



Mountain Telephone

JULY/AUGUST 2025

CONNECTION



Movies in Menifee

Filmmaking hits
East Kentucky

MRTC'S ANNUAL
MEETING ISSUE



By Shirley Bloomfield, CEO
NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association

World Wide Web Day

Celebrate decades of digital innovation

World Wide Web Day is Aug. 1. It's a celebration of a 1993 internet milestone that transformed our society, changing everything from work and health care to communications and entertainment.

Before the web, accessing information and resources on the interconnected computers spanning the globe required specific software and skills. Email use was even limited—in business, fax machines still ruled. Then, researchers in Switzerland, including Tim Berners-Lee, developed the World Wide Web. Not only was information easier to share, but the freely distributed tools that made it possible fueled decades of innovation.

Now, rural internet service providers like yours manage the high-speed networks unlocking the modern web. NTCA's 2024 Broadband/Internet Availability Survey Report showed that 89% of rural customers served by providers responding to the survey have access to speeds of at least 100 Mbps.

That's a dramatic change compared to 1993, when connecting was slow and noisy, reliant on dial-up modems and copper lines. Back then, a speed of 14.4 Kbps was great—nearly 7,000 times slower than a 100 Mbps connection today.

Students can now access endless resources online and attend virtual classes. Telemedicine brings services and specialists otherwise unavailable in rural communities. Farmers monitor crops, manage resources and keep livestock healthy with internet-connected tools. And that's only the beginning.

NTCA members across rural America make it all possible. So, let's take a moment to celebrate not only World Wide Web Day, but also the communications professionals in your community.

Thank you for all you do. 📺



Help your community thrive

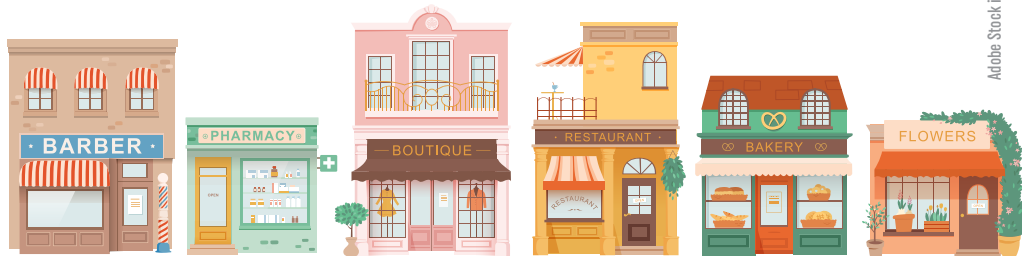
Local businesses are a cornerstone of the United States' economy, particularly in rural communities. You need to look no further than your local utility providing a fast, reliable internet network. Companies like these are not only committed to providing excellent service but also uplifting their communities.

A report last year by Capital One Shopping, a site operated by the banking and credit card company, highlighted the importance of local retailers.

- In one week, **91% of American consumers** shop at small and local stores.
- **68%, or \$68 out of every \$100**, spent at local stores remains in the local economy.
- American shoppers spent an estimated **\$4.51 trillion** at local stores in 2023, equivalent to **54.3% of all retail sales**.
- The average person **shops locally 213 times per year** or once every **1.7 days**.

Community Benefits to Shopping Local

- **Shopping small** keeps **dollars local**.
- Dollars spent at an independent business may **recirculate** in the local economy **an average of six to 15 times**.
- Small businesses make up to **136% more charitable donations** per employee than businesses with 500 or more employees.
- Residents of communities with more independent businesses **drive three-quarters fewer miles** than their neighbors who have less access to small local shops.





A Sunshine Shield in Your Pocket

Apps to protect your skin

Long days outdoors are a joy of summer. A little sun can even increase your vitamin D levels, which has a range of health benefits. On the other hand, bathing in too much sunlight is not good for the skin, raising the potential for skin cancer. And some people are more susceptible than others.

So, it just makes sense to track and manage sun exposure. Think about all the things we already monitor—steps, sleep and even what we eat. Why not also track exposure to ultraviolet light, the rays produced by the sun?

In fact, your phone's weather app may already offer a forecast for expected sun exposure at your location. Other apps though can ramp up the details. Early UV apps were basically glorified timers with general advice tacked on. Today's versions

are more sophisticated, providing information on everything from cloud cover to how much sun is reflecting off surfaces around you.

These apps often have easy-to-understand color-coded displays that show your risk level. Most will customize their recommendations based on your skin type, which means you're getting advice that's relevant to you specifically.

Some of the more advanced options do more than track UV exposure. They can use your smartphone's camera to analyze your features and suggest proper levels of sun protection. Many will even send timely reminders when it's time to reapply sunscreen based on your activity level and which products you're using.

The more comprehensive sun safety apps don't only monitor UV rays. They

include educational content about sun damage and skin cancer prevention. Some even track vitamin D production, helping you balance protection with healthy sun exposure.

Family-friendly versions allow users to set up profiles for multiple family members with different skin types, making it much easier to manage sun protection during group outings like beach days or picnics.

Of course, no apps replace a proper checkup with your dermatologist, but they do offer daily reminders about a danger we can't always see. So, next time you're heading outdoors for a day in the sun, check the app store for your favorite device and see if there's an app that provides the details you need to stay safe. At minimum, the apps can keep the importance of skin protection top of mind. ☀️

Hearts and Home

Making connections that matter

I always enjoy these long, sunny days, which are perfect for slowing down and spending time with the people who matter most. It's an opportunity to unplug and enjoy the outdoors, and at Mountain Telephone we believe the communications services we provide can help connect us in person and online.



SHAYNE ISON
General Manager

Have you ever noticed how we can all get stuck looking at our phones? Even though our internet connects thousands of homes and businesses, the best connections often happen when we look up and see each other face to face. This summer, I invite everyone to find that sweet spot, using our internet to make your real-life gatherings even better.

Think about that family reunion you're planning. Group texts make organizing easy. Video calls let you chat with relatives who moved away. When everyone finally gets together, your phone can capture precious moments and then store, edit and share those images online. Fast reliable internet makes it all possible.

Similarly, our local markets and festivals thrive because vendors can easily process card payments without the need for expensive and complex systems. And they can keep potential customers updated by posting online about sales and new products. But being out and about shopping is still an opportunity for connections where neighbors meet in person, shake hands and catch up.

Also, thanks to abundant and affordable streaming services for music and video, families can gather indoors or outside for movie nights. Perhaps some things that start small can grow into monthly traditions where neighbors become friends.

At Mountain Telephone, we don't just support a fast, industry-leading internet service. We believe these resources can create paths to new possibilities. Your stories of connection and success fuel our passion—grandparents who video chat with grandkids, local businesses that ship to customers around the nation or young artists sharing digital creations with the world.

This summer, try using technology with purpose. Create a shared family photo album that relatives can add to from anywhere. Use social media to organize a park cleanup day. Stream music for any social events such as barbecues, weddings or birthday parties. Record video interviews with friends and family to save and share their stories.

The best communities blend new technology with cherished traditions. At Mountain Telephone, our investment in this community allows us to use technology to make our ties to one another stronger.

As we enjoy summer, remember that our most important connections will always be with each other. We are proud to provide the technology that helps those connections grow. Let's make this a summer of real connections, both online and in person. 📞

The Mountain Telephone Connection is a bimonthly newsletter published by Mountain Rural Telephone Cooperative, © 2025. It is distributed without charge to all member/owners of the cooperative.



Mountain Telephone

Mountain Rural Telephone Cooperative, Inc., is a member-owned cooperative dedicated to providing communications technology to the people of Elliott, Menifee, Morgan, Wolfe and a section of Bath counties. The company covers 1,048 square miles and supplies service to nearly 11,500 members.

Send address corrections to:

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UTILITY RESOURCES

On the Cover:



Actor and producer Ebie Adkins talks to Dave Siriano, writer and director of the series "Gone," which films in Menifee County. See story Page 12.

Photo courtesy of Ebie Adkins

CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET AS OF DEC. 31, 2024

ASSETS

Current Assets \$23,203,622

Other Assets

Investments in affiliated companies
(including cellular) 52,265,611

Miscellaneous Physical Property 4,403,739

Other Investments 20,233,211

Total Current/Other Assets 100,106,183

Telecommunications Plant 152,957,134

Less Accumulated Depreciation (100,377,837)

Net Telecommunications Plant 52,579,297

TOTAL ASSETS \$152,685,480

LIABILITIES and MEMBERS' EQUITIES

Current Liabilities 4,783,812

Long-Term Debt to U.S. Government 3,648,357

Members' Equities:

Memberships 155,777

Patronage Capital 147,604,697

Retired Capital Credit Gain 1,324,608

Accumulated Other Comprehensive Income (Loss) (4,831,771)

TOTAL LIABILITIES and MEMBERS' EQUITIES \$152,685,480

Each year, Mountain Rural Telephone Cooperative's Board of Directors sets the capital allocation based on the financial well-being of the cooperative. This factor determines the amount that will be returned to each customer when capital credits are dispersed. The 2024 patronage allocation percentage applied to accounts is 18.583255% or 19 cents on the dollar. Keep in mind the more services you receive from Mountain Telephone, the greater the investment in the local network and therefore the greater your capital credit return.



HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

Mountain Telephone wishes you safe and happy holidays! Our office will close **Friday, July 4**, in observance of Independence Day, and **Monday, Sept. 1**, for Labor Day.



MOUNTAIN CELEBRATES 75 YEARS OF SERVICE AND CONNECTION

Seventy-five years ago, Mountain Telephone started building the area's first reliable and affordable telephone network. Since then, we've kept our commitment to connect our communities to the world with cutting-edge fiber broadband. This year we celebrate service, dedication and you—the people who make it all possible!



CATCH A WAVE

These water parks are built for thrill, not chill

Story by KATHY DENES

If summer has a signature scent aside from freshly mowed grass, it's the chlorine of swimming pools and water slides. Water parks are the ultimate hot-weather attractions, and some have been popping up lately that go far beyond splash pads and lazy rivers. These parks lure the adventurous with endless waves and whitewater for rafting, kayaking, canoeing and even surfing—no wild oceans or rivers required.

The first of these parks in the country, the U.S. National Whitewater Center in Charlotte, North Carolina, is home to a whitewater river that challenges even the most experienced wave riders. Touted as the world's largest artificial river, its recirculating treated water flows along dual concrete channels offering rapids

varying in intensity from Class II to Class IV.

The sprawling facility is geared to all sorts of outdoor recreation and is still evolving nearly 20 years after opening. Guided rafts and kayakers with whitewater experience ride the same rapids U.S. Olympic athletes use for training and team trials. The Wilderness and Competition channels provide varying intensity and length before ending in the tranquil pool where riders steer their boats onto a conveyor belt and ride back to the start for another go.

"The USNWC was the first whitewater channel specifically designed for family-level fun at an Olympic-standard facility," says course lead designer Scott Shipley, an engineer, kayak champion

and three-time Olympian who holds four world titles. "Until Charlotte, every whitewater channel in the world was an Olympic channel first that was later adapted for commercial rafting. We created a channel for family recreational rafting first and then added a competition channel. We focused on the church and school groups that will be using it as a way to help get them active."

SURF CITY

At Riversport OKC in Oklahoma City, Olympic and Paralympic athletes train in rowing as well as canoe and kayak. In fact, it is slated to be the canoe slalom venue for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics. Its whitewater center offers rowing, kayaking and surfing lessons,



ABOVE: Progressing from bodyboarding to kneeboarding takes very little time with FlowRider's perpetual waves.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Rafting can get pretty wild on Riverpark Rapids in downtown Oklahoma City.

along with tubing, paddleboarding, high-speed slides and even fun on dry land.

Riverpark Rapids whitewater rafting and kayaking center is in Riversport Adventure Park, in the Boathouse District along the Oklahoma River. Whitewater kayaking and guided rafting start at the top of the artificial river, reached via a conveyor belt. From there, it's an easy slide into the river to start a memorable ride.

Those ready to Surf OKC can catch a wave, no previous skill needed. Starting with bodyboarding, the staff teaches all the basics to help visitors hang 10. Wipeouts are inevitable, but there are no sharks in the nonstop waters of the FlowRider surf machine. Found all over the world, these compact wavemakers keep endless, shallow water flowing atop a trampolinelike surface.

TEST THE WATERS

Riverpark OKC is open daily 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the summer and on weekends in the late spring and early fall. Day passes and memberships are available. Each Thursday through Aug. 7, Riverpark offers NightWater Evening Rafting from 6-8 p.m. riversportokc.org

The Charlotte Whitewater Center will celebrate Independence Day by hosting a free two-day festival, July 3 and 4, with live music and more. Evening events those days include illuminated rafting



High above Riversport, a young visitor secured with a safety harness navigates one of the six levels of SandRidge Sky Trail.



In the hills above Charlotte, North Carolina, the U.S. National Whitewater Center caters to whitewater enthusiasts ranging from novice paddlers to Olympic athletes.

Photo courtesy of U.S. National Whitewater Center

and kayaking on the river's Competition Channel, but this requires purchase of an activity pass. See the center's website for schedules, pass information and events, plus details about any required gear and skill prerequisites. whitewater.org. 📱

MAKING A SPLASH

Montgomery, Alabama—Whitewater paddlers of all skill levels can enjoy the thrills of rafting or kayaking at Montgomery Whitewater, complete with a 1,600-foot Competition Channel and 2,200-foot Creek Channel. To open its season, Montgomery Whitewater hosted the 2025 Pan American Canoe Slalom and Kayak Cross Championships. It was the site of the U.S. Canoe/Kayak Slalom Olympic team trials for the 2024 Paris games. For more, go to montgomerywhitewater.com.

Sevierville, Tennessee—Before the 2020 opening of Soaky Mountain, surfer Ben Gravy tested its waters, posted his rides on YouTube and declared the park has the "best manmade novelty wave in America—one of the best on the planet." Soaky Mountain is open daily in July and August and on weekends in September.

Check out soakymountainwaterpark.com.

Rock Hill, South Carolina—Two custom lakes at SouthTown Wake Park await wakeboard riders 7 and older, and there isn't a boat in sight. Boarders hold ski ropes pulled by overhead cables. Beginners can sign up for lessons on the smaller lake, while the larger lake is equipped with jump ramps and other features that let advanced wakeboarders work on extreme moves. There's also Aqua Park for paddleboards, as well as an obstacle course on floating inflatables and onshore games.

Get all the details at southtownwakepark.com.

The Mountain Difference

Photography by WILLIAM LEMASTER

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D. Joleen Frederick
Attorney



Shayne Ison
CEO/General
Manager



Quentin Murphy
Assistant General
Manager

MRTC EMPLOYEES



Adam Mann



Amie Wheeler



Andrew Bailey



April Cox



Austin Murphy



Ben Bowman



Brad Nickell



Brandon Wilson



Bryan Cox



Caleb Caudill



Caleb Gilliam



Carla Hileman



Carter Bolin



Collin Massie



Courtney Rice



Curtis Howell



Dale Brown



Dave Pence



Drew Bush



Dylan Howard



Elaine Prater



Ethan Howell



Garett Loudermilk



Garrett Howell



Gene Cornett



Grayson Brown



Hope Barker



Hope Potter



Hunter Williams



Jacob Hampton



James Lane



Jason Oliver



Jason Sargent



Jerry Hampton



John Aragon



John Michael Gibson



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Katelyn Stacy



Keith Stamper



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Kerrick Kidd



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Travis Keeton



Tyler Adkins



Tyler Benton



Wes Collett

THE KIDS ARE

How teenagers navigate digital communication

Story by DREW WOOLEY

Born into the world of smartphones and social media, today's teenagers spend more time communicating online than any of their predecessors. While that familiarity with the online world builds skills with digital platforms, it also affects how they experience adolescence.

"We see that a lot of their development is shaped through their interactions with technology," says Kaitlyn Burnell, director of research for the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Winston Center for Technology and the Developing Mind. "It's not just reflecting those aspects of development but also fundamentally changing how they're going through those experiences."

Experts say the key to making sure those changes are positive is understanding how teens are communicating online and giving them the knowledge to shape their own experiences.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is often the most public form of online communication for young people and an easy way to communicate on a large scale. While social status and approval from peers has always been important for adolescents, Burnell says that influence is amplified by social media's ability to track those reactions in real time.

"Adolescents place a lot of importance on the number of likes and the quality of the comments they're getting," she says. "There's no real counterpart of that in the past. The best thing I can come up with is maybe the number of yearbook signatures or something old school like that. But it's very, very different."

That isn't always a bad thing. While image-heavy platforms like Instagram can lead some to struggle with body image, recent studies show a well-curated social media feed can inspire young people more than discourage them. Many teens understand how their feeds work.

"To adolescents' credit, they're pretty sophisticated in tailoring their algorithms," says Michaeline Jensen, University of North Carolina at Greensboro associate professor. "If they're not liking what they're getting, they game it—unfollow some stuff or press the thumbs down to try and steer toward different content. They're pretty sophisticated with trying to make their online spaces a place that's affirming and positive for them."

DIRECT MESSAGING

Direct messaging is reserved for more personal interactions. Private messages are the go-to way to express love, get emotional support or just check in with a parent.

"It's how they talk to people who really matter to them," Jensen says. "Things like day-to-day logistical stuff can make parenting easier, so you can check in and get work done. But it does seem like when teens have those more emotionally supportive conversations over text, those seem to be perceived positively by the kids."

Written chats proved to be more popular than video chats even during periods of separation like the coronavirus pandemic. While video calls can be an authentic way to communicate with faraway family, the interface can prove distracting when talking to other teens.

"Hypothetically, video communication should be more enriching because it's as close to a face-to-face conversation as you can get," Burnell says. "However, the problem that we've identified is that



online

the default for most software is that you see yourself and that isn't always great. If you're occupied with how you look, then that's going to impede those social benefits."

SOCIAL GAMING

Teens often spend social time gaming online, whether with local friends or players across the world. While there are concerns about this hurting offline relationships, Sophie Janicke-Bowles, an associate professor at California's Chapman University, found the opposite can be true.

"When it comes to kids hanging out with friends, social gaming is taking that over," she says. "And it can actually increase both the online and offline connection when hanging out with friends. So, it can be a contributor to more social interaction rather than less."

Gaming spaces can still expose players to coarse language or bullying. An awareness of how those platforms are used and who they are exposing adolescents to is crucial for creating a positive experience.

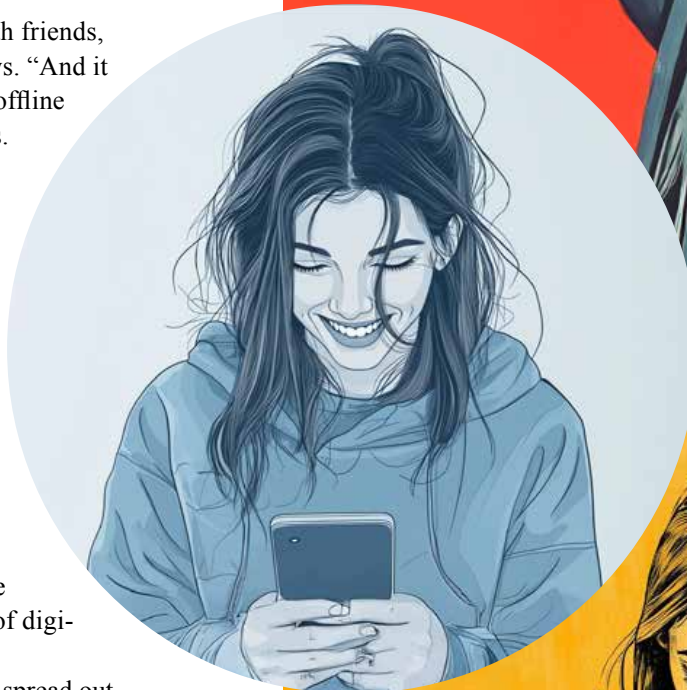
RURAL CONNECTIONS

Building digital literacy can be challenging in rural areas, where the digital divide is closing but schools may not have resources to teach how to make the most of digital communication.

"It makes sense that if families are more spread out from each other you can't just go next door and hang out with your friend," Jensen says. "There might be greater reliance on digital technologies in order to facilitate those social connections, and we don't yet know how kids will adjust to that."

But the upside for rural kids can also be much greater. Digital communication can help them stay in touch with local friends who do not live miles away or even find communities around their personal interests that do not exist nearby. The key is staying aware of how they use those tools, even as they are rapidly changing.

"We know that for everyone, these forms of digital communication are just embedded within our daily lives," Burnell says. "Everyone relies on digital forms of communication for social support. So, it's important to remember it's not just good or bad. It depends on the content, it depends on the person, and it depends on what they're doing." 📱



Adobe Stock (altered) AI-generated illustrations by LucyJ

Lights, Camera, Action!

Filmmakers find gold in Menifee

Story by JEN CALHOUN with EBIE ADKINS

Carrie Lawson was skeptical last fall when her friend, Ebie Adkins, asked her to go all the way to Lexington to see an independent film. It was a long drive, after all, and the subject matter of the movie centered around the drug crisis in Appalachia.

"This was all in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene, too," says Carrie, who had only recently been named tourism director for Menifee County. "We didn't have electricity at home, and there were trees down everywhere. I was like, 'What am I going to see—Bob's backyard movie?'"

But Ebie insisted. The local teacher had an acting role and a production credit in "M30 Oxy," a crime thriller written and directed by Kentucky-born filmmaker Wesley Mullins.

But beyond that, Ebie wanted to show Carrie an example of a film that was shot in Menifee County—something she believed could be replicated with other movie and TV projects. Filmmaking could bring more money into the county by attracting visitors, providing jobs and creating business opportunities. As a bonus, it could give young people a much-needed creative outlet.

As soon as Carrie saw the movie, she saw the potential. "It depicted Menifee County in a great light," she says. "It

didn't show us as your stereotypical Appalachian area—no shoes and all that. I wanted more people to see it."

Carrie was able to convince Tenth Frame Cinemas in nearby Mount Sterling to show "M30 Oxy" over a four-day run. "Almost 700 people went and saw the film," she says. "It was a huge accomplishment for us."

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Shortly after the release of "M30 Oxy," Echo TV Studios, a Florida-based company, shot two seasons of "Gone," a series about end times that features local cast and crew, including several first-time actors who are Menifee residents. The story follows a woman who ends up alone after her husband and daughter disappear following the rapture.

Dave Siriano, writer and director of "Gone" enjoyed his time in the county. "The location is beautiful and working with the local actors, the experience was tremendous," he says. "My plan is to create and film many more projects in the county and to let people see the beauty of it."

Other filmmakers have also shown interest, including Beth Houck with Eternal Choices Productions, who traveled to see the premiere of "Gone" in Frenchburg. After seeing the county, she and others



Ebie Adkins, left, an executive producer on the series "Gone" and the actor playing Emily, poses with James Botts, executive producer and "creepy clerk" in the show, and Kara Young, who plays Detective Harris.

in her company decided it was the best location and team for filming one of their upcoming series.

"I hope the relationships we're building in the faith-based film industry can bring more projects to the area," says Ebie, who, along with another Menifee County resident, took a job with Echo TV.



Adobe Stock image by Vadim Georgiev

“WE’RE JUST A WONDERFUL PLACE TO BE. NOW PEOPLE ARE BEGINNING TO SEE IT.”

—CARRIE LAWSON, MENIFEE COUNTY
TOURISM DIRECTOR

POSSIBILITIES

Last year, Menifee County also welcomed crews from Florida, Norway and California to the community for production of a television series and a short film. This small-town success has positioned the county in the middle of a statewide effort to attract more filmmaking with the commonwealth’s recent creation of the Kentucky Film Office within the Cabinet for Economic Development.

Carrie believes Menifee County is poised to be part of the future of Kentucky filmmaking because of its people and landscape. “We’re just a wonderful place to be,” she says. “Now people are beginning to see it. Geographically, it’s beautiful. We’re in the heart of the foothills.”

Filmmakers also need things like great locations and the type of broadband infrastructure provided by Mountain Telephone. “It’s an edge to have fiber internet with high speeds for filmmakers,” Ebie says. “I told somebody that the other day. It surprises people that we have such a dependable internet connection. It’s huge.”

Menifee County officials also have plans to provide local students with filmmaking training, including both the technical and creative aspects of the business, Ebie says. Filmmakers need everything from production assistants to camera operators and actors.



Photos courtesy of Ebie Adkins

Mallory Cooper, a high school freshman and “Gone” cast member from Season 3, is excited she can act in a television project. “I think it’s awesome that we have all of these opportunities in Menifee County,” she says. “Just being able to say, ‘That’s my hometown!’ when I see something filmed right here.”

Ebie’s goal is to stick to filmmaking based around faith. “We don’t have Hollywood aspirations for what we’re doing here,” she says. “We just want to work together to share stories that bring hope.”

ABOVE: Actors film a scene for the series “Gone.” The story follows a woman who ends up alone after her husband and daughter disappear following the rapture.

TOP: Cast and crew members from the series “Gone” take a break from filming.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

For more information on Menifee filmmaking, contact Ebie Adkins at ebie@echotvstudios.com.



Burger Bliss

Create a meal perfect for summer

Few things in life are better than a big juicy burger in the middle of summer. Mouths water at the thought. And it takes just a few ingredients to reach perfection.

There's more to making the perfect burger than hand-patting the beef, though that's an excellent start. But before you do that, add a little salt and pepper, a dash of Worcestershire sauce, an envelope of onion soup mix and mayonnaise. Yes, mayo. Ignite the fire, add your burgers to the grill and get ready for a taste explosion.

And since it's summer, add a watermelon salad and finish the meal with a big scoop of easy-to-make peach ice cream—no churning required—and you have a meal fit for a summertime feast.



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

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

MAYO BURGERS

- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 1/2 cup plain bread crumbs
- 1 envelope onion soup mix
- 2 pounds ground beef
- 8 hamburger buns

Combine mayonnaise, bread crumbs and soup mix in bowl.

Mix mayonnaise mixture into ground beef. Shape into 8 patties. When forming

hamburger patties, make a shallow indentation or dimple in the middle of each patty. This divot will keep the center from bulging up as it cooks so that the patty will stay flat and even. Even cooking and heat distribution will keep each patty juicy and consistent. Grill or broil until done. Serve burgers on buns with desired condiments.



WATERMELON SALAD WITH BALSAMIC REDUCTION

- 2/3 cup balsamic vinegar
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 7- to 8-pound watermelon
- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/4 cup fresh mint leaves, chopped
- 2/3 cup crumbled feta cheese

In a small saucepan set over medium-high heat, combine the balsamic vinegar and sugar. Bring the mixture to a boil and continue cooking, stirring and scraping down the sides as needed, until it has reduced and is the consistency of syrup,

about 5 minutes. It will thicken as it cools and only yield a few tablespoons. Set it aside to cool while you prepare the salad.

Cut the watermelon into cubes or use a melon baller to scoop it into balls. Put the melon pieces in a large bowl.

In a small bowl, whisk together the lime juice and olive oil with a pinch of salt and pepper. Pour the dressing over the watermelon, add the chopped mint and feta cheese, and toss to combine. Drizzle the salad with the balsamic syrup and serve immediately.

SUMMER PEACH NO-CHURN ICE CREAM

- 1 pound fresh peaches, peeled, pitted and sliced
- 1 14-ounce can sweetened condensed milk
- 1 8-ounce block of cream cheese
- 2 cups heavy whipping cream
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract

Using a food processor, pulse the

peaches until they are pea-size chunks. Alternatively, dice the peaches by hand and, in a large bowl, lightly mash them to release juices. Cover with a towel and set aside.

In a large mixing bowl or a stand mixer, mix the sweetened condensed milk, cream cheese, heavy whipping cream and vanilla on a medium-high speed until stiff

peaks form. Gently fold in the peaches until just combined.

Pour the mixture into a freezer-safe container. Cover with plastic wrap, allowing wrap to lie directly on top of the ice cream mixture. This will keep the ice cream from forming crystals on the top. Freeze at least 4 hours for soft-serve ice cream or 6 hours to overnight for firmer ice cream, then scoop away! 🍦





Mountain Telephone

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You're invited!

Mountain Telephone's

ANNUAL MEETING

Thursday, July 10

Morgan County High School

Registration: 5-6:15 p.m.

Business Meeting: 6:30 p.m.