



MAY/JUNE 2018

BEACON

GET OUT THIS WEEKEND

Don't miss these summertime celebrations



FINDING THE GREEN

Hit the links at these Midwestern destinations

'WURST IS FIRST

Brat season arrives on the high plains



BY SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

Sustaining our rural broadband dollars

It's exciting to see the attention rural broadband has received the past several months. But as we explore ways to extend broadband to unserved rural areas, it is important to consider how those dollars are spent.

The Agriculture and Rural America Task Force in the U.S. House of Representatives held a briefing in March. I was honored to be one of their participants and share insights into rural broadband challenges. We hear a lot about the digital divide, but I spoke with the group about the rural-rural divide — the investments being made by locally-owned broadband providers and the areas where larger carriers are not making the investments their rural communities need.

We have seen several promising steps taken by Congress and the FCC in recent months. Our industry applauded the inclusion of \$600 million for a new rural broadband pilot program to be administered by RUS in the omnibus funding bill that was signed by President Trump. And the FCC recently acted to address some of the immediate budget shortfalls in the commission's High Cost Universal Service Fund (USF), the primary support that allows rural broadband providers to make the business case for sustained deployment and service.

Telecommunications providers like yours have done a great job delivering broadband to rural America with the help of USF. There is still much work to do, and it will take partnerships as well as reliable, sufficient USF funding to ensure the availability and affordability of robust broadband for unserved areas. 📶

Youthful trends

A survey spots the habits of rural teens

Participating in social networks, streaming more than five hours of content weekly, and reliance on mobile devices for photos and messaging are some trends defining how rural high school students use modern communications tools and services.

Every two years, participants in the Foundation for Rural Service Annual Youth Tour and applicants to the foundation's College Scholarship Program complete a study about their telecommunication habits.

A total of 1,706 high school students, with 80 percent between the ages of 14 and 19, completed the survey. Here are a few of the conclusions:



PRICE AWARENESS

Seventy-two percent of respondents have their monthly cellphone bill paid by someone else, and **25 percent** have no concept of the size of that bill.

When these young people enter the "real world," they will likely face sticker-shock as they shop for cellphone service.

STAYING SOCIAL

Participating in social media is, by far, **the most popular online activity** among those surveyed.

While a mobile phone is still important for the basics, such as personal safety and education, the primary draw is the ability to connect to those similar to themselves. Also, online interaction is the preferred means of personal communication, and losing that link is unthinkable to most.



TEXTING AND DRIVING

Young people need more convincing about the dangers of texting while driving — **22 percent** of respondents admitted they occasionally texted while driving.

While **95 percent** have seen at least one public service announcement about the dangers of texting while driving, **75 percent** have seen multiple such announcements.

The report concluded that "this informational onslaught needs to continue, and should be supplemented by additional, proven methods of getting this life-saving message across, whether in schools, churches or other places where young people can be counseled."

BULLYING ONLINE

Cyberbullying is a significant concern, and more than half of all survey respondents know of a cyberbullying incident involving a personal acquaintance. **More than 25 percent** reported being personally affected by cyberbullying. 📱



New law aims to improve the quality and reliability of calls made to rural America

BY STEPHEN V. SMITH

Rural residents and business owners scored a major legislative victory in February, one that should reduce the rural call completion problems that have long plagued those who live and work in America's small towns and communities.

The Improving Rural Call Quality and Reliability Act was signed into law by President Trump and gives the Federal Communications Commission additional tools to combat call completion failure.

For years, rural citizens have reported problems receiving calls that originate outside their area and from wireless callers. Some calls have poor quality, while other calls simply never come through. A leading cause of these issues is substandard service from third-party, intermediate carriers, known as "least-cost routers," which originating carriers use to route their calls into rural areas. This is done in an effort to lower the costs of delivering a call into a rural community, where terminating costs are higher.

The new law gives authority to the FCC to require providers to register with the agency and to meet quality standards. "I will be working closely with my fellow

commissioners to ensure that rural Americans have what every American expects: a telephone system that works," says FCC Chairman Ajit Pai.

Passage of the act was the result of a bipartisan effort in the U.S. House and Senate. "For too long, rural communities across the country have been suffering from unreliable phone service. Without consistent and dependable service, it is challenging to stay connected to loved ones, run a business, and reach first responders in an emergency," says U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn, who sponsored the bill in the Senate. "Enacting these common-sense standards for providers will ensure that every family can trust that their calls will be completed, regardless of where they live."

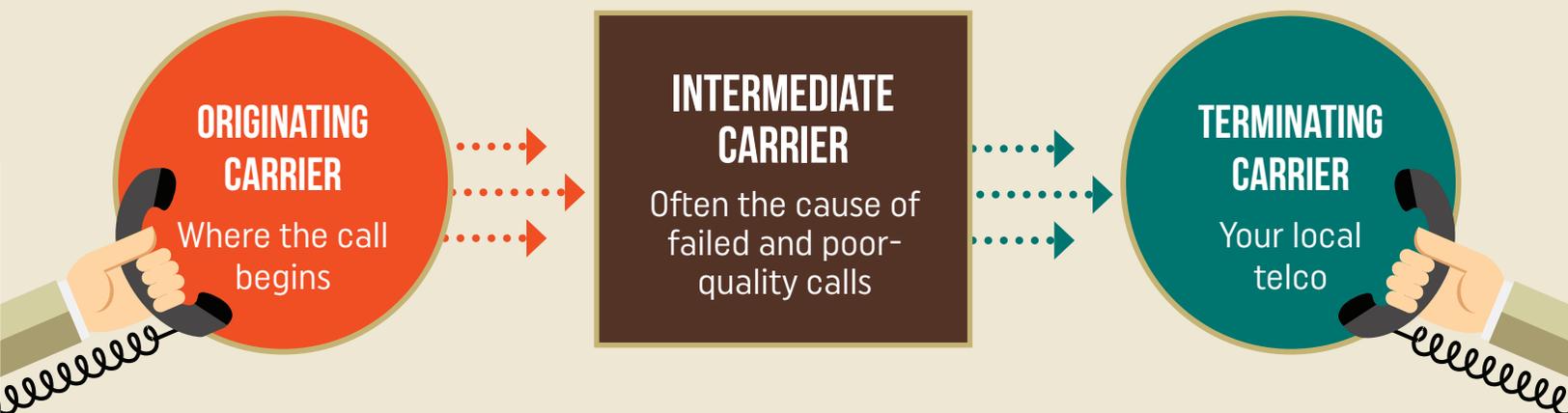
U.S. Rep. David Young, R-Iowa, sponsored the bill in the House. "Improving rural call completion rates and quality

are important to ensuring the survival of small towns and granting Americans the choice to live and thrive in whatever community is best for them and their family, rural, urban, or anywhere in between," says Young.

The legislation came in part due to combined efforts of America's rural telecommunications providers, who have worked the past several years with elected officials and regulators to solve the rural call completion problem. "Passage of this bill reaffirms the power of advocacy," says Shirley Bloomfield, CEO of NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association, which represents nearly 850 cooperative and independent telcos in rural and small-town America.

"Rural providers do more than deliver technology to their customers; they take their concerns to Washington and educate lawmakers on bills that impact their lives and livelihoods," Bloomfield says. "This measure will bring greater transparency to the call routing marketplace and send a bipartisan message about the importance of on-going efforts to solve call completion problems that threaten the general well-being of countless Americans." 📞

Legislation targets cause of many rural call completion problems



Counting on small businesses



DERRICK BULAWA
Chief Executive Officer

Have you ever thought about what our community would be like without small businesses?

For starters, half of us would be out of work because small businesses employ 48 percent of U.S. employees, according to the Small Business Administration.

On a national scale, without small businesses the economy would become stagnant. According to estimates, 64 percent of new private sector jobs come from small businesses.

The downtown areas of our communities would certainly look very different if they were completely shuttered, as small businesses make up the heart of most business communities.

And while it may not be so obvious, think of the sports teams, community events and charitable organizations that count on donations and sponsorships from our small-business community.

I would even argue that many small businesses, such as BEK Communications, are what help give our communities their identities.

In short, we need our small businesses. The U.S. Small Business Administration has declared April 29-May 5 as National Small Business Week. It is a designation that goes back to 1963, aiming at celebrating small businesses locally and around the nation. Please join me in supporting them and commending them for the long hours, dedication and commitment to their customers that have made them a part of the fabric of our communities.

At BEK Communications, we're proud to be one of those small businesses, but we're also proud to support many small businesses throughout our region with our advanced broadband network, cloud and media products.

As you've seen in the pages of recent magazines, there are plenty of examples where local small businesses rely on a broadband connection to place orders, send emails, interact with customers on social media, improve efficiency in their operation and stay competitive regionally and globally.

Broadband helps make the world a smaller place, which helps small businesses. Did you know that 98 percent of the companies that export products overseas are small businesses? In fact, according to the Department of Commerce, one-third of U.S. merchandise exports are from small and mid-sized businesses. I think it's safe to assume that when small businesses communicate with customers or suppliers overseas, they aren't sending letters — they're using their broadband connection from providers like BEK.

A recent report revealed small businesses that access global markets over the internet have a 30 percent higher survival rate than similar businesses that aren't connected.

We live in an exciting time when a small startup company or even a longtime family business has access to a local, regional, national and even global market because of broadband.

Our community counts on small businesses, and small businesses count on BEK Communications. We are proud to support them with the technology needed to thrive in today's economy. 



The BEK Beacon is a bimonthly newsletter published by BEK Communications, ©2018. It is distributed without charge to all customers.



is committed to delivering advanced communications services to the residents of Burleigh, Emmons, Kidder, Barnes, Logan, McIntosh, McLean, Morton and Oliver counties. As a member-owned cooperative, BEK is guided by a board of directors elected by the members.

BEK Communications
1-888-475-2361

200 East Broadway, P.O. Box 230
Steele, ND 58482
325 2nd St NW
Valley City, ND 58072

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A CONTENT MARKETING COMPANY

On the Cover:



Summertime enjoyment gets into full swing as a number of familiar festivals provide seasonal food and fun. See story Page 12.

Photo courtesy of Layn Mudder, LPT Images.

Hot tunes on the go

Streaming services unlock music riches

From backyard barbecues to picnics at the park, no summer memories are complete without a sizzling soundtrack. While there's a certain nostalgia to waiting by the radio for that perfect song, high-speed broadband and our mobile devices now allow us to skip the wait and focus on the fun.

Here are some of the best ways to stream your favorite music. All services offer free trials and are available for iOS and Android devices. Ease of integration varies, but most services can play through digital assistant devices such as the Amazon Echo, Google Home and Apple HomePod.

SPOTIFY

While there is an ad-supported free version limited to a "shuffle-only" mode on phones, the paid version of Spotify is where the service shines. For \$9.99 a month — \$4.99 for college students or \$14.99 for the family plan — you can listen to a catalog of more than 30 million songs, build and share playlists, and download music to play offline.

PANDORA

Perfect for those looking to discover new music, Pandora takes your preferred song, artist or musical style and builds a station around it that matches your taste. The free version is like ad-supported radio. Pandora Plus, which costs \$4.99 monthly, removes ads. For \$9.99 monthly, Pandora Premium lets you listen to any song from a library with 40 million titles and includes downloading for offline use.

APPLE MUSIC

If you have an extensive iTunes music

library, then Apple Music is a good choice.

The service integrates your existing music to the service's catalog of 45 million songs. Apple Music also supports Siri voice commands and song downloads. There is no free option, but new users get three months at no charge. Afterward, pricing is similar to Spotify, starting at \$4.99 for students.

GOOGLE PLAY

For \$9.99 a month, users get access to more than 40 million songs, as well as any music you upload to Google's cloud. The service also includes access to YouTube Red, the paid version of the video streamer that features exclusive content and ad-free videos.

AMAZON

The online sales giant offers two services. For listeners who pay the \$99 annually for Prime membership, Prime Music offers access to a library of about 2 million songs. Amazon Music Unlimited (\$7.99 monthly for Prime members and \$9.99 monthly for non-Prime users) is comparable to other streaming services in content and features. It is a good option for users of Alexa-enabled devices. [☞](#)



HI, I'M MATT OHLHAUSER!

In this column, in each issue, you'll learn about technology and read simple tips to get the most out of your electronics. For more tips or help with your devices, please come see me at the store. I'm always happy to help!

DEVICE OF THE MONTH

Fugoo Style-S Bluetooth speaker



Take your music anywhere with the Fugoo Style-S Bluetooth speaker. Dustproof, waterproof and shockproof, it can live through almost any summer adventure. The speaker combines great sound quality, battery life up to 15 hours, and a stylish cover that can be swapped out for other colors. Available for \$119.99, or two for \$199.98, at fugoo.com.



Photo courtesy of Bully Pulpit Golf Course.

Tee it up

Golfers are packing their clubs and heading out to pursue their passion throughout the region where the earth is rich in the minerals that create healthy, beautiful fairways. Tee it up on some of the top courses in North Dakota and Minnesota.

Bully Pulpit Golf Course

3731 Bible Camp Road, Medora, North Dakota

Bully Pulpit is recognized for its "unlike-any-other" layout and scenery, says head golf pro Casey Moen.

"Located in the heart of the North Dakota Badlands, we are fortunate enough to have the National Park as our backdrop," he says. "Plus, there is no residential development that can be seen from any golf hole, which in this day and age is remarkable. It really is a little slice of heaven."

- **Grass:** Salt-tolerant fescue on fairways, Seaside II bentgrass on greens.
- **Signature hole:** No. 15 is said to be the best par-3 in the country without an ocean vista. It's the highest point on the golf course with the most picturesque view.
- **Course length:** 4,750 to 7,166 yards, depending on your tee box.
- **Greens fees:** \$59-\$99, depending on day/time. Senior discounts offered Monday-Thursday; military discounts at all times.
- **Schedule a tee time:** 701-623-4653 or online at medora.com.



Photo courtesy of The Links of North Dakota.

The Links of North Dakota

5153 109th Ave. NW, Ray, North Dakota

You can count on a steady breeze coming across the prairie, and it will challenge you on every green. But if there's a kinder side to The Links of North Dakota, it's that there are no water hazards. Don't think you're getting off easy, though — you'll meet plenty of sand bunkers along the way. "Constantly changing wind speeds and directions make it a different experience every time you play," says head pro Jeff Covington.

The course on the shore of Lake Sakakawea is one of the few true links-style courses in the region. There are cabins for rent and 20 full hookup RV spots to keep players from having to travel too far to find a place to sleep for a night or two.

- **Grass:** Bentgrass fairways and greens.
- **Signature hole:** Hole No. 8 is a par-3 that tees off from one of the highest points on the course, giving you a spectacular view.
- **Course length:** 5,249 to 7,092 yards, depending on your tee box.
- **Greens fees:** \$55.
- **Schedule a tee time:** 701-568-2600 or online at www.thelinksofnorthdakota.com.



Photo courtesy of Hawktree Golf Club.

Hawktree Golf Club

3400 Burnt Creek Loop, Bismarck, North Dakota

Golf Digest last year ranked 18-year-old Hawktree as the No. 1 public golf course in North Dakota. What makes it a little

different from others is that Hawktree is the only course in the state to use a GPS system in its golf carts to provide exact yardages to the flag stick, says head pro Michael Herzog. The Jim Engh-designed course has black sand bunkers and a number of elevation changes that will have you changing your strategy from hole to hole.

"We get players from all over the country, and many tell me this is one of the best courses they've ever had the privilege to play," Herzog says.

Herzog recommends visiting Hawktree's restaurant for a grinder, wrap or burger before or after play. "It has one of the best views in all of North Dakota. Just by turning your head, you can see 14 of the holes and all the beautiful scenery," he says.

- **Grass:** Kentucky Bluegrass on fairways and bentgrass on greens.
- **Signature hole:** No. 7. It's a scenic par 5 playing downhill with a dogleg right, sands from the Black Hills on the left side and water hugging the front side of the green. The result? A majestic hole that requires aggression but rewards players with stunning views of the course.
- **Course length:** 4,868 to 7,085 yards, depending on your tee box.
- **Greens fees:** \$42-\$100, depending on day/time.
- **Schedule a tee time:** 701-355-0995 or online at hawktree.com.

The Preserve Golf Course at Grand View Lodge

Preserve Boulevard, Pequot Lakes, Minnesota

The Preserve at Grand View is about 8 miles north of the main resort, and the course winds through some of Minnesota's best forest and wetlands. "And with its tour-speed greens, it sets itself apart from a lot of courses in the area," says head golf pro Adam Haugen. "We get people coming from all over the country and world that come to visit the resort and play our course."

- **Grass:** Bentgrass fairways and greens.
- **Signature hole:** It's a toss-up between

No. 1 and No. 18, both of which are reachable par-5 holes and play downhill off the tee. No. 18, though, might be the most fun as it's in view of the clubhouse — a great setting for groups to gather and heckle buddies finishing their rounds, Haugen says.

- **Course length:** 4,785 to 6,611 yards, depending on tee box.
- **Greens fees:** \$40-\$105, depending on day/time. Special rate of \$37.25 for locals Wednesday afternoons.
- **Schedule a tee time:** 218-568-4944 or online at grandviewlodge.com.



Photo courtesy of Rush Creek Golf Club.

Rush Creek Golf Club

7801 County Road 101, Maple Grove, Minnesota

Rush Creek's beautiful, natural setting may well be its biggest draw with 13 of the 18 holes featuring wetlands. "The layout is really quite scenic," says golf operations manager Jenny Stendahl. Five sets of tees makes it enjoyable for golfers of all skill levels.

"But I truly feel like the biggest thing that sets Rush Creek apart from other places is our staff," Stendahl says. "Our employees are welcoming and create a down-to-earth atmosphere that creates a memorable experience."

- **Grass:** Bentgrass fairways and greens.
- **Signature hole:** No. 18 is a dogleg left par 5 with out-of-bounds on the right and water along the left. The second shot requires a long carry over the marsh to reach the green or a safe layup to try and secure your par.
- **Course length:** 5,228 to 7,290 yards, depending on your tee box.
- **Green Fees:** Vary by day and tee time.
- **Schedule a tee time:** 763-494-0400 or online at www.rushcreek.com.

Congratulations, BEK seniors!

BEK Communications received 34 scholarship applications from high school students in our service area. Congratulations to these 10 seniors who each won a \$500 scholarship.



Chase Bader
Wishek High School



Kaylee Beachler
Kidder County High School



Luke Hoberg
Napoleon High School



Shaye Koester
Kidder County High School



Jade Koski
Wing High School



Lauren Koski
Wing High School



Abby Slyter
Valley City High School



Tanner Thomsen
Valley City High School



Mya Vetter
Linton High School



Sarah Weigel
Napoleon High School

CONGRATULATIONS, BEK TECHNOLOGY SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS!

University of Mary - **Tanya R. Taplin** - \$1,250 scholarship from BEK Communications.
Valley City State University - No applicants received.



Beacon trivia questions

- 1 Which music streaming service has the most songs available?
- 2 If you want to enter a rubber duck race, which festival do you need to attend?
- 3 Who designed the Hawktree Golf Club in Bismarck?

Entries must be received by July 11, 2018.

NAME _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

Clip and send to the **BEK office at P.O. Box 230, Steele, ND 58482**. You can also email answers to **bekcomm@bektel.com**. BEK will draw for five \$5 credits to be applied to the winners' bills.

March/April Beacon Trivia Winners:

Juleen Johnson - Steele
DelRoy Ketterling - Wishek
Jane Schneider - Napoleon
Michael Kuntz - Steele
Irene Brindle - Hazelton

Dates to remember!

- May 1** — May Day
- May 13** — Mother's Day
- May 19** — Armed Forces Day
- May 28** — Memorial Day
(BEK offices closed)
- June 14** — BEK Communications Cooperative annual meeting
- June 17** — Father's Day
- June 21** — Summer Begins



BEK Communications member news

The information and notices provided here are directed to BEK cooperative members – patrons receiving services in the telephone exchanges of Hazelton, Kintyre, Linton, Lehr, McKenzie, Napoleon, Pettibone, Regan, Robinson, Steele, Sterling, Strasburg, Tappen, Tuttle, Wilton, Wing, Wishek and Zeeland.

BEK Communications Cooperative 66th annual meeting

"Challenge of Change"

Please join us for the 66th annual meeting of BEK Communications Cooperative on Thursday, June 14, at the Kidder County High School in Steele.

- Registration and beef supper are from 5:30-7:00 p.m.
 - Enter at the high school's entrance door.
- BEK Communications Cooperative annual meeting begins at 7:00 p.m.
 - Meeting is conducted in the school gymnasium.

The annual report of BEK Communications Cooperative will be mailed in May to all members. The official notice of the 66th annual meeting on Thursday, June 14, appears on the first page of the report booklet. BEK's annual report contains the 2017 year in review of financial reports, officers' reports and much more. It also includes nominees for directorship. As a cooperative member, you are encouraged to come and share our year in review. Your participation in the business meeting of your cooperative is greatly appreciated. For your convenience, child care will be available during the meeting.



Nominations for Director

On Thursday, June 14, the BEK Communications Cooperative member-owners residing in Districts II, III and IV will elect one director from each district to serve a three-year term.

The 2018 Nominating Committee met on Wednesday, March 21, to make nominations to be placed on the ballots for their respective districts.

Candidates nominated will appear on the ballot for the director election(s) and be made public 30 days prior to the BEK Communications Cooperative annual meeting on June 14. Cooperative members will vote for their district representative at that time.



2018 Appointment of Voting Representative

Members attending the annual meeting as a voting representative of a church, school district, cooperative or other organization must complete the "Appointment of Voting Representative" form found on BEK's website at www.bektel.com. Click on About Us, Board of Directors, and scroll to the bottom of the page and click the link for the form. It may also be obtained by contacting the BEK office at 1-888-475-2361.

This is not a proxy statement. Residential and sole proprietorship business customers cannot use this form. They must vote in person at the annual meeting.

Completed forms may be submitted to BEK Communications Cooperative anytime before noon on June 14, the day of the annual meeting. Forms may be dropped off or mailed to:

BEK Annual Meeting
BEK Communications Cooperative
P.O. Box 230
Steele, ND 58482-0230

Be sure to mail your forms early.



LIFELINE SERVICE

Lifeline is a government assistance program that can help pay a portion of your telephone, mobile phone or internet bill each month. Consumers are allowed only one Lifeline program benefit per household.

DO YOU QUALIFY?

Stay connected with a Lifeline discount.

Apply today!

LIFELINE IS A FEDERAL PROGRAM TO HELP LOW-INCOME AMERICANS PAY FOR PHONE OR BROADBAND SERVICE

? How much will Lifeline save me?

If you qualify for Lifeline, you will receive a credit of \$9.25 each month on your bill.

? What services are covered by this credit?

You have the choice (where applicable) of applying your benefit to one of three types of service offerings:

- Fixed or mobile broadband
- Fixed or mobile voice-only
- Bundles of fixed or mobile voice and broadband

NOTE: Lifeline can only be used for one source of communication from the list above.

? Can I receive more than one Lifeline credit?

No, consumers are allowed only one Lifeline program benefit per household.

? How do I qualify?

You are eligible for Lifeline benefits if you qualify for and receive one of the following benefits:

- SNAP
- Medicaid
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Federal Public Housing Assistance
- The Veteran's Pension or Survivor's Pension benefit.

Additionally, consumers at or below 135 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines will continue to be eligible for a Lifeline program benefit. (State determinations of income will no longer be accepted.) There are no changes to the eligibility criteria for Tribal programs.

NOTE: Some states have additional qualifying programs, allowances and stipulations. Check with your local telecommunications provider for information about benefits that may be available in your state.

? How do I enroll in the Lifeline program and start receiving this benefit?

To find out whether you qualify for Lifeline assistance, please visit www.lifelinesupport.org or call your local telecommunications provider.

NOTE: Your telephone company is not responsible for determining who qualifies for these programs or who receives assistance. Consumers must meet specific criteria in order to obtain assistance with their local telephone and/or broadband service, and qualifying is dependent upon government-established guidelines.

Web Crafty

Try online tools for creative hobbies

I have been sharing my stories of technology and doling out advice on how to be more tech-savvy. I hope you feel as if you have gotten to know my family and me during the past couple of years. So now it only seems right to admit the other side of my personality that you may not guess. Whenever I have a free moment, I am usually at my sewing machine working on a quilt, bag or purse. I may also be working away on a cross-stitch wall hanging or embroidering a household item. I'm an old-fashioned, low-tech crafter whenever I get the opportunity.

So, how does that fit into this technology column? Well, I suspect many of you reading this article may have similar hobbies. If it isn't sewing, it may be baking, woodworking or jewelry-making. What I've been discovering is there are lots of websites, apps and technology tools available to help you create and sell your masterpieces! Here are some of my favorite "crafty" websites and why I love them:

CRAFTSY

Craftsy is one of my newest favorites, accessible through both a website and an app. It gives you access to patterns for



many types of crafts but also includes video instructions. I'm working on a project that takes me step by step with video, written instructions and a pattern. This is a wonderful site if you are looking to learn something new. You'll find instructions on lots of topics, such as sewing, painting, cooking, cake decorating, photography, gardening and much more!

CUSTOM MADE

I've promoted this site for many years. If you are looking to sell your craftwork, or if you are looking to buy a very

specific, specially made item, I encourage you to take a look at this website to see if it would be a good fit for you to sell your skills to potential buyers.

CRAFT GOSSIP

Craft Gossip is a website that hosts a collection of blogs from crafters in all sorts of categories. You can find fun ideas for oodles of projects no matter what your skill set is. You can also find projects based on holiday themes. New content is added all the time, so you can always find a new project.

I believe that technology is

going to help revive the craft and hobby lifestyle. So many of these skills, once passed down through the generations, have been abandoned or forgotten. Now, one person can share his or her skills with millions by putting the instructions online. So try something new today! 



CARISSA SWENSON
IS A TRAINING AND EDUCATION CONSULTANT FOR CONSORTIA CONSULTING.



Don't forget about the most common sites, such as **YouTube**, **Pinterest** and **Etsy** for tutorials, patterns and craft buying and selling. These sites are frequented by crafters for a reason!

DOWN-HOME celebrations

Don't miss these local favorites during festival season



BY DREW WOOLLEY

Summer is the perfect time to be out with family and friends, but you don't have to travel far to have a good time. This year, explore the great events happening in your neighboring cities right here in North Dakota.

Annual celebrations in Hazelton, Mandan and Valley City have something for everyone. Enjoy a dance at Community Days, check out the classic cars on display at Rally in the Valley, or add some live music to the mix with Buggies 'n Blues.

★BUGGIES 'N BLUES

Buggies 'n Blues started out 25 years ago as a simple idea from the Mandan Musicians Association. They had just completed construction of a bandshell in Dykshoorn Park and thought someone should make use of it.

Blues music on a Sunday sounded like fun, but organizers thought adding a car show to the mix might attract more people. Vern Cermak helped to organize the event for the first couple of years, and before he knew it, he had a tradition on his hands.

"It's certainly grown, which is something you can see from the number of cars we get," he says. "The first year, I think we had about 100 cars. Now we easily have 500."



Colorful classic cars draw a crowd during the annual Buggies 'n Blues festival held each June.

Photo courtesy of Layn Mueller, IPT Images.

The car show isn't the only part of Buggies 'n Blues that has grown over time. Cermak remembers having little more than a couple of chuck wagons and a handful of sponsors the event's first year. Now, visitors can choose from a dozen food vendors in the park, and more than 80 sponsors back the weekend's activities.

This year's car parade, which will be Saturday, June 9, will feature a procession of presidents going back to William Taft. The car show will take place Sunday, where visitors will have the opportunity to see the famous Munster Koach and DRAG-U-LA — cars from the classic sitcom "The Munsters." Sunday afternoon's musical performance will also include favorite car songs from the '50s and '60s, plus the appearance of a special guest.

Any money raised during the event goes toward the Mandan Progress Organization and the Musicians Association, both of which put that money back into the community through musical scholarships and other local events. But most importantly, Buggies 'n Blues is simply a good day out.

"You don't have to spend a dime unless you want to buy food or craft items," says Cermak. "It's free, and it's just good family entertainment."

their community. Every community needs people around to care about it and help it to grow; otherwise, it'll die."



During the Rally in the Valley parade, children marvel at anything bright and shiny, especially the line of tractors from local farms.



Hazelton Community Days has a wide variety of events for the whole family to enjoy.

★ RALLY IN THE VALLEY

Everyone wants to be in town for the Rally in the Valley, which started out as Valley City's own Community Days celebration. The Rally has become the highlight event of each year; in fact, residents schedule class reunions, family get-togethers, and local races on the same weekend in order to include them in the fun.

This year's event on June 16 marks the 35th annual Rally in the Valley, and Valley City Area Chamber of Commerce Event Coordinator Jerilyn Beckman expects more than two dozen food and craft vendors to participate.

As always, the Rally begins with a parade down Central Avenue in the morning, followed by a car show. Celebrate Father's Day by taking dad to the burnout competition in the afternoon, or just check out the food and craft vendors in Veterans Park throughout the day.

One favorite every year is the Duckin' Down the Sheyenne duck race. Contestants buy a rubber duck to help raise money for a local organization and see if theirs is the first to cross the finish line when they're all dumped into the river.

The Rally in the Valley takes place all day Saturday, but there are plenty of activities all weekend. Take part in Friday evening's Relay for Life, close out your Saturday with a street dance put on by local bars, or watch the dirt bikes and motorcycles at the Dakota Riders Hill Climb on Sunday.

Most importantly, Chamber of Commerce Executive Vice President Kay Vinje hopes everyone will take some time to enjoy the company of friends and neighbors.

"The Rally is a time you can count on seeing just about everyone in town. That's part of the tradition," she says. "People really like each other, so it's a day to have a party all together and just be family." 🗨️

★ HAZELTON'S COMMUNITY DAYS

As its name suggests, Community Days is all about bringing the people of Hazelton together once a year. The tradition started in 1962 when the newly formed Hazelton Lions Club wanted to organize an event that would celebrate the city with games and socializing.

Every year since, residents have gathered for parades, dances, friendly competition, movies and more. While the celebration is primarily a way of paying the community back for its support and hard work, Community Days has also become an important fundraiser for the Lions Club's other projects.

Over the years, the club has used the money it collects to clean the new school building's windows, buy new uniforms for the school band, send one resident to St. Louis for eye surgery, and restore the Hazelton Community Center downtown.

As Community Days has grown, more organizations throughout the city, like the local 4-H Club and school groups, have also gotten involved. Verda Seeklander, a lifetime member of the Hazelton Lions Club, believes it's that history of bringing everyone together that makes the event crucial to the community.

"It's important to draw people together so they don't just go their separate ways," she says. "It encourages them to care about

Brats to brag about

It's an unassuming little restaurant. In fact, drive by and you might miss it except for the sign out front: The Wurst Shop in Dickinson, North Dakota.

Owners Ken and Kristina Molitor love the name, and regulars find it appropriate because the shop in Dickinson is known for the best bratwurst in the state — if not the entire Midwest.

Before purchasing the shop in 2008, Molitor was a rancher and farmer. But the leap from farmer to restaurateur and sausage-maker wasn't as far-fetched as you might assume.

"When I was a farmer, I made a couple of different kinds of sausage," Molitor says. And he also frequented The Wurst Shop as a customer. So when he got the opportunity to buy the shop, he accepted the challenge. Within a decade, he added employees and modernized the equipment needed to make the sausages. He also added a dining area with six tables, plus a counter where people can pull up a stool and chow down on a brat.

One thing that he didn't change, however, is the recipe for making bratwurst. As a man with German heritage, sausage making was in his blood, but it took some training to perfect his technique. "My predecessors here at The Wurst Shop — a German couple — taught me how they did it," he says.

Bratwurst takes up many squares on the prairie's culinary quilt. According to the



2004 census, North Dakota and Minnesota are in the top five states with citizens claiming German heritage. It's little wonder, then, that brats are a menu favorite in homes and eateries throughout the area.

Although he has used the same sausage recipes The Wurst Shop has had since it opened in 1998, Molitor has added new flavors. The menu is posted on the wall and presented at tables decorated with German motifs. "It's like walking into a restaurant in Germany," he says of the decor.

New flavors of bratwurst he's added include curry, sweet Italian, spicy Cajun and mango habanero. "We make everything here from scratch," he says. That means homemade German potato salad and other sides that change on a regular basis.

"German food is the No. 1 food worldwide," he notes,

adding that customers come from as far away as — no surprise — Germany as well as Hawaii and Alaska.

"We have a map on the wall with push pins that show where we ship our sausage as well as where all our customers come from," he says.

The Wurst Shop also makes custom sausage for those who bring in their own meats and seasonings. "We're the largest processor for wild game around here," Molitor says, adding that the strangest recipe he's been asked to make was pork brats with gummy bears.



FOOD EDITOR
ANNE P. BRALY
IS A NATIVE OF
CHATTANOOGA,
TENNESSEE.

BRATS AND PASTA

- 2 sweet red peppers, coarsely chopped
- 1 cup onion, coarsely chopped
- 4-6 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 pound bratwursts
- 1/2 cup beer
- 1 pound rigatoni pasta
- 1/2 cup fresh basil
- 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes (more or less to your liking)
- 1 1/2 cups shredded cheddar cheese, divided

Heat oven to 425 F. Mix red pepper, onion and garlic with olive oil in a 9-by-13-inch baking dish and roast in oven for 25 minutes, stirring occasionally. While vegetables roast, remove casing from bratwurst and crumble and brown in a skillet over medium heat until they are no longer pink and are well-browned.

Remove bratwurst and drain on paper towel. Pour fat from skillet. Return bratwurst to skillet and add beer; bring to a simmer. Cook pasta according to package directions and drain, reserving 1/2 cup of pasta water.

Remove roasted vegetables from oven; immediately add bratwurst from skillet. Add basil, red pepper flakes, pasta and 1 cup of cheese. Toss to mix thoroughly. If mixture seems too dry, add some of the pasta water to moisten. Sprinkle remaining cheese over top and serve.

BRATS POTATO SALAD

- 1 pound brats
- 8-10 medium red potatoes
- 6 hard-boiled eggs, chopped
- 2 celery sticks, chopped
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 2 tablespoons sweet pickle relish
- 1 1/2 cups mayonnaise
- 1/4 cup ranch dressing
- 1/4 cup Dijon mustard
- 1/4 cup beer
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper

Cover potatoes with water in a large pot and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and cover the pot. Cook the potatoes until tender (roughly 20-25 minutes). Drain and rinse in cold water. Skin potatoes and chop into squares. Place in a large bowl.

Grill or skillet-fry brats until heated through and nicely browned. Cut into 1/2-inch slices; cool before adding to the salad.

Add brats, eggs, celery, onion and pickle relish. Add mayonnaise, ranch dressing, Dijon, beer, salt and pepper to another bowl and mix well. Pour as much as needed over potato mixture and gently stir to combine. Place in a sealed container and store in the refrigerator for several hours, allowing flavors to marry.

NOTE: If you have any remaining dressing, use it as a binding for deviled eggs, or add a little when you mash potatoes. The dressing adds a nice flavor to both.



SWEET AND SPICY BRATS

- 2 roasted red peppers, chopped
- 1/2 of a 12-ounce beer
- 1 cup beef broth
- 1 pound beef bratwursts, sliced
- 1 pound spicy beef bratwurst, sliced
- 1 large sweet onion cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1/4 cup jalapeno pepper slices
- 1/4 cup grape jelly

- 1/4 cup chili garlic sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper

Bring the roasted peppers, beer and beef broth to a boil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Cook for 1 minute, then stir in the sliced bratwurst. Sprinkle the onion and jalapeno slices over the bratwurst and simmer until the onion is tender, about 10 minutes. Stir in the grape jelly, chili sauce, paprika and black pepper. Cook about 10 minutes longer or until the sauce thickens slightly. 



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