

BTC Fiber

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2022

CONNECTION

Light Up Pikeville

Christmas spirit brings
community together

AVIAGEN AT HOME
IN PIKEVILLE

MEET THE INSTALLATION/
REPAIR TECHNICIANS



By SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

Rural broadband thrives in 2022

The commitment and professionalism of rural broadband providers creates lasting and substantive improvements, bringing essential services that bridge the gap in internet performance between rural and metropolitan areas. In many cases, NTCA members offer even more robust services than those available in larger cities.

In recent years, Congress has passed billions in funding for rural broadband. I was fortunate to attend a White House ceremony last year for the signing of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which included over \$60 billion for broadband projects.

NTCA has worked to ensure this funding goes to communities that need it most, as well as to providers, such as yours, with a long history of servicing their neighbors with the highest-quality broadband.

While broadband expansion is a priority, we've continued our focus on advocacy, including working with the Federal Communications Commission to ensure the long-term viability of the Universal Service Fund. It's a program that helps Americans in hard-to-serve areas keep pace with services found in more densely populated communities.

We've also expanded our Smart Rural Community program to highlight the great things robust broadband access brings to rural America — it's not just cities that are "smart!" Over 240 providers are part of the program. Visit smartruralcommunity.org for more information.

As we celebrate our wins from this year, we're looking forward to an even better 2023. 🍀

TO ALL WHO BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

Thank you

FOR ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR

Fast internet access is essential for rural communities to thrive in a fast-changing, highly connected world.



High-Speed Internet



Voice Communications



Videoconferencing



Telehealth



Business-level Data Tools



Online Education



Streaming Video & Music

Professionals in your community make this possible — working daily to help you lead a better life.

Thank you for all you do!

Business is booming

Apps help small business owners thrive

Running a small business is no easy task. There's a long list of things to keep track of, from inventory and sales to payroll and budgeting. It can get overwhelming staying ahead of the curve.

Thankfully, there's a wide array of apps geared toward making the life of a small business owner easier. Listed below are some of the best apps in 2022 for small businesses.

POINT OF SALE SYSTEMS

These systems allow small businesses to complete sales and ring up customers. According to NerdWallet, restaurants require POS systems that provide coordination and table management, while a retail store requires inventory management features.

Square — The POS offered by the financial tech company Square meets all these requirements and much more. Square is easy to use, offering transparent pricing, live support and compatibility with iPhone, iPad and Android devices. The first magnetic stripe credit card reader is free, and there is even a free plan available for small businesses that don't require advanced functions. While many payment processors have hidden monthly fees, Square doesn't charge by the month. Instead, you pay 2.6% + 10 cents for each credit card transaction for unlimited devices.

ACCOUNTING AND BUDGETING

Accounting software helps small businesses that may not be able to hire a full-time, in-house accountant. With these apps, you can track profit margins, revenues, expenses and budgets to understand the health of your business.

Intuit QuickBooks — Intuit QuickBooks is the industry standard and leader for small business accounting software in 2022, according to NerdWallet. It offers a multitude of service tiers, so it can easily be scaled to the size of the business it serves. It is accessible anywhere from QuickBooks online to the cloud-based version. Some of QuickBooks' best features include a full suite of reports, double-entry accounting, ease of accessibility and sharing with outside accountants, live service bookkeeping support and easy mobile access. Pricing is \$25 a month with other monthly payment tiers (\$50, \$80 and \$180 respectively).

PAYROLL

Paying employees on time is essential to operating a business. Extra help tracking hours and payments can allow small businesses owners to give attention to many other daily aspects of running their companies.



Patriot Payroll — While there are lots of payroll apps on the market, a majority of them are so high-priced that the cost outweighs the benefit of extra help for smaller companies. Patriot Payroll has an affordable price point — \$10 a month, plus \$4 an employee — while offering the same services and benefits as its more expensive counterparts. These services include a one-month free trial, HR support and coverage for up to 100 employees.

INVENTORY

Tracking inventory is a crucial part of staying ahead of the curve for any business. It is no easy task without help, which is why large corporations dedicate entire teams and extensive software programs just for inventory.

Sortly — With built-in barcode scanning that can track stock across multiple warehouses, Sortly has everything you need to manage inventory on the go. It offers both barcode and QR code scanning, giving you the flexibility to use what works best for your business. It even has an offline mode, so a signal interruption won't slow you down. Keep scanning incoming and outgoing items and seamlessly sync up once you're back online. 📦

Annual reflections

Together, we make our community better

As the final days of 2022 unfold and we enter a season of celebration and remembrance, I enjoy the opportunity to reflect on this place we call home and the role of BTC Fiber.



CHARLIE BORING
General Manager

Many of us lead lives where it seems the accelerator is always pushed to the floor. Between raising families, bustling careers, volunteering and embracing active pastimes, everyone is flying through life. But the holidays — while busy in their own way — are a chance to take solace and find respite in traditions like sharing family tall tales, great meals and a few belly laughs. We might even find quiet moments, if we're lucky.

During these times of reflection, I appreciate a theme that runs through our community — neighbors helping neighbors. In so many ways, these connections are what make rural places like ours special. We rally together in hard times. We celebrate good times as a community. We also embrace the teamwork needed to build for the future, which is at the core of BTC Fiber's mission.

I will never forget this company's history or the role it plays, because it's far different than that of the for-profit businesses serving our nation's metropolitan areas. Rather than focusing on stock prices or maximizing profits, BTC Fiber was created to support our hometowns. When larger national companies ignored us, calling our communities too rural and small to be a sound investment, our founders stepped up. It began with telephone lines connecting homes and businesses. But the work did not stop there. Now we provide a suite of modern communications tools and a fast and dependable internet network that would create envy in many of the largest cities.

This network is not something our leaders and staff did. It's a creation made possible by you and the people you see every day at the grocery store or at school events. An elected board of directors — residents who, just like you, depend on our services — set the standards and long-term goals we strive to achieve. We are a company made up of people devoted to helping their neighbors. Few other communications companies can say the same.

Does that make BTC Fiber special? Certainly, we're proud of the work we do because it benefits others. However, I fully appreciate that we're far from alone in having a goal of uplifting those around us. Our places of worship, schools, locally owned businesses, first responders and more bring that same spirit to their day-to-day missions.

It's this sentiment that also reminds me to appreciate those who served and sacrificed in the name of our nation. Veterans Day is Nov. 11. Please take a few minutes, at least, to appreciate the sons and daughters of this community who made the choice to serve. Rural areas like ours have a long history of service to the armed forces, something we should never forget. Truly, are there more profound examples of neighbors helping neighbors?

And during this time of celebration, I must thank everyone who is part of the BTC Fiber family. Every department — every individual — plays a vital part in bringing you the services you need in this fast-paced world.

From everyone at BTC Fiber, have a wonderful Thanksgiving and a Merry Christmas. 📧

Connection is a bimonthly newsletter published by BTC Fiber, ©2022. It is distributed without charge to all customers of the company.



is a member-owned cooperative dedicated to delivering advanced telecommunications technology to the people of Bledsoe and Sequatchie counties and portions of Van Buren, Cumberland and Hamilton counties.

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On the Cover:



Red Bird Manor is just one of many homes and businesses that decorate for Christmas as part of Light Up Pikeville. See story Page 8.

Photography by John Hargis



Beginning on Dec. 7, BTC Fiber will give away a \$100 bill credit to one lucky winner each day for 12 days during our 12 Days of Christmas giveaway. There's nothing to do! If you're a member, you're in the drawing. Watch BTC Fiber's Facebook page for the results.

Crawford recognized for assisting American Legion

Evan Crawford, system administrator for BTC Fiber, recently received a framed certificate of appreciation from American Legion Third District Commander Ronald G. White.

A few months ago, White was struggling to make a list of email addresses of American Legion members. He contacted BTC Fiber, his internet provider in Bledsoe County, and Crawford was happy to lend a hand.

White says Crawford went above and beyond to help him set up his members' email list and answer his questions. White wanted to recognize Crawford for helping him communicate with other American Legion members throughout the state. Although White serves the Third District, he resides in Bledsoe County, which is in the Fourth District of the American Legion. Local Commander Jack Durham expressed his appreciation to Crawford on behalf of the Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 5033.



American Legion Third District Commander Ronald G. White presented a framed certificate of appreciation to Evan Crawford, system administrator with BTC Fiber. On hand for the presentation, were, from left: BTC Fiber General Manager Charlie Boring, Chief Information Officer Russ Camp, Crawford, White and American Legion Post 66 Commander Jack Durham.

Holiday Closings

In observance of the holiday season, the BTC Fiber offices will be closed the following days:

- Thanksgiving – Thursday, Nov. 24, and Friday, Nov. 25
- Christmas – Friday, Dec. 23, and Monday, Dec. 26
- New Year's Day – Monday, Jan. 2

When our offices are closed you can access your account 24/7 with online bill pay. Find out more at bledsoe.net. For emergency repairs related to your service, call 423-447-6815 during holiday closings.

CPNI: HOW BLEDSOE TELEPHONE COOPERATIVE INC. PROTECTS YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION

Important notice to subscribers regarding your Customer Proprietary Network Information: Bledsoe Telephone Cooperative Inc. wants you to understand your rights to restrict the use of, disclosure of, and access to your Customer Proprietary Network Information, or CPNI. You have a right, and Bledsoe Telephone has a duty under federal law, to protect the confidentiality of your Customer Proprietary Network Information.

WHAT IS CPNI?

It is the information that Bledsoe obtains that relates to the quantity, technical configuration, type, destination, location and amount of use of the telecommunications service you subscribe to from Bledsoe. It includes the information that is found in your bills, but it does not include subscriber list information (name, address and telephone number). Examples of CPNI would be the telephone numbers that you call, the times you call them, the duration of your calls or the amount of your bill.

USE OF YOUR CPNI

CPNI may be used by Bledsoe to market services that are related to the package of services to which you currently subscribe or when marketing "adjunct to basic" services, such as Call Waiting and Caller ID. CPNI may also be used for the provision of customer premises equipment ("CPE") and services like call answering and voicemail and to protect Company property and prevent fraud. Bledsoe offers additional communications-related services. We seek your approval to access your CPNI so that BTC Fiber can provide you with information on new services and products that are tailored to meet your needs or may save you money.

IF YOU APPROVE OF OUR USE OF YOUR CPNI AS DESCRIBED ABOVE, NO ACTION IS NECESSARY ON YOUR PART.

You have the right to disapprove this use of your CPNI by contacting us in writing at P.O. Box 609, Pikeville, TN 37367, or by telephone at 423-447-2121. If you disapprove of our use of your CPNI, you may not receive notice of new services or promotions, but your existing services will not be affected. If you do not notify us of your objection within thirty-three (33) days, we will assume you do not object and may use your CPNI for these purposes. You have the right to notify us at any time to object to the use of this information. Your election will remain valid until you notify us otherwise.

Don't get your tinsel in a tangle

Story by ANNE BRALY

Decorating the Christmas tree is a beloved holiday tradition, but before you can hang the ornaments, take photos of the grandkids beneath its boughs or open presents beside it, you've got to find one.

Visiting a Christmas tree farm can put you in the spirit of the season as you make family memories while supporting a local business. And you'll bring home the absolute freshest trees, wreaths and greenery possible, so everything will last much longer.

"The whole idea of starting a family tradition is about creating a fun environment that the whole family can participate in," says Greg Shell, who, along with his wife, Weeta, established Shell's Christmas Tree Farm in 1988 on their property in Tuscumbia, Alabama. "It gives people a chance to slow down and spend time together creating special memories."

It's a family business for Greg and Weeta, whose two sons, Aaron and Chad, have helped out on the farm since they were 8 years old. Now grown men, they bring their own families to help when the Christmas tree season is in full swing. With more than 3,000 trees growing on the 44-acre farm, would-be buyers have plenty of options. Available species include Virginia pine, Leyland cypress, variegated Leylands, Carolina sapphires and blue ice cypress. Also, the Shells bring in freshly cut Fraser firs from the Blue Ridge Mountains and sell them starting Thanksgiving Day.

Shoppers receive tags with their names, and the Shells provide bow saws for those looking to cut their own trees. Or participants can simply tie their tags to trees, which staff will cut and then measure and shake before drilling holes in their bottoms and netting them for transport. Prices start at \$8 per foot.

But don't stop with the tree. Enjoy a warm cup of apple cider, visit with Santa, let the kids play in their own area, and enjoy the bonfire. There are also food trucks and a huge room filled with holiday greenery. "We're all about offering something for families to do together," Greg says. "And we're now seeing fourth-generation families visit our farm. It's pretty cool to see families want to continue to the next generation."

For more information, visit shellschristmastreefarm.com.

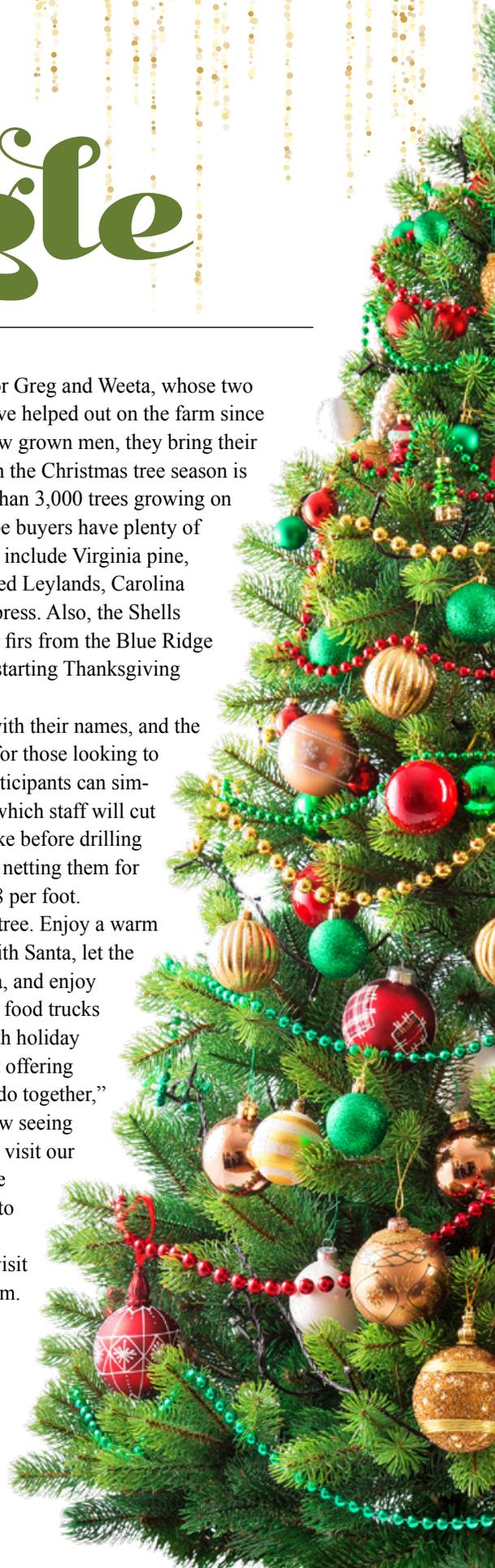
Get in the holiday spirit — visit a Christmas tree farm. You'll have a chance to make family memories, possibly sample tasty treats and return home with a fresh, beautiful tree.

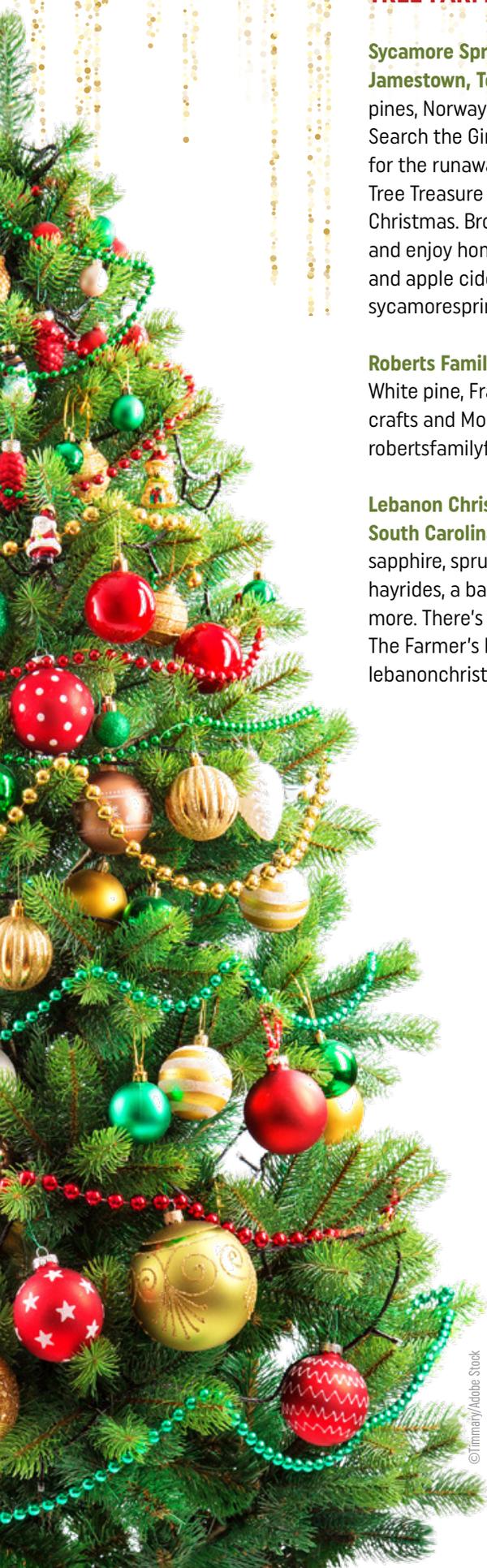


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TREE FARMS ACROSS THE SOUTH

Sycamore Springs Christmas Tree Farm, Jamestown, Tennessee — White and Scotch pines, Norway spruce and Leyland cypress. Search the Gingerbread Trail through the forest for the runaway gingerbread men, explore the Tree Treasure Maze to find the real treasure of Christmas. Browse in The Treehouse gift shop and enjoy homemade cookies, hot chocolate and apple cider. Full details are online at sycamorespringsfarmtn.com.

Roberts Family Farm, Guston, Kentucky — White pine, Fraser fir and balsam fir, plus local crafts and Momma Rob's Bakery. Learn more at robertsfamilyfarmky.com.

Lebanon Christmas Tree Farm, Ridgeville, South Carolina — Leyland cypress, Carolina sapphire, spruce pine and Virginia pine. Also, hayrides, a barrel train ride for the kiddies and more. There's also an on-site restaurant, The Farmer's Daughter. Learn more at lebanonchristmastree.com.

Thornhill Farm Christmas Trees, Pisgah, Alabama — Leyland cypress and white pines. Enjoy hot chocolate or warm cider while they cut, shake and bag your chosen tree for you. Online: thornhillchristmastrees.com.

Green Cedar Tree Farm, Nicholasville, Kentucky — Freshly cut Fraser firs and blue spruce trees from the Blue Ridge Mountains available on Saturday, Nov. 26, for the farm's annual Green Cedar Christmas, a festival with free hot cocoa, lessons in making holiday wreaths, farm animal encounters and live Christmas music. Also, find the perfect spot to get your family picture taken for your photo Christmas cards. Any trees left over will be sold on a first-come, first-served basis. Details online at greencedarfarm.com.

Turkey Creek Christmas Tree Farm, McCormick, South Carolina — White pine, Virginia pine, Leyland cypress, Eastern red cedar, blue ice cypress and Carolina sapphire. Play area for the kids. Check out the farm's Facebook page for the latest offerings. Learn more at turkeycreekchristmastreefarm.com. 📱

Tips for a fresh tree

Naturally, a newly cut tree is going to be fresher than one that's been on a lot for a while, but it still needs some TLC. Here are some tips to help your tree last the season:

- 🌲 Start with a healthy, vibrant tree. You're going to get that from a tree farm, but be sure to trim any lower or dead branches.
- 🌲 Make a clean, straight cut across the bottom. Most tree farms will do this for you and drill a hole in the bottom if you have the kind of tree stand that needs one.
- 🌲 Water, water, water. Get the tree in water as soon as you come home and continue to water every day.
- 🌲 Keep the tree cool and away from any heat source that will dry it out.
- 🌲 Use LED lights. They don't get as hot, though they won't give the traditional light you may desire.
- 🌲 After Christmas, recycle your Christmas tree. Many towns offer a free service that turns them into mulch.



Aviagen

At home in Pikeville

Aviagen is building for the future

Story by LISA SAVAGE



Kasey Wilson, left, manager of the Pikeville feed processing facility, meets with Richard Obermeyer, director of feed production for Aviagen North America.

Photo by Mark Gilliland

The addition of Aviagen's Pikeville feed processing facility earlier this year to the poultry-breeding company's other area operations will have a tremendous impact on the state's economy — to the tune of a \$35 million investment.

That's big news for Bledsoe and surrounding counties.

Aviagen worked with Pikeville Mayor Philip Cagle, Bledsoe County Mayor Gregg Ridley and other economic development leaders to bring the feed processing facility to fruition. "We are excited that Aviagen chose Bledsoe County as the location of this strategic investment, which will benefit our citizens and our state," Cagle says.

It's a perfect fit for Bledsoe County. "As an agricultural community, we share Aviagen's commitment to provide a sustainable and affordable food source for our local families and people around the world," Ridley says. "We look forward to a long and mutually beneficial relationship for many years to come."

The Pikeville location is Aviagen's third feed processing facility in the United States, and it's now the country's most advanced feed mill, says Richard Obermeyer, director of feed production for Aviagen North America. Pikeville's physical location played a vital role in the decision to build the new facility here — both the isolation and job opportunities for the local workforce were attractive. "We talked to the local mayors and learned that 80% of the work force leaves the county for jobs," Obermeyer says. "We wanted to have a secure location for the plant while providing a location right here in the county that could offer jobs now and in the future."

Kasey Wilson manages the local facility, and about 15 employees work there with additional jobs anticipated in the next few years. "We built this facility with room to grow," Obermeyer says.

A WIN-WIN FOR TENNESSEE AND AVIAGEN

The facility will benefit the state's economy and local farmers, eventually bringing 260 new jobs to the area, including up to 36 positions at the feed mill itself. Aviagen's goal is to use local sources as much as possible to make the grain at the mill. Obermeyer estimates a need for between 1 and 1.5 million bushels of grain in the first year alone.



Photos contributed by Aviagen



Aviagen's presence in Tennessee brings \$35 million to the state's economy.

Aviagen's current veterinary laboratory, hatchery, office, vehicle maintenance facility and a number of pedigree farms are located in Crossville, about 25 miles north of Pikeville. The \$35.3 million investment in the feed mill is part of a broader development project for the Pikeville and Crossville areas that will include the expansion of production farms and the Pikeville hatchery.

ABOUT AVIAGEN

Since 1923, Aviagen has been a preferred global poultry breeding company that supplies day-old chicks to be used as parent stock for the production of commercial broiler chickens.

Headquartered in Huntsville, Alabama, the company's mission is to give its customers — the world's chicken meat producers — everything they need to successfully provide their growing communities with a sustainable, affordable and nutritious source of protein.

Aviagen's feed processing facilities provide nutritious, biosecure feed that is specially formulated for the unique dietary needs of Aviagen flocks in all phases of growth. The Pikeville facility produces about 3,000 tons of feed per week, and 156,000 tons annually.

Food safety and security are a top commitment, and the new facility is one of the most secure feed mills in the country. It uses the latest technology to achieve full pathogen elimination and comprehensive biosecurity. "Protecting the health and welfare of our birds and keeping pathogens out of the food chain are our foremost priorities," Obermeyer says. "This all begins with biosecure, high-quality feed."

The facility meets stringent regulations set by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the state of Tennessee. Aviagen

was the first poultry-breeding company in the country to design and build its own feed processing facilities to eliminate contamination and ensure high levels of biosecurity. Pikeville joins Aviagen locations in Sallisaw, Oklahoma, and Athens, Alabama, as a high-capacity, state-of-the-art feed processing facility.

USING TECHNOLOGY

"To secure the supply to our customers worldwide and keep harmful pathogens out of the food chain, we implement strict biosecurity practices," Obermeyer says. Adding to the company's extensive biosecurity measures in and around the facility, the location in Pikeville was chosen for its physical isolation, and access is restricted to authorized personnel only.

BTC Fiber internet service connects the location to the corporate office. All the systems within the Pikeville facility use advanced technology, monitoring each piece of equipment and generating reports and vital information that affect production. All reports go to the main office in Huntsville where the data is monitored. "Access to fiber internet is vital for production," Obermeyer says. "We have a fiber optic network throughout our building for fast access to all our control systems."

One of Aviagen's goals is involvement in the community, and the company supports local schools' activities. It also donates to various local nonprofits, including fire departments, food banks and similar organizations. "We have been welcomed into the Pikeville community, and we've developed a fantastic relationship with the whole area," Obermeyer says. "We look forward to many more years working with the people of this community."

A virtual tour of the Pikeville facility is available by searching Aviagen Pikeville on YouTube. [📺](#)

Your *connected* gift guide

6 gift ideas that make the most of your high-speed internet

The holiday shopping season is here, and there has never been a better time to find the perfect gadget that takes advantage of your high-speed internet connection. From tools that make working from home look good to devices to unwind with, high-speed service will help these gifts shine for the techie in your life.

1. Google Nest Hub, \$50

Give the gift of better mornings with the Google

Nest Hub. Designed for the bedside, it can track sleep quality, update you on the weather and your calendar, stream music and video and control any smart home appliances you might have. It even has a built-in light sensor to make sure the screen is never too bright. Let's see an alarm clock do that.



2. Sonos Roam, \$180

The Roam is the perfect portable speaker for anyone on the move. Stream music, podcasts and more with great audio quality and take them from one room to the next with ease. Roam's Wi-Fi support automatically joins any other Sonos speakers around the house and also works as a smart speaker, connecting to Amazon's Alexa or Google Assistant.



3. Kindle Paperwhite, \$140

For the bookworm in the family, the Kindle Paperwhite is still the best e-reader around. The glare-free display is just like reading on real paper, while the 2021 model adds a warm light option to make reading at night easier on the eyes. Purchase new books or download old favorites in seconds without ever leaving your



favorite reading chair.

4. Logitech C920S Webcam, \$74

More people are working from home than ever before, so help the remote workers in your life look good while being productive. This Logitech webcam will offer a big upgrade over any built-in camera. It's also ideal for the livestreamers, offering great video quality at an affordable price.



5. Xbox Game Pass, \$9.99/month

If you're giving or receiving an Xbox Series X, Game Pass is a no-brainer. Essentially Netflix for games, the service offers hundreds of games on demand, from the biggest Xbox exclusives available on launch day to creative indies from your favorite developers. Download games in minutes with a fiber connection and discover something new.



6. Apple AirTag, \$30

Know someone who's always losing their keys? These tiny Bluetooth trackers are here to help. Attach them to your keys or anything else you're prone to misplacing, and the AirTag will leverage the network of nearby Apple devices to locate it — in some cases, within inches. For the Android user, the Tile Mate is just as handy. ☑



Tasty app-etizers

6 digital tools to level up your kitchen skills

Even the most experienced home cooks can use a little inspiration now and then. Fortunately, it's never been easier to find. The wide variety of cooking apps and websites available today make it easy to plan meals and even eat healthier. Whether you're looking to ditch the stacks of faded recipes, make something new or find video instructions to walk you through every step, these tools will bring a little extra flavor to your kitchen.



SideChef — If you're just starting out in the kitchen, SideChef is great for learning the basics. A cooking novice created the app for beginners, and it does away with fancy culinary terminology and instead offers dynamic guidance through recipes, providing step-by-step photos, hands-free voice commands and built-in timers. There are over 18,000 interactive smart recipes to try out, so pick your favorite and get cooking.



Food Network Kitchen — Craving something you just saw on the Food Network? The Food Network Kitchen features recipes from fan-favorite personalities and food writers, along with prep time, cook time and difficulty level. Any fan of the network will feel right at home in the app, which lets you search more than 80,000 recipes for categories like grilling, baking, kid-friendly and dairy-free.



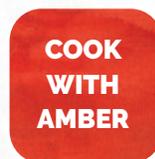
Cookpad — For those looking for a more social cooking experience, Cookpad offers a community of home chefs around the world. Discover new ideas, share photos, ask questions and exchange advice. You can even take part in cooking challenges or online cooking classes. And since Cookpad's user base is global, there are plenty of international recipes to satisfy an adventurous palate.



Forks — From vegan lifestyle site Forks Over Knives, the Forks app offers over 600 recipes for anyone sticking to a plant-based diet. What the app lacks in quantity it makes up for in quality, convenience and ease of use. There are new recipes each week, and you can export your favorites to have a ready-made shopping list for your next grocery trip.



Mealime — Meal planning can be a headache, but Mealime makes it easy. The app curates recipe suggestions based on your preferences to help you find healthy new favorites. They're all guaranteed to take 30 minutes or less to cook, but you can also import recipes from the web to add more options.



Cook with Amber — Teenage cook Amber Kelley has been encouraging kids to get in the kitchen since 2012. Today, college keeps her pretty busy. But her YouTube channel, Cook with Amber, still features years' worth of videos that walk kids through their own healthy and delicious kitchen adventures so you can make dinner and memories together. 📺





Buildings throughout downtown will twinkle this season during Light Up Pikeville.



Photography by John Hargis Photography

Light Up Pikeville

Story by LISA SAVAGE

Lola Sells has always loved Christmas and watching Hallmark movies during the holiday season.

It was her dream to add lights to Pikeville to resemble one of the festive movie sets.

Last Christmas, that dream became reality with Light Up Pikeville. “We have the perfect town for it,” she says. “We have the courthouse, the farmers market and the downtown area, and it already looks like a scene out of a movie.”

Now that the event is in its second year, Lola hopes to add more lights and attract more participants. In the initial planning stage, she soon discovered that others share her dream of a picture-perfect Christmas. Before she knew it, homes and businesses were adding lights and decorations throughout downtown.

She received a \$10,000 donation from the city and other contributions to help pay for professionals to place lights on rooftops of downtown buildings. On Main Street, more than a quarter-mile of decorated businesses and storefronts displayed brightly colored Christmas lights. “The focus this year will be on Main Street,

from bypass to bypass, but everyone is invited to join in,” Lola says.

Lola loves the nostalgia and atmosphere the lights help create. And as a business owner herself — she runs It’s Lola’s, an antique store on Main Street — she knows attracting visitors to Pikeville can provide a boost to the local economy.

COMMUNITY EFFORT

Planning starts in the summer, and lights start going up in October. “We start telling people in July to start getting ready,” Lola says. She plans to include more lights, events and decorations this year. “We’d like to add more Christmas trees and more wreaths.”

Light Up Pikeville officially starts on Nov. 12 with the annual cruise-in, which includes antique and unique cars decorated for Christmas.

Lola hopes to increase activities around events like the tree-lighting ceremony on the Bledsoe County Courthouse lawn.

There will be special music every weekend, along with the Christmas parade on Nov. 26, when Santa will make an appearance. She hopes more food vendors

Downtown looks like a Hallmark movie

set up at the area farmers market during special events and that it becomes a place for holiday craft vendors. “We’d love for people to have an atmosphere like that to shop,” she says.

Lola would also like to expand to the area near the fairgrounds, with hopes that the farming community will be involved, too.

TRANSFORMATION

Lola’s dream was to light up the town, and it wasn’t hard to imagine Pikeville’s transformation looking similar to a Hallmark movie scene. Many volunteers are on board to assist, and city and community leaders stepped up to help, too. “It’s been more than I could ever have imagined,” she says. “It wouldn’t have been possible without the cooperation of everybody working together to make this dream come true.”

DUNLAP CHRISTMAS PARADE
Dec. 10

FOR MORE DETAILS about events, follow Light Up Pikeville on Facebook.

MEET YOUR BTC FIBER EMPLOYEES

Installation/repair technicians

- Michael Stults, outside plant manager
- Brian Bridges, outside plant supervisor

What's the name of your department?

BTC Fiber installation/repair technicians, which is under the outside plant team.

What is the primary function of your department?

The BTC Fiber installation/repair technicians are responsible for the installation of services at customers' homes or businesses. They also are responsible for maintaining those services.

What role does your department play in the overall operations at BTC Fiber?

The installation/repair technicians prewire new homes when requested and install all wiring and equipment that BTC Fiber uses to hook up telephone, IPTV and internet service at the customer's location. The installation/repair technicians also make any repairs at a customer's residence or business when it's necessary to go to the site to clear a problem.

What information about your department would be helpful for members to know?

Our repair department operates Monday through Saturday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Call 423-447-6815 with any problems you may be having with your service, and someone will be available to assist you.

We have a customer support specialist who works in our repair department Sunday through Thursday, from 2 to 10 p.m. answering calls and troubleshooting over the phone with customers. Outside of these hours, we have an after-hours answering service that answers all calls to our repair department and notifies BTC personnel of any emergency calls they receive.

What is something unique that the general public might not know?

If you are building a new house and have questions about a prewire or the services we offer, give us a call, and we will be glad to assist you with any questions you may have. Prewiring a new home or structure while the walls are open assures that the wire can be pulled to the customer's desired location. 🗨️



Austin Mercer



River Swafford



Bradley Hankins



Lane Reece



Matthew Holland



Travis Johnson

Installation/repair technicians

- Austin Mercer — two years
- Lane Reece — one year
- River Swafford — two years
- Matthew Holland — one year
- Bradley Hankins — two years
- Travis Johnson — six months



A tasty tradition

Celebrate the season with sweet holiday treats

Baking is a time-honored tradition in so many households this time of year. Kids love sprinkles, and holiday hosts appreciate having sweets on hand for unexpected guests and tasty gifts for neighbors and friends.

There are a few important tips that can make your holiday baking a stress-free experience and perhaps a little more rewarding for those who will be enjoying the results of your efforts. Many of us have had baking disasters that weren't funny at the time but made for entertaining stories later. That doesn't need to be the case, though, if you:

▶ **Organize** — Make lists of all the things

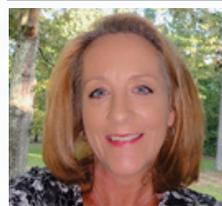
you want to bake and the ingredients you'll need. Do this a couple of days ahead of time so you can decide what will need to be frozen and used in coming weeks, such as cookie dough.

▶ **Check your pantry for the essentials** — Make sure you have plenty of sugar, flour, butter, eggs and the all-important extracts of the holiday season: vanilla, almond and, oh, yes, peppermint. There's nothing more aggravating than getting halfway through a recipe only to open the sugar bag and discover it's nearly empty. Don't forget cooking spray and parchment paper, too. You'll be needing them.

▶ **Make sure you have plenty of room in your refrigerator** — Some baked goods need to be chilled. This is a good time to throw out what's been in the fridge a little too long or to use up any leftovers.

▶ **Ponder presentation** — Check your closets and cabinets for decorative cookie tins. You'll need them for more than just cookies, they're also great for caramel corn, fudge, brownies and bars. A colorful holiday tin is so much more festive than a zip-top bag with a stick-on bow.

Now, get baking. It's almost Christmas!



FOOD EDITOR
ANNE P. BRALY
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TENNESSEE.

Photography by MARK GILLILAND | Food Styling by RHONDA GILLILAND





HOLIDAY CARAMEL CORN

One word of caution: be sure to weed out all of the unpopped kernels so there are no unexpectedly hard bites in this delicious, sweet-salty snack.

- 3 quarts popped popcorn (about 2 bags microwave popcorn, popped)
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) butter (no substitute)
- 1 cup brown sugar, firmly packed
- 1/4 cup dark corn syrup
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 cups mixed nuts

Heat oven to 250 F.

Place popped popcorn into a large, 4-inch-deep buttered baking pan, and place it in the oven to keep warm. In a large saucepan, melt the butter over

low heat. Stir in brown sugar, corn syrup and salt. Bring to a soft boil, stirring constantly. Boil without stirring for 5 minutes. Remove from heat, and quickly stir in the baking soda and vanilla.

Remove popcorn from the oven. Slowly pour syrup mixture over popcorn, and add nuts, mixing well. This may prove a bit difficult at first, as the caramel mixture hardens quickly once removed from the heat. But as you stir it while it's baking in the oven, it will soften and get much easier to stir.

Butter a large cookie sheet, and turn the popcorn mixture into the pan. Bake for 45 minutes to 1 hour, stirring every 15 minutes. You don't want the popcorn to get overly browned. Remove from the oven and cool completely. Break apart. Store in tightly covered tins.



CRANBERRY ORANGE HOLIDAY NUT BREAD

- 2 cups flour
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 cup butter, softened
- 1 tablespoon grated orange peel
- 3/4 cup orange juice
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 large eggs
- 1 cup fresh or frozen cranberries
- 6 ounces chopped pecans

Preheat the oven to 350 F. Grease the bottom of a 9-by-5-inch loaf pan and set aside.

In a large bowl, mix the flour, sugar, baking powder, salt and baking soda. Stir in the butter until the mixture is crumbly. Stir

in the orange peel, orange juice, vanilla and eggs, just until the batter comes together. Be careful not to overmix. Fold in the fresh cranberries and nuts.

Transfer the batter to the prepared baking pan. Bake until a wooden toothpick inserted in the middle comes out clean: about 50 minutes to 1 hour. Cool in the pan for 5 minutes before loosening the sides of the loaf from the pan. Transfer the loaf to a rack to cool completely before slicing. Let cool completely and wrap with plastic wrap.



PEANUT BUTTER STARS

A classic holiday cookie. These freeze well, so make plenty to enjoy throughout the season.

- 1/2 cup shortening
- 1/2 cup peanut butter
- 3/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar

- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/8 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 egg
- 2 tablespoons milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- Chocolate kisses or stars

Preheat the oven to 350 F.

In a large mixing bowl, beat shortening and peanut butter with an electric mixer on medium-high speed for 30 seconds. Add 1/2 cup of the granulated sugar, along with the brown sugar, baking powder and baking soda. Beat until combined, scraping sides of bowl occasionally. Beat in egg, milk and vanilla until combined. Beat in as much of the flour as you can with the mixer. Stir in any remaining flour.

Shape dough into 1-inch balls. Roll balls in 1/4 cup granulated sugar. Place 2 inches apart on an ungreased cookie sheet.

Bake for 10-12 minutes or until edges are firm and bottoms are lightly browned.

Immediately press a chocolate star or kiss into the center of each cookie. Transfer to a wire rack and let cool. Store in airtight containers. Makes 54 cookies. 📄

Everyone at BTC Fiber is grateful for our membership and the community we call home.



WISHING YOU AND YOURS A
WONDERFUL HOLIDAY SEASON!