

CONNECTION

Dinner on a Stick

Fire up the grill
for tasty kabobs

PIZZA ON MAIN

COWBOY POETS



By Shirley Bloomfield, CEO
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

Ensuring Access for All

Supreme Court upholds
Universal Service Fund

Money raised by a small fee on your communications bill makes a critical difference throughout rural America. Earlier this year, a ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court allowed the Universal Service Fund, or USF, to continue.

I can't emphasize enough how critical this ruling is in a journey that began in 1934, when the Communications Act decreed all Americans should have access to rapid, efficient and nationwide communication services at reasonable prices.

Then, the 1996 Telecommunications Act created the USF to better connect rural areas and make voice and broadband services more affordable for rural and low-income consumers, schools, libraries and rural health care facilities.

By affirming that the Federal Communications Commission has discretion to collect the fees, the court kept this foundational tool in place. A March survey of nearly 270 NTCA members indicated that the USF programs help keep rural broadband rates more affordable. Without this funding, rural consumer rates could be more than double those in urban areas.

Policymakers in Washington, D.C., are debating how to reform universal service programs going forward, so that they can continue to serve the needs of millions of Americans.

It is essential that our elected officials understand the positive impacts the critical USF programs have had—and continue to have—on the availability, affordability and sustainability of voice and broadband services for millions of consumers, businesses and anchor institutions in rural America.

Visit ntca.org/universalservice. 



Secure Your Digital World

Keys for success

While October is National Cybersecurity Awareness Month, protecting yourself requires year-long vigilance. And everyone's needs vary based on the online tools and resources you use.

Remember, bad actors are increasingly sophisticated—they want access to your information. The FBI offers a few tips for some of the key points of emphasis, and they provide a good starting point for planning your personalized security strategy.

Create a sturdy defense. Update systems, software and apps. Also, install a strong, reputable antivirus program.

Connect carefully. Be cautious when connecting to a public Wi-Fi network. Avoid sensitive transactions, including purchases. Create a strong and unique passphrase for each online account.

Lock down all accounts. Establish multifactor authentication. Examine the email address in all correspondence and scrutinize website URLs before responding to a message or visiting a site. Don't click on anything in unsolicited emails or text messages.

Guard your information. Be cautious about your information in online profiles and social media accounts. Sharing the names of pets, schools and family members gives scammers hints they need to guess your passwords or the answers to your account security questions. Never send payments to unknown people or organizations, particularly those urging immediate action. 

RAISING HISTORY

Heritage breed farmers preserve the past while protecting the future

Story by LES O'DELL

Farmers, ranchers, shepherds and homesteaders work to raise crops and livestock as efficiently as possible. Like any business, the goal is to maximize income and profitability.

Yet many agriculturalists also see themselves as conservationists, working to preserve the past while ensuring the future by using Earth-friendly farming methods and raising animals facing extinction.

In Pikeville, Tennessee, Amy Balog and her family raise endangered agricultural animals, also called heritage livestock breeds. “There are so many reasons why,” she says. “It’s not only keeping the genetics going. It’s the history and provenance of the breeds.”

Her Faverolles chickens, Sebastopol geese and Saxony ducks are among 180 breeds listed on the Conservation Priority List, an annual ranking of farm animals on the brink of disappearing. The list includes varieties of 11 different animals, from rabbits to cattle, horses and hogs. Many breeds fall out of favor in commercial agricultural settings. Perhaps they don’t put on weight as quickly as other breeds, for example. But they still have value.

SUSTAINABILITY

Protecting biodiversity and genetic resources is an important reason for protecting heritage breeds, says Allison Kincaid, executive director of The Livestock Conservancy. But many producers choose heritage animals because they want to make a difference.

“None of us can predict what the future of agriculture will look like. This is about keeping these breeds around as a genetic

reservoir,” she says, adding these animals are key to food security. “If we didn’t have this diversity, eventually we would narrow our food system down to where it wasn’t sustainable. There would be no backup.”

Likewise, farmer Grant Breitreutz of Redwood Falls, Minnesota, takes a conservation approach to crop production. “We’ve been no-till for 12 years for all of our crops,” he says. Grant leaves farm implements that expose the soil, such as plows and discs, in the machine shed. Instead, he plants cover crops, grasses and other plants he sows without exposing the soil in order to replenish organic nutrients and to minimize erosion.

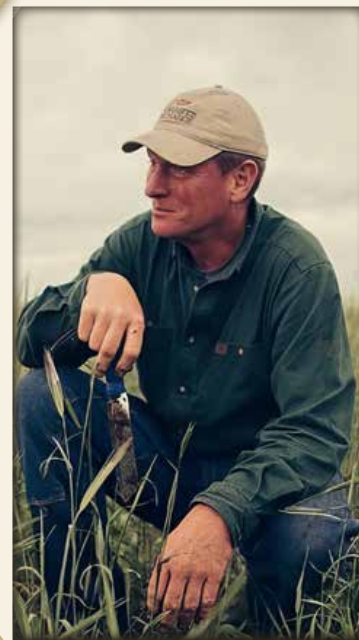
Grant pivoted to conservation farming practices to ensure his soil is healthy and hearty enough to produce bumper crops for generations to come. “If we’ve done this for 130 years of farming, how much time do we have left? So, that’s why we focus so hard on building our soils back,” he says. “It has made a world of difference, and the crops are much more drought resistant and are yielding more bushels per acre. Plus, our pastures have tripled in production over the years by taking care of the soil first.”

The Breitreutz family won the inaugural Minnesota Leopold Conservation Award, presented in 2024 by the Minnesota Soil Health Coalition. Grant says honors are not important, but preserving things for future generations is. Amy agrees.

“It’s more about quality over quantity and quality is what keeps these lines going. If we don’t do it, I’m afraid they’ll all get lost,” she says.



Amy and Daniel Balog, who live outside Pikeville, Tennessee, raise heritage animals like the Sebastopol goose she’s holding.



Grant Breitreutz uses no-till techniques that protect soil quality on his Minnesota farm.

For more about agronomic conservation, visit sandcountymn.org and to learn about livestock conservation efforts, visit livestockconservancy.org.

Photo courtesy of Amy and Daniel Balog

Photo courtesy of Grant Breitreutz

A Smarter, Safer Connection

As families take on the new academic year, homes naturally evolve into digital classrooms and late-night study zones. At Ardmore Telephone Company, we recognize that today's household isn't just connected—it's immersed in a digital network that demands both security and reliability. Now more than ever, it is vital that we empower families, students and professionals alike to thrive in an environment where connectivity is not just expected, but essential.



KAREN JACKSON-FURMAN
Chief Executive Officer

From virtual learning to video calls, your connection should never be something you have to worry about. That's why, on July 1, we began offering a free trial of **ProtectIQ**, a network-level security service designed to detect and destroy threats before they ever reach your home. Running silently in the background, this technology helps protect each click, stream and search—so your family can explore the web with comfort and confidence.

We're also proud to offer **ExperienceIQ**, a service designed to give families control over how their households engage with technology. Whether prioritizing bandwidth for late-night study sessions or minimizing distractions during downtime, ExperienceIQ equips parents with tools to tailor their home networks to fit evolving needs. Screen time limits, content filters and device

prioritization are just the beginning—each feature is accessible through the **ATC Control app**, a secure platform designed for real-time household oversight.

If you haven't yet explored these services, we encourage you to learn more about them. They represent our unwavering commitment to enhancing the lives of our customers and their internet connections. For additional information, visit our YouTube channel, @atcfiber, follow us on Facebook, @ardmoretelephone or contact our team directly at **800-830-9946**.

Whether you've been with us for years or just joined the ATC family, thank you for your trust. We are honored to take another meaningful step forward in our continued effort to enhance the everyday experience for our members. It's a privilege to protect what matters most and to support your family as you live life connected. 📶



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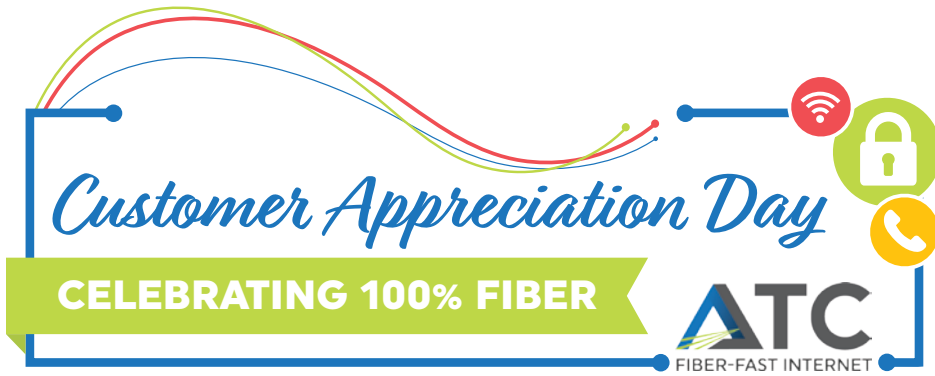


On the Cover:



Kabobs are a versatile entree option that can be easily customized to include the favorite flavors of every member of the family. See story Page 14.

Photo by Mark Gilliland



JOIN US FOR OUR ANNUAL CUSTOMER APPRECIATION DAY WHERE WE CELEBRATE YOU!

Enjoy grilled hot dogs and hamburgers on **Thursday, Oct. 23**, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the ATC office, 30190 Ardmore Ave. We'll have drawings for door prizes and a special giveaway for the first 100 customers.*

*One gift per customer.



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**

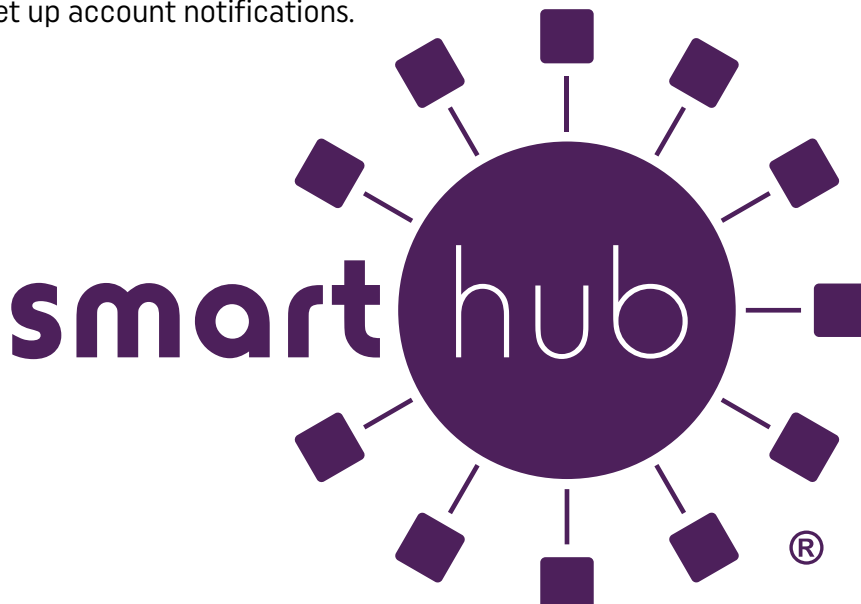
PAYING YOUR BILL ONLINE IS EASY

With SmartHub, you don't need to leave home to make a payment.

As an Ardmore Telephone Company customer, you can pay your bill when and where it's most convenient for you.

With SmartHub you can:

- Make payments safely and securely.
- Get 24/7 account access on your smartphone, tablet or desktop.
- Set up account notifications.



MEET ATC'S NEWEST EMPLOYEE

Jack Walker

Where are you from?

Mississippi.

What is your job title?

Fiber combination technician.

What do you do in your spare time when you're not working?

I do yard work, fish and rest!

What is your favorite use of technology?

Using my phone and PlayStation 5.



Mapping out your perfect road trip

Story by DREW WOOLLEY

Fall is the perfect time for travel and new experiences with family and friends. And while flying can have its conveniences, most travelers prefer to hit the road when mapping out their next adventure. According to AAA's domestic travel forecast for a recent holiday weekend, 87% of travelers planned to make trips by car.

PREPARE FOR THE ROAD AHEAD

"I usually tend to drive, and most people choose to drive. And the reason for that is, for most families and groups of people, it's the most affordable way to travel," says AAA Texas Communications Manager Doug Shupe. "It's also the most convenient. You can leave when you want to leave and return when you want to. But there definitely needs to be some preparation before taking a long road trip."

Before everyone piles into the car, make sure you're ready for the journey. That includes giving your vehicle a quick inspection, planning a route and having the supplies—and the tunes—to keep everyone happy until you reach your destination.

SAFETY CHECK

Before any lengthy road trip, Doug recommends taking your vehicle for a tuneup at a trusted repair facility. But if you can't find time for that, it's still a good idea to do a few quick checks on your own.





Check your tires to make sure they're properly inflated and in good condition.

That includes the tread. If you can put an upside-down quarter in the grooves of your tires and see the top of George Washington's head, it's probably a good idea to replace them before taking a long trip.

If your vehicle's battery is more than 3 years old, consider having it tested before getting on the road. Vibration can also cause a battery to fail sooner, so check that the terminals are secure and free of corrosion.

Examine your radiator and cooling system to make sure they're in good condition. Check belts and hoses for cracks or fraying that could lead to problems after extended use.

Ensure your wiper blades are in good shape in case you pass through a rainy patch, and have someone help you check that your headlights, taillights and turn signals are all working properly.

PLANNING YOUR ROUTE

One of the best parts of any road trip is mapping out a path, as long as there's a little room for improvisation. Plan ahead and make the most of these tools



that can help you find the right stops along the way.

Know what's coming—Apps like Roadtrippers and GasBuddy can help you pick the best place to make a pit stop. Get suggestions for must-visit restaurants and scenic drives or just scope out the most affordable gas prices so you can make the most of your detours.

Go analog—GPS is an invaluable resource on the road, but it's still smart to have a physical map to orient yourself just in case you lose signal or your battery dies. Maps can even be a fun distraction for kids and give them a hands-on way to follow along with where you are.

Track your itinerary—If you've already set up all your reservations for hotels, restaurants and attractions, TripIt can keep track of it all in one place. The app syncs with your inbox to compile an itinerary, so you don't have to search for each confirmation email, and sends you reminders so you can focus on having fun.

Don't be afraid to rest—If you're driving for multiple days, be realistic about how far you can go before resting for the night. It's better to lean toward too many stops than too few. You can even pull over for a quick 30-minute nap if you're feeling drowsy.

FUN AND GAMES

Hitting the open road also means getting to spend plenty of time with your favorite people. So don't forget

to prepare the food, games and music that will help you make the most of it.

State of play—Road trip games are classic, from the Alphabet Game and I Spy to Two Truths and a Lie and 20 Questions. Make your own fun by taking turns thinking of a movie and describing it in the worst way possible to see who can guess it. Or, learn more about each other by picking a category like songs, books or foods and building your own top-five lists.

Fight the munchies—Stops at hole-in-the-wall restaurants are a must for



any road trip. But someone is bound to get hangry in between meals. Everyone's favorite snacks will vary, but it's hard to go wrong with some trail mix or jerky. You can even pack fruit and rice cakes for healthy options.

The perfect mix—Planning out a playlist that will make everyone happy is a tall task. You want music that will fit the mood and maybe even complement the terrain you're driving through. Fortunately, you don't have to do it alone these days. If everyone shares the same music service, you can make a shared playlist that everyone can contribute to. You can even make a game out of it, guessing who's the secret Swiftie or where all those oldies came from. 📻



Gotta Love a Little Local Flavor

Gin House Barbecue has been an Elkmont favorite for decades

Story by DREW WOOLLEY | Photos by ANNA BOGER

When Anna Boger and her family moved to Elkmont in 2004, they wanted to become a part of the community. Some families might get involved with their church or dive into local sports. Eight years after their move, Anna and her husband, Shannon, decided to buy a restaurant.

“We weren’t from here, and it just felt like a good way to learn people and get to know the community,” she says. “And it really came from Kenny Carter, who owned Gin House originally. He made us feel welcome, and we wanted to carry that on and let other people know they were welcome to the community, as well.”

Kenny, who died in 2005, ran Gin House Barbecue for nearly 20 years. In 1986, he converted his former cotton gin on Upper Fort Hampton Road into a barbecue stand, where he served family recipes he tested at home before taking them to the Gin House. In 1991, he opened a dining room to expand the barbecue



ABOVE: Over the course of the late 1980s and early '90s, Kenny Carter converted his old cotton gin into a restaurant he named Gin House Barbecue.

INSET: The stuffed potato is one of restaurant owner Anna Boger's personal favorites on the menu.

stand into a full-blown restaurant. But he kept the distinctive gray metal funnel that defined the cotton gin.

“They were used to catch cottonseed and save it. People would pull the wagon over there, catch the seed and take it home and plant it,” Kenny told The Decatur Daily in 1996. “I wanted to keep those intact. They don’t have these anymore. It was a way to utilize the whole place. I didn’t want to take away from the outside of the building at all.”

A CLASSIC RECIPE

Kenny’s wife, Peggy, kept the restaurant running until 2011, when she decided it was time to sell. That’s when the Bogers stepped in. They ran a chain of convenience stores in Morgan County before their move, and they felt confident in the transition to the restaurant business. After a short closure, they reopened Gin House in January 2012.

The Bogers did not have access to Kenny’s original recipes, but they did have years of experience eating his food. From the start, they aimed to keep the same menu, recreating each dish as closely as they could. The one change they made just a few



Gin House Barbecue started serving breakfast in 2012.

months after taking over was to open the restaurant for breakfast for the first time.

“It’s grown every year since we first started,” Anna says. “It’s gone from me and one other person being able to pretty much run it to now we usually have at least five people for every shift. Luckily, the Lord has blessed us and always provided the next person we needed at the right time.”

As she expected, one of Anna’s favorite parts of running the restaurant is getting to know the people who come through the door. Many of them are regulars from local farms or workers from the Snap-On Tools, EFI Automotive and Bassco Cast Stone plants. Others make the trip from the edges of Limestone County or Athens. There’s even one group from Morgan County that comes by once a month just for the ham.

“You just make relationships that last, and that’s how it’s been here,” she says. “We’ve had people that come in every day from farms or different businesspeople, and you just learn who they are, who their family is. You get to learn about everybody in a different way.”

COOKING ON THE LINE

One of the restaurant’s most important business relationships is with Ardmore Telephone Company. Anna estimates that more than half of Gin House’s business now comes from call-in orders, and the point-of-sale system relies on an internet connection.

“So, if the internet is down, everything is down. But that’s just not something we have a problem with,” she says. “We use Ardmore Telephone at all three of our businesses. I have Ardmore

Telephone at home, as well, and I don’t look to change. I’ve had lots of people try to get me to, but they have always been quick to get things up and going if there is an issue. I always recommend them if anybody asks.”

For the moment, the Bogers do not have any grand plans to expand or change Gin House Barbecue. After almost 14 years at the helm, they can’t know what the future holds, but they are not looking to go anywhere soon. For Anna, that consistency is one of the greatest strengths of locally owned businesses like Gin House. Many of her employees have stayed with the restaurant for years, and that familiarity is not something that can be replicated.

“The people coming through here don’t even have to say a word. They pull up and we know what they want,” she says. “And that’s not just us. We try to go into local mom-and-pop places wherever we go for the same reason. Because you’re supporting local people who are working for the people in their community.”

GIN HOUSE BARBECUE

18060 Upper Fort Hampton Road, Elkmont
256-732-4579

Follow Gin House Barbecue on Facebook.

HOW THE WEST WAS HEARD

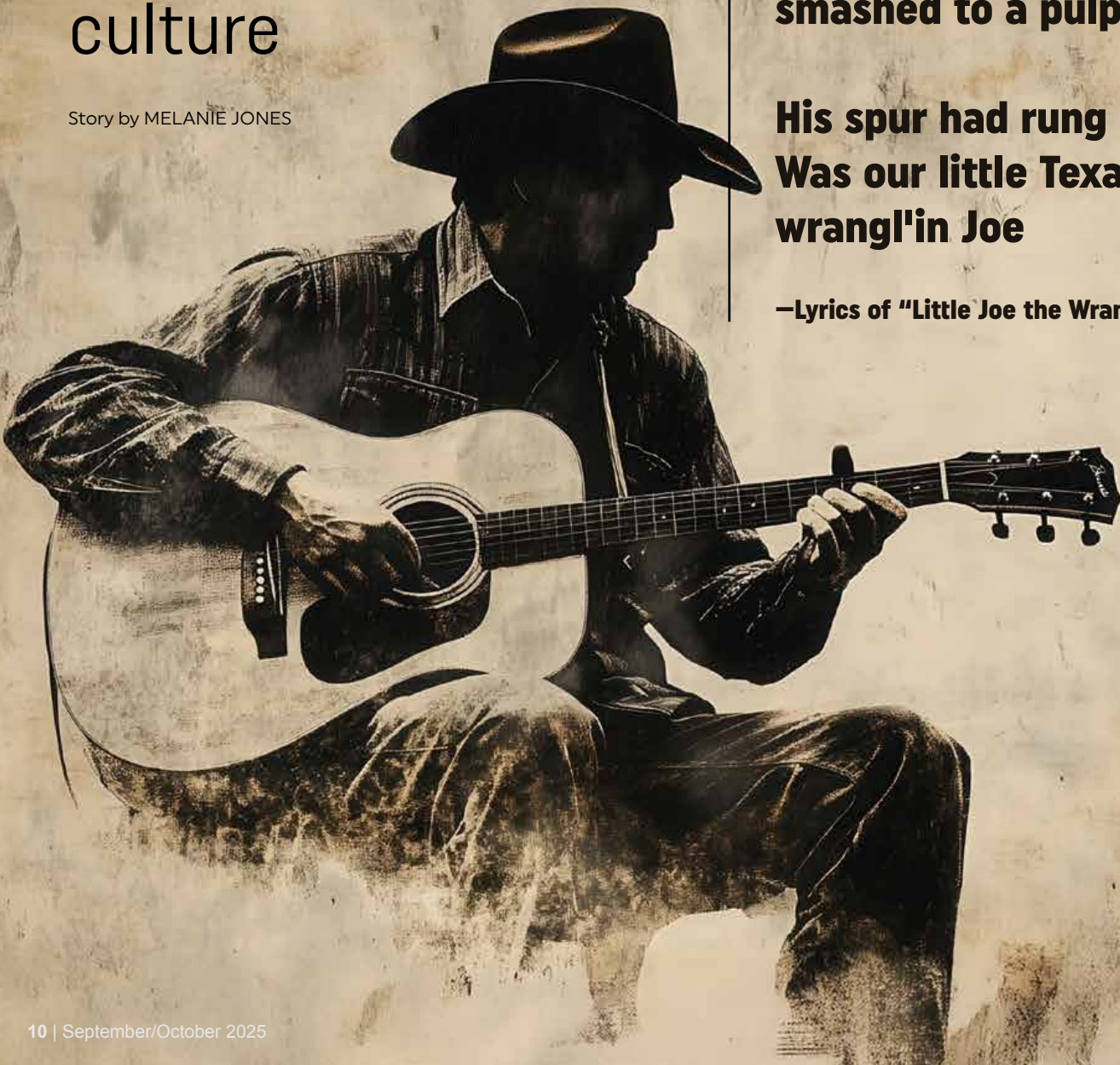
Poet and musician captures cowboy culture

Story by MELANIE JONES

**Next morn'in just
at daybreak
And beneath his horse,
smashed to a pulp**

**His spur had rung his knell
Was our little Texas Faithful,
wrangl'in Joe**

—Lyrics of “Little Joe the Wrangler”





Andy Hedges plays several instruments favored by cowboys, including the banjo.

Andy Hedges, a cowboy poet, musician and podcaster, collects oral histories of the Old West the way rodeo champs collect belt buckles. He's a champion of cowboy culture, and he has the hat to prove it.

"I think there's something about that image that just resonates with people," he says. "They know cowboys represent some of the best of American values—independence, honesty, hard work. And when they hear it, they're hearing real, authentic stories from cowboy culture. They learn the real truth behind the cowboy image."

Cowboy poetry also extends to music, with songs like "Rounded Up in Glory" and "Little Joe the Wrangler." Roy Rogers and Gene Autry brought that style of music to the silver screen, although the Hollywood version is not at the heart of the genre.

Authenticity inspires events across the country, from the Cowpoke Fall Gathering in Loomis, California, to Old West Days in Valentine, Nebraska. Minnesota annually declares a Cowboy Poetry Week, and Andy is returning to Jonesborough, Tennessee, where he performed several times. Cowboy music has even made it to the world-famous Carnegie Hall.

DISCOVERY

Andy, who lives in Lubbock, Texas, is part of a movement that began in 1985, when a group of cowboys met in Elko, Nevada, for the inaugural National Cowboy Poetry Gathering. It's where cowboys swap tales, sing songs of the range and recite poetry that fills lonely days and nights.

What makes a poet a cowboy poet? Andy says his friend Vess Quinlan explains it this way: "He told me there's two ways you can make a deposit in the cowboy poetry bank. One is by being a working cowboy who writes poetry. The other one is to be a non-cowboy who writes poetry that is so good, it becomes accepted by working cowboys. And, of course, it has to be authentic. It has to ring true to those people."

"A lot of people write or recite cowboy poetry or sing the old cowboy songs or write new songs," Andy says. "The truth is a lot

of us, including myself, have never made a living as a cowboy."

Andy has spent years immersing himself in cowboy culture's history, poetry and music. "I try really hard to represent the culture in an authentic way," he says.

He grew up hearing stories of his dad, who worked the rodeo circuit before becoming a Primitive Baptist preacher. He watched old Hollywood Westerns and listened to Western music. "All I really thought I wanted to do was be a cowboy," he says.

But his true obsession with cowboy culture began when he saw an episode of "Austin City Limits" featuring Michael Martin Murphy and friends. Those friends included cowboy poet Waddie Mitchell, cowboy singer Don Edwards and the groups Sons of the San Joaquin and Riders in the Sky. "It just opened that world up to me," Andy says. "I didn't realize there were people who still sang the old songs. I'd never heard cowboy poetry before I heard Waddie on that show."

A self-taught guitarist, young Andy learned some of the old songs. "It was really the beginning of a lifelong obsession with cowboy poetry and cowboy songs," he says.

By the time he could drive, the homeschooled teen was traveling to cowboy gatherings. By 20, he made it to Elko, where he's appeared 17 times. Since recording his album of duets, "Ride On, Cowboy," he and some of the album's guests have appeared on the Grand Ole Opry and practiced, practiced, practiced their way to Carnegie Hall, where they performed for an appreciative audience in March 2024.

The music has an international audience. While travelers come to the United States for gatherings, some performers also toured overseas. Andy even traveled to Turkmenistan as part of a cultural exchange. "The cowboy has always been the folk hero of America," he says. "People identify with that image. You know, when I traveled to Turkmenistan, or just travel overseas not performing, when I wear a cowboy hat, people love that and immediately associate that image with the United States." 📺

SWAPPING STORIES

Cowboy poet and musician Andy Hedges will be the teller-in-residence at the National Storytelling Center in Jonesborough, Tennessee, Sept. 2-6. Andy has participated in the National Storytelling Festival before.

"It's a really fantastic gathering of all kinds of storytellers from different traditions," he says of the festival. "I was honored to be there representing the cowboy tradition and sharing cowboy poetry with them." As teller-in-residence, he'll perform a concert every day, make media appearances and take part in other community events. For more information on the event, go to storytellingcenter.net.

To learn more about cowboy culture, check out Andy's podcast, "Cowboy Crossroads." You can download episodes at andyhedges.com/cowboy-crossroads.

Hometown Flavor

Pizza on Main serves 'perfectly imperfect' recipes to happy diners

Story by DREW WOOLLEY

After 23 years on the road as a trucker, David Young was ready for something new when he settled down in Ardmore. He started working for the commercial maintenance and janitorial business his wife, Jada, owned. Then, a couple of years ago, the couple began talking about opening a pizza shop.

"I just like to see people happy. And nothing really makes you happier than a good meal," David says. "I love seeing tables full of people happy, smiling, talking and having a good time. It's pretty rewarding for me."

At first, the Youngs looked for locations they could convert into a restaurant. But then, just nine months after it opened, Pizza on Main became available when owner Brandie Pearson was unable to continue running it. David picked up the reins last year on Oct. 1.

In just his first year in charge, David has been overwhelmed by the enthusiasm from his customers. In addition to regulars from across Ardmore, the restaurant has had visitors from Pulaski, Athens, Harvest and one from Huntsville who got the recommendation from a member of the city council.

"It blows my mind how much people love this pizza," David says. "That's why I bought it, because I love the food here. Brandie made an excellent product, and we pretty much kept it that way except for adding to the menu."

While the dinner rush has been healthy since he took over, David's first order of business is to expand the lunch menu to get more people at his tables during the day. He is also working on a delivery system, which will rely heavily on service from Ardmore Telephone Company.

"We wouldn't exist without it. Half our business is phone calls," he says. "And, of course, the TVs, the cash register and everything on the computer run off the internet. I haven't had any complaints about it."

Despite always wanting to open a restaurant, David wasn't sure he would have the chance after two other careers. Now that the chance has come along, he's proud to be able to bring good food and a local gathering place to Ardmore.

"A lot of people call what we do craft pizza. I never really thought of it like that,

but I guess in a way it is," he says. "We hand-press the dough, we make everything right when you order it. Each order is perfectly imperfect. But we must be doing something right because a lot of people love it." 🍕

PIZZA ON MAIN

26671 Main St., Ardmore, Tennessee

931-427-1124

Follow Pizza on Main on Facebook and Instagram.



Photo courtesy of Jada Miller Young

David Young and Jada Miller Young started running Pizza on Main in October 2024.

You're in Control



Living Connected

Fiber for the speed of life!

Rest easy with new security and lifestyle features from ATC

When it comes to making that important video call for work, streaming your favorite show at the end of a long day or protecting your devices from dangerous viruses, you just want your internet to work when you need it.

That's where ProtectIQ and Experience IQ from Ardmore Telephone Company come in. Together, they give you the security and control over your home network that let you focus on the important things. Here are just a few ways these powerful tools can help you get the most from your high-speed internet service.

PEACE OF MIND MADE EASY

The best protection is the kind you don't even have to think about. That's exactly what ProtectIQ offers with its array of built-in safety features:

Block threats automatically—Don't know a thing about malware? No problem. ProtectIQ scans all your online traffic for viruses, malicious websites and other intrusions without your lifting a finger.

Stress free—Get alerts only when you need to know about a blocked threat or suspicious activity. No more unnecessary notifications raising your anxiety levels.

Ready to go—ProtectIQ is already built into your ATC router. No need to schedule a time-consuming installation, just

download the app on your mobile device and start enjoying your peace of mind.

WI-FI THAT WORKS FOR YOUR LIFE

ExperienceIQ puts you in control of every aspect of your home's internet, from internet controls to your most important connections:

Clear the way—Whether it's an important video call, a crucial online exam or a high-stakes gaming session, ExperienceIQ lets you set which apps

and devices get priority on your network, so you always have a quality signal when you need it most.

Set your boundaries—Internet control settings make it easy to block inappropriate content, set screen time limits for certain devices and even pause internet access for everyone during family dinner time.

The insight you need—Not sure what's slowing your connection down? Finding the culprit has never been easier. With Experience IQ, you can see what devices are online at any given time and how much bandwidth they're using.

For more information about Wi-Fi control options, call 256-423-2131 today. ☎



Adobe Stock photo by Kateryna

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internet issues?
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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

Dinner on a Stick

Kabobs make for easy meals, quick cleanup

Do you ever crave an easy meal with meat and vegetables? Try putting kabobs on the menu. It's a tasty grill-friendly choice, and cleanup is easy.

Begin with a tender cut of meat like top sirloin, which is affordable. Filet also works well. If you'd like, substitute chicken or tofu. Just remember to cut your protein portions to about the same size so they cook evenly. You can add as many chopped veggies as you like.

Begin with a fresh marinade. Homemade chimichurri does double duty as a marinade and seasoning sauce—it works for any protein. Round out your meal with crunchy Asian coleslaw and a fresh apple cake for dessert.

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

GRILLED CHIMICHURRI STEAK KABOBS

CHIMICHURRI SAUCE

- 1/2 cup fresh cilantro, packed, leaves and tender stems
- 1/2 cup fresh parsley, packed
- 3 tablespoons fresh oregano or 3 teaspoons dried
- 1 lemon, zested and juiced
- 3-4 cloves of garlic
- 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 teaspoons red wine vinegar
- 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt

and pulse until blended. Taste and season with salt and pepper as desired.

STEAK KABOBS

- 32 ounces top sirloin, or the protein of your choice, cut into 2-inch cubes
- 36-48 baby potatoes, golden or mini reds
- 2 medium bell peppers, any color, chopped into 2-inch pieces
- 2 small red onions, chopped into 2-inch pieces
- Kosher salt and ground black pepper

Put all ingredients in a food processor



CRUNCHY ASIAN COLESLAW

- 2 packages ramen noodles, any flavor
- 2 16-ounce packages shredded coleslaw mix
- 1 cup slivered almonds, toasted
- 5 green onions, chopped
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 1/3 cup rice vinegar

Reserve the flavor packets from the noodles for another use or toss. Crush the

noodles and set aside. Toss together the coleslaw mix, almonds and green onions in a large salad bowl.

Whisk together the sugar, oil and vinegar in a small bowl until mixed. Add the dressing to the coleslaw mixture and toss to coat. Mix in the chopped noodles. Serve immediately. Makes 12 servings.

Note: You may prepare the salad in advance, adding the noodles just before serving so they are crunchy.

FRESH APPLE CAKE

- 1 cup oil
- 2 cups sugar
- 3 eggs
- 2 1/2 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 cup pecans or walnuts, chopped
- 3 cups apples, peeled and chopped

CREAM CHEESE FROSTING

- 1 8-ounce package cream cheese, softened
- 16 ounces powdered sugar

- 8 tablespoons butter
- 2 teaspoons vanilla

Measure oil into a large bowl, then whisk in sugar and eggs.

Mix together the flour, salt, baking powder and cinnamon, then add to the creamed mixture, beating well. Add vanilla, then fold in nuts and apples.

Pour mixture into a greased 9-by-13-inch pan. Bake at 350 F for 50 minutes or until cake tests done. Cover with foil if it gets too dark around the edges.

To make frosting: Combine all frosting ingredients and spread over cooled cake.

After reserving some of the chimichurri to use during cooking and for dipping the cooked kabobs, combine the rest of the sauce and the cubed protein in a sealable bag. Set aside to marinate. Meanwhile, soak the skewers in water a minimum of 20 minutes so they don't burn on the grill.

Add potatoes to a large pot, cover with water and 2 teaspoons of salt. Boil for 5-7 minutes or until fork tender. Drain and rinse the potatoes. Let them sit in cold water to cool. Chop veggies and have them ready to slide onto your skewers.

Now it's time to assemble: Using a soaked skewer, put either a potato or piece

of meat on first, so the rest of the veggies don't slide off the end. Then alternate between meat, potatoes and veggies.

Prepare the grill to about 500 F. Once it's ready, place steak kabobs perpendicular to the grill grates. Grill 3 minutes on each side for medium doneness. If you use chicken, cook for 5-7 minutes. Tofu needs to cook about 10 minutes. While cooking, brush the reserved chimichurri on the kabobs.

Remove the kabobs from the grill and let rest for 3-5 minutes. Use the chimichurri as an extra dipping sauce, if desired. 🍴





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