

CONNECTION

Young learners

Grant helps library buy computers

BEAUTY WITHIN

ECLIPSE

By SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO
 NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

Agriculture thrives with broadband

Every day I hear examples of how the fast, reliable internet service provided by NTCA members brings telemedicine, rich entertainment resources, educational opportunities, jobs and far more to rural communities like yours.

But that’s just the beginning. These internet networks also create a vital foundation needed by a range of industries critical to the nation’s economy. While agriculture might not immediately come to mind when considering the internet, the \$4.4 billion ag tech market is a showcase for how broadband can bring farms and ranches the internet-connected tools that make agriculture more efficient, productive and sustainable.

Smart irrigation systems, farm management and automation software, drones and sensors that can remotely monitor factors such as soil moisture are just a few of the innovations used in modern agriculture. They make a real difference, too.

For example, consider just one part of the agricultural equation — water. Leveraging these high-tech tools can reduce water use by 4%. When considering the scope of the industry, that’s a tangible difference, the equivalent of filling 750,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools.

Without reliable internet access, these tools wouldn’t be possible, nor would the benefits to consumers. When agricultural production is less expensive and yields are higher, we can all enjoy more favorable prices.

So, when you think about all your internet service provider does for you personally, take a moment to appreciate they’re making a difference for all of us, nationwide. 📶



The ag tech advantage

CONNECTED TOOLS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Internet-connected technology makes a bottom-line difference in agriculture, responsible for as much as an **8% increase** in the value of corn crops alone. That’s an attention-getting result, and it makes it worth a closer look at ag tech.

THE DETAILS:



Ag tech includes smart irrigation farm management software, drones, remote sensing, biotech, automation and more. Many of these tools rely on the internet to share access and store and share data.

Value of the U.S. ag tech market:
\$4.4 billion

Value of agriculture, food and food-related industries:
\$1.26 trillion

Agriculture supports **43 million jobs**, **\$2 trillion** in wages and generates **\$718 billion** in taxes.

CURRENT AG TECH OFFERS:



9% reduction in chemical use



6% reduction in fossil fuel consumption



4% reduction in water use — enough to fill 750,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools



30-million-pound decrease in herbicide use

THE BOTTOM LINE: Ag tech enables farmers to lower costs while increasing yield and productivity.

Truly personal fitness

Online fitness offerings bring workouts to wherever you are

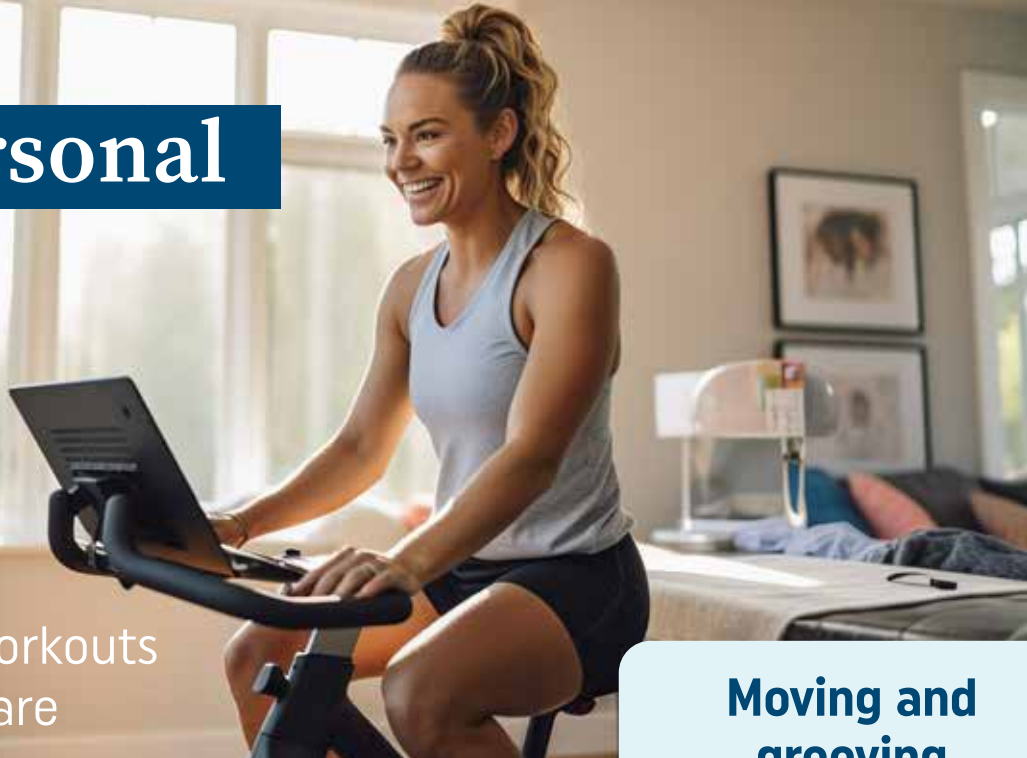


Photo by woffhain971/Adobe Stock

Story by SARA D. PATTERSON

After an exhausting workday, heading to that boring fitness class that's way too expensive to skip sounds like about as much fun as a root canal. What if you could just click an app or website and join a class from home? Think of the time, energy and frustration you could save.

With live and prerecorded classes and a fast and reliable internet connection, it's easy to turn any space into a gym. Thanks to apps and an array of online workout programs, you have the ability to exercise whenever, wherever and with whomever you want.

Some apps create personalized daily workout programs, while others provide a library of on-demand classes. Take a live class and become part of a community where everyone feels the burn.

PICKING THE PERFECT PLAN

As the popularity of online exercise programs continues to grow, so does the number of available options. Before choosing one, here are some factors worth considering.

Cost: Pricing can vary widely, but many apps and programs offer a free trial before requiring a subscription or financial commitment.

Instructors: Check their credentials to make sure they're certified in whatever they're teaching.

Variety: You'll maximize your results by

finding a program that keeps you interested while increasing the difficulty over time.

Devices: Make sure the program you choose works across all your devices. Compatibility is important since one of the biggest benefits of online fitness is the ability to take it with you anywhere.

FITNESS TO GO

While the at-home workout might seem isolating, it's actually a gateway to a digital community of like-minded fitness enthusiasts. The classes can provide a connection to a new whole world.

Onepeloton.com: Most famous for its much-advertised, in-home bike revolution, the Peloton digital app features on-demand and live classes of all kinds — no equipment needed.

Nike.com/ntc-app: This free app provides a variety of classes and styles for folks with busy schedules.

Apple.com/apple-fitness-plus: These classes, including yoga and Pilates, are personalized and perfected for Apple Watch users.

DailyBurn.com: This site offers the opportunity for one-on-one instruction. You can discover a favorite series or search for a specific workout depending on your mood.

Beachbody.com or BODi: This platform features '80s-style bootcamp classes, progress-tracking and nutrition hacks. 📱

Moving and grooving

Some mobile fitness fans are turning to more creative ways to work out at home. Harkening back to the days of Richard Simmons and Jazzercise, online dancing is fast becoming a personal fitness staple.

Online dance classes can be less expensive than in-person sessions and offer more style options. And, many people feel more comfortable staging a dance party in their own living rooms rather than in a studio full of strangers.

Zumba.com: The Latin-inspired cardio workout has motivated millions around the world to get moving since dancing into the spotlight in 2001.

Obefitness.com: With more than 8,000 classes and 20 different class types to choose from, there's something for everyone. Up to 22 live classes are available, seven days a week, starting at 6 a.m. Eastern time.

Dancio.com: Here you'll find hundreds of recorded classes covering various dance styles.

Steezy.co: Work out while learning a variety of urban dance moves.

Spotlight on esports

Broadband-enabled opportunity abounds

I am thrilled to see the profound impact broadband is having on our rural communities. We often talk about broadband's effect on economic development, education, e-commerce, entertainment and more. And make no bones about it, these are real benefits that we are just beginning to experience in our own communities, partially spurred on by DTC's investment in world-class broadband infrastructure.



CHRIS TOWNSON
Chief Executive Officer

A new broadband-enabled opportunity with real benefits is emerging as well — esports. This modern form of competition is not just a digital pastime, it's a gateway to numerous opportunities, especially in areas where traditional economic and social activities can be limited. Here are just a few:

EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS

First, esports is an educational tool. It promotes strategic thinking, teamwork and problem-solving skills. In rural schools, where resources for extracurricular activities might be scarce, esports provides an accessible and engaging platform for students. It's not just about playing games, it's about learning the technology behind them. DTC is committed to helping schools set up esports programs that will lead to increased interest in STEM fields. Students who engage

in esports often develop a curiosity about how games are made, which can steer them toward careers in computer science, programming and digital design.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Economically, esports can be a benefit for rural areas. Setting up esports tournaments and leagues can attract visitors and sponsors, bringing revenue into our communities. Local businesses may benefit from the increased foot traffic during events. Moreover, esports provides an avenue for talented individuals to earn scholarships and even make a living. Our cooperative is proud to sponsor local esports teams, contributing to the economic vitality of our region.

SOCIAL BENEFITS

On the social front, esports offers a sense of community and belonging. Esports creates a virtual gathering space, allowing individuals to connect, collaborate and compete with others from around the world. Science is proving that this connectivity is crucial for the mental well-being of participants, especially for youths who might feel disconnected from the larger world.

TRAINING AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Lastly, esports is a powerful tool for training and workforce development. The skills required to excel in esports — such as quick decision-making, analytical thinking and cooperative teamwork — are highly transferable to the modern workplace. By participating in esports, individuals in rural areas can develop skills that are in high demand in the digital economy. Our cooperative actively supports training programs that use esports as a platform to teach these skills, thereby preparing our members for the jobs of tomorrow.

CONCLUSION

Esports is much more than a game for rural communities. It's a catalyst for educational growth, economic development, social connectivity and workforce readiness. As a telecommunications cooperative, DTC Communications is committed to providing the high-speed internet infrastructure and support necessary for esports to thrive in our rural communities. We believe in the power of this digital revolution to help transform lives and communities, offering new opportunities for growth and connection in the digital age. It may just help us all level up. 📡

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On the Cover:



The Justin Potter Library in Smithville used a Foundation for Rural Service grant to help pay for new children's computers. See story Page 8.

Congratulations to our photo contest winner!



615-597-6852

Lisa Keyer

Early one morning, Lisa Keyer took in the view as she sat on the deck of the cabin she and her husband, John, own on Center Hill Lake. The sunrise was so stunning that morning as the light filtered through the trees that she grabbed her camera and snapped a photo.

That photo earned Lisa the DTC Communications Photo of the Year honors. For winning the contest, Lisa will receive a \$250 credit on her bill, and the



photo will be featured on the cover of the DTC Annual Report.

When Lisa and John looked for a place to retire a couple of years ago, they didn't have to look far.

Lisa, a registered nurse esthetician, and John, a

surgeon, have had a cabin on Center Hill Lake for 16 years. It was a place to get away on weekends. They considered retirement locations, and as they sat on the deck overlooking the lake, they knew it made most sense to retire there.

"We love it here, and I said, 'This is where we need to be,'" Lisa says.

They bought the lot next door and built a house next to the cabin. The couple recently moved from the cabin into the house.

FIND YOUR NUMBER AND WIN A PRIZE!

A prize may be waiting for you in this issue! We have randomly selected the telephone numbers of 10 lucky DTC members and hidden them throughout this publication.

Find your number and call 615-683-1010 to claim your prize!



Spring forward

Don't forget to set your clocks ahead! Daylight saving time starts at 2 a.m. on Sunday, March 10.

TOTALLY AWESOME

APRIL ECLIPSE WILL WOW!

Story by KATHY DENES

The Southeast boasts plenty of beautiful scenery, but the heavens get credit for two of the region's most spectacular sights in a span of less than six months. For three hours on Oct. 14, an annular eclipse created a "ring of fire" visible along its path from Oregon down through Texas. April 8 will bring yet another eclipse, this time plunging all beneath its route from Texas up to Maine and beyond into total darkness.

Except for Southwest Kentucky, very little of the Southeastern U.S. will be in the path of totality. The shadow will barely hit the northwest corner of Tennessee as it cuts through the Kentucky Band region, skims Mayfield and then darkens Paducah and Henderson around 2 p.m. EDT.

For those not in the path of totality, even the partial eclipse will be awesome to behold. Starting around 1:55 p.m. in areas east of totality, the orbiting moon will obscure the sun's bottom-right section and make it look like a crescent by around 3 p.m. By about 4:20 p.m., the sun will again be a complete ball of fire.



Photo by Aditi/Adobe Stock

*“And the moon
in haste eclipsed
her, and the sun in
anger swore.”*

— Aristophanes, Greek writer, 450-385 B.C.,
after observing an eclipse

ECLIPSE 101

TOTAL ECLIPSE: When the moon passes between the Earth and the sun and briefly covers the sun’s disk completely, areas within the narrow path of the moon’s shadow will experience total darkness. Those outside the path of totality will see a partial eclipse. Go to greatamericaneclipse.com or eclipse2024.org to see how the eclipse will look in your area and to find loads of other information.

VIEWING AN ECLIPSE: The only time it is safe to look at the sun with the naked eye is during the brief totality phase of a total solar eclipse, so that only applies to those directly in its path. At all other times, eclipse phases and locations, direct viewing of the sun is only safe through special solar filters and viewers. Look for the ISO 12312-2 standard, and make sure they are free of scratches or flaws. No. 13 or 14 welder’s glass also provides protection.

EVENTFUL OPTIONS

Events for seeing and celebrating the eclipse include Paducah’s two-day downtown street fair and a viewing party at its National Quilt Museum. Louisville’s Kentucky Science Center is chartering buses to take eclipse fans to Evansville for a riverfront view of totality.

U.S. Space & Rocket Center in Huntsville, Alabama, home to the INTUITIVE planetarium, is setting up solar telescopes. Many educational activities are planned, including NASA’s livestream of the eclipse which will be shown throughout the center.



Photo by supertramp8/Adobe Stock

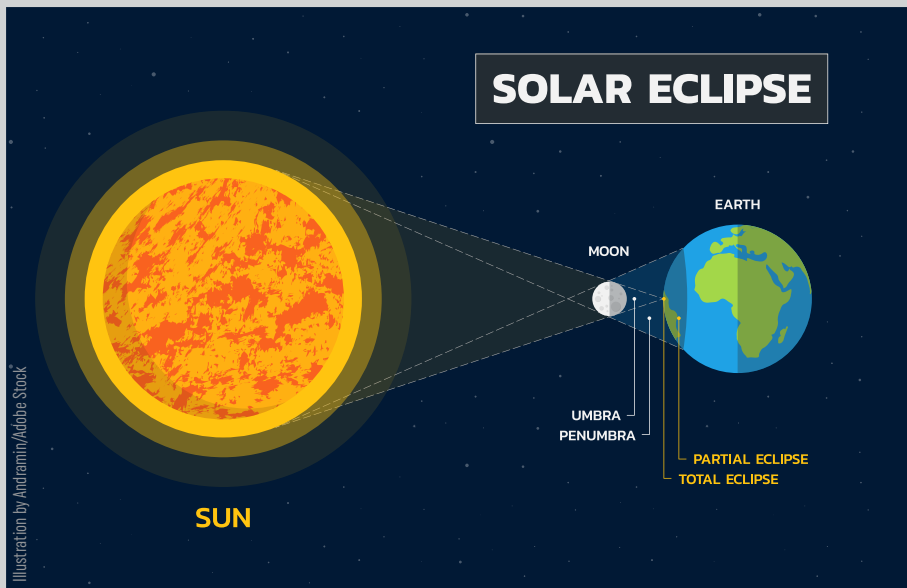


Illustration by Andramini/Adobe Stock

Of the 350-plus permanent planetariums in the U.S., six are in Alabama, eight in Kentucky, four in South Carolina and five call Tennessee home. Find one near you at go-astronomy.com/planetariums.htm.



Illustration by Jiva Dore/Adobe Stock

EARLY LEARNING

GRANT PAYS FOR NEW CHILD-FRIENDLY
COMPUTERS AT JUSTIN POTTER LIBRARY

Story by LISA SAVAGE



When Mariah Kilgore brought her daughter to the Justin Potter Library, they found exciting new technology. The Smithville library has a new pair of advanced literacy workstations, thanks to a \$5,000 grant from the Foundation for Rural Service.

“We are so thankful for this resource to use for our homeschool students,” Mariah says. “It teaches so many subjects, and it’s a fun way to learn.”

The FRS is the philanthropic arm of NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association. DTC Communications is

a proud member of NTCA. “It’s quite an honor that an organization in our service area was selected for one of the Foundation for Rural Service grants,” DTC CEO Chris Townson says. “It’s part of the commitment that we at DTC have, along with the FRS, to provide support to a variety of local efforts to sustain a high quality of life in rural America.”

The library used the grant to replace the 10-year-old Advanced Workstation in Education systems, says Kathy Hendrixson, director at Justin Potter Library. The new touch-screen

workstations are child-friendly computers that are not connected to the internet. Each workstation features a colorful keyboard, a mouse perfectly sized for little hands and a self-contained browser with access to about 85 award-winning educational programs. The lessons — available in both English and Spanish — are designed to help children develop early literacy skills in subjects ranging from English to math, science, handwriting, coding, cybersafety and much more. Homeschooling and programming resources are included.

Thanks to the \$5,000 grant, the library only needed to spend \$1,575 of its own funds to buy both workstations. “Because of this partnership with the Foundation for Rural Service and DTC Communications, children and their parents can enjoy and use these early literacy stations, and parents can feel confident that their child is using a safe, fun and educational resource to help improve their learning skills,” Kathy says.

LOOKING BACK

The Justin Potter Library, named for the DeKalb County native whose foundation supplied funding, opened in 1967. Construction on the 3,764-square-foot building began in 1966. The project received a \$50,000 Federal Library Services Construction Act grant, but local organizers needed to come up with \$50,000 in matching funds.

Searching for financial backers, library supporter Emma Burton found the Justin and Valerie Potter Foundation. The Potter family moved from DeKalb County to Nashville and prospered in business. The family established a foundation to support educational facilities and donated the matching funds, Kathy says. In 2003, the library was renovated and expanded by 2,000 square feet, adding a genealogy room and other needed space.

The Justin Potter Library, which has a satellite location in Alexandria in addition to the Smithville branch, has come a long way in 57 years. “We’re established and a hub of the community,” says Kathy, who became director in 2007. “We offer just about any service anyone in the community could need.”

The library’s two locations offer about 40,000 items, including books, videos, DVDs, microfilm, audiobooks, magazines and newspapers. The public can visit the library for fax, copy, scanning and notary services, tax and voter forms, and the library also offers boating exams through the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency.

In addition to the new early education workstations and an extensive children’s area, nine computers connected to DTC’s



ABOVE: The Justin Potter Library opened in Smithville in 1967.

RIGHT: Library staff member Wendy Crotty, left, helps Jan Thomas check out a book.

high-speed internet service are available for public use. The library’s Wi-Fi provides internet access for patrons to use their own computers, and that service extends to the parking lot, making Wi-Fi accessible even when the library is closed. “DTC is a wonderful supporter of our library, and the internet service through them makes so many of our programs possible,” Kathy says.

CHECK IT OUT

With a library card, patrons have access to over 480,000 free e-books, audiobooks and streaming videos through the Tennessee R.E.A.D.S. program — which stands for Regional eBooks and Audio Download System. “There are over 1,000 book downloads a month using the R.E.A.D.S. program that counts toward the library’s circulation,” Kathy says.

The library has an extensive collection of county genealogy and history materials, all due to the work of County Historian Thomas G. Webb, who passed away in 2019. His effort and dedication, combined with that of many others in the community, made the genealogy room possible. Visitors from all over the country have used the library’s resources to gather information about their own families. “We had a mother and daughter



615-563-6799

from California come here, researching family history, and they stayed a few days,” Kathy says.

The library hosts a variety of programs and events throughout the year, including Older Americans Day on May 15, the Summer Reading program, holiday events, teen programs, volunteer opportunities through Tennessee Promise, book signings, homeschooling events, the Dolly Parton Imagination Library and outreach programs to the schools.

“Our vision is that all DeKalb County residents will have the opportunities they need to improve the quality of their lives,” Kathy says. “We have a mission of providing quality materials and services that fulfill educational, informational, cultural and recreational needs of the entire community in an atmosphere that is welcoming and respectful.” 📞

FUNKY CHICKENS

Ornamental poultry are not your basic backyard birds



Light Brahma bantams are Turner's favorite chickens to breed and show.

Story by SARA D. PATTERSON



Joe, Meagan, Turner and Kaiser Holland have found a home in the world of exhibition poultry.

Seven-year-old Turner Holland wanted to keep busy outside of school, but he knew he wasn't athletic and couldn't stand sports. That's when his dad, Joe, brought home a half-dozen baby chickens from Tractor Supply.

Those first six chicks led to hundreds more as Turner and his family jumped into the world of backyard poultry at their home in Harrodsburg, Kentucky. Now known as Chicken Hill Farm, they are a go-to source of the rare blue Araucana, as well as several other breeds of ornamental chickens.

Their clientele is a growing group that finds joy in raising chickens. More than 12 million people — about twice the population of Arizona — share their yards with a flock, according to The American Pet Products Association's most recent national pet owner survey. The number of households with chickens rose from 8% in 2008 to 13% in 2020.

Many people choose to keep them as pets or as a steady source of fresh eggs.

But exhibition chickens like the Hollands' are often inconsistent layers. Instead, these flashy fowls have a different job — strutting their stuff.

The Hollands' signature Araucana chickens are recognizable by their poof of feathers — known as tufts — that grow at their ears instead of at their “rumpless” tail ends. While the “hilarious, friendly girls,” known for their pastel blue eggs, are Chicken Hill Farm's stars, they share the spotlight with many other funky chickens. There's the Muppet-like jet black Polish with their explosion of fluffy, white head feathers that often obscure their eyes. The Brahmas have abundant, soft feathers that cover their legs and feet. And then there are the small silkies, the most unique of all. Lacking the barbicels that hold a feather's shape, they look — and feel — like they're covered with fur rather than feathers.

Maintaining the chickens' genetics is fascinating, says Turner's mom, Meagan.

At first, she and Turner focused on breeding, but then they discovered the exhibition part of fancy poultry. They took a few of their favorites to a local county show in June 2022 and then to another one a week later. Turner is now 11 and a rising star on the exhibition poultry circuit.

“After that, it just snowballed, and he’s all in,” Meagan says. “He just fell into it and is obsessed. This is such a great activity for him and for us to do as a family.”

The family now spends most weekends in the summer and fall traveling to exhibitions where Turner is making a name for himself. Meagan handles the birds. Joe, an Army veteran, drives. And younger son, Kaiser, is beginning to join his brother in the show ring.

“I don’t know if my husband was as excited about our new lifestyle,” Meagan says with a laugh. “He’s not into the breeding like Turner and I are. But he enjoys the birds and the time we spend together as a family.”



ABOVE: Turner’s light Brahma bantam cockerel won champion of the Feather Legged Class in the junior show at the Ohio National Poultry Show.

LEFT: As more people become involved with raising fancy chickens at home, the number of exhibition poultry shows and entrants continues to grow.



Photo by Sara D. Patterson

Are you ready for backyard chickens?

Saving money and healthier eggs are the intent of many people who raise chickens, but those goals are often difficult to reach, says Gregory Archer, associate professor and extension specialist for Texas A&M Department of Poultry Science.

“I tell people it should be more about self-satisfaction and the desire to know exactly how and where your eggs came from. Chickens are also fun, and kids love them.”

Possible challenges include bird medical care, waste management or strategies for excess eggs. Similarly, predators can quickly be an issue.

Also, there are geographic-specific considerations. “Often, people don’t manage heat or get the correct breeds for Texas heat,” he says. “You need to make sure you have fresh water, shade and maybe some fans.”

A little research will help identify birds suitable for heat, cold or any environment.

CHICKEN CONSIDERATIONS



If you’re contemplating backyard chickens, consider these points before adopting the chicken lifestyle.

LOCAL LAWS AND NEIGHBORHOOD REGULATIONS

- Check for the latest rules on chicken ownership in your town and county. Many cities limit the number of chickens allowed per household and prohibit roosters entirely.
- Often, cities require chickens to be kept enclosed and that the coop is well maintained and cleaned frequently.
- If you decide to sell your eggs, ensure it’s legal where you live.

EXPENSES

Even small-scale chicken farming requires ongoing expenses after buying or building a coop and fencing.

- A 40-pound bag of feed can cost \$25 or more, depending on the brand, nutritional value and other factors.
- Dietary supplements are typically needed, so budget for extra proteins and treats, like dried insects — a 5-pound bag can cost at least \$50.
- Chickens require fresh bedding, like pine shavings or chopped straw, every time the coop is cleaned.

CARE

While caring for chickens isn’t a full-time job, do expect to invest time.

- Most people adopt a daily or twice-daily routine for feeding and watering.
- Many times, chickens need to be let out of a small coop in the morning and herded back in at night for safety.
- Remember, chickens can fly. Some people prefer to clip their wings regularly, while others choose a run with fencing or netting overhead.

Source: Osceola County Extension Agent Jessica Sullivan

Let your inner beauty shine through

Moonstone Spa offers treatment options for busy clients

615-563-0395

Story by LISA SAVAGE

When she was 14 years old, Genesis Mitchell started watching YouTube videos to learn how to apply makeup. “I loved to watch, and I was inspired to learn everything I could,” she says. “I knew right then I wanted to do something in the beauty field.”

As a licensed esthetician, she is now living her dream. Sometimes called skin care therapists, estheticians are trained to perform a variety of procedures and services, including facials, lashes, brows, makeup application and waxing. Genesis, who is also licensed in lash artistry, opened Moonstone Spa in Carthage in 2021. Today, she and her staff of six help their clients feel good about themselves every day.

Moonstone Spa offers just about all beauty services available in large cities, including brows, lashes, facials, waxing, manicures, pedicures and massages. It even offers sauna treatments. Some dual services are also available. For example, a facial and a manicure can be done simultaneously, which can be a real time-saver for a client with a tight schedule.

“I wanted to offer something that is convenient and local to the men and women in our community,” Genesis says. “If someone needs to run in on their lunch break for a brow wax, we can do that quick.”

BUILDING A BEAUTIFUL BUSINESS

Born and raised in Smith County, where she graduated from Gordonsville High School, Genesis worked at McDonald’s and Ulta while completing her training to become a licensed esthetician. License in hand, she began her career in skincare by renting space to offer her services at Moon Child Spa and Boutique. As her client base grew, she opened her plaza storefront, and changed the business’s name to Moonstone Spa.

“We continued to grow and get requests for other services, so we expanded,” she says. “Now, we’ve doubled in size.” Genesis moved the business to the storefront next door to the original location.

Thanks to its fast and reliable internet connection from DTC, Moonstone Spa offers online appointment bookings, with detailed descriptions of its offerings like lash extensions, chemical peels and brow services. Treatments such as infusions and enzyme therapy treatment — which combines some of the latest technology in peptide, antioxidant and dermal regeneration science to stimulate plasma in the deeper levels of the skin — are also available. Enzyme therapy treatment is ideal to instantly establish firmer, tighter skin and treat skin that is dull, sagging or sun damaged, Genesis says. She plans to add



Genesis Mitchell owns Moonstone Spa in Carthage.

permanent jewelry soon, and is currently training to be able to offer permanent cosmetics and microblading, a semipermanent tattooing technique used to make eyebrows appear thicker.

“We have so many options and can customize our services to meet the needs of all our clients,” Genesis says. “We firmly believe that you should prioritize yourself to be the best that you can be.” 📱

Best of the best

DTC honors football all-stars

DTC Sports has named its third annual DTC Communications All-Star Team, honoring the best local high school football players from the 2023 season.

The team includes 22 student-athletes from area high schools, including Cannon, DeKalb and Smith counties, Gordonsville and Watertown.

DTC Communications and DTC Sports celebrate each of our area teams' success and are proud to recognize the outstanding student-athletes from the DTC service area, including the 2023 DTC Communications Player of the Year, Tucker Kyne, of Cannon County High School. ☎ 629-226-7281

DTC ALL-STAR TEAM



Kyle Adams, senior
Gordonsville



Adam Cooper, senior
Watertown



Will Farris, senior
DeKalb County



Javier Gaspar, senior
Smith County



Dalton Hancock, senior
Gordonsville



Peyton Hix, senior
Smith County



Tucker Kyne, senior
Cannon County



Riley Lollar, senior
Smith County



Ty Martin, senior
Smith County



Canaan Musgrove, senior
Gordonsville



Trey Pack, senior
Watertown



Ryan Rodrigues, senior
Watertown



Kwame Seay, senior
Watertown



Brayden Smithson, senior
Cannon County



Malachi Trapp, senior
DeKalb County



Ari White, senior
DeKalb County



Mason Greer, junior
Gordonsville



Kolby Miller, junior
Cannon County



Ty Webb, junior
DeKalb County



J Foster, sophomore
Gordonsville



Chandler Hale, sophomore
Cannon County



Riley Martin, freshman
Smith County



Regional Accents

Local favorites are
key ingredient of
America's melting pot

Every local dish has a story behind it, history heaped with flavor. One of the best ways to discover these is by stirring the nation's culinary pot to see what's cooking.

Certain dishes are common to us Americans across the board. We'll fry just about anything. From Twinkies to turkeys, they all go in the deep fryer. But, when it comes to comfort-food classics, states and regions have their own distinct accents. U.S. culinary traditions form a giant melting pot with regional flavors blended in for extra deliciousness.

Regional foods are some of the most fascinating bites one can experience. Here's a look at some of the ones that are favorites across our nation.



**Food Editor
Anne P. Braly
is a native of
Chattanooga,
Tennessee.**

Photography by **Mark Gilliland**
Food Styling by **Rhonda Gilliland**

SMOKED GOUDA MAC AND CHEESE

You'd be hard-pressed to walk into a diner around the South and not see mac and cheese on the menu. This recipe just takes it up a notch.

- 1 pound short pasta, such as elbow macaroni or shells
- 1 pound smoked gouda cheese, grated
- 8 ounces extra-sharp white cheddar cheese, grated
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter
- 4 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 2 cups heavy whipping cream
- 2 cups whole milk
- 1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon ground white pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon ground mustard
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- Salt, to taste
- 4 slices of bacon, crumbled (optional)

Preheat the oven to 350 F. Cook pasta according to package directions to al dente stage, then set aside.

In a large Dutch oven or other deep pot, heat butter over medium-low heat. Once butter has melted, add in flour and whisk until all flour disappears, then slowly add in heavy cream and whole milk. Stir and let mixture come to a slight boil. Add in all spices and stir again. Lastly, add in 8 ounces of smoked gouda cheese and white cheddar cheese. Whisk until all cheese has melted.

Add in pasta and mix everything together to fully incorporate, making sure all pasta is coated with sauce. Add salt, to taste.

Transfer mixture to a large, lightly greased baking dish, then top dish with remaining smoked gouda. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes or until mixture is golden and bubbly.

Let cool for 15 minutes and serve warm topped with crumbled bacon, if desired. Makes 8 servings.



WILD RICE CHICKEN CASSEROLE

Wild rice is found throughout the Midwest, where this recipe originates.

- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1/3 cup butter
- 1/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1 can (14 1/2 ounces) chicken broth
- 1 cup half-and-half
- 4 cups cubed, cooked chicken
- 4 cups cooked wild rice
- 2 jars (4 1/2 ounces each) sliced mushrooms, drained
- 1 jar (4 ounces) diced pimentos, drained
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh parsley
- 1/3 cup slivered almonds

In a large saucepan, saute onion in butter until tender. Stir in the flour, salt and pepper until blended. Gradually stir in broth. Bring to a boil. Boil and stir for 2 minutes or until thickened and bubbly. Stir in the half-and-half, chicken, rice, mushrooms, pimentos and parsley. Heat through.

Transfer mixture to a greased 2 1/2-quart baking dish. Sprinkle with almonds. Bake, uncovered, at 350 F for 30-35 minutes or until bubbly. Makes 6-8 servings.

SALMON PICCATA

This is a popular recipe in the Northwest where fresh salmon is easy to find. In other states, try to get your hands on the freshest fish possible to bring out the flavors in this dish.

- 4 salmon steaks, 1 inch thick
- All-purpose flour (for dredging)
- 1/4 cup plus 3 tablespoons butter, divided
- 3 tablespoons onion, finely chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 heaping tablespoon capers, drained
- 1/8 teaspoon dried Italian seasonings, crushed
- 1/2 cup white wine
- 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons beef broth

Preheat oven to 400 F. Rinse salmon steaks under cool water, pat dry and roll in flour.

In a large ovenproof frying pan or saute pan, heat 1/4 cup butter until it melts. Briefly saute the salmon steaks, browning them lightly on both sides.

Bake, covered, 10 to 15 minutes until a meat thermometer registers an internal temperature of 140 F, or until salmon is slightly opaque in the thickest part. You may need to cut to test. During this time the meat continues to cook because the meat temperature will rise 5 to 10 degrees after it is removed from the oven and the juices will redistribute. Remove from oven. Reserve liquid in the pan, and transfer salmon onto a warm serving platter.

Using the same pan over medium heat, stir into the reserved liquid the onion, garlic, capers and Italian seasonings. Simmer for 5 minutes. Add white wine, lemon juice and beef broth. Stir until well blended. Turn off the heat, whisk in the remaining 3 tablespoons butter until blended. Remove from heat, pour sauce over salmon and serve immediately. Makes 4 servings. 🍴

SALSA ROJAS

Salsa is the condiment of choice throughout Texas and many of the Western states.

- 1 can (28 ounces) whole tomatoes, drained
- 1 can (14 1/2 ounces) diced tomatoes with garlic and onion, drained
- 1 can (14 1/2 ounces) stewed tomatoes (with Mexican seasonings, if you can find them), drained
- 1 can (10 ounces) diced tomatoes and green chilies, drained
- 1 medium onion, quartered
- 2 banana peppers, seeded and coarsely chopped
- 2 jalapeno peppers, seeded and coarsely chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2 cup minced fresh cilantro
- 1/4 cup lime juice
- 2 ripe avocados, peeled and cubed
- Tortilla chips



Place the first 10 ingredients in a food processor; cover and process until chopped. Add cilantro and lime juice; cover and pulse until combined.

Transfer to a bowl; stir in avocados. Serve with tortilla chips or use as a condiment for your favorite Tex-Mex dishes.



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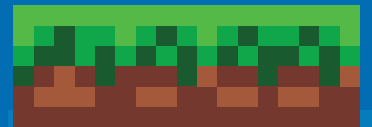
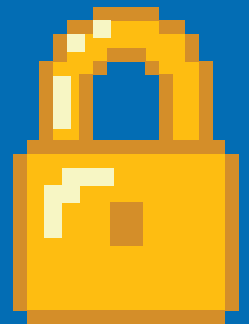
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