

CONNECTION



Drink to your health

Creek Nutrition
in Paintsville

CAPITAL TRIP

COMFORT FOOD



By Shirley Bloomfield, CEO
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

An Ongoing Mission

NTCA supports rural broadband

As we begin a new year, our NTCA members are on my mind, specifically how they do so much to create a better tomorrow by deploying and sustaining reliable broadband networks that connect rural communities to the world.

We've come a long way since the creation of NTCA in 1954, and I wanted to start 2025 with a reminder—or possibly an introduction—to who we are and how we serve the people who work so hard for you.

We represent about 850 independent, family-owned and community-based rural telecommunications companies. Without NTCA members, many communities would continue to be left behind by larger, national internet providers. So, we strive to advance policies that help these companies close the digital divide. This includes supporting programs like the Universal Service Fund, which helps rural consumers get and stay connected to high-quality, affordable internet.

I'm proud to note how well our NTCA members do their jobs. The robust and reliable broadband they provide enables businesses to connect to customers, doctors to patients and teachers to students. And the work they do in their communities goes beyond providing internet service. Many host digital literacy classes, sponsor STEM and esports initiatives at schools, support economic development initiatives and so much more.

In short, NTCA members are dedicated to improving the communities they serve.

As we enter a new year, we continue to support our members as they work to make your lives the best they can be. 🗨️

HIDDEN CONNECTIONS

BROADBAND NETWORKS SUPPORT YOUR COMMUNITY

Your fast, reliable internet connection connects you to the internet, bringing you a seemingly endless number of services. Whether you enjoy streaming entertainment, gaming, video calls and more, this essential service adapts to your needs.



Did you know, however, that same network may also underpin a range of other services essential to your community? While the specifics may vary from place to place, fast internet networks create a foundation for rural America.



PUBLIC SAFETY

The communications systems serving first responders often rely on broadband-speed internet.



EDUCATION

School systems send large amounts of data and offer classrooms access to online resources.



GOVERNMENT

From informational websites and apps to the computer networks and databases needed to operate, local governments require excellent connectivity.



HEALTH CARE

Whether transmitting medical records or for telehealth visits, medical providers increasingly rely on digital tools.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Fast broadband networks provide a community resource attractive to both businesses and homebuyers, creating a keystone for growth.

A Safe Place to Stay

Isaiah House provides comfort for foster children



Photo courtesy of Corey Paulson

Television host Mike Rowe, center, surprises Isaiah 117 House co-founder Ronda Paulson and her family for a taping of his Facebook show “Returning the Favor.”

Story by MELANIE JONES

When Ronda and Corey Paulson met their first foster child at the back door of the Carter County, Tennessee, Department of Children’s Services, he was wearing too-small pajamas. The clothes he was wearing when he was removed from his unsuitable home were filthy, and DCS was unable to provide any that fit him properly.

The 9-month-old was fortunate the couple could come get him quickly. Some foster children spend hours—if not days—at overwhelmed and understaffed DCS offices, sometimes sleeping on the floor.

That situation has begun to change, however, thanks to a far-reaching program the Paulsons were inspired to establish in 2018. Thanks to word of mouth and a 2020 feature by “Dirty Jobs” host Mike Rowe on his Facebook page, their effort is spreading nationwide.

When the couple took the baby boy, Isaiah, home they lavished him with love and everything else an infant could need. But the Paulsons couldn’t stop thinking about something they learned in their

foster-parenting classes—the DCS office is usually the only place for a child to go on removal day.

They thought of little Isaiah. And they started studying the Bible’s book of Isaiah, including part of one verse in particular, Isaiah 1:17, which calls on people to “take up the cause of the fatherless.”

Then they thought, “What if there was a home?” Corey says.

BUILDING A MOVEMENT

So, that’s what they set out to create. Ronda put together a board and worked with the local DCS office to come up with a workable concept. They raised money, bought a house and renovated it to DCS specifications. They painted the door red, and they called it Isaiah 117 House.

The house provides space for DCS workers who now bring children there instead of an office building. Children and teens have access to baths and showers. They get brand-new clean clothes and

toys. They have beds to sleep in if the placement takes more than a few hours. Volunteers cook them nutritious meals and comfort food.

That was 2018, and it was supposed to be one and done. “Clearly, we’ve learned that God had other plans,” Corey says.

Word of mouth spread. Soon neighboring Tennessee counties wanted their own Isaiah 117 Houses. Then, in 2020, Ronda and the Isaiah 117 House were featured on Mike Rowe’s Facebook show “Returning the Favor.” Two million people saw that episode on March 9, 2020. Then the calls really started coming in. Corey says they heard from people in 41 states and four countries wanting to start their own Isaiah 117 Houses. Now about 30 are open and more are in the works across 12 states.

“On March 13, the world shut down,” Corey says of the COVID-19 pandemic. “But our mission kept growing. We say Mike Rowe and Jesus are building houses for children.” 📺

LEARN MORE

Interested in learning more about Isaiah 117 House or how to establish one in your area? Visit isaiah117house.com.

New Foothills Website Makes Life Easier

Convenience is just a click away

As we step into the new year, Foothills is making it easier than ever to stay connected, save money and manage your services—right at your fingertips. Whether you're looking to upgrade your internet speed, customize your TV package or streamline your payments, our newly enhanced website is here to make it happen! Let's explore some of the advantages of managing your account online.



ANDREA FERGUSON
Marketing Coordinator

CUSTOMIZE AND UPGRADE

With just a few clicks, you can now adjust your internet speed to meet your needs—from lightning-fast browsing for work or school to seamless streaming for gaming or movie nights. Want to add more channels to your TV package or remove channels you no longer watch? You can log on to your account anytime and do just that. With these new improvements, the capability to customize your services is in your hands.

MANAGE PAYMENTS WITH EASE

Do away with the hassle of mailing checks or waiting in line to make last-minute payments. Our website allows you to make secure, convenient payments any time, day or night, with a credit/debit card or your checking account. Plus, you can sign up for autopay and never worry about missing a due date again. Toss that paper bill and receive your electronic statements straight in your inbox. It's quick, simple and keeps you on top of your budget.

BUNDLE AND SAVE BIG IN 2025

With the new year comes new opportunities to save. Now's the perfect time to consider bundling your services. By combining internet, TV and phone you can unlock significant savings and enjoy the convenience of one single monthly bill. With rising costs everywhere, bundling is a smart way to keep more money in your pocket while still getting the best service this area has to offer. Our new and improved website makes it easy to explore bundling options and calculate your savings, all with a few clicks.

At Foothills, we're committed to keeping our community connected with technology that fits your lifestyle. Whether you're managing your services or looking for ways to save money, our updated online features are designed with your convenience in mind. Here's to a new year with new beginnings and a whole new way to stay connected! Visit foothills.net to see the latest updates and to create your online account. [🔗](#)



CONNECTION

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2025

VOL. 12, NO. 1

The Foothills Connection is a bimonthly newsletter published by Foothills Communications, ©2025. It is distributed without charge to all customers of the company.



Foothills is a member-owned cooperative that has been serving residents and businesses in Eastern Kentucky since 1951. In the early days, we only offered telephone service over copper wires. Over the years, we have expanded our network and now provide broadband internet and cable TV services over fiber optic facilities to much of our service area, which includes Magoffin, Johnson and Lawrence counties, as well as parts of Boyd and Carter counties and Prichard, West Virginia. We love being part of the communities we serve. Our customers are our families, friends and neighbors.

Foothills Communications
P.O. Box 240
1621 Kentucky Route 40 West
Staffordsville, KY 41256
www.foothills.net
606-297-3501
Toll Free: 888-262-3782

Foothills Mission Statement

"To provide the latest in communications at affordable prices with exceptional service."

Produced for Foothills Communications by:



On the Cover:



Terry Trimble owns Creek Nutrition in Paintsville, which sells energizing teas and shakes.

See story Page 12.

Photo courtesy of
John Michael Laney

FOOTHILLS
COMMUNICATIONS

**PAY EASY
FAST AND
SECURE WITH
AUTO PAY**

**AND SAVE \$1 ON YOUR
MONTHLY BILL WHEN
YOU SIGN UP FOR
E-BILL!**



CALL 606-297-3501

Need help paying for services?

Lifeline assistance may be an option for you!

You are eligible for Lifeline benefits if you qualify for and receive one of the following benefits:

- SNAP
- Medicaid
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Federal Public Housing Assistance
- The Veterans Pension or Survivors Pension benefit
- Meet income requirements

DO YOU QUALIFY?

Apply today!

To find out whether you qualify for Lifeline assistance, please visit checklifeline.org or call 800-234-9473.

Tired of robocalls?

The Do Not Call Registry can help reduce the number of unwanted telemarketing calls you receive.

Learn more at donotcall.gov, or call **888-382-1222**. You must call from the telephone number you wish to register. For TTY, call 866-290-4236.



MAKE A

Valentine's Day CONNECTION

WE'RE NOT LIKE THE OTHER GUYS.

OUR BROADBAND IS THE SWEETEST!



606-297-3501
foothills.net

Roll Out the Red Carpet

Fans play key role in film festivals' success

Story by KATHY DENES

The new year brings film fans front-row access to the latest—possibly greatest—in movie entertainment. Surprising plot twists, emotional turbulence, enlightenment, wild outdoor adventures, horror, invasions from space and even close encounters with celebrities are all in store. The 2025 film festivals are ready for their close-up.

These festivals in communities large and small offer great destinations. There's something for everyone. For example, the Lookout Wild Film Festival is a staple in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

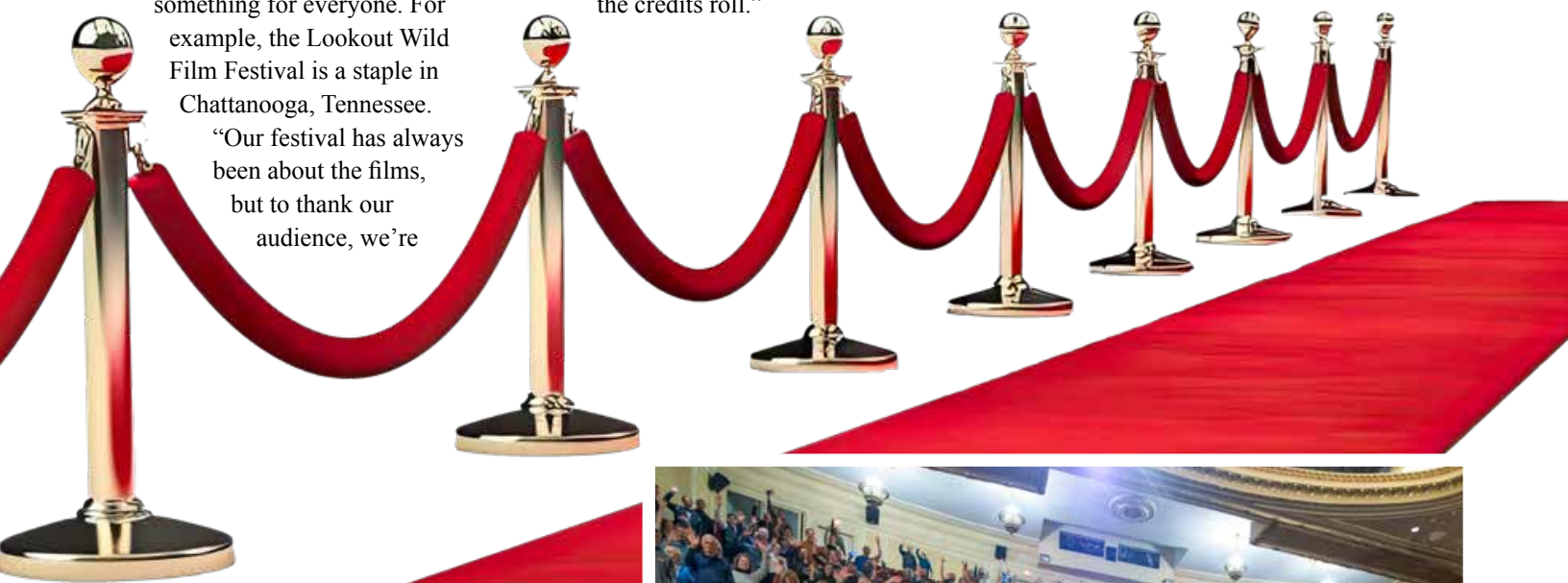
“Our festival has always been about the films, but to thank our audience, we’re

trying to bring in more of the festival aspect,” says Steve Rogers, event director for Lookout Wild Film Festival. “It’s about creating a welcoming and inclusive festival culture. You get to be in a room where every person around you shares a love for adventure and the craft of storytelling. Exploring amazing locations, cheering for stunning visuals and tearing up at touching moments become shared experiences that stay with you long after the credits roll.”

FAN FOCUS

Almost every film festival relies on fan participation. Screenings and special events are typically open to the public.

Fans at film festivals often rub elbows with industry insiders, filmmakers and actors as they get an inside look at the movies and topics that will shape the entertainment scene in the coming year. They also get to see impactful projects that



Festivalgoers pack a Chattanooga venue for the Lookout Wild Film Festival.

REGIONAL FESTIVAL FARE

The Lookout Wild Film Festival, Chattanooga, Tennessee: The festival season in the Southeast starts out on the wild side when this returns to Chattanooga, Jan. 16-19, for its 13th year. The festival welcomes guests to its new venue, The Signal at the historic Choo Choo complex, to screen films capturing the thrill of outdoor adventures and the importance of environmental conservation. Live music is thrown in for good measure before screening sessions and during intermissions. Find details on the festival focused on "wild places and the people they inspire" at lwff.org.

The Chattanooga Film Festival, named after its host city: The festival is June 21-28 at the historic Read House. The films are a treat for fans of horror, and the festival touts itself as a summer camp for cinephiles. Actor and producer Elijah Wood won the Moonstruck MoonPie Eating Contest back in 2015.

The Southern Fried Film Festival, Huntsville, Alabama: This festival combines independent film, music and technology.

The Lindsey Film Fest, Florence, Alabama: The University of North Alabama hosts the Lindsey Film Fest, Feb. 27 to March 1. Created in 1988 by George "Goober" Lindsey of "Andy Griffith Show" fame, the festival is free.

The Beaufort International Film Festival, Beaufort, South Carolina: The festival returns Feb. 18-23 for its 19th run. Last year fans saw actor Gary Sinise receive the Pat Conroy Lifetime Achievement Award as the festival celebrated the 30th anniversary of "Forrest Gump." Beaufort served as a backdrop for the film.

Cosmic Holler Film Fest, Ashland, Kentucky: An out-of-this-world experience is guaranteed. This one-day fall film festival at the Paramount Arts Center is a celebration of all things science fiction. Last year's festival kicked off with a visit from Capt. Kirk himself, William Shatner.

may never make it to their neighborhood theaters. But beyond that, fans meet people with similar interests, making the festivals social events involving much more than just cramming in as many screenings as possible.

Finding a great festival to attend is easy—they are plentiful. One great resource for starting your search is filmfreeway.com.

HIT THE MARK

A festival's website is the best resource to find everything from ticket availability to screenings info, schedules, parking and even lodging. Online ticket sales for the public often start well in advance, and popular festivals can sell out quickly.

A great option for the adventurous film buff is to sign up as a festival volunteer. Many festivals are staffed by volunteers, and even the largest festivals rely heavily on volunteer workers. Duties range from greeting patrons and taking tickets to helping at evening parties. Volunteers often reap the rewards such as free admission and sometimes even access to industry professionals.

Another option is to become a member of the organization putting on a festival, which can bring year-round benefits. Some festivals also offer members the option of in-home streaming of films throughout the year, while others have affiliations that provide discounts at movie theaters throughout the country.

Once at the festivals, attendees can easily navigate their many options through schedules continually updated on the event's website or even through an app. Take, for example, the Sidewalk Film Festival, which will take over the Historic Theatre District in downtown Birmingham, Alabama, Aug. 18-24. Spread across about a dozen venues, it offers more than 200 film screenings, plus educational and Q&A sessions. To help attendees stay on track, the festival's website, sidewalkfest.com, has maps and an interactive schedule. 📱



Outdoor adventure gets top billing at the Lookout Wild Film Festival.

Photos courtesy of LWFF



WASHINGTON AWAITS

Youth Tour offers students the experience of a lifetime

Story by JEN CALHOUN and ANDREA FERGUSON

Foothills Communications is thrilled to announce it is now accepting applications for the 2025 Foundation for Rural Service Youth Tour.

Founded 30 years ago, the Youth Tour is a program that brings 100 rural students from all over the country for an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C. During the weeklong event students will meet with government officials and legislators, develop leadership skills, learn about the importance of the internet in rural communities and visit many of the sites Washington has to offer.

Rural telecom companies like Foothills Communications pay for the students to attend the fun and educational event. Foothills is expected to select two outstanding students from its coverage region.

Last year, the cooperative chose Johnson Central High School students Joshua Fitchpatrick and Kylie Castle to attend based on their academic achievements, community involvement and keen interest in public service and rural broadband, says Andrea Ferguson, marketing coordinator at Foothills.

“We were so proud to have Joshua and Kylie representing our community and our cooperative,” Andrea says. “They not only got a firsthand look into the challenges surrounding rural broadband access, but they were also able to join their peers from across the country to tour the city, learn about the legislative process and engage with key political figures. Foothills has been a strong supporter and advocate for rural broadband access, and we were honored to sponsor these students on a trip of a lifetime!”



ABOVE: From left, Joshua Fitchpatrick, U.S. Rep. Hal Rogers, Kylie Castle and Foothills Marketing Coordinator Andrea Ferguson. Joshua and Kylie were both students at Johnson Central High School when Foothills chose them to represent the cooperative.

LEFT: Students from all over Kentucky pose for a picture outside the U.S. Capitol building. The students participated in the 2024 Rural Service Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., last summer. The free trip gave them a chance to learn resume-building leadership skills, meet with national leaders and tour the nation's capital city.

The trip included visits to landmarks like the Lincoln Memorial, the Washington Monument, Arlington National Cemetery and Mount Vernon. Students also got to visit the U.S. Capitol and the Federal Communications Commission.

Joshua and Kylie also met with U.S. Rep. Hal Rogers, who serves Kentucky's 5th Congressional District. The district spans parts of Southern and Eastern Kentucky, including Johnson, Lawrence and Magoffin counties.

During the visit, the students were able to talk to the congressman about the issues that affect them. They also learned about how the legislative process works and why it's important for regular citizens to get involved in the political process.

Kylie says she learned some important lessons. "Reaching out to elected officials and advocating for policy changes is vital," she says. "More people need to understand that rural broadband is not merely a luxury but a necessity in our lives."

Joshua says he was excited to visit the capital city to learn more about the nation's history and his part in it. "It was something I'd always dreamed of," he says. "I went hoping to bring back knowledge that could help our community grow. I am sincerely thankful I got the opportunity." [📄](#)

LEAD, LEARN & EXPLORE

APPLY TO WIN A FREE TRIP TO WASHINGTON, D.C.

The Foundation for Rural Service will host the 2025 Youth Tour from June 2-6 in Washington D.C. For 30 years, the annual event has offered high school students a chance to visit the nation's capital, form friendships with teenagers from all over the country and meet with national leaders.

During the weeklong event, 100 students will get the chance to develop leadership skills and sightsee at some of the capital's most culturally significant places. They'll also learn about legislation that shapes the internet and broadband infrastructure—both of which impact all of us every day.

WHAT IS THE FOUNDATION FOR RURAL SERVICE?

The Foundation for Rural Service, or FRS, is a nonprofit established by NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association. FRS supports rural telecom companies like Foothills by providing policymakers with information on the importance of, and the challenges inherent in, providing broadband services to rural communities. The mission of FRS is to sustain and enhance the quality of life in rural America through philanthropic and educational programs. The organization's vision is to harness the power of rural broadband telecommunications to enrich lives in America.

WHAT DOES THE TRIP INCLUDE?

Students selected by Foothills will receive free round-trip airfare, four nights' hotel accommodation, three meals a day, bus transportation to all activities, admission to ticketed events

and a Youth Tour T-shirt. Excursions may include the Lincoln Memorial, the U.S. Capitol, Mount Vernon, Arlington National Cemetery and a play at the Kennedy Center. In addition, students will get the chance to interact with other high schoolers from all over the country during activities and programs. Students taking part in the Youth Tour will be under the supervision of chaperones and FRS staff at all times.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE?

Students must be high school students, age 15, 16 or 17 at the time of the tour, who live in the Foothills service area and who have a parent or legal guardian who subscribes to one of Foothills' products such as broadband, telephone or TV.

HOW DO I APPLY?

Visit foothills.net and click "News" to submit an application. **Deadline is Feb. 15.**

A SMOLDERING SITUATION

Volunteer fire departments face dwindling numbers, aging workforce



Illustration by Adobe Stock

Story by MELANIE JONES and JEN CALHOUN

When a crisis strikes in a rural community, the first people on the scene are usually friends and neighbors who sacrifice their time and safety because they want to help, not to draw a paycheck. They put out the fires. They drive the rescue vehicles. They save lives.

According to the National Volunteer Fire Council, nearly 19,000 of the nation's 29,452 fire departments are all-volunteer, and the number of volunteers has been shrinking. In 2020, the number of volunteer firefighters reached a record low. On top of that, more than half of those volunteers in smaller departments are aged 40 or older, and 34% are 50 and older.

That doesn't mean older firefighters can't get the job done, says Steve Hirsch, NVFC chairman. At 62, Steve is the training officer of the fire department in Sheridan County, Kansas. He recalls a man once asking him the age of the oldest firefighter in his department. He told the man 93. The man laughed and said, "No, I mean the age of your oldest firefighter that's still responding to calls." The man was shocked when Steve again replied, "93."

"But you know, that was out of a station that might get one or two calls a year," he said. "He'd grown up in that area his entire life. He knew where every hole and every gate was in his neighborhood. He wasn't out there pulling hose or doing entry, but he was able to drive a pickup. It worked out nice."

A HEALTHY MIX

Steve doesn't believe older firefighters are a bad thing. He sees the importance of having all ages.

"We can't let the fire department get all old," he says. "Nothing wrong with a good mix. That's pretty important. But we still have to have young people to get out there and do the work. Is there a safety factor in having everybody that's older? Probably, because

the older we get, the more likely we are to have heart attacks and other health issues."

Depending on the state, county or even the fire district, firefighters may not have to meet physical requirements. "A lot of places, they're hard up enough for people that if you've got a pulse, you're probably qualified," Steve says.

Not all volunteer fire departments are having trouble recruiting younger volunteers, however. The Vincent Volunteer Fire Department in Owsley County, Kentucky, maintains a squad of 17 or 18 members between the ages of 25 and 55. That's not too bad for a small, unincorporated community in a county of about 4,000 people.

"It's hard to find younger people, because a lot of times, the tradition just doesn't carry," says Capt. Billy Long, who heads the department. "There's just not a lot of involvement with it. But here lately, we've had a lot more involvement with the community. It's been good this past five, six, seven months."

BENEFITS AND SACRIFICES

Billy, who is 41, understands the benefits and the difficulties of becoming a volunteer firefighter. On the one hand, the job is rewarding, especially in a small town like Vincent. "You get to know everybody," he says. "Also, the involvement—it can open up other doors. I've been a volunteer firefighter since 2002, and I've also been an EMT for 12-13 years now."

But it's also a tough, time-consuming job. "I guess a lot of it is the time, the effort, the training," Billy says. "You've got to attend training every year. It's a lot of effort to do something without pay."

Steve says his best recruitment tool is his existing firefighters. He also says his department is probably the only one in a

“A lot of places, they're hard up enough for people that if you've got a pulse, you're probably qualified.”

—Steve Hirsch, chairman of the National Volunteer Fire Council

Photo courtesy of Steve Hirsch



National Volunteer Fire Council Chairman Steve Hirsch has been training firefighters for 25 years.

Photo by Adobe Stock/Teerapong23

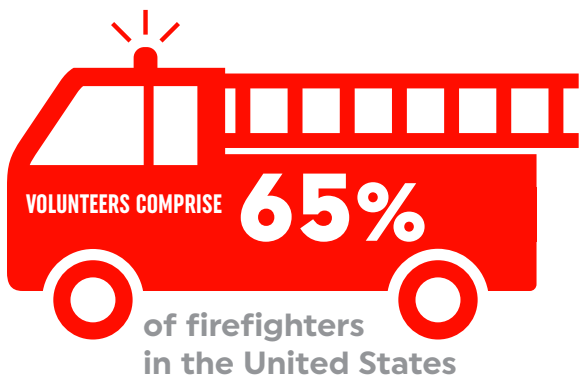


multicounty region that has an aerial ladder. Park that on the street, and people start coming in. Being active on social media is a good way to recruit younger people, he says. But having a good attitude is a big part of it.

He hears a lot of negative comments about the younger generation, how they're always on their phones. “What I find is, most of the time, they're checking to make sure that I know what I'm talking about, and that's OK,” Steve says.

It's important to keep recruiting, he says, because we can't let the fire departments die.

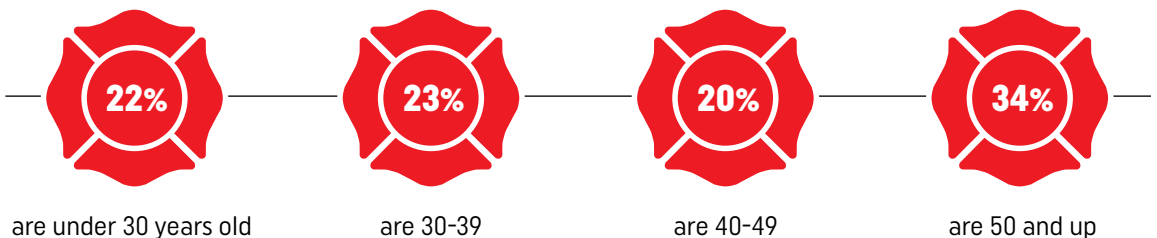
“What is a community going to do when they don't have a fire department?” he says. “That's probably the newest, biggest building in that town of 80-some people. People use that fire station for all sorts of events in the community. A lot of our small towns have lost their school, they've lost their grocery store. A lot of them have lost their banks. Some of them don't have cafes anymore. So that fire department becomes the glue that binds that community together. And, you know, you lose one more glob of glue, and pretty soon, things just fall apart.” 📱



The number of volunteer firefighters reached a record low of **676,900** in 2020

200% Increase in call volume in the last 35 years

The volunteer fire service is an aging population. In communities under 2,500:



Source: National Volunteer Fire Council

Tea-riffic!

Paintsville shop finds dedicated following

Story by JEN CALHOUN



Terry Trimble, owner of Creek Nutrition in Paintsville, displays some of her drinks loaded with supplements.

When Terry and Randy Trimble moved their store, Creek Nutrition, from Jefferson Avenue to Broadway Street in November 2023, they didn't lose a single customer. "Oh, they found us," Terry says with a laugh. "They hunted for us."

The shop sells teas, shakes and iced coffees that include added supplements like vitamins, protein powders, collagen, electrolytes and more. They also sell the products in dry form for customers to make at home. "Listen, if I'm going to be closed, they will come in and get their dry teas to make at home," Terry says. "They don't like to go without their teas. We all love them."

A SHOP IS BORN

The shop in Paintsville got its start in 2020 after a couple from Oklahoma wandered into Randy's hair salon, Backstage Hair Productions, carrying a box of energy teas and some questions about local real estate. "They were getting ready to move into a retail store in Paintsville, but there were some problems with permitting in that location," Terry says. "They wanted to know if there was anywhere else they could go."

Randy, who is now retired, knew the space next door was available, but his contract didn't allow him to sublet. "They said, 'Well, how about we partner up?'" Terry says. "Randy thought it might be something I'd want to do, because I had just retired. So, he called me and asked."

When she tried the different products, she loved them. Tea flavors include everything from peach, green apple, pomegranate, lime and cherry to cranberry ginger ale and strawberry watermelon.

Flavors aside, Terry says she was most impressed with the changes she saw in her body. "I had a lot more energy," she says. "Also, the protein shakes can double as meal replacements. I immediately started dropping pounds."

TAKING CARE

Once word caught on, Creek Nutrition gained a fast following. "We stay busy and are very blessed," she says. "People always want to get a protein shake or energy tea. They can add supplements like electrolytes, collagen and protein—just all these supplements that you can add in."

Popular drinks include those with supplements for pre-and post-workouts, weight loss and more. "I have a sheet with the menus, and they tell all the add-ins that can go into the teas," she says. "Two or more products is called a tea bomb. It costs a little more, but most people level up when they buy a tea."

Terry believes the popularity of the shop has everything to do with a cultural boom in fitness and health-consciousness. Nearly 60% of Americans reported using dietary supplements of some kind, according to a survey conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 2017-18. Other studies and surveys show that number to be as high as 74% in 2023.



The shop gives guests a comfortable space to lounge.

“People are more interested in their health these days,” Terry says. “Everybody’s excited about the energy these products give them. Plus, everything we sell is sugar-free and fat-free, which is rare. People really love it.”

COMMUNITY-FORWARD

In 2021, Terry took over the business, and her former partners moved back to Oklahoma. Today, the shop is known for its relaxed and happy atmosphere.

In addition to the retail shelves loaded with supplements, the space offers comfortable seating, free Wi-Fi through its Foothills Communications fiber broadband connection and colorful menu boards.

“I try to change out the menus every season,” Terry says. “I offer different flavors and fun names. Sometimes people will come in and say, ‘Have you ever tried this?’ If I haven’t, I’ll create a tea and put their name on it.”

She also works hard to give back to the community by sponsoring school sports teams and various other activities. In addition, she holds a monthly contest for the store’s Facebook followers to vote for their favorite local businesses. Terry tallies the votes, then delivers free teas to each of the winning business’ employees.

Social media, she says, has been an important part of interacting with customers, growing her business and developing deeper connections with the community. “The community has been so good to us, and we try to give back to them just as much,” Terry says. “It’s just been a wonderful experience.”

TASTE FOR YOURSELF

Creek Nutrition in Paintsville sells energizing teas, shakes and vitamin supplements, including everything from protein powders and collagen to electrolytes. It’s at 221 Broadway St., Ste. 5. Normal hours of operation are 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday. For more information or to see the latest menus, visit the Creek Nutrition 606 Facebook or Instagram pages.



Creek Nutrition in Paintsville sells flavorful teas and shakes with supplements like protein and energy boosters.

Photos courtesy of John Michael Laney

All the Comforts of Home

Classic trio's widespread appeal endures

The definition of comfort food depends on your region. In the Midwest, it might be a bubbly hot dish just pulled from the oven. In the Southwest, comfort may come in the form of a steaming bowl of chili, while Southerners might look toward biscuits and gravy with a side of grits.

Three simple dishes, however, bring together the entire culinary country—tomato soup, a gooey grilled cheese sandwich and a warm slice of apple pie with a scoop of vanilla ice cream.



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

CREAMY TOMATO SOUP

- 4 tablespoons butter
- 3 cups yellow onions, finely chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 (28-ounce) cans tomatoes
- 2 cups chicken stock
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh basil or
1 1/2 tablespoons dried basil, plus
more to serve
- 1 tablespoon sugar, or to taste
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black
pepper, or to taste
- Dash of Worcestershire sauce
- 1/2 cup heavy whipping cream
- 1/3 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Heat a nonreactive pot or enameled Dutch oven over medium heat. Add butter, then add chopped onions. Sauté

10-12 minutes, stirring occasionally, until softened and golden. Add minced garlic, and sauté 1 minute until fragrant.

Add crushed tomatoes with their juice, chicken stock, chopped basil, sugar, pepper and a dash of Worcestershire. Stir and bring to a boil then reduce heat, partially cover with lid and simmer 10 minutes.

Use an immersion blender to blend the soup in the pot or transfer to a blender in batches and blend until smooth—being careful not to overfill the blender with hot liquid—then return soup to the pot over medium heat.

Add heavy cream and grated parmesan cheese and return to a simmer. Season to taste with salt and pepper, if needed, and turn off the heat.

Ladle into warm bowls, and top with more parmesan and a sprinkle of basil.



GROWN-UP GRILLED CHEESE

Makes 4 sandwiches

- 3 tablespoons butter, divided
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 yellow onions, diced
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 teaspoon fresh thyme or 1/4 teaspoon dried
- 2 teaspoons fresh rosemary or 3/4 teaspoon dried, divided
- 1 teaspoon brown sugar
- 8 slices artisan sourdough bread
- Mayonnaise
- 12 ounces Gruyere cheese, grated at room temperature
- 6 ounces sharp white cheddar cheese, grated at room temperature
- 4 thin slices Muenster cheese, at room temperature

Add 1 1/2 tablespoons butter and olive oil to a skillet and heat over medium-low heat. Add diced onions, salt, pepper, fresh thyme and 1 teaspoon of fresh rosemary to the hot skillet and saute about 10 minutes, stirring often, until onions are soft and

starting to brown. Stir brown sugar into the onions and cook another minute. Transfer onions to a plate.

For each sandwich: Spread one side of two pieces of bread with a little bit of mayonnaise.

To the same skillet, add remaining butter and rosemary and heat over medium heat. Add both pieces of mayonnaise-coated bread, mayonnaise side down, and cook until bread is golden brown and crunchy, 2-3 minutes.

As soon as you add the bread to the skillet, add a bit of cheese to the top of each piece. Once it starts to melt a little, sprinkle a couple tablespoons of the caramelized onions over the top of one of the pieces of bread.

When the bread is golden brown, sandwich the pieces of bread together and cook on low heat until the cheese is fully melted. Transfer to a plate and repeat with remaining slices of bread and ingredients.

GRANDMA'S SIMPLE APPLE PIE

- 1 double-crust pie pastry
- 1 large egg, beaten
- Filling:**
- 6-7 cups apples, about 2 pounds
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon nutmeg



Preheat the oven to 425 F. Peel the apples and cut them into quarters. Remove the core and slice the apples 1/4-inch thick.


In a large bowl, combine the apple slices with lemon juice, sugar, flour, cinnamon and nutmeg. Toss apple mixture well and set aside.

Roll out half of the pastry dough into a 12-inch circle. Line a 9-inch pie plate with the dough and fill it with the apple mixture.

Roll out the remaining dough and cover the apple filling. Pinch the edges to seal, trimming any excess. Style the edges as desired by crimping or pressing with a fork.

Cut four to five slits on top of the crust to allow the steam to release. Whisk the egg with 2 teaspoons of water or milk and brush over the crust.

Bake at 425 F for 15 minutes, then reduce the temperature to 375 F and continue baking for another 35-40 minutes or until the crust is golden and the apples are tender.

Remove from the oven and let rest for at least 30 minutes before serving. Serve with vanilla ice cream, if desired. 



P.O. Box 240
1621 Kentucky Route 40 West
Staffordsville, KY 41256

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
HILLSBORO, OR
PERMIT No. 66

The background of the advertisement is a photograph of a tall, metal lattice cell tower on the left side. The tower is silhouetted against a sky with soft, orange and pink hues from a sunrise or sunset. In the distance, rolling hills are partially obscured by a thick layer of white mist or fog. The overall mood is serene and expansive.

Building a Legacy of **INNOVATION**

The logo for Appalachian Wireless features the word "Appalachian" in a large, blue, serif font. Above the letters "A" and "h" are stylized, blue and grey wave-like lines that resemble radio signals. Below "Appalachian" is a horizontal line, and underneath that line, the word "WIRELESS" is written in a smaller, blue, all-caps, sans-serif font.

Appalachian WIRELESS

An **East Kentucky Network** Company

www.appalachianwireless.com