

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2026

CONNECTION

**Macon
Department
Store**

Continuing the legacy

 **nctc**

Celebrating
75
YEARS

**HOLIDAY
WI-FI TIPS**

By Mike Romano, CEO
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

Broadband Powers AI

Artificial intelligence is a hot topic these days with a constant stream of news articles talking about its benefits and potential pitfalls. While many of us think about AI in terms of chatbots like ChatGPT, it can also play a powerful role in helping businesses, like small, rural broadband providers, operate more efficiently behind the scenes.

As we all explore the practical applications of AI, NTCA members are implementing various AI tools to analyze network performance data, identify potential issues before they affect customers, strengthen cybersecurity efforts and streamline routine administrative tasks. Finding these efficiencies allows employees to spend less time on repetitive work and more time on what matters most—building and sustaining reliable networks and supporting their communities. Especially if the implementation is done right and if providers “own their own AI future,” they can be well positioned to identify and capitalize on new opportunities to grow and sustain their operations and serve customers and communities even better.

Rural broadband providers are unique. They are rooted in their communities, and personal relationships are the heart and soul of their service. AI should not replace that but, rather, it should be another tool to help local teams operate smarter and more efficiently so they can continue to provide high-quality, reliable service to their friends and neighbors.

And none of this innovation is possible without broadband. Every AI tool, whether used by a family, school, business or even a data center, relies on high-speed, reliable broadband. As the demand for these tools continues to grow, rural broadband providers will invest in building and sustaining the robust networks needed now and in the future. ☎



Adobe Stock image by Lightfield Studios

System Reset

We’ve all heard the inevitable question when troubleshooting an internet outage: Have you tried turning the router off and on again? Rebooting electronics is such a common fix that it’s become a running joke. But why does it actually work?

You might not think about it this way, but your router is a small computer, complete with its own memory, storage and operating system. Just as your computer can crash or freeze up, the same is true for your router.

WHAT DOES A REBOOT DO?

As with any computer, bugs can use memory or trigger safety measures that cause problems. A reboot won’t solve the underlying issue, but it can be a quick fix.

Your router also manages multiple devices on the network. If some IP addresses are the same or are not up to date, your router can make mistakes. Rebooting the router resets those assignments.

Just like computers, a router can overheat, especially if it’s in a tight space hidden from view. Turning it off for a few seconds can give the hardware a needed break. ☎



Adobe Stock image by Ivan

Simple habits help your devices' batteries last longer

Story by DREW WOOLLEY

Whether it's a smartphone, laptop or a favorite pair of earbuds, most of us rely on rechargeable batteries every day. But like any electronic device, those batteries don't last forever.

Most modern devices use lithium-ion batteries, which gradually lose their ability to hold a full charge over time. While battery aging is unavoidable, a few simple habits can help slow the process and keep your devices working well for years. Maintaining good battery health can also delay the need for costly repairs or replacement of a device.

CHARGE SMARTER

Many people think leaving a phone plugged in all night will damage the battery. Fortunately, today's smartphones and laptops are much smarter than older electronics. Most stop charging once they reach 100% and manage the charging process automatically.

Even so, experts say batteries tend to last longer when they aren't constantly kept at either a full charge or completely drained. If possible, try to recharge your device before the battery falls below about 20% and unplug it once it has enough charge for the day. Many newer devices also offer optimized charging settings that learn your routine and reduce battery wear.

Heat is a battery's enemy. Avoid leaving phones or laptops in a hot car or in direct sunlight for extended periods, especially while charging.

CHECK YOUR CABLES

A charging cable may seem like a minor accessory, but taking care of it can save both frustration and money.

Instead of pulling a cable out by the cord, grasp the connector itself. Avoid tightly wrapping cables around chargers or bending them sharply, since repeated stress can damage the wires inside. If a cable becomes frayed or the connector is loose, replace it rather than continuing to use it.

It's also a good idea to use charging cables and power adapters from reputable manufacturers that meet your device's specifications.

NO WIRES? NO PROBLEM

Wireless charging pads have become increasingly common for smartphones and some earbuds. Instead of plugging in a cable, you simply place the device on the charging pad.

Wireless charging can reduce wear on a device's charging port, especially if you plug and unplug your phone several times each day. Some newer devices also support magnetic wireless chargers that help align the phone for more efficient charging.

While wireless charging is convenient, it may charge more slowly than a cable and can generate a bit more heat. For many users, though, it's an easy way to simplify charging while reducing wear on connectors.

With a few simple habits, you can help your devices stay powered longer and keep their batteries healthier for years to come. 

Choose Value

Make wise choices this shopping season

At this time of year, everyone is looking for ways to make their dollars go as far as possible. We watch for good deals and compare prices. But that doesn't mean the lowest price is always the best value. I'm sure we can all think of a few times when we have gone with the cheapest option available, only to find out too late exactly why the price was so low.



**JOHNNY
MCCLANAHAN**
President/CEO

It's a choice we're facing more and more often, even when choosing communications services. Just like when you buy a gift or hire someone to work on your home, cost matters when choosing essential services. But we also want to be confident in what we're getting for that money and, just as importantly, what kind of experience we can expect once the deal is done.

At NCTC, we know the value of our services is about more than just dollars and cents. Make no mistake, we know price matters, and we work to offer competitive options throughout the communities we serve. Pricing and available services can vary by area, but wherever you are, our focus is on delivering strong overall value. And that value goes beyond price.

Take our fast, reliable internet service. We work to offer plans that provide value for a variety of needs. But we also believe that value shines every time your connection lets you stream the big game without worrying about performance, finish homework in a snap or snag those hard-to-find holiday gifts.

Value and reliability are also at the forefront when you are on the go with Trilight Mobile from NCTC. You get the winning combination of nationwide coverage, community connectivity and our trusted local customer service.

So, as the holidays offer a fitting reminder of what real value means every day, we should remember that the lowest price does not always tell the full story. Reliability, service, personal relationships and, yes, price all matter.

We're proud to bring you services that offer great value, because that's what you do when helping friends and neighbors connect to the world.

Thank you for letting us serve you. Have a happy Thanksgiving and a merry Christmas. 📺

NCTC RECENTLY LOST A FAMILY MEMBER, TONYA BROWN

Tonya was a dedicated employee with 25 years of service at NCTC. She was a dispatch clerk and was formerly a customer service representative. Tonya always went out of her way to provide the best service available to our customers to address their needs. Tonya had been sick for several months but still had a desire to come back to work to be with her NCTC family.

Tonya passed away Tuesday, Sept. 1, 2026. We wish to pass along our deepest sympathies to Tonya's husband, Brian, and their family. Read more about Tonya and her legacy on Page 5.

The North Central Connection is a bimonthly newsletter published by NCTC, © 2026. It is distributed without charge to all member/owners of the cooperative.



North Central is a member-owned corporation dedicated to delivering advanced telecommunications technology to the people of Northern Middle Tennessee and Southern Kentucky, including Macon County, Tennessee, and Allen County, Kentucky. NCTC also serves portions of Sumner, Trousdale, Smith and Clay counties in Tennessee. Through a partnership with Warren RECC, NCTC provides high-speed internet to portions of Butler, Grayson, Edmonson and Warren counties in Kentucky.

North Central
872 Highway 52 Bypass E.
P.O. Box 70
Lafayette, TN 37083
Telephone: 615-666-2151
nctc.com

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UTILITY RESOURCES

On the Cover:



Lafayette's Macon Department Store has a wide selection of clothing and accessories for the entire family, including Christmas-themed pajamas. See story Page 8.

Photo courtesy of NCTC

REMEMBERING TONYA BROWN

NCTC is heartbroken as we mourn the loss of our dear friend and co-worker, Tonya Brown.

Tonya was a part of the NCTC team for 25 years, and during those years, she touched so many lives with her kindness, her loyalty and her dedication. She always had a smile and a kind word for everyone. Even during her illness, Tonya was determined to get well and come back to work. In fact, she did work while she was sick. That's just the kind of person she was.

We are going to miss her more than words can say. While our hearts are heavy and we are grieving, we find comfort in knowing that Tonya is no longer suffering and is finally free from pain.

We are so thankful for the 25 years we were blessed to have Tonya as part of our NCTC family. She will always be remembered, always be missed and never be forgotten.

Please keep Tonya's family, friends and all of us at NCTC in your thoughts and prayers.

If you'd like to share a memory, a photo or condolences, we would love to see them.



Tonya Brown

NORTH CENTRAL TELEPHONE COOPERATIVE

BALANCE SHEET			
December 31, 2025			
ASSETS			
Current Assets			102,955,624
Other Assets			
	Investments in Affiliated Companies		13,887,954
	Nonregulated Investments		201,357
	Total Current/Other Assets		14,089,311
Telecommunications Plant			237,869,363
	Less Accumulated Depreciation		152,858,358
Net Telecommunications Plant			85,011,005
TOTAL ASSETS			\$ 202,055,940
LIABILITIES and MEMBERS' EQUITIES			
Current Liabilities			9,438,271
Long-Term Debt			10,680,358
Other Liabilities			6,239,638
Members' Equities			175,697,673
TOTAL LIABILITIES and MEMBERS' EQUITIES			\$ 202,055,940

CONTACT SANTA

Make sure your Christmas wish list reaches Santa.

Call the jolly old elf at 615-67-SANTA (615-677-2682), or send your letter by emailing santa@nctc.com.

FREE MOVIE DECEMBER

Each weekend in December, NCTC TV subscribers can enjoy premium movies—for free—from HBO, Cinemax, Showtime and Starz/Encore!



HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

NCTC offices will be closed in observance of the following holidays:

Thanksgiving—Thursday, Nov. 26

Christmas—Thursday, Dec. 24, and Friday, Dec. 25

New Year's Day—Friday, Jan. 1

Museums and Memorials

Remembering the war that changed the world

Story by LAURA MCGILL

When measured on a grand scale, World War II is almost too immense to comprehend. An estimated 16.4 million people served in the U.S. Armed Forces during the war, with more than 405,000 losing their lives. The United States spent about \$341 billion on the war effort, or \$4.7 trillion when adjusted for inflation. Globally, the loss of life is estimated to be as high as 85 million people, with adjusted costs surpassing \$15 trillion.

On a human level, the war is responsible for countless stories of lives cut short and those forever changed. Many of those accounts are preserved at The National WWII Museum in New Orleans.

OVERWHELMING AND INTIMATE

Located on a sprawling campus, The National WWII Museum features seven distinct areas. The experience captures both the

grand scale of battle through immersive displays and the small, poignant reminders of the men and women who fought for freedom on the battlefield and the homefront.

While tours can begin in any of the buildings, the Louisiana Memorial Pavilion provides an important orientation and history lesson on the significant events that set the stage for World War II. Exhibits explain the political debates, the attack on Pearl Harbor, rationing of consumer goods, America's internment camps, segregated military units and the dramatic economic response.

Building 3, Campaigns of Courage, is divided into two parallel exhibits—the Road to Tokyo and the Road to Berlin. Each brings to life the hard-fought victories and the devastating losses on the long journey to end the war. Battles in the Pacific are recounted in a gallery that places visitors in grueling conditions from Guadalcanal and the Philippines to the haunting scenes from

Request permission to come aboard

With their sailing days long behind them, a few of America's World War II ships continue to serve their country. Today, the mission is to honor those who served and educate about a time that is slipping away from living memory. Here are a few treasured museum ships that welcome visitors to come aboard.

USS Alabama

Mobile, Alabama

After earning nine battle stars, the Mighty A battleship and its crew of 2,500 led the American fleet into Tokyo Bay on Sept. 5, 1945. The ship is joined at Battleship Memorial Park by the USS Drum, the oldest American submarine on public display.

USS Kidd

Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Learn the story of how the Kidd became the only U.S. Navy ship allowed to fly the Jolly Roger flag of piracy. Check before planning a visit, as the Kidd has been in dry dock for repairs and was awaiting a higher water level to return home.

USS Lexington

Corpus Christi, Texas

Commissioned in 1943, the ship was the Navy's oldest working carrier when decommissioned in 1991. In 1980, it became the first aircraft carrier in U.S. history to have women stationed aboard as crew members.

USS North Carolina

Wilmington, North Carolina

The battleship served in every major Pacific naval offensive during World War II, earning 15 battle stars. It is the state's official memorial to the more than 11,000 North Carolinians who died during the war.

USS Yorktown

Mount Pleasant, South Carolina

The Navy's 10th aircraft carrier, the Fighting Lady, was commissioned on April 15, 1943. Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum is also home to the USS Laffey, the most decorated World War II-era destroyer still in existence.

emotrials

the aftermath of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. European battles are revisited with landscapes ranging from fortified beaches and bomb-torn villages to frozen forests and unimaginable death camps.

Other buildings include the Solomon Victory Theater with the 4D movie experience “Beyond All Boundaries,” narrated by Tom Hanks. The Liberation Pavilion explores the postwar years and the war’s continuing impact. At the US Freedom Pavilion: The Boeing Center, visitors can get up close with WWII tanks, trucks and planes. Building 7, the John E. Kushner Restoration Pavilion, may be the last on the list, but it is worth including to see the museum’s ongoing restoration work. The space is dominated by the patrol torpedo boat PT-305.

With so many stories to tell, it is difficult to tour the entire museum complex in just one day. Two-day passes are available, and memberships include unlimited regular admission. Learn more at nationalww2museum.org. 



The National WWII Museum in New Orleans gives many opportunities for visitors to learn about the war and its impact on the world.



Photos courtesy of The National WWII Museum

A display at the Arsenal of Democracy exhibit details the role of the media in sharing information about the war.



Adobe Stock image by Ryan Conine

During USS Lexington tours, visitors can explore 11 decks along five routes. Volunteers are on hand to answer questions.

Shop Local in Lafayette

Macon Department Store is a treasured landmark

Story by LAURA MCGILL

In the early 1960s, Terry Hudson's parents, Adonal Calvin and Zetta "Inez" Hudson, opened Macon Department Store on the historic courthouse square in Lafayette. Just across the square, they later added a shop, known locally as The Annex, where they sold discounted merchandise. In Red Boiling Springs, the couple owned Hudson's Department Store.

After Adonal's death in 1979 and the closing of The Annex and the Red Boiling Springs store in the 1990s, Terry and his mother continued to run the Macon Department Store. In the early 2000s, Terry bought Inez's share of the business and became the sole owner.

RAISED IN RETAIL

Heather Day was a high school student when she started working part time at Macon Department Store in 1993. She

couldn't have imagined that 33 years later she would still be working there, but under very different circumstances.

Heather got married a few years after taking the job and soon started a family. Her daughter, Mackinzie, was born in 1999, followed by a sister, Morgan, in 2004. Since the girls' grandmothers both worked, Heather needed help with her young children. That's when Terry stepped in, welcoming the girls into the store whenever Heather was working. But his help went well beyond that of an understanding boss.

"Terry would spoil them on a daily basis," Heather says. "As they got a little older, he would take them to Walmart to buy them toys and take them on school trips, so I could work in the store." It is a time Mackinzie remembers fondly. "Mom would give Terry and me a talking-to

about no more toys," she says. "That rule we never listened to."

CONTINUING THE LEGACY

In early 2019, Terry, who never married and didn't have children of his own, asked Heather and her daughters to keep the store going after his death. He spent the next few months teaching them more about the business. When Terry passed away that November, he left his estate—including the store—to Mackinzie and Morgan.

"He loved them as they did him," Heather says.

Today the work of running the store is shared among the three. Heather serves as general manager and is in the store most days. Mackinzie and Morgan join her on their days off from their other jobs. Mackinzie works part time at Macon



Macon Department Store opened on Lafayette's courthouse square in 1962.

Community Hospital, while Morgan works part time at Westmoreland Pharmacy.

Heather handles most of the paperwork, and Mackinzie and Morgan take care of marketing and online sales. All three buy merchandise. They have a support system of family and friends to help with larger needs like maintenance.

Moving forward after Terry's death was a difficult time compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic. "We were trying to learn to move forward without Terry," Morgan says. "Then the pandemic hit, and we had to try new ways to reach our customers. By trial and error, we made it through."

FOCUSED ON COMMUNITY

Now seven years into their roles as owners, Mackinzie and Morgan know their success depends on support from the local community. "Owning our business is a big deal," Morgan says. "Trying to buy merchandise that our customers will like and purchase can be stressful."

That stress is balanced with the reward of knowing their customers personally. "We have more one-on-one time with our customers," Mackinzie says. "When someone comes in and asks for help, we have a better understanding of how to help because we know them."

While local customers are crucial, the store also welcomes shoppers from other areas. "We couldn't keep the doors open if

ATLANTA APPAREL AND MORE



From left, Macon Department Store owners Heather, Morgan and Mackinzie Day attend an apparel market in Atlanta.

SHOPPING FOR SHOPPERS

Step inside Macon Department Store or browse its posts on Facebook, and you'll notice a carefully curated selection of clothing and accessories.

Each year in February and again in August, store owners Heather, Morgan and Mackinzie Day travel to Atlanta to attend apparel and shoe markets. It is an important part of the business that their friend and predecessor, Terry Hudson, taught them how to do.

Months before they can place merchandise on the racks, they have to make decisions about what to buy at the markets. "We usually walk about 3 miles a day and have appointments all day long," Heather says. "We have to have a game plan, or it would be overwhelming."



Terry Hudson treasured his time with Morgan, left, and Mackinzie and enjoyed having them in the store.

the community didn't support us," Heather says. "It is also important that we have out-of-town customers too."

To serve their customers, Heather, Mackinzie and Morgan rely on phone and internet service from NCTC. "We make our online purchases from companies, answer questions from customers on the phone and post on our Facebook page," Heather says.

Customers can look forward to specials during Black Friday sales in the store. Shoppers are also invited to stop by and check out the Macon Department Store booth at A Southern Marketplace at Acres of Grace Farms in Red Boiling Springs, Nov. 19-21. [📍](#)

Have a Holly Jolly Kitchen

Smart gifts can make holiday cooking easier

Story by DREW WOOLLEY

The holiday season means warm family gatherings, pulling out favorite recipes and sharing memorable meals. But it can also bring crowded kitchens, packed schedules and stress over that perfect entree overcooking.

Fortunately, smart kitchen devices can take the pressure out of home cooking. Whether you need to monitor food remotely, automate routine tasks or just get rid of some of the guesswork, there are tools to help experienced chefs and culinary newbies alike. That makes these connected kitchen gadgets the perfect gifts that continue paying off long after the holidays are over.

SMART COFFEE MAKER

Holiday mornings often begin before sunrise, and a smart coffee maker can have a fresh pot waiting before anyone reaches the kitchen. Many models allow users to schedule brewing from a smartphone, create recurring routines and integrate with voice assistants for hands-free operation.

Consider brewing capacity, programmable schedules and compatibility with whole-pot or single-serve brewing preferences when comparing options.

KITCHEN DISPLAY

A smart display serves as a digital recipe book, cooking timer, entertainment hub and communication center all-in-one device. It can display step-by-step recipes, manage multiple timers, stream music or video and answer cooking questions without requiring users to touch a phone with messy hands.

When selecting a model, compare screen size, voice assistant compatibility and integration with other smart-home devices. Displays that support video calling can also help families connect with relatives during the holidays.

SMART MULTICOOKER

A connected multicooker combines the functions of a pressure cooker, slow cooker, rice cooker and saute pan into one appliance while adding smartphone controls and guided recipes. During the holidays, it can free up valuable space by preparing mashed potatoes, soups, stuffing or desserts while the stovetop and oven are occupied.



Look for models that include a variety of cooking programs, delayed-start options and recipe integration through a companion app. Capacity is another important consideration, with larger households typically benefiting from 6- or 8-quart versions.

WIRELESS MEAT THERMOMETER

A wireless smart meat thermometer allows cooks to monitor the internal temperature of turkey, ham, beef or other meats from a smartphone without opening the oven or smoker. Many models estimate cooking times, alert users when food reaches the desired temperature and provide guided cooking recommendations to help avoid overcooking.

When shopping, consider how many probes are included. Larger families or frequent entertainers may appreciate systems that can monitor multiple dishes at the same time, while single-probe models are often sufficient for everyday use.

SMART AIR FRYER

Connected air fryers allow users to start cooking, adjust temperatures and receive notifications through a mobile app. They're ideal for preparing appetizers, vegetables or rolls and reheating leftovers quickly during busy holiday gatherings.

The basket size should match the number of people typically served. Dual-basket models provide additional flexibility by allowing two foods to cook at different temperatures simultaneously.



COUNTERTOP OVEN

A smart countertop oven can bake, roast, air fry, broil and toast while offering app connectivity, automatic cooking programs and recipe guidance. These appliances are especially useful during the holidays, when the primary oven is filled with a turkey or roast and additional cooking space is needed for side dishes and desserts.

Interior capacity is one of the biggest differences between models. Shoppers should also compare available cooking modes and determine whether remote monitoring or automatic cooking adjustments are important features.

CONNECTED WALL OVEN

Smart wall ovens connect to home Wi-Fi networks, allowing users to preheat the oven remotely, watch cooking progress and receive alerts when dishes are finished. Some premium models

also feature internal cameras or food-recognition technology that can provide additional guidance throughout the cooking process.

Because these appliances are built into cabinetry, buyers should carefully verify dimensions, installation requirements and compatibility with existing kitchen layouts before making a purchase.



SMART MICROWAVE

Connected microwaves can automatically adjust cooking times, download cooking instructions through companion apps and send notifications when food is ready. They simplify reheating leftovers, preparing vegetables and handling quick side dishes while the rest of the holiday meal comes together.

Capacity, sensor cooking functions and compatibility with existing smart-home ecosystems are among the most important features to compare when choosing a model.



CONNECTED STAND MIXER

While stand mixers have long been a staple for holiday baking, newer connected versions can



guide users through recipes, recommend mixing speeds and synchronize with companion apps. They're particularly helpful when preparing cookies, cakes, breads and festive desserts.

Consider bowl capacity, motor power and the availability of optional attachments that expand the appliance's versatility beyond baking.

Holiday meals keep the kitchen busy with dozens of dishes, careful timing and plenty of coordination. Smart cooking tools can't take care of everything on their own. But for families who enjoy cooking together or playing host, they can simplify many of the tasks that make holiday cooking stressful, so you can focus on what makes this time of year special. 📱



Home for the Holidays

From the Thanksgiving turkey to cookies for Santa, online shopping to favorite Christmas songs, so many holiday traditions are powered by Wi-Fi. With NCTC's 100% fiber network and Blast Wi-Fi, you can enjoy these treasured moments knowing that your home's internet connection can simultaneously support multiple devices this holiday season and all year long.

HOLIDAY RECIPES

Wi-Fi-enabled kitchen appliances and gadgets can save time and let you keep an eye on your cooking while you do other things. Start your busy holiday mornings with a connected coffee maker. Rely on your smart refrigerator to organize your grocery list. Call on voice assistants to convert measurements.

With today's smart kitchen tools

and appliances, you can preheat your oven remotely, adjust temperatures and receive alerts when the cooking time is done. Use a Wi-Fi meat thermometer to monitor the temperature of your turkey or ham while you focus on other menu items. And make cleanup less of a chore with a smart dishwasher that can alert you to maintenance issues before they wreak havoc.



It all runs smoothly because NCTC's Blast Wi-Fi system optimizes signals, giving you more complete coverage.

BRIGHT LIGHTS

Whether you are competing with your neighbors for the most elaborate Christmas decorations or just keeping it simple with a few strands of white lights on the tree, programmable lights and smart plugs allow you to control it all from your smartphone.

Pair those special ornaments from your childhood with the high-tech fun of creating your own customizable animated light sequence. You can configure it all and add in convenient scheduling from the comfort of your couch.

With Wi-Fi coverage reaching more of your home, you can control your smart plugs and programmable lights right from your phone. Deck the halls, brighten the front porch, and add a little holiday sparkle to the back patio.

WELCOME GUESTS

When hosting a big holiday meal or welcoming friends and family for an extended visit, you plan for extra chairs around the table and more groceries in the fridge. But don't forget to make your home network welcoming as well.

When guests arrive, so do their devices. In the blink of an eye, your home network needs to support a multitude of smartphones, tablets and gaming devices. In addition to the demand for bandwidth, you need to protect your network's security. Set up a secure guest network with the NCTC Wifi app, and enjoy ProtectIQ and ExperienceIQ at no extra cost. Plus, 24/7 support for peace all season.

Use your NCTC WiFi app to control user access and protect against dangerous malware.

NCTC's high-capacity fiber network was built with peak holiday needs in mind. It offers more than enough bandwidth to meet Thanksgiving and Christmas demands for watching the big games, streaming holiday movies and powering up those new Wi-Fi-enabled gadgets. With 24/7 support, you can enjoy the season with peace of mind. 

NCTC MULTI-GIG INTERNET

Power your home with 8-Gig fiber internet—NCTC's fastest speed. During the holidays and all year long, these fast speeds allow you to stream without buffering, game without lagging and enjoy every device in your home with 100% fiber reliability.



FIBER SPEEDS FOR EVERY HOME
AND EVERY LIFESTYLE

8 Gig

5 Gig

2 Gig

1 Gig

300 Mbps

100 Mbps

Included With Your Service

- 100% fiber connection
- WiFi 7 router (2 Gig speed and above)
- NCTC Wi-Fi App for network control
- ProtectIQ and ExperienceIQ

No buffering. No lag. Just pure fiber speed — the NCTC way.

Learn more at nctc.com/blast

See website for full details.
Some restrictions may apply.



Snacks Worth Sharing

Crowd-pleasing recipes for festive gatherings

The holiday season is full of opportunities to gather with family, friends and neighbors, but hosting doesn't have to mean spending hours in the kitchen. Just a few simple, shareable dishes can help guests mingle while keeping the cook out of the kitchen, so everyone can be part of the celebration.

Whether you're hosting an open house, pitching in for a potluck or serving appetizers before a holiday meal, these easy recipes are big on flavor and short on prep time, making them perfect for busy holiday schedules. 🗨

Photography by
Mark Gilliland

Food styling by
Rhonda Gilliland

HOT SPINACH ARTICHOKE DIP

- 1 10-ounce package frozen chopped spinach, thawed and squeezed dry
- 1 14-ounce can artichoke hearts, drained and chopped
- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- ½ cup sour cream
- ½ cup mayonnaise
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Crackers, sliced baguette or tortilla chips



Preheat the oven to 350 F. In a large bowl, combine the ingredients until well mixed. Season with salt and pepper to taste, then transfer the mixture to a lightly greased baking dish. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, until the dip is hot and bubbly with lightly browned edges. Serve warm with crackers, toasted baguette slices or tortilla chips.

BAKED BRIE IN PUFF PASTRY

- 1 8-ounce wheel brie
- 1 sheet puff pastry, thawed
- ¼ cup cranberry sauce or your favorite fruit or jam
- ¼ cup fresh or dried cranberries or fruit of your choice
- ¼ cup chopped walnuts or pecans
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 egg, beaten for egg wash
- Fresh rosemary or fruit, for garnish
- Assorted sliced fruit and crackers for serving

Preheat oven to 400 F and line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Unfold the puff pastry on a lightly floured surface. Place brie in the center. Spread cranberry sauce, jam or fruit over the top of the brie. Top with cranberries or fruit and nuts. Drizzle with honey. Fold pastry over the brie, sealing the edges. Place seam-side down on the baking sheet. Brush with the beaten egg.

Bake for 20 to 25 minutes until the pastry is golden brown and the cheese is soft and melty. Garnish with rosemary and serve warm with sliced fruit and crackers.

Tip: Let rest for 5 minutes before serving, so the cheese sets slightly.



BRUSCHETTA



- Fresh, ripe tomatoes, any color
- Sourdough bread, fresh or day-old
- 2 garlic cloves, skin removed
- Extra virgin olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Fresh basil (optional)



Thoroughly wash the tomatoes, then chop roughly into small pieces and place in a bowl. Save any juice. Add a generous amount of extra virgin olive oil, salt, pepper, one clove of crushed garlic and fresh basil, breaking up the leaves if desired. Mix and leave to rest for 10 to 20 minutes at room temperature or in the fridge.

Slice up to two pieces of bread per person. Heat a skillet on high and cook bread on both sides for a few minutes, until golden. You can also heat the bread in a toaster or oven. Once ready, immediately rub a clove of garlic over the top of the bread.

Using a tablespoon, drizzle any remaining tomato juice over each slice of bread, then add the tomato mixture and a few pieces of fresh basil.



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Santa Approved

Trilight Mobile From NCTC

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