



Mountain Telephone

BROADBAND:
HELPING YOU WORK



MAY/JUNE 2020

CONNECTION



FRESH AND LOCAL

Menifee County Farmers
Market keeps growing

BRIDGING THE GAP

Chinese lessons prepare
students for success

MAKING A CONNECTION

Broadband links home and
work to the world



By SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO

NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association


Staying well, staying connected

It's late March as I work on my thoughts for this issue. Knowing that the magazine won't reach your mailbox for another four weeks, I asked myself, "What will the world look like in late April to early May?" So much has changed in just the past two weeks, it's hard to imagine what the immediate future holds.

There are, however, a few things I know with great certainty. In this time of crisis, community-based broadband providers across America have stepped up their already deep commitments to keeping you connected. As Americans are increasingly compelled to work or study from home, use telemedicine, and lean on virtual tools to connect with loved ones, the work of your local broadband company has become more essential than ever — for you and for the national economy.

Working with one voice through NTCA, these providers have been on top of national issues such as adopting the FCC's "Keep Americans Connected" pledge, communicating with Congress on the importance of the "Keeping Critical Connections Act," and advocating for support to help small broadband providers ensure internet connectivity when it's extremely critical.

Locally, providers like yours are balancing employee safety with their commitment to keeping networks functioning. In times of crisis, we see more strongly than ever that these providers' investment in building resilient networks — and in the people who operate them — is foundational to our society.

Stay well, stay healthy and stay connected. We will get through this together. 

WE WERE HERE

when our communities needed a modern, reliable communications network.



WE ARE HERE

to help you stay connected during this time of national crisis.



WE WILL BE HERE

supporting the recovery through a broadband network that builds businesses, creates jobs and drives the economy.

**PROUD TO BE YOUR
COMMUNITY-BASED
BROADBAND PROVIDER**

Unlocking the potential of rural businesses

Story by NOBLE SPRAYBERRY

By turning to digital technologies, more than half of small businesses in rural areas expanded their customer base not only locally but also throughout their state, and about one-third grew their market in neighboring states. In fact, about 16% of rural businesses even used digital resources to expand into international markets.

Those were only a few findings from a study Amazon commissioned from the U.S. Chamber Technology Engagement Center that showed how broadband has the potential to further benefit the economy in rural communities and the nation as a whole.

What's the possible upside of improving access to digital tools such as broadband? Rural small businesses have the potential to be critical blocks in the foundation needed to strengthen the nation's economy.

Increasing the number of businesses adopting online tools and digital services could support thousands of jobs. Businesses with revenue of less than \$100,000 have the greatest potential to benefit.

Increased adoption of technology could be responsible for generating billions of dollars of revenue, and Southern states have the most room to grow.

Results of the study released in 2019 were compiled from a survey sent to more than 5,000 rural small businesses across the country. And the report made three policy recommendations that could help make the projections a reality.

CONNECTIVITY

Selling online depends on internet and mobile phone service. About 27% of rural residents lack access to high-speed internet, compared with 92% of all Americans who can access faster services. The private and public sectors should continue to identify opportunities to expand connectivity through initiatives such as the creation of new infrastructure.

NEW POLICIES COULD EASE CONCERNS OF RURAL SMALL BUSINESSES

66% of rural small businesses say poor internet or cell-phone connectivity negatively impacts their business.

38% of rural small businesses say they can't hire the talent with the right digital skills in their area.

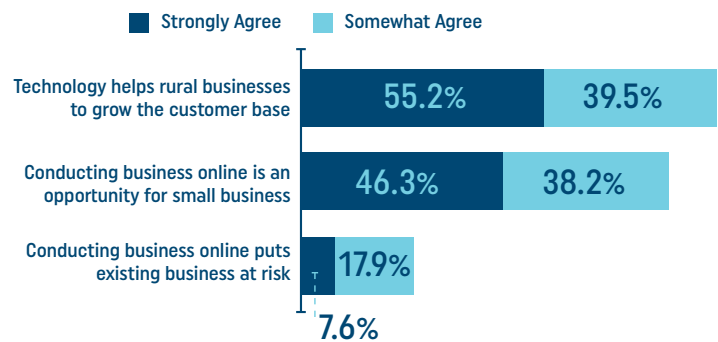
Nearly **41%** of rural small businesses agree that policy-makers should create incentive programs that make it easier for rural small businesses to incorporate digital technology into their daily operations.

TRAINING

There should be a goal of increasing the talent pipeline of candidates trained in digital skills, such as the use of cloud computing and digital marketing. Such a workforce could offset the existing shortage of IT professionals in rural areas.

DIGITAL TOOLS

Increasing the adoption of digital training and digital tools by rural small businesses will allow them to better scale their operations. This study highlights two points: the positive benefits for rural small businesses effectively utilizing digital tools to sell online and the potential for businesses currently underutilizing those digital tools to grow. ☑



Source: Unlocking the Digital Potential of Rural America, A U.S. Chamber Technology Engagement Center study commissioned by Amazon.



ESSENTIAL SERVICES?

Early in 2020, we didn't necessarily have any reason to consider what the "essential" goods and services were in our lives. As we know, that all changed this spring when many "nonessential" workers were sent home and we were urged to only leave home for "essential" trips.



SHAYNE ISON
General Manager

Amidst this strange season we're in, two things have become crystal clear for me:

1. Broadband and communications services are essential for our community and,
2. When our community counts on our team at Mountain, our employees shine.

I'd like to use some of this space to say how proud I am of our employees. These men and women help navigate this unprecedented time for our cooperative, communicate changes with our members, and make sure our network does its job connecting all of you.

I'm also proud of our community and would like to sincerely thank the medical personnel, grocery store workers, first responders, civic leaders, all utilities and so many others who are still working tirelessly to keep our community running during this COVID-19 crisis.

ESSENTIAL CONNECTION

Part of the reason our team continues to work so hard is we realize what a telephone and broadband connection means to members of our community. Very early on in the coronavirus crisis, we saw government officials, school administrators, pastors and even entertainers embrace digital content.

Some of that information is critical to help students continue learning and to keep people safe. In other instances, it may be purely for entertainment. But I believe that when we were asked to remain in our homes, having access to all of the quality entertainment options a fiber-based communication network provides was a blessing.

The industry statistics I've seen certainly indicate people are putting communication networks — such as phone, internet and TV — to work. Carriers reported a strong increase in voice phone call activity and call duration during the first couple of weeks after leaders began encouraging people to stay home. At that same time, web traffic grew significantly.

At your home, that increase may have been children taking virtual field trips or accessing school resources. Worshipers across our region continue to be online throughout the week streaming church services. Many people are working from home over their broadband connection. Teleconferencing platforms saw an enormous increase in traffic, according to Wired Magazine. Maybe you called a friend or family member to catch up instead of visiting in person.

From an entertainment standpoint, networks like ours have seen a surge. Nielsen, the company famous for its TV ratings, said that people staying home leads to an almost 60% increase in the amount of TV we watch.

I don't bring all this up to bore you, but I wish to underscore a point. The fiber-based communication network we provide is an essential service both when times are dark and in the brighter days I know are coming. 📞

The Mountain Telephone Connection is a bimonthly newsletter published by Mountain Rural Telephone Cooperative, © 2020. 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:



Kristina Capo from Craft Legacy Farms sells fresh, locally sourced foods at the Menifee County Farmers Market. See story Page 8.



Photographers **WANTED!**

Have you snapped a breathtaking photo of Bath, Elliott, Menifee, Morgan or Wolfe counties? Mountain Telephone is now accepting digital photos for our 2021 directory and calendar. Each submission can include up to two photos and must be digital high-quality JPEG images. Please send all submissions to Lisa Fannin at lfannin@mountaintelephone.com. 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 25.



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Rest, relax and rejuvenate

A vacation does not necessarily require a plane ticket, hotel room or even a tank of gas. In fact, whether you're on a budget or just looking for a way to unplug from the stresses of day-to-day life, there are plenty of relaxing options if you never leave home.

After all, any break is a good break, so here are a few resources, suggestions and tips for those interested in unwinding without heading out.

Explore



- ▶ Are you a burgeoning birder? iBird, Peterson Birds of North America, the Audubon Society and others have created apps to help both the novice and experienced birder. Apps may include photos, artwork and birdsongs to help you identify birds where you live. You can even earn an online certificate from birdercertification.org.
- ▶ Arborday.org offers an online database for identifying trees across the U.S. along with its "What Tree Is That?" pocket field guide. Snap a photo of a leaf and the website will help identify it.

- ▶ Backyards are meant for play and family barbecues, but take a closer look. Grab a magnifying glass and learn what's out there beyond the grass. Create a nature trail for kids and learn about the plants, insects and animals living in your backyard.
- ▶ Geocaching is a good old-fashioned treasure hunt with a twist. Try the app from Geocaching.com and get out in nature to find "treasures" others have left. You'll also learn some handy navigation skills.



Get playful



▶ Coloring isn't just for kids. It can help adults reduce stress and anxiety, improve vision and focus, and even sleep better! Best of all, coloring supplies are inexpensive and available at stores and online retailers everywhere.

▶ Pull the board games out of the closet and dust them off. It's time for a family-friendly faceoff. Traditionalists may prefer games like Monopoly, Life or Scrabble, but conservative estimates count tens of thousands of available board games.

▶ Discover your inner Monet with an online art class. A quick internet search for online art classes yields results of everything from basic drawing to comic book art to figure drawing and more!



▶ Piece together a pretty picture and flex your mental muscles at the same time. Family jigsaw puzzles use a combination of small, medium and large pieces so everyone can join in on the fun. Try puzzlewarehouse.com for a giant selection of puzzles for all ages.

Books and music

▶ Did you know there's a free digital library of classic books? Project Gutenberg offers digital downloads of titles ranging from "Pride and Prejudice" to "Peter Pan." Just visit gutenberg.org.

▶ For those who believe "all the world's a stage," playbill.com offers a range of resources, including guides to finding streaming videos of stage performances.

▶ Check with your local library about e-book selections using apps such as [SimplyE](#) and [Libby](#).



▶ If you need help selecting a book to read, do a quick Google search for Time magazine's All-Time 100 novels. If mysteries are your thing, visit theedgars.com for a list of the latest award winners. And for sci-fi fans, pop over to nebulas.sfw.org.



Go virtual

▶ Consider a virtual tour, and begin with a visit to google.com/earth. Search for one of the 31 virtual visits to national parks such as Acadia, Everglades and Joshua Tree. They're fantastic.

▶ Check out Virtualiteach.com for a guide to online tours of places such as the Louvre, the National Museum of History, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and other popular venues across the world.

▶ Many zoos offer entertaining live webcams, particularly if the viewer catches the animals at just the right time. A great first stop is the San Diego Zoo: zoo.sandiegozoo.org/live-cams.

▶ And don't miss artsandculture.google.com for tours of The Modern Museum of Art, the CERN laboratory and much more. Seriously, this is a must-visit. ☑





A FRESH TAKE ON local food

MENIFEE COUNTY FARMERS MARKET KEEPS GROWING

Story by JEN CALHOUN | Photography by MELISSA GAINES

Back in the early '80s, local farmer Marvin Botts set up shop in a parking lot in downtown Frenchburg to sell his extra produce. When another grower joined him, they realized they were onto something.

“They got with an extension agent, and they decided to start a farmers market with regular hours and regular days of operation,” says Robert Doyle, president of the Meniffee County Farmers Market, which begins its 39th year as an organized market in June. “It started very organically.”

SUPER FARMERS MARKET

These days, however, the market sells more than spare snap peas or tomatoes. Now it's jam packed with locally produced items that range from greens to meats and pretty much everything in between. All of the foods are fresh, and all are grown by people who live in Meniffee and its surrounding counties.

“We'll accept all kinds of vendors, but they have to grow or make what they sell,” Doyle says. “We don't allow reselling.”

That restriction hasn't kept the Meniffee County Farmers Market from growing, he says. It has actually exploded in popularity, bringing more vendors and more shoppers. “We've expanded our product line in the past couple of years,” Doyle says. “Last year, for the first time, we had a vendor that sold fresh eggs every week. We also had a vendor who sold pork and turkey and plans to expand that. In addition, we have vendors who sell baked goods, artisans who sell their handmade jewelry, and people who make candles and soaps.”



The market's vendors also make it easy for customers to buy their products. Many sellers accept SNAP and vouchers from WIC, the Seniors Farmers Market Nutrition program and the FarmRx program. Some even accept credit cards, using readers on their tablets.

INSTA-FAME

Doyle says that when he started as a vendor at the market in 2013, there were about three or four others who sold there regularly. But with the development of the Menifee County Farmers Market Facebook page, those numbers started growing.

"We had up to 10 vendors selling on the same day last year," he says. "We have Facebook and Instagram accounts, and that's been the best way for customers to find out what's new at the market and what our hours are. Facebook is how we've reached the most people, and I think it would be difficult to get the word out without it."

The popularity of the market has been good for customers and vendors alike. Charlene and Wallace Smallwood, who run a Menifee County farm, say they've been coming to Frenchburg on a regular basis to sell their fresh produce for about 20 years.

On a typical market Friday, they'll get started picking and cleaning at about 7 a.m. After loading the truck, they'll arrive at the market around 3 p.m. to set up for the 4 p.m. start time. Then they'll bundle up items, chat with customers and trade stories until the market closes at 7 p.m.

The Smallwoods' booth is a popular one

with customers, and they enjoy meeting people and passing the time with them, Charlene Smallwood says. Throughout the season, they'll grow and sell corn, potatoes, green beans, squash, cucumbers, beets, peas, tomatoes and more. Sometimes, they'll grow watermelons and pumpkins, too. "We have a little bit of everything," she says. "It takes that, because you've got to please everybody."

The market has been a decent moneymaker for the couple since Wallace Smallwood retired from a job at Woods-bend Youth Development Center a few years back. But it's hard work. On market Fridays, the Smallwoods usually stay until dark. Then they get up to take any extra items to a farmers market in a different town the next day.

Being a vendor isn't easy, but the market's customers appreciate their efforts, Doyle says. "We serve a valuable need," he says. "The market is a good place to get fresh, locally grown produce, but it's also a good community gathering spot." 📱

Fresh IS IN —————

The Menifee County Farmers Market generally opens around the second week of June, but this year, it could open earlier. Hours are 10 a.m.-1 p.m. on Tuesdays and 4-7 p.m. on Fridays. The market runs through the last week of October at the Farmers Market Pavilion, 62 Back St., in downtown Frenchburg. To keep up with the latest news and products, visit the Menifee County Farmers Market Facebook and Instagram pages.



Wallace and Charlene Smallwood have been regular sellers at the market for nearly 20 years.



Kristina Capo with Craft Legacy Farms offers dozens of fresh produce items almost every week.



A trusty solution

Broadband creates a key resource

Access to fast internet service is an increasingly important resource, a realization playing out in large and small ways for rural communities across the nation. And state and local governments are striving to make it easier for residents to take advantage of new communications resources.

For many, the benefits created by access to broadband are deeply personal, and the choices made by one Tennessee family illustrate the possibilities.

Aaron and Becca West lived in Spring Hill, a Nashville suburb, when a national communications provider brought high-speed internet to their neighborhood. Aaron West took advantage, working from home and eliminating his 45-minute commute to a software company. Also, the new technology allowed him to grow his own business, an audio and visual consulting company serving churches.

When the family opted to relocate to the more rural area of Crossville, Tennessee, they did not leave behind the opportunities made possible through broadband. The local telephone cooperative, Ben Lomand Connect, provides 1 Gbps internet service

through a fiber optic network. And the couple took advantage.

“I’ve had the company for about nine years, but I couldn’t operate it the way I can operate it now,” West says. “The fiber was so huge for the contract work. It was so much easier to communicate. When we were looking for homes here, we immediately ruled them out if they didn’t have high-speed internet access.”

Broadband has also helped the career of Becca West, a teacher by training. She connected with a program called GoGoKid, allowing her to use the internet to teach English to Chinese students. The arrangement also made it easier for her to home-school the couple’s two daughters.

While fast internet access improves their connectivity to the world, the family also experiences its capacity to create a deeper connection with each other. “We’re all here together, and we’re very intentional about doing things together,” Aaron West says. “We’re able to go to parks and libraries. We’re freed up to focus on our family instead of it being career first and family second.”

UNTAPPED POTENTIAL

Stories such as that of the West family are only the beginning. The full potential of broadband remains untapped, and states nationwide can benefit as fast networks reach rural areas.

Last year the U.S. Chamber Technology Engagement Center released results of a study commissioned by Amazon that found Texas could add as many as 23,433 jobs in rural communities over three years.



Becca West teaches English to Chinese children via the internet.



Aaron West, a Tennessee resident, in his home office.

And hitting that mark could generate an additional \$6.6 billion in annual sales and \$963 million in annual wages.

While the Lone Star State leads all states in potential gain from broadband growth, both Ohio and Mississippi could also see significant gains. The study emphasized that achieving the potential growth would require investments such as an increase in rural broadband and cellphone access, as well as growth of the number of people with digital skills necessary for these jobs.

With so much potential at stake, local communities are incentivized to promote broadband-based jobs, even if that means updating local regulations, as one Wisconsin county has done in recent years.

EMBRACING OPPORTUNITY

Once, home-based businesses in Wisconsin's Bayfield County were required to secure permits to operate. Now, the county takes a more common-sense approach as the description of a home-based worker evolves.

"We've recognized the direction of business in America today and around the

world," says Rob Schierman, director of planning and zoning for Bayfield County. "We created some breathing room for when a business would need a permit and when it doesn't. We're creating opportunity while still protecting the integrity of neighborhoods."

The area was one of the first to receive the state's Telecommuter Forward! Certification, one step in promoting work-from-home jobs and taking advantage of the internet network of Norvado, a telecommunications cooperative in Cable, Wisconsin.

"We're providing a means to try to stimulate some of that employment activity coming to Bayfield County and to take advantage of the fiber optics that we have here with Norvado," Schierman says.

The issue is personal for Schierman and his wife, Jennifer, who understand the benefits of telecommuting.

Her employer is based in Minneapolis, but she works from home. The need for high-speed internet connectivity is a necessity. "We connect via phone, and we hold meetings on Skype," she says. "It works. It's very slick."

Like other telecommuters, she enjoys the freedom to get up and move, to go walk the dog or to pitch in a load of laundry. "It definitely makes life easier," she says.

Rob Schierman says that freedom is part of the draw for telecommuters who live in Bayfield County or those considering relocating there. "The younger workforce doesn't like to be married to a desk or a location," he says. "They're a little bit more fluid in their lifestyle and like to be where they can hop on a bike trail or go fishing or go kayaking. They can take advantage of the resources in Bayfield County — we're uniquely situated along Lake Superior and close to a lot of undeveloped areas where recreation is still plentiful." 🗨️



Jennifer Schierman telecommutes to the city.



A whole new world

Morgan County High students learn Chinese language and culture

Story by JEN CALHOUN | Photography by MELISSA GAINES

Every weekday during sixth period, Lucas Cole voyages to the other side of the world. There, he learns a new language, figures out a different culture and prepares himself for a world that is growing closer by the day.

But he doesn't need to pack a bag. Lucas, a freshman at Morgan County High School, is one of about 30 students studying Chinese language and culture through a program that can help Kentucky students gain an edge in international relations and business.

LEARNING CURVE

The program is part of the Confucius Institute, an organization that develops partnerships among various Chinese universities and businesses and Kentucky schools. Together, they offer classes for elementary, middle and high school students taught by licensed, native Chinese-speaking teachers.

Morgan County High School's teacher is Xi Nie, a native of mainland China. Her first name is Nie, pronounced Nee-yeah, and her last name is Xi, pronounced Shee. Unlike Western cultures, the family name in China comes first.

Xi has been in the U.S. since the beginning of the 2019-20 school year. She plans to teach Chinese language and culture at the high school level through the 2020-21 school year, and she teaches four levels of Chinese classes spread over three periods. Students in level 3 and 4 classes attend at the same time.

Learning the language is important, Xi says, because it helps the two cultures gain a better understanding and appreciation for one another. "Language is the tool that opens the world," she says. "If they can learn the language, they can learn a lot about the world. If you learn Chinese, you can learn a lot about China. It's a wonderful way to connect or make connections, so I think it's important."

Xi says her students help her, too. "Actually, I think my students are my English teachers," she says.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURE

Learning Mandarin is only part of the students' education, however. Lucas has grown increasingly interested in the richness of China's culture since he started taking Chinese when he was a third grader at Ezel Elementary School through the same program. "Chinese culture has been around a lot longer than American culture, so it's very different," he says.

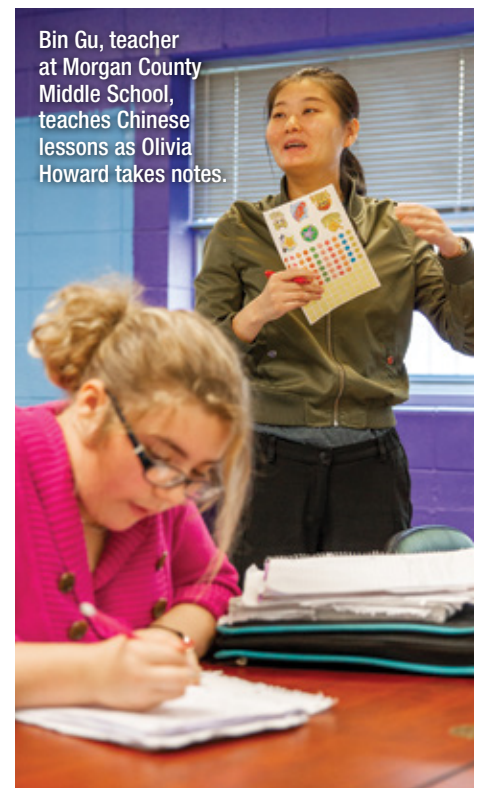
One of the cultural aspects that fascinates him is Peking opera, a type of performance that combines music, vocal performance, miming, dance and acrobatics. Unlike Western operas, the stage sets are sparse. However, the costumes are elaborate and colorful, making the performers the highlight of the event. "I've learned a few of the songs from some Chinese operas," Lucas says.

During class, Xi uses presentations she prepares from online tools, along with curriculum from the Confucius Institute.

"I have a computer in my classroom that helps me search for some materials, and sometimes I can find videos on YouTube that help them learn about Chinese culture and language," she says.

LOOKING AHEAD

Lucas, who plans to be a teacher, hopes to travel to China one day, possibly to teach English. Or he might like to instruct Chinese people in the U.S. He says every time he learns a new word or phrase, he learns how to write the corresponding Chinese character.




Bin Gu, teacher at Morgan County Middle School, teaches Chinese lessons as Olivia Howard takes notes.



Lucas Cole and Layla Perry learn Chinese at school through a program that helps bridge language and culture gaps.

But he admits it's a tough language for a freshman high school student in the U.S. to learn. "Right now, I pretty much know the basics," he says. "It just depends on the topics as to whether I could say or understand something."

Going forward, he thinks learning the language could give him an edge for college and job applications, as well as in everyday life. "I think it gives me more opportunities for my future," he says. "I think it would probably be good if more of us knew Chinese because it would help relations between China and America. But also, it's just a really interesting language to learn." 



Sylvia Carter, grant writer, and Esther Cain, Morgan County School board member.



Why learn Chinese?

The world is getting smaller every day, and learning to speak Chinese helps bring people together in ways that include trade and international relations. Still, the skill is scarce in many companies, even those that do business with China. Knowing the language and the culture can be an attractive asset for many recruiters.

A billion reasons

More than 1.2 billion people speak Chinese, including many in Singapore and Taiwan. Knowing Chinese can help give students an edge as they move through life and work.

Exercising the brain

Learning a new language also takes brain power. While many English speakers primarily use the left temporal lobe of the brain, Mandarin speakers use both sides, according to the Keats Language School, which teaches Chinese.

Farm Fresh

LOCAL INGREDIENTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE



Farm-to-table dining isn't a flash in the pan. "It isn't a trend," says Tommy Hines, executive chef at Pursell Farms in Sylacauga, Alabama. "It's here to stay. I look forward to sourcing locally and cooking with the seasons."

When it comes to food philosophies, few are as straightforward as the farm-to-table movement. Simply, it's food sourced as close to home as possible — if not from a personal garden then from a farm close enough that whatever is harvested one day can be on your plate the next, if not sooner. In addition to being more healthful, with no added ingredients, the farm-to-table philosophy supports the local economy, so it's a win-win for food purveyors, cooks and diners.

Hines, a native of New Orleans, grew up and honed his culinary skills in a part of the country where farm-to-table is a way of life, with a warmer climate that allows for year-round produce and within easy reach of the fruits of the sea.

"We cook with the seasons, using foods that are out our back doors," he says. "We use Creole tomatoes when they're in season. We use Louisiana peaches when they're in season. And the fresh seafood in the Gulf and the foods that are at your back door. Everything that's available to you. That's just how I learned to cook, and



Tommy Hines, executive chef at Pursell Farms in Sylacauga, Alabama, finishes a plate of vegetables with boiled peanut hummus.

I think that's the best way to cook.

"Why cook something that's not from your area?" Hines says. "First of all, you're going to pay more money, but it's not as good quality. You know, you pick up a tomato in December, and it's nothing like those wonderful tomatoes you can get in July and August."

When Hines started at Pursell Farms in the fall of 2019, he began a relationship with farmers and other food producers in the Sylacauga area. And his menus at the resort's two dining venues, Old Tom's Pub and Arrington, reflect the partnership between chef and farmers with dishes that change according to the season.

In cooler months you may find crab au gratin, kale and brussels sprout salad, or chicken and sausage gumbo.

But when the weather warms, you'll find dishes featuring the bounty of summer, such as Hines' heirloom tomato and peach salad with olive crumble or the strawberry-rhubarb shortcake with whipped mascarpone.

Hines likes to think of farm-to-table eating as something that comes full circle — from the ground to the plate and, if you compost, back into the ground again. "I think people should be eating what they have the ability to grow or get from their local farmers markets," he says.



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

Heirloom tomato and peach salad with olive crumble

- 4 large heirloom tomatoes (about 2 1/2 pounds)
- 2 medium yellow peaches
- Fleur de sel or kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1/4 cup torn fresh basil leaves, plus whole leaves for garnish
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 tablespoons chardonnay vinegar
- 4 (2 1/2 ounces each) rounds burrata cheese
- 2 tablespoons black olive crumble (instructions follow)

Cut the tomatoes and peaches into wedges and place them in a large bowl. Sprinkle them with fleur de sel and pepper, add the 1/4 cup basil and olive oil, and mix well. Let stand at room temperature 30 minutes to 1 hour, stirring occasionally. Place 1 burrata cheese round in the center of each plate. Fan the tomatoes and peaches around the cheese, dividing equally, and drizzle with the dressing left in the bowl. Garnish with olive crumble and whole basil leaves.

To make olive crumble: Place 1 cup pitted black olives on a wire rack with a tray underneath and roast in the oven at 175 F until dry, about 2 1/2 hours, or until semicrispy. Pulse in a food processor to a consistency of coarse crumbs.

Strawberry-rhubarb shortcake with whipped mascarpone

For the filling:

- 1 pound medium-size strawberries, hulled and quartered
- 3/4 cup granulated sugar, divided
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 1 tablespoon Grand Marnier
- 1 1/2 cups chopped fresh rhubarb (about 2 stalks)
- Pinch kosher salt

Biscuits:

- 2 cups sifted all-purpose flour, plus extra for work surface
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon table salt
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
- Freshly grated zest of 1 orange
- 1 cup heavy cream, plus extra for brushing biscuits
- Coarse or granulated sugar
- Unsalted butter (for baking sheet)

Whipped mascarpone:

- 1 cup mascarpone
- 3 tablespoons powdered sugar
- 2 tablespoons heavy cream

For the filling: Mix berries with 1/4 cup sugar, vinegar and Grand Marnier in a medium-size bowl. Toss gently and set aside. In a small saucepan, combine rhubarb, remaining 1/2 cup sugar and salt. Cook over medium heat, stirring, until sugar melts and liquids are simmering nicely, 8 to 10 minutes. Remove from heat and cool to room temperature. Rhubarb will soften as it sits. Add berries and stir. Set aside.

For the biscuits: Preheat oven to 400 F. In a large bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, salt, sugar and orange zest. In the bowl of a standing mixer, whip cream until it forms firm peaks. Fold the whipped cream gently into the flour mixture until the dough begins to come together. (Add another 1 or 2 tablespoons of unwhipped cream, if needed.) Gently gather the dough into a ball and turn it out onto a floured surface. Press to form a disk about 3/4 inch thick. It will be slightly crumbly. Using a biscuit cutter 2 1/2 inches wide, cut out the biscuits and lay them on a baking sheet greased with unsalted butter. Brush them with extra cream and sprinkle on the coarse or granulated sugar. Bake until golden, 15 to 17 minutes. Cool on racks.

For the whipped mascarpone: Combine all ingredients in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment. Beat, starting on low speed and gradually increasing speed, until the mixture is light and fluffy, about 1 minute. Refrigerate in an airtight container until ready to use, up to 3 days.

To plate: Split each biscuit horizontally. Spoon berry-rhubarb mixture on the bottom half, top that with mascarpone and cover with the top half of the biscuit. Garnish with powdered sugar. 🍷





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