

CONNECTION



Secrets to success

Balancing career and family

STREAMING 101

ECLIPSE

By SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO
NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association

Agriculture thrives with broadband

Every day I hear examples of how the fast, reliable internet service provided by NTCA members brings telemedicine, rich entertainment resources, educational opportunities, jobs and far more to rural communities like yours.

But that's just the beginning. These internet networks also create a vital foundation needed by a range of industries critical to the nation's economy. While agriculture might not immediately come to mind when considering the internet, the \$4.4 billion ag tech market is a showcase for how broadband can bring farms and ranches the internet-connected tools that make agriculture more efficient, productive and sustainable.

Smart irrigation systems, farm management and automation software, drones and sensors that can remotely monitor factors such as soil moisture are just a few of the innovations used in modern agriculture. They make a real difference, too.

For example, consider just one part of the agricultural equation — water. Leveraging these high-tech tools can reduce water use by 4%. When considering the scope of the industry, that's a tangible difference, the equivalent of filling 750,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools.

Without reliable internet access, these tools wouldn't be possible, nor would the benefits to consumers. When agricultural production is less expensive and yields are higher, we can all enjoy more favorable prices.

So, when you think about all your internet service provider does for you personally, take a moment to appreciate they're making a difference for all of us, nationwide. 📶



Illustration by Olga Strelnikova/Adobe Stock

Internet-connected technology makes a bottom-line difference in agriculture, responsible for as much as an **8% increase** in the value of corn crops alone. That's an attention-getting result, and it makes it worth a closer look at ag tech.

THE DETAILS:



Ag tech includes smart irrigation farm management software, drones, remote sensing, biotech, automation and more. Many of these tools rely on the internet to share access and store and share data.

Value of the U.S. ag tech market:
\$4.4 billion

Value of agriculture, food and food-related industries:
\$1.26 trillion

Agriculture supports **43 million jobs**, **\$2 trillion** in wages and generates **\$718 billion** in taxes.

CURRENT AG TECH OFFERS:



9% reduction
in chemical use



6% reduction
in fossil fuel consumption



4% reduction
in water use — enough to fill 750,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools



30-million-pound
decrease in herbicide use

THE BOTTOM LINE: Ag tech enables farmers to lower costs while increasing yield and productivity.

Truly personal fitness

Online fitness offerings bring workouts to wherever you are

Story by SARA D. PATTERSON

After an exhausting workday, heading to that boring fitness class that's way too expensive to skip sounds like about as much fun as a root canal. What if you could just click an app or website and join a class from home? Think of the time, energy and frustration you could save.

With live and prerecorded classes and a fast and reliable internet connection, it's easy to turn any space into a gym. Thanks to apps and an array of online workout programs, you have the ability to exercise whenever, wherever and with whomever you want.

Some apps create personalized daily workout programs, while others provide a library of on-demand classes. Take a live class and become part of a community where everyone feels the burn.

PICKING THE PERFECT PLAN

As the popularity of online exercise programs continues to grow, so does the number of available options. Before choosing one, here are some factors worth considering.

Cost: Pricing can vary widely, but many apps and programs offer a free trial before requiring a subscription or financial commitment.

Instructors: Check their credentials to make sure they're certified in whatever they're teaching.

Variety: You'll maximize your results by

finding a program that keeps you interested while increasing the difficulty over time.

Devices: Make sure the program you choose works across all your devices. Compatibility is important since one of the biggest benefits of online fitness is the ability to take it with you anywhere.

FITNESS TO GO

While the at-home workout might seem isolating, it's actually a gateway to a digital community of like-minded fitness enthusiasts. The classes can provide a connection to a new whole world.

Onepeloton.com: Most famous for its much-advertised, in-home bike revolution, the Peloton digital app features on-demand and live classes of all kinds — no equipment needed.

Nike.com/ntc-app: This free app provides a variety of classes and styles for folks with busy schedules.

Apple.com/apple-fitness-plus: These classes, including yoga and Pilates, are personalized and perfected for Apple Watch users.

DailyBurn.com: This site offers the opportunity for one-on-one instruction. You can discover a favorite series or search for a specific workout depending on your mood.

Beachbody.com or BODi: This platform features '80s-style bootcamp classes, progress-tracking and nutrition hacks. 📱

Moving and grooving

Some mobile fitness fans are turning to more creative ways to work out at home. Harkening back to the days of Richard Simmons and Jazzercise, online dancing is fast becoming a personal fitness staple.

Online dance classes can be less expensive than in-person sessions and offer more style options. And, many people feel more comfortable staging a dance party in their own living rooms rather than in a studio full of strangers.

Zumba.com: The Latin-inspired cardio workout has motivated millions around the world to get moving since dancing into the spotlight in 2001.

Obefitness.com: With more than 8,000 classes and 20 different class types to choose from, there's something for everyone. Up to 22 live classes are available, seven days a week, starting at 6 a.m. Eastern time.

Dancio.com: Here you'll find hundreds of recorded classes covering various dance styles.

Steezy.co: Work out while learning a variety of urban dance moves.

Speeding forward

A look back shows how far we can go

There's comfort in the familiar, and it's easy to become nostalgic about the past, even when it comes to technology. But we live in fast-changing times, and the tug of the well-known shouldn't keep us from enjoying the benefits of modern devices and services.



TREVOR BONNSTETTER

Chief Executive Officer

Change can be hard, particularly when a treasured device is no longer relevant. But there's so much to gain. Just a few years ago buying a big-screen TV meant finding a place for a bulky TV that likely weighed hundreds of pounds. And that "big-screen" TV was smaller than what we'd consider a medium-sized modern flat-screen — weighing in at under 40 pounds.

For those who researched options, saved money and waited to make a purchase like that big TV, there's probably still a fondness for the memory of that old set, even if it went to a recycling center ages ago.

Today, however, many TVs are smart, internet-connected devices allowing you to stream a rich sea of content tailored to your needs.

The screens display images in a quality often unavailable in many movie theaters. Simply put, there's no comparison between a modern television and one from even 10 years ago.

You can apply that same idea to so many other devices and services, too. What was great is now simply out of date. Many people once had 35 mm cameras for family snapshots, but modern smartphones not only create professional-quality images but also make it easy to back photos up to the cloud or share them on social media.

There was a time when a key was the only way to lock your door. Now, there are smart locks you can open or secure remotely, video security systems and more. Even your kitchen might have internet-connected devices, such as slow-cookers or grills allowing you to manage cooking temperatures with a smartphone app.

This cutting-edge technology is possible because of the fiber optic network we are building. Fiber moves data at the speed of light, and it's available to most of our customers.

So, while change isn't easy, the gains of embracing modern technology are worth the effort. Over the last two years, ATC has begun to phase out the old copper network. While the fiber optic network isn't quite ready in some areas, we are slowly building our way to everyone. For those customers waiting for fiber, we ask that you stay patient. Building a future-proof fiber network takes time.

There are countless benefits to making this change, including a faster, more reliable internet connection, enhanced 911 features, easier access to telehealth and communications tools. If you're still on an old copper connection and have access to fiber, it's time to make the change.

Please contact us to set up an order to convert your existing services to the new fiber network. We'll do the rest.

Remember, there's no added cost to switch your existing telephone service to this new, improved network, and we'll provide a battery backup for telephone customers to make sure you stay connected with friends and family for up to eight hours if your power goes out. Internet only customers may purchase a battery backup for an additional fee.

The future is bright. Let's go there together. ☺



CONNECTION

MARCH/APRIL 2024

VOL. 12, NO. 2

The Ardmore Connection is a bimonthly magazine published by Ardmore Telephone Company, © 2024. It is distributed without charge to all customers of the company.



Ardmore

TELEPHONE COMPANY

is a hometown service provider delivering advanced telecommunications technology to the people of Giles and Lincoln counties in Tennessee and Limestone and Madison counties in Alabama. The company is managed by Telecom Management Services and owned by Synergy Technology Partners.

Ardmore Telephone is an equal-opportunity employer and provider.

Ardmore Telephone Company
P.O. Box 549
Ardmore, TN 38449
Telephone: 256-423-2131
or 800-830-9946
www.ardmore.net

Ardmore Office:
30190 Ardmore Ave.
Ardmore, AL 35739
Monday - Friday
8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.



Find us on Facebook and Instagram!

Produced for Ardmore Telephone by:

Pioneer
UTILITY RESOURCES

On the Cover:



Local women are thriving in the banking industry. From left, Gabby Blade, Crystal Tucker and Laura Mullins share their stories. See story Page 8.

Photo by Rachel Brister
Photography

ONLINE BILL PAY



Simplify this spring and save time with online bill pay!

ATC makes it easy to pay your bill online. With SmartHub, you get:

- Safe and secure payment options
- 24/7 account access via phone, tablet or desktop
- Important account notifications



Ardmore
TELEPHONE COMPANY

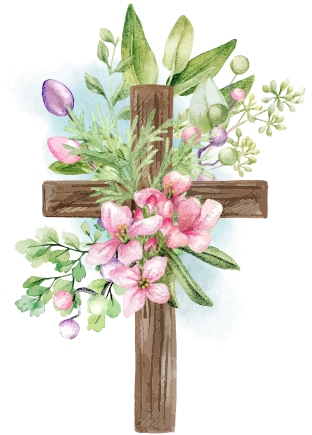
800-830-9946
www.ardmore.net



Spring forward

Don't forget to set your clocks ahead! Daylight saving time starts at 2 a.m. on Sunday, March 10. Also, remember to change the batteries in your smoke detectors.

Celebrating Easter!



Everyone at ATC wishes you and yours a wonderful Easter!

Fiber is coming to a neighborhood near you!



Learn where Ardmore Telephone Company's fiber-fast internet will be available next at www.ardmore.net.

ATC provides matching upload and download speeds, smoother streaming and a stable connection so your family can simultaneously work remotely, learn virtually, check in with the doctor and game online.

And, if you are looking for a new, fiber-ready home, the first phase of construction for the Ayers Farm subdivision fiber network is complete. Another phase will begin soon.

To sign up, call 800-830-9946.*

*Fiber-fast internet is not yet available in all areas served by ATC.

TOTALLY AWESOME

APRIL ECLIPSE WILL WOW!

Story by KATHY DENES

The Southeast boasts plenty of beautiful scenery, but the heavens get credit for two of the region's most spectacular sights in a span of less than six months. For three hours on Oct. 14, an annular eclipse created a "ring of fire" visible along its path from Oregon down through Texas. April 8 will bring yet another eclipse, this time plunging all beneath its route from Texas up to Maine and beyond into total darkness.

Except for Southwest Kentucky, very little of the Southeastern U.S. will be in the path of totality. The shadow will barely hit the northwest corner of Tennessee as it cuts through the Kentucky Bend region, skims Mayfield and then darkens Paducah and Henderson around 2 p.m. EDT.

For those not in the path of totality, even the partial eclipse will be awesome to behold. Starting around 1:55 p.m. in areas east of totality, the orbiting moon will obscure the sun's bottom-right section and make it look like a crescent by around 3 p.m. By about 4:20 p.m., the sun will again be a complete ball of fire.



Photo by Adil/Adobe Stock

Illustration by James Thew/Adobe Stock

*“And the moon
in haste eclipsed
her, and the sun in
anger swore.”*

— Aristophanes, Greek writer, 450-385 B.C.,
after observing an eclipse

ECLIPSE 101

TOTAL ECLIPSE: When the moon passes between the Earth and the sun and briefly covers the sun’s disk completely, areas within the narrow path of the moon’s shadow will experience total darkness. Those outside the path of totality will see a partial eclipse. Go to greatamericaneclipse.com or eclipse2024.org to see how the eclipse will look in your area and to find loads of other information.

VIEWING AN ECLIPSE: The only time it is safe to look at the sun with the naked eye is during the brief totality phase of a total solar eclipse, so that only applies to those directly in its path. At all other times, eclipse phases and locations, direct viewing of the sun is only safe through special solar filters and viewers. Look for the ISO 12312-2 standard, and make sure they are free of scratches or flaws. No. 13 or 14 welder’s glass also provides protection.

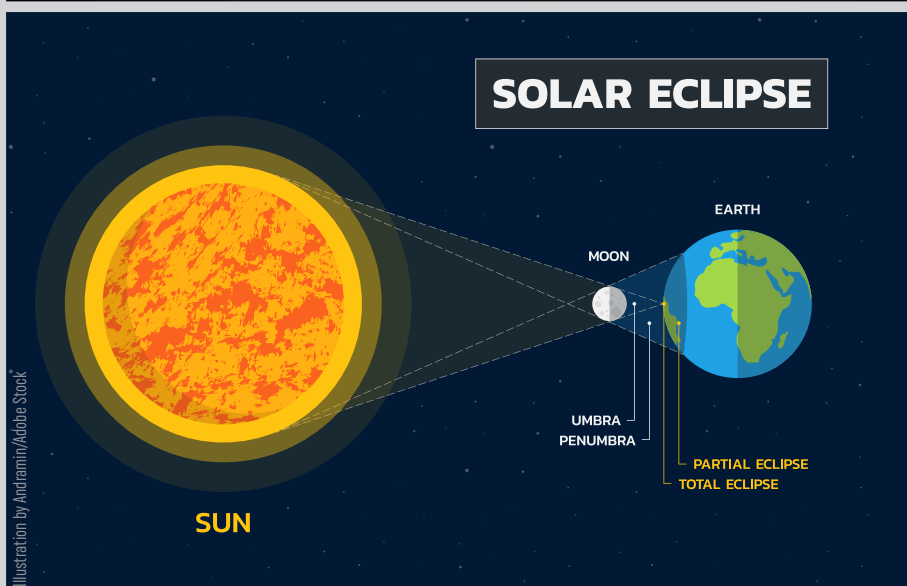
EVENTFUL OPTIONS

Events for seeing and celebrating the eclipse include Paducah’s two-day downtown street fair and a viewing party at its National Quilt Museum. Louisville’s Kentucky Science Center is chartering buses to take eclipse fans to Evansville for a riverfront view of totality.

U.S. Space & Rocket Center in Huntsville, Alabama, home to the INTUITIVE planetarium, is setting up solar telescopes. Many educational activities are planned, including NASA’s livestream of the eclipse which will be shown throughout the center.



Photo by supertramp8/Adobe Stock



Of the 350-plus permanent planetariums in the U.S., six are in Alabama, eight in Kentucky, four in South Carolina and five call Tennessee home. Find one near you at go-astronomy.com/planetariums.htm.



Illustration by Jiva Core/Adobe Stock

BALANCING ACT

A tribute to local women

in the banking industry

Story by LISA SAVAGE

Gabby Blade doesn't have time to hit the snooze button. She runs a couple of miles a few mornings a week, but her mental checklist is always running before she heads to work at Cadence Bank.

Meanwhile, Laura Mullins never sets an alarm. She wakes up about 4 a.m., and by 5, she's making breakfast for her husband, whose farming duties start early. She checks in by phone with family before heading to work at North Alabama Bank by 6:30 a.m.

No loud alarm goes off in Crystal Tucker's bedroom. She prefers a gentle sound. Crystal leaves time to enjoy her coffee, play with her dogs and make sure her youngest son, a high schooler, is up before she leaves for work at First National Bank.

These three women lead different lives, yet they have much in common. After years of hard work, they are now bank executives — a field traditionally dominated by men. Each March, the U.S. observes Women's History Month, celebrating the achievements of women like Gabby, Laura, Crystal and millions of others.

GABBY BLADE

Growing up in Hazel Green, Gabby worked at Whitt's Barbecue in high school and college. One of her regular customers worked at Cadence Bank and talked Gabby into taking a job as a teller. From there, she moved to the accounting department, learning the ins and outs of all the bank's departments over the years.

That knowledge proved valuable — after 18 years at the Ardmore location she's now branch manager. "I feel like I grew up here," Gabby says. "With the group I have, it's easy to lead. Even though it's been challenging at times, I've loved it."

Balancing work and raising an active family was a juggling act for Gabby and her husband, Matt, requiring a positive attitude, lots of late nights and early mornings. It's easier now that their children, ranging in age from 16 to 22, are older. "It was challenging, and I prayed a lot," she says. "My kids and my family are my No. 1 priority."

Balancing work and family herself, Gabby makes sure the staff knows she understands what they're going through. "We make sure families come first," she says.

She also serves as director of Clothe Our Kids, a nonprofit organization. "We work with the school systems to provide clothing to children in need and at risk," she says.



Photo by Rachel Brister Photography

Gabby Blade works at Cadence Bank.



Laura Mullins works at North Alabama Bank. She enjoys quilting in her spare time.

LAURA MULLINS

The oldest of six, Laura grew up in Louisville, Kentucky, where her dad worked for International Harvester. When he took a similar job near Huntsville, the family moved, but Laura stayed behind to attend Bellarmine University, where she worked in the accounting office to offset tuition. After graduation, she worked full time at the university.

While visiting her family, Laura met a farmer named Lonnie Mullins when he came into her family's Dellrose store. She quit her job at the university and moved to the Ardmore area when she and Lonnie married a few months later. Today, Laura and Lonnie live in Hot Rock, and their two sons and their families are nearby. "It's all worked out well," she says.

She's been at North Alabama Bank for 35 years, currently serving as vice president and credit administrator. She saw the transition to online banking, and believes she can share the knowledge she gained throughout her career with the next generation.

"If you can understand the reason for your job and your purpose, it goes a long way," she says.

When Laura isn't working, helping on the farm or spending time with family, she's likely quilting. She grew up watching her grandmother quilt, and she took up the hobby after her sons graduated high school. "I saved many of their T-shirts, so I decided to make each of them a T-shirt quilt for Christmas that year," she says.



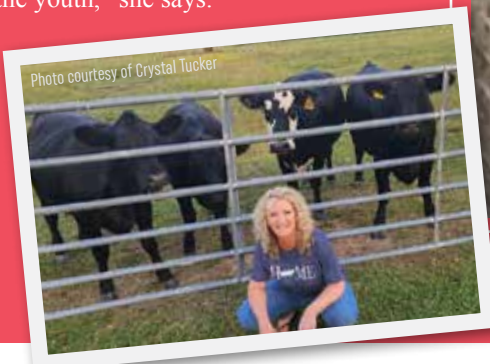
CRYSTAL TUCKER

Originally from Columbia, Tennessee, Crystal and Royce, her husband of 22 years, now live in Ardmore, where she started working at First National Bank in 2002. "I had not even considered banking previously," she says.

Crystal held various posts, including lender, on her way to being named manager of the Ardmore branch. In keeping with the bank's principles, she focuses on exceptional customer service. "I love helping that first-time homebuyer or that 18-year-old establishing credit when they buy a car," she says. "It's about relationships."

Crystal loves that community involvement is part of her job and participates in educational programs at Cedar Hill Elementary and Ardmore High School where students learn how to make deposits by putting their own money in a savings account at the bank. "It's teaching kids the importance of saving," she says. She also teaches a class at the high school that deals with establishing credit, budgeting and saving money. "We really believe in giving back to the youth," she says.

She's involved with the Ardmore Police Department's annual toy drive and the school's backpack program, which supplies food for students. She enjoys cooking and spending time with her sons, ages 20 and 16. Now that her kids are older, balancing work and home isn't as difficult. "It's a juggling act, being a wife, mother and having a career," she says.



Crystal Tucker works at First National Bank. She enjoys spending time with her animals and considers the cows her pets.

Photo by Rachel Brister Photography

FUNKY CHICKENS

Ornamental poultry are not your basic backyard birds



Light Brahma bantams are Turner's favorite chickens to breed and show.

Story by SARA D. PATTERSON



Joe, Meagan, Turner and Kaiser Holland have found a home in the world of exhibition poultry.

Seven-year-old Turner Holland wanted to keep busy outside of school, but he knew he wasn't athletic and couldn't stand sports. That's when his dad, Joe, brought home a half-dozen baby chickens from Tractor Supply.

Those first six chicks led to hundreds more as Turner and his family jumped into the world of backyard poultry at their home in Harrodsburg, Kentucky. Now known as Chicken Hill Farm, they are a go-to source of the rare blue Araucana, as well as several other breeds of ornamental chickens.

Their clientele is a growing group that finds joy in raising chickens. More than 12 million people — about twice the population of Arizona — share their yards with a flock, according to The American Pet Products Association's most recent national pet owner survey. The number of households with chickens rose from 8% in 2008 to 13% in 2020.

Many people choose to keep them as pets or as a steady source of fresh eggs.

But exhibition chickens like the Hollands' are often inconsistent layers. Instead, these flashy fowls have a different job — strutting their stuff.

The Hollands' signature Araucana chickens are recognizable by their poof of feathers — known as tufts — that grow at their ears instead of at their “rumpless” tail ends. While the “hilarious, friendly girls,” known for their pastel blue eggs, are Chicken Hill Farm's stars, they share the spotlight with many other funky chickens. There's the Muppet-like jet black Polish with their explosion of fluffy, white head feathers that often obscure their eyes. The Brahmas have abundant, soft feathers that cover their legs and feet. And then there are the small silkies, the most unique of all. Lacking the barbicels that hold a feather's shape, they look — and feel — like they're covered with fur rather than feathers.

Maintaining the chickens' genetics is fascinating, says Turner's mom, Meagan.

At first, she and Turner focused on breeding, but then they discovered the exhibition part of fancy poultry. They took a few of their favorites to a local county show in June 2022 and then to another one a week later. Turner is now 11 and a rising star on the exhibition poultry circuit.

"After that, it just snowballed, and he's all in," Meagan says. "He just fell into it and is obsessed. This is such a great activity for him and for us to do as a family."

The family now spends most weekends in the summer and fall traveling to exhibitions where Turner is making a name for himself. Meagan handles the birds. Joe, an Army veteran, drives. And younger son, Kaiser, is beginning to join his brother in the show ring.

"I don't know if my husband was as excited about our new lifestyle," Meagan says with a laugh. "He's not into the breeding like Turner and I are. But he enjoys the birds and the time we spend together as a family." 



ABOVE: Turner's light Brahma bantam cockerel won champion of the Feather Legged Class in the junior show at the Ohio National Poultry Show.

LEFT: As more people become involved with raising fancy chickens at home, the number of exhibition poultry shows and entrants continues to grow.



Photo by Sara D. Patterson

Are you ready for backyard chickens?

Saving money and healthier eggs are the intent of many people who raise chickens, but those goals are often difficult to reach, says Gregory Archer, associate professor and extension specialist for Texas A&M Department of Poultry Science.

"I tell people it should be more about self-satisfaction and the desire to know exactly how and where your eggs came from. Chickens are also fun, and kids love them."

Possible challenges include bird medical care, waste management or strategies for excess eggs. Similarly, predators can quickly be an issue.

Also, there are geographic-specific considerations. "Often, people don't manage heat or get the correct breeds for Texas heat," he says. "You need to make sure you have fresh water, shade and maybe some fans."

A little research will help identify birds suitable for heat, cold or any environment.

CHICKEN CONSIDERATIONS



If you're contemplating backyard chickens, consider these points before adopting the chicken lifestyle.

LOCAL LAWS AND NEIGHBORHOOD REGULATIONS

- Check for the latest rules on chicken ownership in your town and county. Many cities limit the number of chickens allowed per household and prohibit roosters entirely.
- Often, cities require chickens to be kept enclosed and that the coop is well maintained and cleaned frequently.
- If you decide to sell your eggs, ensure it's legal where you live.

EXPENSES

Even small-scale chicken farming requires ongoing expenses after buying or building a coop and fencing.

- A 40-pound bag of feed can cost \$25 or more, depending on the brand, nutritional value and other factors.
- Dietary supplements are typically needed, so budget for extra proteins and treats, like dried insects — a 5-pound bag can cost at least \$50.
- Chickens require fresh bedding, like pine shavings or chopped straw, every time the coop is cleaned.

CARE

While caring for chickens isn't a full-time job, do expect to invest time.

- Most people adopt a daily or twice-daily routine for feeding and watering.
- Many times, chickens need to be let out of a small coop in the morning and herded back in at night for safety.
- Remember, chickens can fly. Some people prefer to clip their wings regularly, while others choose a run with fencing or netting overhead.

Source: Osceola County Extension Agent Jessica Sullivan



Streaming 101

Choosing what's best for you

With more news, sports, educational and entertainment options than ever, it's no surprise the use of the latest streaming platforms continues to increase.

Whether it's Sling TV, Hulu, YouTube TV or DirecTV Stream for local channels and more traditional channel lineups or movies on services like Netflix, Paramount + or Disney +, a good streaming experience requires a high-speed internet connection like Ardmore Telephone Company's service.

Streaming is convenient and apps can be used on a smart TV or devices such as Roku, Amazon Fire TV Stick, a laptop or smartphone. And, perhaps best of all, streaming is easy and often less expensive than cable or satellite.

It's important to choose the streaming service that makes the most sense for your family. It's easy to sign up by going to the website for the service you choose. There are options that give viewers a little bit of everything. While some services are similar to more traditional cable options, others target more specific interests. For example, Fubo TV is geared to sports fans.

TV STREAMING CONTINUED TO RISE IN 2023

While strikes by writers and actors resulted in an extended pause in content creation, streaming channels continued to gobble up about half the daily time TV audiences viewed media last year, according to Nielsen, which tracks media trends and viewership.

There's a rich, deep archive of shows and movies, illustrated by the rise of "Suits," a legal dramedy that ended its run on the

USA Network in 2019. For one 12-week span last year, Netflix audiences watched 36.8 billion minutes of the show — the equivalent of 70,000 years.

Nielsen found several other eye-catching trends:

- A typical adult on average spends more than 10 hours daily with some form of media, about half of which is TV content.
- Streaming hit a high for its proportion of total TV usage, nearly 39% in 2023.
- Traditionally scheduled television programming, however, still dominated the media mix. Broadcast and cable accounted for more than 50% of TV usage.
- Broadcast and cable programming attracted an audience of 185.1 billion between the start of 2023 and November of that year.
- When looking at original programs, Netflix dominated. The top titles included "Outer Banks," "The Night Agent" and "Ginny & George."
- When it came to streaming movies, Netflix again led the group with "Glass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery." Disney+ followed close behind with "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever" and "Avatar: The Way of the Water."

Those are just a few of the trends, emphasizing both the rise of streaming and the resiliency of broadcast channels. Viewers have more options than ever.

To learn more about Sling TV or internet service to accommodate streaming devices to widen your viewing options, visit www.ardmore.net. 📺



Graphic: TarikVision/Adobe Stock

Symmetrical speeds

Why it matters

Have you ever seen an ad for high-speed internet with an introductory price that's just too good to be true? In most cases, it is. Buried in the fine print, there's often a disclaimer explaining that the advertised speeds apply only to downloads.

A QUICK Rundown on Speeds

Simply put, download speeds are how quickly you can retrieve information from the internet. Quick download speeds end annoyances like buffering. Upload speeds determine how quickly you can share something on the internet. The quicker the upload speeds, the faster you can share a social media post, upload a file or participate in a video meeting without lags.

FASTER Uploads

Our upload speeds are quickly becoming the biggest distinction setting Ardmore Telephone Company apart from our competitors. Our fiber network not only provides Gig-capable speeds, but our upload and download speeds are about the same. Also known as symmetrical speeds, this

makes a substantial difference in so many daily online tasks.

DON'T MISS OUT

If you're having trouble taking part in the latest trends in digital media content, interacting and communicating online or using devices like video doorbells, smart appliances and cloud-based cameras, the speed of your internet connection might be the reason.

THE SPEED YOU NEED

To estimate the minimum upload capacity your household needs, take the number of active internet users and multiply that figure by 5 Mbps. Then add 5 Mbps per smart device in the household. The result of that equation quickly overwhelms many of ATC's competitors, which typically have upload limits of 10-15 Mbps, resulting in poor performance for most users.

Symmetrical speeds make a difference for everyone, but especially for those who use videoconferencing platforms or who share documents or large photo or video files online. Matching upload and download

speeds are also vital for livestreamers and digital media content creators using platforms like YouTube and Twitch, which require increased upload speeds to produce higher-quality content. 🗨️

Experiencing internet issues? LET US HELP!

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

Fiber-fast internet is the future. And it's here!



800-830-9946 | www.ardmore.net

Note: Fiber internet is not yet available in all ATC service areas.



Regional Accents

Local favorites are
key ingredient of
America's melting pot

Every local dish has a story behind it, history heaped with flavor. One of the best ways to discover these is by stirring the nation's culinary pot to see what's cooking.

Certain dishes are common to us Americans across the board. We'll fry just about anything. From Twinkies to turkeys, they all go in the deep fryer. But, when it comes to comfort-food classics, states and regions have their own distinct accents. U.S. culinary traditions form a giant melting pot with regional flavors blended in for extra deliciousness.

Regional foods are some of the most fascinating bites one can experience. Here's a look at some of the ones that are favorites across our nation.



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

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

SMOKED GOUDA MAC AND CHEESE

You'd be hard-pressed to walk into a diner around the South and not see mac and cheese on the menu. This recipe just takes it up a notch.

- 1 pound short pasta, such as elbow macaroni or shells
- 1 pound smoked gouda cheese, grated
- 8 ounces extra-sharp white cheddar cheese, grated
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter
- 4 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 2 cups heavy whipping cream
- 2 cups whole milk
- 1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon ground white pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon ground mustard
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- Salt, to taste
- 4 slices of bacon, crumbled (optional)

Preheat the oven to 350 F. Cook pasta according to package directions to al dente stage, then set aside.

In a large Dutch oven or other deep pot, heat butter over medium-low heat. Once butter has melted, add in flour and whisk until all flour disappears, then slowly add in heavy cream and whole milk. Stir and let mixture come to a slight boil. Add in all spices and stir again. Lastly, add in 8 ounces of smoked gouda cheese and white cheddar cheese. Whisk until all cheese has melted.

Add in pasta and mix everything together to fully incorporate, making sure all pasta is coated with sauce. Add salt, to taste.

Transfer mixture to a large, lightly greased baking dish, then top dish with remaining smoked gouda. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes or until mixture is golden and bubbly.

Let cool for 15 minutes and serve warm topped with crumbled bacon, if desired. Makes 8 servings.



WILD RICE CHICKEN CASSEROLE

Wild rice is found throughout the Midwest, where this recipe originates.

- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1/3 cup butter
- 1/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1 can (14 1/2 ounces) chicken broth
- 1 cup half-and-half
- 4 cups cubed, cooked chicken
- 4 cups cooked wild rice
- 2 jars (4 1/2 ounces each) sliced mushrooms, drained
- 1 jar (4 ounces) diced pimentos, drained
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh parsley
- 1/3 cup slivered almonds

In a large saucepan, saute onion in butter until tender. Stir in the flour, salt and pepper until blended. Gradually stir in broth. Bring to a boil. Boil and stir for 2 minutes or until thickened and bubbly. Stir in the half-and-half, chicken, rice, mushrooms, pimentos and parsley. Heat through.

Transfer mixture to a greased 2 1/2-quart baking dish. Sprinkle with almonds. Bake, uncovered, at 350 F for 30-35 minutes or until bubbly. Makes 6-8 servings.

SALSA ROJAS

Salsa is the condiment of choice throughout Texas and many of the Western states.

- 1 can (28 ounces) whole tomatoes, drained
- 1 can (14 1/2 ounces) diced tomatoes with garlic and onion, drained
- 1 can (14 1/2 ounces) stewed tomatoes (with Mexican seasonings, if you can find them), drained
- 1 can (10 ounces) diced tomatoes and green chilies, drained
- 1 medium onion, quartered
- 2 banana peppers, seeded and coarsely chopped
- 2 jalapeno peppers, seeded and coarsely chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2 cup minced fresh cilantro
- 1/4 cup lime juice
- 2 ripe avocados, peeled and cubed
- Tortilla chips



Place the first 10 ingredients in a food processor; cover and process until chopped. Add cilantro and lime juice; cover and pulse until combined.

Transfer to a bowl; stir in avocados. Serve with tortilla chips or use as a condiment for your favorite Tex-Mex dishes.

SALMON PICCATA

This is a popular recipe in the Northwest where fresh salmon is easy to find. In other states, try to get your hands on the freshest fish possible to bring out the flavors in this dish.

- 4 salmon steaks, 1 inch thick
- All-purpose flour (for dredging)
- 1/4 cup plus 3 tablespoons butter, divided
- 3 tablespoons onion, finely chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 heaping tablespoon capers, drained
- 1/8 teaspoon dried Italian seasonings, crushed
- 1/2 cup white wine
- 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons beef broth

Preheat oven to 400 F. Rinse salmon steaks under cool water, pat dry and roll in flour.

In a large ovenproof frying pan or saute pan, heat 1/4 cup butter until it melts. Briefly saute the salmon steaks, browning them lightly on both sides.

Bake, covered, 10 to 15 minutes until a meat thermometer registers an internal temperature of 140 F, or until salmon is slightly opaque in the thickest part. You may need to cut to test. During this time the meat continues to cook because the meat temperature will rise 5 to 10 degrees after it is removed from the oven and the juices will redistribute. Remove from oven. Reserve liquid in the pan, and transfer salmon onto a warm serving platter.

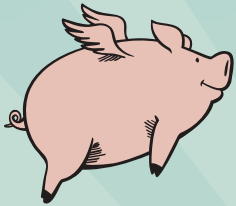
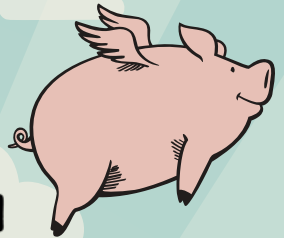
Using the same pan over medium heat, stir into the reserved liquid the onion, garlic, capers and Italian seasonings. Simmer for 5 minutes. Add white wine, lemon juice and beef broth. Stir until well blended. Turn off the heat, whisk in the remaining 3 tablespoons butter until blended. Remove from heat, pour sauce over salmon and serve immediately. Makes 4 servings. 🍴



P.O. Box 549 • Ardmore, TN 38449

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

MULTIPLE DEVICES
VIRTUAL REALITY
CONNECTED FAMILIES LARGE FILES
4K VIDEO AUGMENTED REALITY
BANDWIDTH HOGS
VIRTUAL REALITY 4K VIDEO
GAMING AUGMENTED REALITY LARGE FILES
MULTIPLE DEVICES GAMING
CONNECTED FAMILIES 4K VIDEO



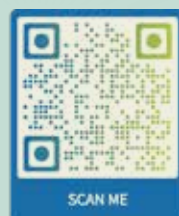
Elevate to
**BANDWIDTH
HOG HEAVEN**



Live Life Connected.

**GET GIG
CONNECTED TODAY!**

ATC's fiber internet may not be available in all areas.



Ardmore
TELEPHONE COMPANY

800-830-9946
www.ardmore.net



ATC is an equal opportunity employer and provider.