with gas and diesel fuel, the store sells some of the best home-cooked food in the region. Breakfast is one of the most popular times of day, with homemade biscuits and gravy, pancakes, hash browns, eggs, and more. A post office is also located inside. Visit the store's Facebook page for hours and information or call 606-768-3255. For more information on any of Mountain Telephone's small business plan, business systems and residential plans, call 606-743-3121 for more information.

The need for speed

West Liberty family gets a boost with Wi-Fi Advantage

Story by JEN CALHOUN

Matthew Brewer's life was getting complicated when it came to his internet service. With five people in his house and at least 18 devices accessing the internet, his home's internet highway was turning into more of a big-city freeway at rush hour.

His daughter, who participates in home schooling for health reasons, needed the internet to access her classes, homework and social interactions. His 80-something-year-old father needed it for games. He and his wife and their sons needed it for, well, everything — shopping, streaming movies and shows, gaming and correspondence.

Their internet service was no longer a sidebar in their lives. It had become a necessity. Like many people today, the Brewers depend on internet for their phones, their TV sets, their computers and a host of other electronic devices they own.

SWITCHING GEARS

At Brewer's home in West Liberty, there's someone on a device almost any time of day. So when their internet signal muddled and slowed to a near halt, the whole family found out just how much a lack of internet speed could affect their daily lives. There were delays with his daughter's homework assignments and the TV's buffering. Phone calls failed. Nobody could get the most out of their devices. Brewer knew something had to change.

That's when he found out about Mountain Telephone's Wi-Fi Advantage. The plan allows up to 250 devices to connect seamlessly to the internet service in one home, with uninterrupted streaming and surfing for every member of the family. Installation is free, and support is available 24/7.

"I wanted faster speeds," Brewer says. "Before I got it, it seemed like the internet service was dragging. Now, it works perfect." 📺

Wi-Fi that truly works

Connect anywhere in your home with the ultimate Wi-Fi Advantage from Mountain Telephone, and we'll switch your old router with a new Wi-Fi 6 router. Call us today at 606-743-3121.

- **Powerful:** Use multiple devices with uninterrupted surfing and streaming.
- **Control:** Enable guest Wi-Fi, parental controls and protection from malware and viruses using the MRTC Total Command app.
- **Relax:** Keep the stress away with our 100% free installation and 24/7 support.



CREATIVE SPACES

Artists and craftspeople find community online

Story by DREW WOOLLEY



Jessica Sanders, left, and Addie Moore keep ETX Creatives running along with Lisa Horlander, who is not pictured.



The online community is home to 350 artists and creatives.



ETX Creatives welcomes artists and visitors at in-person events.

Addie Moore just wanted to know a schedule for local art shows. A mixed media artist and art teacher at Chapel Hill High School, she and her friends knew there was a need for better communication among creatives in Tyler, Texas, and beyond.

“I heard it enough times that eventually I realized, ‘OK, I guess I have to do it,’” she says of her commitment in 2018. “Our first meeting we just went out for a beer and decided to make a Facebook group.”

That group became ETX Creatives, an online community of artists and artisans throughout East Texas. Today, the curated Facebook group is home to 350 creatives who use the space to share their work, offer inspiration and encouragement, or share news about upcoming exhibitions.

“We’re a largely rural area, so you have your friends from high school, church or that you’ve met over time. But it tends to happen in pockets,” says Moore. “There aren’t a lot of public spaces, so the internet provided a space for us to connect, express what we’re doing artistically and to let people know you’re not alone in Edom or your small town. You have a community.”

BREAKING THE BLOCK

Having a community of people who understand the struggles of the creative process has been especially important over the last year when artists and creatives have been hit hard by the economic challenges of the coronavirus pandemic.


“It’s a great place for us to say, ‘I’m having some creative block,’ or ‘How are you staying positive during this

time?’” says Moore. “I think having this creative community that knows what we’re going through and can give suggestions if we’re stuck or having trouble with a particular process has been a great support.”

ETX Creatives also hosts a blog on its website, etxcreatives.com, where visitors can find updates on the latest events and shows across East Texas. The site also allows promotion of items ranging from handmade ceramics and jewelry to clothing and one-of-a-kind paintings. The group also produces the “ETX Creatives Podcast” to showcase local artists and to delve into the creative process.

Before the pandemic, ETX Creatives hosted in-person exhibitions and workshops where hundreds of visitors from throughout the state could try their hand at printmaking or creating their own T-shirts. While those meet-ups have been put on pause, the group has continued to raise funds for local artistic projects.

And the best may be yet to come. Along with her ETX Creatives partners Jessica Sanders and Lisa Horlander, Moore is working to organize their informal group into an official non-profit. Once established, they can raise money for their own space, where they aim to continue hosting public events, have a permanent gallery and provide studio space for short-term artist residencies.

“My ultimate goal is to influence an economy among the creative community so people want to buy from local artists,” says Moore. “It can create appreciation and community support beyond just a space for us to talk to each other.” 

THE FUTURE OF ART

When it was founded in 1961, the Kentucky Guild of Artists and Craftsmen promoted local creators with a traveling "Guild Train" that exhibited their work across the state. The Guild Train no longer runs, but the organization still brings artists, craftsmen, collectors, galleries and other interested parties together.

In recent years, the guild's transformation has seen it harness the power of the internet to build social media communities and host online collections, where visitors can view and purchase work from member artists. Greg Lakes, who joined the guild after he and his wife opened the Clover Bottom Bed and Breakfast in McKee, hopes organizations like the guild continue to see the value of online communities for their members.

"Those places are where you have to be now to be viable as a selling artist," he says. "We have a lot of great artists in the area who come to the guild, and I think the groups that are going to survive are the ones who develop their online presence."

For more information, visit kyguild.org.



CREATIVE VOICES

Access to fast internet services creates fresh opportunities for creators in rural communities throughout the nation.

"I've never had to advertise. I just use Facebook to let people know when the classes are, and people usually use that to save a spot."

— Tammie Franklin, owner and teacher at Tammie's Treasures Painting Classes in River, Kentucky

"It helps us stay connected, and we reach a larger audience. It's one of the best ways we have to spread the word about what we do."

— Debra Ruzinsky, director of the Appalachian Center for Craft in Smithville, Tennessee



The team at Turtle Farm Pottery creates artful treasures out of clay from their studio in Wolfe County. From left, Casey Papendieck, Noah Broomfield, Laura Gregory and Lyndsey Harper.



EVERYDAY ART

Turtle Farm Pottery builds business with a purpose

Story by JEN CALHOUN

Photography by WILLIAM LEMASTER

Casey Papendieck likes the idea of someone sipping coffee in the morning from a mug he made or mixing batter in a bowl that left his studio months, or perhaps years, before. There's something soulful about the idea that people miles away might admire the contours and rich colors of a piece of pottery he shaped and glazed — all while going about their daily routine.

"I'm really into that — the idea of transforming otherwise mundane experiences into a moment of thoughtfulness and beauty," says Papendieck, founder of Turtle Farm Pottery, a studio in the Red River Gorge area. "I think that's what well-made ceramics do. They can transport the user out of their routine into this interesting moment where they are interacting with this handmade piece."

EARLY RETIREMENT

Papendieck was nearing 40 when he started the business not long after graduating in 2017 from Berea College with a bachelor's degree in ceramic art. By that time, however, he'd already traveled across the U.S. and Canada.

An Oregon native, Papendieck spent much of his 20s driving a Volkswagen bus to discover the best places to surf, play music and climb mountains. During those years, he did migrant work for cash, or he stopped off to hold down a regular job here and there. It was all part of a reverse plan in his life that turned out to be a philosophy for Papendieck.

"I always said I was retired in my 20s," he says. "My idea was to be retired when I was young so I could do my adventuring while I have the energy and the bravery.

Then, I would have my career later in life, which is what I'm doing now."

He met his Texas-born wife, Laura Gregory, about 15 years ago when she was a geography student at the University of Texas at Austin. After she graduated, the couple ditched the VW and resumed their travels in a minivan. Papendieck went on to study music at the Kentucky School of Bluegrass & Traditional Music in Hyden.



HOME ON THE GORGE

Eventually, they ended up on the farm in Wolfe County where they now live. The couple forms the band The Handshake Deals, and Gregory apprentices at the pottery studio while also working as the Red River Watershed coordinator for Kentucky Waterways Alliance.

“We fell in love with the area — with the natural beauty, the people and the music,” Papendieck says. “We really connected with the community in the Red River Gorge, which is ultimately what kept us here. We found a groove, a little family.”

They also found Papendieck’s friend and former Berea College classmate, Noah Broomfield, who is the artist in residence at Turtle Farm Pottery. The team makes everything from the popular Red River Gorge coffee mugs to bowls, tea kettles, pitchers, salt cellars, wine and bourbon cups, cookie jars and more. They’re also known in the region for their chunky mugs sold at Miguel’s Pizza, a popular spot for tourists and locals alike in “the Gorge.”

“Function is really important to us as far as ergonomics of handles and the weight of the piece,” Papendieck says. “We want it to perform well for its intended use, and that’s something we’re striving for all the time.”

In the beginning, Turtle Farm sold its pottery through local retailers and at festivals. But the recent pandemic caused the artists to turn to website sales in May 2020. Now, internet sales rival those of the tourist-driven sales in the Red River Gorge.

“Mountain Telephone has been right here with us the whole time we’ve been building this business,” Papendieck says. “It would not be possible without the work they’ve done to bring high-speed fiber optic internet to the middle of these magical woods. We commonly have guests from the city who say our rural internet here is 10 times better than where they live.” 📶

Turtle Farm Pottery fundamentals

To find out more about Turtle Farm Pottery or to shop, visit its website at turtlefarmpottery.com or check it out on Facebook and Instagram. Its items are also available at local shops and eateries around the Red River Gorge, including BedRock RRG, Brandenburg General Store, Daniel Boone Trading Co., La Cabana Mexican Restaurant, Miguel’s Pizza, Ramble and Roam, Red River Rockhouse, SheBrews Coffee and Books, Sky Bridge Station, and Sticks, Stones & Stitches.

Turtle Farm Pottery also plans to sell pottery and offer pottery classes in The Brick at the Red River Gorge this spring. The Brick is a three-level building at 5412 Kentucky Route 15 N. in Pine Ridge. The building will house a coffee shop and ceramic gallery selling Turtle Farm creations on the main floor, Airbnb-type lodgings upstairs and a pottery studio in the basement for classes. For more information, visit The Brick at the Red River Gorge Facebook page.



Laura Gregory — an apprentice potter, musician and Papendieck’s wife — works on a piece in the studio.



Lyndsey Harper adds handles to Turtle Farm’s popular mugs.



Casey Papendieck moved to Wolfe County with Gregory after visiting the Red River Gorge for climbing and hiking.



Noah Broomfield applies attention and detail to each piece he makes.



Sunny side up?

Mix it up in the morning

Ham and eggs just go together — you rarely think of one without picturing the other. And they are so often seen together on an Easter menu.

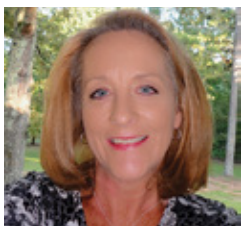
But what do you do once the Easter lunch is over and you're faced with leftover ham and lots of eggs?

For starters, make sure that you've handled all the food safely. With a lot of cooks in the kitchen prepping so much food, sometimes safe food handling practices fly out the window. Make sure you're preparing — and storing — food properly, so all of your guests leave with a full tummy and not a sick stomach.

While you're boiling eggs to dye for Easter, boil some extras, and make sure you keep them in the refrigerator until you're ready to use them.

Don't serve or eat any eggs that have been at room temperature for more than two hours.

As for your ham, if it's ready to eat then, you simply have to warm it up. But if you have to roast it yourself, make sure the internal temperature reaches 145 F.



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

HAM AND EGG CASSEROLE

- 2 medium cooked potatoes, peeled and sliced
- 4 hard-boiled large eggs, chopped
- 1 cup diced fully cooked ham
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 1 large egg
- 1 1/2 cups sour cream
- 1/4 cup dry bread crumbs
- 1 tablespoon butter, melted

In a large bowl, combine the potatoes, eggs, ham, salt and pepper. Combine the raw egg and sour cream. Add to potato mixture and gently toss to coat. Transfer to a greased 11-by-7-inch baking dish.

Toss bread crumbs and butter. Sprinkle over casserole. Bake, uncovered, at 350 F for 20 minutes or until bubbly and cooked through.

CREAMED HAM AND EGGS

- 3 tablespoons butter
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 1/2 teaspoon dry mustard
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 2 1/4 cups milk
- 1 cup diced cooked ham
- 4 hard-boiled eggs, chopped
- 4 biscuits

Melt butter in a large saucepan over low heat. Stir flour, mustard, salt and pepper into butter until mixture is smooth and bubbly. Remove from heat and add milk. Return to heat and bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Boil until mixture thickens — about 1 minute.

Stir ham and eggs into milk mixture and cook until heated through. Spoon creamed ham and eggs onto biscuits and serve.

PUFFY HAM AND EGG QUICHE

- 1 (17 1/3 ounce) box frozen puff pastry
- 8 ounces ham, chopped
- 4 hard-boiled eggs, sliced
- 8 ounces mozzarella cheese, shredded
- 1 beef bouillon cube
- 1/4 cup evaporated milk, warm
- 1 tablespoon parsley, chopped
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 4 tablespoons Parmesan cheese, grated

Preheat the oven to 375 F. Roll one sheet of puff pastry into a pie dish. Sprinkle ham on the bottom of the pie. Add a layer of sliced hard-boiled eggs and a layer of the mozzarella cheese.

Dissolve the beef bouillon in the warm milk and mix with parsley, beaten eggs and Parmesan cheese. Pour over ham, eggs and cheese. Cover the pie with the second puff pastry. Bake for 45 minutes or until golden brown. Let it sit for 5 to 10 minutes before cutting and serving.



Hard boiled eggs benedict

- 4 hard-boiled eggs
- 2 English muffins (split half)
- 4 slices ham
- Chopped parsley (optional)

Hollandaise Sauce:

- 4 large egg yolks
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1/2 cup butter (very slightly softened, cut into 5 pieces)
- Pinch of salt
- Dash of cayenne pepper (optional)

Prepare hollandaise sauce by placing a heat-proof bowl over a pan of gently simmering water (about 1 1/2 inches of water). The bottom of the bowl should not be touching the water. Alternatively, a double boiler set can be used. Add egg yolks and lemon juice to the bowl and whisk vigorously until the mixture becomes shiny/glossy and thickens. Whisk in

one piece of butter until fully incorporated into mixture. Repeat with remaining pieces, one at a time.

Whisk in a pinch of salt and a dash of cayenne, if using. If mixture is too thick, whisk in a bit of warm water, a tablespoon at a time. Remove from heat and use immediately.

In a hot skillet, over medium heat, heat the ham. Toast the English muffins until lightly browned. Cut each hard-boiled egg into fourths. Assemble by placing an English muffin half on a plate (cut side up), topping with 1 slice of ham, 1 egg (cut into fourths), and drizzle with 1/4 of the hollandaise sauce. Topped with chopped parsley, if desired, and serve warm.

Alternately, to make this dish a little easier, buy an envelope of Knorr's hollandaise sauce mix and follow package directions.



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