

The

Communicator

JULY/AUGUST 2018

2018 ANNUAL MEETING

Members enjoy
food, prizes and
entertainment

SECURITY SOLUTIONS

Protecting families and homes
with the latest technology

DINNER IS SERVED

Meal delivery kits make
evenings tastier



BY SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

Telemedicine is key to rural health

Broadband internet access is making a real difference in the lives of people across rural America. I see it whenever I travel to the states where telecommunications companies like this one are building advanced networks to reach those in hard-to-serve regions.

Broadband supports efforts that are vital to a community's well-being, such as economic development, education and small-business growth. But broadband's greatest impact is perhaps seen in the delivery of health care.

Robust and sustainable broadband infrastructure is necessary for expanding access to health care in rural America. NTCA has been looking into telehealth applications for a number of years. We have hosted events on our own. We have worked with health care groups to learn about their challenges and to introduce them to our member telcos' capabilities. We have assisted our members in launching pilot projects of their own.

Telemedicine in rural America is truly a win-win proposition. Access to advanced services in a local community brings greater health care options to its residents. As a bonus, telemedicine also makes it easier to attract high-skilled labor, industry and economic development. NTCA is passionate about the role that our member telcos play in telemedicine — and I think we have only scratched the surface of possibilities.

Your local telecommunications provider, like hundreds of similar companies across rural America, is building the advanced broadband network that makes telemedicine possible. ☎

Money from home

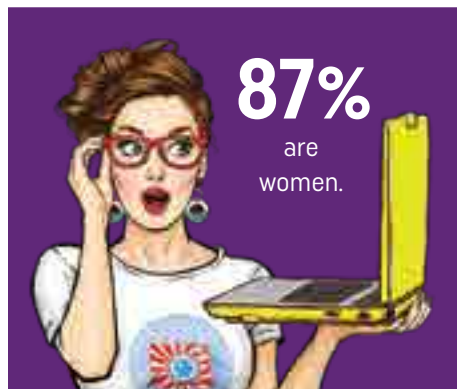
Using the internet to start cottage industries

Ever been told you can sell those knit caps or great jewelry pieces you've made but don't want to invest the money it takes for a brick-and-mortar location? Look to the internet.

More and more people are finding ways to earn a living by building online businesses from their homes. According to Forbes, more than 52 percent of all small businesses in the U.S. are home-based, and most rely on the internet. These jobs can offer flexibility, independence and a way to skirt the traditional 9-to-5.

As more Americans board the microbusiness train, the economy is taking notice. While small, these microbusinesses employ 55 million people in the U.S. They also contribute more than \$1 trillion in earnings to the U.S. economy, according to Etsy, a global online marketplace for handcrafted and vintage pieces.

Many of these entrepreneurs are young, female and live in rural areas, too. Etsy recently polled its network of 1.7 million sellers around the world, and the results are eye-opening. Check out a few of these statistics from the 2017 Etsy Seller Census:



But so are privacy concerns

BY JEN CALHOUN

About seven out of every 10 American adults use some kind of social media, but it doesn't mean they don't have worries about it.

A recent Pew Research Center study found that more Americans than ever use Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other social media platforms as part of their daily lives. They keep in touch with friends and family. They participate in civic and political activities. They even use social media for work or to share health and science research.

But the study found that as the number of likes and shares grows, so do concerns about privacy.

PRIVACY ANXIETY

Last year, only 9 percent of social media users were “very confident” that social media companies would protect their data, Pew research found. In fact, about half of the users polled “were not at all or not too confident their data was in safe hands”

And while many users said they wanted to do more to

protect their privacy, nearly two-thirds worried that current laws weren't good enough to do the job. In addition, nearly 65 percent said they support more regulation of advertisers.

It's not just privacy that worries them either. Pew research found that only 5 percent of users trust all of the information that comes to them on social media. They also don't like the harassment, political bickering, disrespect and incivility that can come with a day in the life of Twitter or Facebook.

HARD HABIT TO BREAK


But if social media is so troublesome, why are people sticking with it?

Maybe it's because they feel like they have to, Pew experts suggest. Let's face it; social media is an easy and convenient way to stay connected to our friends, families and the organizations we love. As a

result, some users find it hard to stop. Social media is part of their everyday lives.

NEW RULES

However, some privacy advocates say change is coming. One example is the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation, which was adopted in April 2016 and went into effect in May of this year.

The regulation offers data protection and privacy for all those in the European Union, but it could also have a positive effect on U.S. social media users. Pew experts say the GDPR “will give users — even Americans — greater protection about what data tech firms can collect, the data that can be used and how consumers can be given more opportunities to see what is happening with their information.” 



Social media use has grown dramatically

Percent of adults who say they use social media sites, by age

18-29 year olds

56% → 88%
2008 2018

30-49 year olds

18% → 78%
2008 2018

50-64 year olds

6% → 64%

2008 2018

65+ year olds

2% → 37%

2008 2018

SOURCE: PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Are you well-connected?

Stop and count with me for a moment. How many internet-connected devices do you have in your home?



JIM COOK
General Manager

For many of us, smartphones and computers are the first obvious devices that come to mind, but what other devices are there? How about tablets? Any smart TVs or streaming boxes like Roku or Amazon Fire TV? If you have children at home, what about their game systems, computers and other devices? Maybe you've gotten into the smart home technology and have some of the bulbs, security cameras or outlets.

When you think about all of the things we use regularly that depend on the internet, the answer to my question can grow quickly.

In fact, depending on which source you use, most North American households have between five and 10 connected devices. Some experts believe that number will grow to as many as 50 devices in less than five years!

Whatever your number of connected devices happens to be, know this: There is no better network to handle a family using multiple connected devices than the type of fiber optic network NHTC has built for our members.

We have invested millions of dollars in our region to build a world-class fiber optic network. While there are many benefits to a fiber connection — including reliability and increased home value — I'd like to discuss the capacity your fiber connection will afford your family.

While we often talk about an internet connection's speed, we really mean the speed at which things download. The bits and bytes are moving at the same speed no matter your connection, but it's the capacity (how many bits and bytes can pass through each second) that matters.

I often tell people to think of internet service like plumbing. Each file you are trying to download is like a bathtub filling up. The bits of data that make up the file flow through your modem and router just like water into a tub. Filling a tub from the spout is much faster than filling it with a sink sprayer because the spout has more capacity to let more water through. Similarly, a smaller connection is going to limit the amount of data that can pass through when compared to a bigger connection.

To follow that analogy, it's also important to consider how many faucets you're going to be using at the same time. If you open all of your faucets, the water pressure is going to dip significantly, and it's going to take a lot longer to fill each tub or sink. For broadband, the same thing happens with multiple devices on a network. If you have three tablets, a game system, two computers, four phones and a streaming TV using your connection, each one is going to be slower — unless you have a high-capacity connection via fiber optics.

As we continue to improve our network, we're looking down the road at the future. We see families in our area continuing to add the latest technology in their homes, which drives up the demand for broadband capacity. The fiber network we've built is the only way we can be sure we have the capacity to serve you today and in the future. ☎

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On the Cover:



Brandon Elder, of Arab, was a recent American Idol contestant and was part of the entertainment lineup at the New Hope Telephone Cooperative annual meeting. See story Page 12.

Scholarship winners chosen

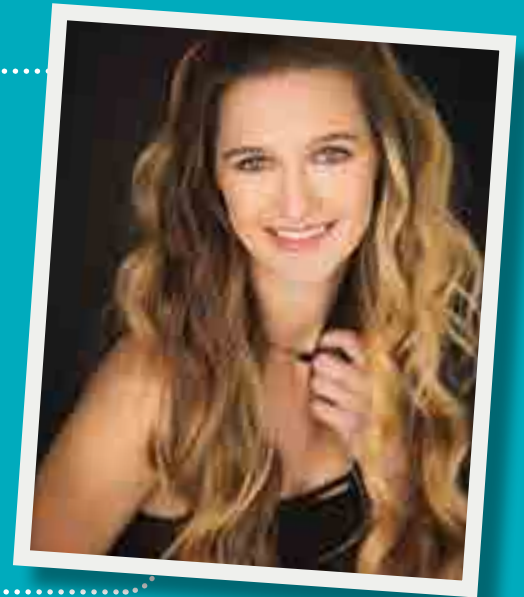


Sara Clark

Sara Clark, a New Hope High School graduate, was awarded a \$1,500 college scholarship by NHTC. She plans to attend Lee University in Cleveland, Tennessee, to study religion. Clark's extracurricular activities included Fellowship of Christian Students and varsity volleyball. She was also an SGA officer. She served on the yearbook staff for two years. Clark has served in several locations in Nashville and Lynchburg, Virginia, as a volunteer for Fuge camps. She has assisted building homeless shelters and special needs workplaces, and she has worked with Boys and Girls Clubs. Clark has also volunteered with Manna House, and she has taken a mission trip to Uganda. Along with taking AP courses in school and her impressive list of clubs and activities, Clark also led vacation Bible school and taught lessons with Fellowship of Christian Students.

Gracie Weeks

Gracie Weeks, a KDS DAR High School graduate, was awarded a \$1,500 college scholarship by NHTC. She plans to attend Calhoun Community College with a focus on 3D drafting and design, followed by attending the University of Alabama in Huntsville to major in business management. Weeks was inspired to follow this career path after working part time at her father's business, Weeks Construction. Weeks was a member of the Leo Club and the DAR High School Choir, and she attended Lake Guntersville Music Academy for piano and vocal training. She was a member of the Historical Society and the United States Dressage Federation, and she was voted senior class best dressed. Weeks was also an aide for the Learning Resource Center physical education class and has served the community by visiting nursing homes and volunteering for both Special Olympics and Grant youth football and basketball leagues.



Save the date!

Make plans to attend NHTC'S CUSTOMER APPRECIATION DAY

Mark your calendars to join NHTC employees for a day of food and fun at our Customer Appreciation Day on Friday, Oct. 26, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.



Happy Fourth of July!

The NHTC offices will be closed Wednesday, July 4, to celebrate Independence Day. Have a safe and happy holiday!

Bids for lawn maintenance

NHTC is currently accepting bids for lawn maintenance. Please call 256-723-4211 for more information.





A Republic P-47 Thunderbolt from the Tennessee Museum of Aviation.

Photo courtesy of Tennessee Museum of Aviation.

✈ Flying High ✈

Flight museums around the South take us into the sky, celebrating the history, as well as the future, of flight. Some exhibits immerse us in active simulations, and others challenge us with interactive designs. Still others tell impactful stories. All share a common mission, though, offering insights into how American history is inextricably linked to the early pioneers of our skies. Here are some of the museums that soar high in offering education and fun for children and adults.

Tennessee Museum of Aviation

135 Air Museum Way • Sevierville, Tennessee

Children will love being the pilot as they climb in the cockpit and get their hands on the controls of an authentic A-4 Skyhawk from the Vietnam War era. Aviation enthusiasts will appreciate the massive, 35,000-square-foot hangar with all of its aircraft engines, cockpits, military vehicles and restored vintage Warbirds. These aircraft make up the foundation of the Tennessee Museum of Aviation and were flown on missions during World War II.

"They are most impressive, and a number of the Warbirds are still airworthy," says Rhonda Melton, operations coordinator.

Among the aircraft within the museum are two Republic P-47 Thunderbolts — there are less than a dozen of these World War II fighters remaining in the world. Another favorite exhibit is the Douglas A-1H Skyraider, complete with battle scars received from its service during Vietnam.

A new "Faith and Courage" exhibit pays tribute to U.S. Military Chaplains from World War II through the present. And a 52-foot display traces milestones in the history of pre-Wright Brothers aviation,

including timelines of military aviation. The wall also features the Volunteer State's contributions to flight, making the Tennessee Museum of Aviation Tennessee's official repository and archive of aviation history.

- **Admission:** Adults: \$12.75. Seniors: \$9.75. Ages 6-12: \$6.75. Children under 6: free.
- **Information:** 866-286-8738 or online at www.tnairmuseum.com.

Southern Museum of Flight

4343 73rd St. N • Birmingham, Alabama

A visit to the Southern Museum of Flight is a walk through time. Learn about a pilot in 1953 who defected from North Korea to an air base in South Korea. Or see a 1925 crop duster flown by Huff-Daland, the company that would become Delta Airlines.

The level of detail in the exhibits, combined with their scale — the Korean defection exhibit spans 150 feet — provides visitors with an immersive experience, says museum curator Wayne Novy. And there are a number of activities for children, including sitting in aircraft cockpits, operating the controls of a full-size airplane, and building and flying their own balsa glider.

- **Admission:** Adults: \$7. Seniors and students: \$6. Kids under 3 and active military and their families: free.
- **Information:** 205-833-8226 or online at www.southernmuseumofflight.org.

The Aviation Museum of Kentucky

4029 Airport Road at Blue Grass Airport
Lexington, Kentucky

The Bluegrass State is well-grounded in aviation history. Matthew Sellers, of Carter County, Kentucky, invented retractable landing gear, and Solomon Van Meter, of Lexington, is responsible for the creation of lifesaving pack parachutes. These men and others are honored for their contributions and service in the Aviation Museum of Kentucky's Hall of Fame, one element of the 23-year-old museum.

History buffs will enjoy seeing restored barnstormers and vintage airliners, such as a Lockheed L-12 that was used as a



Photo courtesy of Lone Star Flight Museum.

spy plane before World War II broke out. But the museum also looks toward the future of aviation with exhibits such as "Women in Aviation," which, while telling of women in the past, encourages young women of today to pursue their aviation dreams as pilots and aerospace engineers. Kids will enjoy getting in the cockpit of a Cessna 150 and turning the control wheel to learn about the relationships between control surfaces on the aircraft, such as rudders and stabilizers.

- **Admission:** Adults: \$8. Veterans and seniors: \$6. Ages 6-16: \$5. Members and children under 6: free.
- **Information:** 859-231-1219 or online at www.aviationky.org.

Carolinas Aviation Museum

4672 First Flight Drive at Charlotte
Douglas International Airport
Charlotte, North Carolina

Flight had its beginnings in the Carolinas, and for the past 25 years, the Carolinas Aviation Museum has told its story. Exhibits include the Wright Brothers on the coast of North Carolina at Kitty Hawk and the Airbus A320 that became Flight 1549, the "Miracle on the Hudson." This is the museum's signature exhibit, and it leaves people in awe.

"Many visitors don't realize that we have the actual Flight 1549. It's not a replica," says museum spokeswoman Jessica Mallicote. "Visitors can see the actual aircraft, hear passenger stories and experience the event in a powerful way."

Visitors will come face to face with an F-14 Super Tomcat, a DC-3 commercial airliner and a CH-46 helicopter transport.

They can also create a new adventure when they get behind the controls of a Cessna 150 to get a feel for what it's like to pilot an actual aircraft.

The museum is located in North Carolina, but it's an easy road trip from South Carolina.

- **Admission:** Adults: \$12. Seniors 60-plus: \$10. Veterans: \$9. Ages 4-18, college students with ID and active military: \$8. Kids 3 and under: free.
- **Information:** 704-997-3770 or online at www.carolinasaviation.org.

Lone Star Flight Museum

11551 Aerospace Ave. at Ellington
Airport • Houston, Texas

History and the future of aviation meet at the new Lone Star Flight Museum, opened less than a year ago at Houston's Ellington Airport. This is one museum that takes you into the skies — literally. With a battery of more than 20 restored planes, you can buy a ticket and take a ride. Or, stay grounded and tour the two 30,000-square-foot hangars housing historic aircraft, such as a Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress or a North American B-25 Mitchell.

The Aviation Learning Center, the second of its kind in the U.S., immerses visitors in the energy and excitement of flight through a hands-on learning adventure. Designed for students in grades 5-12, the center uses the universal wonder of flight to engage kids in the exploration of science, technology, engineering and math. Students have come from around the world to get a taste of aviation training. There are three replica cockpits, two hang glider simulators and a theater featuring a film about the principles and history of flight development.

- **Admission:** Adults 18-64: \$20. Ages 12-17: \$18. Seniors 65-plus and kids 4-11: \$16. Members and children 3 and under: free. Additional discounts given for advance online purchases.
- **Information:** 346-708-2517 or online at www.lonestarflight.org.



Sarah and Jeff Holland

PROTECT WHAT MATTERS MOST

TECHNOLOGY GIVES CUSTOMERS PEACE OF MIND WHEN THEY'RE NOT HOME

BY LISA SAVAGE

Jeff Holland is a firefighter, and his hours at home are unpredictable. He often worried about his family while he was working. His wife, Sarah, usually didn't sleep well, aware of every sound when he was away.

All that changed when the Big Cove family had a security system installed from NHTC Security Solutions.

It gave them peace of mind.

A camera system is one of Jeff Holland's favorite aspects of the service. One camera allows a good look through-

out the house. They also have other interior and exterior cameras. They can monitor the system using an app downloaded to their mobile phones.

"When he's at work, he can look at his phone and see what's going on," Sarah Holland says. "It gives him peace of mind when he's not here."

If the Hollands leave for an extended time, Sarah Holland's mother checks on their dog. "I can arm the alarm when we're gone and then disarm it when she is going to go let the dog out. Then, I reset the alarm when she's finished," Sarah Holland says.

The Hollands love the service, but even before they started using it, they liked the way the plan worked. With NHTC, they were able to set up a payment plan and bundle

security with other NHTC services.

"We were already happy with our decision to go with NHTC Security Solutions, but now that we have it, we love it," she says. "Now, I always sleep like a baby."

THE LATEST TOOLS

"Technology has changed significantly since New Hope Telephone Cooperative first offered security services," says Bart Hopkins, part of the security sales and service team at NHTC. "And the security systems are also available to homes and businesses outside NHTC's traditional service area."

"NHTC Security Solutions isn't like one of the other major security providers, and we don't try to be," Hopkins

says. "We're committed to serving our customers and ensuring we provide the best equipment, installation and customer service possible."

While some customers have the basic alarm system, other advances in technology have allowed for services such as home automation, Med Alert, home theater, structured wiring, audio and closed-circuit video systems. These offerings include key features such as local monitoring, fast and friendly service and the bundling of bills. Most homeowners' insurance companies also give discounts for home security systems.

Home automation has many features that allow the customer to configure the system, including a phone app. "The service can be as basic



The NHTC Security Solutions team wants to talk to you about securing what you love. From left are Becca Hyde, Kanita Medlen, Lee Glaser and Bart Hopkins.

as accessing the app to see if your home is armed or disarmed and what doors are open,” Hopkins says.

“Technicians will meet with customers to determine how many cameras are needed and the best possible locations to cover as much of an area as possible,” says Lee Glaser, security specialist and installer.

“We will never pressure you to buy something you don’t want, but we will do

everything possible to ensure that you have everything you need,” Glaser says. “Our goal is to give you a solution that fits you best with no high pressure.”

BUSINESS-FRIENDLY

NHTC Security Solutions is based in New Hope as part of NHTC. “Technicians have many years of experience in consumer electronics, theater design, security and low-voltage wiring,” Hopkins says.

“We are licensed and insured, and all of our employees are certified installers with years of wireless and structured wiring experience, so you can feel comfortable and safe when we’re working in your home or office,” Hopkins says. “When you work with NHTC Security Solutions, you’re not buying a product or a service; you’re buying a solution and the feeling of security it provides.” ☎

MEET THE SECURITY SOLUTIONS TEAM



**SALES REPRESENTATIVE
KANITA MEDLEN**

of New Hope has been with
NHTC for 18 years



**SALES REPRESENTATIVE
BECCA HYDE**

of Grant has been with
NHTC for nine years



**SECURITY SPECIALIST AND INSTALLER
BART HOPKINS**

of Owens Cross Roads has been
with NHTC for five years



**SECURITY SPECIALIST AND INSTALLER
LEE GLASER**

of Grant has been with
NHTC for two years

Good & EASY EATS!

Subscription services provide first-class meals and convenience

BLUE APRON

Blue Apron delivers everything you need for a gourmet-quality meal you can cook at home. The step-by-step recipes are paired with unique ingredients to help you feed your family for a fraction of restaurant prices without sacrificing taste. Menu items include spicy smoked trout sandwiches, Caribbean chickpea curry and Mexican-spiced pork.

As low as
\$9.99
per serving!



HELLO FRESH

Much like Blue Apron, Hello Fresh is a competitor with a twist. While you'll still find high-end meals, Hello Fresh specializes in simple home cooking. But the meals don't skimp on flavor. The plates include tasty recipes for winner winner chicken orzo dinner, pineapple poblano beef tacos and slow cooker smoky beef chili.

As low as
\$8.74
per serving!



FRESHLY

If you're tired of cooking on the stove but still want to put a satisfying meal on the table every night, Freshly is the perfect option. Packed with protein, Freshly meals can be cooked in the microwave. The natural ingredients are also gluten free. The options don't disappoint; each chef-prepared meal is ready in under three minutes. You'll find Sicilian-style chicken parmesan, homestyle meatloaf, and spaghetti squash and meatballs on the menu.

As low as
\$8.99
per serving!



MUNCHPAK

If you're not in the mood for a full meal but you're curious about what our neighbors across the pond reach for in their pantries, MunchPak is the answer without the cost of the flight. With snacks from around the world, you choose the size of your delivery and customize its contents. Try out Japanese hard candy, wacky new potato chip flavors, drink options and more.

As low as
\$9.95
per serving!



Your personal 'techtionary'

Learn the internet lingo basics

Sometimes the language of technology can seem complex, but it's an increasingly common, and important, part of day-to-day life. Hopefully, this column will make your use of technology a little smoother.

I often describe myself as a translator, and I want to help you create your own "techtionary." I'll define some common words associated with the internet and related services, and, hopefully, this will give you a simple reference you can keep handy.

► **BROADBAND:** This term is meant to define fast internet. The fastest broadband services come from providers that rely on fiber optic networks, although some companies do offer broadband plans through networks reliant on copper cables. I like to think of broadband as a garden hose delivering water. The higher the water pressure — how many megabits per second your plan provides — the faster the speed!

► **OVER-THE-TOP (OTT) VIDEO:** This term refers to media delivered through an internet connection — often with the help of a smart TV, Roku, Apple TV or other streaming device — as opposed to your standard cable TV or satellite TV.

► **WI-FI:** This is the way you can connect a computer, television or other device to the

internet without using a wire. From your home to the coffee shop, Wi-Fi is increasingly essential as more and more people rely on mobile devices or connected devices, such as a Roku, Amazon Echo or gaming box. Keep in mind, Wi-Fi can be either open for all to access or protected with a password. If you have a home Wi-Fi network, consider using a secure password.

► **WIRELESS ROUTER:** This device converts a broadband connection into a Wi-Fi signal. Routers need to be maintained and updated regularly to have the best connection. Many broadband providers sell routers or offer plans where they manage the router. Using a router recommended by your broadband provider is a good idea because they typically help

maintain the device and keep it updated. I think of a router as a sprinkler head attached to the end of the garden hose. It distributes the broadband signal to a wider area, much like a sprinkler distributes water.

► **STREAMING:** This term refers to accessing content, such as television shows or music, over the internet. If you like to watch a video using applications such as Netflix or YouTube, you are streaming video. If you listen to music online through Pandora or Spotify, you are streaming audio. The content is stored online as opposed to you downloading it to your device.

► **VOICE OVER INTERNET PROTOCOL (VOIP):** While the phone seems to work as it always has, VoIP technology is very different from that used

when copper wires transmit phone calls. With VoIP, calls go through your internet connection. VoIP is becoming more and more common, and in most cases you don't even know you are using an internet-based phone.

These are just a few of the words you may hear in regards to your internet service. Don't hesitate to ask questions when speaking to your internet service provider, which is a great resource. The internet network can seem like magic at times, but it's not as mysterious as it may appear. ☎



CARISSA SWENSON
IS A TRAINING
AND EDUCATION
CONSULTANT
FOR CONSORTIA
CONSULTING.



Grand-prize winner Mike Tipton celebrates with his family after learning he won a 50-inch smart TV.

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

A report from NHTC's annual meeting

BY LISA SAVAGE

Weston Reed licked a drop of ketchup from the corner of his mouth as he ate his hot dog. His brother, Jameson, and sister, Gracyn, shared a box of popcorn, sneaking in a few tosses of the treat at each other.

The 4-year-old triplets sat with their parents, Grant and Nicole Reed, on the bleachers at the middle school gym, enjoying the entertainment at New Hope Telephone Cooperative's annual meeting.

"It's a good family outing," Nicole Reed says.

The Reeds are NHTC internet customers, and they don't usually miss a meeting. Brandon Elder, a man from Arab who made it to the Top 50 and Hollywood Week on the hit television show "American Idol," provided entertainment.

"I watched 'American Idol' this season, so this was exciting," says Nicole Reed of Elder's performance. "We would have come anyway, but this made it even better."

The New Hope High School show choir, "The Pride," also performed.

NHTC members registered for more than two dozen door prizes, including free internet service, TV service, gift packs, tablets, an Apple Watch and TVs.

Member Mike Tipton pumped his arms in the air when his name was called as the winner of the grand prize — a 50-inch TV. "I just had a feeling," he says. "I've always

wanted to come, but this was the first year I actually made it. I sure am glad I did."

DOWN TO BUSINESS

Even though it's a festive atmosphere, the meeting is an important part of operations at the cooperative.

Board members are elected, and the meeting serves as a platform to update members on highlights from the previous year. Place 1 Board member Greg Glover and Place 8 Board member Randy Morrison were re-elected.

General Manager Jim Cook described the cooperative's solid 2017 financial performance, which allowed members to benefit with more bang for their buck.

All NHTC subscribers now have digital fiber-to-the-home internet, Cook says. The minimum residential internet speed was once again increased — this year from 25 to 50 Mbps — with no price change. The cooperative also reduced the residential pricing for 100 Mbps and gigabit-speed tiers. In addition, the minimum business internet speed was increased with no price change.

The cooperative's assets in 2017 totaled \$37 million, and there was a \$2.7 million investment in the fiber-to-the-home project.

Operating expenses rose by 3.5 percent,



Grant and Nicole Reed enjoy attending the NHTC annual meeting every year with their triplets: Weston, Jameson and Gracyn.



NHTC board member Garland Elders announces the winners of the door prizes.



Representing New Hope Telephone Cooperative, seated, from left, are Calvin Bearden, secretary; Jeffrey Cantrell, vice-president; Mike Whitaker, president; and Randy Morrison, treasurer. Back, from left, are General Manager Jim Cook; board members Jeff Cooper, Garland Elders, Jim Duncan, Barry Jones and Greg Glover; and the board attorney, Mac Martinson.

driven by significant increases in fees charged by television content providers and the decision by the cooperative's board to speed the removal of old copper and cable networks.

"Even with the slight reduction in revenues and increase in expenses, our ability to keep controllable expenses relatively flat along with modest growth in nonregulated products and services, such as internet and security solutions, allowed us to post a healthy operating income margin of \$1.2 million," Cook says.

GOING GIG

This year marks the one-year anniversary of the cooperative's certification by NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association as a gigabit broadband internet provider. The cooperative is capable of delivering gigabit broadband speeds and enabling technological innovation throughout New Hope, Grant and Owens Cross Roads, with 100 percent of the membership included in the fiber network.

Only about 10 percent of NTCA member-companies have achieved the designation of gig-certified provider, Cook says.

While about 99 percent of the fiber network is underground, the cable TV and cop-

per networks are aerial lines. Cook says the cooperative plans to focus on removing the aerial lines and recycling the cables. Removing the aerial cables should cut expenses by \$200,000 annually.

Cook says the NHTC team can grow the broadband network to serve the influx of new subscribers into the area. "We will expand our boundaries and enhance our product and service offerings," Cook says.

Robust growth in new home construction, with the majority in the Owens Cross Roads exchange, results in a 3.5 percent increase in residential subscribers. The broadband customer base has grown by 5 percent.

The board approved the expansion of the fiber network near the communities of Horse Cove, McMullen Road and Berkley.

"For years, we have been approached by residents living in the areas adjacent to our boundaries. They have asked us to please extend our fiber network in their areas so they, too, can enjoy the benefits of our state-of-the-art broadband network," he says. "We are proud to be your technology and communications provider in the areas we have served for many years as well as the areas where we are expanding." 📶

"WE WILL EXPAND OUR BOUNDARIES AND ENHANCE OUR PRODUCT AND SERVICE OFFERINGS."

**— JIM COOK, GENERAL MANAGER
NEW HOPE TELEPHONE COOPERATIVE**



Bo Baldwin shows off his new NHTC shirt at the annual meeting.

Canning 101

Do you want to get started with canning vegetables, fruits and more? Well, it's best to pay attention to a few fundamental rules.

Ruth Sarro, a former extension agent for the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, says you will need some basic equipment, including a wide-mouth funnel, tongs, a ladle or dipper, a jar lifter and a water bath canner with a rack inside.

The best foods for canning have good structure and won't fall apart during the process. High-acid foods and pickles don't need to be pressure canned, but low-acid foods — like vegetables, meats, soups and broths — do.

Inspect your fruits and vegetables before canning. “The quality of the food going in determines the quality of the canned product,” says Sarro.

Glass jars and rings may be sterilized and reused, but you must purchase new flat lids each time. The “USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning” is available through the National Center for Home Food Preservation's website.

FOND MEMORIES

Sarro recalls childhood summers spent gathering wild blackberries and plums and fresh figs, pears, persimmons and pecans on the family dairy farm in South Alabama.

“With seven children to

feed on a farmer's wages, my mother taught each of us to harvest, freeze and can fruits and vegetables,” she says. She became a member of her local 4-H club; food preservation was one of her many projects.

After college, she worked as an agent for the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. Although she primarily handled 4-H programs, she also answered consumers' questions about canning and food safety.

Now retired, she teaches nutrition classes part time at Jacksonville State University, and she continues to enjoy canning at home. She makes berries into jams, freezes them to use throughout the year or eats them fresh.

That's the beauty of food preservation, she says. Canning and freezing let you enjoy the taste of summer in the dead of winter.

“My family prefers home-canned jams and jellies because the taste is more like fresh fruit,” Sarro says. “Home-canned peaches taste much better than commercially canned peaches. Sometimes I make peach jam, too. My daughter calls that ‘liquid gold.’”

HOMEGROWN

Retirement has allowed Sarro time to garden, and she's harvested okra, tomatoes, hot peppers and cucumbers. She grows corn, squash and eggplant, too. What she doesn't grow she buys at the local farmers market in Anniston, Alabama, or she shops at pick-



Ruth Sarro prepares strawberry jam in her home in Wellington, Alabama.

your-own farms in her area.

Canning also frees up freezer space. However, there's no room in the house for all the full jars, so the Sarros store them on shelves in their workshop.

“They'll stay above freezing temperatures out there in the winter but not too hot in the summer; then we'll bring them inside and keep them in the pantry as we need them,” she says, adding that she tries to use the food within a year of canning.

The following recipes are some of Sarro's favorites. They are ones she found in the publication “Food Safety in Alabama” but she says she's tweaked them through the years.



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



Anything from watermelon rind pickles to tomatoes and pepper jelly can be canned and preserved.

WATERMELON RIND PICKLES

- 2 pounds (about 4 cups) prepared watermelon rind
- 1 tablespoon pickling lime
- 4 cups white vinegar, divided
- 1 cup water
- 5 cups sugar
- 1 tablespoon whole allspice
- 1 tablespoon whole cloves
- 6 small pieces stick cinnamon

Prepare the watermelon rind by trimming all green and pink portions off. Cut into desired shape or size. Mix pickling lime in a quart (4 cups) of water. Soak prepared watermelon rind in the lime-and-water mixture for 2 to 3 hours. Drain and rinse well, then rinse again to make sure all lime is off the pieces of watermelon rind. Cover rinsed watermelon rind with fresh, cold water and boil for 1 hour or until tender. Drain watermelon rind. Cover with a weak vinegar mixture of 1 cup of vinegar to 2 cups of water. Allow to stand overnight. Discard the liquid the next morning. Make syrup of the 3 cups of vinegar, 1 cup water, sugar and spices by combining and heating to a simmering point. Remove syrup from heat, cover

and allow to steep for 1 hour so flavors of spices can be absorbed. Strain out spices. Add drained watermelon to the syrup and cook gently for 2 hours until syrup is thicker. Using a slotted spoon, pack watermelon rind into prepared standard canning jars. Pour syrup over the watermelon rind in the jars to cover it. Leave 1/2-inch head space in the jar. Wipe jar rims. Adjust jar lids and bands. Process in a boiling water bath canner for 15 minutes for pints and half-pints.

CHILI SAUCE


- 1 peck (about 2 gallons) large ripe tomatoes
- 6 large onions
- 3 large bell peppers
- 1 1/2 pints (3 cups) cider vinegar
- 2 tablespoons cinnamon
- 1 tablespoon mustard
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 2 1/2 tablespoons salt
- 1 tablespoon ginger
- 1 teaspoon nutmeg

Peel, core and slice tomatoes. Chop onions and peppers. Put into a large saucepan. Add remaining ingredients and cook on top of range, stirring

frequently, until sauce reaches consistency of ketchup (about 4 hours). Pack in hot, clean standard pint jars. Remove air bubbles. Wipe jar rims. Adjust jar lids and bands. Process in a boiling water bath canner for 10 minutes.

BREAD-AND-BUTTER PICKLES

- 10 cups sliced cucumbers
- 2 cups sliced onions
- 1/4 cup salt
- 2 cups cider vinegar
- 2 teaspoons celery seed
- 2 teaspoons powdered turmeric
- 1 (3-inch) cinnamon stick
- 3 cups sugar

Combine cucumbers and onions, sprinkle with salt and set aside for 1 hour. Drain off all liquid. Put in a saucepan with vinegar, celery seed, turmeric, cinnamon and sugar. Bring to a boil and simmer 20 minutes. Put into clean standard pint canning jars. Remove air bubbles. Wipe jar rims. Adjust jar lids and bands. Process in a boiling water bath canner for 10 minutes. 



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