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16



24

FEBRUARY

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NUMBER CRUNCHERS

Experts say sharper math skills and more math-related degrees can lead to better job opportunities for Kentuckians. Learn more about college programs across the state that are building opportunities for Kentucky students.

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KENTUCKY BY THE NUMBERS

Did you know Kentucky is the nation's No. 1 producer of cars, light trucks and SUVs per capita? Or that an Erlanger factory makes 6.5 million Airhead candy bars per day? Explore more fun facts and surprising stats about the Bluegrass State.

ON THE COVER Electricity is used at the moment it's generated, which means supply and demand must remain in balance. A new report from the North American Electric Reliability Corporation shows that more than half of North America is at risk of energy shortfalls in the next 10 years due to surging demand and the retirement of reliable energy sources. Read more on page 10. Illustration: Andrea Ucini

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OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Kentucky Living is published to create a community of people who take pride in thinking of themselves as Kentuckians and as knowledgeable electric co-op consumer-members, in order to improve their quality of life.

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Strength in numbers

You can count on Kentucky co-ops

I'M A NUMBERS GUY. I always have been. And this issue is full of exciting stats—from number crunching careers to fun facts about Kentucky. Here are a few of my favorites:

36: Data science is a growing field: According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the number of jobs in data science will grow by 36% through 2033. And those careers have salaries with six figures.

3,000: According to Alicia Sells, CEO of We Lead CS, a virtual career academy for high school students, there are about 3,000 tech jobs open in Kentucky and not enough skilled workers to fill them. Read more about this new academy on page 20.

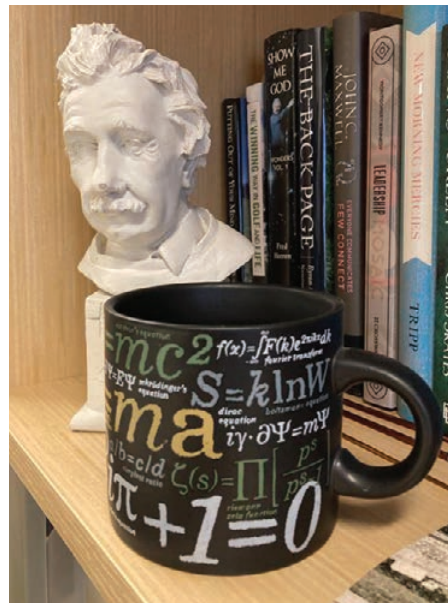
79 million: Did you know more than 79 million people visited Kentucky in 2023 and spent \$9.7 billion across the state? Find more interesting facts beginning on page 24.

20,597: Votes cast in the 2024 Best in Kentucky Awards. The 2025 contest kicks off this month. We encourage you to visit KentuckyLiving.com and nominate your favorites in 30 categories. This is how your area gets represented, so go online and complete our nomination form. For a list of categories, go to page 47.

Speaking of numbers, here are some things you might not know about Kentucky's electric cooperatives:

26: With two generation and transmission cooperatives and 24 electric distribution cooperatives, Kentucky has 26 electric co-ops.

1.8 million: Those co-ops serve 1.8 million consumer-members in 117 of the state's 120 counties.



JOEL SAMs

3,100: Kentucky's electric cooperatives employ more than 3,100 people across the state.

99,700: Combined, Kentucky co-ops have more than 99,700 miles of line. That's enough to wrap around Earth's equator four times.

The most important number I can share, though, is **1**—the single mission that guides Kentucky's electric cooperatives. We are here to provide safe, affordable and reliable electricity to you, the consumer-member. When it comes to fulfilling this mission, you can count on us.

Chris

CHRIS PERRY
President/CEO



KENTUCKY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

FROM THE EDITOR

AS YOU MIGHT HAVE GUESSED,

if you noticed the byline in the December issue or follow us on Facebook, I love coffee. I'm thrilled to have written about some amazing local coffee houses twice now—in September 2016 (the same month my oldest son was born) and last December.

Each time we've run a story about coffee, we've gotten friendly, but enthusiastic feedback shouting out some places we might have missed. We welcome that! It's impossible to include every coffee house in the state with our limited space.

But thanks to you, I can now add places like The Sunflower Treats and Coffee in Cadiz, Baxter's Coffee in Somerset (though we did include Baxter's in 2016) and The Local Press Coffee in Mount Washington to my ever-growing list of places to try.

Stay safe and warm this month. And if a cup of coffee helps you do that, cheers to you. I know it adds daily pep to my steps.

SHANNON BROCK,
EDITOR

Contact Us

- Questions, comments, letter to the editor
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Submit & Share

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Louisville, KY 40232. Submission should include your name, address, phone numbers, email address and name of electric co-op.



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Follow us online for events, recipes, videos, contests and more!



JOLEA BROWN

COLLEGE GUIDE

Explore Kentucky's higher ed offerings

The annual *Kentucky Living* College Guide contains detailed information to help students choose the school that best fits their needs. Visit us online for a full listing of Kentucky's higher education institutions, along with contact information, enrollment numbers, tuition, room and board costs, student/faculty ratios and featured programs.



DO THE MATH

Planning for college success

College math programs across Kentucky equip students with skills for in-demand careers. Read the story on page 16, then visit KentuckyLiving.com for more tips on affordability, scholarships, academic support and community connections.



HISTORY COMES TO LIFE

Experience Kentucky's Black history tours

Walking and driving tours across the state celebrate the stories and contributions of Black Kentuckians. Read the story on page 36 for travel inspiration, then visit KentuckyLiving.com for videos that bring Kentucky's Black history to life.



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From family home to fine dining

WALKING THROUGH AN OLD or historic home leads one to imagine the conversations, plans and plots that may have been made there through the years.

Author and storyteller Bob Rouse has given voice to one of Midway's historic sites now known as the Holly Hill Inn, the flagship restaurant in Chef Ouita Michel's successful portfolio. In *Up Home: A Family, a Tragedy, & the Holly Hill Inn*, Rouse chronicles the life and times of all those who called Hermosa, the house's formal name, home. Rouse can speak with authority on his subject—the house belonged to his family for almost 100 years, and he and his sisters, the eighth generation of his family to reside in Midway, grew up right next door.

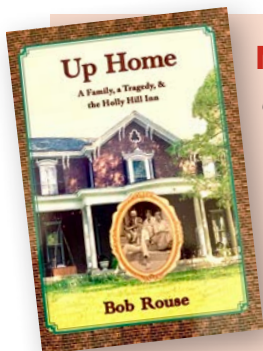
Dating back to the 1840s, the original structure went through several owners and additions until the Parrish family, Rouse's great-grandparents, purchased it in 1903. Rouse walks readers through the simpler times of those years, documented by his great-aunt's journals, when the Parrish children spent warm summer nights on the sleeping porch, extra faces around the table were always welcome, and nighttime entertainment involved gathering around to listen to a radio show.

No family history is devoid of tragedy, however, regardless of how idyllic things appear. Rouse discusses the accidental drowning of his great-uncle, the last male in the Parrish line, and the ripple effect of grief felt throughout the town. Though Rouse never met him, he mourns the loss nonetheless and ponders the influence knowing him might have had.

Today, Rouse lives just down the road from his family's homeplace and goes "up home" often. Much has changed, of course, in converting a former home to a fine dining establishment, but as Rouse recently walked through each room observing the satisfied customers, the knowledgeable and capable wait-staff and the precision of the kitchen crew, his sense of pride is evident as he describes the transition from a boy wandering into the kitchen looking for a snack to a paying customer of that same kitchen.

Rouse also pays tribute to his beloved tiny town. With a little over 1,700 residents, Midway is the place he and his wife chose to raise their own family: "These people and this place are part of me, and I gladly introduce them to you."

» Penny Woods



Michel making her own history

Up Home: A Family, a Tragedy, & the Holly Hill Inn, (Rabbit House Press, \$24), can be purchased online at www.rabbithousepress.com or at A Likely Story Bookstore in Midway.

Along with her husband, Chris, Ouita Michel, a Lexington native, is the owner of eight dining establishments in Midway, Versailles and Lexington, including Holly Hill Inn. She is a six-time James Beard Foundation Award nominee, including nominations for Outstanding Restaurateur and Best Chef Southeast. Find a list of her restaurants, as well as stories and recipes, at www.hollyhillandco.com.

tip

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Use Energy Star-rated equipment in your home office. It consumes up to 50% less energy than standard models. Set equipment like printers and scanners to automatically switch to sleep or energy-saver mode when not in use. Use efficient lamps for task lighting. Replace any older bulbs with energy-saving LEDs. Source: energy.gov



NRECA



**"How adorable!
He looks just like you."**

Be aware of potential payment scams

Some electric cooperatives across the state have been on the receiving end of something resembling a bill payment scam—sometimes quite literally, when co-op employees are contacted about paying their own bills.

In the most recent example, a third-party company sends an email that appears as though it's coming from the cooperative, but directs recipients to pay in a separate portal. Though the company eventually may make the member's payment, it could be held and sent to the co-op past the payment due date.

So, what can you do to protect yourself and your money? It's more important than ever to know the payment you send is going directly to your cooperative. Your best option

is to make your payment in the same way you always do or to call your local co-op directly and ask about available payment methods.

Here are some tips from Utilities United Against Scams:

- Never make a utility bill payment to anyone calling you on the phone, coming to your door (unless that is a verified bill payment method used by your utility company), texting you or emailing you.
- Always call your co-op at the number provided on your bill or on their website if you have a question about payment or billing information.
- Know your bill payment options—online, by phone, automatic bank draft, mail or in person.

**Have a question
or comment for
the editor?**



Please address letters to the editor to: Letters, *Kentucky Living*, P. O. Box 32170, Louisville, KY 40232 or email by going to KentuckyLiving.com and clicking on "Contact Us." Letters may be edited for style, length and clarity.

featured FRAMES

Duane Cross, Harrodsburg, an Inter-County Energy consumer-member, captured a sunset at Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill along with the image of three special guests.



The grid's balancing act

Demand surges as reliable power is forced to retire

JOE ARNOLD AND SCOTT FLOOD



In the last 10 years, the use of electrical power in Kentucky has soared far beyond the dreams of those who built the distribution co-ops. People are learning more uses of electricity every day; more homes are being connected every day; more appliances are being sold every day.”

» Seth Thompson, *Kentucky Electric Co-op News*, 1950

WHEN EDITOR SETH THOMPSON sat at his typewriter 75 years ago to write for Kentucky’s electric co-op magazine (which would later become *Kentucky Living*), he probably could not have imagined how advanced manufacturing, artificial intelligence and electric vehicles would someday tax the power grid.

Thankfully, Thompson and his fellow electric co-op pioneers understood the first rule of the electric grid: Like a perfectly balanced scale, the

grid must be built to produce power in balance with the highest demand at any moment.

“No one knows how fast this state will grow, nor how much power it will need in any given year,” Thompson wrote. “... We must assume that future generations will be just as hungry for the better things of life as the generation which built the electrical distribution co-ops.”

Indeed, the appetite for energy today is larger than ever and growing. U.S. electricity demand increased 2.5% in 2024 and is expected to grow by 3.2% this year. That was after a 4.8% increase in 2022. Through 2029, the nation’s peak demand is projected to grow by 38 gigawatts. That would be like adding the energy needs of another California to our nation’s already stressed power grid.

What’s driving demand?

Federal policies, subsidies and tax advantages are encouraging more electric use, from efficient electric heat pumps to electric vehicles.

Meanwhile, the rapid growth of artificial intelligence is driving the development of massive data center facilities. By 2022, these facilities accounted for 2.5% of the nation’s consumption of electricity—and by 2030, they are projected to consume as much as 9% of all electric power.

But instead of ensuring a perfectly balanced electric grid to meet the surging demand, new



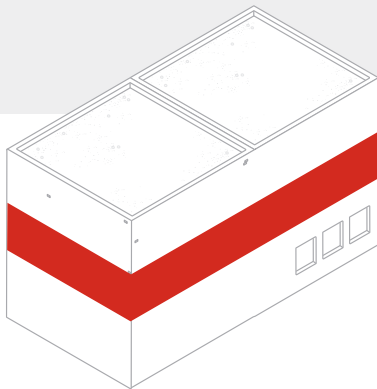
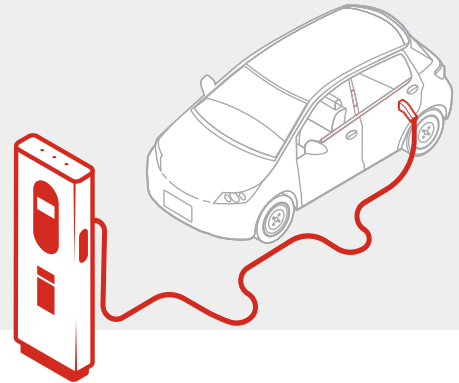
ANDREA UCINI

Soaring Demand

After decades of flat or declining electricity demand, the United States is in the midst of a boom in power use. Recent government data shows that power consumption nationwide is set to increase by at least 38 gigawatts between now and 2028. This trend would ordinarily be great news for the power industry. But government policies aimed at shutting down fossil-fuel-based generation and years-long delays in permitting and siting for new transmission lines are turning this power boom into a capacity crisis. Here are the primary demand drivers:

Electrification

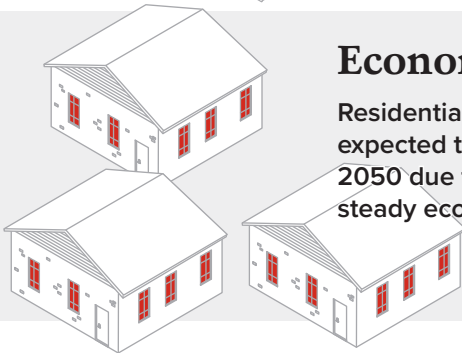
Electric vehicle adoption, electrification of home heating and industrial electrification are expected to increase overall U.S. energy consumption by 1% per year through 2026.



↑
65%

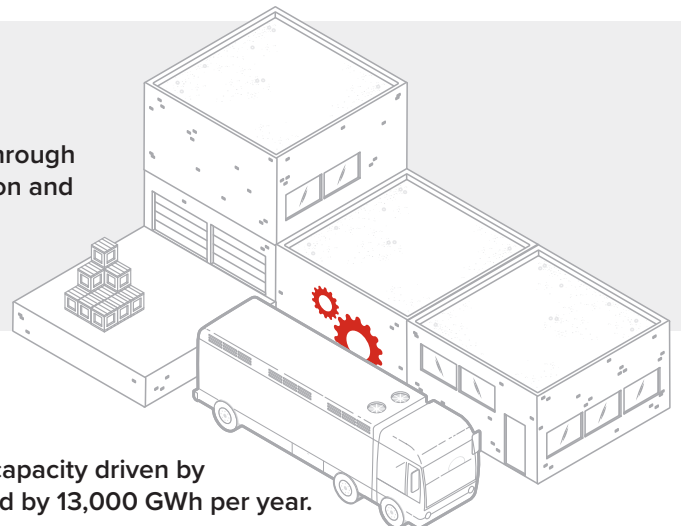
Data Centers

Driven by explosions in artificial intelligence, cryptocurrency and cloud computing, total U.S. data center load is projected to increase by 65% by 2050.



Economic Growth

Residential power consumption is expected to increase by 14–22% through 2050 due to increases in population and steady economic growth.



Manufacturing Growth/Onshoring

New, expanding and “onshored/reshored” manufacturing capacity driven by federal incentives is expected to increase industrial demand by 13,000 GWh per year.

Key products: EVs, batteries, semiconductors, solar power components

Total Demand

Analysts predicted in 2023 that U.S. peak demand will increase by at least 38 GW over the next five years, nearly double the growth rate predicted in 2022.

2027

Forecast
835 GW

Forecast
852 GW

2028



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

▲ Data centers are driving record demand for reliable electricity. Photo: Manuel Geissinger/Pexels

federal regulations are forcing power providers to shut down reliable sources of baseload power. Many large coal plants have been converted to use cleaner-burning natural gas, but the new rules make it too costly to convert some coal plants, so they are being shut down prematurely. More than 110 gigawatts of on-demand generation—enough to power about 35 million homes—is forecast to be retired by 2033.

As a result, over half of North America could face energy shortfalls in the next decade, according to a new report from the North American Electric Reliability Corporation.

“Our infrastructure is not being built fast enough to keep up with the rising demand,” says John Moura, NERC’s director of reliability assessment and performance analysis. “Policymakers, industry leaders and stakeholders across North America must work together to ensure the expansion of the bulk power system ... and also maintain reliability that our society depends on.”

New energy construction

The energy industry carefully forecasts demand because construction of all types of electric generation is costly and lengthy—often longer than a decade from groundbreaking to entering service.

Before any new power project can connect to the electric grid, regulators must first assess whether the transmission system can handle it safely and reliably. Each project must wait in line for its turn to be reviewed.

Federal subsidies have stimulated solar, battery and wind projects, which make up almost all the

DATA CENTERS AND ENERGY USE

As use of artificial intelligence skyrockets and a greater share of computer applications and storage migrate to the cloud, all that data needs to be stored somewhere. Data centers, which are massive groups of high-capacity computer servers, provide the most efficient way to handle it.

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, data centers can consume as much as 50 times the energy per floor space of other types of commercial buildings. A single large data center may use over 100 megawatts of power, enough to power 80,000 households.

capacity in the interconnection queues today. But due to its variability and weather dependence, renewable energy is not reliable enough to provide baseload power, NERC says.

That dependability gap will also lead to higher energy costs in the future, explains Chris Perry, president and CEO of Kentucky Electric Cooperatives.

“Because solar energy doesn’t work when the sun is not shining, it has to be backed up by a reliable power source, such as coal, natural gas or nuclear,” Perry says. “Ultimately, electric consumers will have to pay for both.

“Someday, we hope that utility-scale batteries can be robust enough to power us through an



KentuckyLiving.com

From the archive

Read the original 1950 *Kentucky Electric Co-op* News column by Editor Seth Thompson on KentuckyLiving.com

extended period of time, and co-ops will make those investments when the time comes, but we need to keep the grid reliable.”

What can be done?

In a letter to President Donald Trump,

Jim Matheson, CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, pledged to work with the new administration to advance policies that support energy production, manufacturing and infrastructure that are crucial to the well-being of co-op communities.

“We urge President Trump and congressional leaders to prioritize reliability right out of the gate before it’s too late,” Matheson says.

As Seth Thompson wrote in this magazine 75 years ago, “We believe, therefore, that the time to prepare for the future is NOW.” **KL**

get ready 2025 PHOTO CONTEST

Gather your photos and get ready to enter the *Kentucky Living* 2025 Photo Contest starting **March 1** at KentuckyLiving.com.

Submit up to two entries per category:

- Animals
- Plants & Flowers
- People
- Landscapes & Scenery
- Kentucky Travels

20 WINNERS | 20 PRIZES

Winners published in July.

Online People’s Choice contest with weekly prizes.

KentuckyLiving

Contest is open to co-op consumer-members and the public, both amateur and professional photographers. Entries accepted for ages 13* and up.

*Ages 13-17 must have consent from a parent or guardian when they enter online.



TOMMY LOPEZ

Bringing back history

Corns Repair preserves tractors

FLEMING COUNTY

As a young boy, Mason Corns developed an interest in old tractors. He learned how to restore them on his family's farm alongside his dad, Joe, and grandfather, Leonard. "We would get them to where they'd run and put some paint on them," recalls Corns.

Today, Corns is part of his family's cattle operation. And nearly 13 years ago, his early fascination with tractors led him to open his own business—Corns Repair, LLC, powered by Fleming-Mason Energy in Fleming County—where the company does everything from regular maintenance to full restorations.

▶ Mason Corns drives his restored 1974 John Deere 2630 in a local tractor parade. Corns' business, Corns Repair, LLC, did the restoration. Photo: Larry Gooding

This 1976 International 966 Black Stripe was restored by Corns, shown, and is owned by Rick Alexander. Photo: Brittany Corns



Refurbishing a tractor takes a lot of time and effort, but Corns enjoys the process of adding value to old farm machinery. "If somebody wants us to restore something, in our eyes, we want to put quality into it, just as if it were manufactured again," says Corns.

While each restored tractor is special to him, including a 1976 International 966 and a 1979 Ford 5600, one in particular stands out—a 1974 John Deere 2630. "It's our personal tractor," he explains. "I traded 14 rolls of hay for it. Brought it home in the back of a pickup truck and on a trailer in pieces and put it together one piece at a time."

Corns compares the tractor preservation process to some other hobbies, only on a much larger scale. "It's just like a big giant puzzle or a model car that you'd buy at a box store," he says.

And restoring tractors has turned into a family affair. Corns' wife, Brittany, and their daughter, Mallory, 13,

and son, Kaleb, 5, also pitch in. "Every tractor that we redo, everybody has a hand in them. It's not just me," says Corns.

He takes pride in seeing a tractor preserved, noting that a lot of people today appreciate the craftsmanship in what he calls "the older generation stuff" that was built to last. "It's always a proud moment when you bring something back to life that was almost put to idle at one time," says Corns. "And seeing the person that you do it for, or if you do it for yourself, is always rewarding to me."

To Corns, restoring tractors is his life's work and mission: "To help bring back history, one piece at a time."

Learn more by visiting Corns Repair on Facebook or www.cornsrepair.com. **KL**

AMY COBB, a member of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, enjoys writing fiction and nonfiction for children and adults.



‘Transformative’ plans in Shelby County

Shelbyville Battery Manufacturing to produce utility-scale batteries

JOE ARNOLD

The largest economic development project in Shelby County history is projected to begin operations later this year manufacturing utility-scale batteries.

Shelbyville Battery Manufacturing, a subsidiary of e-Storage, plans to invest \$712 million on a 1 million-square-foot plant to be served by Shelby Energy Cooperative.

“We are proud to be a part of the growing energy technology transformation across the U.S., and we are thrilled to announce our investment in a new, state-of-the-art industrial battery cell, module and packaging plant,” says Colin Parkin, president of e-Storage. “This new plant will allow us to provide our U.S. customers with cutting-edge, American-made battery energy storage products.”

The large battery systems are marketed to utility companies and project developers nationwide. Solar and wind farms can charge the systems when the sun is shining and wind is blowing,



then discharge during short-term demand surges and to stabilize grid fluctuations. Lithium-ion batteries can typically discharge power for two to four hours.

The president and CEO of Shelby Energy, Jack Bragg, says the project will have a major impact on the region: “We are so excited to welcome Shelbyville Battery Manufacturing into our Shelby Energy and Kentucky’s Touchstone Energy Cooperatives family. From the company’s initial visits to

Shelbyville, we knew right away that the synergies and timings associated with the project were aligning to help bring this transformational project to fruition in Shelby County.”

In addition to manufacturing, the company also plans an on-site research and development lab, fostering collaboration with universities to further its technologies.

The projected workforce of 1,500 people would make Shelbyville Battery Manufacturing the largest employer in Shelby County, according to Shelbyville Mayor Troy Ethington.

“This is transformative,” Ethington says. “First and foremost, the creation of over 1,500 well-paying jobs will provide new opportunities for our residents, attracting talented individuals and families to our community. Shelbyville continues to become one of the fastest growing communities in the commonwealth, and we’ve been preparing for a moment like this.” **KL**

e-STORAGE

csestorage.com

LOCATION:
Shelbyville

INDUSTRY:
Utility-scale energy storage

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE:
Shelby Energy



Shelbyville Water & Sewer Commission Operations Manager Bill Bryant, left, welcomes Shawn Qu, chairman and CEO of Canadian Solar, at the November 15, 2024, announcement of the e-Storage facility in Shelbyville. Photo: Kentucky Governor’s Office

Canadian origins

e-Storage is a subsidiary of Canadian Solar, Inc., founded in 2001 by Shawn Qu, who initially envisioned building a small company to focus on renewable energy sources. Based in Ontario, the company is now a worldwide leader in the design, manufacture and integration of battery energy storage systems for utility-scale applications.

“We made sacrifices to grow our research, our idea, and build up the enterprise little by little,” Qu explains. “While it was quite a struggle, it also taught us good things can happen to people who struggle and who work hard. From a humble start, we have grown our company to a global company with \$7.6 billion revenues last year and employees spread out around the world.”

NUMBER CRUNCHERS

Math skills add up for
Kentucky's future

BY KRISTEN WHITE





Javan Reed speaks to students at Simmons College in Louisville. The college has redesigned math courses and launched two new majors: computer information systems and applied mathematics. Photo: Jolea Brown

BETTER MATH SKILLS, plus an increased number of math related degrees, equals more and better job opportunities for Kentuckians.

Across the state, modern mathematics-related degree programs and partnerships are solving this equation, positioning the state for economic expansion and generating opportunities for students.

Essential for economic growth

At the Paducah Engineering Innovation Center on the University of Kentucky Pigman College of Engineering's Paducah campus, juniors Marshall Jenkins and Braden Ivy are at work perfecting their latest models of aeronautics components on the computer. They have learned multiple 3D computer-aided design programs, including AutoCAD and Solidworks that help them take an idea from concept to constructed project.

Jenkins and Ivy have already won awards for their work at a national competition. "Some people don't think of math as creative, but it's amazing to take an idea in your head to a product that makes lives better. Engineering is math that makes things. It's all about working together," Jenkins explains.

One of his professors is Y. Charles Lu, the H. E. Katterjohn Professor of Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering at UK and director of UK's Paducah Campus, located at West Kentucky Community & Technology College. Lu notes that two large rooms of equipment in the cutting-edge makerspace were donated by community members.

"Our community has invested in students to make sure Kentucky is ready for economic growth," says Lu, a West Kentucky RECC consumer-member. "In recent years, Kentucky has experienced unprecedented economic growth and attracted historic business investment. Kentucky has also received record federal funding to improve infrastructure. This will bring more high-paying jobs to our state."

However, Lu adds, the state is also facing a challenge to develop a skilled workforce in math-heavy careers to take on those jobs in the coming years. For example, he says, only 1.7% of Kentucky graduates are in the engineering field, while the U.S. average is 4%. "We need more students willing to pursue math-related fields like engineering and computer science."

Lu says Kentuckians may not be aware that their state has become the No. 1 vehicle producer in the U.S. per capita. Kentucky has also become a sought-after location for manufacturers of electric vehicles and their components and is ranked second in national aerospace product exports.

"Kentucky is well-positioned to become a leader in next-generation manufacturing, which will be technology-enhanced through artificial intelligence, robots and machine learning," Lu says. "We have in-demand industry sectors coming to our state, but those industries also demand employment specialization."



Y. Charles Lu, the H. E. Katterjohn Professor of Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering and director of UK's Paducah campus, makes sure students are understanding the coursework. From left, Evan Utley, Lu and Allison Millspaugh. Photo: Kristen White

Michael Yoder, director of community and workforce development in the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development, explains the demand: “Companies across practically every industry are expressing an increased need for skilled workers, especially those with a background in mathematics, whether that be demand for engineers, computer programmers, or any number of technical roles.”

Lu says having a local workforce able to help a company grow solves problems of recruitment and retention for corporations considering planting roots in Kentucky. UK Paducah is doing its part to prepare that workforce by offering engineering degrees in three disciplines: mechanical engineering, chemical engineering and computer engineering technology, with more than 100 students enrolled.

Overcoming the fear of math

Lu is proud of the smaller student-to-faculty ratios at UK's Paducah campus, which means students get help to succeed academically in ways students may find inaccessible at other schools. “Engineering requires high level math that may intimidate students. Our small

‘fish bowl’ study groups help them as they push forward to their goals,” he says.

Javan Reed, provost and vice president of academic affairs for Simmons College of Kentucky, a historically Black college in Louisville, agrees that a fear of math keeps many students from considering hard sciences over liberal arts. “At Simmons, our mission is to raise up change agents. To be a global thinker around complex problems, students must have the ability to think analytically—and that means students must tackle math,” he says.

Simmons is redesigning its math courses to partner with majors to cover what students need to know in their chosen fields. For example, Reed explains, “If a student is majoring in communications, we want them to have competency in budgeting and accounting they will be called upon to use in corporate projects.”

Reed has looked at ways Simmons can help students feel more confident in math. “Some of our students have not had positive learning environments in the past. We work to erase the message that they can't learn math,” he says. “We have developed a three-pronged approach: regular lectures with direct instruction, required small-group labs where peer tutors and math professionals

help students master the coursework, and a Math Learning Center that is staffed from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. to answer questions and provide further support.”

This new math-support infrastructure has made it possible for Simmons to offer two new math-related majors for high-demand careers—computer information systems and applied mathematics. “We are putting in place corporate partnerships and guidance from UK to help us strengthen the coursework and internship opportunities connected to these two majors,” Reed says. “We are proud to offer scholarships for our math majors and are working to show our students the endless career pathways in math, from marketing data analytics to cybersecurity.” One student recently received an internship at the Department of Defense, he notes.

Applied math

Applied math is the practical use of math in science, engineering, technology and more. “In the past, many math majors stayed with pure math and pursued the field of education,” says Elizabeth Donovan, professor of mathematics and statistics at Murray State University. “Now, applied math career fields are wide open. Many students pursue statistics, computer science or another specialization.”

Ed Thome, who chairs the Department of Mathematics and Statistics at Murray State University and is a West Kentucky RECC consumer-member, champions the value to the student who chooses to master pure math alongside one of Murray's applied-math programs: “Every corporation needs problem solvers. Financial analysts, shipping and logistics specialists, economists—students can take their math careers in many different directions. But there's something about pure mathematics that helps learners. Math is clear and precise. It impacts how we think. And other skills go with math—perseverance and careful logic. Employers like to see a math background for these reasons.”

Planning for success

With an abundance of college math programs across the state, how do you choose one that's right for you? Visit KentuckyLiving.com for more tips on affordability and scholarships, academic support and community connections. While you're there, don't forget to browse the 2025 *Kentucky Living* College Guide.

Murray State combines mathematics and statistics courses in one department, aiming to help math majors secure internships and awards at places like UPS, Marquette Transportation Co. and at national hackathons, where they can collaborate to solve engineering or computer problems

Murray State also partners with the University of Louisville on a five-year course resulting in both bachelor's and master's degrees in biostatistics, with students completing most of the program's coursework at Murray State. A degree in biostatistics leads to careers in public health, pharmaceutical research, epidemiology and more.

Western Kentucky University also offers several applied math concentrations, including a concentration in mathematical economics and actuarial sciences, which is unique in Kentucky. An actuary typically works for insurance companies, but those skills also can be applied to areas such as banking, investing and employee benefits.

What is data science?

A growing profession, data science is a fascinating combination of computer science, math and statistics. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the number of jobs in data science will grow by 36% through 2033, with an average salary of more than \$100,000.

Data scientists analyze data to help businesses understand consumer needs, explore opportunities for growth and improve efficiency. In a way, data science is math designed to answer questions for a company. The need for statisticians and data scientists has grown to the point that UK has introduced a new bachelor's degree in statistics and data science, in addition to its longstanding master's and doctoral programs in statistics and bachelor's programs in mathematics.

The demand for statisticians created a need for the new, more specific undergraduate program, explains Melissa Pittard, senior lecturer and director of undergraduate studies in UK's Dr. Bing Zhang Department of Statistics.

"Statistics has been moving in its own direction distinct from math for

UK Paducah juniors Marshall Jenkins and Braden Ivy perfect their aerospace designs on computer and in production before taking them to a national competition.
Photo: Kristen White



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KENTUCKY'S INVESTMENT IN TECH SUCCESS

In 2022, the state legislature approved House Bill 680, which secured \$3 million in funding for a new virtual career academy for high school students. The academy, called We Lead Computer Science (We Lead CS), began its inaugural year in August 2024 with 100 students from Owen, Lawrence and Rockcastle counties, along with students from iLEAD and New Horizons academies, which are multidistrict high schools that provide advanced career and technical education along with core classes, operated by Ohio Valley Educational Cooperative and Kentucky Educational Development Corporation, respectively.

"About 3,000 tech jobs are open in Kentucky right now, but we don't have enough skilled workers to fill these jobs," says Alicia Sells, CEO of We Lead CS. "We

Lead CS exists to advance students' interests and skills in high-wage, high-demand jobs and begin defining their career goals in high school. Because we are virtual, opportunities are no longer limited by the availability of a teacher in the district."

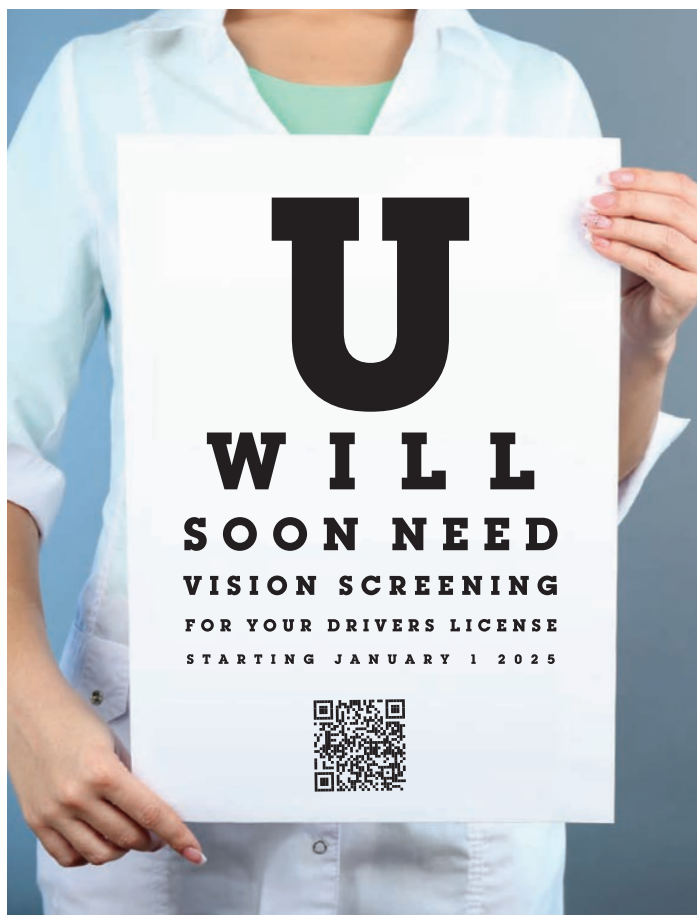
Through We Lead CS, students have the opportunity to earn college credit, up to completing an associate degree, as well as to secure mentorships and internships through partnerships with some of the biggest employers in Kentucky through the INTERalliance of Greater Cincinnati and Future 42.

"These employers represent some of the best in their fields. Students get to work directly with industry leaders to learn about tech careers. Math is a hard lift for many students, but when they see what jobs are out there and experience

the small-group learning setting we offer, they feel supported and motivated," Sells says. Many of those students also receive significant scholarships and lucrative internships.

Emphasizing math benefits all Kentuckians, Sells adds. "More efficient manufacturing practices, better data and a more prepared workforce come down to dollars and cents. Companies pass higher costs onto consumers, so if we can prepare an exceptional generation of thinkers in Kentucky, our own investment into young adults will come back to us," she explains.

Parents, students and school districts interested in learning more about We Lead CS can visit weleadcs.org. The academy plans to enroll up to 300 students for next school year.



SAFE DRIVERS SEE CLEARLY.

Effective January 1, 2025, a new Kentucky law requires vision screening for anyone renewing a driver's license. In 2025, if you've seen a vision specialist or Transportation Cabinet credentialed medical provider in the last 12 months, simply bring in a completed vision form to any Driver Licensing Regional Office when you renew **OR** get free vision screening at the time of renewal. Renew early in person, online or by mail (up to 6 months before your expiration date). For more details, visit drive.ky.gov/visionscreening.



**DRIVER LICENSING
REGIONAL OFFICES**



Melissa Pittard, senior lecturer and director of undergraduate studies at the Dr. Bing Zhang Department of Statistics at UK, has chosen courses for the new bachelor's degree in statistics and data science that will help students maximize their many career options. Photo: Kristen White

quite some time, but with the explosion of the desire for companies to analyze their own data to help answer questions they have, the demand for statisticians and data scientists exceeds the current supply,” Pittard says. UK’s new program enables students to take 12 hours of electives in a discipline that complements their interests, such as computer programming.

Is math for me?

Mathematics can lead to career opportunities and success in almost any field, says Harold Smith, associate professor and chair of the Department of Math and Physics at Thomas More University.

For example, he says, math graduates might go to law school, earn MBAs, become doctors, or help fight terrorism by breaking codes or developing stealth aircraft. Graduate school is also an option,

for which schools often pay students through assistantships, Smith notes.

He encourages students with an interest in math to explore the possibility of math as a major.

“You owe it to yourself to check out the classes,” says Smith, an Owen Electric consumer-member. “They are different from high school math—you can be creative and find ways to apply what you know to solve community concerns or advance an industry you love.”

Yoder, of the state’s economic development cabinet, reiterates the importance of math training for Kentucky’s workforce.

“There’s already a demand for these skilled positions, so as we are able to show we can meet that demand, companies will take notice,” he says. “The result will be even more high-wage jobs being made available and more opportunities to keep Kentucky talent in Kentucky.” **KL**



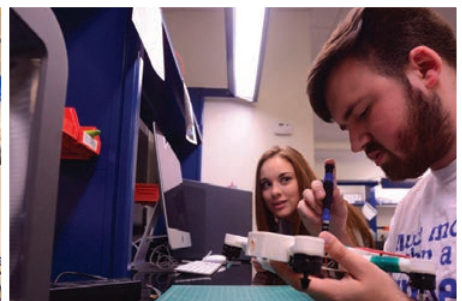
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Hidden treasure

Though the weather this month can be frightful, some Kentucky destinations are delightful all year. Diamond Caverns in Park City is one of those, maintaining a temperature of 58 degrees year-round underground.

Diamond Caverns is located near Mammoth Cave National Park, and while the caverns don't compete in size—Mammoth is the world's longest known cave system—they are a little easier to access, just one mile off I-65 at exit 48, says Stanley Sides, one of the owners.

"[Visitors] can take a one-hour cave tour, then get back on the interstate and head on to wherever they're going," he says.

The Mammoth Cave system has sandstone caprock that protects it, but in Diamond Caverns, the sandstone caprock has eroded. "Diamond is full of formations, and in that sense, has sort of thrived as a show cave since 1859," Sides says.

Diamond Caverns was discovered by a local enslaved person. In a history of the caverns, Sides writes, "Lowered on a rope into the cave, this first visitor thought sparkling calcite formations resembled diamonds, and the name for the cave was born."

Sides, who lives in Missouri, has explored caves in Kentucky since 1962. He says he thought his affinity for caves would eventually work out of his system, "but at this point, after all these years, it just won't let me go yet."

Diamond Caverns is located at 1900 Mammoth Cave Parkway in Park City. Tours are first-come, first-served, but groups larger than 20 should book ahead. Hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. CST. Cost is \$24 for adults; \$12 for children ages 4–12. Read more at KentuckyLiving.com.

Story: Shannon Brock

Photo: Diamond Caverns

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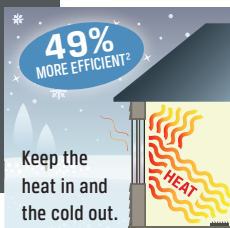
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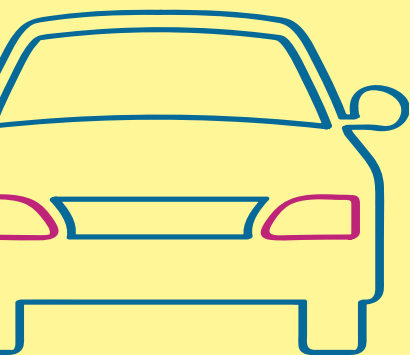
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[†]Using U.S. and imported parts.



Kentucky by the NUM

Kentucky is known for bourbon, basketball and horses—and you'll find all those things here, too—but there are many other fascinating facts about the commonwealth. From automotive production to travelers visiting Kentucky, find some of our favorite data below.



INDUSTRY

Kentucky is the **#1** producer of cars, light trucks and SUVs per capita.
(Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development)

There are more than **550** automotive-related facilities in Kentucky.
(CED)

1 OUT OF EVERY 18 workers in the U.S. automotive industry works in Kentucky. *(CED)*

Kentucky's automotive-related establishments employ **103,000** people. *(CED)*



ucky MEMBERS

More than **100** aerospace-related facilities in Kentucky employ more than **23,000** people. *(CED)*

The average price of industrial electricity in Kentucky is **17%** lower than the national average. *(CED)*

6.5 MILLION Airhead candy bars are produced daily in Erlanger. *(National Confectioners Association)*

Laughing Cow cheese makes more than **400 MILLION** wedges each year in Leitchfield. *(Bel Brands USA)*

Every Post-it Note gets its start at a plant in Cynthiana. In 2024, 3M made enough Post-It Notes to circle the Earth more than **100 TIMES**. *(Post-it)*

There are more than **7.5 MILLION** barrels of bourbon in Kentucky rickhouses. That's nearly **1.75** barrels of bourbon for every person in the state. *(Kentucky Tourism)*



POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

The population of Kentucky topped **4.5 MILLION** in 2020. *(U.S. Census Bureau)*

There are **1,994,323** housing units in Kentucky. *(U.S. Census Bureau)*

By population density, Kentucky's smallest county is Robertson, with **2,193** people. The largest is Jefferson, with **782,969** people. *(U.S. Census Bureau)*

88.5% of Kentucky adults 25 and over have a high school degree or higher. *(U.S. Census Bureau)*

27% of Kentucky adults 25 and over have a bachelor's degree or higher. *(U.S. Census Bureau)*

Scott County is projected to have the state's biggest population growth in coming decades—an increase of **79.5%** by 2050. *(U.S. Census Bureau)*



FUN AND GAMES



There are more than **300** golf courses in Kentucky. *(Kentucky Tourism)*

The University of Kentucky's biggest-ever basketball crowd was for former Coach John Calipari's first game against Louisville in 2010. **24,479** people attended. *(UK Athletics)*

Kentucky has more than **1.5 MILLION** acres of public hunting land. *(Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources)*

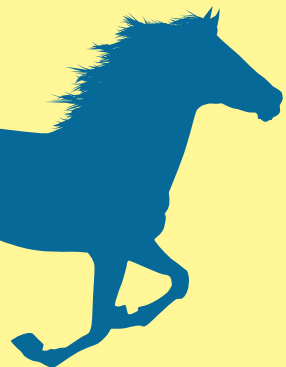
Kentucky's **13** major river basins contain more than **90,000** miles of streams. *(Kentucky Geological Survey, UK)*

There are more than **450** horse farms in the state. *(Kentucky Tourism)*

107 out of **150** Kentucky Derby winners were bred in Kentucky. *(Kentucky Tourism)*

Kentucky has **45** state parks and historic sites and one interstate park. *(Kentucky Tourism)*

79.3 MILLION travelers visited Kentucky in 2023, a **4.5%** increase from 2022. Those travelers spent a total of **\$9.7 BILLION** across the state. *(Kentucky Tourism)* **KL**



Eye Doctor Helps Tennessee Legally Blind To See



High Technology For Low Vision Patients Allows Many To Drive Again



For many patients with macular degeneration and other vision related conditions, the loss of central vision detail also signals the end to one of the last bastions of independence: driving. A Lebanon optometrist, Dr. James Gillispie, is using miniaturized telescopes that are mounted in glasses to help people who have lost vision from macular degeneration and other eye diseases.

Imagine a pair of glasses that can improve your vision enough to change your life. If you're a low vision patient, you've probably not only imagined them, but you have been searching for them. Bioptic telescopes may be the breakthrough in optical technology that will give you the independence you've been looking for. Patients with vision in the 20/200 range can many times be improved to 20/50 or better.

Macular degeneration is the leading cause of blindness and vision loss in people over 50. Despite this, most adults are not familiar with the condition. As many as 25% of those over the age of 50 have some degree of macular degeneration. The macula is only one small part of the retina; however, it is the most sensitive and gives us sharp central vision. When it

degenerates, macular degeneration leaves a blind spot right in the center of vision, making it difficult or impossible to recognize faces, read a book, or pass the driver's vision test.

Nine out of ten people who have macular degeneration have the dry form. New research suggests vitamins can help. The British medical journal BMC Ophthalmology recently reported that 56% of patients treated with a high-dose combination of vitamins experienced improved vision after 6 months.

While age is the most significant risk factor for developing the disease,



A scene as it might be viewed by a person with age-related macular degeneration.

heredity, smoking, cardiovascular disease, and high blood pressure have also been identified as risk factors. Macular degeneration accounts for 90% of new legal blindness in the U.S. While there is currently no cure, promising research is being done on many fronts.

"Our job is to figure out everything and anything possible to keep a person functioning, especially driving," says Dr. Gillispie of Low Vision of Tennessee.

When Beth, 62, of Greenville, TN came to Low Vision of Tennessee she wanted to keep her Tennessee driver's

license and was prescribed bioptic telescopic glasses to read signs and see traffic farther away. Dr. Gillispie also prescribed microscope glasses for reading newspapers and menus at restaurants.

As Beth puts it, "My regular glasses didn't help too much – it was like looking through a fog. These new telescopic glasses not only allow me to read signs from a further distance, but make driving much easier. I've also used them to watch television so I don't have to sit so close. I don't know why I waited to do this; I should have come sooner."

"Bioptic telescopes can cost over \$3,000," said Dr. Gillispie. "especially if we build them with automatic sunglasses."

"The major benefit of the bioptic telescope is that the lens automatically focuses on whatever you're looking at," said Dr. Gillispie, "It's like a self-focusing camera, but much more precise."

To learn more about bioptic telescopes or to schedule a consultation with Dr. Gillispie, give us a call at (615) 948-9185. You can also visit our website at:

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Bluebell beauty

An early-blooming native flower

WITH SPRING ON OUR

MINDS, it's time to prepare this year's garden plan. One way to start is by reviewing all of your garden pictures from last year. What stands out in my garden pictures is the beautiful Virginia bluebell, a native Kentucky plant, which bloomed in early April.

In mid to late March, the new leaves begin to emerge from the ground. At first, they are purple and hard to see, because they blend into the wintry surroundings—so watch where you step. As they grow taller, the leaves turn green, and plants stand 1 to 2 feet tall as they begin to bloom. Pink flower buds turn blue as they open. The flowers are bell-shaped, fragrant and droop just slightly. They will bloom for about three weeks.

Locating plants can be difficult, but they are most often available at native plant nurseries. Get your orders in early, because they sell out fast. Plants are often shipped bare root. Plant them in March in shade to deep shade. Bluebells grow only in moist and rich soils. In the wild, they can be found near creeks and flood plain areas. In my garden, I have a low, shady and moist spot that turns out to be the perfect little urban environment where they can prosper.

Bluebells will self-seed and colonize, but if you want to expand your planting faster, you can dig and divide them in early spring. Always buy plants from a reputable nursery and never harvest them from the wild. Enjoy them while you can, because by early summer, they begin to go dormant. Mine are planted under a bottlebrush buckeye. Once it is full of leaves and blooming, the Virginiana bluebells are hidden away for another year. **KL**

SHELLY NOLD is a horticulturist and owner of The Plant Kingdom. Send stories and ideas to her at The Plant Kingdom, 1000 E Market St., Louisville, KY 40206.



ASK THE gardener



Is February too early in the season to transplant ornamental grass?—

Bobby Bowling

A It's not too early to move your ornamental grass. Early spring is the best time to transplant, and it's also a good time to divide the root ball, if needed. Grasses are low maintenance, but they grow quickly and benefit from being divided every few years. Go ahead and cut back your grass—digging will be much easier once the foliage is removed. It helps to have the new planting holes prepped and ready to go before digging up the existing plant. Use a sharp spade and get as much of the root system as possible.

» Angie Oakley



Have a gardening question?

Go to KentuckyLiving.com, click on Home & Garden, then "Ask the Gardener."

READER
recipe

Flavor-packed soup

Taco Soup

Submitted by Mark Haley
Consumer-member of Owen Electric
Cooperative

Mark's neighbor shared this delicious recipe with him years ago, and he has tweaked it to make it his own.

3 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
1 medium onion, diced
2 Tbsp oil
1 ½ C water
1 (15-oz) can creamed corn
1 (15-oz) can black beans, drained
2 (15-oz) cans pinto beans, drained
2 (10-oz) cans Rotel with diced tomatoes and green chilies
1 (1-oz) pkg dry ranch dressing
1 (1-oz) pkg taco seasoning
Optional toppings: tortilla chips, sour cream, and shredded cheese

Bring water to boil in a large pot, then reduce to a simmer. Poach chicken breasts in simmering water until done. Remove chicken breasts and cool on a plate. Drain water. While chicken cools, add diced onion and oil to pot and cook until translucent on medium-low, about 10 minutes. Shred chicken when cool enough to handle, then return to pot with onions. Add water, then remaining ingredients. Bring to boil, stirring occasionally, then reduce heat and simmer, covered, for about an hour. Serve in bowls with crumbled tortilla chips, sour cream and cheese as desired. Serves 8-10.

Heartwarming recipes

Comfort foods for Valentine's Day

VALENTINE'S DAY is all about celebrating love, and there's no better way to do that than with comforting food made at home.

Whether you're planning a cozy date night in or just want to surprise your loved one with something special, this month's recipes have you covered. A hearty taco soup to warm you up and giant cookies with toasted pecans to satisfy your sweet tooth are perfect for a cold February evening filled with love (and flavor).

Chocolate Chip Oatmeal Cookies with Toasted Pecans

1 C butter, softened	1 tsp baking soda
1 C granulated sugar	1 tsp vanilla bean paste or extract
1 C brown sugar, packed	½ tsp salt
2 eggs	½ tsp nutmeg
2 ½ C old fashioned oats	1 C chocolate chips
2 C all-purpose flour	¾ C toasted pecans, chopped
1 tsp baking powder	

Cream butter and sugars in a large mixing bowl 2–3 minutes, until light and fluffy. Add eggs and mix until just combined. Mix in oats, flour, baking powder, baking soda, vanilla, salt and nutmeg. Add chocolate chips and toasted pecans and give one final mix. For each cookie, spoon out 3 ounces of dough (6 tablespoons or three standard cookie scoops if you have no kitchen scale) and roll into a large ball with your hands. Place on baking sheet. Chill for at least an hour.

When ready to bake, preheat oven to 350° and line three baking sheets with parchment paper. Place 6 cookies on each sheet and bake 11–13 minutes, or until edges are golden brown and centers are just set. Cool cookies on baking sheet for a few minutes before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely. Makes 18 cookies.

HEATHER BILYEU, raised in southern Kentucky, is the owner and voice behind the food blog, *Fueling a Southern Soul*.

**SEE
VIDEOS**

at KentuckyLiving.com/Cook

Go to KentuckyLiving.com/submit-a-recipe



Firehouse Pizza gives back

Building community in Morgantown and Bowling Green

JOEL SAMS

IF YOU'RE HUNGRY FOR HANDMADE PIZZA, sandwiches, salads, pasta, wings or ice cream, Firehouse Pizza in Morgantown has you covered. And if you want to give back to the community, they've thought of that, too. A "wall of donations," visible from both registers, holds gift cards donated by customers. Owner Eric Sublett says the wall stays full—a testament to the community's generosity.

"If you've got a young mother or a family struggling, the last thing they want to do is ask for help," Sublett says. "I'm just like, 'Come on, I got you. Go sit down.'"

Served by Warren RECC, Firehouse Pizza has been a Morgantown staple since Sublett and his wife, Tosha, opened the restaurant in 2006, after opening their original in Bowling Green in 2003. Sublett prides himself on constant innovation, from the menu (sweet bacon sriracha pizza, anyone?) to the self-pour beer to the ice cream counter.

The pizza dough is handmade, the cookies are baked in-house and the sandwiches use top-quality ingredients. Sublett says the focus on quality has distinguished the restaurant from the beginning.

"When you put that kind of love into it, hopefully the customers notice, and they want to come back," he says.

Located at 107 E. Ohio St., the Morgantown location is open 10 a.m.–9 p.m. Wednesday–Monday (closed Tuesday). The Bowling Green location, at 1701 U.S. 31 W. Bypass, is open 11 a.m.–3 a.m. Tuesday–Sunday (closed Monday). See menus, photos and more at firehousepizza.net. **KL**



ERIC SUBLETT

Firehouse Pizza Steak Sandwich

Serves 4

1 (approximately 12-oz) ribeye steak

Salt and pepper

2 Tbsp olive oil, divided

1 green bell pepper, sliced

½ red onion, sliced

1 C fresh white mushrooms, sliced

4 slices provolone cheese

4 hoagie buns, sliced for sandwiches and buttered

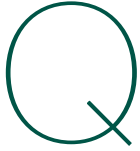
Lettuce, tomatoes and mayonnaise for optional topping

Season steak generously on both sides with salt and pepper. Heat one tablespoon olive oil in cast iron skillet on high. When hot, add steak and reduce heat to medium-high. Sear until steak is deeply browned on both sides and has reached desired doneness. Set aside to rest. Lower heat to medium. Add remaining tablespoon oil and cook pepper, onion and mushrooms until soft, about 10 minutes. Set vegetables aside and divide into four portions. To assemble, toast buttered buns in skillet until golden brown. Slice steak thinly against the grain and divide into four portions. For each sandwich, add one portion of steak to skillet and top with a portion of vegetables and slice of cheese. When cheese is melted, transfer meat, vegetables and cheese to toasted bun with spatula. Garnish with lettuce, tomatoes and mayonnaise as desired.



ERIC SUBLETT

Is your fireplace energy efficient?



I heard fireplaces can make your home colder. How do I keep my home comfortable while enjoying cozy fires?

MIRANDA BOUTELLE

writes on energy efficiency for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

A fireplace can be more suited for ambiance than for creating heat. When you have a fire, warm air rises and draws the smoke out through the chimney. This also draws the warm air out of the house. The impact is even worse in drafty homes.

But if you enjoy curling up in front of the fireplace during the colder months, here are some tips to efficiently operate a fireplace in your home.

First, a word about the chimney damper, which should be open when you have a fire going or when any hot ashes are in the fireplace to ensure smoke and carbon monoxide don't come into your home. Once the fire and all ashes are fully extinguished, close the damper. Leaving the damper open allows warm air to escape, wasting energy.

If your damper doesn't close properly or your chimney doesn't have one, purchase a chimney plug—many sizes and styles are available, including inflatable options.

SAFE AND WARM

If you have a woodstove, fireplace or any fuel-burning appliance in your home, be sure to install and maintain smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless gas that can be harmful or even deadly if not detected.



Types of fireplaces

Wood fireplaces are not an efficient option to heat your home because most of the heat goes out of the chimney.

Fireplaces with gas logs are required to be installed with a mechanism that always keeps the damper open. This safety feature allows gases from the pilot light to escape. Glass doors can reduce the impact of air leakage in the winter and summer months.

High efficiency wood stoves can lower your heating costs and are eligible for federal tax credits.

Photo: Miranda Boutelle

Sealed combustion gas fireplaces are fully enclosed systems that draw the air needed for combustion from the outside. When properly installed, they provide the fire's warmth without the worry of heat loss from drafts.

Woodstoves and pellet stoves are additional options that provide more heat than wood or gas fireplaces. Federal tax credits are available for high-efficiency biomass stoves. Visit www.energystar.gov for more information. **KL**

Spring

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— Todd Finley, Executive Director,
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Speak the (electric) language

How well do you understand what powers your home?

MANY PEOPLE MOVE INTO A HOME without understanding its electrical system. Your electric cooperative handles the line portion up to the attachment point on the house. Everything beyond that point is the consumer-member's responsibility.

In most cases, your electrical service panel is inside your home. The service panel sends electricity to light switches, outlets and appliances. If your electricity short-circuits or an overload shuts down power, your service panel is where you go to restore the flow.

Depending on the age of your home, either fuses or circuit breakers help keep the electrical system from overloading, preventing an electrical fire. The main breaker cuts all power to the home, and the individual circuit breakers administer power to individual parts of the home. All of the circuits and what they power should be labeled in the service panel. A couple times a year, try turning each breaker on and off. This helps familiarize you with each component of the box and will keep them from getting stuck.

You are responsible for making sure no circuits are overloaded. A general rule when setting up your breakers is to have only one big ticket item on a



circuit. If your circuits frequently overload, it may be time to contact an electrician to add more circuits to your service panel. **KL**



ALI COTTON
is Safety Director at
Pennyrile Electric

**YEARS IN THE
INDUSTRY:** 16,
as of this May

**WHEN I'M NOT
WORKING I'M:**
Spending time with
my family, coaching
youth volleyball and
watching my kids play
all of their different
sports.

Electric lingo

When you call an electrician to assist you with a problem, it's helpful to know the lingo:

Electrical service panel: Distributes electricity to switches, outlets and appliances. This is where you can restore the flow to an overloaded circuit or shut down the power to the circuit.

Fuse: Safety device used to protect individual circuits that were installed in homes before 1965. Blown fuses in these homes must be replaced.

Circuit breakers: Safety devices used to protect individual circuits in newer homes. When a circuit is "tripped" it just has to be mechanically reset to resume operating.

Arc fault: A dangerous electrical problem caused by damaged, overheated or stressed electrical wiring or devices.

Source: Electrical Safety Foundation International

Arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs): These are new protective devices that replace standard circuit breakers in electric service panels. AFCIs provide enhanced protection against additional fire hazards called arc faults.

Tamper resistant receptacles: Wall outlets with an internal shutter mechanism preventing children from sticking objects into the receptacle.

Ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs): Electrical safety devices that trip electrical circuits when they detect ground faults or leakage currents.

Grounding: The method used to connect an electrical system to the earth with a wire, protecting anyone working on the system, the system itself and anything connected to it.

Avoiding wildfire smoke

Protect yourself from poor air quality

FEBRUARY WEATHER IN KENTUCKY can bring anything: a warm, spring-like day, a frigid snowstorm or even a raging wildfire.

Many aren't aware, but Kentucky's spring wildfire season annually runs from February 15 to April 30. Approximately 1,000 wildfires burned about 48,000 acres across Kentucky in 2023. Smoke produced by a large fire can degrade local air quality and cause breathing difficulties for children and adults living miles from the fire's source.

How can wildfire smoke affect me?

It's always a good idea to check your local Air Quality Index, or AQI. The AQI gives five levels of air quality—on a scale between 0–500. An AQI of 150 or higher means air quality is poor and unhealthy. Up-to-the-minute public air quality data is easily accessible online through websites like airnow.gov and in weather apps on most smartphones.

Poor air quality isn't good for anyone. But those with conditions like asthma, COPD or heart disease may be more sensitive to adverse changes in air quality and should be cautious when the AQI starts to creep up. Common wildfire smoke-related symptoms include shortness

of air/breath, asthma attacks, headaches, fatigue, stinging eyes, scratchy throat, irritated sinuses and increased heartbeat.

Ways to help protect yourself

Limiting exposure is the key to reducing the effects of breathing poor-quality air. Here are a few ways to help protect your breathing:

Stay inside with windows closed and air conditioner running. Remember to

clean/change your filters on a routine basis.

When driving, set your air conditioner to recirculate to limit poor air intake.

Limit physical activity outside when the AQI is higher than 200 (others with chronic disease may want to consider heading indoors at lower readings).

Wear a mask, but more specifically an N95 or approved P100 respirator. Check that it has been approved by the National

Institute of Occupational Safety and Health.

In the event of a nearby wildfire, stay aware of air quality reports and emergency communications from local officials and first responders. If you begin to have symptoms, seek appropriate medical attention. **KL**

JASON BALLENGEE, D.O., is assistant professor of internal medicine at the UK College of Medicine and a pulmonary/critical care physician with UK HealthCare.

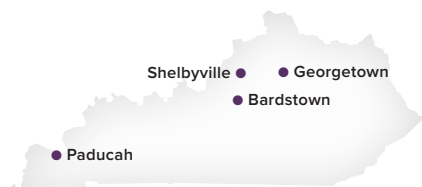




Explore Kentucky's Black history

Walking and driving tours bring history to life

BY KATHY WITT



The Hotel Metropolitan celebrates the African American history encapsulated within its walls. Photo: Paducah Convention & Visitors Bureau

MEET AN EARLY 20TH CENTURY

hotel proprietress who provided sanctuary to African American travelers. Call up a World War I Harlem Hellfighter. Learn about an educational collaboration between Booker T. Washington and the president of what was once America's leading retailer—Sears, Roebuck & Co.

Take a walk into the cemeteries and schools, churches, historic homes and buildings of the Bluegrass State to learn about Black Kentuckians who have left an indelible mark on the pages of the past. Their sometimes little-known stories

are told on walking and driving tours across the state.

Scott County African American GeoTrail, Georgetown

This new interactive experience sends treasure seekers to eight sites, including African American communities and churches, and a cabin made by a former enslaved person from recycled building materials.

"In commemoration of Juneteenth, we created a GeoTrail to spotlight historical locations throughout Scott County to draw attention to the rich history and the significant contributions that



Lexington pays tribute to its Black history and heritage on two tours, including the self-guided African American Heritage Tour. Photo: Richie Wireman

African Americans have made to the area,” says Barbara Fox, who helped develop the Scott County African American GeoTrail.

As they traverse the county, geocachers will meet notables like a pioneering educator, the first African American and member of the U.S. Armored Forces to be killed during World War II, and the legendary Buffalo Soldiers—the name Native Americans gave to the first peacetime all-Black regiments in the U.S. Army in the late 1870s.

“It not only educates visitors about our local history but also fosters community engagement in exploring our unique cultural landscape,” says Bailey Gilkerson, associate director at Georgetown/Scott County Tourism.

Upon completion of the passport, geocachers receive a commemorative two-sided coin depicting the trail experience.

CIVIL RIGHTS TRAIL IN KENTUCKY

Celebrating the legacy of the Civil Rights Movement, the U.S. Civil Rights Trail is a collection of more than 130 landmarks across 15 states that includes museums, birthplaces, national historic sites, neighborhoods, schools and statues. In Kentucky, visitors can learn about the movement and the advancement of social justice at historic sites in Berea, Russellville, Louisville and Simpsonville, including Lincoln Hall at Berea College, Muhammad Ali Center and the Louisville Downtown Civil Rights Trail. www.kentuckytourism.com/things-to-do/culture/history-and-heritage/civil-rights, www.civilrightstrail.com



DESTINATIONS

more to explore

Walk, drive and ponder as you learn about the contributions of Black Kentuckians to the Bluegrass State and beyond.

Featured tours

African American Heritage Driving Tour

Paducah; www.paducah.travel/maps/african-american-heritage-driving-tour, (800) 723-8224

Kentucky Black Trailblazers

Bardstown-Nelson County, Elizabethtown-Hardin County, Louisville, Oldham County, Shelby County and Shepherdsville-Bullitt County; www.kentuckyblacktrailblazers.com.

Scott County African American GeoTour

Georgetown; www.georgetownky.com/geocaching-trails, (502) 863-2547

Other self-guided Black history walking/driving tours

African American Heritage Tour

www.visitlex.com (click Things to Do/Tours/Self-Guided Experiences), (800) 845-3959. Lexington author/historian Yvonne Giles narrates this 35-stop tour through the city's Northside, East End, Jefferson Street and South Hill neighborhoods.

African American History Cell Phone Tour

Hopkinsville; www.hopkinsvilleky.us/visitors/cell_phone_tours/index.php, (270) 887-4000. Calling it “a testament to Hopkinsville’s rich and enduring African American heritage,” Amy Rogers,

executive director at the Hopkinsville-Christian County Convention & Visitors Bureau, notes the 18 snapshots of the tour “allow us to honor the significant contributions of our community’s past and present, fostering a deeper appreciation for our shared history.”

Lexington’s East End Walking Tour

www.tourthehistoricbluegrass.com/tours/show/1, (859) 253-0362. Created by the Blue Grass Trust for Historic Preservation in partnership with Keeneland, the 30-stop tour begins with former Kentucky Poet Laureate Frank X Walker reading his poem, *Ode to the East End*.

Newport Black History Tour

www.nkyartwalks.com/newport-black-history-tour, (859) 261-4677. The eight-stop tour includes Newport Floodwall Murals.

Shake Rag Walking Tour

Bowling Green; www.visitbgky.com/blog/post/shake-rag-tour, (800) 326-7465. Home to the city’s oldest Black congregation and a 1906 hotel catering to Black travelers like Ray Charles, Chuck Berry and Tina Turner, Bowling Green’s Shake Rag Historic District is on the National Register of Historic Places.

The African American Heritage Trail

Winchester; www.visitwinchesterky.com (click on Tours & Trails/African American Heritage Trail), (859) 744-0556. Follow eight education signs highlighting people and places of Winchester’s African American community, including Winchester’s first legal cider maker, Fanny Cole, who is celebrated annually in October during Fanny Cole Fest.



Betty Dobson, executive director of the restored 1908 Hotel Metropolitan, greets visitors at the door in the character and costume of the hotel's original proprietress. Photo: Paducah Convention & Visitors Bureau

HISTORIC HOTEL PRESERVES BLACK HISTORY

A stop on Paducah's African American Heritage Driving Tour, the historic Hotel Metropolitan—now an African American heritage museum—tells the story of Annie Turnbo Malone (1877-1957), among others. The mother of the African American beauty industry, Malone was the first African American woman millionaire in the U.S. Tours are conducted by Betty Dobson, portraying original proprietress, Maggie Steed, an African American entrepreneur who built the hotel to accommodate people of color.

The hotel was part of the "Chitlin' Circuit," a touring circuit that provided employment for Black musicians—Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holiday, Mahalia Jackson and Cab Calloway. It was later listed in the Green Book, the travel guide compiled by Victor Hugo Green and published from 1936 to 1967 with listings of safe businesses for African American travelers.

Hotel Metropolitan recently received a \$1.34 million grant from the Mellon Foundation to support the preservation of this historic landmark and to continue and expand its legacy. More info, www.paducah.travel (click on Things to Do/ Tours & Trails/ Paducah's Signature Experiences).

African American Heritage Driving Tour, Paducah

The annual Eighth of August Emancipation Celebration inspired the Paducah Historical Preservation Group to create a 26-stop tour, developed with the Paducah Convention & Visitors Bureau, which would offer attendees a chance to experience local African American heritage.

The inaugural tour, given by trolley and complete with living history

characters, debuted during Paducah's 2023 Eighth of August Celebration. Today, tour-takers wind through this UNESCO Creative City and national heritage destination by car, from Burks Chapel A.M.E. church and the MLK Jr. monument to slave plots at Oak Grove Cemetery and the Hotel Metropolitan.

"This hotel hosted some of the greatest visionaries of the 20th century, including Thurgood Marshall and Ella Fitzgerald," says Liz Hammonds, director

of marketing and communications at the Paducah Convention & Visitors Bureau. "The staircase railing—like most parts of the hotel—is original to the building, and when you climb the stairs, you're touching the same railing used by the greats."

The Paducah School of Art & Design is not part of the driving tour, but is a stop that enhances the experience. It currently displays recently acquired artwork by the late Helen LaFrance, an acclaimed folk artist born in Graves County.

Kentucky Black Trailblazers, central Kentucky

This new augmented reality experience features multiple story-stops in six communities, among them:

- The Harlem Hellfighters in Shelby County, a renowned infantry group from World War I, several members of whom are buried in Shelbyville's historic Calvary Cemetery.
- Mack Rowan, highlighted at My Old Kentucky Home State Park in Bardstown. Rowan was born into slavery in 1820 and became a master boot and shoemaker—a vocation inspired by his own infirmity.
- Alex Beaumont, who joined the Union Army in 1864 at Camp Nelson and served as a cook and private in Company E of the 116th Infantry, United States Colored Troops.

These 19 experiences bring the history of these influential Black Kentuckians to life through augmented reality technology. Scan the QR code on your phone and point your camera to an open space, then watch the Harlem Hellfighters march in place. Hear Rowan talk about his clubfoot, which led him to create footwear to accommodate all types of feet and foot conditions.



KentuckyLiving.com

Living history

Notable Kentucky African Americans, from a hotel entrepreneur to an enslaved person-turned educator, come to life in videos at KentuckyLiving.com, where you'll also find info about a database of Kentucky African Americans.

Derby. In Shepherdsville, listen to Annie Mitchell Reed, a nanny, cook and laundress, recall surviving the state's deadliest train wreck only to face the uncertainties and unfairness of life in a segregated world.

In each instance, voicing their stories gives these history makers the recognition—sometimes long overdue—they deserve. **KL**

KATHY WITT is an award-winning travel and lifestyle writer based in northern Kentucky and the author of seven books, including *Perfect Day Kentucky* and *Secret Cincinnati*.

Born into slavery in Kentucky in 1839, Alex Beaumont would join the Union Army in 1864 at Camp Nelson. Photo: ShelbyKY Tourism

"To see the project go from an idea to not just a project, but an experience using never-done-before technology, is mind blowing," says Janette Marson, president of ShelbyKY Tourism, who originated the idea and spearheaded the project. "I am beyond proud of the project, my partners and the Black historians we worked with to make it happen."

A treasure trove of little-known stories, the experiences immerse visitors in the struggles and challenges of Black activists, unsung heroes and everyday people who overcame, persevered and inspired. In Louisville, see Oliver Lewis, an African American jockey who was the winner of the first Kentucky

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EVENT CALENDAR



LOUISVILLE ZOO



GRETCHEN STEELE



VADIMADOBESTOCK

1 WILD WINTER

Wild Winter Days at the Louisville Zoo helps the food insecure and saves visitors some money. During February, the zoo discounts admission at the gate for each person who brings a canned or nonperishable item, benefiting the Dare to Care Food Bank. It may be cold outside, but indoor spaces like the Gorilla Forest, HerpAquarium and more are toasty! Hours: 10 a.m.–4 p.m. (exit by 5 p.m.). Louisville zoo.com for cost info.

2 COOL CARNIVAL

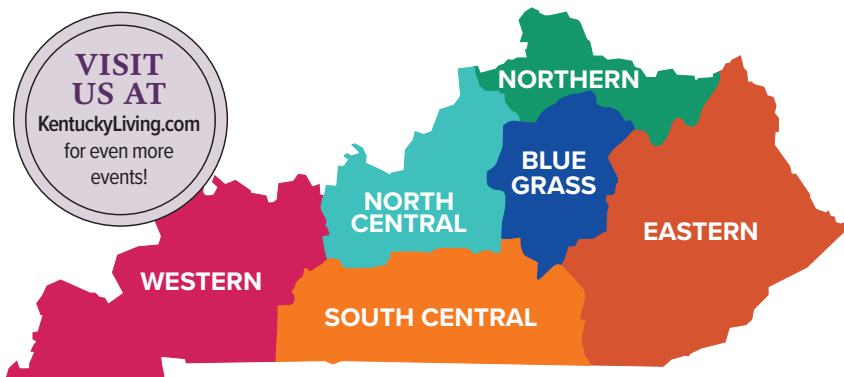
Free popcorn with the police. Hot chili when it's chilly. A pop-up dance party. All this and more family fun at the Bellevue Winter Carnival, noon–4 p.m. February 22 at Foote & Fairfield avenues. Free games, prizes and one-of-a-kind balloon creations for the kids; chili flights from local restaurants' chili cook-off; and unique winter vendors. Info, Facebook: City of Bellevue, Kentucky, (859) 431-8888.

3 MIGRATORY MARVELS

Thousands of sandhill cranes migrate each winter through Barren River Lake and the state park there helps you watch them, February 7–9. Educational sessions Friday evening, van tours at sunset and sunrise Saturday and sunrise Sunday, and other activities like guided hikes. Cost: \$55 adult (Friday session, tour, T-shirt and snack); \$45, 8–12. Must be at least 8 for van tour. Overnight lodging discounts available. Details: <https://parks.ky.gov>, (270) 646-2151.

4 WATCH THE BIRDIE

Rather, count the birdie! Carter Caves State Resort Park joins Audubon's national Great Backyard Bird Count February 15. The free event starts 10 a.m. at the park lodge with a short educational presentation including bird photos and sound, then a half-mile hike on Raven Bridge Trail, ending back at the lodge with a bird feeder craft. Bird count will be submitted to Audubon. No pre-registration required. Info, <https://parks.ky.gov>, (606) 286-7009.



BLUEGRASS

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8

Isidore String Quartet, (859) 236-4692, Norton Center for the Arts, Danville

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15

Rosanne Cash, (859) 236-4692, Norton Center for the Arts, Danville

Bulls, Bands, & Barrels, (859) 233-4303, Alltech Arena, Lexington

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20

Yamato: The Drummers of Japan, (859) 236-4692, Norton Center for the Arts, Danville

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22

Fireside Chats: Maggie Delaney, (859) 527-3131, Fort Boonesborough State Park, Richmond

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26

Jim Henson's Fraggle Rock: Back to the Rock, (859) 439-5143, Boyle County Performing Arts Center, Danville

EASTERN

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1

Eastern Kentucky Outdoor Expo, (606) 776-3502, Morehead Conference Center

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7

Big Boy Toy Show, thru 9th, (606) 444-5500, Appalachian Wireless Arena, Pikeville

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13

Dean Z: The Ultimate Elvis, (606) 324-0007, Paramount Arts Center, Ashland

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15

Dale Ann Bradley Band, (606) 945-5999, Meadowgreen Appalachian Music Park, Clay City

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28

Sawyer Brown, (606) 258-2020, The Corbin Arena

NORTH CENTRAL

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7

18th Century Market Fair, (270) 312-5983, Pritchard Community Center, Elizabethtown

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 10

NouLou Parlor Series: Breaking Boundaries, (502) 426-2126, Oxmoor Farm, Louisville

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12

National Farm Machinery Show, thru 15th, (502) 367-5000, Kentucky Exposition Center, Louisville

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14

Bluegrass Friday Nights, (270) 257-2311, Rough River Dam State Resort Park, Falls of Rough

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15

ECO Kids Discovery Day, (502) 955-8512, Bernheim Forest and Arboretum, Clermont

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28

Home & Garden Show, thru March 2nd, (502) 367-5000, Kentucky Exposition Center, Louisville

NORTHERN

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13

Henry V, thru 23rd, (859) 572-5464, NKU Greaves Concert Hall, Highland Heights

Altar Boyz, thru March 2nd, (859) 652-3849, The Stained Glass Theatre, Newport

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28

Brent Terhune Comedy, (859) 360-3333, Commonwealth Sanctuary, Dayton

Dance '25: Homecoming, thru March 2nd, (859) 572-5464, NKU Greaves Concert Hall, Highland Heights

SOUTH CENTRAL

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7

Lone Star Rodeo, thru 9th, (270) 745-3976, L.D. Brown Ag Expo Center, Bowling Green

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8

Marty Stuart and His Fabulous Superlatives, (270) 361-2101, The Plaza Theatre, Glasgow

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13

Metal World: Mission to Asteroid Psyche, thru March 27th, (270) 745-4044, Hardin Planetarium, Bowling Green

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15

Orchestra Kentucky: Motown & More, (270) 904-1880, SKYPAC, Bowling Green

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20

Driving Miss Daisy, thru March 2nd, (270) 432-2276, Barn Lot Theater, Edmonton

Stephen Wilson Jr: Son of Dad Tour, (270) 361-2101, The Plaza Theatre, Glasgow

WESTERN

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1

7 Bridges: The Ultimate Eagles Experience, (270) 821-2787, Glema Mahr Center for the Arts, Madisonville

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5

Native Reflections Exhibit, thru 21st, (270) 753-4059, Murray Convention & Visitor's Bureau

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15

The French Family Band, (270) 527-3869, Kentucky Opry Theater, Benton

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21

Wynona Wang, piano, (270) 821-2787, Glema Mahr Center for the Arts, Madisonville

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23

Jazz on Stage: Chamber Soul, Jazz & Blues, (270) 887-4295, Alhambra Theatre, Hopkinsville

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 25

The Addams Family, (270) 687-2770, RiverPark Center, Owensboro

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27

Sons of Mysterio, (270) 821-2787, Glema Mahr Center for the Arts, Madisonville

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1 OWL SIGHTING

Daniel Hunt spotted this owl in Louisville's Irish Hill neighborhood. "It was a perfect morning to step into the quiet of the snow and capture the world in its purest form," he says.

2 SNOW DAY

Hudson Tate enjoys playing outside in the snow—and having a day off school. Photo by mom, Stephanie Tate, a consumer-member of Meade County RECC from Leitchfield.

3 WINTER WONDERLAND

Mabel, a Pekingese, enjoys a brisk wintertime walk in Garrard County. Photo by owner, Lisa Yoder, a consumer-member of Inter-County Energy from Lancaster.

4 DOE, A DEER

Edwin Bowe, Nicholasville, captured this photo of three does emerging from cover during an early December snowfall. Bowe is a consumer-member of Blue Grass Energy.

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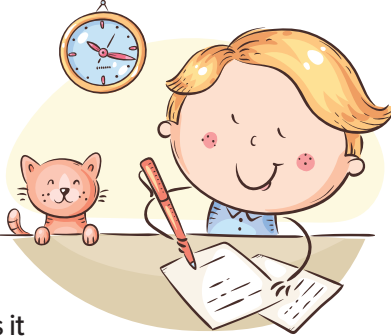


Visit **KENTUCKYLIVING.COM** and click on **CONTESTS** to submit photos.

KENTUCKY kids

Break It Down

If you have a big school assignment, break it into smaller tasks. This makes it easier to manage and less overwhelming!



NINE-BANDED ARMADILLO

Armadillos are animals that mostly live in Central and South America. One kind, called the nine-banded armadillo, can even be found in the central United States! These mammals are related to sloths and anteaters. Armadillos have a special tough shell that helps protect them from danger. This cool armor is made of hard skin with solid plates and bendy bands. It covers most of their body, including their head and usually their tail.



Did You Know?

Honey was discovered in Egyptian tombs that is over 3,000 years old and still edible! Its natural sweetness and low moisture help it last a long time.

Green Team Tip

Make sure water faucets are fully turned off when you are finished using them.

— Jacob Judd,
age 9



Enter
KIDS
Contest

Submit a Green Team Tip or Joke online at KentuckyLiving.com:Magazine/Submissions for a chance to win a prize!

Stay Safe from Snow Glare

On sunny winter days, the sun reflects off the snow. Protect your eyes from the bright light by wearing sunglasses if you are going to be outside for several hours playing sports like sledding, skiing or snowboarding.



Tell us a joke!

What do elves
eat for breakfast?

Snowflakes!

— Rose Drippe,
age 10



GREAT OUTDOORS

Back on the fly

Chasing rainbows on the Cumberland

WHEN I MOVED BACK to Kentucky full-time after 20 years of fly fishing in Alaska, I hung up my fly rod. Here in the Bluegrass State, I focused on bass, crappie, redear and catfish—but my love of fly fishing never waned. Through books and magazines, I kept in touch with fly fishing and often pulled from great memories of casting a fly to rainbows and grayling in the last frontier. During these times, I also researched the many fly fishing opportunities across Kentucky. I planned a trip for years, but never acted due to a mix of busy schedules and the many other fishing opportunities that Kentucky offers. But that changed when a special opportunity came my way.

My friend and fellow outdoor writer Bob Sawtelle invited me to fly fish the Cumberland River with him and Dave Debold, who owns the Louisville-based Double D Outfitters. Debold knows the Cumberland River well, including the generation schedule at Wolf Creek Dam and the sections of the river with the best current for catching trout on the fly. The winter months make for great fishing, Debold says, because the generation schedule allows for a later (and warmer) start.

Our trip called for a downriver launch, and the boat was in the water before daylight. The air was cool, but comfortable, and the sunrise was remarkable with fog rising from the river and the chatter of a kingfisher chasing breakfast. The sun was still

hiding behind the bluffs when I landed my first fish. It was a solid rainbow trout—as pretty a specimen as I have ever seen.

The trout fell for a mop fly, one of the simplest flies I have ever used. It's nothing more than a 1-inch piece of microfiber mop material with a small dubbing collar. Debold says the mop fly mimics a small minnow drifting down the river, and trout can't resist it. I fished the mop fly under a small cork bobber, known as a strike indicator in the fly fishing world.

The Cumberland River is a Kentucky gem that I can personally recommend to anyone who loves fly fishing. The bald eagles, kingfishers and deer in a backdrop of beauty are just a few more reasons to see it for yourself. My experience was wonderful—yet another story for the campfire. **KL**



A beautiful Cumberland River rainbow. Photo: Ken McBroom

KEN MCBROOM, an outdoors writer/photographer, created RamblingAngler.com. McBroom grew up in Lynchburg, Tennessee, and now lives in western Kentucky.



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A bucket of rocks

Rare moments remembered



BYRON CRAWFORD is Kentucky's storyteller—a veteran television and newspaper journalist known for his colorful essays about life in Kentucky. Contact Byron at KentuckyLiving.com: About/People.

THE OLD BUCKET OF ROCKS resting in a dark corner of the garage has been part of my life since I was a kid.

You might say it was handed down from my dad, who was neither a paleontologist nor mineralogist, but a Kentucky farmer who liked rocks.

Our farm wasn't covered with rocks—just enough to make it interesting. Dad taught me early how to skip rocks across the wide, shallow creek that bordered the back of our place, and he often picked up unusual rocks and fossils in its riffles while fishing. After work in the fields, he'd sometimes come through the back gate at sundown carrying an interesting rock or "Indian relic" that had been unearthed by the plow.

reputed to have studied geology at Harvard. Dad said they found just enough gold to "get by." He moved on after one year, eventually returning to his native Kentucky. And while Joe continued prospecting in the mountains, Dad, a longtime consumer-member of Inter-County Energy, settled for the simple treasures found in his own fields and streams—some of which he left in the old bucket.

As a kid, I played with the rocks in a building we called "the smokehouse." Its interior still wore the familiar fragrance of hams that were cured there by my grandparents in years long past, and where the bucket of rocks sat in the corner. To my disappointment, my favorite rock, one that I thought was a chunk of jasper, is now the only one missing.

When my parents retired and moved to a place in town, I moved the bucket of rocks to their garage. And when Dad died in 2011, I brought it home with me.

Not long ago, I moved the bucket into the light and began examining the rocks, one by one, for the first time since I was a small boy. Dad and I never talked much about the rocks back then, but I had a good idea what he'd say about them now.

The heavily-pitted dark rock, about the size of a baseball, looked to him like a meteorite, but it probably wasn't, he'd say. He'd tell me where he found some of the fossils, and would lament the damage to a few stone relics that were left ages ago by unknown hands on land where they since have been broken by plows and bulldozers.

There were well over 50 rocks in the bucket, resting on a bed of straw. Until Dad was gone, they were only some rocks that he'd saved from the fields and creeks back home.

Now, they are touchstones of rare moments remembered. **KL**



Some were kept in a shoebox, but the rest went into the 5-gallon galvanized bucket that once held livestock feed at the barn, or bundles of tobacco plants pulled from plant beds in the spring.

During his younger days, Dad had gone west prospecting for gold in the Arizona mountains with his friend, Joe, who was



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