

WK&T

MAY/JUNE 2025

CONNECTION

Foreign Relations

Local farmer hosts international visitors

HIGH-TECH FARMING

PLAY BALL!



By Shirley Bloomfield, CEO
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

The Journey to Connectivity


NTCA members create broadband networks so fast and reliable that it's easy to take for granted the effort and expertise needed to bring these services to homes and businesses. These professionals do amazing work, particularly when considering the intricate, multi-step journey to build, expand and maintain a network.

It begins with detailed research and careful planning. The broadband provider must learn exactly how many homes and businesses might want service, as well as the challenges posed by the landscape. Then, a thorough review of the numbers determines if the project makes financial sense. It's a puzzle where the pieces are population density, infrastructure costs and potential demand for the service.

Then there's the engineering—design, build and inspect. Detailed maps identify routes for cables, permitting, environmental regulations and access to land. Some of these projects can take two to four years from the first engineering drawing to the first connection.

The work doesn't stop when the network goes live. These networks require maintenance, technology upgrades and customer support.

These networks are lifelines connecting rural communities to telehealth, education, remote work and cutting-edge technologies. With the help of service providers like yours, we're building broadband to last and ensuring no community gets left behind in our increasingly digital world.

To learn more, check out the Foundation for Rural Service and JSI's latest report, "Delivering Broadband From Beginning to 'End,'" at frs.org/delivering-broadband-beginning-end. 



Safe Searches

Tips to avoid scams

When you need information fast, a quick check of Google is often the first stop. In fact, some people find it easier to search online for everything, including the addresses for a specific website like a bank, trusted repair service or health care provider.

Unfortunately, scammers know this, too, so they sometimes create bogus sites with addresses confusingly close to the real thing.

Google is aware of this trend, and it touts advanced systems that keep users' search results 99% spam-free. The company also offers a few tips for closing the final security weaknesses.

- Pay close attention to the URL—the specific web address—before clicking any unfamiliar link. Typically, in an email, hovering the cursor over the address will show the complete link. Don't click the link if it looks suspicious.
- The three dots next to the search results in Google can be used to find more details about the webpage, store or business you're considering. You can find clues indicating if the site is legitimate before clicking the link.
- When you're looking for official resources, watch out for unusual address formatting. For example, there's typically only one correct customer service number for a larger company. But not all businesses have customer service numbers, and searching for them requires you to be mindful. Watch for strange formatting in the website address, including unexpected symbols or emojis.

A Rockin' RECIPE

Hannah Dasher cooks up an online storm



Performer Hannah Dasher created a countryfied niche for herself on social media.

Photo courtesy of Jeremy Ryan Photography

Story by BRANDI DIXON

Hannah Dasher is a blast of classic country and rock 'n' roll paired with social media influencer. Stepping into the home she calls "Honky-Tonk Graceland" and features on her social media is, as Hannah says, like going back in time to "your meemaw's house."

"Avocado green canisters, gold salt and pepper shakers, brass pots. I love my retro kitchen, and I love that the fans feel right at home," she says, adding that she enjoys entertaining.

Music and songwriting are Hannah's first loves. "I was rehearsing my acceptance speech for best new female vocalist of the year in my mirror at age 10," she says. "I grew up listening to '90s country radio, and knew I wanted to be an entertainer."

Hannah pursued music professionally, taking her big hair and a heaping helping of Southern charm to Nashville, Tennessee. She started out writing songs for other artists, getting some big accolades thanks to collaborations with Brad

Paisley, Lainey Wilson and Ian Munsick, to name a few. She continued performing whenever she had the chance.

STAND BY YOUR PAN

In 2020 during the pandemic, Hannah found herself stuck. "All the stages shut down, and I needed a stage," she says. "Talking with some friends I learned a lot of girls my age couldn't cook, so I stumbled into the world of social media, and it was the perfect storm."

Hannah took to TikTok to share her

family's beloved recipes and a few of her own, all while sprinkling in a bit of her signature rockin' country flavor. The recipe produced the now-viral Stand By Your Pan social media accounts. More than 1.5 million followers join Hannah daily in her retro kitchen.

"I love that this brought country and noncountry music fans together," she says. "It's hard to pigeonhole into just one world, and I'm glad that I can be this representative of the past and the future via a semicelebrity chef." 🗨️

ALL THE RIGHT INGREDIENTS

When Hannah Dasher isn't cranking out content, she's picking up a guitar and writing music.

"God always sends it from the left side of the sky and out of my mouth," she says of her process. "Sometimes it's melody and lyrics simultaneously, but you just never know, and you always have to be looking for it."

Hannah is on the road this year with her band on The Wanted Tour, featuring stops across the United States, the United Kingdom and Sweden. She encourages fans to spread the word and come see her and her "boys."

The True Cost of Fiber Cuts

More than just repairs

WK&T takes great pride in delivering reliable, high-speed fiber internet to our members. Whether working from home, attending virtual classes, running a business or simply streaming your favorite shows, you rely on our network to keep you connected. But many people don't realize how fragile that connection can become when someone starts digging without taking the proper precautions.



KAREN JACKSON-FURMAN
Chief Executive Officer

Across our service area, thousands of miles of fiber optic cable run underground, connecting homes, businesses and essential services to our world-class network. This infrastructure is carefully installed and maintained to withstand the elements, but one threat can't be completely avoided—accidental damage caused by digging.

Each year, WK&T responds to multiple incidents where fiber lines are cut by individuals, contractors or utility crews who dig without first calling 811. It might be someone installing a new fence, planting trees or even working on a driveway or patio. Whatever the project, failing to locate buried utilities before digging puts our fiber—and your neighbors' connections—at serious risk.

When a fiber line is cut, the effects are immediate. Homes lose internet, businesses lose access to payment systems and communication tools, students can't complete online assignments, and patients miss telehealth appointments. In some cases, even emergency responders lose connectivity to critical systems. What starts as a simple backyard project can suddenly disrupt life for dozens—or even hundreds—of families.

Restoring service after a fiber cut is a complex, time-sensitive process. Our crews must find the damage, carefully expose the cut line and make delicate repairs to restore the connection. Depending on the severity and location, these repairs can take hours or even days to complete.

But the costs go far beyond time and materials. There's a financial cost for the repair itself, which may ultimately be passed on to the party responsible for the cut. There's also the community cost—lost productivity for remote workers, disruption for businesses and frustration for families trying to go about their daily lives. And perhaps most importantly, there's the potential safety cost if emergency services or telehealth providers are unable to communicate.

The good news is that fiber cuts are completely preventable. By simply calling 811 before starting any digging project, you ensure all underground utilities, including our fiber, are properly marked. This free service takes just a few minutes to schedule but can avoid hours of frustration and thousands of dollars in damage.

WK&T works hard to provide reliable service, but we can't do it alone. Protecting our network is a shared responsibility. Whether you're a homeowner working on a weekend project or a contractor breaking ground on a major development, calling 811 is the law, and it's the right thing to do.

For more information about safe digging practices and the importance of calling 811, visit www.call811.com. Thank you for helping us protect our network, and thank you for being a valued member of the WK&T family. 📞

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CONNECTION

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WK&T
WEST KENTUCKY AND TENNESSEE
TELECOMMUNICATIONS COOPERATIVE

is your cooperative serving West Kentucky and Northwest Tennessee across nearly 24,000 network connections. The company is dedicated to using technology to keep its members connected through local and long-distance calling, high-speed internet, digital television and beyond.

WK&T is an equal-opportunity employer and provider.

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UTILITY RESOURCES

On the Cover:



Local farmer Keith Lowry hosts a group of farmers from Central and South America as they learn about Kentucky agriculture.
See story Page 8.

Photo courtesy of the
Kentucky Corn Growers
Association

WELCOME WK&T'S NEWEST EMPLOYEES



KAILEY BUTLER

Where are you from?
Fancy Farm, Kentucky.

What's your job title?
Sales and customer service representative.

What do you do in your spare time?
I love to go thrifting.

What is your favorite use of technology?
Connecting with people through social media.



EVAN JEFFERSON

Where are you from?
Pennsylvania.

What's your job title?
CAD engineer.

What do you do in your spare time?
I attend car shows during the spring, summer and fall. I also go to the shooting range on the weekends fairly regularly.

What is your favorite use of technology?
Social media and YouTube for learning new DIY projects.

TREVOR BONNSTETTER HONORED FOR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT



During the 2025 NTCA Excellence Awards in February, NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association presented the James L. Bass Manager Life Achievement Award to former WK&T CEO Trevor Bonnstetter.

NTCA recognized Trevor for his 27 years growing the company. WK&T now provides 100% gigabit connectivity to a service area

spanning three states. The award also recognizes Trevor's role in the development of the WK&T Technology Park and helping launch IRIS Networks.

The NTCA Excellence Awards recognize broadband providers who exceed expectations in supporting their customers and community members and advancing communications services in rural America. Congratulations to Trevor for this high honor!





Minor Leagues

MAJOR FUN

Road trip to
baseball's most
entertaining
destinations

Story by JOHN CLAYTON

Ric Sisler admits he misses the annual spring-to-fall marathon of a baseball season. “When it’s in your blood, it doesn’t matter what you’re doing. You’re always going to be pulled toward that industry, and I’m

certainly no exception,” he says. “Going to the ballpark, the camaraderie and being around the yard was just a thrill for me.

“I certainly don’t miss tarp pulls and some of those types of things,”

he says with a laugh, referring to the back-breaking work of getting protective tarps on and off the diamond during rainy weather.

The national pastime is most certainly in Ric’s blood. He played for three

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Marketers and merchandisers will say quite a lot. Creative—some may say outlandish—nicknames, mascots and logos are part of the landscape of minor league baseball. Here are a few of our favorites:

Florida: The Fort Myers Mighty Mussels—The nickname is more about seafood than sinew.

Alabama: Rocket City Trash Pandas—It pairs Huntsville’s role in the space industry with a cute raccoon reference.

Georgia: Augusta GreenJackets—The GreenJackets mascot is

akin to a yellow jacket, but the reference is to Augusta’s long history with The Masters golf tournament, which awards the winner a green jacket.

North Carolina: Kannapolis Cannon Ballers—The alliteration is nice for the team once known as the Intimidators after the late NASCAR star and Kannapolis native Dale Earnhardt Sr., who was then part-owner of the team. The Cannon Ballers mascot, Boomer, has an uncanny resemblance to Earnhardt.

Kentucky: Bowling Green Hot Rods—The nickname gives the team a link to the nearby National Corvette Museum.



Young fans take in a midseason fireworks display from ground level at PNC Field, home of the Scranton Wilkes-Barre RailRiders.

seasons in the New York Yankees minor league system before running several minor league organizations as a front office executive and as vice president/general manager of the independent South Coast League based in Georgia. His father, Dick Sisler, was a Major League Baseball manager and All-Star player, and his grandfather, George Sisler, is enshrined in the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

Ric, who is still involved in athletics as director of corporate sponsorships at Western Carolina University, says many fans of the game come back season after season.

“Minor league baseball has been part of the fabric of our society in a lot of smaller towns,” he says. “It was kind of a binding agent for folks to come watch baseball with their friends and neighbors and just have a wholesome time.”

While the minor leagues are about family fun and community pride to many fans, the game is a balance of business and player development for the teams and their MLB affiliates. The minors have long relied on fan-friendly, creative promotions and player interactions to sell tickets, and all of that comes with an affordable price tag.

“I think people have always gone to minor league games because it’s

affordable,” Ric says. “You had great entertainment and could see some potential big-league players there at

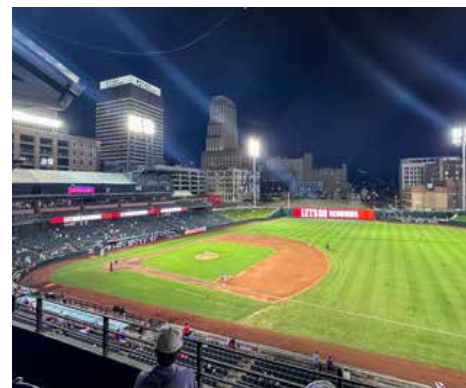


Photo courtesy of Andy Johns

The Memphis Redbirds offer another reason to visit West Tennessee.

an affordable price. You’re very close to the field and close to the players. It was a different setting from the Major League parks. I don’t want to see that change.”

Planning a trip this summer—or maybe even a baseball pilgrimage? There’s a game, sports history and tradition, as well as a bunch of fun waiting for you. 📺

HISTORIC HOME FIELDS

Some of the oldest ballparks in the country are in the Southeast, and three of them are on the National Register of Historic Places.

That list includes Birmingham, Alabama’s Rickwood Field, which is the nation’s oldest professional baseball park still with its original structure. Opened in 1910, two years before Boston’s Fenway Park, Rickwood was home to the Negro Leagues’ Birmingham Black Barons.

The double-A Birmingham Barons play an annual ceremonial game at Rickwood, and Major League Baseball hosted a game between the St. Louis Cardinals and San Francisco Giants at the venerable ballpark last season, a 6-5 Cardinals victory.

Jackie Robinson Ballpark in Daytona Beach, Florida, was the first ballpark to allow the Brooklyn Dodgers’ African American prospect whose name now graces the stadium to play with white players in the segregated South in 1946. The park dates to 1914 and was originally named Daytona City Island Ballpark.

Spartanburg, South Carolina’s Duncan Park was constructed in 1926 and was home to minor league baseball almost continually until 1994. It was also home to the Spartanburg Sluggers, a Negro League minors team from 1928-52. An estimated 21,000 spectators reportedly crowded in and around the ballpark to attend Game 5 of the 1938 American Legion World Series between Spartanburg and Los Angeles.

The 3,000-seat stadium is currently Spartanburg High School’s home field. The city of Spartanburg is building a new stadium for the Hub City Spartanburgers of the South Atlantic League. The city is the new home of the former Down East Wood Ducks of Kinston, North Carolina.

Showcasing

KENTUCKY CROPS

Lowry Farms hosts ag visitors from Central and South America

Story by DREW WOOLLEY

When Keith Lowry and his wife, Rita, heard the Kentucky Corn Growers Association was looking for a family farm to visit with a delegation of Central and South American farmers, they knew Lowry Farms in Pilot Oak would be a perfect fit.

“We’re a sixth-generation farm here in Western Kentucky. Last year was my 50th crop, and this will be number 51 in 2025,” he says. “You can’t get much more family than that.”

The group of roughly 20 farmers and grain buyers visited Lowry Farms on Oct. 10 after attending the U.S. Grains Council’s Export Exchange 2024 Conference in Fort Worth, Texas. In the past, the association took U.S. farmers south to network and make their cases to international grain buyers. But this time the Kentucky Corn Growers team of Laura Knoth, Adam Andrews and Kate Pride wanted to show off the quality of U.S. farming operations.

“I wanted to show them how we, as family farmers, take care of the crop. That we do a good job, we are very efficient and clean, and we keep the quality of the grain high,” Keith says. “All they have to do is call, and we can get it to them. Availability is real important to us.”

The whole Lowry family—Keith, his wife, their four sons and eight grandchildren—welcomed the visiting delegation. One of Keith’s granddaughters handed out goody bags, put together by the Mayfield-Graves County Chamber of Commerce, to all the visitors while everyone enjoyed homemade ice cream and cakes.

“It was a really good little family-oriented time,” Keith says. “We toured the farm and showed them some equipment that is a little bit different and bigger than what they’re used to.”

SHARED LANGUAGE

The delegation included farmers, buyers, general managers and executives from farming operations in Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala and Panama. In addition to Lowry Farms, they made



Photos courtesy of the Kentucky Corn Growers Association

A member of a group of roughly 20 Central and South American farmers takes a closer look at the equipment on Keith Lowry’s farm in October. The visit was organized by the Kentucky Corn Growers Association.

stops at the Green Plains Ethanol Plant, Tosh Farms Feed Mill and Swine Production, Hopkinsville Elevator Co. and farms in Texas. By the time they were done, participants had followed the journey of grain in the United States from the corn farm to distribution and even to a fuel source.

During the visit to Keith’s farm, he highlighted the operation’s grain storage systems they use, sustainability practices and some



Keith shares information about a planter he uses on Lowry Farms.

the help of interpreters and a shared understanding of their work quickly dispelled those concerns.

“I really related to the farmers. It’s odd to have somebody 5,000 miles away with the same goals as I do here on the farm,” he says. “They don’t have so much corn, but whatever we’re growing, we always take pride in what we do.”

LINES OF COMMUNICATION

One advantage Lowry Farms has in running an efficient operation is reliable high-speed internet service from WK&T. With so much modern farming equipment relying on an internet connection to work properly, that service has gone from a luxury to a necessity for many farmers.

“It really helps my operation and any operation because everybody is high-tech now,” Keith says. “In my line of work, when something goes wrong, I need help now. WK&T is just super to work with. I know when I call, they are on the ball. They can take me through any issues step by step, and we don’t have to wait.”

While not every farm in the country has the benefit of WK&T’s service, Keith hopes that visits like this one will spread the word to farmers and buyers throughout North and South America that U.S. farms have the supply, efficiency and quality they need.

“We’re very proud of the crops we raise in the states. And so are the people in the Kentucky Corn Growers Association and the trade people that worked to get this lined up,” he says. “We want them to know that we’re here to help them, and we can get the product to them in a safe manner.” 📞



Keith, left, shows the visitors around his family’s farm.

of the factors that have contributed to improving yields over his 50 harvests. Many of the guests particularly enjoyed seeing some of the large tractors, planters, combines, headers, grain carts and sprayers.

“They were very smart, and they had a lot of questions that I never thought of about our plant system, about our tractors, about our combines and our harvesters,” Keith says. “They have similar equipment but don’t have anything that big down there. They were just a good bunch of people.”

One of Keith’s favorite aspects of the visit was realizing that, no matter where they may be from, farmers have so much in common. Even though he had worried about the language barrier,

LOOK TOWARD THE

Light

Whatever you call them, fireflies mesmerize

Story by **SARA DIAMOND PATTERSON**

Catching lightning bugs in a Mason jar with holes punched in the lid is a summer ritual for kids across the country. Watching their light show together is often a time for families to slow down, which is what Lynn Frierson Faust's family began doing in the Great Smoky Mountains during the 1960s.

They marveled for years at the unique light display, as the flying beetles blinked on and off at the same time for several hours after dark. When Lynn heard the August 1991 edition of *Science News* magazine featured an article on fireflies that blink in unison, she figured she would finally find out why and how they made their magic.

"I remember thinking, 'Oh cool, a lightning bug feature. It'll talk about our light show.' Only it didn't mention one thing," she says. In fact,

the authors said the Western Hemisphere had no species of fireflies that blinked synchronously.

Lynn let them know they were mistaken and invited them to come to the Smokies to see the show for themselves. The scientists did and agreed Lynn was right, lighting the way for her life's work.

'JUST SO DARN FUN'

As "The Lightning Bug Lady," Lynn is internationally known for her research on the ecology and habits of the more than 125 species of U.S. fireflies, helping

THE LOWDOWN

HOW: Fireflies produce their magical flashes through bioluminescence, a chemical reaction.

WHY: Each of the more than 125 species of fireflies in the United States—2,000 worldwide—has a unique signature flash pattern the males use to attract females of their specific type.

WHERE: Everywhere. Many Western species do not flash or fly, but they're out there.

WHEN: Warm summer nights.



AI-generated artwork by Firefly

LEND A HAND

Pesticides and habitat reduction have taken a toll on firefly populations. Maintaining a "wild" area of your yard with a little water, native vegetation and undisturbed soil will make your home more firefly friendly. But the easiest way to help is simply by turning out the lights during their active period. Visit xerces.org or firefly.org for more tips.

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Photo courtesy of Lynn Frierson Faust



A BBC crew takes a break from filming in 2019. Naturalist Lynn Frierson Faust examines equipment she and Mark Zloba, ecological manager at the Edge of Appalachia, use to gather fireflies at the preserve outside of Cincinnati.

to raise awareness of their unique life cycles and importance within ecosystems.

She scrambles to 14 states each year to catch them emerging during their eight-week active season, usually early June to late July. For 18 years, she has been the worldwide go-to on the subject, serving as on-site scientific consultant for BBC Earth, Discovery, National Geographic and other international film crews. Lynn's 2017 book, "Fireflies, Glow-worms, and Lightning Bugs," was the first-ever comprehensive firefly field guide and shared the results of her nearly three decades of research on behalf of museums, universities, state and national parks and nature centers.

"I'm not a scientist per se, but I've done the research, a whole lot of research," she says. "I'm just a regular person obsessed with these and fortunate to have the time and a little knowledge to build on."

Throughout history, fireflies have symbolized hope and mystery, serving as transient reminders that life is fleeting. In some cultures, people see them as their lost ancestors, a sacred connection between the earthly and spiritual worlds.

When she began, Lynn didn't have much research to start with. "There were just a bunch of dusty old scientific papers, but that's about it," she says. "There's just not been that much research done on them since they aren't harmful or helpful to people or crops."

They are, however, a great indicator species for the health of ecosystems. "When they disappear, we have to know why and where to look." And

HERE THEY ARE!

No matter where you are, you don't have to go far to find the magic. You can look for lightning bugs anywhere from your backyard to wildlife management areas or wooded parks, avoiding light pollution and areas that spray for mosquitos.

The Southeast offers the most variety of firefly species. "Generally speaking—and this holds true for almost all living things—as you go south closer toward the equator, you get a greater diversity of species but maybe fewer numbers," firefly expert Lynn Frierson Faust says. "Whereas when you go north in latitude, you get greater numbers but fewer species."

The *Photinus carolinus* species in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park of Tennessee and North Carolina are known for their synchronous flashes. You can see them put on a similar show at South Carolina's Congaree National Park. Thousands of these fireflies emit between five to eight flashes of light all at once followed by eight to 10 seconds of darkness.

Their light shows have become so popular, each year more than 20,000 people enter a lottery drawing at each park for viewing spots during the two-week active period, usually in early June depending on temperatures and soil moisture.

Lynn says they will always serve as a nostalgic reminder of days gone by.

"Lightning bugs are fantastic ambassadors leading people back into nature and to a better understanding of the connectedness of it all," she says. "Plus, they're just so darn fun." 📺

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NAME GAME

Officially known as Lampyridae, worldwide fireflies are called blinkies, glowflies, moon bugs, peeney-wallies, blinkin' bees, hoturu, fire beetles and candle flies. Here at home, "lightning bug" is more common in the South and Midwest, while "firefly" is typically heard in the West and large cities in the East. Some researchers attribute the differences to weather. While lightning is most active in the South and Midwest, the West sees the most wildfires.

THE FUTURE OF FARMING

High-speed internet helps FFA student farm smarter

Story by ELIZABETH GREEN

A Henry County High School student now approaching his senior year, Dallas Bomar has spent years working on his family's farm, learning how precision agriculture can help maximize yields of corn, wheat, soybeans and cotton they grow across their 3,000 acres.

By combining traditional farming techniques with new technology, precision agriculture gives farmers data they can use to operate more efficiently. That includes analyzing the soil composition of their fields and using GPS mapping to determine where to most effectively apply just the right amount of fertilizers and pesticides.

ROOM TO GROW

While precision agriculture technologies like variable rate fertilizer applications and yield monitoring have been around since the 1990s, only 27% of U.S. farms take advantage of them, according to reporting from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

For many farmers, the cost of investing in new high-tech equipment is a major stumbling block. But emerging methods could make precision agriculture accessible to more farmers with technology including:

- Remote sensing drones to provide measurements on crop conditions.
- In-ground sensors that offer near-real-time information on soil temperature, moisture and nutrients.
- Targeted spray systems that use machine learning to spray specific areas.
- Automated mechanical weeders that can avoid damaging crops.

Photo courtesy of the Bomar family



Dallas Bomar, a junior at Henry County High School, helps work his family's 3,000-acre farm.

Dallas, 17, uses precision agriculture applications often. The technology ensures the planter distributes seeds evenly, predicts crop yields in different fields and helps with lime distribution to adjust pH levels. He's used the technology for as long as he can remember, but its benefits really shine through when he compares new machinery to the older equipment he sometimes uses.

"I can tell a difference in how much technology has changed," he says.

BROADBAND MAKES IT BETTER

Broadband is a critical piece in running precision agriculture functions. The Bomar family is looking into technology to reduce the time their grain dryer needs to operate. It runs with the help of their internet service from WK&T, and the technology alerts them if the dryer shuts off.

"Fiber internet can be a game-changer for farmers using precision agriculture methods by providing high-speed, reliable connectivity that supports the transfer of so much data in real time," says WK&T CEO Karen Jackson-Furman. "We at WK&T are proud to play a role in helping our farmers stay connected and using the most up-to-date technology to sustain the agriculture industry."

WK&T is actively expanding its fiber broadband services, bringing high-speed internet to underserved rural areas where new fiber infrastructure can deliver speeds of up to 2 Gigs. As precision agriculture continues its rapid expansion—it's projected to grow about 10% each year through 2033—reliable internet has become essential for modern farm operations and data-driven decisions.

For now, as he finishes high school, Dallas enjoys taking part in the local chapter of the National FFA Organization, which he's been a member of since the seventh grade. His academic agricultural pursuits focus mainly on row cropping, but he also maintains a small herd of cows. 🐄

Call 811 Before You Dig

It protects you and your community



Living Connected

Fiber for the speed of life!



A fiber internet connection opens all kinds of digital opportunities, from taking classes remotely and running a business online to working from home or queuing up your favorite show at the end of a long day. WK&T works hard each day to make sure that service is reliable and affordable for our members. But no amount of planning can prevent outages that happen when fiber lines are accidentally cut.

Every year WK&T responds to multiple incidents where individuals, contractors or other utility crews cut a line because they did not call to have them marked before digging. Digging without first checking for underground utility lines not only runs the risk of interrupting service but it can also result in serious injury. Many utility lines are buried just a few inches below the surface. So, even if you're only planning a small gardening project, it's important to call before you dig.

If you plan to dig on your property, protect yourself and your community by following these simple steps:

Call—Dial 811 two to three days before digging starts to notify your local one-call center of your plans. You can also make a request online at www.call811.com. The

center will then notify any affected utilities in your area.


Wait—Do not start digging until the relevant utilities have had time to respond to your request. On average, it will take the one-call center two to three days to provide you a list of utilities it notified.

Mark—Confirm that all utilities have responded to your request by checking the list provided by the one-call center. Make sure each one has marked any underground lines on your property.

Avoid—Follow the marks provided by

each utility. Avoid digging on any marked ground. If the marks are hidden or disrupted during your work, call 811 to have them re-marked.

Dig—Be aware when you dig. If it isn't possible to avoid digging near the marked areas, consider moving your project to another part of your property.

A call only takes a few minutes but can save you injury, interrupted service and unhappy neighbors. So, the next time you're planning a weekend yard project, call 811 or visit www.call811.com first. 



Adobe Stock photo by Jukov Studios

Experiencing internet issues? LET US HELP!

If you're having any problems with your internet, please call us so we can work through service issues together. We are committed to making your connection an outstanding experience.

Connection Matters



877-954-8748 | www.mywkt.net

Fantastic Frying

Flavorful chicken with the finest sides

Many say munching on piping-hot, crispy fried chicken is a joy like no other. Whether it's juicy white meat from the breast or the wings or the deep, engaging flavors of the dark meat found in thighs and legs, when it comes to fried chicken, most everyone has a preference. But there are a few things that good pieces of fried chicken have in common—the skin must stay on, and it must be crispy.

That's not too much to ask, but it's something that many cooks cannot achieve. There's a knack to it that may take a few extra steps, but the endgame is well worth it.

Serve the chicken alongside a big spoonful of potato salad and finish with a bowl of banana pudding and you have a meal fit for a beautiful summer evening.



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

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

CRISPY FRIED CHICKEN

- 1 (4-pound) chicken, cut into pieces
- 1 cup whole milk buttermilk
- 2 cups all-purpose flour for coating
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 quarts vegetable oil for frying

Dry chicken with paper towels. Put the flour in a large plastic bag. Let the amount of chicken you are cooking dictate the amount of flour you use. Season the flour with paprika, garlic powder, salt and pepper to taste. Paprika helps to brown the chicken.

Dip chicken pieces in buttermilk then, a few at a time, put them in the bag with the flour, seal the bag and shake to coat well.

Place the coated chicken on a cookie sheet or tray, and cover with a clean dish

towel or waxed paper. Let sit until the flour reaches a paste-like consistency. This step is important to ensure that the skin will be crispy and adhere to the chicken.

Fill a large skillet (cast iron is best) about 1/3 to 1/2 full of vegetable oil. Heat until very hot.

Put in as many chicken pieces as the skillet can hold. Brown the chicken in hot oil on both sides.

When browned, reduce heat and cover the skillet. Let cook for 30 minutes (the chicken will be cooked through but not crispy). Remove cover, raise heat again and continue to fry until crispy. Drain the fried chicken on paper towels. Depending on how much chicken you have, you may have to fry it in a few batches. Keep the finished chicken in a slightly warm oven while preparing the rest.



LOADED BAKED POTATO SALAD

- 4 pounds russet potatoes
- 1-2 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 3/4 cup sour cream or full-fat Greek yogurt
- 1/2 cup cheddar cheese
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 12 ounces bacon, cooked, cooled and chopped
- 6 green onions, whites and green parts, chopped

Preheat the oven to 400 F. Place cleaned potatoes on a baking sheet and pierce four to five times with a fork. Lightly coat with olive oil, sprinkle with kosher salt and cook for 50-60 minutes or until easily pierced with a cake tester or skewer. Remove from the oven and let cool for 5 minutes. When cool enough to

handle, peel the potatoes and cut into 1-inch chunks, discarding the potato skins. The potato flesh may crumble and get shaggy, and that's OK—transfer it all to a large mixing bowl. While still warm, sprinkle the potatoes with the apple cider vinegar. Set aside for 15-30 minutes or until the potatoes are cooled.

Meanwhile, cook the bacon in a large skillet or in the oven, drain and let cool. Crumble into bite-size pieces.

In a small bowl, mix the mayonnaise and sour cream. Season with the kosher salt and pepper.

When the potatoes are cool, pour the mayonnaise mix over them with the crumbled bacon, green onion and cheddar cheese. Gently fold the ingredients together. Season with more salt and pepper to taste. Refrigerate for 3 hours up to overnight before serving. Store in the refrigerator for up to four days.

NUTTER BUTTER 'NANA PUDDING

- 8 ounces softened cream cheese
- 1 (14-ounce) can sweetened condensed milk
- 2 (3.4-ounce) boxes instant vanilla pudding
- 2 3/4 cups cold milk

- 8 ounces whipped topping divided
- 1 (1-pound) package Nutter Butter or other peanut butter sandwich cookies
- 5-7 ripe bananas, sliced



In a large mixing bowl, beat the softened cream cheese until smooth. Add the condensed milk and mix until there are no lumps.

In a second bowl, mix the pudding mix and milk together until smooth. Pour the pudding into the cream cheese mixture and mix until completely combined. Fold in half of the whipped topping.

Line the bottom of a trifle dish with a layer of Nutter Butter cookies. Add a layer of banana slices on top of the cookies. Spread a layer of the pudding mixture evenly over the bananas. Repeat 1-3 times, depending on the size of your dish.

Spread the remaining whipped topping on top of the pudding. Cover and chill for at least 4 hours but overnight is best.

Crush a few Nutter Butters on top of the whipped topping immediately before serving. 🍪



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- Graves County High School
- Marshall County High School
- Calloway County High School
- WK&T office in Martin
- Carlisle County High School
- WK&T office at Southern Illinois Electric Co-op

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