BREAKING BOUNDARIES
Fiber brings the world to rural Tennessee

A RICH HERITAGE
Museum features Nobel Peace Prize winners

GADGETS TO GIVE
Your guide to the hottest tech for the holidays
Cybersecurity is everyone's duty

Now that November has rolled around, the time for scary movies, spooky costumes and Halloween parties is over. At NTCA, we also just finished a month-long focus dealing with something just as scary — the cybersecurity threats facing our country.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security declared October as National Cyber Security Awareness Month and November as Critical Infrastructure Security and Resilience Month. The two designations draw awareness to the danger cyber criminals pose to institutions, businesses and individuals, and it underscores the responsibilities of actively protecting our internet-connected systems.

Today, everything from traffic lights to banks to pharmacies relies on the internet to function, and it is crucial we work to keep these systems secure. One vulnerable computer is enough to leave an organization open to cyberattack.

While online criminals are nothing new, they also show no signs of going away. Cybersecurity is a top issue for NTCA, and I know your telco is working hard every day to ensure your network stays safe and secure. From talking with experts around the industry, here are some things consumers can do to help stop cyberthreats:

• Download and install new updates to your computers and mobile devices.
• Create complex passwords and keep them secure.
• Do not download “free” content or programs from non-reputable sites as they often contain dangerous malware.
• Consider a career in cybersecurity. Federal agencies and private firms are constantly hiring in this expanding field.

Before Hurricane Harvey even made landfall, telephone cooperatives throughout Texas were deciding how to support each other. Lines of communication opened directly between telcos, and the Texas Statewide Telephone Cooperative Inc. (TSTCI) helped companies along the coast plan for sharing manpower, equipment and generators.

That spirit of camaraderie is part of the cooperative mission, but it also extends beyond the cooperatives themselves. When YK Communications received a phone call from Matagorda County officials at 4 a.m. the morning of Aug. 28 asking for help setting up an emergency operations center, the telco was quick to offer their own offices as a headquarters.

“The fact that those relationships exist is pretty impressive for YK, but that’s also the kind of story you could have heard anywhere in Texas,” says Weldon Gray, CEO of TSTCI.

There are few organizations that understand the importance of giving a helping hand more than Star Communications in North Carolina. When Hurricane Matthew struck in 2016, Star’s main offices were flooded, along with the majority of its nearly 1,500-square-mile coverage area.

VP of Sales and Business Operations Kyle Randleman recalls wading through septic water in the cooperative’s offices to recover thousands of paper records. But he also remembers how Atlantic Telephone Membership Cooperative stepped up to provide generators and extra technicians to help Star get back on its feet.

“We’ll never forget that,” Randleman says. “I think independent telcos sometimes think of themselves as islands, but one of the things I learned is that sometimes you need to not be afraid to let your guard down and ask for help.”

Throughout the Harvey recovery, TSTCI has received offers from cooperatives as far away as Iowa for donations of surplus copper cable, and associate members like CoBank have begun setting up disaster funds throughout the state.
Anyone using technology in the last few years has heard about the importance of cloud computing, but it can sometimes be difficult for people to put their finger on what exactly it is.

Think of it this way: In the past, people had to download applications directly onto their computer or device to use them. With the cloud, those same programs are accessed through the internet.

If you check and send emails from your phone, that’s using the cloud. Even posting photos and messages to social media like Facebook takes advantage of cloud technology. Your information is saved somewhere other than your computer, meaning it can be accessed from any other device as long as you have an internet connection.

That flexibility makes cloud technology a game-changer for individuals and businesses. For growing companies that aren’t sure what their exact bandwidth needs are, it provides flexibility. For that friend who lost their phone with all the great vacation photos, it acts as a convenient backup. The cloud can even help people across the globe collaborate on projects in nearly real time.

Research from software company Druva indicates that as businesses learn more about how cloud technology works, they trust its security over their own ability to back up important information. In a survey, 82 percent of people cited the ability to recover from a disastrous loss of data as one of the primary reasons to move their information to the cloud.

It’s no wonder, then, that cloud technology has been on the rise and is a focal point for some of the world’s biggest companies. Amazon and Microsoft both offer cloud computing services. Also, providers such as a telco in Tennessee have created services like NowCloud. In 2018 and beyond, the cloud is expected to reach even greater heights.
Survey says: Rural telcos are overcoming challenges to serve you

Despite plenty of obstacles, telcos like DTC are winning the battle to bring broadband to rural America according to a recent survey — and we’re doing it through our commitment to serve you.

Unlike our giant corporate counterparts who selectively build in lucrative areas to please their investors, we build the networks for you.

“NTCA members are the proven broadband-solutions providers for their communities, living in the communities they serve and providing critically important broadband service to community anchor institutions,” says NTCA Manager of Economic Research and Analysis Rick Schadelbauer. “In so doing, they make significant contributions to the safety, health and overall well-being of their customers. Their service helps facilitate the overall viability of rural America.”

Schadelbauer authored the “NTCA 2016 Broadband/Internet Availability Survey Report,” which is full of interesting information. For instance, customers demand faster broadband speeds, and telcos like DTC invest millions of dollars into meeting those demands.

One particular line item from the survey is worth highlighting because I think it explains why we do what we do. According to the data, the median telco responding to the survey serves four public service entities; three primary or secondary schools; one public library; one hospital or medical clinic; as well as 911 call centers, post offices and city halls.

When people think of our communities, these are institutions that give us our identity and that residents count on daily. Serving them is a pleasure for us, but also a duty stemming from our commitment to improving our community.

But, as the survey results make clear, it’s not easy.

The results underscore some of the challenges we’re so familiar with here at DTC. Almost nine out of 10 telcos surveyed said the high cost of construction and materials is a significant barrier to improving their networks with more fiber. Other barriers identified on the survey included regulations and regulatory uncertainty, delays in receiving orders of fiber optic cable, and the long distances the network has to cover to reach rural residents.

The rural nature of our service area has always been a major challenge. While I’ve seen numbers suggesting urban and suburban telcos serve more than 120 customers per square mile, most of the NTCA survey respondents reported serving areas with only 1 to 5 customers per square mile.

As you might imagine from those numbers, urban telcos can collect much more money by running fiber to cover a square mile and serving 120 customers, compared with rural telcos only serving one to five customers from the same investment in fiber.

Reading those numbers, some would ask the obvious question: Why build such an expensive network in such a hard-to-serve area?

To answer that, I would refer to that first item I mentioned. You have to look at who we serve: schools, hospitals, fire departments and law enforcement. The institutions you count on all count on us to keep them connected. Without the hard work borne from our decades-long commitment to you, these pillars of our community might not have the connectivity they need to serve our communities.

I’m pleased with the insights the NTCA survey provides, and I’m willing to predict the results of the next such survey: Despite the expense, despite the risks and despite the uncertainty from regulation, telcos like DTC will still be there serving our communities. Thank you for counting on us.
ALEXANDER VOTED ONTO DTC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

During the Sept. 16 DTC Annual Meeting, Michael Alexander was announced as the new director for the Woodbury exchange, beating out incumbent Jean Chumbley Ferrell, with a 233 to 179 vote.

Jim Vinson and Terry McPeak both ran unopposed and remain the directors of the Milton and Norene exchanges, respectively.

Following the meeting, the board of directors met to elect officers including Roy. N. Pugh as president, Bennie Curtis as vice president, Terry McPeak as secretary and Randy Campbell as treasurer.

TO ALL VETERANS

Thank you for your service!

This Veterans Day, DTC would like to honor every man and woman who has served in our nation’s military. You have helped to keep us safe and to protect the freedoms we hold dear. Thank you for your service.

DTC HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

- We will be opening the stores late (at 10 a.m.) on Nov. 8.
- Closed for Thanksgiving: Thursday, Nov. 23-Saturday, Nov. 25
- Closed for Christmas: Friday, Dec. 22-Monday, Dec. 25
- Closed for New Year’s Day: Monday, Jan. 1

FIND YOUR NUMBER AND WIN A PRIZE!

A prize may be waiting for you in this issue! We have randomly selected the telephone numbers of 10 lucky DTC members and hidden them throughout this publication. Find your number and call 615-683-1010 to claim your prize!

CATCH YOUR LOCAL CHRISTMAS PARADES BROADCAST ON DTC3

Everyone loves a parade, and DTC3 will continue the tradition of broadcasting all area Christmas parades during the holiday season.

After all, DTC3 is the exclusive community channel for local broadcasting.

Watch for news about when DTC3 will air each one, and enjoy the parades:

- Carthage – 5 p.m., Nov. 26
- Woodbury – noon, Dec. 2
- Smithville – 1 p.m., Dec. 2
- Gordonsville – 5:30 p.m., Dec. 2
- Liberty – 2 p.m., Dec. 3
- Alexandria – 2 p.m., Dec. 10
There’s nothing quite like a freshly cut Christmas tree, including the aroma of pine, whimsical decorations on its branches and presents beneath its boughs. While the tree lasts just a few short weeks, it can help create lifelong memories.

Searching for the perfect tree, cutting it down and bringing it home is old-fashioned family fun. Here are some farms around the South that allow you to cut your own tree, plus some farms that do a little extra to celebrate the Christmas season.

Bluebird Christmas Tree Farm
985 Brushy Valley Road, Heiskell, Tennessee

Customers have returned for more than 20 years to this 7-acre farm in a scenic mountain valley on the edge of the Cumberland Plateau. “It’s certainly a family tradition,” says owner Joseph Collins, who adds that each holiday season also brings first-time visitors.

The farm does not allow chain saws but provides hand saws if you don’t bring your own. And if cutting your tree is too difficult, folks on the farm will do the job for you. Most people prefer cutting a tree themselves, Collins says.

Bluebird’s gift shop features locally made items, such as jams, butters and honey. Also, the store offers wreaths, garlands, handmade toys and ornaments. A historic log cabin provides a look back in history.

- **Trees for cutting:** Norway spruce, Leyland cypress and Virginia pine
- **Prices:** You can buy a “Charlie Brown” tree for $10. Other prices range up to $200, depending on tree type and size.
- **Information:** 865-457-5682 or online at bluebirdtrees.com

Old Dairy Christmas Tree Farm
3273 McClain Circle, Gadsden, Alabama

Mark and Lisa Stephenson are opening Old Dairy Christmas Tree Farm for the first time this year. “We sold a few to family and friends last year, and they plan to come back this year,” Lisa Stephenson says. “I have watched a family sit down around a tree
and sing carols. That’s one of the reasons I wanted to start the tree farm.”

And while you search for a perfect tree on the farm, sip on a cup of hot chocolate that the Stephensons offer to ward off winter’s chill. They also sell fresh wreaths. Call ahead to place your order.

Chain saws are not allowed. Hand saws are provided, or your tree can be cut for you at no charge.

- **Trees for cutting:** Leyland cypress, Murray cypress and Carolina sapphire
- **Prices:** Start at $35
- **Information:** 256-504-8658 or on Facebook

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**Hollow Creek Tree Farm**

228 Windmill Road, Gilbert, South Carolina

A day at Hollow Creek Tree Farm is all about family, including the family dog. “We’re a dog-friendly farm,” says owner Mike McCartha, whose dad, J.W. McCartha, started selling trees in the late 1970s to supplement his income after retiring from the Merchant Marine.

In the beginning, J.W. McCartha brought in trees from his brother’s nearby farm. Now, 15 of the farm’s 36 acres are planted with trees ranging in height from 4 feet to more than 20 feet.

Bow saws are provided — no chain saws allowed — or Mike McCartha will do the cutting for you.

Weekends on the farm feature free hay rides. You can also stop by the gift shop and sip on free coffee or hot chocolate while you shop for a fresh wreath for your door, handmade bows for your gifts or a stand for your tree.

- **Trees for cutting:** Leyland cypress, Murray cypress, Carolina sapphire, blue ice cypress, Virginia pine, white pine, Burkii cedar, Deodar cedar, Thuja green giant, Hollow Creek slims
- **Prices:** $7-$13 per foot, depending on size and variety
- **Information:** 803-892-3662 or www.hollowcreektreefarm.com

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**Plantation Pines Christmas Tree Farm**

10096 County Road 429, Tyler, Texas

This is the first year running the Christmas tree business for Burren and Heather Reed, but it’s nothing new for them. She grew up in the business with her parents, Nick and Nancy Wiggins.

Last year, the Reeds took over the business and are now prepared for the masses of shoppers who come to their farm in search of the perfect tree.

Visitors can take hayrides, sip hot chocolate, warm up around a campfire, make s’mores, shop in the gift shop and more.

“It seems that every year more and more families come to share in the experience, and I’m excited to see the next generation of families come through the farm as we transition into running it,” Heather Reed says. “We love the family traditions — that’s what we’re all about!”

Chain saws are not allowed, but hand saws are provided.

- **Trees for cutting:** Virginia pines
- **Prices:** $7-$8 per foot
- **Information:** 903-595-2046 or www.plantationpinesfarms.com

**Cathole Bend Christmas Tree Farm**

1243 Cathole Bend Road, Lancaster, Kentucky

Steven McManus began planting evergreens in 2004 and is now one of a handful of farmers in Eastern Kentucky who open their fields during the holiday season.

In addition to cutting a tree, you can choose from balled and burlapped trees so that you can have a tree to plant after the holidays. If you do purchase a live tree, do not bring it inside until a day or two before Christmas. That’s the best way to ensure its longevity.

If you want to cut your own — no chain saws allowed — McManus says he provides bow saws with high-quality European blades that cut through the wood with relative ease.

To ward off the day’s chill, Cathole Farm offers free hot chocolate and coffee.

- **Trees for cutting:** Norway spruce, white spruce, black hills spruce, Canaan fir, Fraser fir, Meyer spruce and white pine
- **Prices:** Start at about $40
- **Information:** 859-985-7044
Newspaper clippings, books, cufflinks and memorabilia paying tribute to two Nobel Peace Prize winners fill display cases at Smith County Heritage Museum.

A photo of Vice President Al Gore Jr. during a presidential inauguration hangs on one wall. And a much older photograph captures the image of the birthplace of Cordell Hull, secretary of state under President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Both men are from Smith County.

“It’s unusual for a small, rural county such as ours to have a Nobel Peace Prize winner, and we have two,” says Pam Billington, president of the board of directors for the Smith County Heritage Museum.

The museum’s newest exhibit features the prize winners. But more than a dozen other displays tell the stories of music, patriotism and influences that shaped the county.

Even the museum’s home, owned by the city and leased to the museum, has an interesting history. The Smith County Heritage Museum opened in 2004 in the renovated W.E. Stephens Manufacturing building in Carthage. The manufacturing company produced work clothes, jackets and uniforms from 1951 to 1987.

“The company was an early advertiser on Nashville’s Grand Ole Opry,” says Barbara Upchurch, the board’s secretary and a founding member of the museum.

THE MUSIC

Smith County is known for its musical heritage, and an exhibit was developed as an accompaniment to a Smithsonian Traveling Exhibit on roots music, Upchurch says. It features musical instruments, pictures and displays on local artists such as bluegrass banjo player Cordell Kemp and gospel artists like The Wilburns and Eddie Crook.

One display includes a suit of clothes worn by DeFord Bailey, a country and blues harmonist. He was the first African-American performer on the Grand Ole Opry stage. “We have a lot of musical roots in Smith County,” she says.

STORIES OF SMITH COUNTY

The museum’s first exhibit — Turning Point — won a state award from the Tennessee Association of Museums. It was created in collaboration with Middle Tennessee State University and Dr. Brenden Martin, professor of public history. It recognized the years from 1880 to 1930.

The museum’s exhibits feature the county’s first inhabitants hundreds of years ago and in just about every era since. Exhibits cover the historical significance of medicine, music, agriculture, education, churches, women, African-Americans,
architecture and transportation. “We even have an exhibit about the minerals significant in Smith County,” Upchurch says.

The transportation exhibit covers roads, rivers, rail and ferries. The educational history of Smith County is a big part of the museum. Over 60 public schools and several private schools existed at one time in Smith County. Pictures of many of the schools are displayed, along with old wooden desks.

Most items for exhibits were donated, including a safe owned by the first mayor of Carthage, L.A. Ligon. It’s one of the most recent donations from Ligon’s grandson.

THE WARS
Exhibits commemorate Smith County’s representation in the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, Civil War, World Wars I and II, Korean War and Vietnam War. Smith County was named after Revolutionary War veteran Daniel Smith.

“We had 1,500 men who participated in (the Civil War),” Upchurch says. The majority were Confederate soldiers, and 138 from Smith County died in the war. The Union Army occupied Carthage’s Battery Hill from 1862 to 1865.

“Letters and artifacts show the conflicted loyalties of Smith County citizens,” Upchurch says.

It’s not the number of men who fought during the various wars that is noted, but those from Smith County who died. “We had 24 who died during World War I, and 52 lost their lives during World War II,” Billington says. The Korean War claimed the lives of seven from Smith County, while the Vietnam War claimed eight.

“We have uniforms and medals and some type of memorabilia representing just about all the wars that people from here participated in,” Upchurch says.

THE WINNERS
The exhibit honoring Nobel Peace Prize winners Hull and Gore is still a work in progress, Billington says.

Smith County is home to the two statesmen, as well as Gore’s father, Al Gore Sr. Also, two Tennessee governors and one Arkansas governor hail from Smith County.

Hull’s career started as a lawyer in Carthage, and Gore announced his vice presidency from the steps of the courthouse in Carthage, Billington says.

Hull is considered the father of the United Nations and was secretary of state from 1933 to 1944. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1945 for world organizing.

Al Gore’s family is from Smith County, and he and family members still have farms in the area. Gore was elected in 1992 as vice president and served with President Bill Clinton. Early on, he was known for being environmentally conscious. He lost the presidential election in 2000 but decided to use his influence to increase awareness about global warming.

He was part of the team awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007 for world organizing and humanitarian work.

PRESERVING HISTORY
It’s the rich heritage of Smith County that prompted a group of residents to document the stories and establish the museum, Upchurch says. Admission is free. A membership — $25 for individuals or $60 for a business — brings benefits such as discounts on gift shop purchases and renting the main gallery for events. “It’s important to preserve the heritage of our county, and that’s what our organization is dedicated to,” Billington says.

Smith County Heritage Museum:
107 Third Ave., Carthage, Tennessee
Open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Admission is free.
The holidays are a time to get together with family and friends and share joy and laughter and maybe a gift or two. There are few sweeter feelings than making someone happy by giving them what they’ve always wanted. Of course, you can also enjoy the time-honored tradition of hint-giving by leaving this magazine casually open to this page, maybe even draw — casually, casually — a giant red circle around your favorite gadget. Either way, get ready to enjoy a high-tech holiday with those you love.

‘STAR WARS: JEDI CHALLENGES’
Remember that scene in the original “Star Wars” where Luke wears a helmet with its blast shield down and deflects lasers from a training drone? You’ll look about as silly as he does but feel 10 times cooler as you wear this augmented reality headset and battle the likes of Darth Maul, Kylo Ren and Darth Vader himself. Along with lightsaber duels with your favorite bad guys, “Jedi Challenges” also lets you play a strategy game and even holochess. The kit comes with a lightsaber controller, an AR headset and a tracking beacon, but you still need a compatible Android or iOS smartphone to run the game app. Available at Best Buy or Lenovo.com for $199.99.

AUTOMATIC PRO
Plug an Automatic Pro adapter into any car’s standard diagnostics port to monitor everything from its location to engine diagnostics from your smartphone. The Automatic Pro app can tell you the problem behind that check engine light, keep an eye on your family’s progress while they’re on the road, and even call emergency services automatically if there’s a crash. Available at automatic.com and Amazon for $129.95.

ECHO SHOW
The Amazon Echo launched in 2014 as slightly more than a glorified Bluetooth speaker. But it quickly added functions and partner apps that have made it the device to beat as the nerve center of a smart home or as a viable personal assistant. The Echo Show adds a 7-inch touchscreen, which means now — along with the Echo’s ability to type up your emails, control your smart home devices, shop on Amazon, etc. — you can use YouTube, make a video call, look up a recipe or watch the news. Available on Amazon for $229.99 or a two-pack for $360.

LEGO BOOST CREATIVE TOOLBOX
This 840-piece set lets you build five progressively more challenging models and is basically a starter robotics kit. Although it’s recommended for children ages 7 through 12, it’s hard to imagine adults who won’t have fun helping put together everything from a robot that dances and tells jokes to an automated production line that builds smaller Lego models. The kit comes with Bluetooth connectivity; two motors; and tilt, color and distance sensors. A tablet is needed for instructions and to program your creations. Available at Lego.com and most retailers for $159.99.
My kids will never know the agony of waiting until Saturday morning to watch their favorite cartoons. Nor will they ever need to adjust the “rabbit ears” to make the screen a little less snowy. Thanks to DVRs, streaming and high definition, my kids have access to their favorite shows every day of the week in crystal-clear quality.

For those of you who are curious, streaming has nothing to do with water in a creek. It’s all about watching videos over the internet. Some people prefer this method of TV, as it allows them to watch the shows they want when they want, without having to sit through lots of commercials. I must admit, I love that there are fewer commercials during kids shows as it reduces the amount of “Mom, I want THAT” I typically hear when the kids see their favorite shows. So how do you “stream”? There are three key things you need:

1. A high-speed internet connection, preferably a broadband connection for the best signal. If you want to stream on several devices at once, you’ll need a faster connection.

2. A device with streaming apps installed, such as a smartphone, tablet, computer, or a streaming stick attached to your TV such as Roku, Amazon Fire TV Stick or Apple TV.

3. A streaming app that has the content you want to view. There are several different streaming apps available, with Netflix being one of the most popular.

If you already subscribe to Netflix for your own viewing, you can set up profiles for different members of your household. You can assign a “teen,” “big kid” or “little kid” status to your children’s profile. This keeps them from viewing shows that may be inappropriate. However, if you are looking to just stream content for kids, there are many other free options out there that would be just as good, if not better than what Netflix offers for kids.

Here are some streaming apps I recommend for kids:

- **YouTube Kids** – A good option for bigger kids who know how to search for the types of shows they enjoy.
- **WATCH Disney or WATCH Disney Junior** depending on the age of your kids – Includes episodes of all your kids’ favorite Disney Channel shows.
- **PBS Kids** – Has all your kids’ favorite PBS shows including “Sesame Street” and “Curious George.”
- **PlayKids** – A good option for entertaining preschool-aged children.

As I’ve mentioned before, screen time should just be a small part of your kid’s day. By choosing how your child watches their shows and how they access them, you maintain a little more control over what they are seeing and learning.

Parenting Tip

Need help setting limits for your kids’ screen time? Healthychildren.org has an interactive Family Media Planner that can help you establish guidelines for when it’s OK and not OK for your children to use their electronics.
High-speed internet is making a difference, becoming as important as electricity and water. That’s why DTC Communications is committed to investing $40 million over the next five years to bring state-of-the-art fiber technology to Middle Tennessee.

Fast, reliable broadband can provide entertainment through online gaming or streaming a movie. It can generate jobs, educate students, improve health care and far more. It’s no longer a luxury. It’s a necessity.

“It used to be when someone was moving to this area, their first question was ‘Where do I go to get electricity and water?’” says Bill Woodard, executive director of the Smith County Chamber of Commerce. “Now their first question is ‘Where do I go to get internet?’ Homes and businesses can’t survive anymore without high-speed fiber internet.”

Fast internet service is so important that most prospective homeowners and business owners won’t consider locating in the region without it. “It definitely puts more rooftops in the county,” Woodard says.

A NETWORK FOR TODAY, AND TOMORROW

DTC Communications is creating a high-speed, fiber optic network throughout
DeKalb, Cannon, Wilson, Rutherford and Smith counties, DTC Chief Executive Officer Chris Townson says. The goal is to complete the initial build-out within five years.

“We’re just beginning to see what broadband through fiber optics can mean for health care, schools, industries and families in our area,” Townson says. “It opens up so many possibilities.”

Many modern high-tech tasks require speeds available only through fiber, which uses cables made of tiny strands of pure glass — each about the diameter of a human hair — to transmit beams of light over great distances. The beams are capable of carrying high-quality data at gigabit speeds to homes and businesses.

DTC is replacing existing copper lines with fiber, which will be used for new services.

The possibilities with fiber are exciting for local leaders. “Fiber is an important factor to DeKalb County, not only for our homeowners but also for businesses and industry,” DeKalb County Mayor Tim Stribling says. It will mean more reliability, higher bandwidths, faster connection speeds and better video quality. Economic development is a huge benefit of fiber for our county, and it attracts new businesses and industries,” Stribling says.

Fiber allows existing businesses and industry to have faster and more reliable internet access, which increases productivity and efficiency in the workplace. “More and more people work from home, and fiber would allow them to work from home more effectively,” he says. “We live in a fast-paced society, and this technology helps us to keep up with that demand.”

**ESSENTIAL ACCESS**

As customers need faster speeds, fiber-based networks are proving to be the only connections capable of meeting those needs, Townson says. “The reason we at DTC are so passionate about this network build-out is that we are proud to see the impact our network will have on our members’ quality of life, economic well-being and educational opportunities,” he says.

Children will benefit from high-speed connections at home and school, allowing them to learn from and to interact with cutting-edge learning resources.

Adults will be able to use the faster speeds to run a business, work from home, upgrade their homes with automated devices, and pursue their hobbies and interests.

Telemedicine is a growing component of health care and gives better access to local and regional doctors. It can mean faster treatment because of capabilities such as transmitting a high-resolution image for review by a specialist.

“The technology can provide high-speed internet that is as fast, if not faster, than many metropolitan areas,” Woodard says. “Most of the people who live and work in rural areas, such as Smith County, choose to be here. It’s nice, he says, to have the same advantages as those in bigger cities.”

“People want to live in the country, but they want the world at their doorstep. And fiber internet is the only way they’re going to get that out here,” Woodard says.

DTC’s fiber network delivers the high speeds and bandwidth you need to enjoy all the internet has to offer. With a Wi-Fi network, you can extend broadband internet service throughout your home and across all your devices, including smart TVs, smartphones, computers, tablets, gaming consoles and more.

If you only have one device connected to the internet, you’re really just scratching the surface of what broadband internet can offer.

**WEAK SIGNAL?**

While a Wi-Fi network enhances the capabilities of your internet connection, it’s important to remember that several factors can affect Wi-Fi signal strength and quality. These include:

> **Distance**: Devices closer to the router will have stronger connections.

> **Age**: Older devices may use technology that cannot take advantage of today’s faster internet speeds.

> **Devices**: Each device shares part of the total available bandwidth. Several connected devices means less bandwidth for each.

> **Other**: Microwaves, cordless phones, fluorescent lights, Bluetooth devices and other electronic devices could interfere with your Wi-Fi signal.

**BOOSTING YOUR WI-FI**

If your family often connects several devices to your Wi-Fi network at the same time and your speeds are impacted, contact DTC to discuss options for upgrading your internet speeds to match the needs of your home.

If you experience loss of signal in rooms located upstairs or on the opposite side of your home from your router, you may need a network extender to boost the power of your Wi-Fi network. These small, affordable devices plug into a normal electrical outlet. Once connected to your Wi-Fi network, they extend the reach of your network to more rooms in your home or even to your patio or deck.

Give DTC a call today at 615-529-2955 to receive more information about how to get an extender for your home.
The holidays are one of the best times of the year for baking. And no one knows how to make a great seasonal dessert better than Lynn Cummins, who, with her husband, Mike, owns Whistle Stop Cafe in the tiny town of Glendale, Kentucky.

The cafe opened in 1975 in the town’s former hardware store. Old wooden floors creak with age, and a bell on the door welcomes visitors. It’s not uncommon to encounter a line of customers.

This place is known for its fried green tomatoes, hot browns, fried chicken and meatloaf. But take a look at the A-frame sign on the sidewalk out front: Try Our Famous Desserts.

The Cummins, the second owners, bought the restaurant 13 years ago. They added some of Lynn Cummins’ favorite dishes, including an array of desserts all made from scratch on-site. The daily menu features seven different pies, two cakes and two fruit cobblers.

“I’ve always loved to cook and bake,” she says. She worked in fast-food management and in a school cafeteria, but she always wanted to use some of her own recipes.

“This was always one of our favorite restaurants,” Mike Cummins says. “We used to come here on our way to where we lived in Indiana. So, jokingly, I told the owners, ‘When y’all get ready to sell, let us know.’”

In March 2005, they took over one of the best places for desserts in Kentucky. “Even on cold, winter days, we get tables of people who have never been here before,” Lynn Cummins says. “Seventy to 80 percent of our guests are not local. They come from as far away as California.”

The secret to their desserts? For one thing, they use “good old lard,” Mike Cummins says.

But there’s also a trick to the mile-high meringue that floats atop many pies, Lynn Cummins says: “lots and lots of whipping.” But just be careful not to overwhip the meringue, she warns, or the results may be grainy and dry.

Lynn Cummins’ lemon meringue pie is one of the most popular items on the Whistle Stop Cafe menu, especially during the holidays.

**Lynn Cummins’ baking tips**

- Always heat your oven before using, and use the middle shelf unless noted. Both of these steps will promote even baking and reduce the chance of burning or over-browning.

- If you don’t have a toothpick to check for doneness on a cake, lightly press the middle. If it springs back, the cake is done.

- If you are frosting a cake that crumbles into the frosting, first spread a very thin layer of frosting. Then, frost as normal, spreading in only one direction.

- Never bake with whipped or tub margarine. Tub margarine contains the wrong amounts of water and fat for baking. Only use a good-quality stick margarine or butter, such as Land o’ Lakes.
CHOCOLATE MERINGUE PIE

Crust:
- 2 cups flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt, slightly heaping
- 2/3 cup lard or shortening
- 1/3 cup cold water
- 1/4 teaspoon white vinegar

Pie:
- 2 cups milk
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons cocoa
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 5 egg yolks (save egg whites)
- 1 teaspoon butter
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

Meringue:
- 5 egg whites (from the pie filling eggs)
- 1 3/4 cups sugar
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 2 teaspoons cream of tartar

For crust: Mix flour and salt. Cut in the lard until crumbly. Stir in water and vinegar. If dough seems dry, add 1 teaspoon cold water at a time until it forms a smooth, stiff crust. Refrigerate for a half-hour or longer before rolling out.

For pie: Place milk in a double boiler and heat until a skin starts to form. Combine sugar, flour, cocoa and salt; add to double boiler. Stir gently until filling begins to thicken; add egg yolks. Stirring occasionally, let cook for 30 minutes, or until consistency of thick pudding. Add butter and vanilla. Pour into blind-baked pie shells. Spread meringue on the top and bake at 300 degrees until meringue is golden brown.

For meringue: While pie filling is thickening, make meringue. In large bowl, whip egg whites with sugar, cornstarch and cream of tartar on low. After 2 minutes, increase speed to medium. When it gets frothy and just starts to thicken, turn on high. Whip until it forms peaks. Do not overwhip.

Red Velvet Cake

Sauce:
- 3/4 cup milk
- 1/2 cup sugar

Stir the first four ingredients together. In another bowl, cream the oil, sugar, food color and eggs together. In a cup, stir the baking soda and buttermilk — it will bubble up. Alternate the dry and liquid into the cream mixture, beating thoroughly. Stir in vanilla. Divide into two greased and floured cake pans. Bake at 350 degrees for 20 to 30 minutes or until cake tests done.

Cream the cream cheese and butter in a bowl. Gradually add the sugar and beat until smooth. Add the vanilla. If it is too thick add a tablespoon of milk and beat well.

To create the sauce, bring 3/4 cup of milk and 1/2 cup of sugar to a boil. As soon as you take the cake layers out of the oven, evenly distribute the sauce over them. Let set for 15 minutes, then remove from pans to cool on a rack.

When the cake is cool, frost with cream cheese icing.
LOCAL BASKETBALL

CATCH YOUR FAVORITE BASKETBALL TEAM ON DTC3 THIS SEASON

- **Tuesday, Nov. 21**: Gordonsville at Smith County
- **Tuesday, Nov. 28**: DeKalb County at Gordonsville
- **Friday, Dec. 1**: DeKalb County at Watertown
- **Tuesday, Dec. 5**: Cannon County at Smith County
- **Monday, Dec. 18**: Watertown at Gordonsville
- **Friday, Jan. 12**: Cannon County at Watertown
- **Tuesday, Jan. 16**: Watertown at Smith County
- **Friday, Jan. 19**: Watertown at DeKalb County
- **Friday, Jan. 26**: Cannon County at DeKalb County
- **Tuesday, Feb. 6**: DeKalb County at Smith County
- **Friday, Feb. 9**: Smith County at Gordonsville

CHECK YOUR GUIDE FOR SHOW TIMES!

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