



NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2025

CONNECTION

Eye on the Weather

A volunteer observer keeps track

FARMERS CO-OP

PETS FOR VETS



By Shirley Bloomfield, CEO
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

Professionally Secure

NTCA members are committed to your safety

As we enter the holiday season, it is an opportunity to acknowledge a group of professionals you may not realize is working diligently behind the scenes to make this season—as well as every month of the year—enjoyable and safe.

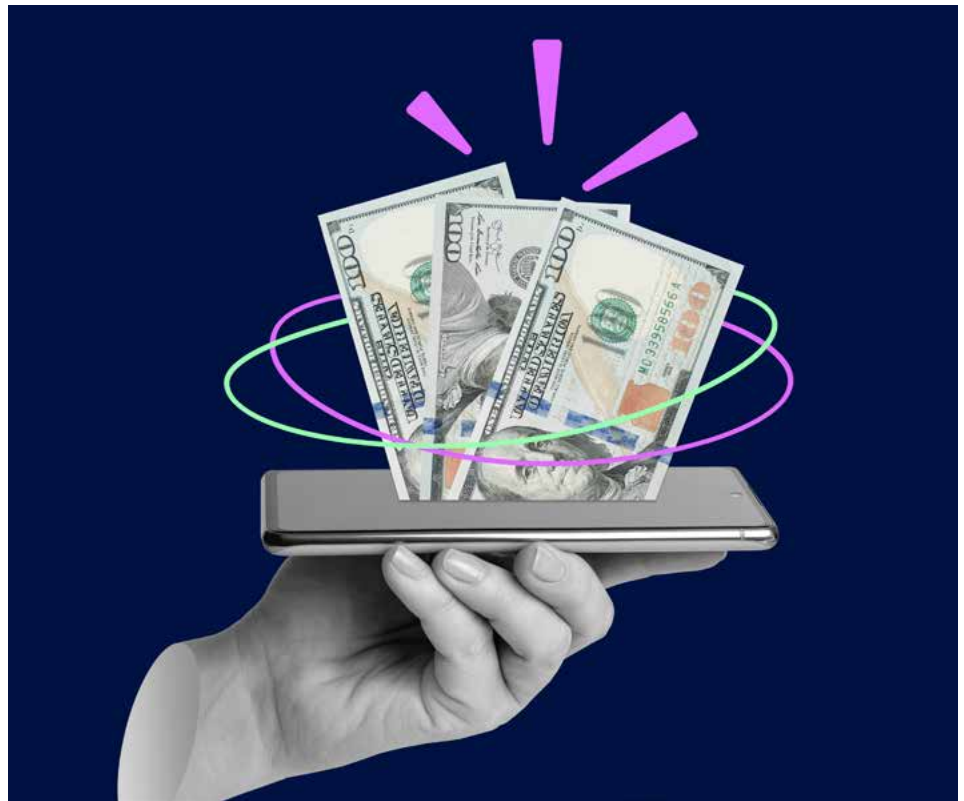
Many of you stream movies, music, short videos or interactive games, and there's always online shopping. NTCA members provide rural communities with the networks vital for all of this and so much more, from banking to education, telehealth and beyond.

Unfortunately, online risks do exist. Scammers may try to capture your personal information, or malicious websites might lead to insecure transactions. There are even attempts to disrupt the infrastructure itself.

Monitoring threats and vigilantly updating everything from software to security strategies is central to the day-to-day job of rural broadband providers. To help with this, NTCA created CyberShare: The Small Broadband Provider ISAC, an information-sharing network that allows participating providers to collaborate and share critical information. Whether it's learning about vulnerable equipment, software exploits, recent cyberattack attempts or mitigation strategies, this information sharing helps members proactively strengthen their defenses to keep you and your family safe online.

You play a role, too. When you're shopping online, make smart choices, such as relying on websites with addresses that begin with https, shop on well-established sites and lean on strong, secure passwords.

Together we can enjoy happy, safe holidays. 📱



Adobe Stock image by LarriBat

Use Caution With Cash Apps

While mobile payment apps like PayPal or Venmo make it easy to send and receive money online or through an app on a phone, scammers are also waiting to take advantage.

This service becomes an intermediary between your money and whoever is on the other end of a transaction, which can create an added layer of security.

But if a scammer tricks you into sending money, it's hard to get it back. The Federal Trade Commission notes the risks and offers tips for staying safe.

- Don't send a payment to claim a prize or collect sweepstakes winnings.
- Never give your account credentials to anyone who contacts you.
- Protect your account with multifactor authentication or a personal identification number.
- Before paying, double-check the recipient's information to make sure you're sending money to the right person.
- If you get an unexpected request for money from someone you do recognize, speak with that person directly to make sure the request really is valid, not a scam by a hacker who got access to their account.

If you find unauthorized payments or think you paid a scammer, immediately report the transaction to the service providing the payment app. Instructions should be available on the service's website. Also, report the scam to reportfraud.ftc.gov. 📱

Outside the Box

Personalized presents extend gift-giving beyond holidays

Looking for that gift that keeps on giving long after they've tossed the wrapping paper and bows? With a little online exploration, a nontraditional gift is out there for just about everyone on your list.

GAMING SUBSCRIPTIONS

Just like movie and music services, game subscriptions offer unlimited access to huge catalogs of titles for players who would rather not put up the \$70-\$80 average price for each individual game. Paying a part of the most popular subscriptions—Xbox Game Pass at \$9.99-\$19.99 per month, PlayStation Plus at \$17.99 or Apple Arcade at \$6.99—is a great way to show your gamers some love.

WATCH 'EM PLAY

Video game streaming involves broadcasting live gameplay over the internet, allowing viewers to engage with and watch other players in real time. Like livestreaming on Facebook and TikTok, game streamers provide content for viewers worldwide, playing video games and offering commentary.

Twitch is by far the most popular service, with more than 240 million monthly subscribers who play, watch, create content and follow other gamers. Three subscription tiers with different levels of perks range from \$4.99 to \$24.99 per month. Steam is also huge. Discord, Kick, Caffeine and DLive are other popular choices for gifting your interactive gamers, just confirm the platform they prefer so you're sure to get them a gift they can use.

'OF THE MONTH' CLUBS

With a quick internet search, you can set

up a monthly delivery of everything from pickles to pet chews to bath gels, bacon and beyond. Look at sites like Amazing Clubs or Month Club Store to find multiple choices in one spot.

A monthly themed box or crate can satisfy all ages, from educational toys at Crunchlabs and a monthly Lego set through Brick Loot to a spa-in-a-box from Therabox. Visit Cratejoy for a wide selection.

Consider a gift subscription to Dear Holmes, which mails weekly clues on fancy stationery for solving a Victorian-era crime. For \$50, six months' worth of mysteries will turn your person into a solo Sherlock or the leader of a team of Watsons who share stories on YouTube.

GIFT CARDS

You've no doubt noticed the columns of gift cards at your supermarket or drugstore. They look like colorful credit cards, and that's exactly what they are. These pieces of plastic can be applied toward almost anything from cash to food delivery services. The easiest way to give something everyone wants and by far the simplest to ship, gift cards are expected to generate \$447.1 billion in revenue this year.

You can grab gift cards toward recurring subscriptions, like a movie or music streaming service. You're sure to earn points by gifting a part of the monthly Netflix or Hulu charges. Or find a Spotify, Apple Music or SiriusXM gift card and keep the happy tunes flowing all year. 📺

GIFT CARD SMARTS

Stick to stores you know and trust. Avoid buying online where shady sellers may promote fake or stolen gift cards.

Avoid cards with signs of tampering.

Pay with a credit card if possible. If you run into problems and have to file a chargeback, your credit card company will investigate.

Consider using the gift card quickly to avoid potential inactivity fees or issues like business closure.

Keep copies. If the gift card doesn't work, the number on the card and store receipt will help you file a report with the Federal Trade Commission at reportfraud.ftc.gov.

Source: Federal Trade Commission

Happy Holidays!

Let's thrive and celebrate together

The final two months of 2025 will bring turkey dinners, bright lights, festive gatherings and so much more. I always enjoy this time of year, when shared values and community spirit tie us together. At NCTC, we're happy to play our part, too.



**JOHNNY
MCCLANAHAN**
President/CEO

One of the profound moments of this season occurs Nov. 11, Veterans Day. It's an opportunity to honor the men and women who gave their time, and sometimes their lives, to the armed services. Rural communities like ours contribute to our nation's security. I wish to express my appreciation to every service member, past and present. In particular, I'd like to thank those NCTC employees who served: Jason Draper, U.S. Air Force and the National Guard; Lucas Reynolds, Air Force; and Patrick Pysarchyk, U.S. Marine Corps. Similarly, thank you to every spouse or family member who either served or who supported a service member. Together, we make our community and our nation strong.

The holiday season is also a time to appreciate and patronize the businesses that help our local economy thrive. NCTC proudly supports local merchants during this busiest of shopping seasons. For some companies, the gains made from Black Friday and similar sales events are the difference between a profitable year and lean results.

By providing quality communications services, we strive to help them connect not only to you but also to the online tools and resources—even the online shoppers—that create success. We lend a hand when a new company opens. And we know our fast, reliable internet network is considered essential for employers looking for a location.

But shopping and income are only two parts of the equation during the holiday season. There's time for pure fun, too. Though many people do find plenty of enjoyment in shopping, many families will turn to their broadband connection to unlock a treasure trove of digital experiences.

Music, movies, gaming, social media and far more are a few clicks away. You'll even find an article in this magazine noting several possible digital gifts, perfect for the times when you need a creative solution.

As we give thanks during this holiday season, however, it's important to remember more than fun and opportunity. That's the other side of our mission. Yes, we focus on providing essential services, but we also believe in giving back, both as a company and as individuals.

Not everyone's fortunes are equal. It's often particularly trying during the holidays. If you can help, consider contributing monetarily to a charity, finding a few spare hours to volunteer or donating food or other goods.

Please visit area shops. Check out a local artist. Find a one-of-a-kind gift from an equally unique business. And if you're able, help as you can. Together, we make this community a wonderful home where we can all thrive.

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

The North Central Connection is a bimonthly newsletter published by NCTC, © 2025. 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.

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Produced for North Central by:

Pioneer
UTILITY RESOURCES

On the Cover:



David Calvert is the National Weather Service's official weather observer for Scottsville and Allen County.
See story Page 12.

Photo by Adrianna Texcahua

NORTH CENTRAL TELEPHONE COOPERATIVE

BALANCE SHEET

December 31, 2024

ASSETS

Current Assets	88,267,325
Other Assets	
Investments in Affiliated Companies	13,929,672
Nonregulated Investments	237,007
Total Current/Other Assets	14,166,679
Telecommunications Plant	241,038,068
Less Accumulated Depreciation	153,086,494
Net Telecommunications Plant	87,951,574
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 190,385,578

LIABILITIES and MEMBERS' EQUITIES

Current Liabilities	11,432,552
Long-Term Debt	11,855,049
Other Liabilities	5,041,897
Members' Equities	162,056,080
TOTAL LIABILITIES and MEMBERS' EQUITIES	\$ 190,385,578

NCTC SUPPORTS ISAIAH 117 HOUSE



Isaiah 117 House Sumner County Leader Michelle Penick, center, accepts an NCTC donation presented by customer service representatives, from left, Cierra Lumsden, Cassy Sullivan, Katrina Brown and Dawn Scholl.

HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

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

Thanksgiving—Thursday, Nov. 27

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

New Year's Day—Thursday, Jan. 1

FREE MOVIE DECEMBER

Each weekend in December, NCTC TV subscribers can enjoy premium movies—for free!

- HBO
- Showtime
- Cinemax
- Starz/Encore



COMING SOON—TRILIGHT MOBILE

Better wireless from the people who bring you better internet.

Arriving this spring!



CONTACT SANTA

615-67-SANTA (615-677-2682)
email: santa@nctc.com

Speedway In Lights

Bristol gears up for Christmas festivities

Story by KATHY DENES

Ready to take a lap around the “The World’s Fastest Half-Mile” illuminated by 3 million Christmas lights? For the 29th year, Tennessee’s Bristol Motor Speedway and Dragway is inviting the public to come celebrate the season.

The route of the 4-mile-long Food City Speedway In Lights powered by TVA starts at Bristol Dragway, entered off Highway 394. About midway through, drivers enter the iconic “Last Great Colosseum” and circle its half-mile concrete oval. After taking that memorable lap, guests can park inside the track and treat the family to the Christmas Village, presented by HSN.

The Christmas Village, adorned in holiday decor, includes Santa’s Hut, where kids get the chance to meet the jolliest old elf. There are also carnival rides, vendors offering Christmas crafts and treats, a tubing slide and a snow maze.

After enjoying all the village has to offer, guests will get back in their vehicles and continue the drive, which concludes at the Dragway entrance.

ICE, ICE, BABY!

Finishing the drive doesn’t have to mean it’s time to leave the speedway, though. Adding to the holiday sparkle is the Tri-Cities Airport Ice Rink at Bristol

Motor Speedway, presented by Stateline Services and touted as the region’s best and longest-standing ice rink. Visitors can enjoy skating daily from Thursday, Nov. 20, through Sunday, Jan. 11, 2026. Admission is \$12 for guests who bring their own skates or \$15 for those who need to rent them.

The 120-by-60-foot ice rink is covered by a tent at the speedway’s North Entrance. Promotional nights and special events are offered, such as College Nights at the Ice Rink. On Tuesdays, students who present their valid college IDs at the ticket booth will get a free skate rental.

A LIGHT FOR CHILDREN

Proceeds from the Speedway In Lights and affiliated events benefit Bristol Speedway Children’s Charities, which funds agencies that have helped thousands of children. The charity was founded in 1996 when Bristol Speedway became part of Speedway Motorsports, which has a Speedway Children’s Charities chapter at each of its 11 racing venues.

Claudia Byrd, the executive director of the Bristol chapter, was charged with coming up with a signature fundraising event. Inspired by her family’s tradition of enjoying holiday light displays in her hometown, Claudia suggested the speedway present a Christmas lights show. It


quickly got the green light from track owner Bruton Smith. To date, thanks to the Christmas event and others throughout the year, the charity has distributed nearly \$20 million.

“Speedway In Lights is not only the flagship fundraiser for Speedway Children’s Charities but a tradition for so many in the Tri-Cities region,” says Betsy Holleman, the charity’s senior manager for development and events. “The event has accounted for a third of our annual budget for over 25 years. It’s an opportunity to bring family out for an evening of Christmas fun, while supporting kids in our area.”

FAST FACTS

Speedway In Lights begins on Friday, Nov. 21, and continues daily from 6-10 p.m. into the new year, concluding on Saturday, Jan. 3.

Prices for cars range between \$25-\$35. Vans are \$85, and buses are \$150. Visitors can take advantage of Fast Lane presented by Citi, a speedy \$75 option that provides a shorter wait time on select nights when traffic lines get long.

For details about Fast Lane presented by Citi and all other Speedway In Lights event and pricing updates, go to bristolmotorspeedway.com. 



ABOVE: The display of Speedway In Lights sponsor Food City brightens up a section of the route.

LEFT: Skaters enjoy the covered ice rink outside Bristol Motor Speedway.

Rooted in Community

Local farmers cooperative serves everyone

Story by JEN CALHOUN

In a world dominated by big-box hardware stores with limited customer service and even less expertise, the Macon-Trousdale Farmers Cooperative stands out. It's a place where a farmer can order a load of feed for his cattle, a homeowner can find help for a wilting tomato plant and a neighbor can buy new truck tires.

"We do a little bit of everything," says General Manager Scottie Sadler. "We can

custom spray fields or help with soil samples. We have some way of helping out with pretty much anything that deals with agricultural and backyard planting. And you don't have to be a farmer. Anyone can shop co-op, as we like to say."

MORE THAN A FARM STORE

The cooperative's roots go back to the 1940s, when farmers in Macon County joined together to pool resources, increase

their bargaining power and share some of the risks involved in farming. Around the same time, Trousdale County farmers were doing the same. In 1971, the two groups combined to form the Macon-Trousdale Farmers Cooperative, while making sure each county maintained a farm center store.

Since then, the stores' services and offerings continued to grow. The co-ops sell everything from cowboy boots to clothing, as well as seed, feed and everything else most people would expect from a farm store.

"We get new customers every day," says Turell Eller, the cooperative's credit manager who's been with the organization

FROM LEFT: Co-op employees Sandy Goad, Turell Eller, Scottie Sadler, Bryan Carter and Trent Cook are just a few of the knowledgeable staff members ready to serve the community. Brandon Underwood, one of the cooperative's employees, works in the tire shop. A tractor display at the cooperative shows off some of the latest farm machinery. The co-op offers a wide selection of parts for most types of farm equipment.





AND YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A FARMER. ANYONE CAN SHOP CO-OP, AS WE LIKE TO SAY.



—SCOTTIE SADLER, MACON-TROUSDALE FARMERS COOPERATIVE GENERAL MANAGER

since 2003. “We’ve had a tire shop for years and still get people in here who never knew we sold tires.”

As more people move into the area from big cities, they’re surprised to learn how much the cooperative has to offer. “Our identity is not as well known, maybe, to someone who might not be from around here,” Turell says. “That’s why we want it to be known that we’re trying to serve everybody that we possibly can.”

BEYOND THE AISLES

With a comprehensive range of services, the Macon-Trousdale Farmers Co-op is a unique center offering much more than can be found on its rows of retail shelves. The co-op provides custom fertilizer spreading services for anyone who needs it, and it rents out equipment to those who’d rather do the job themselves.

The co-op’s staff also provides services like soil sampling, seed samples and expert advice on everything from crop management to diagnosing plant problems.

Services extend beyond agriculture into the broader community. The repair shop works on tractors and other equipment, whether the machinery was purchased there or somewhere else. The co-op also sells several different brands of lawnmowers. “We also have a big tire shop that sells tires for cars, lawnmowers, equipment and trucks,” Turell says.

A DIFFERENT WAY OF DOING BUSINESS

The cooperative’s business model is a key to its success and commitment to the community. It’s made up of more than 900 local farmers and residents, who all share

ownership. “It’s in our best interest to take care of our farmers and keep them coming back,” Turell says. “That’s why we always want to make sure we offer the best service and get them the best products we can at the best prices.”

The member-ownership structure offers other advantages, as well. The collective buying power of all co-ops in the region allows the Macon-Trousdale cooperative to secure better pricing on products and services, which it then passes on to customers. This kind of stability also benefits its employees, who can receive benefits like insurance and 401(k) plans.

While the cooperative works hard to offer competitive pricing, its primary focus is on superior service and expertise. “That’s what we’re best at,” Scottie says. “We’ve got good employees who are knowledgeable and able to help our customers solve problems and get answers to their questions.”

ONE-STOP SHOPS

For more information, follow the Macon-Trousdale Farmers Co-op Facebook page, or visit the website at mtfarmerscoopoutdoorpower.com.

Lafayette location
905 Scottsville Road
615-666-2755

Hartsville location
225 W. McMurry Blvd.
615-374-35



Photos courtesy of Adrianna Texachua



HEALING

BONDS

Pets for Vets makes the perfect match

Story by JEN CALHOUN

When Clarissa Black first took Bear, her husky-malamute, to visit patients at a Veterans Administration medical center, she had no idea he was about to change hundreds of lives.

Of course, she knew Bear was special. He had a way about him. When someone needed quiet company, Bear could lie perfectly still for hours. If someone was working on mobility, Bear would position himself at the perfect distance, paws up, as if to offer encouragement. And when people looked into the dog's eyes and spoke to him, he'd cock his head and let out one of his husky "woos" right on cue.

"People really felt like he was talking to them," says Clarissa, whose background in animal science and anthropology gave her a deeper insight into the interactions. "They felt seen, and they felt heard."

Clarissa's experience with Bear at the VA hospital sparked the idea for Pets for Vets, a nonprofit organization that matches veterans with specially trained companion animals. Since she founded it more than 15 years ago, the organization has matched more than 800 animals with veterans.

WANT TO HELP?

Pets for Vets is a four-star rated, not-for-profit organization that relies on donations to provide free services to veterans. There are several ways to donate.

Donate online: Visit petsforvets.com/donate to make a secure online donation.

Donate by mail: Pets for Vets Inc., P.O. Box 10860, Wilmington, NC 28404.

Other ways to give: The organization also accepts cryptocurrency and vehicle donations that include cars, trucks, boats and motorcycles.

Volunteer: Fill out the volunteer form at petsforvets.com to offer your time and expertise.

For more information about the program, or to apply for a companion animal, visit petsforvets.com or send an email to contactus@petsforvets.com.



LEFT: Spyder's tendency to jump in laps and lick faces helped calm and center Leif Mesinger when he became frustrated.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Clarissa Black, founder and executive director of Pets for Vets, with her late dog, Bear, who sparked the idea for the not-for-profit organization.

We're looking for that reciprocal match where both are getting exactly what they want."

MAKING A MATCH

Once the group approves a veteran's application for a companion animal, the search gets underway. Clarissa's experience as a marine mammal trainer taught her the most powerful relationships happen when both parties get exactly what they need. The process isn't about finding a good dog. It's about finding exactly the right dog.

The matching process is not only thorough, it's personal. Veterans work closely with trainers to identify their needs and prepare for pet ownership. "We spend a lot of time getting to know our veterans, finding out what it is they need, what they're looking for and what would be a good fit for them," she says.

Meanwhile, trainers visit shelters and rescue groups to conduct one-on-one "interviews" with potential animal companions, which can include cats, rabbits and other species, as well. If a veteran enjoys outdoor activities, for example, the trainer might look for a more active dog that loves to fetch and hike. On

the other hand, a more sedentary vet might need a peaceful pooch or calm cat.

From there, each animal undergoes foundation training customized for its future human. During this time, which often takes place in a foster situation, trainers enhance what Clarissa calls the animal's "superpowers," or the natural behaviors that made them perfect for their veteran in the first place.

"We're really trying to make this connection where both are getting exactly what they want," she says. "Ultimately, that connection is what's going to fulfill them and maybe even heal them. There's some research out there that suggests that it's not just any dog, it's the right dog—the dog that people feel connected to—that can help mitigate anxiety and depression." 🐾

SECOND CHANCES

After Leif Mesinger returned home from Iraq, the world felt different. It was harder to navigate and harder to understand. The Army infantryman and gunner suffered a traumatic brain injury from an improvised explosive device blast, and it changed everything.

"My mind was racing, and I struggled to communicate," Leif says in a Pets for Vets testimonial video. "I felt disconnected from everything I used to know."

But help arrived in the form of a tiny, hairless waif of a dog named Spyder. Clarissa Black, founder of Pets for Vets, discovered the dog after meeting with Leif and finding out what he needed in a companion animal.

Spyder's superpower was that he loved to jump into people's laps and lick them. It was a trait Clarissa intentionally honed in Spyder before presenting him to Leif. She knew that kind of gentle, rhythmic contact could ground a person dealing with anxiety.

In time, Spyder's constant presence gave Leif a growing sense of purpose and a deepening bond. Thanks to his more than 15 years with Spyder, Leif's communication with others has improved and his life is more fulfilling than ever. "Spyder was kind of like that saving grace that centered me again and brought me back," he says.

SERVING THOSE WHO SERVED

The program generally serves veterans dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injuries, but the organization is open to helping any vet who could benefit from a deep connection with a pet. And while the service is completely free to the veterans, it relies on donations from the public and a network of more than 100 volunteer animal trainers across the country.

It's important to note that Pets for Vets animals aren't service dogs that have been highly trained to assist people with disabilities. Still, the organization works hard to meet the veterans' needs as well as the animals'.

"We're not just asking what the dog gives the veteran," Clarissa says. "We want to know what the veteran gives the dog.

WEATHER

Scottsville native keeps the

Story by JEN CALHOUN

Every morning at 6 a.m. David Calvert steps outside his home in Scottsville, Kentucky, to check the weather. But this is no ordinary check. He doesn't just glance at the sky or hold out a hand to feel for rain. Instead, he uses research tools and scientific instruments to measure humidity, rainfall, wind speed and wind direction. Then he records it.

As the National Weather Service's official weather observer for Scottsville and Allen County, David is one of about 8,500 volunteer Cooperative Weather Observers across the U.S. and its territories who serve as the backbone of the nation's climate record-keeping system. Together they make up one of the world's largest citizen science networks.

SERIOUS SERVICE

Weather observers like David don't simply provide the historical data that appears on the news when meteorologists reference temperature highs and lows. Their work can inform everything from drought declarations to construction planning.

It also supplies information to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which helps warn the public of impending severe storms and informs some of the nation's largest industries, including fisheries management and marine commerce.

"People don't realize how much these records are actually used," David says. "They might be surprised to know that my information is supplied to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, for example. If there are floods or long periods without rain, the government uses that information to pay farmers for the loss of crops."

David is only the fourth person to maintain the county's weather records. The first official weather station for Scottsville and Allen County started in 1946. David took over the job in 2001 when the county's recordkeeper of more than 50 years died.

"The NWS was looking for someone to take his place, and I had several years' experience previously," David says. "I lived only about a mile and a half from him, and that's what they were looking for—somebody that was close, that could keep the records without having to move the stations very far.

"I just kind of slid in, and we never missed a month," he adds.



David Calvert built a weather observation tower in his backyard.

Photos by Adrianna Texcaltua

R MAN

records coming

COMMITTING TO THE COMMUNITY

Weather observers like David are no longer paid by the government. But at one point they were. When asked why they kept going on a volunteer basis for such a valuable service, David laughs.

“They knew they could get it for free,” says David, whose day job is making Uncrustables sandwiches at the J.M. Smucker Co.’s plant in Scottsville.



This gauge in David's yard measures rainfall amounts.

That’s because he and the thousands of others who keep weather records for their communities genuinely enjoy the science of meteorology and the service to humanity it provides—so much so that they’ll wake up every morning at 6 a.m. for the rest of their lives to make sure accurate records are kept.

Without them, America’s weather history would not only have big gaps, but it could hurt everything from long-term climate research to practical considerations like insurance industry risk assessments.

“I had probably been doing it about 10 years when they stopped paying us,” David says. “So, I had a choice whether to keep the records or not. I thought, ‘Well, you know, I’m going to do this as long as I can. Pay me or don’t pay me, I’m still going to do this.’”

David’s dedication extends beyond his daily observations, too. When the Louisville-based NWS needs ground verification of storm damage somewhere in the region, they call him. He might drive to investigate tornadic activity or find other ways to assess damage, which helps inform meteorologists working more than 100 miles away.

“It takes a lot of dedication to keep records for all these years and never miss a day,” David says. “But I guess I just feel like it’s a service to the community and the state and the nation to help keep these records.”

THE FOUNDING FATHERS AND WEATHER RECORDS

The National Weather Service is rooted in the very founding of the United States, according to information from the organization.

Many of the founding fathers were avid weather observers. Thomas Jefferson purchased a thermometer from a local Philadelphia merchant while in town for the adoption of the Declaration of Independence. He also bought a barometer, which was one of the only ones in the country at that time. He made sure to record the temperature on July 4, 1776, was 76 degrees.

Jefferson also made regular meteorological observations at Monticello from 1772 to 1778, and he participated in taking the first known simultaneous weather observations in America. George Washington also took regular observations. His last weather entry in his diary was made the day before he died.

Source: “History of the National Weather Service” from weather.gov

Share a Pizza

Share Your Heart

Start a new holiday meal tradition

Turkey, ham, lamb—tradition gives them all a place on the holiday table. But gather the family together for a pizza party, and you can roll out a whole new tradition.

Make your own pizza dough with just a handful of ingredients, and you'll know that there are no preservatives and other unhealthy additives. For a family affair and fun for the kids, create a bar with pizza toppings—pepperoni, sausage, onions, peppers, cheese and the like—and let them make their own.

A preheated pizza stone will crisp the crust, but a cookie sheet also works.

A pizza salad with Italian herbs and a creamy vinaigrette dressing is the perfect pairing.

A dessert pizza with fresh berries and other fruits available year-round delivers a refreshing finish. Make the crust the day before and layer on the cream cheese spread. But wait until shortly before serving to add the fruits so they will stay colorful and fresh.



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

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



FAMILY NIGHT PIZZA

- 1 cup warm water (105 F)
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 tablespoon active dry yeast
- 1 tablespoon olive or avocado oil
- 1 teaspoon fine sea salt
- 2 to 2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

Preheat oven to 500 F. Put a pizza stone or cookie sheet in the oven while it preheats, and let it warm for at least 10 minutes.

MAKE THE DOUGH

In a large mixing bowl, stir water, yeast and sugar to combine. Let mixture sit for 5 minutes or until it becomes frothy and bubbles form. Gently stir in olive oil.

Add 2 cups of flour and salt and mix with a spatula until a ball begins to form. The

dough will still be slightly sticky. Add more flour as needed to form a dough ball.

Transfer to a floured surface and knead into a smooth dough, adding up to 1/2 cup extra flour if needed.

Cover the bowl with a damp tea towel, and let it rise for 10 minutes or up to 1 hour.

ASSEMBLE THE PIZZA

Roll the dough into your desired shape and put it on a piece of parchment paper. Add pizza sauce, cheese and toppings of choice. Transfer the pizza to the preheated pizza stone or cookie sheet in the oven.

Bake for 12-15 minutes or until the bottom of the crust is golden brown. Remove the pizza from the oven, and let it cool for 5-10 minutes before serving.

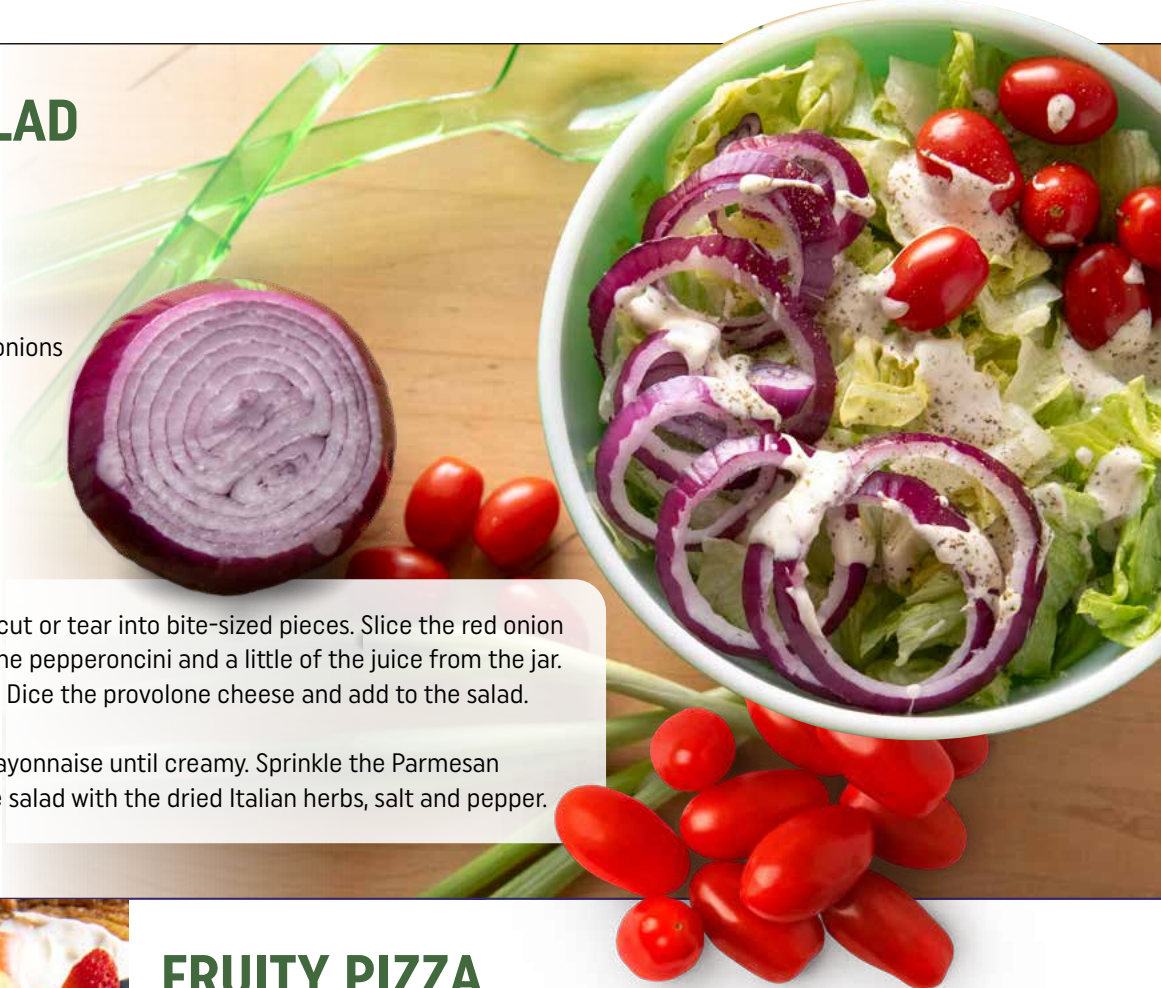
PIZZA NIGHT SALAD

- 1 head iceberg lettuce
- 1 medium red onion
- 6-8 pepperoncini peppers
- Chopped tomatoes to taste
- 8 slices provolone cheese
- 1 bunch fresh chives or green onions
- 1 1/3 cup favorite vinaigrette
- 1 tablespoon mayonnaise
- 1 1/2 cup Parmesan cheese
- 1 tablespoon or more dried Italian herbs
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Wash and air dry the lettuce and cut or tear into bite-sized pieces. Slice the red onion and add to the lettuce, along with the pepperoncini and a little of the juice from the jar.

Toss the tomatoes over the salad. Dice the provolone cheese and add to the salad. Sprinkle the salad with the chives.

Mix the salad dressing and the mayonnaise until creamy. Sprinkle the Parmesan cheese over the top and season the salad with the dried Italian herbs, salt and pepper.



FRUITY PIZZA

FOR THE CRUST

- 1 1/3 cups unsalted butter, softened
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 1 teaspoon orange zest
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 eggs, room temperature
- 2 tablespoons whole milk, room temperature
- 4 cups flour
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt

FOR THE FROSTING

- 2 7-ounce jars marshmallow creme
- 2 8-ounce packages cream cheese

SUGGESTED TOPPINGS

- Kiwi, sliced
- Blueberries
- Raspberries
- Pears, cored and sliced
- Mango, peeled and cubed
- Strawberries, sliced

Preheat the oven to 350 F.

For the cookie crust: In a large bowl, cream the butter, sugar, orange zest and vanilla thoroughly. Add the eggs and beat until light and fluffy. Add the milk and mix.

In a medium bowl, sift together the flour, baking powder and salt, then blend this into the butter mixture. Divide the dough into two disks and lightly flatten each disk between two sheets of parchment paper. If baking one large pizza, do not divide the dough. Refrigerate for 1 hour or freeze for 20 minutes.

Roll each dough half into an 11-inch round, then transfer to pizza pans. Or, press the dough into a large sheet cake pan.

Bake until the cookie dough is cooked and golden brown, but not overly crisp, 15-18 minutes. Remove from the oven and let cool completely.

For the frosting: In a mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, whip together the marshmallow creme and cream cheese until light in texture. Spread onto each cooled crust.

To decorate: Top the pizza with prepared sliced fruit, as desired. Slice into squares or wedges and serve. 🍷





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HAPPY Thanksgiving

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our blessings.**

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happy holidays!**



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