

The

# Communicator

MAY/JUNE 2019

**BROADBAND:**  
JOBS EDITION

## SWEET SUCCESS

Donut shop brings business  
and treats to New Hope

## DRIVERS CAN SAVE LIVES

Follow the Move Over law  
for safer roadways

## A COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Grant Pharmacy celebrates  
decades of service



BY SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO  
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

## Broadband drives rural and urban jobs

With this issue's focus on the impact of broadband on jobs, I was reminded of a report our Foundation for Rural Service and the Hudson Institute released three years ago. Entitled "The Economic Impact of Rural Broadband," this report estimated the direct and indirect economic effects of the rural broadband industry on gross domestic product.

The report showed that rural broadband companies like yours contributed \$24.1 billion to the economies of the states in which they operated. Even more interesting is the fact that \$17.2 billion of that total was through their own operations. The rest, \$6.9 billion, was through the follow-on impact of their operations. Those are impressive numbers under any financial index.

Sixty-six percent, or \$16 billion, of that total economic impact actually flows to urban areas. That means the U.S. jobs market needs rural broadband to remain strong and healthy.

The impact of rural broadband goes far beyond the service areas of rural telcos. The study showed that the rural broadband industry supported 69,600 jobs in 2015 — and I'm sure those numbers are even higher today. These jobs not only come from broadband providers themselves, but also from companies that supply goods and services to the industry. And more than half of those jobs, 54 percent in fact, are actually in urban America.

The truth is in the numbers. Rural broadband creates jobs and helps drive our economy — in rural and urban America alike. 📞

# Fighting robocalls

BY STEPHEN V. SMITH



## TRACED Act would help stop unwanted, illegal calls

Your phone rings. Even though you're in the middle of dinner, you answer because the Caller ID information shows the call is coming from a local number. Maybe it's someone you know.

"Congratulations!" the recorded voice exclaims. "You have been selected to receive a free cruise."

You just answered one of the estimated 130 million automated calls placed every day.

While there are legitimate uses of autodialing, illegal robocalls have become a plague that impacts everyone with a phone. Lawmakers have worked on the issue for almost three decades. Yet despite laws and fines designed to stop the practice, criminals — armed with ever-advancing software and technology — continue to find ways to flood our nation's phone network with unwanted calls.

Earlier this year, Sen. John Thune, R-S.D., and Sen. Ed Markey, D-Mass., introduced the TRACED Act, short for Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence Act. It gives the FCC and other agencies more power in enforcing existing laws governing robocalls.

"Unwanted robocalls that utilize spoofed phone numbers or falsify information are a problem in urban

and rural America alike," says Shirley Bloomfield, CEO of NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association. She says the TRACED Act "seeks to tackle this problem while also recognizing the transitions necessary to implement new technologies and network connections that will help achieve this goal."

In March, the attorneys general of all 50 states, plus four territories, signed a letter in unanimous support of the TRACED Act, sending it to the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee. A group of 10 U.S. senators representing several states and both political parties later issued a press release pledging their support for the bill as co-sponsors.

"With bipartisan support growing, the time to pass legislation to stop the scourge of robocalls has come," said senators Markey and Thune in that press release. "The groundswell of support for our TRACED Act — from state and territory attorneys general, to FCC and FTC commissioners, to leading consumer groups, to major industry stakeholders — shows just how much the American people want Congress to act to stop harassing robocalls."

As of press time, the bill remained in committee. Before becoming law, it would require support by both houses of Congress and the president. 📞





**HEY  
TELEMARKETERS:**

**DO NOT CALL!**

**T**he Federal Trade Commission and the Federal Communications Commission established a National Do Not Call Registry. Joining this registry can drastically reduce the number of telemarketing calls you receive.

**JUST THE FACTS ABOUT DO NOT CALL:**

- Once you've registered, telemarketers have 31 days to stop calling your number.
- Register as many as three nonbusiness telephone numbers. You can also register cellphone numbers — there is not a separate registry for cellphones.
- Your number will remain on the list permanently unless you disconnect the number or you choose to remove it.
- Some businesses are exempt from the Do Not Call Registry and may still be able to call your number. These include

political organizations, charities, telephone surveyors and businesses with whom you have an existing relationship.

Strict Federal Trade Commission rules make it illegal for telemarketers to do any of the following, regardless of whether or not your number is listed on the National Do Not Call Registry:

- Call before 8 a.m.
- Call after 9 p.m.
- Misrepresent what is being offered
- Threaten, intimidate or harass you
- Call again after you've asked them not to



**IT'S EASY!**

Add your number to the  
Do Not Call Registry

Register online at  
**[www.donotcall.gov](http://www.donotcall.gov)**  
or call 888-382-1222.  
For TTY, call 866-290-4236.

You must call from the telephone  
number you wish to register.

**ATTENTION LOCAL  
BUSINESS OWNERS:**

**MAKE SURE YOU FOLLOW  
THE DO NOT CALL RULES**

No matter if you're a one-person shop or a beloved company, local business owners should remember that National Do Not Call Registry rules and regulations apply to you. After all, you don't want to upset a loyal customer, or frustrate potential new customers, with unwanted phone calls.

If you are a company, individual or organization that places telemarketing calls, it is very important that you familiarize yourself with the operations of the National Do Not Call Registry. Unless you fall under one of the established exceptions, such as telemarketing by charitable organizations or for prior business relationships, you may not make telemarketing calls to numbers included in the National Do Not Call Registry.

For information regarding National Do Not Call regulations, visit the National Do Not Call Registry at [www.telemarketing.donotcall.gov](http://www.telemarketing.donotcall.gov). You can find the Federal Communications Commission and Federal Trade Commission rules governing telemarketing and telephone solicitation at 47 C.F.R. § 64.1200 and 16 C.F.R. Part 310, respectively.

**OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION:**

The Do Not Call initiative, regulated by the Federal Trade Commission and the Federal Communications Commission, requires telephone service providers to notify customers of the National Do Not Call rules and regulations. 📞

# Broadband builds business

**A**t NHTC, our daily business is providing reliable service for our customers – but in the big picture, we’re also in the jobs business.



**JIM COOK**  
General Manager

Our broadband network is foundational to our area’s economic well-being and crucial to keeping and growing job opportunities locally. We all want fulfilling and meaningful jobs that provide for ourselves and our families, and broadband is becoming critical to making them possible.

A state-of-the-art fiber optic network ensures that our area can meet the demands associated with economic development as our area continues to prosper and grow. Reliable, high-speed internet access allows our region to remain competitive and viable in three major economic areas.

## SMALL BUSINESSES

It’s no stretch to say small businesses are the backbone of our community. Whether it’s providing Wi-Fi for their customers, giving access to online marketplaces or just ordering supplies online, those same small businesses benefit from our broadband and our phone network. In an age in which it’s easier than ever for small businesses in our community to reach a national or worldwide audience, NHTC is proud to support them as they grow.

## TELECOMMUTERS

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, nearly a quarter of Americans do at least some of their work from home. With the exponential growth in and around Huntsville, we have noticed a trend of employees being relocated to the area for careers at Redstone Arsenal or one of the industrial parks. Our close proximity to Huntsville makes our rural area increasingly attractive to telecommuters who may not want the expense and stress of living in the city. These relocated individuals are frequently surprised to learn that our rural area has comparable, if not superior, communications services to those offered in the large cities they are from. These talented folks are able to have the best of both worlds, with good-paying jobs from top companies while living a rural lifestyle. I am pleased to welcome them to our community.

## ENTREPRENEURS

Many of the brave souls who chase the dream of starting their own business used to face steep disadvantages by launching their startups in rural areas. Entrepreneurs would frequently have to move to cities to find customers, workers or the communications infrastructure to help them launch and grow their businesses. Now, with our broadband, they can engage remote workers, network with other entrepreneurs and reach distant markets like never before.

Those three groups of employees and employers make up a significant portion of our local economy. They do great work producing quality products and services for their customers throughout the ups and downs that any business or economy will have. But as they move forward, I’m happy that they can be confident in having a reliable, supportive communications partner growing right along with them. 📞

## The Communicator

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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.

### Send address corrections to:

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New Hope, AL 35760  
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### On the Cover:



Half Pint's Donut Shop owner Heather League says the small business has grown tremendously since opening in New Hope a year ago. See story Page 8.

# Street cleaning .....

The New Hope Lions Club volunteers, early walkers and "Adopt a Block" volunteers walked the streets and ditches picking up litter for the April 2019 street cleaning. Over 800 bags of litter were collected. The event organizer and facilitators of this community project would like to recognize and thank you for helping make this special day possible and for the improvement to our community.

The support from our community made this happen. Please support our local businesses as they support you. To learn more, contact Ava W. Cambron at 256-723-4695 or 256-479-0184 or any Lion neighbor.

The Lions Club would like to thank the following businesses for their support and donations:

- |                                   |                               |                              |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| • ALFA                            | • Greg's Used Auto            | • New Hope Pharmacy          |
| • All Star Pools                  | • Galen's                     | • New Hope Grocery           |
| • Baker's Hardware                | • Grandmother's House         | • New Hope Family Dentistry  |
| • Betty's Boutique                | • Half Pint's Donut Shop      | • New Hope Funeral Home      |
| • Brown's Wrecker Service Inc.    | • Hardee's                    | • New Hope Telephone         |
| • Burger King                     | • Hi-Tech                     | • Old Vienna Bakery          |
| • Cadence Bank                    | • Hornbuckle Barbershop       | • Perfect Timing Bar & Grill |
| • Citizens Bank                   | • Hound Dog Motors            | • Piggly Wiggly              |
| • Click Construction              | • Howard's Trophy Shop        | • Pit Stop Beverage          |
| • Cooper's Small Engine           | • Hubbard's Tire              | • Royal Roosters             |
| • D & M Automotive                | • JT Smith Contracting        | • Shell Food Mart            |
| • Dennis Martin - Averbuch Realty | • Natural Products            | • Stapler Construction       |
| • Donnie's BBQ Corner             | • Julia's Hair Care           | • Stapler's Furniture        |
| • Dot's Dairy Den                 | • LBC/Discount Tobacco Outlet | • Subway                     |
| • El Paso                         | • Liberty Kim's Food Shop     | • Styles by Beverly          |
| • Extreme Vaping                  | • Madison County Dist. 3      | • Tara Graphics              |
| • First & Last Chance Beverages   | • Masters Car Wash/Cleaners   | • Wavaho                     |
| • G & G Pizza                     | • New Hope Auto Sales         | • W&W BBQ                    |
|                                   | • New Hope Buildings          |                              |



Enjoy Music at the Gazebo every Monday in May, June and July from 6-8 p.m., weather permitting. The Gazebo is at 5496 Main Drive, New Hope. For more information contact Dennis Martin at 256-658-1457.

## SCHEDULE:

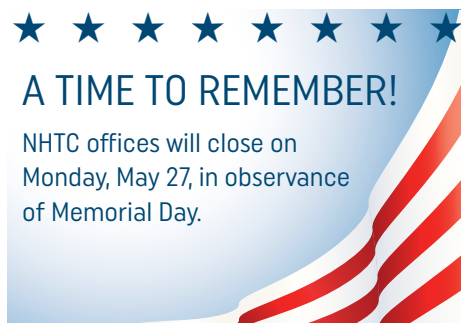
- May 6 — Double Barrel Band
- May 13 — Leon Venerable
- May 20 — Stone Wall Mountain Band
- May 27 — Steve Helton and the Flint River Boys
- June 3 — Glory Echoes
- June 10 — Leon Venerable
- June 17 — Steve Helton and the Flint River Boys
- June 24 — Alex Brown
- July 1 — Josh Fuell and the Grant Mountain Boys
- July 8 — Snake Oil Duo
- July 15 — Harmony Sound Pickers
- July 22 — Songwriters night
- July 29 — Double Barrel Band

Free hot dogs, chips and drink provided by the City of New Hope on July 29, the final night of the season.

## Fresh and local Owens Cross Roads Farmers Market is open for business

The Owens Cross Roads Farmers Market is a perfect place to buy locally grown fruits, vegetables, herbs and flowers. Shoppers can also find fresh eggs, baked goods and crafts. Farmers can conveniently sell produce locally to friends and neighbors.

The farmers market is open to local vendors from May 1 until Sept. 28, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 6 p.m. On Saturdays, the market is open from 8 a.m. until 1 p.m. The market is located at 9032 Highway 431 S. in Owens Cross Roads. Yard sales and solicitation of live animals are not allowed. For selling guidelines and more information, please contact the Owens Cross Roads town clerk at 256-725-4163.







# Seagoing majesty

## Visit the centers working to protect sea turtles

BY ANNE BRALY

**S**ea turtles are some of the most majestic, long-lived animals in the ocean. However, hundreds of thousands of them die each year after being tangled in fishing nets and other man-made gear. They also suffer as a result of climate change, lack of food, contaminated seas and other hazards.

They're among the most imperiled groups of animals that swim our seas, says Dr. David Steen, a research ecologist at the Georgia Sea Turtle Center in Jekyll Island, Georgia. If the baby turtles can make it to adulthood — which is an accomplishment in itself, as most perish before they reach that critical stage — they can live for decades and reproduce many times.

“This offsets the high mortality they experience in early life,” Steen says. “But the big problem arises when adults experience higher death rates than normal. It’s tough for populations to recover.”

The Georgia Sea Turtle Center is one of several such centers located in coastal states around the South. It opened in 2007 and has educated hundreds of thousands of visitors on the hazards sea turtles face, as well as the important role they play in our ecosystem.



Crowds gathered for the release of a sea turtle on Jekyll Island, Ga., which is home to the Georgia Sea Turtle Center.

Photos courtesy of the Jekyll Island Authority.





Conservation efforts are helping to increase the number of loggerhead sea turtle nests in Georgia.

The center is a one-of-a-kind experience, Steen says. Visitors can learn about sea turtles in an interactive learning center, peer into a hospital window to see turtles being treated by a veterinarian, and stroll through a pavilion to view turtles as they are rehabilitated in tanks. And during the nesting season, which runs from May to July, visitors can join educators and researchers on night searches for nesting sea turtles.

Educating the public about the importance of sea turtle recovery is a focus of the center's mission.

"If your ecosystem has missing pieces, there will inevitably be cascading effects, many of which we can't even predict," Steen adds. "There are many philosophical, ecological and spiritual reasons one might consider when discussing why we need to save sea turtles, but there are legal reasons, too. All sea turtles are protected by the Endangered Species Act, and that means we must work to recover their populations."

The effort appears to be working, as the number of loggerhead sea turtle nests in Georgia is gradually increasing, Steen says. "Their numbers are increasing due to a variety of individuals, agencies and organizations in the region, and also because of the state and federal legislation like the Endangered Species Act that protects them." 🐢

## See more sea turtles

### IN SOUTH CAROLINA:

**Zucker Family Sea Turtle Recovery at the South Carolina Aquarium**  
100 Aquarium Wharf, Charleston, S.C.

Online: [scaquarium.org](http://scaquarium.org)

Zucker Family Sea Turtle Recovery allows guests who visit the South Carolina Aquarium to experience and learn about sea turtles. It's both a hospital and a guest experience, making the real-life rehabilitation of sick and injured sea turtles visible to all guests through windows into the surgical suite. Experience a turtle's remarkable journey from rescue to rehabilitation and release.

To date, the South Carolina Aquarium has returned 265 rehabilitated sea turtles to the ocean.

### IN FLORIDA:

**Navarre Beach Sea Turtle Conservation Center**  
8740 Gulf Blvd., Navarre, Fla.

Online: [navarrebeachseaturtles.org](http://navarrebeachseaturtles.org)

The Navarre Beach Sea Turtle Conservation Center is a small operation with a giant mission to educate the public and protect the beautiful turtles that call the Gulf of Mexico home and nest on its white-sand beaches. Visitors to the center can see Sweet Pea, a green sea turtle that cannot be returned to the wild due to her injuries. Also, guests can take a virtual "journey" through Northwest Florida to learn about the region's natural resources and the importance of protecting coastal and marine ecosystems critical to sea turtle survival.

### IN NORTH CAROLINA:

**Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Rescue and Rehabilitation Center**  
302 Tortuga Lane, Surf City, N.C.

Online: [www.seaturtlehospital.org](http://www.seaturtlehospital.org)

Hundreds of loggerheads, leatherbacks, ridleys and green sea turtles come to the beaches of North Carolina to lay eggs before returning to the Atlantic Ocean, leaving thousands of hatchlings to potentially emerge and follow their instincts toward the sea.

Visitors to the Topsail Beach area can visit the Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Rescue and Rehabilitation Center to learn about turtles' lives from beach nest to the sea and the center's effort to improve their odds of survival.

The center offers tours to the public during the warm months, beginning in April.

Sea turtles are also visible at all three North Carolina aquariums, which are involved in rescue, rehabilitation and release.

- **The Aquarium on Roanoke Island on the Outer Banks features a Sea Turtle Rescue exhibit.**
- **Visitors to the Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores on the Crystal Coast can follow the journey of loggerhead sea turtles in the Loggerhead Odyssey exhibit.**
- **In the Wilmington area, The Aquarium at Fort Fisher features turtle exhibits and Turtle Talks at the adjacent Fort Fisher State Recreational Area.**

# SWEET TREATS

## Local donut shop filling orders

BY LISA SAVAGE

**B**its of fresh-chopped bacon top the donut's maple-flavored frosting. Sausage and gravy fills one of the kolach pastries. Bacon on a donut or gravy inside a pastry might seem a little unconventional, but these treats are some of the favorites out of more than three dozen selections at Half Pint's Donut Shop.

Heather League fulfilled a dream when she opened the donut shop in New Hope a year ago. Now, soup and sandwiches for lunch add more variety to the menu. League teamed up with her neighbor, Scott Bond, a chef who has worked all over the world, to come up with the unique donut and pastry selections like apple fritters, red velvet donuts and, of course, chocolate-covered and cream-filled selections.

The Roberto, a donut filled with cream cheese and caramel and sprinkled with cinnamon sugar, is one of the most popular treats. They came up with the concoction while experimenting with new combinations.

"It was a happy accident," League says.

Kolaches — filled with meats, eggs and cheese — make a savory option for breakfast.

### DREAMING OF DONUTS

League worked at a donut shop when she was growing up in St. Louis. "It was a little hole in the wall, but it was one of the busiest holes in the wall you've ever seen," she says. It was her dream to one day have her own thriving small business. A donut shop seemed like a good fit for



Half Pint's Donut Shop owner Heather League has a platter of cinnamon rolls ready for the display case.

New Hope because there were no other similar small businesses, she says.

She and Bond moved to the same neighborhood on the same day in 2008. When League met Bond, he worked as the banquet manager at the Von Braun Center, and she worked in accounting for a government contractor. They talked about the venture for years but didn't open until May 2018.

With their combined backgrounds, they thought the donut shop would work. League owns the business but depends on Bond's baking expertise. He makes almost all the frostings, fillings and pastries from scratch, as well as soups, sandwiches and salads made from scratch.

The shop has produced large orders for the local school and has filled a large cupcake order for a city function. "With a little notice, we can do about anything," League says. Business has steadily increased, and word of mouth plays a big role in attracting new customers.

Videos on Facebook, which is an important advertising tool, show Bond making the dough and pulling the treats from the fryer. Others showcase some of the decorative touches on the tasty treats. "So many chain stores now bring in the products frozen, but we take pride in making ours from scratch," League says. "I think it makes a difference in a small, locally owned business like ours." 📺

### HALF PINT'S DONUT SHOP

10160 U.S. Highway 431 S.

New Hope

6 a.m.-2 p.m. Monday through

Thursday and Saturday.

6 a.m.- 5 p.m. Friday.

256-723-9866

Visit Half Pint's on Facebook for daily specials and additions to the menu.



# Move over — It's the law

## Utility workers now included in the Move Over law

BY LISA SAVAGE

Sometimes, workers can feel the breeze on their faces as a vehicle speeds through a work zone. That's too close for comfort, says Dave Ramski, engineering manager at NHTC. He oversees the crews that often work alongside the area's highways.

The risks go through a lineman's mind when working on the side of the highway. "It's dangerous," he says. "If drivers take their eyes off the road for just a couple of seconds, whether it's texting or using the radio, it's a dangerous situation."

When vehicles do not slow down in a work zone, the drivers often appear to be distracted, Ramski says. To make its trucks more visible, NHTC installed amber flashing lights.

### FOLLOW THE LAW

Now, Alabama has added utility vehicles such as NHTC work trucks to the state's Move Over law. When Alabama adopted the law in 2006, it applied to emergency vehicles with blue or red flashing lights. The state added any vehicle with flashing amber lights last year. Drivers are required to move over when possible and slow down when they see these vehicles.

In rural areas, it's not always possible to move over, says Curtis Summerville, public information officer for the Huntsville district of the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency.



The changes in the Move Over law make it safer for crews at NHTC.

If drivers cannot move over, they must slow down if they see utility crews or other emergency crews with flashing lights alongside the roadway. "They're required to get over if it's safe," Summerville says.

If the speed limit is above 30 mph, speed must be reduced by at least 15 mph

below the speed limit. For speed limits of 30 mph or less, drivers must reduce their speed by 5 mph.

"This is important for the safety of our utility workers and other emergency workers such as law enforcement and emergency responders," Summerville says. 📞

### DON'T BECOME A STATISTIC!

- In Alabama, a traffic crash was reported every 200 seconds in 2017.
- There have been over 800 roadside crashes in the past five years.
- Distracted driving is one of the top four causes of crashes with fatalities or injuries.
- Speeding is the top contributing factor in fatal crashes.
- Distracted driving includes more than texting. Lack of concentration can dull a person's powers of observation and cause an incident that could have been avoided.
- A texting driver is 23 times more likely to be involved in a crash than a non-texting driver.
- A new law in Alabama prohibits using a wireless device to write, send or read a text message, instant message or email while operating a motor vehicle.
- For fatal crashes where seat belts were available, almost 60 percent of fatalities were unrestrained — buckle up.

Source: 2017 Alabama Crash Facts, a publication of Drive Safe Alabama.



# Bringing Economic

# HOPE

Broadband networks recharge rural communities

BY JEN CALHOUN

When Bud Layne engineered a new design for conveyor belts back in 1989, the internet was hardly a thought in most people's minds. Relatively few had heard of it, and even fewer used it. So, as technical as his Glasgow, Kentucky-based company may have been, internet access didn't matter.

"But all that's changed. Today, the Span Tech CEO and founder depends on high-speed internet from his local rural telecommunications cooperative to send engineering design files across the world in the time it takes to sip coffee.

Without that kind of access, Layne couldn't sell his conveyor belts to multi-national food producers like Kraft. He also couldn't employ between 80 and 90 people in a town of less than 15,000. "Every design layout we do has to be redone, on average, five times," he says. "All this stuff moves back and forth digitally over our network. These are some big drawings I'm talking about."

Rural-based companies like Span Tech are still an exception, however. The U.S. Census Bureau's 2016 American Community Survey found that only 17 percent of businesses operate in rural communities, defined as nonurban towns of fewer than 50,000 residents and sparsely populated

High-speed internet allows Span Tech, a conveyor system manufacturer, to transfer engineering designs across the world.



regions. The number of companies working in rural areas, however, could increase if high-speed internet networks continue to appear in all regions of the country.

## GOING COUNTRY

Entrepreneurs are taking note of rural success stories, according to a June 25, 2018, story from the business website Fundra.com. Survey data from the 12 Federal Reserve Banks found that rural communities outperform urban centers on many metrics of successful entrepreneurship.

"Rural businesses are smaller and grow

more slowly, the data from the Small Business Credit Survey shows," the article says. "But they're also more likely to be profitable than their urban counterparts and have longer survival rates. Plus, entrepreneurs in rural areas have an easier time getting business financing, which is an important factor in scaling a business."

Small and large companies have either popped up in rural regions across the country or, like Span Tech, stayed put thanks to expanded digital access. One example is Above All Aerial in rural Minnesota. The company uses drone technology to



help farmers across the country scout crops and provide damage assessment. Another is Big Tex Trailers, based in Mount Pleasant, Texas. With a workforce of about 2,000, it serves clients throughout the United States and as far north as Western Canada. Also, a U.S. Army veteran turned his love of pop culture into his business, Tennessee Toys and Comics, in a town of about 5,000 people. Now, he sells to collectors around the world.

### THE HIGH COST OF DIGITAL DARKNESS

If high-speed internet access fails to expand in rural areas, however, jobs and the economy can't grow, says Wally Tyner, an agricultural economics professor at Purdue University. Tyner is one of the authors of a detailed 2018 policy brief that shows the economic benefits gained from installing broadband networks in rural areas of Indiana. Through intensive research, Tyner's team found that the economic benefits outweighed the costs of fiber networks at a ratio of 4:1.

"I always like to ask my audience this question when I'm presenting this policy brief: 'Is there anybody in this room who thinks rural electrification was a bad idea?'" Tyner says, referring to the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 that offered low-cost government loans to rural electric cooperatives so people outside of the nation's cities could have access to safe, reliable and affordable electricity.

The answer, Tyner says, is always no. "I don't care how conservative or how liberal you are. No one will say it was a bad idea, even though it's the government getting involved," he says.

Without the initiative, large areas of the country — as well as millions of people — could have gone without electricity for decades, leaving them literally and figuratively in the dark as their city-dwelling counterparts progressed without them.

So what does this have to do with high-speed internet access? Everything, says Tyner, who headed a detailed 2018 policy brief that shows the economic benefits gained from installing broadband networks in rural areas of Indiana.

The Purdue brief found that if rural communities can access the type of broadband networks available in larger cities, there will be more jobs, more industry, better education, more medical opportunities and a host of other benefits.

And while installation of this kind of fiber optic equipment is expensive, the result is that the fiber networks end up paying for themselves many times over. "Today, the economy runs on digits," Tyner says. "If you're on the other side of the digital divide, you're up that creek without a paddle. It's really important for rural areas to have." 🗨️

## Digital dollars

It's no secret that almost every business and government entity relies on high-speed internet. Farms, manufacturing firms, schools and cottage industries depend on the internet for everything from relaying and retrieving information to marketing and sales. But high-speed internet also brings money to local, state and federal economies. The Hudson Institute, a research organization, released a report in 2016 called "The Economic Impact of Rural Broadband." The report found that rural broadband providers across the country directly added \$24.1 billion to the states in which they operated in 2015 alone. Of this, \$17.2 billion was through their own operations and \$6.9 billion was through the follow-on impact of their operations, the report says.

### ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF THE RURAL BROADBAND INDUSTRY BY STATE IN 2015

Alabama	Kentucky	South Carolina	Tennessee
<b>DIRECT IMPACT</b>	<b>DIRECT IMPACT</b>	<b>DIRECT IMPACT</b>	<b>DIRECT IMPACT</b>
\$241 million	\$312 million	\$618 million	\$532 million
<b>INDIRECT IMPACT</b>	<b>INDIRECT IMPACT</b>	<b>INDIRECT IMPACT</b>	<b>INDIRECT IMPACT</b>
\$87 million	\$102 million	\$230 million	\$247 million
<b>TOTAL IMPACT</b>	<b>TOTAL IMPACT</b>	<b>TOTAL IMPACT</b>	<b>TOTAL IMPACT</b>
\$328 million	\$414 million	\$848 million	\$779 million
<b>EMPLOYMENT</b>	<b>EMPLOYMENT</b>	<b>EMPLOYMENT</b>	<b>EMPLOYMENT</b>
1,014 jobs	1,239 jobs	2,725 jobs	2,606 jobs

→ Source: The Hudson Institute's "The Economic Impact of Rural Broadband," 2016.

Brooks Barfield and his daughters, from left, Natalie Barfield, Stephanie Barfield and Nicole Jones.

# FIBER AND PHARMACIES

Keeping up with technology at Grant Pharmacy

BY LISA SAVAGE

**B**rooks Barfield used a manual typewriter to label prescription bottles back in 1966 when he first became a pharmacist and bought Grant Pharmacy.

“It was an old Royal, and I typed all the labels and wrote the charges for the prescriptions on a pad,” he says. Times have changed since then. “The internet has allowed us to do a great deal more than we ever could before,” he says. “There’s no way we could have the business we do without it.”

Although technology has changed, Barfield says the close-knit family business, with its dedication to the community, has not. Barfield doesn’t spend as much time at the pharmacy as he once did. He leaves those operations to his daughter, Nicole Jones.

## CELEBRATING 53 YEARS

Barfield, originally from Georgia, had a scholarship to play football for coach Bobby Bowden at Howard College near Birmingham. By the time Barfield graduated from pharmacy school in 1966, the college had become Samford University. He had a job at a drugstore in Birmingham making \$200 a week, but he had a dream of owning his own drugstore. He asked a salesperson passing through if he knew of any drugstores with an opening for a pharmacist and an opportunity for him to eventually buy the store. The salesperson told Barfield about Grant Pharmacy. Barfield interviewed and was hired for the job.

Three months later, he bought the store, a 2,400-square-foot building. Four years later, he moved the store to the shopping center across the street and doubled the space. In 1979, when the IGA grocery store next door burned, Barfield purchased that space, took down a wall and expanded the drugstore to 10,000 square feet.



Brooks Barfield started the Grant Pharmacy in 1966.



**“The internet has allowed us to do a great deal more than we ever could before. There’s no way we could have the business we do without it.”**

**—Brooks Barfield, owner of Grant Pharmacy**

Barfield added a few employees when he moved to a larger building. He hired Becky Chandler Tucker while she was in high school. She later went to pharmacy school and returned to the store as a pharmacist in 1976. Her brother, Scottie Chandler, also worked at the drugstore while in school, and their mother ran its snack bar for several years. Barfield went on to purchase New Hope Pharmacy, in 1994, and Tucker and Chandler transferred to that location. Chandler is part owner with Barfield at New Hope Pharmacy and Chandler still works there. It’s where Tucker worked until she passed away in 2002.



**Michele Barfield Atchley**  
passed away two years ago.

“We had internet for the first time before Becky left,” Barfield says. “But it wasn’t as sophisticated as it is now.” Barfield’s oldest daughter, Michele Barfield Atchley, followed in her father’s footsteps, graduated from Samford University and became a pharmacist. She was also involved in much of the technology transition. She worked until she became sick and passed away two years ago.

Jones, the youngest of Barfield’s four daughters, graduated from Samford and returned to the store to work as a pharmacist in 1993. “All I’ve ever known is the internet,” Jones says.

### **TIMES HAVE CHANGED**

These days, pharmacies operate much differently than they used to, relying on the internet for just about everything. They have a system that tracks automatic refills and accepts prescriptions online. Insurance companies authorize prescriptions immediately, and pharmacists can stay up to date on changing drugs.

The fast broadband internet reduces the time it takes to transmit claims to insurance companies. The system will automatically send a notification if an insurance company doesn’t cover a particular drug. “We file insurance claims in real time, and sometimes we are the bearer of bad news when a drug isn’t covered by insurance,” Jones says.

Many doctors now send e-prescriptions to the pharmacy. This practice saves a lot of time for the patient and the pharmacy. “It’s much more efficient now,” Jones says. “We can fill the prescription, and by the time the patient gets here, it is usually ready to pick up.”

Before, the customer had to take a prescription to the pharmacy and then wait while staff filled it. That meant the pharmacist also had to read the paper prescription and make sure the drug was in stock before filling the prescription. The online system reduces the risk of an error because pharmacists don’t have to decipher handwriting. “We’re very customer-oriented, so that’s important to us,” Jones says. “We can also place our drug orders online, which means if we have to special order a drug, we receive it the following day.”

The system can also automatically detect when a prescribed drug might interact with a drug the patient already takes. “An antibiotic might have an interaction with heart medication,” she says. “Not everything is filled at our pharmacy, because of mail order, and that helps with duplications that could be dangerous.”

### **TRACKING PRESCRIPTIONS**

Pharmacies can also access Alabama’s online databases that monitor controlled-substance prescriptions, as well as databases of other states. “We’re required to upload information to the database about any controlled substance we fill,” Jones says.

All pharmacies send in the information daily, and the database allows doctors and pharmacists to look at the report. Considering the opioid addiction crisis, it’s an important tool to make sure people are safe. It helps detect when someone seeks an opiate prescription from a doctor and then pursues the same prescription from a different provider within a certain time period in a practice known as “doctor shopping.” It also alerts pharmacists if different pharmacies have filled a particular prescription. The system sends an alert in this case, and the second pharmacist will know not to fill a prescription. “Before, we had no way to track it,” Jones says.

In addition to owning Grant and New Hope pharmacies, Barfield also owned Barfield Health Care in Guntersville until it sold in July 2018.

His daughters, Stephanie Barfield, controller, and Natalie Barfield, a registered nurse, both worked at Barfield Health Care and now work at Grant Pharmacy.

“It just worked out,” Jones says. “With the loss of Michele, it’s even more special that we’re all here, working together.”



**Pharmacist Nicole Jones** enters a prescription as her father, Brooks Barfield, stops by for a visit.

# The beautiful simplicity of hummus

A few basic ingredients create a healthy favorite

**H**ummus is proof that the best things in life are often simple. “I make mine with garbanzo beans, lemon, salt, tahini and some olive oil. That’s it,” says Solomon Babylon, owner of Babylon Gyros in Richmond, Kentucky. “It’s really the tahini — sesame paste — that makes it.”

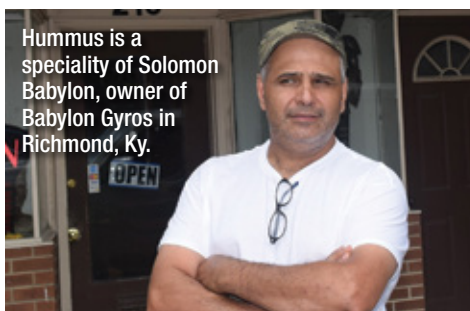
Since opening his restaurant 10 years ago in the charming home of Eastern Kentucky University just a few miles south of Lexington, Babylon has seen a marked increase in the amount of hummus he prepares daily. He serves it as a dip with whole rounds of grilled pita bread or as a garnish for falafel.

“It’s interesting,” he says. “In the 1980s, it was Chinese food. In the ’90s, it was Mexican. In the early 2000s, it was Indian food. There were Indian restaurants everywhere. But now, in the 2010s, people have started turning to Middle Eastern food.”

Hummus includes lots of good nutrients, such as calcium, folate, fiber, healthy fats and magnesium. When it comes to good-for-you ingredients and foods to make our lives better, hummus is a tasty option. “You go into any grocery store and see hummus all over the place,” says Babylon, a native of Jordan.

At the eatery in downtown Richmond, though, hummus is made from scratch. The restaurant goes through about 50 pounds of dried garbanzo beans every week, and Babylon makes hummus three to four times daily, Monday through Saturday. “I make it batch by batch, every two to three hours,” he says.

Though his restaurant serves traditional hummus only, Babylon says there are a number of ingredients you can add to it. “One of the best I’ve ever had is avocado hummus,” he says. “But there’s eggplant hummus and others. You can add spinach



Hummus is a speciality of Solomon Babylon, owner of Babylon Gyros in Richmond, Ky.

to it, red peppers. But remember, you can’t be stingy with the tahini. Tahini makes the hummus. Taste as you go.”

And, he advises, if the recipe calls for it, be sure to add enough lemon. You want a slightly sharp edge to your hummus.

“And you know what’s one of the best tastes you’ll ever have?” he asks. “Hummus topped with rice. Hummus is a base for anything you might want to put on it. That’s why I serve hummus with whole pieces of pita. That way, people can tear off a piece of pita, spread some hummus on it and add some gyro meat or shawarma (roasted meat cooked on a spit and shaved) and make a sandwich.”



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

## TRADITIONAL HUMMUS

- 3 cups dry garbanzo beans, soaked overnight
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 3/4 cup tahini paste, or more, to taste
- 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice, or more, to taste
- Salt, to taste
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil, for drizzling

Rinse the beans and place in a pot. Fill with enough water to cover by at least 1 inch. Allow to sit overnight. Drain beans. Then add water to cover by at least an inch. Bring to a boil; then reduce heat and simmer over medium heat until the beans are very soft, 1 to 2 hours.

Drain the beans, reserving some of the water to use later. Transfer the beans to a blender and blend the beans until smooth, adding 1/2 cup of olive oil gradually. Add some of the reserved water if needed to help it blend. Add the tahini and blend in along with the lemon juice. Add salt. Taste and correct seasonings, adding more tahini, lemon and salt, as needed.

Spread the hummus into a flat serving dish and garnish with a drizzle of olive oil. Serve with pita bread, pita chips, carrots, celery, cucumbers or a combination of any or all of them.

## AVOCADO HUMMUS

*When in a pinch, Solomon Babylon uses canned garbanzo beans, but he recommends using the best you can find, preferably beans from Turkey.*

- 1 (15-ounce) can garbanzo beans, well-rinsed and drained
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 1/2 tablespoons tahini, or more, to taste
- 3 tablespoons fresh lime juice



## Traditional Hummus



Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

- 1/8 teaspoon cumin
- 2 medium, ripe avocados, cored and peeled
- Red pepper flakes, for garnish

In a blender or food processor, pulse garbanzo beans, olive oil, tahini and lime juice until smooth, about 2 minutes. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Add cumin and avocados and pulse mixture until smooth and creamy, 1-2 minutes longer.

Serve topped with more olive oil and sprinkle with red pepper flakes, if desired. Serve with pita or tortilla chips.

### RED BEET HUMMUS

- 2 pounds red beets, scrubbed (about 2 large beets)
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 2 tablespoons ground coriander
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2-1 cup tahini, or to taste
- Kosher salt

Heat the oven to 425 degrees. In an oven-proof Dutch oven, cover the beets with water and bring to a boil on the stovetop. Then keep covered and braise in the oven for about 2 hours, until very tender. Use a knife or fork to test for tenderness.

With a slotted spoon, transfer the beets to a cutting board. When cool enough to handle, slip off the skins and cut the beets into small, 1-inch pieces, spread them on a baking sheet and refrigerate until cold, about 1 hour.

In a food processor, combine the braised beets with the garlic, coriander and lemon juice and pulse until finely chopped. With the food processor on, slowly drizzle in the olive oil until incorporated and the beet puree is smooth. Scrape into a bowl and whisk in the tahini. Season with salt and serve with pita bread or pita chips. 🍷



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# 2019 ANNUAL MEETING

## MAKE PLANS TO ATTEND THE 2019 NHTC ANNUAL MEETING!

**WHEN:** Tuesday, May 21 • Voting begins at 5 p.m., with the business meeting starting at 7:30 p.m.

**WHERE:** New Hope Middle School gymnasium

**ENTERTAINMENT:** Josh and Judy Allison

**DOOR PRIZES:** Door prizes will follow the business meeting.

**BOARD ELECTIONS:** Place 6 incumbent Calvin Bearden, Place 7 incumbent Jeffrey Cantrell and Place 9 incumbent Garland Elders

*Bring your admittance ticket and a valid photo ID to participate in the board elections.*



*Come join us for*  
**MUSIC, FOOD, FUN AND PRIZES!**

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