



Mountain Telephone

BROADBAND:
JOBS EDITION

MAY/JUNE 2019

CONNECTION

STICKY SOLUTIONS

A girl's peanut butter drive feeds the hungry

BUNDLE OF JOY

Family finds love and grace through adoption

BUILDING BUSINESSES

A faster internet grows the economy job by job





BY SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

Broadband drives rural and urban jobs

With this issue's focus on the impact of broadband on jobs, I was reminded of a report our Foundation for Rural Service and the Hudson Institute released three years ago. Entitled "The Economic Impact of Rural Broadband," this report estimated the direct and indirect economic effects of the rural broadband industry on gross domestic product.

The report showed that rural broadband companies like yours contributed \$24.1 billion to the economies of the states in which they operated. Even more interesting is the fact that \$17.2 billion of that total was through their own operations. The rest, \$6.9 billion, was through the follow-on impact of their operations. Those are impressive numbers under any financial index.

Sixty-six percent, or \$16 billion, of that total economic impact actually flows to urban areas. That means the U.S. jobs market needs rural broadband to remain strong and healthy.

The impact of rural broadband goes far beyond the service areas of rural telcos. The study showed that the rural broadband industry supported 69,600 jobs in 2015 — and I'm sure those numbers are even higher today. These jobs not only come from broadband providers themselves, but also from companies that supply goods and services to the industry. And more than half of those jobs, 54 percent in fact, are actually in urban America.

The truth is in the numbers. Rural broadband creates jobs and helps drive our economy — in rural and urban America alike. ☎

Fighting robocalls

BY STEPHEN V. SMITH



TRACED Act would help stop unwanted, illegal calls

Your phone rings. Even though you're in the middle of dinner, you answer because the Caller ID information shows the call is coming from a local number. Maybe it's someone you know.

"Congratulations!" the recorded voice exclaims. "You have been selected to receive a free cruise."

You just answered one of the estimated 130 million automated calls placed every day.

While there are legitimate uses of autodialing, illegal robocalls have become a plague that impacts everyone with a phone. Lawmakers have worked on the issue for almost three decades. Yet despite laws and fines designed to stop the practice, criminals — armed with ever-advancing software and technology — continue to find ways to flood our nation's phone network with unwanted calls.

Earlier this year, Sen. John Thune, R-S.D., and Sen. Ed Markey, D-Mass., introduced the TRACED Act, short for Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence Act. It gives the FCC and other agencies more power in enforcing existing laws governing robocalls.

"Unwanted robocalls that utilize spoofed phone numbers or falsify information are a problem in urban

and rural America alike," says Shirley Bloomfield, CEO of NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association. She says the TRACED Act "seeks to tackle this problem while also recognizing the transitions necessary to implement new technologies and network connections that will help achieve this goal."

In March, the attorneys general of all 50 states, plus four territories, signed a letter in unanimous support of the TRACED Act, sending it to the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee. A group of 10 U.S. senators representing several states and both political parties later issued a press release pledging their support for the bill as co-sponsors.

"With bipartisan support growing, the time to pass legislation to stop the scourge of robocalls has come," said senators Markey and Thune in that press release. "The groundswell of support for our TRACED Act — from state and territory attorneys general, to FCC and FTC commissioners, to leading consumer groups, to major industry stakeholders — shows just how much the American people want Congress to act to stop harassing robocalls."

As of press time, the bill remained in committee. Before becoming law, it would require support by both houses of Congress and the president. ☎



**HEY
TELEMARKETERS:**

DO NOT CALL!

The Federal Trade Commission and the Federal Communications Commission established a National Do Not Call Registry. Joining this registry can drastically reduce the number of telemarketing calls you receive.

JUST THE FACTS ABOUT DO NOT CALL:

- Once you've registered, telemarketers have 31 days to stop calling your number.
- Register as many as three nonbusiness telephone numbers. You can also register cellphone numbers — there is not a separate registry for cellphones.
- Your number will remain on the list permanently unless you disconnect the number or you choose to remove it.
- Some businesses are exempt from the Do Not Call Registry and may still be able to call your number. These include

political organizations, charities, telephone surveyors and businesses with whom you have an existing relationship.

Strict Federal Trade Commission rules make it illegal for telemarketers to do any of the following, regardless of whether or not your number is listed on the National Do Not Call Registry:

- Call before 8 a.m.
- Call after 9 p.m.
- Misrepresent what is being offered
- Threaten, intimidate or harass you
- Call again after you've asked them not to



IT'S EASY!

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.

**ATTENTION LOCAL
BUSINESS OWNERS:**

**MAKE SURE YOU FOLLOW
THE DO NOT CALL RULES**

No matter if you're a one-person shop or a beloved company, local business owners should remember that National Do Not Call Registry rules and regulations apply to you. After all, you don't want to upset a loyal customer, or frustrate potential new customers, with unwanted phone calls.

If you are a company, individual or organization that places telemarketing calls, it is very important that you familiarize yourself with the operations of the National Do Not Call Registry. Unless you fall under one of the established exceptions, such as telemarketing by charitable organizations or for prior business relationships, you may not make telemarketing calls to numbers included in the National Do Not Call Registry.

For information regarding National Do Not Call regulations, visit the National Do Not Call Registry at www.telemarketing.donotcall.gov. You can find the Federal Communications Commission and Federal Trade Commission rules governing telemarketing and telephone solicitation at 47 C.F.R. § 64.1200 and 16 C.F.R. Part 310, respectively.

OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION:

The Do Not Call initiative, regulated by the Federal Trade Commission and the Federal Communications Commission, requires telephone service providers to notify customers of the National Do Not Call rules and regulations. 📞

Broadband builds business

At Mountain Telephone, our daily business is providing reliable service for our customers — but in the big picture, we're also in the jobs business.



SHAYNE ISON
General Manager

Our broadband network is foundational to our area's economic well-being and crucial to keeping and growing job opportunities locally. We all want fulfilling and meaningful jobs that provide for ourselves and our families, and broadband is becoming critical to making them possible.

Reliable, high-speed internet access allows our region to remain competitive and viable in four major economic areas.

INDUSTRY

Whether it's an agricultural operation, an industrial plant or a hospital, businesses rely on broadband to order materials, coordinate logistics, manage supply chains and communicate with other facilities. When a manufacturer or other big business considers a

rural area like ours for a new facility, they are always concerned about broadband access.

I'm happy to say that Mountain Telephone can exceed all of their broadband access expectations. We eagerly engage in every opportunity to work with local officials to recruit new businesses and to help existing businesses expand.

SMALL BUSINESSES

It's no stretch to say small businesses are the backbone of our community. Whether it's providing Wi-Fi for their customers, giving access to online marketplaces or just ordering supplies online, those same small businesses benefit from our broadband and our phone network. In an age where it's easier than ever for small businesses in our community to reach a national or worldwide audience, Mountain Telephone is proud to support them as they grow.

TELECOMMUTERS

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, nearly a quarter of Americans do at least some of their work from home. Rural areas like ours are increasingly attractive to telecommuters who may not want the expense and stress of living in cities. While it's easier to overlook the impact of telecommuters compared to a manufacturing plant spread over several acres, these remote workers play a role in our area's economy. These talented folks are able to have the best of both worlds, with good-paying jobs from top companies while living a rural lifestyle. Most of these jobs are only possible because of the broadband and phone networks we provide.

ENTREPRENEURS

Many of the brave souls who chase the dream of starting their own business used to face steep disadvantages by launching their startups in rural areas. Entrepreneurs would frequently have to move to cities to find customers, workers or the communications infrastructure to help them launch and grow their businesses. Now, with our broadband, they can engage remote workers, network with other entrepreneurs and reach distant markets like never before.

Those four groups of employees and employers make up a significant portion of our local economy. They do great work producing quality products and services for their customers throughout the ups and downs that any business or economy will have. But as they move forward, I'm happy that they can be confident in having a reliable, supportive communications partner growing right along with them. 📞

The Mountain Telephone Connection is a bimonthly newsletter published by Mountain Rural Telephone Cooperative, © 2019. 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 12,000 members.

Send address corrections to:

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On the Cover:



Tenisha Castle, 11, asks for peanut butter for her birthday every year instead of gifts so she can donate to food banks.
See story Page 12.

Happy Mother's Day & Father's Day!

YOU DESERVE TIME TO YOURSELF!

TAKE A LOAD OFF WITH YOUR FAVORITE SHOWS!

Sign up for or upgrade to MTTV's Expanded or Digital plans and get one month FREE.

And when you are on the go, take MTTV along, too, with **WatchTVEverywhere!*** With **WatchTVEverywhere**, you can stream programs from your phone, tablet and computer anytime, anywhere FREE.

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- Both plans have multiple music options and some additional channels.



*Mountain Telephone is not responsible for cellphone data usage while streaming WatchTVEverywhere.



PICTURE PERFECT

Have you snapped a breathtaking shot of Bath, Elliott, Menifee, Morgan or Wolfe County? We are now accepting digital photos for our 2020 directory and calendar. Each submission can include up to two photos and must be digital high-quality JPEG images. All photos should be sent to Lisa Fannin at lfannin@mountaintelephone.com. The deadline is June 1.

MEMORIAL DAY OBSERVANCE



In honor of those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice for our country, all Mountain Telephone offices will be closed in observance of Memorial Day on Monday, May 27.



Nondiscrimination statement

In accordance with the federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices, and employees as well as institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs).

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- To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:
Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, D.C., 20250-9410
- Fax: 202-690-7442
- Email: program.intake@usda.gov

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Seagoing majesty

Visit the centers working to protect sea turtles

BY ANNE BRALY

Sea turtles are some of the most majestic, long-lived animals in the ocean. However, hundreds of thousands of them die each year after being tangled in fishing nets and other man-made gear. They also suffer as a result of climate change, lack of food, contaminated seas and other hazards.

They're among the most imperiled groups of animals that swim our seas, says Dr. David Steen, a research ecologist at the Georgia Sea Turtle Center in Jekyll Island, Georgia. If the baby turtles can make it to adulthood — which is an accomplishment in itself, as most perish before they reach that critical stage — they can live for decades and reproduce many times.

“This offsets the high mortality they experience in early life,” Steen says. “But the big problem arises when adults experience higher death rates than normal. It’s tough for populations to recover.”

The Georgia Sea Turtle Center is one of several such centers located in coastal states around the South. It opened in 2007 and has educated hundreds of thousands of visitors on the hazards sea turtles face, as well as the important role they play in our ecosystem.



Crowds gathered for the release of a sea turtle on Jekyll Island, Ga., which is home to the Georgia Sea Turtle Center.

Photos courtesy of the Jekyll Island Authority.



Conservation efforts are helping to increase the number of loggerhead sea turtle nests in Georgia.

The center is a one-of-a-kind experience, Steen says. Visitors can learn about sea turtles in an interactive learning center, peer into a hospital window to see turtles being treated by a veterinarian, and stroll through a pavilion to view turtles as they are rehabilitated in tanks. And during the nesting season, which runs from May to July, visitors can join educators and researchers on night searches for nesting sea turtles.

Educating the public about the importance of sea turtle recovery is a focus of the center's mission.

"If your ecosystem has missing pieces, there will inevitably be cascading effects, many of which we can't even predict," Steen adds. "There are many philosophical, ecological and spiritual reasons one might consider when discussing why we need to save sea turtles, but there are legal reasons, too. All sea turtles are protected by the Endangered Species Act, and that means we must work to recover their populations."

The effort appears to be working, as the number of loggerhead sea turtle nests in Georgia is gradually increasing, Steen says. "Their numbers are increasing due to a variety of individuals, agencies and organizations in the region, and also because of the state and federal legislation like the Endangered Species Act that protects them." 🗨️

See more sea turtles

IN SOUTH CAROLINA:

Zucker Family Sea Turtle Recovery at the South Carolina Aquarium
100 Aquarium Wharf, Charleston, S.C.

Online: scaquarium.org

Zucker Family Sea Turtle Recovery allows guests who visit the South Carolina Aquarium to experience and learn about sea turtles. It's both a hospital and a guest experience, making the real-life rehabilitation of sick and injured sea turtles visible to all guests through windows into the surgical suite. Experience a turtle's remarkable journey from rescue to rehabilitation and release.

To date, the South Carolina Aquarium has returned 265 rehabilitated sea turtles to the ocean.

IN FLORIDA:

Navarre Beach Sea Turtle Conservation Center
8740 Gulf Blvd., Navarre, Fla.

Online: navarrebeachseaturtles.org

The Navarre Beach Sea Turtle Conservation Center is a small operation with a giant mission to educate the public and protect the beautiful turtles that call the Gulf of Mexico home and nest on its white-sand beaches. Visitors to the center can see Sweet Pea, a green sea turtle that cannot be returned to the wild due to her injuries. Also, guests can take a virtual "journey" through Northwest Florida to learn about the region's natural resources and the importance of protecting coastal and marine ecosystems critical to sea turtle survival.

IN NORTH CAROLINA:

Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Rescue and Rehabilitation Center
302 Tortuga Lane, Surf City, N.C.

Online: www.seaturtlehospital.org

Hundreds of loggerheads, leatherbacks, ridleys and green sea turtles come to the beaches of North Carolina to lay eggs before returning to the Atlantic Ocean, leaving thousands of hatchlings to potentially emerge and follow their instincts toward the sea.

Visitors to the Topsail Beach area can visit the Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Rescue and Rehabilitation Center to learn about turtles' lives from beach nest to the sea and the center's effort to improve their odds of survival.

The center offers tours to the public during the warm months, beginning in April.

Sea turtles are also visible at all three North Carolina aquariums, which are involved in rescue, rehabilitation and release.

- **The Aquarium on Roanoke Island on the Outer Banks features a Sea Turtle Rescue exhibit.**
- **Visitors to the Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores on the Crystal Coast can follow the journey of loggerhead sea turtles in the Loggerhead Odyssey exhibit.**
- **In the Wilmington area, The Aquarium at Fort Fisher features turtle exhibits and Turtle Talks at the adjacent Fort Fisher State Recreational Area.**

Answered prayers

Campton couple's adoption journey enriches their lives

BY JEN CALHOUN



John and Kathi May adopted Madison Grace from China when she was 15 months old.

Not long after John and Kathi May learned they would become parents in July 2010, they put together a photo album and bought a tiny stuffed caterpillar. Then they mailed them both to China.

About three months later, those items came back to them alongside their daughter, Madison Grace, a 15-month-old bundle of love who would change their lives — and their hearts — forever.

BABY LOVE

The Mays adopted Madison from China after a long, rigorous process that included months of paperwork, medical screenings, meetings, interviews and gathering extensive references. They relied heavily on the internet for information and communication.

“The process started in August 2009,” says Kathi May, a medical technologist and the mayor of Campton. “We first had to choose our adoption agency, and we went with Holt International, which has been doing this for years.”

For nearly a year after the process started, the Mays waited and worried. Then, on July 21, 2010, they had their answer. “They called me that afternoon to tell me that they had matched us with

At 9 years old, Madison May loves cheerleading, dance and stuffed animals. She is pictured here at her home in Campton.



LEARNING AND GROWING

At just over a year old, Madison was developmentally behind many other children her age. She had been staying in a foster home in China as an infant. Her speech consisted of a few mumbled words in Chinese. She wasn't walking, and she was still eating with a bottle.

But just a few days after she joined the Mays, she started eating solid food. By the end of the following January, she had taken her first steps. And by summer, the toddler was speaking up a storm in a cute Southern drawl. "We made friends with other American families while we were in China," May says. "They adopted daughters there, too. When we met up with them later in 2011, they couldn't believe her speech. She was already speaking full, clear sentences."

Madison's accomplishments didn't end there. When she was 3, she started reading. "That's another mind-boggling thing," her mother says.

Now, Madison is 9 years old and loves cheerleading, her dance team and stuffed animals — especially a little stuffed frog named "Froggy," which one of her preschool teachers gave to her. "Madison is very energetic," May says. "She's got the best little sense of humor — she's a little spitfire, really." She loves reading and science and even recently downloaded a game about the periodic table. "I told her the sky's the limit," her mother says.

SUPER SUPPORT

Madison's adoption resulted in other positives, May says. While in China, the Mays became close friends with two other families who also adopted baby girls.

Every year, the Mays meet up with the families — one is from Iowa, and the other is from New York. "We go on trips together, and we call it our Chinese reunion," May says. "Each family rotates as a host family, and we'll meet up at a place near that host family. We all stay under the same roof. The girls are all from the same area in China, and they get to come together and bond. That way, they actually know two other people from where they're originally from. And the families provide a great support system for each other. If one of us has issues, we can talk about it." 🗨️

a little girl," May says. "When I hung up the phone with them, they had already sent all her information to me in an email. We had her medical records and pictures. I printed it straight out and showed it to a nurse practitioner. Then we made an appointment with a pediatrician."

In October of that year, the Mays left for Beijing, China, to meet their daughter and bring her home to Kentucky. "The main reason we chose a Chinese adoption over adopting in the U.S. is that, in America, there is a six-week time period that the birth parents can change their minds and take the baby back," May says. "We had already gone through so many struggles with our miscarriages that we didn't want to take that on. We knew that once we went to China and got this little girl that she would be ours from the moment we got her."

And she was. On Oct. 25, 2010, the Mays held their daughter for the first time. They now celebrate that date as Madison's "Gotcha Day" — the day a person joins a family through adoption. The next day, the paperwork was official.

As part of the adoption process, the couple had to stay in China for several more weeks, which turned out to be a good thing, May says. "When we first got Madison, all we wanted to do was take her home," she says. "But staying there actually turned out to be a very important part of the process. We were able to bond with her, but we were also away from everything here — the ringing phones and all the distractions. We needed that time to establish a bond and commit to our family."





Bringing Economic

HOPE

Broadband networks recharge rural communities

BY JEN CALHOUN

When Bud Layne engineered a new design for conveyor belts back in 1989, the internet was hardly a thought in most people's minds. Relatively few had heard of it, and even fewer used it. So, as technical as his Glasgow, Kentucky-based company may have been, internet access didn't matter.

"But all that's changed. Today, the Span Tech CEO and founder depends on high-speed internet from his local rural telecommunications cooperative to send engineering design files across the world in the time it takes to sip coffee.

Without that kind of access, Layne couldn't sell his conveyor belts to multinational food producers like Kraft. He also couldn't employ between 80 and 90 people in a town of less than 15,000. "Every design layout we do has to be redone, on average, five times," he says. "All this stuff moves back and forth digitally over our network. These are some big drawings I'm talking about."

Rural-based companies like Span Tech are still an exception, however. The U.S. Census Bureau's 2016 American Community Survey found that only 17 percent of businesses operate in rural communities, defined as nonurban towns of fewer than 50,000 residents and sparsely populated

High-speed internet allows Span Tech, a conveyor system manufacturer, to transfer engineering designs across the world.



regions. The number of companies working in rural areas, however, could increase if high-speed internet networks continue to appear in all regions of the country.

GOING COUNTRY

Entrepreneurs are taking note of rural success stories, according to a June 25, 2018, story from the business website Fundera.com. Survey data from the 12 Federal Reserve Banks found that rural communities outperform urban centers on many metrics of successful entrepreneurship.

"Rural businesses are smaller and grow

more slowly, the data from the Small Business Credit Survey shows," the article says. "But they're also more likely to be profitable than their urban counterparts and have longer survival rates. Plus, entrepreneurs in rural areas have an easier time getting business financing, which is an important factor in scaling a business."

Small and large companies have either popped up in rural regions across the country or, like Span Tech, stayed put thanks to expanded digital access. One example is Above All Aerial in rural Minnesota. The company uses drone technology to

Digital dollars

help farmers across the country scout crops and provide damage assessment. Another is Big Tex Trailers, based in Mount Pleasant, Texas. With a workforce of about 2,000, it serves clients throughout the United States and as far north as Western Canada. Also, a U.S. Army veteran turned his love of pop culture into his business, Tennessee Toys and Comics, in a town of about 5,000 people. Now, he sells to collectors around the world.

THE HIGH COST OF DIGITAL DARKNESS

If high-speed internet access fails to expand in rural areas, however, jobs and the economy can't grow, says Wally Tyner, an agricultural economics professor at Purdue University. Tyner is one of the authors of a detailed 2018 policy brief that shows the economic benefits gained from installing broadband networks in rural areas of Indiana. Through intensive research, Tyner's team found that the economic benefits outweighed the costs of fiber networks at a ratio of 4:1.

"I always like to ask my audience this question when I'm presenting this policy brief: 'Is there anybody in this room who thinks rural electrification was a bad idea?'" Tyner says, referring to the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 that offered low-cost government loans to rural electric cooperatives so people outside of the nation's cities could have access to safe, reliable and affordable electricity.

The answer, Tyner says, is always no. "I don't care how conservative or how liberal you are. No one will say it was a bad idea, even though it's the government getting involved," he says.

Without the initiative, large areas of the country — as well as millions of people — could have gone without electricity for decades, leaving them literally and figuratively in the dark as their city-dwelling counterparts progressed without them.

So what does this have to do with high-speed internet access? Everything, says Tyner, who headed a detailed 2018 policy brief that shows the economic benefits gained from installing broadband networks in rural areas of Indiana.

The Purdue brief found that if rural communities can access the type of broadband networks available in larger cities, there will be more jobs, more industry, better education, more medical opportunities and a host of other benefits.

And while installation of this kind of fiber optic equipment is expensive, the result is that the fiber networks end up paying for themselves many times over. "Today, the economy runs on digits," Tyner says. "If you're on the other side of the digital divide, you're up that creek without a paddle. It's really important for rural areas to have." 🗨️

It's no secret that almost every business and government entity relies on high-speed internet. Farms, manufacturing firms, schools and cottage industries depend on the internet for everything from relaying and retrieving information to marketing and sales. But high-speed internet also brings money to local, state and federal economies. The Hudson Institute, a research organization, released a report in 2016 called "The Economic Impact of Rural Broadband." The report found that rural broadband providers across the country directly added \$24.1 billion to the states in which they operated in 2015 alone. Of this, \$17.2 billion was through their own operations and \$6.9 billion was through the follow-on impact of their operations, the report says.

ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF THE RURAL BROADBAND INDUSTRY BY STATE IN 2015

Alabama	Kentucky	South Carolina	Tennessee
DIRECT IMPACT	DIRECT IMPACT	DIRECT IMPACT	DIRECT IMPACT
\$241 million	\$312 million	\$618 million	\$532 million
INDIRECT IMPACT	INDIRECT IMPACT	INDIRECT IMPACT	INDIRECT IMPACT
\$87 million	\$102 million	\$230 million	\$247 million
TOTAL IMPACT	TOTAL IMPACT	TOTAL IMPACT	TOTAL IMPACT
\$328 million	\$414 million	\$848 million	\$779 million
EMPLOYMENT	EMPLOYMENT	EMPLOYMENT	EMPLOYMENT
1,014 jobs	1,239 jobs	2,725 jobs	2,606 jobs

→ Source: The Hudson Institute's "The Economic Impact of Rural Broadband," 2016.

The peanut butter girl!

LOCAL STUDENT ASKS FOR FOOD PANTRY SUPPLIES ON HER BIRTHDAY

BY JEN CALHOUN

Tenisha Castle likes “Harry Potter” books and playing with pretend wands made out of chopsticks. She also likes her 4H club and playing with her cats: Duke, Panda and Callie. Next year, she hopes to join the tennis team at her middle school. One day, she plans to go to law school and become president of the United States.

And while she’s OK with everybody knowing these things about her, what she really wants them to know is that she’s one of the lucky ones — her childhood happens to be fun, full of play and laughter. She doesn’t experience true need, and she doesn’t go a day without a meal. But all this hasn’t closed Tenisha’s eyes to those who might not have it as good as she does. “I know there are people out there who need,” the Morgan County Middle School sixth-grader says. “I think that people should know that not everybody’s doing OK.”



Tenisha Castle, 11, believes giving is better than receiving. Instead of gifts, she asks for peanut butter on her birthday to donate it to the local food pantry.

GIVING, NOT RECEIVING

That's why Tenisha, who is 11, started asking for jars of peanut butter for her June 16 birthday about two years ago. She donates it to Christ's Pantry of Morgan County. Like canned meats, canned vegetables, dried spaghetti, oatmeal and cereal, peanut butter is one of the nonperishable food items that food pantries need most.

For Tenisha, it was a way to pay her good fortune forward while reminding others that many people still struggle to feed their families. She doesn't miss the toys and games she might have received, either. "I have plenty of things," she says. "I don't need any more. But I know the food pantry needs peanut butter."

In 2017, Tenisha's birthday request resulted in 123 jars of peanut butter. Last year, she received around 200 jars. "Some were from people at my church," she says. "Others were from my friends and family." In addition, she participated in a community service project at Morgan County Middle School where she collected other nonperishable items, like macaroni and cheese and ramen noodles.

KEEPING IT GOING

If it sounds like a childhood lark, think again. Tenisha, who also serves as the reigning Miss Pre-Teen Whitley County Fair, plans to build a career around helping others. When she gets older, she hopes to attend law school.

"There are a lot of people who need help, and one of the things that they need help with is going to court," she says. "I want to back them up, and I want them to get on the right track. I know a lot of people struggle in life, and it would be good to have a job where I can help them on their way to finding a job and making money so they can support themselves and their children. That way, they can have a place to live and have a family and have success." 📞



How to donate

To donate peanut butter or any other nonperishable food items to Christ's Pantry of Morgan County, call 606-743-4356 to arrange a drop-off. The pantry is at 310 Ruth Ave. in West Liberty.

Other food banks in the region include:

Elliott County Christian Community Center Inc.

157 Main St., Sandy Hook
606-738-4095

Dayspring Assembly of God

1517 Main St., Frenchburg
606-768-6779

Project Worth

Industrial Park Road, Means
606-768-4767

Ann's Backpack Buddies

20 N. Washington St., Campton
606-668-3712

Catholic Church of the Good Shepherd

Campton
606-668-3731

Needed items include the following:

- * cheese or peanut butter crackers
- * beef jerky
- * applesauce
- * pudding
- * fruit cups
- * granola bars
- * cereal bars
- * soups
- * ramen noodles
- * tomato juice
- * packaged nuts
- * trail mix
- * fruit snacks
- * dried fruits
- * peanut butter
- * pasta
- * spaghetti sauce
- * canned vegetables and fruit
- * macaroni and cheese
- * chips/pretzels/Goldfish crackers
- * boxed drinks and juices
- * canned meats and fish
- * rice
- * beans

The beautiful simplicity of hummus

A few basic ingredients create a healthy favorite

Hummus is proof that the best things in life are often simple. “I make mine with garbanzo beans, lemon, salt, tahini and some olive oil. That’s it,” says Solomon Babylon, owner of Babylon Gyros in Richmond, Kentucky. “It’s really the tahini — sesame paste — that makes it.”

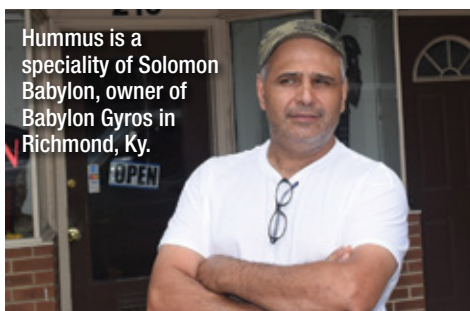
Since opening his restaurant 10 years ago in the charming home of Eastern Kentucky University just a few miles south of Lexington, Babylon has seen a marked increase in the amount of hummus he prepares daily. He serves it as a dip with whole rounds of grilled pita bread or as a garnish for falafel.

“It’s interesting,” he says. “In the 1980s, it was Chinese food. In the ’90s, it was Mexican. In the early 2000s, it was Indian food. There were Indian restaurants everywhere. But now, in the 2010s, people have started turning to Middle Eastern food.”

Hummus includes lots of good nutrients, such as calcium, folate, fiber, healthy fats and magnesium. When it comes to good-for-you ingredients and foods to make our lives better, hummus is a tasty option. “You go into any grocery store and see hummus all over the place,” says Babylon, a native of Jordan.

At the eatery in downtown Richmond, though, hummus is made from scratch. The restaurant goes through about 50 pounds of dried garbanzo beans every week, and Babylon makes hummus three to four times daily, Monday through Saturday. “I make it batch by batch, every two to three hours,” he says.

Though his restaurant serves traditional hummus only, Babylon says there are a number of ingredients you can add to it. “One of the best I’ve ever had is avocado hummus,” he says. “But there’s eggplant hummus and others. You can add spinach



Hummus is a speciality of Solomon Babylon, owner of Babylon Gyros in Richmond, Ky.

to it, red peppers. But remember, you can’t be stingy with the tahini. Tahini makes the hummus. Taste as you go.”

And, he advises, if the recipe calls for it, be sure to add enough lemon. You want a slightly sharp edge to your hummus.

“And you know what’s one of the best tastes you’ll ever have?” he asks. “Hummus topped with rice. Hummus is a base for anything you might want to put on it. That’s why I serve hummus with whole pieces of pita. That way, people can tear off a piece of pita, spread some hummus on it and add some gyro meat or shawarma (roasted meat cooked on a spit and shaved) and make a sandwich.”



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

TRADITIONAL HUMMUS

- 3 cups dry garbanzo beans, soaked overnight
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 3/4 cup tahini paste, or more, to taste
- 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice, or more, to taste
- Salt, to taste
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil, for drizzling

Rinse the beans and place in a pot. Fill with enough water to cover by at least 1 inch. Allow to sit overnight. Drain beans. Then add water to cover by at least an inch. Bring to a boil; then reduce heat and simmer over medium heat until the beans are very soft, 1 to 2 hours.

Drain the beans, reserving some of the water to use later. Transfer the beans to a blender and blend the beans until smooth, adding 1/2 cup of olive oil gradually. Add some of the reserved water if needed to help it blend. Add the tahini and blend in along with the lemon juice. Add salt. Taste and correct seasonings, adding more tahini, lemon and salt, as needed.

Spread the hummus into a flat serving dish and garnish with a drizzle of olive oil. Serve with pita bread, pita chips, carrots, celery, cucumbers or a combination of any or all of them.

AVOCADO HUMMUS

When in a pinch, Solomon Babylon uses canned garbanzo beans, but he recommends using the best you can find, preferably beans from Turkey.

- 1 (15-ounce) can garbanzo beans, well-rinsed and drained
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 1/2 tablespoons tahini, or more, to taste
- 3 tablespoons fresh lime juice

Traditional Hummus



Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

- 1/8 teaspoon cumin
- 2 medium, ripe avocados, cored and peeled
- Red pepper flakes, for garnish

In a blender or food processor, pulse garbanzo beans, olive oil, tahini and lime juice until smooth, about 2 minutes. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Add cumin and avocados and pulse mixture until smooth and creamy, 1-2 minutes longer.

Serve topped with more olive oil and sprinkle with red pepper flakes, if desired. Serve with pita or tortilla chips.

RED BEET HUMMUS

- 2 pounds red beets, scrubbed (about 2 large beets)
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 2 tablespoons ground coriander
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2-1 cup tahini, or to taste
- Kosher salt

Heat the oven to 425 degrees. In an oven-proof Dutch oven, cover the beets with water and bring to a boil on the stovetop. Then keep covered and braise in the oven for about 2 hours, until very tender. Use a knife or fork to test for tenderness.

With a slotted spoon, transfer the beets to a cutting board. When cool enough to handle, slip off the skins and cut the beets into small, 1-inch pieces, spread them on a baking sheet and refrigerate until cold, about 1 hour.

In a food processor, combine the braised beets with the garlic, coriander and lemon juice and pulse until finely chopped. With the food processor on, slowly drizzle in the olive oil until incorporated and the beet puree is smooth. Scrape into a bowl and whisk in the tahini. Season with salt and serve with pita bread or pita chips. 📺



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