



UPCOUNTRY

MARCH/APRIL 2026

# CONNECTED



## Full Bellies, Full Hearts

Meals on Wheels  
delivers dinner  
and comfort

JAZZ ON THE ALLEY

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DIGITAL SPRING  
CLEANING



## RURAL CONNECTIONS

By Shirley Bloomfield, CEO  
 NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

### A Grateful Goodbye

This column is different than the others I’ve written over the years, because it’s my last as CEO of NTCA. When I began working at NTCA nearly 40 years ago, “broadband” wasn’t a household word. “Universal service,” while a longtime national goal, was a concept more than a mission. And “rural America” was too often an afterthought in conversations about connectivity.

Over the course of my career, I have watched the industry transform and a movement grow, powered by NTCA’s small, community-based providers. These providers are determined to bring advanced broadband to the communities they call home, even in places where the maps say it couldn’t be done and the economics didn’t work. Every day they do the extraordinary, proving what is possible when community comes first.

I’ve been honored to witness that perseverance firsthand. I’ve seen providers work through the night after storms so families could reconnect with loved ones. Thanks to their hard work building Smart Rural Communities, students in small towns can access educational opportunities far beyond their county lines. Farmers, small businesses and entrepreneurs use their fiber connections to grow, compete and thrive—without leaving the places they love.

Broadband is about more than technology. It’s access to health care, education, safety and economic opportunities. It’s the ability to stay rooted while reaching outward. And at its core, it’s about people, the NTCA members who make connectivity possible and the customers they proudly serve.

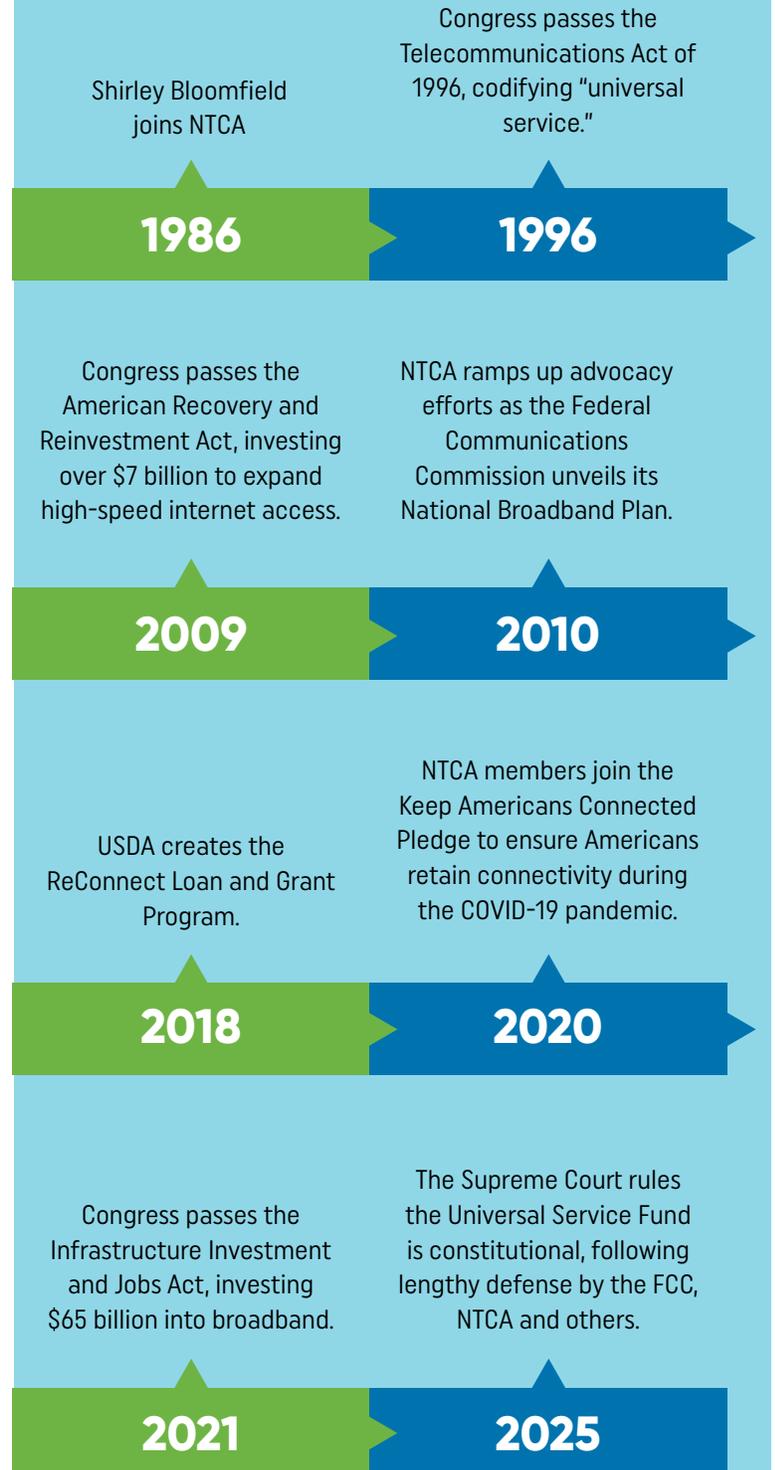
When I reflect on my many years with NTCA, I think about all of the people who shaped not only my journey, but the story of rural America itself. The CEOs who started out on construction crews or at finance desks, the family-owned companies now in their fourth generations, co-op boards that hold community meetings in gymnasiums, NTCA staff who pour every ounce of passion into serving members and the federal partners who understand what makes rural broadband so special.

As I step into my next chapter, I do so with deep gratitude, for the providers who serve with heart, communities that refuse to settle for “just good enough” and Americans who know that high-quality connectivity is not a luxury, but a necessity.

Thank you for reminding me every day why this work matters. [📧](#)

### ADVANCING BROADBAND IN RURAL AMERICA

NTCA–The Rural Broadband Association works to build a better broadband future for rural America, representing about 850 independent, family-owned and community-based telecommunications companies. The tenure of Shirley Bloomfield, named CEO in 2010, highlights a time of significant industry achievement.





Adobe Stock image by Primex Legacy

# Keep Your Health on Track

## Apps can be a helpful tool for managing medications

Story by MELANIE JONES

People who take just one pill a day may find it easy to remember. Adding in a few supplements makes the process a little more complicated. It's not hard to understand how individuals who take multiple prescriptions may need some help keeping up with it all.

It isn't simply a matter of remembering to take the pills or administer the injection. Some medications need to be taken at certain times of the day, while others require multiple, precisely timed doses. Certain drugs should be taken before eating, other treatments are taken with a meal, and still others instruct patients to take them on a full stomach.

Managing medications correctly is vital to staying healthy and living life to the fullest. Fortunately, there are digital tools that can help. Many of these apps also allow users to keep track of their vital signs and make notes about changes they notice in their health. With all this information at hand, doctor appointments can go much more smoothly.

Several free apps are available that not only remind users when to take their medicine but also offer information on how different drugs interact, track symptoms and even prepare a report for doctors. One warning—because they are free, some apps ask permission to share your data with drug companies so they can research drug compliance and effectiveness.

### MY THERAPY

The My Therapy app has attracted attention in the last year, including being featured on ABC and in Wired magazine. The app allows users to set reminders, log when they've taken medicine or skipped it and track weight, blood pressure, blood sugar and other health indicators.

### MEDISAFE

In addition to tracking prescriptions, schedules and health indicators and warning about potential drug interactions, Medisafe users can name a "Medifriend," someone who will be notified if a dose is

missed. Users can also keep tabs on their children's or other dependents' medication information separately from their own. When adding medications to their Medisafe profiles, users can specify the shape and color of the drug, helping them keep straight which pill or capsule is which.

### DOSECAST

For people who have multiple medications to take at different times of the day, Dosecast may be the best choice. The app assigns a sound to each medication, so users receive prescription-specific reminder notifications. It also keeps track of when it's time to order refills. Like the other apps, Dosecast also allows users to track key health indicators.

All these apps are on Google Play or Apple's App Store. They also can interact with the health apps built into phones to provide a better overall picture of your health. [📱](#)

# Delivering service, trust and community impact

In the Upstate and mountain communities we call home, reliability is not a buzzword. It is a necessity. From winding back roads and family farms to small businesses, classrooms and clinics, dependable connectivity is what keeps daily life moving forward. When the internet goes down in a rural community, the effects ripple quickly. That is why reliability matters most to the people we serve.

Speed matters, too. We hear that loud and clear. Fast internet opens doors for opportunity, learning and economic growth. That is why Upcountry Fiber continues to invest in a strong, future-ready network that delivers Multi-Gig speeds, even in some of the most rural corners of our service area. Rural communities deserve access to the same advanced technology as anywhere else, and we are committed to making that a reality.

Speed alone is not enough. A connection that is fast but unreliable does not serve a family working from home, a student attending virtual classes or a local business serving customers online. What truly makes the difference is dependability. Knowing your service will work when you need it most brings peace of mind, and that trust is something we take seriously.



**CHRIS TOWNSON (L)**  
Chief Executive Officer  
West Carolina

**JIM LOVINGGOOD (R)**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Blue Ridge Electric

That trust is built through continued investment and through people. Our employees live here. They drive on the same roads, shop at the same stores and cheer for the same local teams. When storms roll through or problems arise, they go above and beyond to restore service, often working long hours in difficult conditions to make sure their neighbors stay connected. Their dedication and pride in their work are the backbone of everything we do.

We also believe that serving our communities means more than delivering internet service. Rural communities are strong, resilient and deeply connected by the people who care for them. We reinvest locally through fiscal support, economic development efforts and volunteerism because thriving communities do not happen by accident. They happen when organizations show up, give back and stay committed for the long term.

We may not always be the lowest-cost provider, and we are upfront about that. What we promise instead is to be the best. The best in reliability. The best in service. The best in long-term commitment. Being a backbone of our communities means supporting growth, stability and opportunity for generations to come.

As we look ahead, reliable connectivity will continue to play a critical role in the vitality of rural America. We are proud to help build that future alongside you.

As a final note, this issue marks the last edition of Connected Magazine. We are incredibly proud of this publication and the stories we have shared. That will not change. We continue to seek the best ways to serve you and to be good stewards of your investment. You will continue to hear from us through email, including The Scoop already landing in your inboxes. You will also see Upcountry Fiber updates and stories in SC Living, Blue Ridge Electric's magazine. The stories will continue, just shared in new ways, because staying connected to you will always matter to us. 

*Jim Lovingsgood      Chris A. E. Townson*

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is a high-speed fiber internet provider to the five counties of Anderson, Greenville, Oconee, Pickens and Spartanburg. Founded by Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative and West Carolina, Upcountry Fiber was created to bridge the digital divide across rural areas of South Carolina. Offering symmetrical internet speeds up to 8 Gbps over a fiber network, Upcountry Fiber offers the fastest and most reliable high-speed internet in the area.

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Construction Updates & FAQs:  
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Produced for Upcountry Fiber by:



**On the Cover:**



More than 400 Pickens County Meals on Wheels volunteers package and deliver meals to program recipients.  
*See story Page 8.*

Photo courtesy of Pickens County Meals on Wheels

## UPCOMING CLASSES

Upcountry Fiber strives to offer a variety of learning opportunities for our customers. From everyday tech questions to understanding new streaming services, our educational sessions are designed to provide clear, helpful information that makes technology easier to use. Below are some of the topics we currently offer.

- Digital Defense—Tips to stay safe online and avoid scams.
- Streaming 101—A beginner's guide to understanding streaming platforms.
- Introduction to Artificial Intelligence—What is AI and how is it shaping the world?
- WiFi X Service—The ins and outs of our premier WiFi X router and app.

If you'd like to be notified when classes are scheduled, please email [marketing@wctel.com](mailto:marketing@wctel.com) to be added to our notification list.



Upcountry Fiber VP of Technology & Cybersecurity Zac Campbell gives a presentation about the best steps to recognize and avoid cyberthreats.

## HELPFUL RESOURCES

From technology basics to everyday how-tos, our educational blog series focuses on sharing information that's easy to understand and helpful. Here are a few recent highlights offering insights, tips and answers to common questions.

Check out our latest by visiting [upcountryfiber.com/media-center](http://upcountryfiber.com/media-center).

- Understanding WiFi Speed Tests
- Common Internet Issues
- A Fresh New Look for Your WiFi X App
- Not All Fiber is Created Equal



Upcountry Fiber VP of CX & Sales Operations Shannon Sears explains the many benefits of the WiFi X program.



From left, Upcountry Fiber employees, Amanda Clark and Kerri Hall join Westminster Senior Center Director Judy Caywood and cloggers Betty Bowen and Beth Hawthorn for a holiday performance.

## CLOGGING CREW BRINGS HOLIDAY JOY

In December, Upcountry Fiber employees shared holiday cheer with a special clogging performance at the Westminster Senior Center, bringing music, movement and smiles to residents.

As the dancers took the floor, residents clapped along and joined in the festive spirit. For the Upcountry team, the performance was about more than entertainment. It was an opportunity to connect with the communities they serve.

"It was important for me to perform for the Westminster Senior Center to build a deeper sense of connection," says Amanda Clark, account services representative team lead. "Music and dancing bring joy and laughter, and it was wonderful to see everyone smiling and singing along."

What began as a shared hobby among co-workers has grown into a meaningful way to give back. By sharing local tradition and holiday spirit, Upcountry Fiber employees created a memorable moment that reflected that company's commitment to the community.

# Walk This Way

Enjoy the pedestrian-friendly side of Greenville

Story by LAURA MCGILL

**L**ocated in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains with unique urban views and abundant natural hues, Greenville, South Carolina, offers plenty of ways to set your own pace. Enjoy a laced-up, fresh-air visit when you create your personal walking itinerary with choices for foodies, art lovers, sports fans, history buffs and nature enthusiasts.

## DOWNTOWN DIRECTIONS

Perfect for a stroll, the wide and welcoming sidewalks of Main Street invite

visitors to explore the local scene. Start at NOMA Square and fuel up with a hearty breakfast at Roost Free Range Kitchen. Then it's time to start walking. Venture south to Falls Park on the Reedy to enjoy an urban waterfall. Get the best views from Liberty Bridge. Look up to appreciate the bridge's unique single-suspension construction. Be sure to check the schedule for the Greenville Drive, the High-A affiliate of the Boston Red Sox. They play home games on Main Street's Fluor Field, which is modeled after Boston's famous

Fenway Park, complete with its own Big Green Monster left-field wall.

## TRAIPSING THE TRAIL

With design and etiquette guidelines to safeguard children and those with mobility challenges, the Prisma Health Swamp Rabbit Trail provides 28 miles of natural beauty for all fitness levels. Take a casual walk, a jog or a bike ride to discover area parks, attractions, shops and eateries. Didn't bring a bike? No problem. Greenville has several bike rental options.



Photo courtesy of VisitGreenvilleSC/Chelsey Ashford Photography

Wide shady pathways beckon cyclists to explore.



Photo courtesy of VisitGreenvilleSC/Kris Decker - Firewater Photography

Covering more than 28 miles, the Prisma Health Swamp Rabbit Trail Network is a favorite for walking, running and cycling.

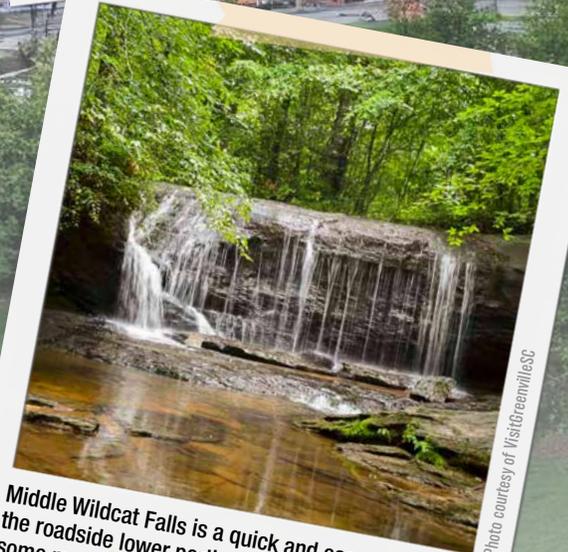


Photo courtesy of VisitGreenvilleSC

Middle Wildcat Falls is a quick and easy hike from the roadside lower portion. Continue upstream with some moderate hiking to view Upper Wildcat Falls.

Urban waterfall at Falls Park

Plan to spend several hours at Cleveland Park, home to the Greenville Zoo, Rock Quarry Falls and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Treat yourself to a scratch-made pastry and a craft coffee at Swamp Rabbit Cafe & Grocery, a popular spot along the trail.

### FUN FESTIVALS

Celebrate scientists, chefs, pitmasters and painters. On April 4, iMAGINE Upstate STEAM Festival spotlights science, technology, engineering, arts and math. Remember to grab extra napkins to savor the dishes at Southern

Roots: A BBQ Reunion on April 11. The culinary experiences continue April 16-19 at Spring Fest with a series of foodie events. Catch your breath and get ready for Artisphere, May 8-10, featuring the works of visual artists representing many different mediums.

### WONDERFUL WATERFALLS

Within an hour's drive from downtown Greenville, enjoy the beauty of six more waterfalls. Easy views can be found at Wildcat Wayside Falls, a roadside pull-off. The middle portion of those falls is an easy hike, while the upper section calls

for moderate hiking. For those who are feeling energetic, the 1,200-foot change of elevation at Rainbow Falls offers a strenuous hiking challenge.

Greenville-area waterfalls are part of the Blue Ridge Escarpment, a geological feature where the Blue Ridge Mountains dramatically drop 2,000 feet to the Piedmont below. In total, the area is home to more than 50 waterfalls.

Plan your Greenville, South Carolina, trip at [visitgreenvillesc.com](http://visitgreenvillesc.com) or on Facebook @visitgreenvillesc. 

Adobe Stock image by Olena

# Nourishing the Community

## Pickens County Meals on Wheels delivers more than food

Story by LAZ DENES

Every weekday in Pickens County, a quiet but highly coordinated effort begins long before the first knock at a front door. In Liberty's McKissick Center, kitchen staff members prepare hundreds of meals that will soon become much more than dinner for the seniors who receive them.

For Kim Valentin, executive director of Pickens County Meals on Wheels, it's never just about food. It's about connection, dignity, safety and making sure people feel like they're part of their community.

Kim has been involved with the organization since 2017 and stepped into the executive director role in 2019, bringing with her a background rooted in community engagement. A former business owner, city council member and downtown advocate in Easley, she was no stranger to juggling logistics or rallying people around a common goal. When her children neared graduation, she felt a pull toward work that was closer to home and closer to the heart.

### CALLED TO SERVE

That led Kim to Meals on Wheels, starting with a fundraising and development role that grew into a leadership position. Under her watch, the organization expanded far beyond its original model of purchasing meals from various sources and delivering them. Today, Pickens County Meals on Wheels prepares its own food, serving roughly 390 home-delivered meals every weekday across the county, along with about 150 additional meals at its senior centers.

The McKissick Center itself tells part of that story. Renovated in 2015, the building allowed the organization to cook meals more efficiently while serving more people at a lower cost. At the same

time, it opened the door for something new, senior centers.

As other senior centers in the area closed, Pickens County Meals on Wheels stepped in, eventually opening centers in Liberty, Central and Easley. Each offers meals, activities and social connections. The Easley location alone has more than 300 members, more than double what leaders initially expected.

"It really shows the need," Kim says. "Once seniors are connected to us through the centers, we're able to support them through every stage."

### HELP WHEREVER IT'S NEEDED

That care is central to the organization's mission. Seniors might start by attending activities and enjoying lunch at a center. After surgery or illness, they can be temporarily transitioned to home-delivered meals. As their mobility decreases, those deliveries often become permanent, ensuring the nutrition and daily safety checks continue.

Pickens County Meals on Wheels operates with just 16 staff members but relies on more than 400 volunteers. Delivery drivers run routes that typically take under an hour, making it possible for individuals, retirees and even businesses to participate.

"We try to meet volunteers where they are," Kim says. "We drop meals at churches, town halls, grocery stores—anywhere that makes it easier for someone to help."



Kim Valentin, executive director of Pickens County Meals on Wheels.



Pickens County Meals on Wheels volunteers deliver food, kindness and companionship.

Photos courtesy of Pickens County Meals on Wheels

That flexibility has attracted corporate partners like the city of Easley, local banks and businesses that rotate staff volunteers to help cover delivery routes. It has also drawn dedicated individuals like Lynn Martin, the current Pickens County Meals on Wheels board chairperson.

Lynn's connection to Meals on Wheels began 14 years ago with a simple Christmas tradition she shared with her late husband, John Wisham, and a group of friends. After first adopting a dozen seniors for the holidays, their tradition is now a countywide angel tree program that provided gifts to 239 seniors this past Christmas alone.

"It's easy to give money," Lynn says, "but the most precious thing you have is your time."

Since joining the Pickens County Meals on Wheels board six years ago, Lynn has given plenty of her time, running routes, preparing financial statements, answering phones, filling in at senior centers and even driving the bus when needed. She jokes that whenever her phone rings and Kim's number lights up her caller ID, she's quick to wonder what she'll be doing next.

### ALL HANDS ON DECK

Kim and Lynn's hands-on approach mirrors that of the entire organization, which is navigating the challenges of rapid growth. The kitchen is nearing capacity. Freezer space is tight, especially around the holidays. Transportation demand has increased so much that the organization now needs a second bus, an expense of roughly \$115,000.

"Growth is a good thing," Kim says, "but it carries weight."

Upcountry Fiber, whose reliable high-speed internet plays a critical, behind-the-scenes role, is proud to partner with Pickens County Meals on Wheels. From scheduling and volunteer coordination to phone systems and shared files, nearly every part of the operation depends on staying connected.



Lynn Martin, the board chairperson for Pickens County Meals on Wheels, delivers meals to one of the recipients.

## PICKENS COUNTY MEALS ON WHEELS

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[pcmow.org](http://pcmow.org)

Follow @pcmow on Facebook and Instagram.

"When you're moving this many parts every day, you can't afford for technology to slow you down," Kim says.

At the heart of it all are the seniors, who welcome their daily deliveries with a smile, look forward to activity days and find family in places they may never have expected. "They give back to us as much as we give to them," Lynn says. "They really do become like family."

For Pickens County Meals on Wheels, that sense of family is the true measure of success, one meal, one visit and one connection at a time. 



Mary Jo and Grady McCarthy pack up meals before heading out to deliver them.

# ALWAYS PREPARED

Scouting America readies kids to protect themselves online



Dozens of Scouts attend a Department of Homeland Security event about online safety.

Story by DREW WOOLLEY

In his days as a Scout, Justin Williams was always drawn to outdoor skills. He excelled at building fires and tying knots. He struggled more with identifying plants, and, even today, he says he still hasn't picked up the knack for it. But as he got older, the leadership skills he was learning every step of the way stood out to him.

"Those are all important skills, but the thing we're really coaching is how to work within a team, be good citizens for the future and make good, ethical decisions," he says. "I thought I was just having fun. But I was really learning a lot of leadership skills that have benefited me throughout my life."

Today, as scout executive for Scouting America's Palmetto Council in South Carolina and den leader for a group of second graders, Justin is amazed at the technology available to young children. There's even technology that could have helped him identify plants as a Scout.

As a result, while Scouting America, formerly the Boy Scouts of America, still emphasizes the importance of getting outside and working with others, the organization is increasingly recognizing the need to meet kids where they are with technology.

Just last year, it introduced its first merit badges for cybersecurity and artificial intelligence. Others, like the Know2Protect badge, are specifically aimed at teaching Scouts about the importance of personal safety online.

"While we know there are a lot of benefits to technology, we also know that, unfortunately, there are people online who do not have our kids' best interest at heart," Justin says. "We need to help our kids recognize who is an ally, who is trying to do them harm and what to do when they encounter those types of people."

## THE NEW NORMAL

For Scouting America's Chief Safeguarding Officer Glen Pounder, that work starts with the adults around each Scout. His office in Irving, Texas, provides training for all Scout leaders around the threats kids may face online—from cyberbullying and body image issues to pornography and sexual exploitation.

"One of our key mottoes is be prepared for life. There's no life these days without the online space," he says. "Our new normal as an organization is we have to be comfortable always looking for what is next, particularly with technology. I think it's about landing the message in a way that is not creating fear. That this is just part of preparing for life."

Starting from kindergarten, Scouting America encourages parents of new Scouts to have their own conversations with their children about general safety practices. As kids earn their annual ranks, they must complete six core components, one of which is additional safety training. Starting in fourth grade, that training includes lessons on what information they should not give out in online settings.

In addition, Scouting America partnered with the Department of Homeland Security in 2024 to build an awareness campaign about the risks kids face online. Scouts and their families can join in-person training sessions and activities or online presentations to learn how to prevent and report online abuse, earning them an exclusive Know2Protect patch.

Glen's hope is that more widespread awareness and training within Scouting America troops can even help protect kids who are not part of the program.

"There's a ripple effect outside of scouting. Each Scout has

friends, siblings and other non-Scouts around them that they share things with,” he says. “So, if you’ve got a million trained Scouts out there it makes it much harder for anyone who’s thinking about abusing their position of trust to get away with it.”

### MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

While preventing these abuses from happening in the first place is the top priority, Glen emphasizes it is just as important for kids to feel comfortable speaking with an adult, whether it’s a parent or a Scout leader, if they do find themselves in one of these situations. If not, the outcome can be tragic.

Justin cites the example of an Eagle Scout in Spartanburg, South Carolina, in the last few years who took his own life. He had connected with someone online and shared compromising photos, only to have those photos used to exploit him.

“He didn’t think there was any other option, so he decided to take his own life,” Justin says. “When you think about the perfect kid, this is the kid that would come to mind. So, this isn’t something that only targets dysfunctional families. Criminals are getting smarter every day, and we just can’t take anything for granted.”

For Glen, that comes down to preparing kids for dangerous situations, trusting them to use the tools available to them and offering understanding if they find themselves in trouble.

“If we haven’t empowered these kids correctly, then the fear stays with them. We need to take that fear away,” he says. “Our focus is on prevention first. But then, if something happens, take a breath and then we’ll move forward. We know what to do, we’re going to get there. You’re not alone in this.” 📱

## BADGE OF HONOR

Scouting America badges aren’t just for archery and pioneering anymore. Here are a few tech-savvy badges and patches today’s Scouts are collecting.

### Cybersecurity Merit Badge

Introduces Scouts to various cyberthreats, including viruses, worms, social engineering and denial-of-service attacks. They learn to protect themselves with strong passwords, firewalls, antivirus software and encryption.



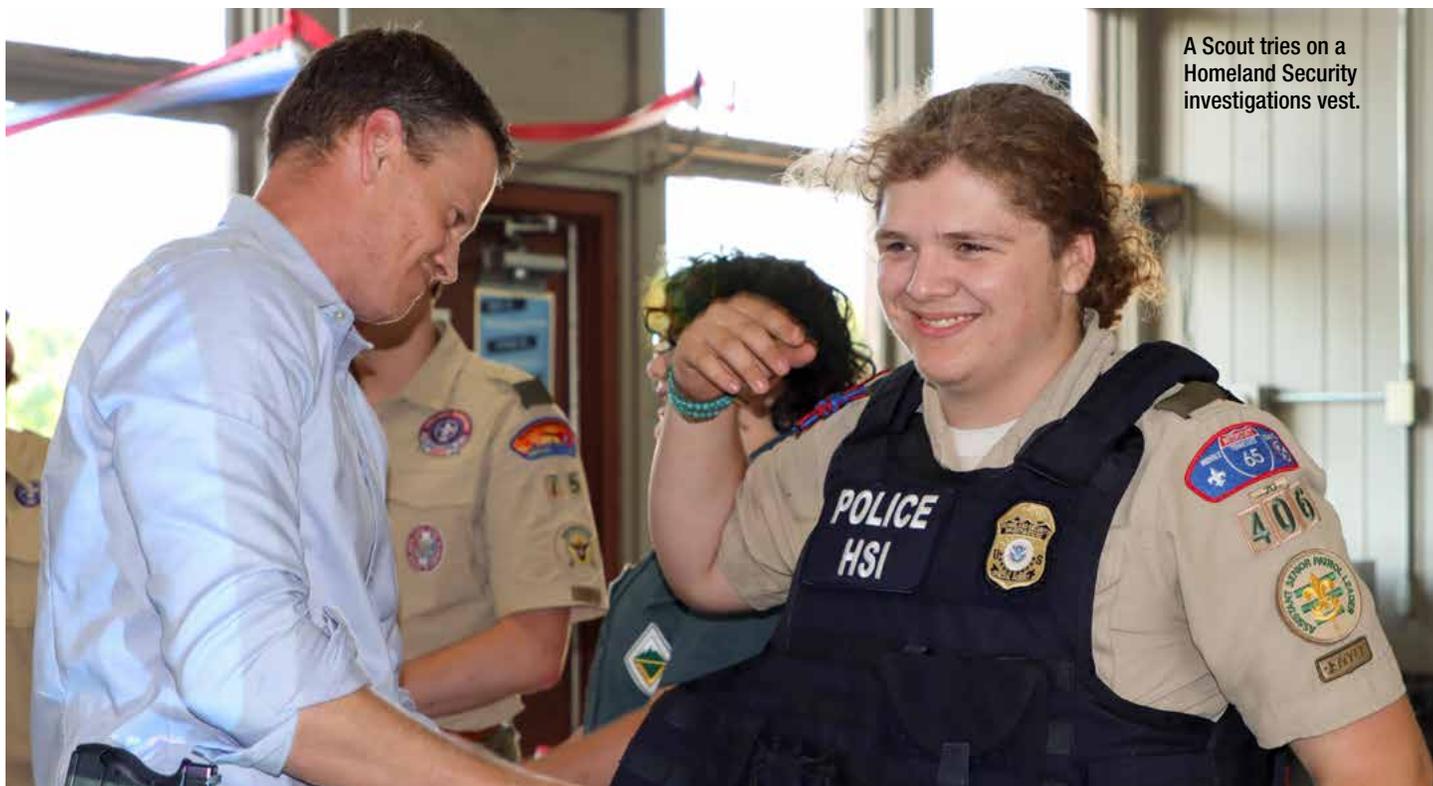
### Artificial Intelligence Merit Badge

Helps Scouts explore what AI is, different types of AI and how to use it in everyday life. They are also challenged to discuss issues around data privacy, bias in AI systems and the ethics of this new technology.



### Know2Protect Patch

Serves as a symbol of the Scout’s commitment to online safety and digital citizenship through participation in the Department of Homeland Security’s Project iGuardian training. The training provides knowledge and skills to protect themselves against online abuse.



A Scout tries on a Homeland Security investigations vest.

Photos courtesy of Scouting America

# STROKES OF GENIUS

## New owners and name are just the start for Windsor at Walhalla

Story by JOHN CLAYTON

**G**olf became a business for the Yeatts and Calhoun families in 2021.

That's when Gary Yeatts and Ryan Calhoun purchased the 30-year-old golf club—now known as Windsor at Walhalla—nestled among the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains with the goal of making it the best public golf course in the Upstate.

With a long list of completed projects and more improvements set for this spring, Windsor at Walhalla is well on its way to making its owners' dream a reality.

"We added the pickleball courts, and we built a members' lounge area this year that we can use for tournament gatherings and stuff like that," says Garrett Kuczynski, director of golf operations for Windsor at Walhalla.

But the biggest projects have been residential real estate developments, Windsor Estates and Windsor Haven, as well as upgrades to the 18-hole, par-72 golf course designed by Harry Bowers and opened in 1991.

"We're replacing all our greens, which were Bermuda with Diamond Zoysia, which does a little bit better for this area, especially in the winter," Garrett says. "We did the back nine in June of last year, and we're redoing the front nine this April."

Garrett also says the club's amenities as well as the challenging layout for golfers make Windsor at Walhalla a value for its members.

"Members play pickleball for free, then you get discounts at the pro shop and at our restaurant, The Tavern, and you get private access to tee times," he says. "That can be helpful, especially on the weekends when those early tee times fill up pretty quick."

Of course, memberships aren't required to enjoy a round of golf on the

6,866-yard course that features some tight fairways and demands precision. "We try to accommodate the public as much as we can, so we do have some public breaks," Garrett says.

The club employs 20-30 people, a number that fluctuates with the change of seasons.

Garrett says his staff relies on Upcountry Fiber's high-speed fiber internet and phone service.

That connectivity powers the online scheduler at [windsoratwalhalla.net](http://windsoratwalhalla.net), which allows golfers to arrange tee times, and its social media presence on Facebook and Instagram.

"I can count on a single hand the number of times that we've had an issue, so Upcountry Fiber has been great," Garrett says. "Any time we've had an interruption, they've gotten us right back up and ready to go." 📶

**RIGHT:** Members host a Ryder Cup-style outing in May.

**BELOW:** Kathy and Ryan Calhoun, left, are co-owners of Windsor at Walhalla with Gary Yeatts, right, seen cheering on the PGA of America team at the 2023 Ryder Cup, held in Rome, Italy.



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Photos courtesy of Windsor at Walhalla

# Jazz on the Alley Warms Up to Hit Another High Note

Outdoor concerts attract thousands

Story by BRANDI DIXON

On Thursday nights since 2010, Ramcat Alley and Townville Street have been home to Seneca's beloved Jazz on the Alley.

"An average night sees between 2,000 and 3,000 people," says Riley Johnson, events coordinator for the city of Seneca. "Going into our 16th year, we are hoping for even more."

Starting in April and continuing through October, Jazz on the Alley welcomes residents and tourists alike to enjoy local up-and-coming musicians as well as well-known touring bands and performers. Jazz on the Alley opens each night with a "happy hour" from 5:30-6:30 p.m. The main event kicks off at 7 p.m. and runs until 9 p.m.

"We call it Jazz on the Alley for the fun it brings," Riley says, noting not all the music is jazz. "You might hear bluegrass, country, folk, '80s or '90s bands. We have about 25 acts that we rotate through during the season."

City Administrator Scott Moulder says Jazz on the Alley is a community event where citizens and visitors can get to know one another. "Community interaction makes the city stronger and more personable, which is a focus of the city leaders," he says. "Jazz provides a wonderful opportunity for entertainment, fun, interaction and, of course, making memories."

The Jazz on the Alley events draw hundreds of music lovers.

## PROMOTING COMMUNITY

In addition to the music, Jazz on the Alley gives patrons the chance to sample the fare of restaurants in the area, enjoy outdoor dining and browse nearby shops. "This is where a lot of people kick-start their weekend," Riley says. "This free, family-friendly environment brings people into downtown Seneca to enjoy all we have to experience."

Jazz on the Alley also gives back to the community by helping local non-profits. "Recognizing they don't have a lot for promoting or advertising, we give them an opportunity to claim the night each week," Riley says. "Food pantries, Rotary clubs, Lions clubs, it gives them a chance to get their message out to the public."

## FIBER STRIKES A CHORD

When it comes to promoting the acts and events, the city depends on its social



Photos courtesy of the city of Seneca

Whitney Bradley sings lead with Groove Planet at a recent Jazz on the Alley concert.

media presence and website to share updates and content with locals.

"Broadband communication is an important element in promoting Jazz on the Alley, as well as all our other events," Scott says. "We depend heavily on reliable, fast broadband services to inform people of upcoming events, as well as last-minute changes that inclement weather can sometimes cause. And, Upcountry Fiber is truly the best at providing that dependable service day in and day out." 

## JAZZ ON THE ALLEY

Ramcat Alley and Townville Street,  
Seneca

[seneca.sc.us](http://seneca.sc.us)

Follow Seneca SC Events on Facebook.



# Treat Yourself

## WITHOUT BREAKING THE BANK

Rich desserts shouldn't cost a fortune

**F**or many Americans, going to the grocery store can be stressful since prices don't seem to be coming down. But we still want to have our cake and eat it too. So, it's nice—and entirely possible—to treat ourselves to something sweet at the end of the meal without breaking the bank.

There are some tricks to keep in mind to help you stay on budget while still satisfying your sweet tooth. For example, if a recipe calls for pecans, walnuts, a less expensive alternative, can be substituted. And use store brands whenever possible—a cost-saving practice that always saves pennies.



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

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

### CHOCOLATE BANANA BARS

- |                          |                             |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1/2 cup butter           | 1 teaspoon baking powder    |
| 1 cup sugar              | 1 teaspoon baking soda      |
| 1 egg                    | 1/2 teaspoon salt           |
| 1 teaspoon vanilla       | 1/4 cup baking cocoa powder |
| 1 1/2 cups mashed banana | 1 cup chocolate chips       |
| 1 1/2 cups flour         |                             |

Preheat oven to 350 F.

Mix the butter, sugar, egg, vanilla and banana. Then add the flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Put half of the mixture into a separate bowl and add the cocoa powder.

Grease the bottom of a 9-by-13-inch pan and pour in the cocoa mixture. The mixture will be thick, just try and spread a thin layer across the bottom. It will rise and make a beautiful, thin bar. Use a smaller pan if you want a thicker bar, however, it will need to bake longer to get the middle done.

Spread the rest of the batter on top of the cocoa mixture. Sprinkle the top with as many or as few chocolate chips as you like.

Bake for about 30 minutes or until the top is browned and a toothpick comes out clean.



## BLUEBERRY COFFEECAKE

- 2 cups white sugar
- 1 cup butter, softened
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup plus 10 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup fresh or frozen blueberries
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup pecans
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 tablespoon powdered sugar for dusting

Preheat the oven to 350 F. Grease and flour a 9-inch Bundt pan.

Beat sugar and butter together in a large bowl with an electric mixer until light and fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in sour cream and vanilla extract. In another bowl, combine flour, baking powder and salt. Stir into butter mixture until just blended. Fold in blueberries.

Spoon half of the batter into the prepared pan. Combine brown sugar, pecans and cinnamon in a small bowl. Sprinkle half of the mixture over the batter in the pan.

Spoon remaining batter on top, then sprinkle on remaining pecan mixture. Use a knife or thin spatula to swirl the mixture into the cake.

Bake until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean, about 1 hour to 1 hour 15 minutes. Let cake cool in the pan for 15 minutes before inverting. Invert carefully onto a serving plate. Dust with powdered sugar just before serving.



## TROPICAL TWISTER

- 2 cups frozen pineapple chunks
- 4 ounces pineapple juice
- 2 scoops vanilla ice cream

Combine all ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth. If it's too thick, add a bit more pineapple juice. Scoop into bowls and, if desired, garnish with additional chopped pineapple and a dollop of whipped cream. Serve immediately. Makes 3 servings.

## STRAWBERRIES AND CREAM PIE

- 1 prepared 9-inch pie shell, graham cracker or pastry crust, baked and cooled
- 1 8-ounce package cream cheese, softened
- 1/3 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon almond extract
- 1 cup whipped topping, thawed
- 4 cups fresh strawberries, washed, hulled and halved
- 1/2 cup semisweet chocolate chips
- 1 tablespoon shortening

Bake crust at 350 F for 15 minutes or until light golden brown. Cool completely.

In a large bowl, beat the softened cream cheese until it is fluffy. Gradually add the sugar and almond extract, beating until fully combined. Gently fold the whipped topping into the cream cheese mixture until smooth.

Spread the cream cheese mixture evenly into the cooled pie crust. Arrange the strawberry halves, cut side down or pointed side up, over the filling.

In a small, microwave-safe bowl, combine the chocolate chips and shortening. Microwave in 30-second intervals, stirring in between, until the chocolate is melted and smooth. Drizzle the melted chocolate over the top of the strawberries and cream filling.

Refrigerate the pie for at least 1-2 hours or until it is set and chilled before serving.



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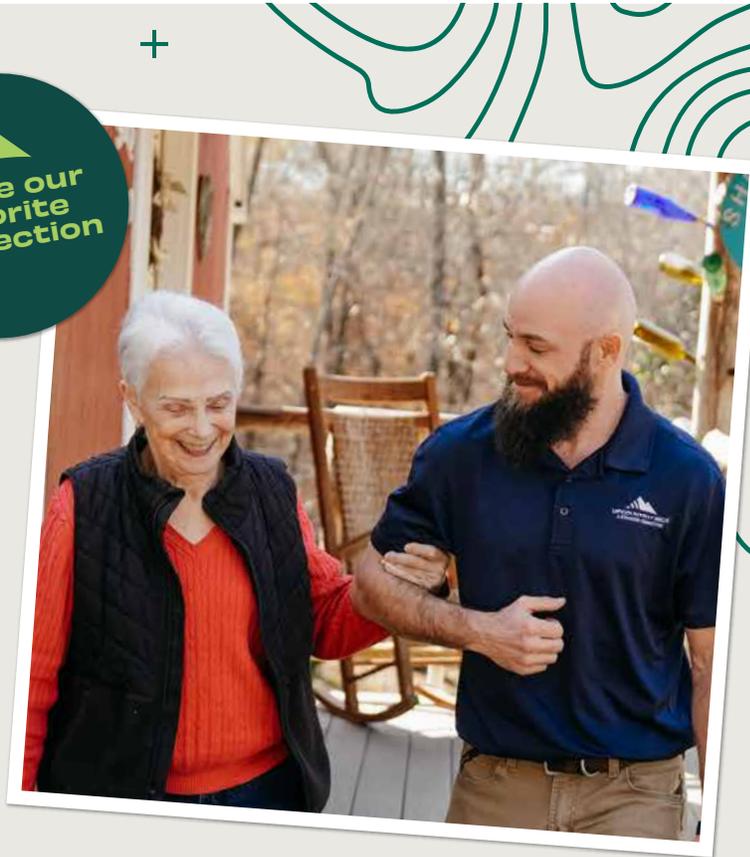
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