



SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2023

CONNECTION

On a mission

Crossroads helps the helpers



JACKSON'S ORCHARD

MOVIES ON THE RUN



RURAL CONNECTIONS

By SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

A front row seat to history

I recently spent the morning at the White House celebrating the historic announcement of \$42.5 billion allocated to all the states and territories in our union to help bridge the digital divide as part of the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment program, also known as BEAD.

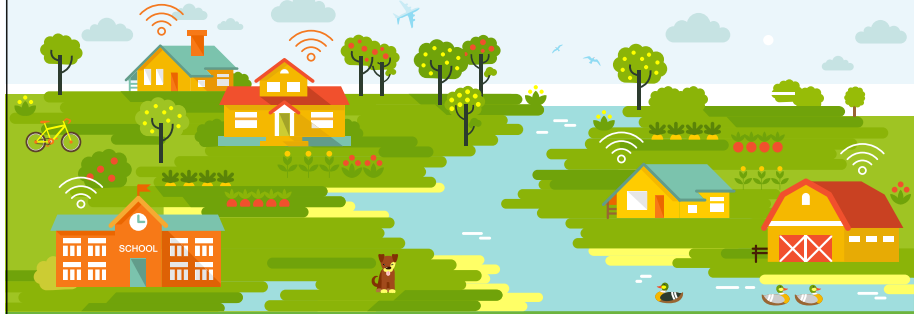
The buzz in the security line was electric as folks lined up early to compare notes on why we are all passionate about broadband deployment, and I enjoyed sharing the activities of community-based broadband providers. I found myself beaming when a few people specifically referenced the fiber networks deployed by NTCA member companies. I love that the hard work of these companies and co-ops like yours is finally getting the credit that is due.

Mitch Landrieu, head of infrastructure initiatives for President Joe Biden, kicked us off and turned the podium to Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo, who is leading BEAD and has genuinely put her passion behind her work. President Biden then took the podium and got right into sharing how much this historic investment in broadband means for our country. I was delighted to hear all the administration's folks share a mindset on the importance of reliable, comparable and affordable broadband and even how fiber is really the technology of choice for this historic investment.

As Secretary Raimondo noted, it really was a "happy broadband day." And, with the support of your community-based provider, we are sure to have many more delightful broadband days in the future. 📶

Why is broadband vital?

It strengthens rural America



Life is often lived online, including working, socializing, learning, relaxing and more. Without fast internet access, however, these day-to-day essentials grind to a halt. But for rural communities, the stakes are even higher.

While it's something we might take for granted — at least for those of us who have access to broadband — the power of fast internet to profoundly improve quality of life remains striking.



-1-

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES:

High-speed internet helps rural businesses expand their reach through e-commerce — possibly even connecting globally.



-2-

REMOTE WORK:

Rural workers can tap into a pool of work-from-home jobs, allowing residents to avoid commutes or the possibility of relocating for work.



-3-

HEALTH CARE:

Telemedicine and access to medical resources — such as time-sensitive treatments like stroke care — are critical.



-4-

EDUCATION:

Rural schools, colleges and students can tap vast resources, including virtual classrooms and distance learning programs.



-5-

AGRICULTURE:

Online resources allow farmers in rural areas to optimize crop management, monitor livestock, access weather information and more.

That's just the beginning. New opportunities will continue to appear, and rural internet providers will make the connections to bring those services to you.



©matortin/Adobe Stock

Stream it to win it

DON'T MISS A GAME THIS SEASON

Fall is prime time for sports fans. There's both college and NFL football. The baseball regular season wraps up, followed by the playoffs and World Series. The first NBA games tip off, too. And with such a rich stew of possibilities, the buffet of options for viewing sports is tastier than ever.

Once, a sports fan might be limited to viewing the feats of only regional teams, and the selection of those games was limited to the lineup a TV network offered. Now, however, sports fans can choose streaming services that best suit their interests and budgets. Pricing can change at any time, though, so verify the cost when you're ready to make a game-time decision.

SOME POTENTIAL WINNERS

- ▶ **NFL Game Pass:** For pro football fans, NFL Game Pass is a game-changer. This streaming service provides access to live out-of-market games. It's hard to beat if you're a fan who wants to keep up with a favorite team whose games typically aren't broadcast in your TV market. NFL Game Pass also offers on-demand replays, condensed games and access to an extensive archive of previous seasons. While Game Pass is just one possibility for streaming NFL games, it's a good one.
- ▶ **NBA League Pass:** Do you love professional basketball? Thanks to NBA League Pass, there's a premium service perfect for anyone hooked on the NBA. There's coverage of live games and the opportunity to watch past games on demand. There's plenty of analysis, features, interviews and more. And it also works great on most devices.
- ▶ **Paramount+, Amazon Prime Video and Apple TV:** These services aren't known primarily as platforms that feature sports. Instead, they established footholds by offering deep libraries of new TV shows and movies, as well as catalogs of longtime favorites. But if you're already subscribing to stream from one of these services, or other similar ones, take a closer look. You might be surprised by the sports available on a subscription you already have.
- ▶ **YouTube TV:** If you want an experience that's close to traditional TV — all the big networks and smaller ones, too — check out YouTube TV. ABC, CBS, NBC, ESPN and more are all available, and they're streaming in real time. You see the games as they're happening. You can even record events so you can watch them later.
- ▶ **ESPN+:** Are you a fan of sports other than the big leagues? ESPN+ takes a deep dive into soccer, tennis and more. There's coverage of everything from Ultimate Fighting Championship bouts to U.S. Open tennis. Smaller college conferences, such as the Ivy League and Conference USA, are showcased, with baseball, softball, hockey, wrestling and more. There's even access to a library of content from the ESPN documentary series "30 for 30." [📺](#)

Co-op strong

Together we lift up our community

Our world changes quickly when it comes to technology and how we interact with one another. But ever since we built the first telephone lines, we've been devoted to providing the services you need to stay engaged, connected and secure. At times, it can prove challenging to bring cutting-edge technologies to a rural community like ours, but with your support we're succeeding.



**JOHNNY
MCCLANAHAN**
President/CEO

Also, NCTC is not alone, and neither are you. We're proud to be part of a nationwide co-op family, a supportive group of like-minded companies committed to uplifting areas in rural America that for-profit companies have often ignored.

While many communities like ours are catching up, there remains a gap between the resources available in rural America versus those found in larger cities. Every day, we work to bridge this digital divide by bringing you resources like internet service at speeds that often beat those found in metropolitan areas. And we do it affordably and reliably.

Each October, during National Cooperative Month, the co-op world honors these efforts that show how neighbors helping neighbors can benefit everyone. You see, as a member of the cooperative,

you are a part of NCTC. When people succeed by working together, isn't it worth celebrating? We think so.


In the cooperative model, unlike with most for-profit corporations, our primary focus is on the needs of our members. Everyone at NCTC lives nearby, so we understand not only the successes our area achieves, but also the challenges we face.

As an added benefit of the cooperative model, we're sometimes able to return money to you. In fact, NCTC's Board of Directors sent capital credits reimbursement in August to eligible members who were in service in 1990.

Just like other companies that are part of the co-op community, we hold fast to a set of shared principles, promoting fairness, democracy and community development. Cooperative Month gives us a chance to amplify our voices and raise awareness about these efforts.

After all, we have seen firsthand the difference fast internet and other services can have. They opened the doors to economic development, more educational resources and a greater choice of health care services thanks to telemedicine.

None of this, however, is possible without you. Our strength lies in your active participation and engagement with NCTC. Our members are crucial in shaping the direction of this cooperative.

Cooperative Month is significant for us, allowing time to reflect on where we've been and where we're going. It's an opportunity to celebrate our achievements, to raise awareness about the power of the cooperative world and to thank you for your help. Together, we'll continue to make our community the best it can possibly be. 

The North Central Connection is a bimonthly newsletter published by NCTC, © 2023. 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, Allen County and Warren County, Kentucky. NCTC also serves portions of Sumner, Trousdale, Smith and Clay counties in Tennessee.

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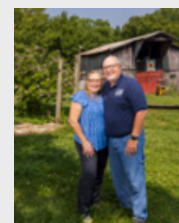
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On the Cover:



Patti and Gil Carter founded Crossroads Mission Care to help first responders, military and spiritual first responders. See story Page 8.

Photo by Tony Young

We can't hide our
excitement!

NCTC's super-fast internet is getting even faster — and we think you're going to love it!

Stay tuned.



SAVE THE DATE

You're invited!

NCTC will hold its

ANNUAL MEETING

on Nov. 4 at Macon County Junior High School.

Entertainment starts at noon, and the business meeting begins at 1 p.m. Come out and enjoy the fun!



NCTC wishes you a relaxing and safe Labor Day weekend. In honor of the holiday — and in recognition of our own employees — our offices will be closed **Monday, Sept. 4.**



ON LOCATION

Movie productions seek rural Southern settings

Story by ANNE BRALY

Lights, camera, action! Those words, once heard primarily in Hollywood studios, now echo through wooded forests and city streets across the South. And for many, a visit to places they've seen on the silver screen adds some excitement to a vacation.

"Film has always been such a powerful medium, and I think people enjoy being a part of something that meant so much to them," says Dan Rogers, senior project manager for the South Carolina Film Commission.

It's widely known that the Atlanta area is a hot spot for zombies in "The Walking Dead" and the unusual happenings in "Stranger Things." Nashville's been given the nod by directors, too, with films including "The Green Mile," with Tom Hanks, and "Coal Miner's Daughter," starring Sissy Spacek as Loretta Lynn, filming in Music City.

Small towns, too, have seen their share of screen time. Black Mountain and Cedar Mountain, both in western North Carolina, were locations for several scenes in "The Hunger Games." Berry College in Rome, Georgia, was transformed into Carmichael Plantation in scenes from "Sweet Home Alabama." Also, Tidalholm Mansion along the Beaufort River in Beaufort, South Carolina, set the stage for both "The Big Chill" and "The Great Santini."

So, what is it about the South that has turned it into the new Hollywood? Kyle Bucher, production manager for virtual productions at 3rd Realm Creations in Mobile, Alabama, says it all goes back to what helps make the region famous — Southern hospitality.

"It goes a long way," he says. "The local hospitality of people and their willingness to try and help is ideal. Also, the local creativity among artists and the community is a stark comparison from Los Angeles and other filming areas."

ALABAMA

Lower Alabama has seen a lot of interest come its way since "Close Encounters of the Third Kind" was released in 1977. You can still see where the main character, Roy Neary, lived in Mobile, 613 Carlisle Drive, along with the home of character Jillian Guiler at 22250 Alabama Highway 181, in Fairhope.

More movie sites in Alabama include Waverly Lake, where a scene in "Norma Rae" was filmed, and Eufaula, where the historic streets were the backdrop for "Sweet Home Alabama." Huntsville's Space and Rocket Center has also been a location in several movies, including "Space Camp" and "Space Warriors." Most recently, West Mobile's Honduran Kitchen, off Snow Road, was used to shoot Robert de Niro's new comedy "About My Father," released Memorial Day weekend.



Blacksher Hall, a grand mansion in Mobile, was used in filming "USS Indianapolis: Men of Courage."

Photo courtesy of Kyle Bucher



KENTUCKY

The diverse topography in the Bluegrass State makes it ideal territory for scouts looking to film movies, says Tim Bates, manager of the Kentucky Film Office.

“Some might think that a destination is particularly beautiful, or maybe they really enjoyed a film so much that they want to experience more of it,” he says. “It’s a rather easy connection between filmmaking and tourism.”

Some of the movies filmed in Kentucky and sites that you can visit include, Pompilio’s Italian Restaurant in Newport, featured in 1988’s “Rain Man” with Dustin Hoffman and Tom Cruise. Or, visit Fort Knox to see where “Stripes,” starring Bill Murray and John Candy, was filmed. The Pioneer Playhouse in Danville was the backdrop for the film “Raintree County” with Elizabeth Taylor and Montgomery Clift. Also, Keeneland in Lexington is always a fun place to visit for tours, a chance to see the horses and, while you’re there, see where much of “Seabiscuit” was filmed.



Danville’s Pioneer Playhouse remains a popular place and is the setting for the Elizabeth Taylor film “Raintree County.”

Photo courtesy of Kentucky Tourism



Photo courtesy of New Line Productions

Walk in the steps of Ryan Gosling and Rachel McAdams along King Street in Charleston as they filmed “The Notebook.”



SOUTH CAROLINA

“Outer Banks” a hit show on Netflix, has brought many people to the area. As a result, “they’ve discovered the beauty of our Lowcountry,” Dan says.

Some of the best areas to visit locations from “Outer Banks” are along Shem Creek in Mount Pleasant. Also, visit the Gaillard Center in Charleston, aka the UNC Chapel Hill Law Library. If you’re in the Charleston area and want to find out more, visit charlestoncvb.com.

Other South Carolina movie sets include Four Square Gospel Church — actually, Stoney Creek Independent Presbyterian Chapel in McPhersonville — where Forrest Gump went to pray for shrimp, and Lucy Point Creek between Coosaw and Lady’s Island, where most of the water scenes were shot. Movie fans can find more places at southcarolinalowcountry.com.



TENNESSEE

The flatlands and mountains of Tennessee have been the backdrop for many movies, and here are some sites that you can visit and relive the magic of the big screen.

Visit Charleston, Cleveland and the Hiwassee River to see where “Wild River,” the first major motion picture filmed entirely in Tennessee, was made. Tour the town of Charleston with a local researcher, and walk the banks of the river and learn of other nearby places that were used in the film. Email davidswafford@charter.net for details.

Drive by the Tennessee State Prison in Nashville and see where parts of “The Green Mile,” “Last Dance” and “Walk the Line” were filmed.

Visit Knoxville’s Neyland Stadium, Market Square and the historic Tennessee Theatre to check out locations you’ll recognize from “The Last Movie Star.”

The swamp at Reelfoot Lake was a setting for the action film “U.S. Marshals.” Be sure to bring your binoculars, too. The bird-watching here is some of the best in the state.

Visit Fall Creek Falls State Park where you can bring out your Baloo and explore areas where the 1994 live-action adaption of “The Jungle Book” was filmed. Wear your hiking shoes — there are plenty of waterfalls, hiking trails and rocks to climb and a canopy challenge course to experience. 📱



Photo courtesy of Tennessee Tourism

The eerie, spooky swamps in Reelfoot Lake made the perfect backdrop for the thriller “U.S. Marshals.”



Gil and Patti Carter served overseas for years helping faith and military communities.

Lightening the load

Crossroads Mission Care offers healing for first responders and more

Story by JEN CALHOUN

Patti Carter likens the stress and trauma someone carries to a backpack. In the beginning, the backpack is probably light. The more trauma its wearer experiences, the heavier it grows.

“As a person encounters different traumatic events, they might process them as well as they can, but they could still have a stone left over — a pebble of remembrance,” says Patti, who co-directs Crossroads Mission Care in Dixon Springs with her husband, Gil. “They might stick it in that backpack to be dealt with another day.”

A backpack like that can get pretty heavy for people who experience trauma regularly, like police officers, firefighters and soldiers. Eventually, all those stones and pebbles accumulate into a heavy load. It can make it hard to move forward in a healthy way. Some might give up altogether.

TAKING ON TRAUMA

The Carters launched Crossroads Mission Care a few years ago as a way to help relieve the heavy burdens often carried by civil first responders, military personnel and

spiritual first responders, like pastors and missionaries. All of their services are free, and they exist through charitable donations and grants.

Crossroads Mission Care holds workshops at fire stations, police departments and county law enforcement offices across Middle Tennessee. The Carters also offer one-on-one coaching sessions. Over the next few years, they hope to expand their programs to include relaxing private retreats and meeting spaces on their pastoral, 45-acre property.

“Just recently, we had someone staying with us,” Patti says. “We drove up to the top of the bluff on the property and turned the engine off and just sat there in silence for a minute, listening to the birds and looking at the wildflowers. There’s something about the natural rhythm that actually calms and centers people, especially people who work in fast-paced, stressful careers.”

Once a year, Crossroads also hosts the Alpha Games First Responder Festival, when firefighters, police and others compete in a variety of friendly events. “Partly, we do it so they can blow off some steam and talk trash,” says Gil, with a laugh. “You’ve never heard trash talk until you get some firefighters and law enforcement together.”

There’s a deeper reason for the festival, too. “It gives the community a chance to come out and cheer them on,” he says. “I’ve heard so many first responders say the same thing: ‘No one wants to see us, because if they see us it means they’re having a really bad day.’ That can be pretty rough on a person.”

COMPASSIONATE COACHING

The Carters have worked for more than 25 years in the nonprofit world, serving in faith- and military-based communities both overseas and in the U.S. The couple started by counseling and helping the faith community get the services it needed. After 9/11, they were also tasked with helping military members and their families.

Along the way, they realized first responder communities, which include



Patti and Gil Carter use their NCTC fiber broadband service for work and recreation.

Photos by Tony Young

law enforcement, firefighters, emergency medical responders and dispatchers, also needed help. “The populations we serve have certain things in common,” Gil says. “By putting others first, they put themselves last when it comes to self-care. Also, they’re all hesitant to admit when they’re struggling, because it can affect their careers.”

Patti, who has a master’s degree in counseling, made a decision not to reinstate her licensure in recent years so she wouldn’t have to contend with insurance reimbursement and other hurdles that could cause privacy concerns for first responders looking for help. “This way, when people come to speak with us, they can do so in complete privacy — no reports, no insurance. Nothing like that,” she says.

Now, she coaches people on how to get to where they want to be by focusing on the present and future goals. Gil has decades of experience in connecting people with the services they need, whether it’s counseling or other tools.

It’s important work, because the health and well-being of first responders can affect the health of a community. Patti and Gil say these groups share a kind of isolation that comes with the job. “We want our first responders and military service members to have their stuff together,” Patti

says. “We want you to be 10 feet tall and bulletproof, thank you very much. They have to run into burning buildings and go into buildings with active shooters.”

But what happens after that? “At what point is it OK to not be 10 feet tall and bulletproof?” she says. “I think it’s a hard process for people, especially when they know that others are relying on them, to be courageous. When they’re struggling, it can be a lot harder for people like that to ask for help.”

Helping the helpers

Crossroads Mission Care is a nonprofit organization that offers free guidance, coaching and other services to civil first responders, faith first responders and current and former military personnel, whether they’re retired, active duty or National Guard.

Crossroads also organizes and hosts the annual Alpha Games First Responder Festival in September. To find out more, visit crossroadsmissoncare.com. You can also make donations by clicking the “Donate” button on the website.

Learning

The word "Learning" is written in a large, cursive, dashed font. The letters are colored in a gradient from light blue to purple to pink. A black needle with a white thread is positioned horizontally across the middle of the word, with the thread looping through the eye of the needle and forming a large orange loop that extends to the right, framing the end of the word.

THROUGH OUR CULTURE

Textile arts have long history in rural America

Story by CHERÉ COEN

For centuries, quilts, pieced together from fabric swatches, warmed sleeping families. Woven blankets also provided warmth and offered an opportunity for creativity in a time when women were busy working at home and had little time for the arts.

Today, quilts and blankets still cover beds around the world, but the historic art form has reached exceptional heights through the use of 3D techniques, photography, natural elements and more. “It’s not just a pretty quilt on a bed,” says Deborah Blanchette Bradley, managing director of the nonprofit Texas Quilt Museum. “This is fine art.”

The La Grange, Texas, museum began when quilters Karey Bresnenhan and Nancy O’Bryant Puentes, producers of Houston’s International Quilt Festival, wanted to share art quilts year-round and not just during the November festival. They restored an 1892 building to 95% of its original architecture and opened the museum in 2011 to exhibit quilts and educate the public on the art of textiles.

“Our purpose is to help people see and understand the world of quilting,” Deborah says. “Women were the heart of the home. Our mission is to offer and share the legacy and history — mostly women’s history — through quilting.”

The museum weaves together American textile history and modern art in its exhibits, including the recent “A Tribute



Photos courtesy of National Quilt Museum

to Mary Ann Vaca-Lambert,” whose quilts have been displayed internationally. The museum also hosted an “All Creatures” juried show with 50 quilts based on James Herriot’s novels and the popular PBS series “All Creatures Great and Small.”

ADDITIONAL INCOME

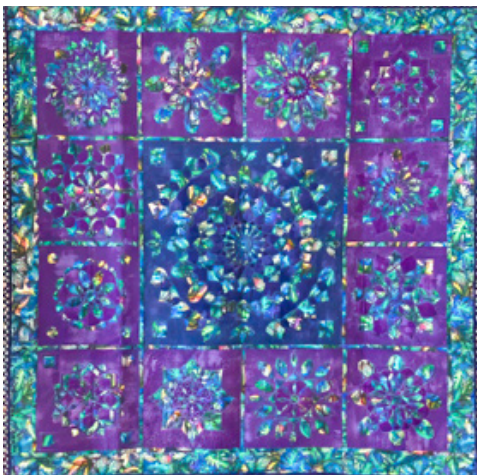
Textiles evolved from utilitarian items to high art, but they also provide many people with additional income. Many members of the McCreary Mountain Craft Center in Parkers Lake, Kentucky, sell their textiles, in addition to other works. The center started as a 4-H organization designed to preserve the craft traditions of Southeast Kentucky.



Photos courtesy of National Quilt Museum

TOP: The National Quilt Museum is in Paducah, Kentucky, one of only a handful of UNESCO Creative Cities in the United States.

ABOVE: The museum displays a wide variety of contemporary textile arts.



A display this year at the Texas Quilt Museum included artwork created by Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo blue ribbon prizewinners.



Photos courtesy of Texas Quilt Museum

“The center was started by an extension agent,” says President Terri Cash. “He wanted to help people in the area make money by selling their crafts.”

The center celebrates 60 years in 2023 and is completely run by volunteers. Artists join for \$10 a year and keep 75% of their earnings. It’s a labor of love, Terri insists. “We’re definitely not out to make money because of the amount of time we put into it.”

Most members are middle-aged and above, but Terri sees young people crafting as well, so weaving and quilting continue to be American art forms. “And we’re happy to pass it down,” she says.

GETTING STARTED

Deborah sees museum visitors looking at professional quilts and other textile artwork and forlornly musing that they could never create such masterpieces. She encourages people to view these showpieces as inspiration to create. “There’s so many ways of being inspired in quilting,”

Deborah says. “You can find inspiration in everything.”

It’s the reason the museum includes education in its programming. It works with Arts for Rural Texas for after-school programs and two summer camps. Children learn skills like needle felting and quilting. “They make a nine-block quilt,” Deborah says. “They learn three patterns and do it all in one week. None of them will look alike.”

The recently opened Discover Exhibit gives children quilt block puzzles and an I Spy adventure through the museum. “It’s meant to inspire kids to learn and take on the art of fabric,” she says. “Art stretches the mind and inspires.”

In addition to the classes and lectures the museum offers, adults looking to get into quilting should find a local guild, Deborah suggests. Quilting guilds exist across the country, and group members are available to mentor and help newcomers. “That’s a great place to start,” she says. “All of these ladies — there’s men in there, too — love to share. It’s like a modern-day quilting bee. If nothing else, it helps you not do it alone.”

Another avenue is sewing classes at extension offices and through 4-H. The University of Minnesota Extension Office, for instance, offers a youth quilting workshop.


Deborah was never a quilter, she was hired to administer the museum, but she’s since taken it up and loves the community she found. “It’s been a wonderful world to become a part of,” she says. 



Photo courtesy of Texas Quilt Museum

Western art created by La Grange High School students is displayed at the Texas Quilt Museum.

Online Resources

- **Paducah, Kentucky**, is home to both the National Quilting Museum and the American Quilter’s Society, dedicated to spreading the importance of quilt making and helping quilters achieve their goals. Because of its quilting heritage and advancements of quilting worldwide, the city was named a UNESCO Creative City for Crafts & Folk Art. View textile art in Paducah’s Lower Town Arts District and visit for AQS’s QuiltWeek April 24-27, 2024. For more information, visit quiltmuseum.org or americanquilter.com.

- **McCreary Mountain Craft Center** celebrates 60 years of showcasing and selling handmade art and crafts. Located in Parkers Lake, Kentucky, near Cumberland Falls, the center sells a variety of textiles. Visit Facebook and search for the McCreary Mountain Craft Center.

- **Texas Quilt Museum** in La Grange rests between Houston and San Antonio and offers exhibits that change four times a year, youth education and one of the largest quilt research libraries in the country. Learn more at texasquiltmuseum.org.



Sweet spot

JACKSON'S ORCHARD & NURSERY ADDS FLAVOR TO FALL

Story by JEN CALHOUN

Cathy Otis figures her parents, Bill and Shirley Jackson, were practicing agritourism before the term was even coined. The first time the family invited the general public to Jackson's Orchard & Nursery for fun and festivities was back in the 1980s.

"Our neighbor, David Garvin, who founded Camping World, had just opened a location in Vacaville, California, and he told us about a big pumpkin festival they held every year out there," Cathy says. "So, my dad and I flew out there to see what it was all about."

Not much later, the family held its own Pumpkin Festival, which became a huge success. "The first year, we just did one weekend," Cathy says. "Then we

added another weekend the next year, and it just kept growing from there."

BOOMING BUSINESS

Today, the event spans six weekends in September and October, with tractor rides, a corn maze, pick-your-own apples, petting zoos, pony rides and even more activities for families. "It's probably what we're known best for," says Cathy, who also helps oversee the Apple Fest over Labor Day weekend, seasonal farmers markets and the Peach Tastin' Days festival in July.

In addition, the orchard's store

sells seasonal products in the summer and fall, with everything from vegetables provided by local farmers to peaches, plums and summer apples straight from its 80-acre orchard full of fruit trees. It also offers apple, peach and plum butters, as well as pies, ice cream, cider, cider slushies and other fruit treats, depending on the time of year and availability.

TECHNO AGRIBIZ

During the Pumpkin Festival weekends, the farm offers several stations with credit card machines. "It used to be that all these different stations had to be cash only, because we couldn't run credit cards at different locations on the farm," Cathy says. "It was pretty limited, because the closest ATM was about a 15-minute drive away."



Jackson's Orchard got its start in 1966, when Bill and Shirley Jackson purchased the land from a retiring farmer.



ABOVE: The orchard harvests several varieties of apples, and families can pick their own.

TOP RIGHT: The Peach Tustin' Days festival is just one of many special events.

RIGHT: Jackson's holds a farmers market throughout the summer, featuring products from the orchard and farm, as well as locally grown vegetables.



Since the family started receiving NCTC's broadband service, however, they've been able to increase sales with more checkouts and faster transactions. "Now, we can run a credit card in, I don't know, two seconds," Cathy says. "It used to take two or three minutes just to do one transaction. I also have several credit card machines, so we can serve a lot more people a lot faster. Plus, we do online ordering. It's just much smoother with the good fiber optic connection."

The family also uses NCTC broadband to keep its social network up to date. They post regular updates on Facebook, where they enjoy a following of nearly 50,000 people. They also use Instagram, Twitter and Pinterest. Their YouTube channel also offers several short videos.

FRUITFUL ORIGINS

The orchard has come a long way since the Jacksons bought it in 1966 from an older farmer looking to get out of the business. Bill was selling agricultural products at the time, when the farmer said, "Instead of selling me chemicals, why don't you just buy this farm 'cause I'm way past needing to retire."

Two months later, Bill and Shirley signed the paperwork. Now, at least three generations of the family are involved in the day-to-day operations, including Cathy, the general manager, and her nephew, Jonathan Price, the field manager. Many other family members pitch in on a part-time basis.

For more than 50 years, the orchard and its accompanying nursery have hosted thousands of visitors, including numerous school groups and tourists. In addition to the festivals and farmers markets, Bill also holds a free fruit tree pruning workshop every March. "Dad will tell you pruning is the most important thing you'll do when it comes to fruit trees," says Cathy, adding that Bill also talks about protections from diseases and pests.

The family is proud to be part of other families' lives, whether they're just coming to play on their popular playground, gathering apples, picking up plants at the nursery or attending a festival. "We're adding to the orchard all the time," Cathy says. "We really appreciate everyone who comes out and enjoys the farm." 📷

Gearing up for fun



Jackson's Orchard & Nursery is known for its farmers markets, tours, playground and concession area, but it also hosts several events each year. Upcoming events include the Apple Fest on Labor Day weekend and the Pumpkin Festival, which kicks off Saturday, Sept. 23, and runs every weekend through Oct. 29. The Pumpkin Festival will include wagon rides to the pumpkin patch, a corn maze, pick-your-own apples, petting zoo, activities for children and more. Pick up a caramel apple and enjoy other treats from the concession stand. The orchard is also available for private events.

For information on events and more, call 270-781-5303, visit jacksonsorchar.com, or find the business at Jackson's Orchard & Nursery on Facebook and Instagram. Check out the Jackson's Orchard YouTube channel for fun and informative videos. Jackson's Orchard is at 1280 Slim Island Road in Bowling Green, Kentucky.

Layers of flavors

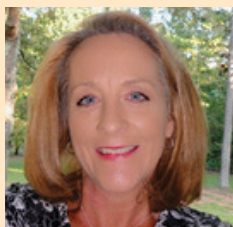
Perfect the sandwich

What makes a sandwich? We posed that question to Bridget Lancaster, host of the popular cooking show “America’s Test Kitchen.”

“A classic sandwich will have a filling between two slices of bread,” she says. “It’s portable, self-contained, and you probably won’t need a knife and fork to eat it. But then you get something like an open-faced sandwich, which is often very saucy or hot and is eaten with a knife and fork.”

Really, a sandwich is what you make it — one slice, two slices, baked, broiled, grilled in butter or served cold. Here are some sandwich tips from “America’s Test Kitchen.”

- Add a tangy sauce such as tzatziki, horseradish or a creamy salad dressing rather than mayonnaise or mustard.
- Consider other breads, such as a sturdy ciabatta or even a nut bread for extra flavor. To keep the sandwich from becoming too much to handle, use just 3–4 ounces of meat and an ounce of cheese. Toast the bread to boost the flavor and keep the sandwich from becoming soggy.
- Instead of a pickle, try chutney or a tangy relish. Instead of iceberg lettuce, try arugula, watercress or spinach. And don’t forget veggies. Consider cucumber, shredded carrots and sprouts.



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



‘America’s Test Kitchen’ **GROWN-UP GRILLED CHEESE**

- 7 ounces aged cheddar cheese, cut into 24 equal pieces, room temperature
- 2 ounces brie, rind removed
- 2 tablespoons dry white wine or vermouth
- 4 teaspoons minced shallot
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 8 slices hearty white sandwich or rosemary bread

Process cheddar, brie and wine in a food processor until smooth paste is formed, 20 to 30 seconds. Add shallot and pulse to combine, 3 to 5 pulses. Combine butter and mustard in small bowl.

Working on a parchment paper-lined

counter, spread mustard-butter evenly over one side of slices of bread. Flip four slices of bread over and spread cheese mixture evenly over slices. Top with remaining four slices of bread, buttered sides up.

Preheat a nonstick skillet over medium heat for 2 minutes. Place two sandwiches in skillet; reduce heat to medium-low; and cook until both sides are crispy and golden brown, 6 to 9 minutes per side, moving sandwiches to ensure even browning. Remove sandwiches from skillet and let stand for 2 minutes before serving. Repeat with remaining two sandwiches.

Note: Hold sandwiches on a wire rack on a baking sheet in the oven at 250 F while the second round cooks.

Easy Reuben

- 8 slices rye bread
- 4 tablespoons butter, softened
- 1/4 cup Russian or Thousand Island dressing
- 8 slices Swiss cheese
- 1 pound corned beef
- 1 1/2 cups sauerkraut, well-drained

Butter one side of each slice of bread. On the nonbuttered side, spread Russian dressing on each slice. Top half of the slices with cheese, corned beef and sauerkraut. Top each sandwich with remaining slices, dressing side down.

Heat a medium skillet over medium heat. Place a sandwich in the skillet and cook until golden and cheese is melted, 3 minutes per side. Serve immediately.




ZIPPY BEEF BARBECUE SANDWICH

Make the barbecue the day before and assemble the sandwiches right before your hike or tailgate or wherever you spend your beautiful autumn weekend.

- 1 1/2 cups ketchup
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/2 cup picante sauce
- 1/2 cup dry red wine
- 1/4 cup balsamic vinegar
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1 beef sirloin tip roast (4 pounds)
- 4 garlic cloves, sliced
- 16 kaiser rolls, split and toasted
- 2 cups deli coleslaw

Mix first nine ingredients. Cut roast in half; cut slits in roast and insert garlic. Place in a 5-quart slow cooker. Pour sauce over top. Cook, covered, on low until tender, 8-10 hours.

Remove beef. Skim fat from cooking liquid. Shred meat with two forks; return to slow cooker and heat through. Serve on rolls with coleslaw. 





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