

CONNECTION

Lights, Camera, Action

Streaming
local sports



CLOTHE OUR KIDS

MESH EXTENDERS



By Shirley Bloomfield, CEO
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

A Winning Game

Esports brings fun, competition and a future

NTCA members are committed to doing more than providing fast, reliable internet service. They strive to enrich the community, including finding new opportunities to help everyone as technologies and online trends evolve.

For example, a growing high school sport unlocks all the traditional benefits of competition, such as team building, while enhancing skills applicable to modern careers. Known as esports, competitive gaming can make a difference in the lives of students.

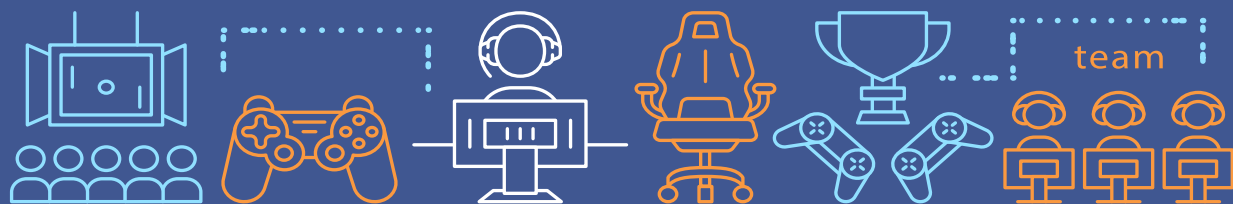
High schools across the nation have embraced esports, and the National Federation of State High School Associations includes esports alongside basketball, football, volleyball and more. Without fast, reliable internet services, however, rural students wouldn't have access. That's the power of providers like yours—they break down barriers and open doors to new opportunities.

Many of the competitions may seem familiar to gamers, ranging from sports games and racing simulations to strategy

and multiplayer battle titles. A growing number of colleges recognize esports and field teams. There's even professional-level competition.

The benefits of esports resemble those found in traditional high school sports. Success relies on teamwork and cooperation. Participants learn life skills and gain a deeper understanding of technology needed for careers ranging from software development to marketing. The broad world of gaming also brings people together, and 61% of gamers say they've met someone they otherwise would not have ever encountered.

Every day broadband uplifts rural America, and we look forward to seeing what innovations and opportunities come next. 



ESPORTS

ESPORTS STATS

Esports is increasingly popular, turning gaming into team competitions at high schools, colleges and even in professional competitions. Some online streaming services offer live coverage of competitions.

WHO ARE GAMERS?

- 24%** are younger than 18 years old
- 36%** are between the ages of 18-34
- 13%** are between the ages of 35-44
- 12%** are between the ages of 45-54

WHO ARE ESPORTS SPECTATORS?

- 50%** are between the ages of 25-41
- 26%** are between the ages of 16-24
- 20%** are between the ages of 42-56

BUILDING SKILLS

Esports creates skills today's students will find marketable.

- Computer network and hardware proficiency
- Digital literacy
- Broadcasting
- Soft skills
- Leadership
- Teamwork
- Problem-solving
- Team building

Source: NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

A Sound Investment



System upgrade takes listening to next level

Whether you're gaming, watching a movie or listening to music, a high-quality sound system can take you from casually listening to feeling like you're part of the action. If you've thought about installing a sound system in your home, 'tis the season, to treat yourself to one that easily meets your needs and budget.

All sound systems have two basic components. First, there's the source providing the audio signal. This can be a TV, gaming device or digital music player, like your phone or computer. The second component is the amplifier, which boosts the audio signal. More than just volume, the amplifier improves the overall sound quality with more detail and clarity.

When it comes to speakers, music formats only require two, but the more speakers you have, the more immersive the sound will be. A soundbar, sometimes called a media bar, has multiple speakers enclosed in a single horizontal unit, usually placed above or below the TV. A surround sound system is much more complex, with speakers strategically placed around the room to deliver the best possible sound.

SOUNDBAR VS. SURROUND SOUND

Soundbars are ready to go right out of the box. They're relatively inexpensive, sleek and easy to install. Soundbars are ideal for smaller spaces because of their minimal visual impact.

When shopping for a soundbar, pay close attention to the number of speakers hidden inside. A larger soundbar doesn't

necessarily mean better sound quality. Look to manufacturers like Bose, Sonos or Vizio for reliable options.

Surround sound is the choice for high fidelity and full dynamic range of sound—think of your listening area as a movie theater with booming audio. It considers factors like room size, acoustics and listening positions to determine the number of speakers and locations. If you already have a basic speaker system at home, upgrading to surround sound might be as simple as adding an extra speaker or two.

PRICE OF PERFECTION

Very simple sound systems can still deliver a fantastic listening experience, so don't worry if you're starting on a smaller budget. But if you're designing your own setup and need advice on speaker placement or hiding wires behind walls, you'll need an electrician for expert guidance. Installers charge an average of \$50-\$100 an hour, so remember to budget for that.

The most common format for surround sound systems is the 5.1, with six audio channels, five speakers and a subwoofer that delivers the deep, rumbling bass frequencies. A 5.1 setup can cost between \$300 to \$1,700.

A more extensive option is the 7.1 surround, with two additional audio channels and two more speakers. Comparable to the audio setup found in large cinemas, the cost of this configuration runs anywhere from \$400 to \$4,000. [🔗](#)

Honoring Those Who Served

Veterans Day is a holiday for all

I always look forward to the holidays, celebrating the bustle, hustle and joy that come with Thanksgiving and Christmas. For many of us, these are happy weeks, and I'm appreciative of every one of them. But there's also another holiday this season deserving of reflection, gratitude and remembrance.



TREVOR BONNSTETTER

Chief Executive Officer

Every Nov. 11, Veterans Day honors the men and women who served in the armed forces. It's a day that carries a great deal of weight in communities like ours, where many families know intimately about all that our veterans face.

Perhaps there are stories handed down from generation to generation about someone who served decades ago. Or maybe a family member recently served or is currently active in the military.

At ATC, we are proud to be able to serve the Ardmore Veterans Museum, which gives our community a place to celebrate and honor hometown heroes. I encourage each of you to plan a visit this Veterans Day to learn about and recognize our local veterans.

I see daily examples of how our communications services connect us. Even though they've changed over the years, beginning with telephone service and continuing with our fast and reliable broadband network, the thread is still the same—we help you make connections.

Veterans Day gives another opportunity to make a connection that may have a deeper meaning. Consider taking a few minutes to reach out, listen and learn about those who served.

One of the best ways to honor our veterans is by ensuring their stories are never lost. In today's digital-infused world, we have more communications tools than ever. Many online resources allow you to learn more about the experiences of our veterans and contribute to preserving their stories.

For example, the Library of Congress' Veterans History Project is a great resource. The project collects and preserves personal accounts of American war veterans so future generations can hear them. If you have a veteran in your life, consider recording their story and sending it to the project. It's a powerful way to ensure their legacy endures. Visit loc.gov and search for the Veterans History Project for all the details.

Another valuable resource is the National Archives, archives.gov, which has a wealth of information about military records and veterans' service histories. You can request records, which is particularly useful for those doing genealogy work. Similarly, The Virtual Wall, found at virtualwall.org, collects and displays the names and details of service members who gave their lives in Vietnam.

Thank you for joining me in celebrating these valiant men and women. Have a wonderful holiday season and a merry Christmas. 📞



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Ardmore Telephone is an equal-opportunity employer and provider.

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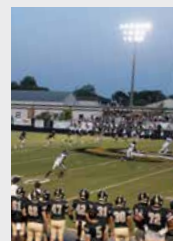


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Produced for Ardmore Telephone by:



On the Cover:



The Ardmore Tigers' season opener against Tanner was streamed live on YouTube and Facebook thanks to the AHS Sports Network. See story Page 8.

Photo courtesy of Rachel Brister

THANK YOU, TREVOR BONNSTETTER!

Ardmore Telephone Company thanks Trevor Bonnstetter for 15 years of service as CEO, a position he has held since Synergy Technology Partners purchased ATC in 2009. Over the years, Bonnstetter oversaw the award of several grants to fund expansion of fiber service across ATC's service area. Please join us in congratulating him as he transitions to a role in government affairs.



CUSTOMER APPRECIATION DAY

ATC thanks everyone who came out to our Customer Appreciation Day in October. We always enjoy the chance to celebrate our customers for the support they show us and our wonderful community.

HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

The ATC offices will be closed for the following holidays:

Veterans Day
Monday, Nov. 11

Thanksgiving Day—Thursday, Nov. 28

Christmas Day—Wednesday, Dec. 25

New Year's Day—Wednesday, Jan. 1



HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

ATC is excited to join our friends and neighbors for the Ardmore Christmas parade again this year. The parade is always one of the highlights of the holiday season, so join us on Dec. 2 to celebrate.



Ardmore Telephone employees gather to celebrate a merry Grinchmas at last year's Ardmore Christmas parade.



Blast Off

Go on a holiday adventure at the U.S. Space & Rocket Center

Story by DREW WOOLLEY

Looking for an out-of-this-world family experience this holiday season? The U.S. Space & Rocket Center in Huntsville, Alabama, will capture everyone's imagination, from kids to adults.

The center was first conceived as Wernher von Braun and his team of rocket scientists were in the final months of refining the Saturn V rocket that would send Apollo astronauts to the moon. As director of the nearby Marshall Space Flight Center, von Braun saw the need for a permanent exhibit to showcase the hardware of the space program.

He petitioned the Alabama Legislature to create a museum with the help of the U.S. Army Missile Command and NASA. The U.S. Army donated land for the museum, and the U.S. Space & Rocket Center opened its doors in 1970, the year after Apollo 11 successfully carried astronauts to the moon and back.

Since then, the center has hosted more than 650,000 visitors each year from as many as 64 different countries. Visitors can get an up-close look at an authentic Saturn V rocket, one of only three in the world, as well as Pathfinder, the world's only fully stacked space shuttle display.

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE TO EXPLORE

Not only is the USSRC an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution, but it is also the official NASA Visitor Center for Marshall Space Flight Center. The museum offers regular bus tours highlighting the facility where the Space Launch System is in development to carry astronauts to Mars, asteroids and even deeper into space.

In addition to exhibits detailing the most complete chronology of launch vehicles in the country, the center's Apollo 16 command module, real Apollo 12 moon rock and daily STEM on Stage performances let visitors interact with artifacts and exhibits.

Children under 8 can explore an International Space Station-themed playground at Kids Cosmos, and every Saturday kids 12 and up are invited to the Maker Lab for hands-on projects that incorporate lessons on topics like solar energy and robotics. Adrenaline junkies can ride the G-Force Accelerator to experience three times the force of gravity or take the Moon Shot to see what a rocket launch feels like as you fly 140 feet straight up in 2.5 seconds.

"The Space & Rocket Center is really an amazing feast for the eyes. It's a place to learn about the past, the present and the future of space exploration."

—Pat Ammons, senior director of public and media relations

AN ASTRONOMICAL CHRISTMAS

One of the USSRC's most popular attractions is the INTUITIVE Planetarium, which features a state-of-the-art digital dome theater. Each screening is unique as a team of live astrophysicists takes visitors on a tour of the solar system.

"It is truly an extraordinary, absolutely world-class planetarium," says Senior Director of Public and Media Relations Pat Ammons. "It's all live and interactive. They take you on a personal tour, you can ask questions and it's highly interactive."

Throughout the holidays, the planetarium also screens a special feature called "The Star of Bethlehem," which explores both the science and religion behind the famous celestial phenomenon. 📺

A HELPING HAND

While the holidays often bring hope and happiness, for many people achieving those peaceful goals are elusive. That's particularly true this year, as communities throughout the Southeast strive to recover from damaging winds and devastating floods.

Dolly Parton, Walmart and countless others have contributed to organizations supporting these rural areas in need. If you wish to contribute, consider these options:

American Red Cross: [redcross.org](https://www.redcross.org)

The Salvation Army: [salvationarmyusa.org](https://www.salvationarmyusa.org)

Photos courtesy of the U.S. Space & Rocket Center

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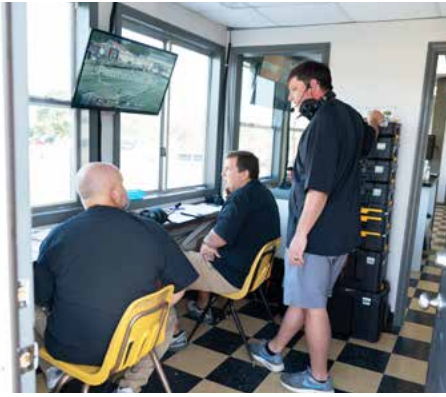
LEFT: The U.S. Space & Rocket Center in Huntsville, Alabama, is a holiday destination for the family.

Photo courtesy of Ash Agency



ABOVE: Finn Cushing, 2, tries an astronaut's suit on for size.

LEFT: See a piece of the moon, a rock brought home by astronauts.



Heath Haney discusses plans with the commentators during a prebroadcast test.

Story by DREW WOOLLEY

HIGH SCHOOL GAME DAY



AHS Sports Network streams quality broadcasts to local fans

As team chaplain for the Ardmore High School football team, Heath Haney was never far from the sidelines during the 2020 season. But the same couldn't be said for many fans when the COVID-19 pandemic kept them away from the stands on Friday nights. Then one team parent had an idea to bring the community a little closer to the action.

"We had a lot of people not coming out to the ballgames, and we were looking for a way we could get the games to people who weren't able to come out," Heath says. "And then Greg Wise had the idea to stream it by himself."

Greg used his phone to stream the first game of the season on Facebook. The following week, Heath joined him along with another parent, Kevin Hillis, who provided more tech support. They started streaming from cameras the football team used to record game film, added commentary from a radio broadcast team, and the AHS Sports Network was born.

The network has grown with each season, adding better-quality equipment, more cameras, coach interviews and coverage for more sports, all streaming live on Facebook and YouTube.

"Now we have kind of a traveling show when we go on the road," math teacher and offensive line coach Jacob Sparkman says. "Everywhere we go people are talking about it, which is awesome. We're doing something cutting edge, and we're trying to be different and want it to be better."



A TEAM EFFORT

As the quality of the production has grown, so has the team needed to keep it running. With Heath directing graphics and an assistant troubleshooting, a typical game can require as many as eight volunteers, between commentators, operators of up to three cameras and a person to switch between each of those feeds on the broadcast.

When Jacob joined the team last year, it was with the hope of getting more students

involved. He taught a media class to give students the skills needed to work the cameras. While a teacher shortage forced the school to put the class on hold this year, the experience was enough to inspire students like senior Sarah Townsend to find other outlets for the skills she picked up.

"I'm not the most tech-smart person, but I learned how to use cameras. And that paid off because now I've bought a camera that I use on my own that I really enjoy," she says. "I applied to be



LEFT: Commentators John South, left, and Jared Kirkpatrick prepare to call Ardmore's football game against Tanner on Aug. 23.

MIDDLE: Public address announcer Jeff Hodges gets ready for kickoff.



BELOW: Kelly Haney operates a camera to get footage from outside the booth.



on yearbook, and now I shoot sporting events that don't get streamed."

Community engagement with the network has also grown—games now average more than 250 viewers. With more eyes and expectations, Heath hopes to continue improving the experience for viewers by adding interactive segments like trivia and prize giveaways for the local crowd.

While much of the money for the network originally came from COVID-related stimulus grants and the athletic department, it's increasingly able to rely on paid advertising to fund equipment upgrades. That support from the community helped the AHS Sports Network team create something special, even with technical limitations.

"We want to do more with it, but you've got to start somewhere. At the beginning, we had to pretty much build everything every week," Jacob says. "We're amateurs, not professionals. Nobody's getting paid for any of this, and people have not complained one bit. My favorite part has just been seeing people enjoy it."

CLEAR SIGNALS

While the AHS Sports Network does its best to maintain a high-quality broadcast of every game throughout the year, that can be a challenge for road games. Often, the main barrier is having a reliable internet connection away from home.

"When we go on the road, we run a mobile hot spot and it's always a 50-50 shot whether it's going to work or not," Heath says. "When we're at home, our whole team breathes a sigh of relief because of the internet that we have. And we're super thankful for them."

In the network's early days, Jacob remembers high-speed fiber from Ardmore Telephone Company being the defining technology that made the broadcasts possible. "I don't think it would ever have gotten off the ground. We were frustrated at every home and away game because we would have so many issues," he says. "Once we saw how well it could work with reliable internet, wheels

started turning. We thought, 'Oh, this can be real.'"

That connection has not only powered a better sports broadcast but helped the community connect with its teams and created more opportunities for students on and off the field. For Heath, one of the standout moments was the first time the network got a clip on the local ABC affiliate in Huntsville.

"We had a fullback that ran a play down the sideline and one of our students got the whole shot," he says. "It was pretty exciting. His whole family and friends got to see him on there. That's been the coolest thing is just the exposure that's helping the kids and the players." 📺

THE ART OF SELF- RELIANCE

Rural writers get a boost from the internet

Story by JEN CALHOUN



Photo courtesy of Shawna Holly

Shawna Holly was researching how to publish her first novel when she ran into a type of writer's block she'd never experienced. This particular block had nothing to do with plot holes or mental tangles. Instead, it centered around the relatively slow-moving churn of books through the nation's traditional publishing houses.

"The industry—from my perspective—is very busy, like so many other businesses right now," Shawna says. "There are very few literary agents and acquisitions editors compared to how many debut authors are seeking representation, and they're all overworked. As a result, the path to traditional publishing is slow. For authors seeking a faster solution, self-publishing is the answer."

So, that's what she did. In June 2023, the Boerne, Texas-based writer published her first novel, "The Stories We Keep," via a self-publishing platform that distributes paperbacks and e-books all over the world. Her second book, "When We're Broken," came out earlier this fall. Both books are in the genre of women's literary fiction.

TAKING CHARGE

Shawna is among a growing number of writers embracing self-publishing

platforms to bypass traditional gatekeepers and speed up the book publishing process. This is especially true for writers from small or rural towns who may have a harder time finding an agent or fostering connections to publishing houses in larger cities.

"Agents receive thousands of queries a year, and they're only taking on maybe two or three new authors in addition to the clients they already have to manage," Shawna says. "It just makes it darn near impossible to find that magic match. I just thought, 'I'm in my 40s and have more stories to write. I don't want to wait.'"

Best-selling authors who famously self-published before landing big book deals and film adaptations include Amanda Brown, who wrote "Legally Blonde," and Andy Weir, who wrote "The Martian." Colleen Hoover, the East Texas author of the blockbuster "It Ends with Us," also self-published her first book, "Slammed," in 2012. She increased her audience by giving away free books and by posting regularly on social media.

Even those self-published writers who don't reach traditional literary heights have profited in the world of self-publishing. The Alliance of Independent Authors published a survey in 2023 reporting that

self-published authors earned a median income of \$12,749—more than double that of traditionally published authors. They also made up more than 50% of Kindle's Top 400 books of 2023, the survey found.

UNTANGLING THE WEB

Self-publishing isn't the only internet tool that sparks creativity, however. Connie Clyburn is an East Tennessee-based writer of several books, including "Wisdom from the Doublewide" and the devotional "Aging Fabulously." Connie found fellowship online through video calls with other writers from as far away as Ireland.

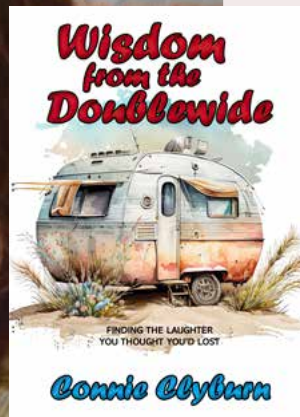
From her home in Telford, Tennessee—which she describes as "a little wide place in the road between Jonesborough and Greeneville"—she also uses the internet to connect with others through her online magazine. Called *ah law, y'all*, the quarterly publication highlights the Southern Appalachian area.

"You don't always think about how vital the internet is as a writer," says Connie, who infuses her writing with scripture and ways to apply it to everyday life. "But, as a rural writer, it has opened up a big world. Anything that I come up with



that I want to read about or research or just connect with is right there at your fingertips.” 🗨️

Photo courtesy of Connie Clyburn



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

For more information on Connie Clyburn, look up her blog, “Wisdom from the Doublewide,” and the online magazine *ah law, y’all*.

Find out more about Shawna Holly and her books at shawnaholly.com.

LEFT: Connie Clyburn got her start as a journalist, and now she writes books, a blog and a newsletter from her home in East Tennessee near Jonesborough. Connie turned her blog into the book “Wisdom from the Doublewide.”

OPPOSITE PAGE: Shawna Holly lives outside of San Antonio, in a town of about 15,000 people. An Air Force veteran, Shawna self-published her book, “The Stories We Keep,” to avoid the sometimes long and tedious process of finding an agent and a publisher.

GET A START WITH SELF-PUBLISHING

Most writers learn quickly that finding a publisher is often harder than writing the book itself. Books are meant to be read, but the steps involved with finding an agent and publisher can waste valuable time and resources. As a result, many writers self-publish. The comprehensive book and writers' blog “What We Reading” lists several self-publishing platforms. We've listed a few resources here for e-books. Visit whatwewereading.com for more information on self-publishing print books.

Amazon Kindle Direct Publishing, also known as KDP

- Highest market share and sales in the self-publishing industry.
- Writers earn royalties of between 35% and 70% depending on the price of the book.
- It's important to note there's another option called KDP Select, which is different than KDP. KDP Select users get certain marketing perks that can help sell their books. In exchange, they can't publish their work with any other self-publishing company.

Apple Books

- Writers earn royalties of 70% on all e-books.
- Second-biggest player in the industry after Amazon's KDP.
- No upfront fees for authors once they have an iTunes account.

Barnes & Noble Press, also known as B&N

- Writers earn 70% on e-books above 99 cents.
- B&N is considered one of the easiest platforms to use.
- Completely free to use, and it does not require exclusivity.

Other platforms include Kobo Writing Life, Draft2Digital, StreetLib, IngramSpark and PublishDrive, some of which have different pricing models and royalty distributions. Each of these platforms generally offers distribution to all the major e-book retailers, so it's important to research all options.

Source: “15 Best Self-Publishing Platforms for Your Book” from the blog “What We Reading.”

Warm Hearts

Clothe Our Kids provides for local children



Photo courtesy of Clothe Our Kids of Ardmore and Giles County

Volunteers organize clothes by gender, size and season.

Story by DREW WOOLLEY

Gabby Blade never planned to run a branch of Clothe Our Kids. When the Fayetteville, Tennessee-based nonprofit dedicated to providing clothing and shoes to children expanded into Ardmore, a friend of hers was in line to run it. But when that friend had to back out unexpectedly, Gabby took the reins.

“We just knew that there was a need here in Ardmore, and that’s the direction God led us. We’ve just been super blessed with donations and financially,” she says. “Personally, we didn’t have things when I was younger. We struggled, and these kids hold a place in my heart because I myself was a kid in need.”

The first Clothe Our Kids location was started in 2013 by two Fayetteville moms, Laura Mayer and Shelley Lyon, who saw the need to help

kids in their community. They operated it out of a garage. Today, donations fill a 3,500-square-foot warehouse downtown, with the founders’ ultimate goal being an independent Clothe Our Kids chapter in every city across the country.

TEAMING UP TO HELP

The Ardmore and Giles County branch held its grand opening in 2018 at its location on Savings Center Drive. In the six years since, Gabby estimates the organization has been able to clothe more than 1,200 kids.

To do that, Clothe Our Kids relies on the local school system. The organization takes requests from school counselors, nurses and the Department of Health and Human Services to identify children who might need the organization’s help. “When we first opened, we had to go around to the different schools and board meetings to give out our information and just let them know that we are here,” Gabby says.

The Ardmore branch gets about 10 requests each month, but back-to-school

and seasonal changes can be especially busy times. Gabby and her team of half a dozen regular volunteers pack each bag with around eight to 10 outfits, including shoes, coats, underwear, socks and diapers, if needed.

Even with her reliable team, Gabby is always on the lookout for more helping hands to sort through donations and organize them by size, gender and season. She may not meet the children who eventually wear those clothes, but she still knows Clothe Our Kids is making a difference.

“Every bag that I send out, I pray over. We never know the kids’ names or anything about them. We just know what school they go to, and we deliver the clothes directly,” Gabby says. “It just holds a special place in my heart.” 

HOW TO HELP

Clothe Our Kids of Ardmore and Giles County always needs more volunteers to help sort and organize donated clothing. Call 931-638-2759 to set up a time to drop off new or gently used clothing. Drop-offs can also be scheduled by emailing clotheourkidsardmoregiles@gmail.com.

CLEAR SIGNALS



Living Connected

Fiber for the speed of life!

How a mesh network can keep you covered



Ideally, a powerful Wi-Fi router can provide internet service throughout your home. But, whether it's the size of the space, thick walls in the way or other equipment interfering with the signal, we've all experienced a weak Wi-Fi signal in some corner of the house.

While Wi-Fi extenders can provide a quick fix, they're far from a perfect solution. By simply repeating your primary router's signal and effectively layering another Wi-Fi network on top of your existing one, extenders are often inefficient. They might slow down your overall connection speed, require complicated software to work with your router and lead to the hassle of switching between networks any time the signal gets weak.

A mesh network, on the other hand, provides one continuous Wi-Fi network throughout your whole house that is easy to use and simple to expand, if needed.

HOW DOES A MESH NETWORK WORK?

A mesh network functions as one unified network. Rather than a single access point with a traditional router, a mesh network uses several "nodes" that provide multiple access points to the same network.

One node typically acts as the base station, much like a router. The other nodes can then be spread throughout your home while still communicating with the base station wirelessly, providing comprehensive Wi-Fi coverage over a wider area. Each node is made by the same manufacturer so they can easily communicate with each other without slowing down your experience.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF A MESH NETWORK?

Excellent coverage for large spaces—
A mesh network is the ideal way to maintain a strong Wi-Fi signal across a

large household. ATC can help you find the best placement for nodes in your home, so you never wander into a dead zone again.

No switching between networks—
Unlike a Wi-Fi extender, each node in a mesh network lets you connect to the same base station. That means you don't have to worry about connecting to different networks in different parts of your home.

Ease of use—Since mesh network nodes are all made by the same manufacturer, you don't have to worry about cumbersome software or multiple updates to keep them secure. And growing your coverage is as simple as getting an additional node. 📶

TROUBLESHOOTING A WEAK SIGNAL

Test your signal strength—Free tools can help you map your home's signal strength to show where it starts to degrade.

Test your connection—If your measured connection speed matches the package on your bill, you could need a higher speed package. If the measured speed is significantly lower, you probably need to boost the signal.

Move your router—One of the simplest ways to improve coverage is to move the router away from walls, heavy-duty appliances, electronics or other objects that could block the signal.

**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.

**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.

Holiday Simplicity

Breakfast casseroles are a gift for busy hosts

Make-ahead casseroles can make the difference between holiday stress and satisfaction. From sweet to savory, there are many choices. Here are several to try this season.



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

SCRAMBLED EGG BAKE

- 4 slices bacon
- 8 ounces dried beef
- 2 4-ounce cans mushrooms, drained
- 1/2 cup butter, divided
- 1/2 cup flour
- 4 cups whole milk
- 16 eggs
- 1 cup evaporated milk

Saute the bacon until almost done. Add dried beef, mushrooms and 1/4 cup butter. While hot, add flour and stir in whole milk. Simmer sauce until thickened and smooth, stirring constantly.

Beat eggs with evaporated milk and salt. Scramble in remaining 1/4 cup butter.

Grease a 9-by-13-inch baking dish. Ladle a layer of sauce into the dish followed by a layer of scrambled eggs. Repeat layers, ending with a layer of sauce. Garnish with mushrooms and bacon. Cover with foil and bake at 275 F for 1 hour.

To make ahead: Make casserole, cover and refrigerate. Bake as directed.

BLUEBERRY PANCAKE CASSEROLE

Crumb Topping:

- 1/2 cup flour
- 3 tablespoons brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted

Pancakes:

- 2 1/2 cups flour
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1/2 tablespoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 2 large eggs
- 2 cups whole buttermilk
- 1/2 cup milk
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1-2 teaspoons finely grated lemon zest
- 2 cups blueberries
- Maple syrup, for serving

Crumb topping: The day before, in a medium bowl, combine flour, sugars, cinnamon and salt. Add melted butter and stir until fully incorporated. Cover and refrigerate.

Pancakes: Preheat the oven to 350 F. Grease a 9-by-13-inch baking dish and set aside.

In a large bowl, combine flour, sugar, salt, baking powder and baking soda.

In a separate bowl, combine eggs, buttermilk, milk, melted butter, lemon zest and vanilla extract. Whisk wet ingredients until well combined. Add wet ingredients to the dry ingredients and stir until just combined. The batter will be lumpy. Do not overmix.

Pour the batter into the greased baking dish. Sprinkle the blueberries over the top. Remove the crumb topping from the fridge and crumble over the top of the blueberries and batter. Bake for 35-45 minutes, until puffed and light golden brown. Use a toothpick to check the center for doneness. Serve warm with maple syrup.



FRENCH TOAST CASSEROLE

- 1 12- to 14-ounce loaf French or sour-dough bread. Stale bread works great.
- 1 8-ounce package full-fat cream cheese, softened
- 2 tablespoons powdered sugar
- 3 teaspoons vanilla extract, divided
- 8 eggs
- 2/3 cup packed brown sugar
- 3/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 2 1/4 cups whole milk

Topping:

- 1/3 cup packed light brown sugar
- 1/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter, cold and cubed
- Maple syrup and/or powdered sugar for topping

Grease a 9-by-13-inch casserole with nonstick spray. Either cut the bread into 1-inch cubes or tear it into preferred size. Spread half of the cubes into prepared baking pan.

Using a hand-held or stand mixer with a whisk attachment, beat the cream cheese

on medium-high speed until completely smooth. Beat in the powdered sugar and 1/4 teaspoon vanilla until combined. Drop random spoonfuls of cream cheese mixture on top of the bread. Layer the remaining bread cubes on top of cream cheese. Make sure some cream cheese is still exposed on top. Set aside.

Whisk the eggs, milk, cinnamon, brown sugar and remaining vanilla together until no brown sugar lumps remain. Pour evenly over the bread. Cover the pan tightly with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 3-4 hours or up to 24 hours. Overnight is best.

When ready to bake, remove from the refrigerator and uncover while you make the topping.

Mix the brown sugar, flour and cinnamon. Then, use a pastry cutter or your hands to cut the cold butter into the topping mixture until crumbly.

Bake at 350 F for 45-60 minutes. You can use a knife to check the French toast—it should come out mostly clean when the dish is ready. Avoid putting the knife into the cream cheese dollop, which could give a false reading.

SAVORY RICE CEREAL CASSEROLE

- 2 pounds pork sausage
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 cups cooked rice
- 3 cups Rice Krispies
- 3 cups shredded sharp cheddar cheese
- 6 eggs
- 2 cans cream of celery soup
- 1/2 cup milk



In a skillet, cook sausage with onion until meat is no longer pink and onions are tender; drain. Transfer mixture to a lightly greased 9-by-13-inch casserole. Top with layers of rice, cereal and cheese. In a bowl beat the eggs with the soup and milk. Spread mixture on top. Cover with foil and refrigerate overnight.

Preheat oven to 350 F. Remove foil and bake for 45 minutes to 1 hour or until a knife inserted in center comes out clean. Let stand for 5-10 minutes before serving.

Note: Making this a day ahead helps to soften the cereal. It can be baked right away, but the cereal may still be crispy. 📺



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A photograph of Santa Claus with a white beard and glasses, wearing a red suit and hat. He is peeking from behind a red banner that has a white, textured border. The banner contains the headline "WAS THAT A CLATTER?".

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