

The

Communicator

NHTC

JULY/AUGUST 2020

BROADBAND:
HELPING YOU FARM



FARMING FAMILY

Five generations have
worked the land

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

NHTC rebrands and highlights
its mission

GROWING THE FUTURE

Broadband revolutionizes
agriculture



By SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

Taking the rural broadband story to the Senate

In mid-May, I appeared before the Senate Commerce Committee to discuss the status of broadband during this time of crisis that has so many Americans working, learning and socializing from home.

I have never been more proud of the broadband providers we represent, watching them move quickly and think outside the box to get the job done for their customers.

It was a privilege to share with senators that NTCA’s community-based broadband providers were well prepared to keep Americans connected during a crisis — thanks to their community commitment, their entrepreneurial spirit and the support of Congress, the FCC and RUS.

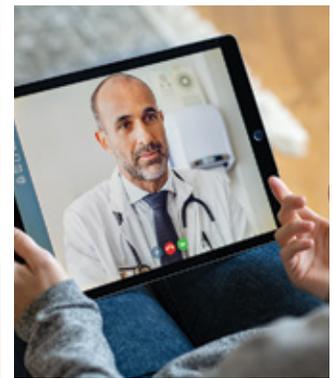
NTCA members have led the charge in building future-proof broadband networks for years and are doing all they can to keep everyone’s internet lights on. But I reminded the committee that to do that, these providers need to keep their own lights on as well.

First, I reminded senators how important it will be to pass the “Keeping Critical Connections Act” to create a temporary emergency fund to keep Americans connected during the pandemic.

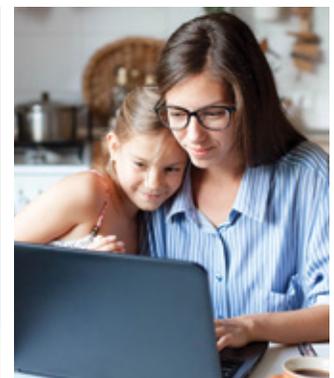
Moving forward, Congress should adopt a “Forever Connected” perspective when it comes to promoting broadband. No American should get second-class broadband service, or worse yet, no service at all.

I appreciated the opportunity to share with senators the story of NTCA members, the Smart Rural Communities they are helping to build, and what support they need to write the next chapter. 📧

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The six-second commute

Work from home policies boost productivity

Story by KALEIGH COX



According to a 2017 Gallup poll, 43% of employed Americans have spent at least some time working remotely. U.S. census data released in 2018 revealed that 5.2% of American workers are based entirely at home. Many employers, however, are reluctant to get on board with remote work. They worry that distractions at home and a lack of oversight could decrease productivity. But are those worries unfounded? One Stanford professor decided to find out.

In 2015, Nicholas Bloom conducted research as a Chinese travel agency tested a new work-from-home policy with half of its call center employees. Bloom found that productivity actually increased by an average of 13% thanks to fewer interruptions, shorter breaks and fewer sick days. With just a six-second commute to their laptop, employees were also less likely to start work late or leave early.

Little bits of time saved here and there added up to a big difference. Each employee completed roughly one extra shift's worth of work. And they were happier, too. Employee attrition, formerly a big problem at the company, decreased by an astounding 50%. The company in Bloom's study cut back on its office space in an expensive city and saved \$2,000 per employee.

Working from home is great for employers and employees alike, but there are challenges to keep in mind. At the end of the study,

over half of the work-from-home employees decided they wouldn't want to work from home 100% of the time, citing isolation as a challenge. Fortunately, there are several ways remote companies can help employees overcome isolation and reap the benefits of working from home:

- ▶ **Use technology to stay connected.** Video meetings allow for face-to-face time and are more engaging than audio-only conference calls. Platforms like Slack encourage steady communication, even between meetings.
- ▶ **Consider flexible policies.** Working from home doesn't have to be all or nothing. Some companies opt for a mix of in-office and at-home days or start new employees in the office for smoother onboarding. The key is to consider the unique needs of the team and experiment with creative options as needed.
- ▶ **Encourage team bonding.** A sense of community can combat feelings of isolation and encourage team cohesion. Non-work-related, group bonding activities — whether virtual or in person — can help teams feel connected and united even as they work from home.

Working from home can save companies time and money, improve employee satisfaction and improve retention rates — as long as they find ways to keep employees connected and engaged from wherever they call home. 📧

Stay focused with the Pomodoro Technique

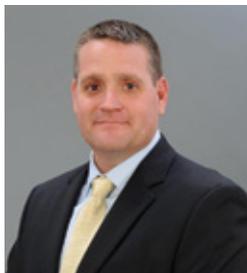
Named after the creator's tomato-shaped kitchen timer, the Pomodoro Technique is a simple time-management strategy widely used by work-from-home employees who need help staying focused. Here's how it works:

- » Select a task to focus on.
- » Set your timer for 25 minutes and work until you hear the "ding."
- » Take a short five-minute break to stretch or grab a coffee.
- » Repeat three more times, then take a longer break of 15-30 minutes.

Even large tasks feel manageable when you only have to focus for 25 minutes at a time. Set a kitchen timer, use your phone's timer or download a Pomodoro app to try this "time-tested" technique for yourself.

Thank you to our farmers

There are many ways this year's pandemic is going to change the way America thinks about things. One of those ways, I hope, is that we remember those who keep our society running.



DANIEL MARTIN
General Manager

Last issue, I outlined how broadband has provided an essential service during the pandemic for the millions of people who've had to adjust to working or attending school online. But in this issue, we're focusing on something even more essential: the farmers, ranchers and other agricultural producers who put food on our tables, lumber in our houses and clothes on our backs.

A steady supply of food and other agricultural products at the store is something many of us frequently took for granted. But the spiking demand and supply chain disruptions this year have made me appreciate when there is chicken in the meat case, fresh vegetables in the produce department and stocked shelves on the paper products aisle.

I think our nation's farmers — including those right here in Alabama — have become some of the most underappreciated but absolutely critical people in this country.

So in light of that, I want to take this space to say thank you.

Thanks to the dairy workers for getting up early for milking. Thanks to the row crop farmers for long days of plowing, planting and harvesting. Thank you to all the fruit growers and pickers in the orchards. A sincere thank you to those raising and butchering our beef, poultry and pork. Thank you to all of those growing and cutting timber. Thank you to all of the beekeepers tending to their hives, the hay farmers storing their bales, the egg farmers in their chicken houses and the grape growers in their vineyards. Thank you to all of the extension agents who help share knowledge between all of those groups.

Whether they're producing beef or beans, cotton or canola, pumpkins, or peanuts, our agricultural producers deserve our appreciation.

Every growing season they risk their financial future, and they must pray for the right weather and good yields. But they're also adapting to changing demands and industry trends.

For anyone who hasn't been out on a farm lately, you might be surprised to find how much technology is in the fields and barns. Farmers use sensors to check soil and moisture conditions, watch temperatures in chicken houses, monitor levels of chemicals in their tanks, order seeds and parts, keep up with commodity prices and find new markets to sell their products.

In this issue, we're happy to highlight the hard work farmers put in to keep America moving and the growing role technology plays in helping their operations run smoothly. It's important to remember that many of the founders of our cooperative were farmers who realized the need for telephone technology, just as they appreciate the need for broadband today.

I'm thankful for all of the members of our local agriculture community and proud to still be their technology partner. 

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is a member-owned corporation dedicated to providing communications technology to the residents and businesses of New Hope, Grant and Owens Cross Roads.

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On the Cover:



The Butler family farm dates back to the 1850s, but technology has improved the efficiency of the soybean and corn crops.
See story Page 8.



The NHTC board of directors elected officers in May

The 2020 officers, seated, from left, are Secretary Jim Duncan, President Jeffrey Cantrell, Treasurer Calvin Bearden and Vice President Randy Morrison. Board members, back row from left, are Jeff Cooper, Garland Elders, Mike Whitaker, General Manager Daniel Martin, Greg Glover, Barry Jones and Attorney Mac Martinson.



*Holiday
closing*

The NHTC office
will be closed on
**Friday, July 3, for the
Fourth of July holiday.**



- **Bandwidth** — The capacity your internet connection has for uploading or downloading data. You can think of this like a pipe that carries water. A large pipe can move big quantities of water much more quickly than a small straw. Similarly, increasing your internet bandwidth enables you to upload and download data more quickly.
- **Fiber** — The fastest, most reliable network infrastructure available. Built with strands of fiber rather than cable or copper, fiber networks can provide speeds of 1 Gbps and beyond.
- **Gbps** — Gigabits per second, a standard of measurement for very fast internet that can download or upload billions of bits of data per second. Most internet connections are measured in Mbps, which is megabits per second. But fiber connections can be significantly faster and measured in Gbps instead.
- **The gig** — Often used to describe internet services that can provide at least 1 Gbps of speed. This is an extremely high-speed connection for both homes and businesses.
- **Mbps** — Megabits per second, a standard of measurement that describes how many bits of data your internet connection can upload or download per second. The higher the number, the faster you can upload or download content online.
- **Router** — A unit that connects the devices in your home to your internet connection and to one another. A router is often paired with a modem, another device that brings the internet from our network into your home.
- **Streaming** — Downloading media a few seconds at a time so that you can enjoy a podcast, music or video even as it downloads. This enables you to enjoy live video in real time and to consume media without having to fully download it to your device first.
- **Wi-Fi** — The technology that makes wireless internet possible. Because Wi-Fi uses radio waves to transmit your internet signal, you no longer have to plug your devices into an Ethernet cable to get online access.

Still have questions about your NHTC internet connection? Our customer service team is local and always happy to walk you through your options. Call us anytime at 256-723-4211.



SWEET & SIMPLE

Gerbera daisies are a colorful burst of sunshine



They start out so colorful and add such a happy touch to your outdoor setting, but with the heat of summer, gerbera daisies begin to lose their appeal. Their healthy, green leaves brown as the heat rises.

But all is not lost — your daisies can come back to life with a little love and flower power on your part.

Gerbera daisies are a popular flower for both the home and garden. You can cut them and make a stunning, multicolored bouquet. They put on quite a show with their rainbow of colors, which is one of the most distinctive qualities of gerberas. They range from beautiful reds, cheery yellows, bright pinks and vivid whites to perfect purples, soft peach and more. And while you may see blue and green gerberas, those are most likely victims of artificial coloring.

“They really are a customer favorite,” says Cole Webster, general manager of The Barn Nursery in Chattanooga, Tennessee. “They’re bright, fun and an iconic bloom. When I think of summer and warm weather, I think of gerbera daisies.”

With proper care, though, these blooms can last well past spring and through the heat of summer — and possibly through the cold of winter.





HERE ARE SOME TIPS WEBSTER OFFERS TO ENSURE THEIR SURVIVAL:

- * Gerbera daisies should be watered every couple of days. It's easy to tell if they're desperate for a drink. The leaves sag, and the blooms wilt. "I like telling people to water them whenever you think about it," Webster says.
- * The best time to water is in the morning. But if you forget, water in the afternoon. Don't wait until the next day. If you're thirsty, you don't tell yourself you'll wait until tomorrow to get something to drink.
- * Fertilize every three weeks. For container plants, Webster recommends a product like Scotts Super Bloom or some other plant food that has a high phosphorus level to help promote big blooms. If you plant your daisies in the ground, a slow-release fertilizer is your best bet.
- * Gerberas are sun-loving plants, but sun is too much of a good thing when temperatures climb to 90 degrees and higher. This is the time of year you should limit

their sunning to mornings, moving them into the shade in the heat of the afternoon.

- * Gerbera daisies can come back next year if you winterize them. In the South, particularly those areas where mild winters prevail, mulch the daisies well, and they'll reappear next spring. In areas that suffer through freezing winter temperatures, bring the daisies inside and place them in a bright window or greenhouse, watering and fertilizing as needed. Note, however, gerberas are more likely to come back and rebloom if they are planted outdoors. They can last for two to three years.
- * Use gerberas in an arrangement for a stunning, colorful showpiece. Their stems are hollow, allowing a wire to be inserted into them if needed for stability.
- * If you plan ahead, you can start gerberas from seed, but it will take about six months for them to reach maturity. Plant seeds around Thanksgiving for spring blooms. 🌸

A few things you might not know about gerbera daisies

Not only are gerbera daisies among the most popular flowers, but they also have an interesting history. They enjoy longevity, have medicinal uses and are made up of a surprisingly complex structure.

- * Dutchman Jan Frederic Gronovius wished to honor a German botanist and physician, Traugott Gerber, when naming the genus Gerbera in the 1700s.
- * Gerberas can last in a water-filled vase for two weeks, making them among the longest-lasting cut flowers.
- * The plant is also believed by many to have health benefits, pulling carbon dioxide and other toxins found in the air and discharging oxygen. Some people even place gerberas by their bedsides.
- * The structure of the gerbera is complex. At first, the flower seems to be a single flower head with many small petals. However, the gerbera flower actually consists of a huge cluster of hundreds of tinier flowers.
- * Scientific researchers have examined the daisies as they study the formation of flowers. And the flower is resistant to fungal diseases.
- * Similar to sunflowers, gerbera daisies track the sun. The flower turns as the light moves from east to west.
- * About 40 documented species of gerberas exist.

Source: flowerweb.com





FAMILY TRADITION

Farming for the future

Story by LISA SAVAGE



Matt Butler, left, Charles Butler and Sam Butler work on the family farm.

The year before Charles Butler was born in 1952, his grandfather still used a team of mules to pull the planter to plant the crops on the family farm. Butler heard stories of one of the mules dying from the heat that summer, but the animal's demise led to an upgrade — a tractor and a two-row planter.

Now, using state-of-the-art equipment, Butler can plant 24 rows at a time. Farming still requires a lot of hard work, but technology helps keep production on track.

FIVE GENERATIONS

In 1858, Butler's great-great-grandfather purchased the 80-acre tract, which remains in the family. Butler now lives on the farm. With the help of his sons, he also grows corn and soybeans on hundreds of additional acres they either own or lease.

Butler is a 1974 graduate of Auburn

University, and his sons, Sam and Matt, are fifth-generation farmers who have carried on the family tradition of graduating from Auburn with an agricultural-related degree. In 1906, Butler's grandfather was the first family member to graduate from Auburn, then called Alabama Polytechnic Institute. He came home to the farm, growing mostly cotton.

Then, when Butler's father, John Ed, graduated from Auburn in 1948, the farm focus turned to livestock. He raised hogs and cattle, but his main love was cattle. "In the '70s and '80s, he was well known for a purebred Simmental cattle herd that was sold as breeding stock across the state and Southeast," Butler says.

By the time Butler returned to the farm, his father had added corn and soybean crops to the livestock herds. "Over the years we got out of the hog business," he says.

In 2010, the Butlers phased out the cattle operation and switched to row crops to focus on a single type of farming. "The row crop and cattle operations would overlap each other," Sam Butler says.

They stopped plowing in the late 1990s and moved to a no-till planting style, which improves soil health and provides more efficient planting operations.



TRADITIONS AND TECHNOLOGY

Now, the precision agriculture management concept guides much of the row crop operations.

Soil tests determine what nutrients an area needs, and programmed equipment dispenses fertilizer accordingly. “Instead of putting a blanket of fertilizer on a field, it can be tailored to what the ground needs,” Sam Butler says.

The farm equipment has GPS-based guidance, keeping rows aligned during planting. “It used to be an art to planting in a straight row,” Charles Butler says. As equipment size has changed, planting can be done 24 rows at a time.

Technology also keeps planting, spraying and similar operations from overlapping. “Instead of wasting seeds, it will cut off and won’t reseed an area already planted,” Sam Butler says.

After the corn and soybean harvests, technology helps monitor the moisture levels in the grain to ensure quality and appropriate moisture.

“It takes the guessing out of the mix,” he says.

Fast, reliable internet is necessary for many of the farm operations, which can involve looking up a replacement part or checking online for the latest techniques. Upgrades to equipment can also take place more easily by downloading information from a manufacturer’s website to a jump drive and then doing an update to the equipment’s software. “The access to technology has made the need for Wi-Fi more important than ever,” Sam Butler says.

Farming has changed a lot through the years, embracing technology and techniques that improve production while making the work a little easier. “The family traditions that our ancestors started years ago are important to us, and we want to continue the work ethic they taught us,” Sam Butler says. “But we are proud that we have the technology that allows us to prepare for the future with more efficient, safe and profitable operations.” 🗨️



FARMING FACTS

- 📍 Farmers today produce 262% more food with 2% fewer inputs (such as seeds, labor, fertilizers) than they did in 1950.
- 📍 One in 3 farm acres is planted for export.
- 📍 In 2006, the average American farmer grew enough food for 144 other people. In 1940, the average farmer grew food for 19 other people.
- 📍 Farming employs more than 24 million American workers, 17% of the total workforce.
- 📍 In 2007, just 187,816 of the 2.2 million farms in the U.S. accounted for 63% of sales of agricultural products, marking a trend toward a concentration in agricultural production.
- 📍 Agricultural efficiency has increased over the past century from 27.5 acres per worker in 1890 to 740 acres per worker in 1990.

Source: Fact Retriever



Technology in the growing field

Innovations in automation help farmers work more efficiently

Story by LAZ DENES

Never has technology been more important to the agriculture industry than it is today. As farmers and ranchers face challenges such as diminishing sustainable farmland, rising costs of supplies and equipment, workforce shortages, and ever-changing consumer preferences, they must find ways to produce more without breaking the bank.

Fortunately, technology enables farmers to shave hours, days and even weeks off some of the most time-consuming tasks to make their operations more efficient than ever.

Corey Poss, an agronomist with the Rutherford Farmers Cooperative in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, oversees an operation that offers satellite and drone technology to help map, monitor and analyze crop fields. Another solution is a forecasting tool that can predict the yield of a particular crop to within 10% — before seeds are even planted.

“Crop ground is getting swallowed up every day, and we’ve got more people to feed, so we have to apply technology everywhere we can to be as efficient

as possible and not waste time and money,” says Poss, who is in his sixth year with the Rutherford co-op after graduating with an agribusiness degree from Tennessee Tech University.

“A lot of our larger growers are participating with us free of charge,” he says. “The technology originated in the Midwest — the Corn Belt. I don’t ever have to step in the field. We can get a much more accurate look from above. We can identify problems with water, nutrient deficiency and disease on a wide scale, and we can advise the farmer so he can apply his fertilizer accordingly. With our satellite and drone technology, we can cover as much as 1,000 acres a day.”





Andy Hacker serves as operations manager for Bonanza Bean in Morris, Minnesota.



Bonanza Bean, which processes millions of pounds of product, relies on broadband to aid in sales and marketing.

PRESCRIPTION FOR SUCCESS

Poss and his crew of four agronomists use the fast fiber optic network at their Woodbury and Smithville locations to process analytics that farmers then load into their automated equipment to enable a precise distribution of fertilizer, pesticides and nutrients on every square inch of a growing field.

It's a practice called "writing prescriptions," something with which Texas farmer Spence Pennington has become all too familiar. Five years ago, he returned to his family farm in Raymondville after serving as an Air Force aircraft maintenance officer. He and his family grow cotton, grain sorghum, corn, sugarcane and sesame seed. They also raise Brangus cattle in Willacy, Cameron and Hidalgo counties in the Rio Grande Valley. Pennington appreciates the ability to pinpoint the varying requirements of his family's farmland through technology.

"I have 10 to 12 systems — my tractors and all my equipment — and I can link them all together to make them all sync, thanks to the broadband at my house," he says. "I can run my agriculture systems, security systems, monitor my equipment. I can literally see the water temp in the radiator of one of my tractors, all from home. When I'm at home, I'm still connected to my farm."

Pennington and his wife, Emily, an Iowa native he met while on active duty in Ramstein, Germany, also rely on broadband technology to help them stay

on top of their continuing duties as Air Force reservists. Pennington is a lieutenant colonel and commander of the 433rd Maintenance Squadron at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio. His wife, a nurse practitioner at a local regional hospital, still serves as an Air Force major. Stationed at Scott Air Force Base near St. Louis, she is the chief nurse of the 932nd Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron.

"We live multiple lives, and we have to cover a lot of ground," Pennington says. "After working 12 to 13 hours a day on the farm, I come home and have to take care of business as commander of my unit. I'm responsible for 250 people remotely, and I'm logging into a very encrypted system.

"Having fast internet has literally changed our lives, and we've gotten so much family time back," he says. "No more headaches, and everything is so much quicker. We've been married just over three years, and we have two kids now, so we can really appreciate being able to take care of our military duties that much more quickly and efficiently."

MAKING THE GRADE

Reliable broadband service also is a valuable tool for the Bonanza Bean farming operation headquartered in Morris, Minnesota. The company processes black beans and three varieties of kidney beans and sells to national and international companies from its state-of-the-art facilities in Minnesota and Arizona.

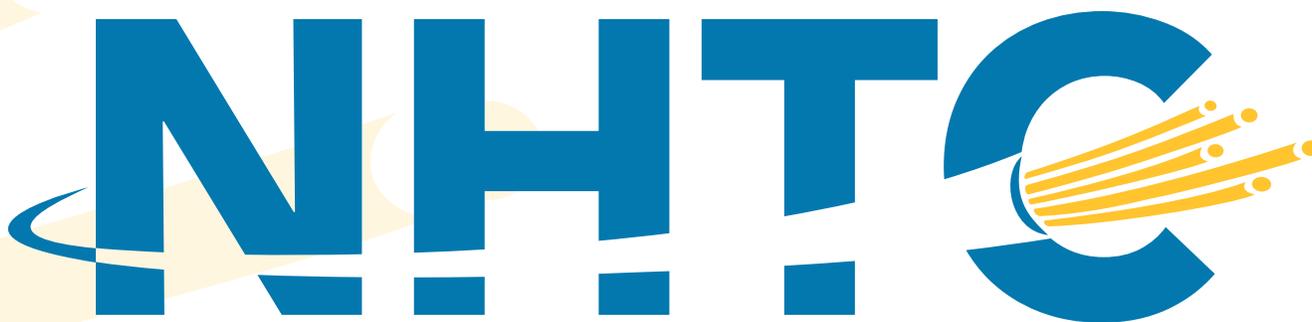


Drone technology allows Corey Poss, of the Rutherford Farmers Cooperative, to monitor fields.

The company touts its magnetic dirt separator, which uses magnets to remove dirt with high concentrations of iron from the beans. It also sells a state-of-the-art, infrared-camera technology for sorting that can differentiate a black bean from a dirtball.

"That machine has really changed our industry," says Andy Hacker, Bonanza Bean operations manager. "The needle machine picks out anything that has a sprout or a skin defect or anything that we can catch with a needle. At Bonanza Bean, we never let anything leave our facility that doesn't make USDA Grade No. 1. With our cleaning facility, we're able to accomplish that."

About 60 million pounds of beans roll through its processing plants each year, with particular emphasis on international sales. Broadband service allows its sales staff to monitor up-to-the-minute market data and communicate with its vast array of customers. ☑



YOUR BROADBAND CONNECTION

BIG CHANGES

New name, new services at NHTC

A name change and new internet plans — a landline is no longer required — were among the scheduled highlights of the 2020 NHTC annual meeting.

However, a state of emergency connected to the COVID-19 pandemic stopped the gathering. “We are living through what will be a historic event,” NHTC General Manager Daniel Martin says. “For the safety of our members, communities and employees, we made the decision to cancel.”

Provisions in the NHTC bylaws, however, allow for situations when too few members can gather to create a binding vote on issues such as board elections. Current directors whose positions were up for election will remain in place. Those directors will serve a one-year term. Members will have the opportunity to vote on those seats at the 2021 annual meeting, and the elected directors will serve three-year terms instead of four.

A NEW NAME

New Hope Telephone Cooperative is now NHTC.

The rebranding better identifies the services NHTC provides. A new logo with the tagline “Your Broadband Connection” better describes what NHTC represents.

“Our cooperative provides so much more than telephone service now, and we wanted our name to represent that,” Martin says.

NO LANDLINE REQUIRED

NHTC plans to launch a broadband-only service that will not require the addition or bundling of a landline. The rates and details will be announced later in the year.

“We are extremely proud to bring to our members the types of services you need and require for education, telemedicine, telework or just for entertainment after a long day’s work,” Martin says. “Now more than ever, the nation is realizing the importance of having robust broadband connections at home. With students participating in online classroom activities and many workers using videoconferencing and web platforms to interact from home, broadband is the glue that is binding the nation as well as our communities together, keeping so many Americans productively engaged and in contact with loved ones.”

COMMUNITY WI-FI

NHTC has also deployed community Wi-Fi hot spots within the three local exchanges, at New Hope City Gazebo, Grant Town Park Gymnasium and Owens Cross Roads Town Hall.



Daniel Martin, NHTC general manager

“Bringing the internet to those that are in need speaks at the core of what our cooperative stands for,” Martin says. “We have pledged to ensure our customers do not lose their broadband or telephone connectivity as a result of these exceptional circumstances.”

Martin hopes members remember NHTC delivers more than broadband or telephone service when they think of the cooperative, its 34 employees and the nine directors.

“We are also doing everything possible to deliver a brighter future for tomorrow for the communities we serve,” he says. “We extend our gratitude to you, our member-owners. Without you, our hard work and effort would be meaningless. So, to each of you, we say thank you for helping to make this, and every year, a success for your cooperative.” 

ON THE HORIZON

CLOUD-BASED EMAIL PLATFORM

NHTC plans to upgrade email clients to a more secure, user-friendly, cloud-based platform. It will even include a calendar for keeping appointments. Premium antispam and malware detection can be added at a low monthly cost to protect all incoming and outbound email traffic.



MANAGED WI-FI

New Wi-Fi services will allow NHTC to design, install and monitor the Wi-Fi signal in the home to ensure it is accessible in all areas.

Fast, reliable Wi-Fi is the service everyone wants, especially with the popularity of bandwidth-hungry applications like streaming HD video and online gaming. And with today's increasingly complicated smart homes and businesses, speed and coverage are more important than ever.

NHTC's Managed Wi-Fi will provide simplicity and more control to create the best experience possible for all online activities. The service will rely on industry-leading products such as the GigaCenter and GigaSpire BLAST.

THREE PLANS

1

Managed Wi-Fi

Managed Wi-Fi includes the basic NHTC Wi-Fi Manager app, which offers basic parental controls and the ability to create profiles and assign devices for on-off control. It will also offer the ability to quickly and easily set up a network for guests. And it will show a device list indicating all connected devices by category.

2

Enhanced Wi-Fi

Enhanced Wi-Fi takes Wi-Fi performance and control to another level. It's all the benefits of Managed Wi-Fi, plus so much more. Enhanced Wi-Fi combines blazing-fast speeds with whole-home coverage. The service provides the premium NHTC Wi-Fi Manager app, ExperienceIQ (enhanced parental controls) and gives you the ability to add ProtectIQ for network security.

3

Whole-Home Wi-Fi

A plug-in Wi-Fi satellite device provides another option to maximize performance. Whether in a basement, bedroom or backyard, this device extends quality Wi-Fi to areas that previously had slow connections. It's more reliable than a traditional Wi-Fi extender and does not require a sign-in with every use.

Remote management of Wi-Fi devices

Sophisticated remote monitoring and diagnostics will help identify and resolve any problems — in most cases, it's not necessary to send a technician to the premises. The system is designed to also tune your services to create the best performance possible.

Experienced customer support representatives can remotely monitor which devices are connected to Wi-Fi. They can identify issues, troubleshoot and help you to quickly solve the problem — all without having to visit your home or business.

Chillingly delicious

No one can resist ice cream

There was a time when ice cream came in just a few flavors — primarily chocolate, vanilla and strawberry. But step inside It's All So Yummy Cafe in Knoxville and you'll find that the quintessential summer treat we all know and love has gone rogue. Watermelon Chip, Roasted Golden Beet and the popcorn-flavored Movie Night certainly don't sound like ice cream flavors, but they're among the many Kim and Wade Wilcox have created since buying the cafe eight years ago.

The menu features sandwiches, salads and other foods typical of most cafes. However, with the purchase of the eatery came an ice cream machine, and the couple decided to use it. But there was a learning curve.

After they had been making ice cream for several years on a smaller scale than they do now, Wade Wilcox decided to learn more — so he went back to school. He didn't enroll in just one of many online courses, though. He took part in Penn State's prestigious ice cream course, an intense, weeklong program that draws people from around the world, teaching them all about the manufacturing of commercially sold ice cream. "It gave me a more rounded, in-depth knowledge of the chemistry that goes into making ice cream," he says. "And it gave me a good chance to make contact with other people in the industry and share ideas."

The Wilcoxes, originally from Iowa, have lived in Knoxville for 23 years. They started out selling about 30 flavors of ice cream. Now, that number has risen to well over 50, but not every flavor is available every day.

"Many of them are seasonal that we only do at certain times of the year," Kim Wilcox says, adding that making these

types available once in a while "keeps people wanting them more." For example, during Girl Scout Cookies season, they'll make ice cream with the treats right after the cookies are delivered. When it's gone, it's gone.

Popular year-round varieties are Death by Godiva Chocolate and Butterfinger. "My personal favorite?" she says. "I don't know that I have one. My favorites change all the time, but I do like all of our coffee-based ice creams."

Ice cream sold at It's All So Yummy Cafe goes by the name Hilton Head Ice Cream, and there's a story behind it. Years ago, the man who first opened the cafe went to Hilton Head and fell in love with the ice cream at the shop Hilton Head Ice Cream. He liked it so much, he convinced the owner to let him open a store in Knoxville. "Part of the deal was that he needed to call it Hilton Head Ice Cream, and that's how Knoxville has always known it," Wilcox says. "We use the same process that the original Hilton Head Ice Cream shop uses."

Now an expert in the field of frozen delights, she offers one important tip for those less skilled in the making of ice cream: "Don't be afraid to experiment with flavors. Ice cream should be fun."



Kim Wilcox and her husband, Wade, created the It's All So Yummy Cafe in Knoxville, Tennessee.



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

LET'S GO TO THE FAIR

Sundae

Cotton candy (available in many stores — or at the fair!)
 Vanilla ice cream
 M&M's
 Chocolate syrup
 Sugar wafer cookie
 Rainbow sprinkles
 Whipped cream
 Maraschino cherry with stem

Make a bowl out of the cotton candy. Put the ice cream in the bowl. Working quickly, add M&M's, chocolate syrup and sugar wafer cookie. Top with whipped cream, sprinkles and a cherry on top. Serve immediately. Makes one sundae.

PUMPKIN WHOOPIE PIE ICE CREAM SANDWICHES

- 3 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 2 tablespoons cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon ground cloves
- 2 cups packed dark brown sugar
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 3 cups pure pumpkin puree
- 2 large eggs
- 1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla

Suggested ice cream flavors: pumpkin, French vanilla, butter pecan, cinnamon or dark chocolate.

Heat oven to 350 F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper. In a large bowl, whisk the flour, salt, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, ginger and cloves. Set aside. In another bowl, whisk the brown sugar and oil until well combined. Add the pumpkin puree and whisk to combine. Add eggs and vanilla until well mixed. Add the flour mixture 1/2 cup at a time, and stir until combined. In 1/3-cup scoops, put the cookie dough

on the baking sheets. They will spread a little, so leave some space between them. Bake for 11-13 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean.

Remove from the oven and let cool before removing from the pan. Once cooled, wrap them individually and freeze.

When ready to serve, take one cookie and place a big scoop of your favorite ice cream on it. Then, top with another cookie and enjoy.

SALTED SESAME CARAMEL

A mouthwatering topping for most any ice cream.

- 1 cup sugar
- Pinch of cream of tartar
- 3 tablespoons water
- 1/4 cup tahini

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2/3 cup heavy cream
- 1/4 cup toasted sesame seeds
- 3/4 teaspoon kosher salt

Bring sugar, cream of tartar and water to a boil in a medium pan over medium-high heat, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Boil until the sugar begins to caramelize in spots. Stir with a heat-proof spatula and cook until the color of honey, 5-7 minutes. Reduce heat to medium low and cook, stirring occasionally, until caramel is a deep amber color, about 5 minutes.

Remove caramel from heat and whisk in the tahini and butter. Then add cream, sesame seeds and salt.

Cool before serving. This sauce may be made ahead of time and refrigerated. 📌





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