



Mountain Telephone

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2026

CONNECTION



Hay, Everybody!

Menifee County
Bale Trail returns

MIGUEL'S PIZZA

CUSTOMER
APPRECIATION
DAYS

By Mike Romano, CEO
NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association

America at 250: Building Connections That Last

Every community has a story to tell, and at NTCA, we're honored to help our members tell theirs.

As we celebrate America's 250th anniversary, it's worth remembering that much of our nation's story started in rural America, and the heartbeat of our great country can often be heard most loudly in the spaces between the biggest cities. You can see this spirit clearly in small towns and rural communities where generations of Americans have come together to build the infrastructure, roads, bridges, and yes, communications networks, that provide a reliable foundation for civic engagement, commerce and connection.

For generations, local providers stepped forward to make sure rural America stayed connected with the rest of the country and the world when others wouldn't. They invested in the infrastructure their communities needed to grow and thrive. As technology evolved, so did those networks. Today, our nation's small, community-based broadband providers are delivering robust and reliable high-speed broadband that powers education, healthcare, agriculture, public safety, small businesses and countless opportunities.

Throughout that journey, NTCA has been proud to advocate for the policies that make those investments possible—and help them provide connections that last for generations.

As we think about what will help America thrive from coast to coast, far beyond the celebration of its 250th birthday, those will matter even more. Together, we'll continue building connections that will take us into the next 250 years. [🔗](#)

A dark blue graphic for National Cyber Security Awareness Month. On the left, there is a stylized illustration of a yellow padlock with a keyhole, set against a background of concentric circles and lines, resembling a digital interface or a lock mechanism. To the right of the padlock, the text "NATIONAL CYBER SECURITY AWARENESS MONTH" is written in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters, with "OCTOBER" below it in a slightly smaller font. Below this, the headline "Protect the Keys, Not the House" is written in a large, light blue, serif font. Underneath the headline, a paragraph begins with a large "W" and discusses the importance of cybersecurity. This is followed by three more paragraphs, each starting with a smaller "W" or "T", providing advice on protecting digital accounts. The entire graphic is framed by thin white horizontal lines at the top and bottom.

**NATIONAL
CYBER
SECURITY
AWARENESS MONTH
OCTOBER**

Protect the Keys, Not the House

When it comes to cybersecurity, do you become overwhelmed by the idea of protecting dozens of accounts? Online banking, shopping sites, streaming services, social media and more. It can seem daunting.

Try thinking about protecting the keys, not the whole house.

Just a handful of accounts unlocks nearly everything else in your digital life. If criminals gain access to one of these “master keys,” they may be able to reset passwords, impersonate you or access sensitive information.

The most important key is your email account. It’s where password reset links are sent, making it the gateway to many of your other accounts. Your mobile phone number is another key, since it’s often used to verify your identity. If you use a password manager, it deserves extra protection because it holds the credentials to many of your accounts. Finally, your financial accounts should always have the strongest safeguards available.

Start by creating a strong, unique password for each of these accounts and turning on multifactor authentication whenever it’s offered. Then make sure your phone and computer stay updated with the latest security patches.

You don’t have to secure every digital door at once. Protect the few keys that unlock everything else, and you’ve taken one of the biggest steps toward keeping your online life secure. [🔗](#)



Adobe Stock image by suthinon602

Sell More, Stress Less

Online alternatives to the Saturday yard sale

Story by LAURA MCGILL

Who looks forward to spending days planning a yard sale only to get up early on a Saturday morning to deal with the guy who arrives early to nose around the garage while you get everything set up or the lady determined to haggle over every price? All that hassle, and you'll still likely wind up with less money in your pocket than you hoped.

Step away from those headaches with convenient online options. You'll be in control, and you can spend your Saturday mornings sleeping in.

WHAT TO SELL

If you are trying to sell collectibles such as vintage records, trading cards and memorabilia, eBay and Etsy are good choices. To sell your grandmother's china, crystal and silverware, start with Replacements Ltd., where you can search by pattern. There are even sites specializing in items like coins and currency or specific brands.

To sell designer clothes and accessories, explore options like The RealReal, Poshmark and ThredUp. Seller beware, though, as these sites often charge high commission rates and have restrictions on which brands they will buy. For the option of shipping or local pickup, look to Facebook Marketplace, Craigslist or local buy/sell groups.

DETAILS MATTER

Think about all the possible questions someone could ask about

your item. Take photos from multiple angles using good lighting. Consider taking a video as well, especially if it helps show the item is in working order. Write a detailed description including all relevant information such as dimensions, weight, brand, color, size and condition.

State the terms in the listing, such as price, payment methods accepted and whether it will be sold on a first-come, first-served basis. When considering what price to ask, research comparable items. Know what the item costs to buy new, and leave room for negotiation.

SELL SAFELY

Selling online isn't completely free of hassles. Be prepared for lowball offers and messages from people who never respond to your reply. Don't be surprised if someone says they want the item but never shows up or cancels at the last minute.

Be aware of fake payment emails or overpayment scams. Ignore suspicious messages. Choose a safe, public location to meet. Your town may even have designated areas such as police station parking lots.

If the buyer is coming to your house, be cautious. Choose a safe time of day. Do not allow someone into your home. Instead, have the item sitting on your front porch or in the driveway. If you are alone, tell a neighbor what you are doing, and ask them to keep an eye on you when the buyer is there. 📞

Co-ops Are the Perfect Blend

Each October, we pause to highlight the benefits of cooperative membership, and this year we're thinking about the warm, inviting nature of co-ops, just like a good cup of coffee. Our shared values, our principles, our commitment and our members all make Mountain Telephone the perfect blend.



SHAYNE ISON
General Manager

Community is at the heart of everything co-ops do. We believe in democracy, people over profits and high-quality service for you and your neighbors. We believe in the people who live and work here and believe they should have the power to make decisions that affect them. We believe in cooperation among other co-ops to help each other get through the hard times and cheer each other on during the good times. Our principles are what make us strong and help our community flourish.

Belonging to a co-op is like choosing to invest in a local coffee shop instead of the big national chain. Both are great, but they're different—and supporting local is the most direct way to reinvest into our own community.

Go ahead, grab a fresh cup of your favorite brew and read about the perks of belonging to a co-op.

Open Membership: Everyone is welcome. All you need is a desire to join, and you're in.

Democratic Control: Every member has a voice and gets to contribute to the success of our cooperative.

Member Participation: When you invest in us, the rewards return to the community by improving service, backing local charities and returning excess funds to you.

Autonomy: Co-ops are strong, independent and self-reliant.

Education: Co-ops empower members with knowledge and understanding.

Cooperation: Different strengths and flavors come together to make something greater than the sum of its parts.

Community Concern: Grounded in doing good and supporting our communities.

Mountain Telephone strives to live these principles every day, not just in October. Together with our members, we make the perfect blend.

Thanks for your continued trust and partnership. 🗨️



CONNECTION

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2026

VOL. 14, NO. 5

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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.

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On the Cover:



The Menifee County Bale Trail is back for its second year. Check out larger-than-life hay sculptures in October.
See story Page 12.

Photo courtesy of Debbie Little



MRTC's Customer Appreciation Days

LET'S CELEBRATE YOU!

Mountain Telephone is excited to announce the dates for our upcoming Customer Appreciation Days. All events will begin at 11 a.m. and end at 3:30 p.m.

Menifee County:

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 9

Menifee County Farmers Market

Elliott County:

THURSDAY, SEPT. 24

Elliott County Extension Office

Wolfe County:

TUESDAY, SEPT. 29

Wolfe County Extension Office

Bath County:

THURSDAY, OCT. 8

Mudlick First Church of God

Powell County:

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 21

Middle Fork Volunteer Fire Department

Morgan County:

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 28

MRTC Headquarters Building

HAPPY LABOR DAY!

On Labor Day, we celebrate the hardworking Americans whose commitment, ingenuity and service help shape our nation's future. Our office will be closed **Monday, Sept. 7**, in observance of the holiday.

Celebrate



October is Co-op Month

Just like a good cup of joe energizes your morning, co-ops energize the community so that together, we can build something strong and robust.



Autumn Advent

Hit the road for fabulous fall foliage

Maple, aspen, birch, oak, hickory, dogwood and gum trees are known for vivid fall colors, ranging from bright reds and oranges to golden yellows and browns. Those vibrant colors are always present. They just need a little seasonal help getting to the surface.

As temperatures drop and sunny days begin to shorten, trees stop producing chlorophyll, the substance that makes leaves

green. As it fades, the brilliant red, orange and yellow pigments obscured by the green begin to shine through.

Cool, crisp days and frost-free nights produce the sharpest fall colors. Drought conditions in early fall can trigger a premature chlorophyll shutdown, causing leaves to wither and fall without reaching their full color potential. And too much rain or an early frost can dull the leaves' colors. 🍂

Know Your Colors

YELLOW—Aspen, beech, birch, cottonwood, elm, ginkgo, hickory, sugar maple, tulip poplar, sassafras, sycamore

ORANGE—Bigtooth maple, Rocky Mountain maple, sugar maple, sweetgum

RED—Black gum, cypress, dogwood, oak, red maple, sourwood, sumac



Where to Look

Our expansive and ecologically diverse region offers ample leaf-peeping options beginning around mid-September and peaking in mid-October. Whether you're hiking forested ridgelines, driving scenic byways, floating a river or camping beneath golden canopies, unforgettable fall colors await you.

Chances are you can find plenty of color right in your own backyard. For fall excursions farther afield, consider these options:

- **Daniel Boone National Forest, Kentucky:** The Red River Gorge and Natural Bridge State Resort Park feature brilliant foliage from maple, beech and sycamore trees with sandstone arches and cliffs adding to the drama.
- **Pisgah and Nantahala National Forests, North Carolina:** The Blue Ridge Parkway, Craggy Gardens and Linville Gorge showcase fiery displays of sugar maples, red maples and hickories, framed by sweeping mountain views.
- **Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests, Georgia:** Leaf peepers flock to Brasstown Bald, Tallulah Gorge and Anna Ruby Falls to see the golden hickories, scarlet oaks and tulip poplars.

ures Await

Don't Leaf Home Without a Plan

No matter the season's conditions, finding fall colors by car, boat or on foot is an autumn joy. Planning a leaf-peeping excursion has never been easier.

Founded in 1875, American Forests is the nation's oldest non-profit conservation organization. Its fall foliage map offers a clear look at where leaves are peaking throughout the United States with tips and suggestions. Visit americanforests.org/fall-foliage-map.

With the tried-and-true The Old Farmer's Almanac, both the yellow-bound classic booklet and online version, arboreal enthusiasts can easily find the best spots near and far. The website features an animated map showing the progression and historical presence of fall colors. The print version includes tables of expected peak dates, regional weather trends and travel features. Visit almanac.com.

Get tips from the folks at Find Fall, "the best place for fall foliage information, destinations, adventures and activities for an autumn you'll never forget." Visit findfall.com.



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Chow Down &

Ventura family offers a refuge for rock climbers

Story by LAURA MCGILL

Seasoned rock climbers who return year after year to scale the walls of the Red River Gorge know all the popular spots—where to climb, the best place to eat, the go-to shopping destination and the perfect place to get some rest. Three of those four spots can be found on Natural Bridge Road in Slade at the Ventura family's pizza restaurant, gear shop and private campground.

What began as a simple ice cream shop in the mid-1980s grew into a sprawling 30-acre haven that includes Miguel's Pizza, Miguel's Rock Climbing Shop and a laid-back place for climbers to camp. Today, Mark Ventura, Miguel's son, leads the operation along with his brother, Dario. His mother, Susan, runs the gear shop during the season.

Dario's time is divided between the

Slade businesses and RedPoint BBQ in nearby Campton. Although Miguel is still a central part of the business he and Susan started more than 40 years ago, he is trying his hand at semiretirement. Not quite ready to let it all go, he helps with maintenance about four days a week.

PIZZA PARADISE

The sprawling restaurant diners see



Red River Gorge rock climbers rely on Miguel's Pizza's tasty menu items to recharge their batteries.

Photos courtesy of Miguel's Pizza

Gear Up

today with 60 picnic tables, indoor seating and overflow seating downstairs is a long way from the original humble ice cream joint. Located in a converted old general store and known as The Rainbow Door, it was quickly a hit with climbers. Soon those hungry climbers started asking for more food options. Pizza was the answer.

With a name change to Miguel's Pizza and an oven that could handle three pizzas at a time, business grew slowly at first. Over time, as the popularity of climbing in the Red River Gorge increased, so too did the crowds coming in for pizza.

In 2018 and 2019, the Ventura family completed a major renovation. The original general store building was preserved while a larger kitchen and more seating were added. Now, in the busy spring and fall climbing seasons, it takes a crew of over 55 employees to handle the demand.



Each year the staff at Miguel's Pizza invites patrons to take part in a Halloween costume contest. Follow the business on Facebook to get the details.

The team at Miguel's Pizza runs five counter-service registers, the main oven can hold 45-50 pizzas at a time and a secondary oven can handle another 18. Even with that capacity, the line is still often out the door as the crew serves up to 800 pizzas a day. Customers receive a tracker to place on their tables, and a food runner delivers the piping-hot pies. The system is powered by Mountain Telephone internet service.

The pizza menu is all about customization. With dine-in, take-out or take-and-bake options, diners can choose from an impressive array of toppings. "We have like 40 different toppings, so you can literally build out whatever you like every time that you come in," Mark says. "It is kinda what we're known for. And that's the same for our breakfast." Miguel's breakfast menu features build-your-own burritos and omelets with the same list of toppings.

Those toppings are local farm-to-table as much as possible with some items grown on-site. "We have our own greenhouse. My dad, one of his many passions is gardening," Mark says. "The main things that we supply ourselves are basil, squash, tomatoes and jalapenos." But with the volume of the restaurant, Miguel can't grow all the ingredients on his own. "Obviously, we're not able to



The BALT sandwich includes bacon, avocado, lettuce and tomato.

MIGUEL'S PIZZA

1890 Natural Bridge Road, Slade
606-663-1975
miguelspizza.com

MIGUEL'S ROCK CLIMBING SHOP

1960 Natural Bridge Road, Slade
606-663-3650
miguelrockclimbingshop.com

The campground is private and exclusively for climbers. Those interested in learning more can call the climbing shop.

produce enough to supply us totally. We have a partnership in Menifee County that supplies us with a lot."

GET YOUR GEAR

Just like the Red River Gorge is highly regarded throughout the climbing community, Miguel's Rock Climbing Shop has earned a reputation far beyond its surprisingly small footprint. It is known for an outstanding selection of everything a climber needs paired with the expert advice of an experienced staff.

Pretty soon, though, that small space will become much bigger. "Our shop might be small, but it is probably one of the more extensive rock-climbing-specific shops in the country," Mark says as he talks about the new building currently under construction. "We're hoping to become a one-stop shop for everyone in the area, not just rock climbers."

Once completed, the new building will be approximately six times larger than the original, giving the Ventura family room to branch out and carry more climbing items. Mark says that the larger space will also include a grocery store offering local produce and eggs. Family members plan to roast their own coffee and develop their own trail mixes. Mark is also planning to make room for items from local artisans.

The target opening date is Oct. 1, but Mark knows a lot of work needs to be done to hit that mark. "It has been a very long, grueling process," he says. "But we know this is something that is needed for both climbers and the locals." 📞



Join the Circle

Bluegrass music grows far beyond its Appalachian roots

Story by DREW WOOLLEY

For many bluegrass musicians, the genre is steeped in tradition. Born with an instrument in their hand, they come of age listening to Bill Monroe, the Osborne Brothers and Jim and Jesse, learning the patterns of old-time folk music before eventually adding their own voices to the mix.

The members of The Last Revel took a different path. Hailing from Minnesota and Wisconsin, far north of bluegrass music's Appalachian roots, banjo player Ryan Acker, fiddler Vinnie Donatelle, guitarist Lee Henke and bass player Ryan Krauss came to the genre a bit later in life.

"My first introduction to bluegrass was probably in college," Ryan Acker says. "I was really drawn to it as the energetic side of the folk singer-songwriter music that I was already pretty fond of. It just seemed like a really great outlet for reckless-abandon youth."

Formed in Minneapolis in 2011, the band started out playing

music based more in blues-rock style, but quickly found the people they met in that space were not as welcoming as they hoped. Around that time, Lee remembers seeing bluegrass-influenced bands like Trampled by Turtles and Pert Near Sandstone and thinking they looked like they were having a pretty good time.

"That was the moment when we were like, 'Instead of trying to turn an acoustic song into something else, what if we just kept it acoustic?'" he says. "If it weren't for all those bands in Minnesota kind of showing us the ropes, I don't know if I would have ever gotten this steeped in it. But the genre itself has just been so heartwarming and embracing."

TIME TO SHOW OUT

As someone who grew up in Kentucky's bluegrass tradition, Ken White finds the community to be as defining a feature as the music itself. A multi-instrumentalist who has played in



Alabama-based band Mountain Grass Unit performs at the World of Bluegrass.



Sierra Hull joins The Wood Brothers, from left, Chris Wood, Oliver Wood and Jano Rix, on the Bluegrass Live! stage.

several bands, Ken now serves as the executive director for the International Bluegrass Music Association. This October, he'll be welcoming musicians from across the globe to the World of Bluegrass in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

"The thing I love about bluegrass is that you don't have to know anybody in the jam circle to walk up and start making music," he says. "From beginners all the way up to the best professionals, people are welcoming. And that's something that transcends language."

The same is true for the music itself. Ken compares being part of a traditional bluegrass band to a jazz ensemble, where each musician has mastery of his or her instrument. They all make an essential contribution to the group's sound but also have moments to shine individually.

"In a lot of old-time folk traditions, the instrumentalist will just play the melody or an accompaniment. They don't really show out," he says. "Part of what makes bluegrass unique is the emphasis on virtuosity. I think that resonates with a lot of people around the globe and is a big part of why bluegrass takes root in other cultures."

Here in the United States, musicians in different parts of the country have found ways to take that sound and make it their own. Texas bluegrass often incorporates elements of Western swing and contest fiddling that are popular in folk music throughout the Lone Star State. For the members of The Last Revel, the earnestness that comes through in their songwriting follows the tradition of other Midwestern bluegrass musicians.

"It's all very songwriter based. That's kind of the main focus

and the bluegrass aspect around it is almost secondary," Ryan Acker says. "The music aspect is more like the vehicle for the song. And I think that is different from other subgenres around the country."

BRIDGING THE GAP

That distinction has, at times, left bands like The Last Revel on the fringes of the traditional bluegrass scene. Early in the band's run, as the members incorporated their blues and indie rock influences alongside traditional bluegrass instrumentation, figuring out where they fit into the genre could be a source of frustration.

"It used to be something we were worried about, and now we kind of pride ourselves on being a little different," Lee says.

"I have so much respect for traditional bluegrass. But I also like that we can lean into our own thing. There are so many variations on bluegrass and roots music. Maybe we can show a different side of it."

As the band tours in support of its 2025 album "Gone for Good," those moments have become some of Ryan's favorites. Whether it's working the merch booth or meeting people at shows, fans regularly tell him they had never listened to bluegrass music until they discovered The Last Revel.

"We're like the gateway to this whole other genre of music that people maybe didn't think they would like," he says. "And I think that's great. With Spotify and other streaming services, it's easy for genres to blend together. If we can be a tiny little bridge for somebody's musical tastes, I really get a kick out of that." 🗨️



The members of The Last Revel came to bluegrass in a nontraditional way and enjoy sharing the genre with new audiences.

The Bale Trail gives Menifee County residents and businesses a chance to shake their creative tail feathers. This turkey-themed entry is titled "Rise and Shine."



HAY THERE!

Menifee County's Bale Trail returns for a second year

Story by LAURA MCGILL

When businesses and families in Frenchburg and surrounding Menifee County communities plan their entries for the 2026 Bale Trail, the hay-themed puns are sure to rival last year's whimsical displays. In 2025, a replica of the water tower declared that

"Bill HAY Bob Loves Charlene" and seasonal sneezes were treated with a "Prescription for HAY Fever."

A trip out West in 2018 led to the light bulb moment for Debbie Little, the dynamic force behind the Bale Trail. "My husband and I took a drive along the

Montana Bale Trail," she says. "I knew this would be a great opportunity for Menifee County."

What she didn't know was that it would take seven years for it to all come together.

The first hurdle was the COVID-19 pandemic, which put a lot of plans on the

back burner. The other big challenge was that Menifee County didn't have a tourism board to help organize and promote such an event. That changed in 2024, when Menifee County Tourism was formed, and Debbie joined the board.

With some closer-to-home advice from the chamber of commerce in Todd County, Kentucky, Menifee County's event began to take shape. "They shared how they handled their event. I ran with that information and tweaked it to better suit our area," Debbie says.

BUILDING ON THE MOMENTUM

Debbie wasn't sure what to expect for the Bale Trail's first year. "I was hoping for maybe 20 displays and \$1,000 in sponsorships," she says. "But we ended up with over 50 displays and more than \$2,000 in sponsorships."

The creativity on display in the contest ranged from movie characters and farm animals to an actual truck on top of hay rolls. The weather didn't always cooperate, and some designs proved to be high maintenance. "We had some heavy rain and high winds," Debbie recalls. "One of our participants had to go out and repair the tail feathers on her rooster every few days. It was a learning experience."

Like last year, the 2026 trail will be promoted on Menifee County Tourism's website and Facebook page. A map will show the locations. There is already excitement about the new display themes. Last year Debbie's entry was "Will HAY Nelson," and this year she's planning to top that with "Doll HAY Parton."



And she's not the only one getting ready. "People were already telling me they knew what they were going to do the next year before the first event was even over," Debbie says. "That's when I knew that this community and the people here were behind this 100%."

With those lessons learned and the momentum behind it, Debbie is ready for the trail's second year.

"It will be easier this year. I know the community is ready and waiting. I know the visitors are out there. The families and kids will show up. The businesses and the creators are on board," she says. "The Menifee County Bale Trail will become the signature event for Menifee County if we continue to get support like we did in 2025." 🗨️



Photos courtesy of Debbie Little

MENIFEE COUNTY BALE TRAIL

Oct. 1-31

Participants throughout Menifee County will create displays using hay bales and loose hay. They may also create a scene using scarecrows or add them to the hay sculpture display.

Any Menifee County citizen, business, church, school class or group can take part, but registration is required. There is no fee to enter.

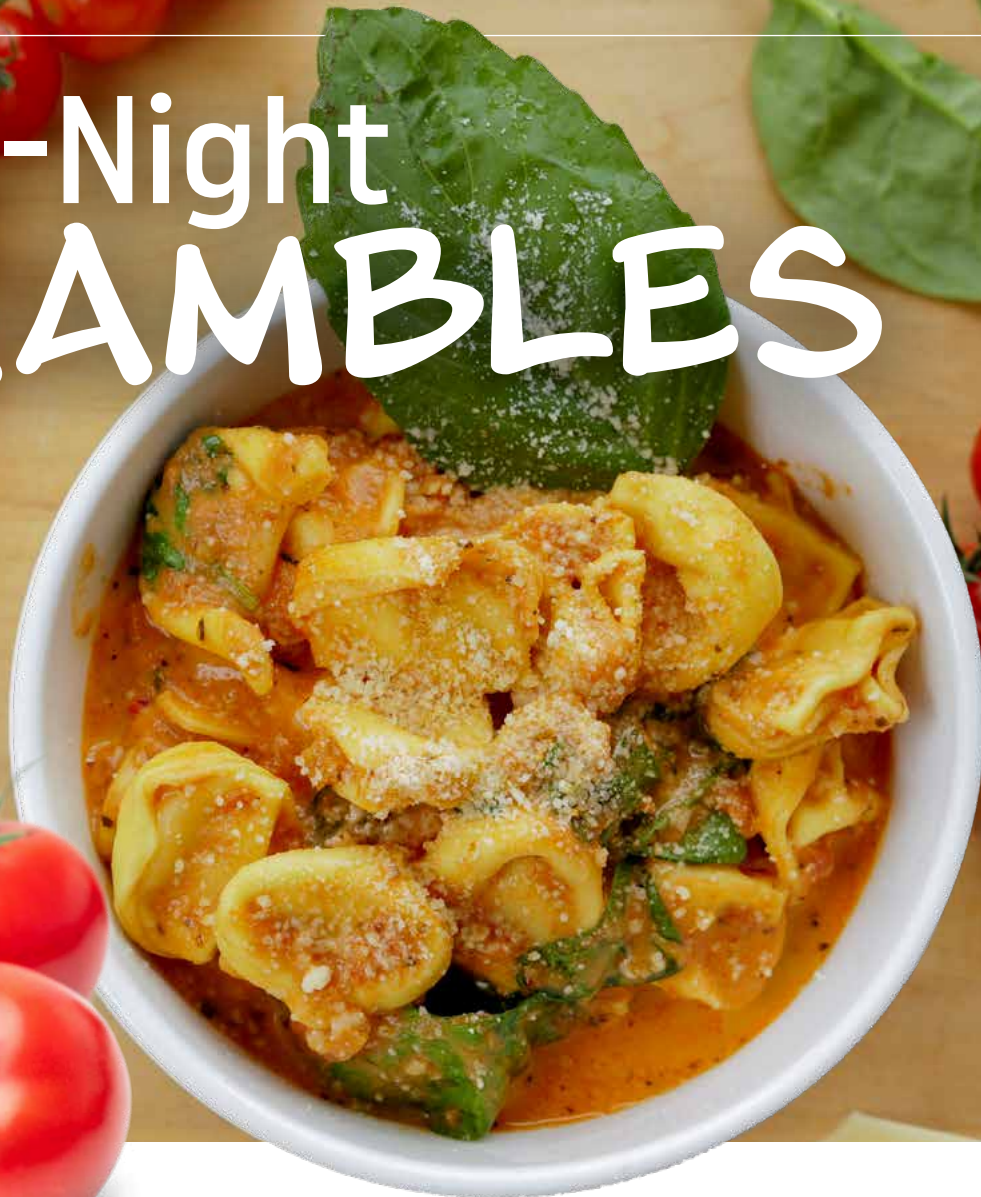
Registration forms are available at menifeetourism.com or in person at the chamber office, 46 Back St., Frenchburg, and must be submitted by Sept. 20.

For more information, go to menifeetourism.com.

FROM TOP: Bale Trail entries range from whimsical, like Daisy the cow in her yellow bow and scarf, to spooky, like the Headless Horseman in this "Sleepy Hollow"-themed display. The creators of "HAY, Have a Latte," brewed up an original idea.

School-Night SCRAMBLES

Quick and satisfying recipes for family dinner time



For many families, September means fresh school supplies, the morning rush to get everyone to class on time and, of course, the dreaded question—what’s for dinner?

Between carving out time to cook and navigating pantry options, finding the right answer isn’t always easy. These quick and easy recipes will keep everyone at the table happy, even on a busy school night. 🗨

Photography by
Mark Gilliland

Food Styling by
Rhonda Gilliland

CREAMY TOMATO TORTELLINI WITH SPINACH

- 1 20-ounce package refrigerated cheese tortellini
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 24-ounce jar marinara sauce
- ½ cup heavy cream
- 4 cups fresh spinach
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- Salt and pepper to taste

Cook the tortellini according to the package directions. Meanwhile, heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat and cook the garlic for about 30 seconds until fragrant. Stir in the marinara sauce and heavy cream and bring to a gentle simmer. Add the spinach and cook until wilted. Drain the tortellini and add it to the skillet, tossing until coated in the sauce. Stir in the Parmesan cheese, season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve immediately.

This recipe offers a nice contrast to the other dishes in the lineup—it’s meatless, family-friendly and has a rich, comforting flavor while still taking less than 30 minutes from start to finish.

TERIYAKI MEATBALL BOWLS

- 1 24- to 26-ounce package frozen fully cooked meatballs
- 1 cup teriyaki sauce
- 3 cups broccoli florets
- 2 cups cooked white or brown rice
- 2 green onions, sliced
- 1 tablespoon sesame seeds (optional)

Prepare the rice according to package directions if it is not already cooked. Meanwhile, place the frozen meatballs in a large skillet over medium heat with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water. Cover and cook for 8 to 10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until heated through.

Add the teriyaki sauce and simmer for 3 to 5 minutes, stirring until the meatballs are evenly coated and the sauce has thickened slightly. Steam the broccoli until tender. Divide the rice among serving bowls and top with the teriyaki meatballs and broccoli. Garnish with sliced green onions and sesame seeds, if desired. Serve immediately.



HONEY MUSTARD CHICKEN WITH ROASTED POTATOES AND CARROTS

- 4 boneless chicken thighs
 - 1 pound baby potatoes, halved
 - 4 medium carrots, sliced
 - 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
 - 1 tablespoon honey
 - 2 tablespoons olive oil
 - 1 teaspoon garlic powder
 - Salt and pepper to taste
- the Dijon mustard and honey. Toss the potatoes and carrots with olive oil, garlic powder, salt and pepper on a sheet pan. Arrange the chicken thighs among the vegetables and brush them with the honey mustard mixture. Roast for about 30 minutes or until the chicken reaches 165 F and the vegetables are tender. Serve immediately.

Preheat the oven to 425 F. In a small bowl, whisk together



CHEESY BLACK BEAN AND RICE SKILLET

- Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat and cook the onion and bell pepper until softened, about 5 minutes. Stir in the black beans, rice, salsa, chili powder, salt and pepper. Cook for several minutes until heated through. Sprinkle the cheese over the top, cover the skillet and cook until the cheese is melted. Serve on its own or with tortilla chips.
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
 - 1 small onion, diced
 - 1 bell pepper, diced
 - 2 cans black beans, drained and rinsed
 - 2 cups cooked rice
 - 1 cup salsa
 - 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
 - 1 teaspoon chili powder
 - Salt and pepper to taste



Mountain Telephone

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