

# KentuckyLiving

*Celebrating the energy  
of your community*

## CONSUMER ADVOCATES

CO-OPS LOOK OUT FOR THEIR MEMBERS

### LEARNING IN THE AGE OF AI

Habits for today's college students

### 2026 LEGISLATIVE GUIDE

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# FEBRUARY

VOL 80 | NO 2

14

## POWER TO THE PEOPLE

**ON THE COVER** The energy world is changing rapidly. As headlines warn of soaring costs and growing demand, electric cooperatives are looking out for Kentuckians. Learn more about how co-ops advocate for consumers, working to ensure that members' interests are protected in a time of rapid growth.

**ON THE COVER** Transmission lines are part of the complex infrastructure delivering power to more than 1.8 million electric cooperative consumer-members in Kentucky. Unlike other kinds of utilities, Kentucky's electric cooperatives are owned by the members they serve—and members' needs always come before outside interests. Photo: Tim Webb

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## LEARNING IN THE AGE OF AI

Large language models like ChatGPT have surged in popularity on college campuses. As the technology evolves—and usage increases—educators and students are grappling with how to use it well. College leaders and students share tips for understanding how AI works, when to use it and what to avoid.

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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.

## TO CONTACT US

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# Thank you, Co-op Caucus

*Lawmakers speak up for co-op communities*

## THIS MONTH'S KENTUCKY LIVING

is a special one, for several reasons. We are especially proud of our 2026 Legislative Guide, which you can see in the center of your magazine. This publication exists to connect you with your elected representatives and senators in Frankfort.

Over the past couple years, we've expanded the guide to include the 100-plus members of the Rural Electric Cooperatives Caucus. One of the largest caucuses in the General Assembly, this group of leaders advocates for the interests of local co-op consumer-members across the commonwealth. We appreciate each of these members and their efforts to learn more about electric cooperatives and issues that affect us every day.

You will also notice we have maps showing your representatives and senators in their respective districts so you can put faces with the names of the people who represent you. We also list these elected officials by co-op, so you can see who represents your co-op as a whole, as well as who represents your specific county in the co-op's service area.

Our relationship to our state's governing bodies is important because as co-ops, we are your consumer advocates. The cooperative difference means that as a consumer, you are also a part-owner of the cooperative that delivers your power. We truly work for you.

This brings me to another reason we are especially proud of this issue. Our cover story discusses one of the challenges that is having a tremendous impact across the energy sector—the increase in energy demand. This is something that we cannot avoid, but Kentucky's electric cooperatives are taking strategic action to prepare and



▲  
State Rep. Michael "Sarge" Pollock takes a ride in an East Kentucky Power Cooperative bucket truck during last year's Frankfort Youth Tour. Photo: Wade Harris

to advocate on your behalf so that you do not shoulder unnecessary costs that come with new development.

Alongside these important topics, we've got some lighter fare, from food stories to travel tips. You might feel inspired to try a recipe or visit a new region of the commonwealth. I've mentioned our legislators who are currently in session in Frankfort, and this month's Worth the Trip column includes some of the top destinations in our capital city.

I hope you enjoy this issue of *Kentucky Living*, but perhaps even more, I hope it encourages you to connect with your elected officials and let them know you appreciate their support on issues that matter to Kentucky's electric cooperatives.

*Chris*

**CHRIS PERRY**  
President/CEO

**KENTUCKY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES**



# FROM THE EDITOR

## ON A RECENT TRIP



to visit my parents, I pointed out the car window and showed my sons the building where I went to elementary school. We've passed by dozens of times, but this time, my oldest (a third grader) seemed to pay more attention.

At his age, I hadn't heard of the internet. I practiced multiplication tables on paper and not on an app on my computer. When I wanted to research a topic, I flipped through the encyclopedia; today, he can find endless information in one Google search.

By high school, the internet and computers played a much bigger part in my education, but we've come a long way even since then.

Today's generation has more to consider than ever before when it comes to their learning, and we dive into that on page 20.

Though it makes me feel my age, I still enjoy taking my kids for a stroll down memory lane. And that's something a computer can't do for them—at least not yet.

**SHANNON BROCK,**  
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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## EXTRA CREDIT

### Interested in AI? Here's your homework

Artificial intelligence tools raise complex questions on many topics—intellectual property rights and plagiarism, environmental and economic impacts, data privacy, mental health, children's safety and many more. Read about learning impacts on page 20, then visit KentuckyLiving.com for links to explore other AI-related topics.



## COLLEGE GUIDE

### Explore higher education in Kentucky

Kentucky Living's College Guide is a comprehensive roundup of colleges and universities in the state. Visit us online for a listing that includes enrollment numbers, tuition, room and board costs, featured programs and more.



## VIDEO TOUR

### Visit Frankfort online

Kentucky's capital city has lots to offer, from historic sites to art to distilleries and sweet treats. Read the story on page 36, then go to KentuckyLiving.com for links to videos from the Kentucky Historical Society, Salato Wildlife Education Center and more.



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# NOMINATIONS

# NOW OPEN

FEBRUARY 1-28



30

CATEGORIES

**NOMINATE** your favorites and be entered to win a **\$100 prize!**

## MID-APRIL

We'll tabulate the nominations and announce three finalists in each category.

## MAY 1-31

Head-to-head online vote at [KentuckyLiving.com](http://KentuckyLiving.com).

## AUGUST 19

Winners announced on the Best in Kentucky Awards Show on [KentuckyLiving.com](http://KentuckyLiving.com), Facebook and YouTube.

## HALL OF FAME

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## DESTINATIONS

Event or Festival  
Winery  
Specialty Lodging or  
Bed & Breakfast  
Museum  
Place for Live Music  
Road Trip  
Kid-Friendly Attraction  
Historic Attraction  
Agritourism Attraction  
Distillery Tour  
Downtown Shopping District

## OUTDOORS

Place for Adventure  
Public Hunting/Fishing area  
Water Tourism Spot  
Camping or RV Spot  
Hiking Trail

## EATS & DRINKS

(non-franchise)  
Bourbon  
Craft Beer  
Sweets Shop  
Barbecue  
Down-Home Restaurant  
Food Truck  
Hamburger  
Coffee Shop  
Breakfast Place

## PEOPLE & PERSONALITIES

Local Radio Host  
Local TV Personality  
Meteorologist  
Kentucky Musician or Band  
Athlete

Visit [KentuckyLiving.com](http://KentuckyLiving.com), click "Contests," then "Best in Kentucky." **Five \$100 prizes will be awarded! Nominate online by February 28, 2026.** Limit one ballot per person. Winners announced August 19 on [KentuckyLiving.com](http://KentuckyLiving.com), Facebook and YouTube. See results in September's *Kentucky Living*.

**NO PURCHASE NECESSARY.** Open to persons 18 years of age or older in the Continental USA, except for employees or immediate family members of *Kentucky Living*, Kentucky Association of Electric Cooperatives, Kentucky's electric co-ops and their respective divisions, subsidiaries, advertising, and promotion agencies. Five \$100 prizes will be awarded; prizes subject to change. One entry per person, drawn at random; odds of winning depend on number of entries received. Entries must be received no later than February 28, 2026. Go to [KentuckyLiving.com](http://KentuckyLiving.com) to read the Official Rules.



# Connecting with another life

Louisville author Ellen Birkett Morris confronts the topic of past-life memories in her novel *Beware the Tall Grass*. A dual-timeline story, the book follows Thomas Boone, a young soldier in the Vietnam war, and Charlie, a present-day toddler who seems to house Thomas's memories.

When her preschooler first mentions landing zones and battle scenes and covers his toy soldiers with white tissues pronouncing them dead, Charlie's mom, Eve, initially brushes it off, assuming he had overheard a historical account on TV or a conversation between adults. Later, when Charlie begins to exhibit PTSD-like symptoms, she becomes more concerned, landing on some articles about past-life memories in children.

Without her husband's support, Eve pursues medical intervention for Charlie, finding herself almost obsessed with needing answers to reduce his mental anguish. Her marriage and friendships start to suffer, and readers who are parents will be able to sympathize with the instinct to help their child at all costs.

The perspective of Boone, the soldier, offers a boots-on-the-ground look at the perils and heartaches of war, both for the soldiers and for the loved ones left behind. The book leaves unanswered some questions about Boone, perhaps allowing

the reader to weigh the possibility of the past-life memory phenomenon.

According to the University of Virginia School of Medicine's Division of Perceptual Studies, more than 2,500 cases of past-life memories in children have been studied over the last 50 years. The division's website says, "Some young children, usually between the ages of 2 and 5, speak about memories of a previous life they claim to have lived. At the same time, they often show behaviors, such as phobias or preferences, that are unusual within the context of their particular family and cannot be explained by any current life events."

Morris heard a National Public Radio story about the university's research on past-life memories and felt compelled to explore more.

"The idea was so big, so fascinating. The only way I had the courage to try to tell a story based on this phenomenon was to let myself off the hook when it came to explaining the unexplainable," she says. "I don't believe in ghosts, have never had a supernatural experience and don't watch scary movies, but the dramatic potential of the story captivated me. The novel became a story of advocacy in search of answers, courage in the face of the unknown and, above all, love."

» Penny Woods



## Acclaimed debut novel

*Beware the Tall Grass*, (Columbus State University Press, \$23.95) can be purchased online at [www.ugapress.org](http://www.ugapress.org).

Ellen Birkett Morris's debut novel was awarded the Donald L. Jordan Prize for Literary Excellence. She has authored short stories and poetry chapbooks that have earned accolades. She teaches creative writing both in Arizona and at Lexington's Carnegie Center for Literacy and Learning. Connect with her at [www.ellenbirkettmorris.com](http://www.ellenbirkettmorris.com).

**tip**

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Midwinter is a great time to ensure you're making the most of your home heating system. Replace or clean filters to keep your furnace or heat pump running efficiently. Ensure vents and radiators aren't blocked by furniture or rugs, as proper airflow helps your system work less and saves energy.

NRECA



## Michel joins Women Remembered exhibit

Ouita Michel is the newest inductee to the *Kentucky Women Remembered* exhibit, a portrait gallery honoring extraordinary Kentucky women throughout the history of the commonwealth.

Gov. Andy Beshear joined Lt. Gov. Jacqueline Coleman and the Kentucky Commission on Women in November for the announcement.

Commission members unanimously recommended Michel, of Lexington, to Beshear for his consideration to be added to the exhibit. The chef has been nominated for eight James Beard awards and has been featured on the Food Network and the Cooking Channel, and in *The New York Times* and *Southern Living*. She and her husband, Chris,

own six restaurants in Kentucky. Her restaurants have purchased more than \$3 million in Kentucky dairy, meat, fruits and vegetables.

Active in her community, Michel is a founding board member of Food Chain, a Lexington nonprofit food incubator; a board member of Hindman Settlement School, which is dedicated to enriching central Appalachian culture; and a member of the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence, a statewide group working to improve education for Kentuckians.

With the closure of the Kentucky State Capitol last year for renovations, the commission partnered with the Kentucky Department



TIM WEBB

for Libraries and Archives to catalog all portraits and brief biographies of each inductee.

The virtual exhibit can now be found at [women.ky.gov/kywomenremembered](http://women.ky.gov/kywomenremembered).

## featured FRAMES



◀ Nathan Frisby, of Staffordsville, a Big Sandy RECC consumer-member, photographed this female cardinal on an icy branch.

### 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](http://KentuckyLiving.com) and clicking on "Contact Us." Letters may be edited for style, length and clarity.

# ‘Kentucky’s energy policy must be grounded in reality’

*Stivers receives Power Partner Award*

JOE ARNOLD



Senate President Robert Stivers speaks during the Kentucky Electric Cooperatives board meeting on December 16. Photo: Joe Arnold

▲ **WHEN KENTUCKY SENATE PRESIDENT** Robert Stivers of Manchester received the 2025 Kentucky Electric Cooperatives Power Partner Award, he stressed reality.

“Kentucky’s energy policy must be grounded in reality and focused on what matters most to families and businesses: affordability, reliability and long-term stability,” Stivers told the board.

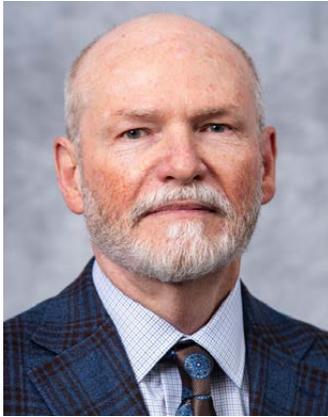
The award recognizes exceptional leadership and collaboration in support of electric cooperatives and their service in local communities.

“You often see an ‘R’ or a ‘D’ behind the name of elected leaders. For President Stivers, I suggest

an ‘E’ for ‘Energy,’” says the co-op association’s President and CEO Chris Perry. “He is among the strongest voices in the country advocating for realistic energy policies because he cares so deeply about the people back home who pay the price when bad ideas become law.”

Stivers has championed legislation in support of reliable energy sources and a realistic and reasonable long-term energy policy.

“Sound energy policy isn’t ideological,” Stivers says. “It’s about meeting real-world needs and keeping the lights on at a price Kentuckians can afford.”



### East Kentucky Power

Don Mosier is the new president and chief executive officer of East Kentucky Power Cooperative, succeeding Tony Campbell, who is retiring in June after leading the generation and

transmission cooperative for 16 years.

Mosier has served as EKPC's chief operating officer and executive vice president since 2010. Craig Johnson, a 36-year veteran of EKPC, succeeds Mosier in that role.

"We have an exciting future ahead of us," Mosier says. "EKPC is building for the future by responsibly adding the infrastructure to meet Kentucky's energy needs."



### Blue Grass Energy

Marty Littrel, who has served as president and CEO at Meade County RECC since 2015, is moving 115 miles to take the same title at Blue Grass Energy, effective this month.

Mike Williams, who has led the co-op since 2012, is retiring after 34 years with Blue Grass Energy.

"We feel fortunate to hire someone as seasoned and qualified as Marty Littrel to replace Mike Williams, who has been an outstanding leader for our organization," says Lu Young, Blue Grass Energy board chair. Young adds that Littrel, with more than two decades of cooperative experience, "will bring an employee- and member-oriented focus to our organization."

Littrel is also secretary-treasurer of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Board of Directors, representing Kentucky, and is slated to serve as president beginning in 2029.



### Meade County RECC

Kyle Heavrin, a native of Breckinridge County and a former employee at Meade County RECC from 2006 until 2013, takes the helm in March, replacing Marty Littrel.

Most recently, Heavrin served as vice president of member service at South Central Power Company in Ohio.

"I'm grateful to have this opportunity to come home and lead Meade County RECC during a time of a rapidly evolving and challenging energy environment," Heavrin says. "We will continue to stay focused on our goals of providing Meade County RECC members with the most affordable, reliable power that is available while investing in our community and our workforce."



### Licking Valley RECC

After 20 years leading Licking Valley RECC, Kerry Howard is handing over the reins to a longtime associate. John May brings nearly two decades of involvement with

Licking Valley RECC, including seven years as a director and more than a decade in management.

A Campton native, May is also well-known in the region for his longstanding volunteer service with Wolfe County Search and Rescue, where he has served for more than 20 years and currently leads the team.

As CEO, May says his approach will be guided by a simple principle: remembering that Licking Valley RECC is member-owned, and that every decision should ultimately serve the people who rely on it. **KL**

# A storied career



## Estep honored for impactful reporting

### SOMERSET

Back in the 1970s, student Bill Estep worked on the school newspaper at Pulaski County High School. It had an impact on him. “I kind of fell in love with asking people questions and writing stories and stuff,” he says. And it would be “the right stuff” for him, because he later took his journalism degree from Western Kentucky University in 1983 and crafted a sterling reporting career over four decades, focusing largely on stories from his beloved Appalachian Kentucky.

He recently retired and, for his work, received the coveted Al Smith Award, a tribute to his work in community journalism in Kentucky.

Estep, a consumer-member of South Kentucky RECC,

grew up on a small farm in the community of Welborn. There, he learned about hard work, and rubbed shoulders with those he calls “good people,” the ones in the region he later covered.

His journalistic baptism came with the weekly *Tri-City News* in Cumberland. “I was called ‘managing editor’ but that really meant (doing) everything. I loved it,” he says. He soon returned to Pulaski County and briefly worked for the daily *Commonwealth-Journal* in Somerset. In 1985, he began his monumental 40-year career reporting for *The Lexington Herald-Leader*.

Estep, fueled by his love for the people and land of southern and eastern Kentucky, wrote countless articles that spurred positive change in the region. Subjects included child welfare, Kentucky’s school deficiencies, drug abuse and a historical look at the area since Harry Caudill’s *Night Comes to the Cumberlands*, was released in 1963.

Chasing such stories, Estep accumulated thousands of

road miles, made countless phone booth stops before cellphones existed, and frequented local courthouses to research records. Often challenging vested interests, he felt a bit threatened on occasion, but persevered. “If you approach people respectfully in a straightforward and honest way,” he says, “they’re going to respond to that (positively). Most of them were welcoming.”

Former *Kentucky Post* managing editor Mark Neikirk called Estep “the kind of reporter who could cover a governor, but he’d rather be covering the people and communities impacted by the governor’s decisions.”

Journalist Al Cross, retired professor emeritus of journalism at University of Kentucky and director emeritus of its Institute for Rural Journalism, notes Estep’s demonstration of “relationship journalism,” with its ties to local communities. “Bill,” he says, “is the best I’ve ever known at that.” **KL**

**STEVE FLAIRTY** is an author, columnist, speaker and former public school teacher.

▶ Bill Estep retired last summer after a 40-year career with the *Lexington Herald-Leader*.

Estep was honored with the Al Smith Award last fall. Photos: Ryan Hermens/*Lexington Herald-Leader*



# A purpose of repurposing

*Sawdust + Stain transforms discarded items into jewelry*

KEVIN OSBOURN

**WHERE OTHERS SEE OLD** desks, discarded baseballs, barn wood or bowling alley planks that need to be thrown out, Holver and Tina Pech, owners of Sawdust + Stain LLC, see possibilities to construct unique jewelry for their business.

And Tina also sees opportunities to connect.

“Community and family and connection are where we thrive,” she says. “We’re not just selling products. We love getting photos of our customers wearing what we make after the purchase. We love that connection.”

Sawdust + Stain is the Florence-based LLC they launched two years ago. The business today focuses on producing earrings and bracelets from recycled wood and other products. Teachers are a big part of the business, which is why their earrings made from old school desks are popular with educators.

Working from their home, powered by Owen Electric Cooperative, the couple has doubled sales over the past year by selling jewelry at



more than 25 arts and crafts shows in northern Kentucky and Cincinnati.

It is very much a family business. Their three daughters—Nova, 12, Arbor, 9, and Charlie, 7— provide

a thumbs up or down on new product ideas, and it all seems to work, because business is growing.

In the beginning, the couple made gnomes at Christmas from reclaimed two-by-fours. But about a year ago, Tina realized that jewelry constructed from repurposed material was really what she loved the most.

She encourages other moms wanting to operate their own business not to wait.

“This has been a dream come true, and I encourage any mom wanting to launch a business to just start,” she says. “There will be ups and downs, but enjoy the journey and the learning that comes with it.” **KL**

*Sawdust*  
AND STAIN

sawdust-and-stain.com

**LOCATION:**  
Florence

**INDUSTRY:**  
Handmade jewelry

**ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE:**  
Owen Electric Cooperative



Tina and Holver Pech are the owners of Sawdust + Stain. They specialize in making jewelry from recycled wood and other products. Photo: Kevin Osbourn

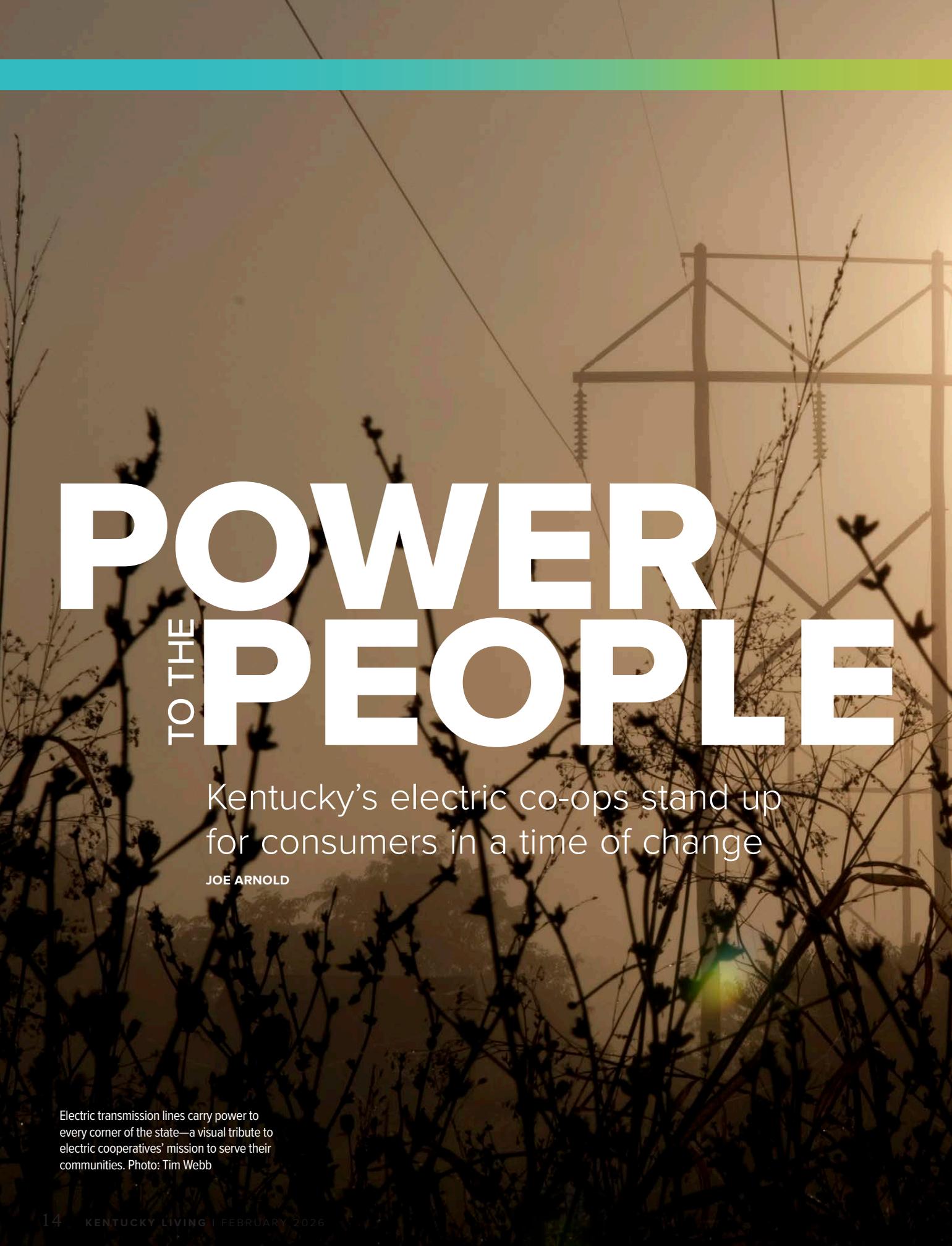
## *Cincinnati charity connection*

One group Sawdust + Stain is thrilled to work with is Cincy Hats, a charity founded by Cincinnati Bengals center Ted Karras.

The hats are popular and sales support a good cause: providing services and housing for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Cincinnati.

Although it is on a small scale, Tina Pech, co-owner of Sawdust + Stain, is proud to be selling her earrings through the charity.

“I emailed them and didn’t give up,” Tina says. “I ran into someone at a show, and said, ‘Please give them my information,’ and a lady came over to talk to me who sets up the pop-up shops at the games. It all came about at the right time.”



# POWER TO THE PEOPLE

Kentucky's electric co-ops stand up  
for consumers in a time of change

JOE ARNOLD

Electric transmission lines carry power to every corner of the state—a visual tribute to electric cooperatives' mission to serve their communities. Photo: Tim Webb



**W**hen headlines warn of soaring energy costs, grid stress and the explosive growth of data-hungry industries, it is natural to wonder who is looking out for everyday Kentuckians. In much of Kentucky, electric cooperatives take up that charge.

As member-owned, not-for-profit utilities, co-ops are built to protect the people they serve. And today, as the energy landscape shifts rapidly, co-ops are stepping forward—advocating for fair policy, planning responsibly for new industrial load and pushing back when proposals threaten the reliability of the grid, the wallets of consumer-members or both.

From soaring infrastructure costs and federal regulatory shifts to the sudden arrival of massive data-center developers looking for hundreds of megawatts of power, Kentucky's cooperatives are stepping into a new era of advocacy.

"We exist to serve the people of rural Kentucky," says Don Mosier, president and CEO of East Kentucky Power Cooperative. "That means planning responsibly, investing carefully and speaking up when policies or proposals threaten the affordability or reliability our members depend on."

EKPC is owned by 16 local electric distribution co-ops, delivering power to more than 1 million people across 89 Kentucky counties.

### **A case study in consumer advocacy**

In October, EKPC teamed up with Kentucky Attorney General Russell Coleman to challenge a proposal from PJM Interconnection—the regional grid operator serving part of eastern Kentucky and 12 other states.

Economic development is welcome, but not at the expense of existing members.

At issue is how PJM would allocate the costs of emergency federal orders requiring some coal-fired plants to remain online. PJM's plan would spread those costs across the entire region—even in states, like Kentucky, that have responsibly secured their own reliable generation resources and kept them operating. That's in contrast to other states that advanced policies to close plants, contributing to the shortfall.

In a formal protest filed with federal regulators, EKPC and the attorney general argued that PJM's plan violates

longstanding principles and would unfairly raise bills for Kentuckians. Coleman said bluntly that Kentuckians should not be forced "to pay for someone else's poor planning."

For co-ops, this is what consumer advocacy looks like: stepping in with facts and evidence when policy proposals threaten to shift unjustified costs to the very families co-ops are built to protect.

### **Planning for growth without burdening the consumer**

Across the nation, the rise of artificial intelligence and cloud computing has sparked a flood of data center development, offering opportunities such as jobs and additional tax base. These facilities can require hundreds of megawatts of electricity—enough to power tens of thousands of homes.

Kentucky's relatively low energy prices and available land have already drawn interest from major developers. But "the siting of these particular centers will be a concern, especially in communities that have water and

## **WHAT IS A DATA CENTER TARIFF—AND WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?**

Most headlines that include the word tariff refer to international trade. But in the utility world, a tariff is something very different: it's the public, legally binding rulebook a utility must follow when serving any customer, whether it's a family home or a major industry.

East Kentucky Power Cooperative's new Data Center Power tariff was created because data centers are unlike any other type of customer. They require enormous amounts of continuous electricity, often equal to tens of thousands of homes. This new rate schedule requires the data center to pay for the infrastructure needed to serve it, to avoid driving up costs for everyone else on the grid.

The Data Center Power tariff prevents cost shifting from happening. Here's how:

1. Developers pay their own way. The tariff requires data center operators to fund the engineering studies, power upgrades and transmission improvements necessary to serve their load.
2. Large facilities must secure dedicated resource. For the biggest projects—250 megawatts or more—the developer must provide dedicated generation capacity, so co-op members never subsidize their energy needs.
3. Every project gets reviewed by state regulators. The Kentucky Public Service Commission must review and approve each data center contract, ensuring transparency and fairness.
4. Member protection comes first. Economic development is welcome, but not at the expense of existing co-op members.

EKPC created one of the most consumer-focused approaches in the nation, ensuring that the benefits of development come without hidden costs to Kentucky families.

# Data Centers

Data centers are the backbone of the internet, storing and managing everything from social media and cryptocurrency mining to artificial intelligence, cloud computing and streaming services. As these digital services expand, the size and number of data centers is growing rapidly, with many being sited in rural areas served primarily by electric cooperatives. This new load brings big opportunities and major challenges.

## Why rural areas?

- Companies are choosing rural locations for their data centers because of cheaper land, available power and possible tax breaks.

## HVAC

- Constant cooling is needed to ensure the servers function properly.

## Servers

- Servers are the “brains” of the data center, running applications and processing data 24/7. Each rack of servers can consume 10-30 kW, enough to power a small home or grain mill. A large data center may have thousands of server racks.

## Infrastructure

- Data centers often require new electrical infrastructure to accommodate their power needs.

## Water source

- Many large data centers are deploying evaporative cooling, which is more efficient than compressor-based systems.

## Backup power

- On-site generators keep data centers running during system outages and can be used to curtail load during peaks.

Source: NRECA; Design: Jen Wheeler

NRECA

## HOW CO-OPS, ALLIES ARE CONSUMER ADVOCATES

**Grassroots policy mobilization:** Kentucky co-op consumer-members can join a grassroots coalition at RuralPowerKY.com. In partnership with Voices for Cooperative Power, grassroots allies receive action alerts when important legislation is pending.

**Nonpartisan voter engagement:** Since 2016, Kentucky Electric Cooperatives has partnered with the secretary of state on Co-ops Vote to boost voter turnout in the areas served by cooperatives, so member priorities shape elections.

**Legislative and regulatory representation:** As seen in the Kentucky Electric Cooperatives Legislative Guide in the center of this magazine, co-ops help connect consumer-member concerns with policymakers. Co-ops advocate on rate design, permitting, reliability standards and tax/environmental rules that directly affect member bills and service.

**Co-op Caucus:** More than 100 lawmakers make up the bipartisan Kentucky Electric Cooperatives Caucus, formed two years ago as the official group of legislators who are dedicated to representing the interests of local co-op constituents by supporting policies that promote reliable energy at competitive rates. See the caucus roster in the Kentucky Electric Cooperatives Legislative Guide in the center of this magazine.

**PAC contributions:** Kentucky's Electric Cooperatives PAC and America's Electric Cooperatives PAC support candidates who prioritize cooperative consumers and rural reliability. Contribute at RuralPowerKY.com.



▲ Warren RECC CEO Dewayne McDonald, left, Jackson Purchase Energy Cooperative CEO Greg Grissom and Pennyriple Electric Board Chairman George Fox talk with Rep. James Comer during the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C., last spring. Photo: Wade Harris

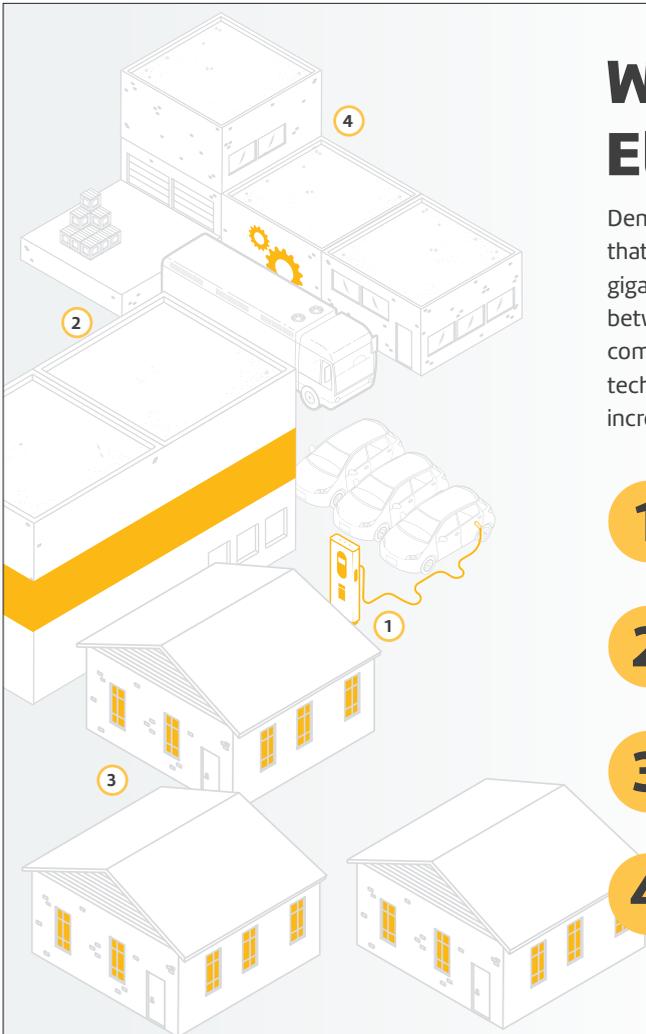
resiliency needs already,” Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet Secretary Rebecca Goodman warned at the Kentucky Electric Cooperatives Annual Meeting in August. “And the cost associated with the energy that’s required is going to be a real challenge.”

At the same time, Goodman applauded EKPC for working to create a framework that addresses these challenges while shielding existing members from additional costs.

Co-ops have been proactive in preparing for the possibility of serving data centers because, under Kentucky law, they are legally obligated to serve any new home, business, factory or even data center that locates in their territories.

EKPC’s Data Center Power tariff—the first of its kind among cooperatives—ensures that developers shoulder the full cost of serving their load, including required studies, upgrades and even dedicated generation resources for very large projects. The rationale is simple: economic development is welcome, but not at the expense of existing members.

Big Rivers Electric Corporation, owned by three distribution co-ops that serve 22 counties in western Kentucky, shares the same philosophy. President and CEO Don Gulley emphasizes that large loads must not be subsidized by local families and small businesses. “Any large-load project must stand on its own two feet,” Gulley says. “These new loads should strengthen the system, stabilize rates and create long-term value for the communities we serve.”



# Why is the Demand for Electricity Rising?

Demand for electricity in the U.S. is booming. Recent data shows that power consumption nationwide is set to increase by at least 38 gigawatts (enough electricity to power 3,600 homes for one year) between now and 2028. Meeting this new demand will require a combination of new power plants, grid upgrades and energy storage technology advancements. Here are the key factors that are driving increased demand.

- 1 Increased Electrification:** Electric vehicle adoption, electrification of home heating and industrial electrification are increasing overall U.S. energy consumption.
- 2 Data Centers:** Driven by explosions in AI, cryptocurrency and cloud computing, total U.S. data center load is projected to increase by 65% by 2050.
- 3 Economic Growth:** Residential power consumption is expected to increase by 14% to 22% through 2050 due to increases in population and steady economic growth.
- 4 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.

NRECA

The Tennessee Valley Authority, which serves five of the 24 distribution co-ops in Kentucky, is sounding the same note of caution. TVA reports that data centers jumped from just 1% of its industrial load in 2019 to 14% in 2024, with 11,000 megawatts of new requests now pending.

“TVA is focused on ensuring customers do not subsidize power for industries such as data centers,” says TVA spokesman Adam May. “We’re not saying no—we’re saying ‘yes, but...’ It will take us time to add new generation to meet the growing demand. We also work with data centers to ensure they participate in demand response programs where they reduce their load on the grid during peak demand times such as cold winter mornings and hot summer afternoons.”

## Why co-op advocacy matters now

While data centers draw headlines, rising electricity costs have deeper roots. National studies show dramatic rises in the cost of poles, wires and transformers, coupled with the costs to comply with ever-changing federal environmental regulations. Many coal plants were forced into early retirement not because they were unreliable, but because the cumulative regulatory burden made continued operation financially impossible.

The results are increasing energy prices and decreasing reliability—consequences co-ops warned policymakers about for years.

Today, co-op representatives

continue showing up in Frankfort and Washington as consumer advocates.

“Kentucky’s electric cooperatives are locally grown and community focused, and that’s what everybody expects. That’s what we appreciate about you,” Goodman told co-op leaders. “You’re trusted in your communities. When you speak, people listen, and when you act, you make a real difference.”

In a rapidly changing energy landscape, Kentucky’s electric cooperatives are determined to keep earning the trust of consumer-members and policymakers by planning wisely, advocating boldly and protecting their members above all else. **KL**



University of Louisville juniors Sophia Stover, left, and Anna Harrington catch up in the Swain Student Activities Center. Photo: Kristen White

# LEARNING IN THE AGE OF

# AI

## Kentucky college leaders and students share tips for navigating new technology

BY KRISTEN WHITE

No technology in recent history has divided experts more than artificial intelligence. The most optimistic forecasters predict an AI-driven future of almost unimaginable prosperity and productivity. Pessimistic observers foresee dire economic consequences at best, and human extinction at worst. Still others predict that most things will stay about the same.

Here's one thing we know for certain: large language models like ChatGPT have surged in

popularity on college campuses, where students use them for everything from brainstorming project ideas to writing full papers. As the technology evolves, educators and students across Kentucky are grappling with how to use it well.

Mohamed Shehata, assistant professor of computer science at Midway University, says to understand AI's limits, it's important to know how it works. Put simply, generative AI models function like skilled quilters. They cut, rearrange and stitch



Hands-on learning and human skills remain invaluable, even in the age of AI. Below, nursing instructor Savannah Roof demonstrates checking vitals on an infant during a class at the Elizabethtown Community & Technical College Leitchfield campus. Photo: Brian Bohannon



## UNDERSTAND THE LIMITS OF AI

Students need to understand that AI has major limitations, Shehata says: “Answers can be biased, boring or wrong. As a professor, when I see the same wording for several students’ incorrect answers, I know the culprit.” He uses these shortcomings as a learning exercise. “I like to show students in class where AI failed in their homework assignments,” he says with a chuckle.

Sophia Stover is a junior at the University of Louisville who is preparing for law school. Stover, who was a 2023 Washington Youth Tour delegate sponsored by Nolin RECC, says AI tools are helpful for creating flashcards as study aids. But she is leery of depending on it too much. “My friends in law school have had AI hallucinate cases that never happened,” she says.

Hallucination refers to the tendency of AI tools to make up false information and present it as fact. Stover is alert to

together the information they have been trained on to make seemingly new products. Generative AI can create essays, articles, images, videos, audio or even software code.

Shehata reminds students that, although AI results can seem intricate, they are not entirely original in the same sense human thinking can be. “AI predicts answers it deems statistically accurate based on data it has been fed,” he explains. “It operates through logic and algorithms.”

Leah Simpson, system director of online learning and faculty development for the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, elaborates on what this means for the quality of student learning when using AI.

“AI runs on data, and the results it provides are only as good as the data it was trained with,” she says. “It doesn’t know answers. It predicts them. When a student relies too heavily on AI, it hinders learning and means the student is at risk of shallow or incorrect answers.”



## AI USE POLICIES ON KENTUCKY CAMPUSES

AI has taken campuses by storm—almost faster than professors could adjust to its use. Many schools leave AI usage policies up to individual instructors. According to Leah Simpson, system director of online learning and faculty development for the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, some instructors use a stoplight icon to help students understand whether AI is allowed to complete coursework: green (AI acceptable), yellow (AI only for brainstorming or feedback on completed work), and red (no AI/brain only).

At Midway University, assistant professor of business Xinxing Wu likes to use this policy for accountability:

### AI Tool Usage Disclosure

If you use any AI tools during your work, you must clearly disclose where/what/why/how they are used in your assignment. Failure to disclose AI use or presenting AI-generated work solely as your own without clarification may be considered a violation of academic integrity. Answer the following questions at the end of your submission.

- Where was AI used (e.g., for summarizing, code assistance, data visualization)?
- What tool(s) were used (name and version)?
- Why did you choose to use these (e.g., to generate ideas, translate text, check grammar)?
- How was AI output used in your final submitted work (e.g., edited, cited, directly included, cherry-picked for some ideas)?

At left, ECTC Leitchfield biology professor Jennifer Yates uses group games and active learning like concept maps to help students master content in anatomy and physiology classes.

Above, Brennan Christmas, at far right, studies with friends on the Western Kentucky University campus.  
Photos: Kristen White

the dangers of outsourcing her thinking to a fallible model.

“In the courtroom, I will be defending someone’s life or business,” she says. “I don’t want to get that wrong. I plan to do my own research.”

Xinxing Wu, assistant professor of business at Midway University, encourages students to have the right perspective on AI’s abilities.

“I tell students they must treat AI as a junior assistant, not an authority,” he says. “Large language models cannot handle reasoning like the human brain. It’s a great partner in work, but it is limited in solving complicated problems.”



◀  
Trey Conatser leads initiatives at the University of Kentucky to foster AI literacy and skills. Photo: Sabriel Metcalf/Spectrum1

## DO YOUR OWN THINKING

Trey Conatser, who directs the University of Kentucky's Center for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching, urges students to value their own knowledge and creativity, even as AI use

becomes more common in school and in the workplace.

He uses the term "cognitive offloading" to describe what's happening when people rely on technology to do their work. There's a place for this, he says—but there's also a downside. Because AI tools may seem to be more knowledgeable, students hesitate to go through the learning process themselves.

Shehata, the computer science professor at Midway, has noticed this shift. With the rise of AI, students are acing homework but failing in-class quizzes. "When I give students a pen-and-paper quiz or an exam with digital limits, they

don't know the material," he says. "If you do not know the information the first time, you won't be able to recall it."

Shehata remembers how much content he and his peers had to master just two decades ago. Now, professors face students with shorter attention spans and higher anxiety.

"Students need to know they can focus. They can do hard work by themselves, without AI," he says.

Conatser echoes that, saying students need to savor moments of inefficiency—the parts of papers and projects that are hard.

"We often value speed over endurance," he says. "But sustained challenge is where real learning takes place—not just with academics, but with durable skills like perseverance. Learning requires personal effort and practice. It's important to commit to these as we increasingly work alongside AI."

# get ready 2026 PHOTO CONTEST

Gather your photos and get ready to enter the *Kentucky Living* 2026 Photo Contest starting **March 1** at [KentuckyLiving.com](https://KentuckyLiving.com).

*Submit up to two entries per category:*

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## 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.

WAYNE GARBON



ECTC students use hands-on models as they learn about the human brain.

ECTC math professor Miky Wright coaches students through online practice problems after class. Photos: Brian Bohannon



Conatser notes that students can lose confidence when comparing their writing or knowledge with AI, feeling defeated and tempted to abdicate their work.

“Of course, AI seems to know more than any of us individually,” he says. “But it is not human. I tell my students: ‘AI does not have your experiences. You have something to say. Use your voice.’”

Conatser urges teachers to keep pushing students to develop reading, writing and critical thinking skills. In his own writing classes, which engage students with AI tools, he clarifies that he’s not seeking perfect work. He prefers writing that wrestles with ideas and that reveals the student’s process over seemingly competent AI output.

“No professor wants to read what an AI bot has written for a student. We want to know their thoughts. We want to see what they can create,” he says.

## SMART WAYS TO STUDY WITH AI

Students Brennan Christmas and Sophia Stover share their favorite tips for using AI to increase their abilities.

### 1. Turn notes into study tools.

Use AI tools like ChatGPT or Gemini to create study guides, flashcards or practice tests from your handwritten notes. Typing your notes into AI helps you review and engage with the material. Repetition and recall are still key to academic mastery.

### 2. Ask for steps, not answers.

When you’re stuck, use AI to explain how to solve a problem, not to solve it for you. Struggling through the process builds understanding, critical thinking and perseverance.

### 3. Support strong academic standards.

Encourage teachers and schools to keep expectations high and communicate clear, integrity-based AI policies.

### 4. Do your own work.

Practice handwriting, reading and math without relying on devices. Your own skills are your best long-term security.



## BEWARE THE DRAW OF AI

Developers program AI to seem human-like and supportive to users—qualities known as anthropomorphism and sycophancy, Conatser says. Developers build in personification because they want their product to be viewed as a cooperative partner in work. And they want to encourage its use to grow their platforms.

The human-like, interactive quality of AI is powerful. When students feel cared for by AI—perhaps given more encouragement by a bot than by peers or teachers—it’s hard for them not to look to it for both emotional support and for academic shortcuts. Research cited by the Brookings Institution shows that users no longer turn to generative AI tools primarily for help with their work—many are also seeking “companionship and therapy”—an approach that comes with significant risks.

Brennan Christmas, a junior at Western Kentucky University and a 2023 Washington Youth Tour delegate sponsored by Pennyryle Electric, is preparing for a career in secondary education and Christian ministry. He fears the first generation of AI users will be sucked in by its novelty and suffer a decline in literacy. He’s observed falling academic outcomes across Kentucky the past couple of years, something he thinks correlates to AI’s escalation.

“The decline in retention of knowledge is disturbing,” he says. “How are students going to handle life’s issues? You can’t plug everything into AI to solve.”

## SKILLED PEOPLE STILL STAND OUT

Timothy Campbell, vice president of academic affairs at Midway University, says students who do the work to write, perform computational steps, and plan and organize projects on their own will stand out in tomorrow’s job market.

“We assure students their work will be rewarded,” he says. “Yes, AI has value as a thought partner, but you are the student. You have to put the work in to understand your field. You have to strain through hard concepts, and wrestle with complex and sometimes unfinished ideas. ... I think there is great satisfaction in the process our work requires of us.”

Above left, ECTC nursing students observed processes during a campus blood drive. Photo: Brian Bohannon

Above, Midway University computer science majors Caua Kreia, center, and Isadora Silva, right, talk with Dr. Mohamed Shehata about AI use in coding. Photo: Kristen White

Christopher Howes, vice president of technology solutions and chief information officer at KCTCS, anticipates that the jobs of the future will be more collaborative with AI, but that students’ human skill remains irreplaceable.

“I encourage them to develop skills such as creativity, emotional intelligence, critical thinking and ethical judgment,” he says. “Add value by growing in your abilities to be adaptable, empathetic and capable of making nuanced decisions in complex situations.”

AI is becoming an essential technology—it might one day be as essential as the electricity that powers our lightbulbs and the phones in our pockets. But it’s not superior to human ingenuity.

“The human mind is an extraordinary resource, and learning is truly a privilege,” says Reneau Waggoner, KCTCS vice president for academic and student success. “We are already finding meaningful ways to motivate our students—and ourselves—and we must continue to build on that momentum by nurturing critical thinking and a commitment to lifelong learning.” **KL**

KentuckyLiving.com

### Questions to ponder

Artificial intelligence raises complex questions on many topics, from intellectual property rights to bias to protecting children online. Visit KentuckyLiving.com for links to further reading on the AI revolution.



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# String of hearts

*A surprising succulent*

**STRING OF HEARTS** is a house-plant that is becoming more popular. It is considered a succulent, but you wouldn't guess that by its appearance. If you look closely, you will see small aerial tubers at the base of the leaf nodes, which give it another common name—rosary vine.

String of hearts can climb or cascade, so it is suitable for a hanging basket, small trellis or topiary. The trailing branches can grow several feet long. Its leaves are dark green with silver markings, but cultivars are also available with cream and pink variegated leaves and green leaves with a shade of orange.

This succulent vine is best grown outdoors from late spring to early fall in a location with bright light, but protected from heavy rainfall. Indoors, place it in a south- or west-facing window. Soil with good drainage is critical, because overwatering will cause quick decline. Water only when dry, fertilize minimally—and only in the active growing season of summer—with a half-strength or half-rate dose of balanced fertilizer. When repotting is necessary, use a good cactus and succulent mix and repot only as the active growing season begins in late spring.

This wiry vine never seems to be particularly lush, but you will know



SHELLY NOLD

it's happy and healthy if you have thick, dark green leaves and lots of vining stems. If the light level is too low, leaves become pale green and plants lack vigor. Flowering normally occurs in summer and the tubular, pink-hued flowers are attractive to hummingbirds, providing another great reason to grow it outside in summer. **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



*How can I prevent brown spots on my Little Lime hydrangeas, and when should I prune them?—Mary Yeager*

**A** Panicle hydrangeas are relatively disease-resistant but can be affected by fungal diseases, which is likely what has caused the sporadic brown spots on your shrubs. Hot, humid conditions and rainfall/overhead watering contribute to the spread of this disease. In more severe cases, a fungicide could be helpful, but removing and disposing of the infected leaves should be all you need to do to prevent further spread. Prune in late winter or early spring before new growth begins. Little Lime hydrangeas bloom on new wood that will develop later in the spring, so you don't need to worry about removing potential flowers like you would on hydrangeas that bloom on old wood.

» Angie Oakley



SAKAWUT/ADDBE STOCK

### Have a gardening question?

Go to [KentuckyLiving.com](http://KentuckyLiving.com), click on Home & Garden, then "Ask the Gardener."

READER  
recipe

A Twist of Citrus

**Mini Orange Biscuits**

Submitted by Meghan King

Consumer-member of Farmers RECC

Meghan watches a lot of *Gilmore Girls*. In one of the episodes, the chef mentions making mini orange biscuits with honey mustard ham. She thought that sounded delicious and decided to create her own recipe.

- 3 C all-purpose flour, divided**
- 1 Tbsp baking powder**
- 3 tsp sugar**
- 1 tsp kosher salt**
- ½ tsp baking soda**
- 1 C unsalted butter, cut into cubes and chilled**
- 1 Tbsp orange zest**
- 1 C buttermilk, cold**
- 1 Tbsp butter, melted**

Preheat oven to 425° and line a baking sheet with parchment paper. In large bowl, whisk together two cups flour and dry ingredients. Add butter and orange zest, cutting in with a pastry cutter until the mixture resembles pea-sized butter pieces. Stir in buttermilk until a sticky dough forms. Turn dough onto floured surface and knead in remaining one cup flour. Roll dough into a 9-inch by 5-inch rectangle, 1 inch thick. Cut into four rectangles, stack, roll again, and repeat once more. Cut biscuits with a 2 1/2-inch cutter, place on prepared sheet and brush with melted butter. Bake 11–13 minutes until golden. Serve warm with butter, jam, or ham and eggs. Yields 15 biscuits.

# Biscuits and gravy

*A comforting start for cold mornings*

**IN THE DEPTHS OF WINTER**, this month calls for foods that stick to your ribs and keep you warm and full. Not many breakfasts do that better than classic biscuits and gravy—a Southern staple that always feels like home. Our reader recipe follows that trend and adds a zesty twist. While you might not serve them alongside the gravy, mini orange biscuits offer a sunny balance to this dreary month. Both recipes make February feel a bit cozier.

## Sausage Gravy

- 1 lb sausage**
- 1 Tbsp butter**
- 1 Tbsp flour**
- 1½ C heavy cream**
- 1 C whole milk**

- ½ tsp freshly cracked black pepper**
- ¼ tsp salt**
- 1 batch of your preferred buttermilk biscuits**

In a large skillet over medium heat, brown the sausage, breaking it up as it cooks, until the edges start to crisp and no pink spots remain. Remove from skillet and place on a paper towel-lined plate to drain. Keep grease in the pan and return to the stove. Reduce heat to low and add butter and flour to skillet. Whisk together and let cook for 1–2 minutes. Slowly whisk in heavy cream, about 1/2 cup at a time, whisking between each addition to remove lumps. Add milk and whisk again. Continue to cook for about 5 minutes, whisking often, to thicken. Stir in salt, pepper and sausage. Cook 5 minutes more so flavors come together. Spoon warm over freshly baked biscuits and enjoy. Serves 4.

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

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# Cooked slow, served fast

*Celebrate Mardi Gras at Gumbo Ya Ya in Nicholasville*

JOEL SAMS



TESSA TODD

**EVERY YEAR, GREG TODD** worries customers won't show up for the Fat Tuesday celebration at Gumbo Ya Ya in Nicholasville. So far, he's been proven wrong.

"I always laugh at him, because every year, our numbers are better than the year before," says his wife, Tressa. "I'm like, 'Yes, dear, they're going to show. They're going to come.'"

The fast casual Cajun-Creole spot stays busy year-round, but Mardi Gras, which falls on February 17 this year, brings long lines of customers eager for red beans with smoked sausage, chicken creole, maque choux, jambalaya and more—and a free slice of King Cake, a Mardi Gras tradition, with every meal.

The Todds pride themselves on a long culinary lineage—Greg was mentored by Joe Vuskovich, a New Orleans native who founded Jozo's Bayou Gumbo in Lexington. Greg and Tressa opened Gumbo Ya Ya's first location in 2004, and its current spot in Brannon Crossing in 2015. Over the years, customers have appreciated quick service, fresh ingredients and impeccable service.

"It's slow cooked, but it's served fast," says Greg, noting that he might stir 12 gallons of roux for five hours to thicken a 60-gallon kettle of gumbo. But service is quick—Tressa says customers' food is often plated before they pay at the counter. A rotating menu keeps things fresh, and diners can choose white rice, grits, jambalaya or—controversially—pasta as the base for their sauces. Tasting samples are free, and homemade desserts, including bread pudding, peanut butter pie and pralines, sweeten the deal.

Served by Blue Grass Energy, Gumbo Ya Ya is located at 294 E. Brannon Road in Nicholasville and open 11 a.m.–9 p.m. Monday–Saturday.



## Gumbo Ya Ya Pralines

Serves 16

- ½ C whole milk
- ½ stick salted butter
- 1 Tbs vanilla
- ½ tsp salt
- 2 tsp powdered sugar
- ¾ C brown sugar, packed
- 1¼ C white sugar
- 4 C pecan pieces

In a 2-quart uncovered saucepan, combine all ingredients except pecan pieces over medium heat. Stir regularly with wooden spoon until all ingredients are blended well and temperature has reached 230°. Remove saucepan from heat and stir in pecan pieces using a metal tablespoon. Continue stirring until the ingredients have cooled to 170°. Spoon one heaping tablespoon at a time onto foil or parchment paper. Let pralines cool at room temperature for 20 minutes.



TESSA TODD

# Appliances: When should you upgrade?



*Appliances are so much more efficient now—how do I know when to upgrade my current models?*

**MIRANDA BOUTELLE** writes on energy efficiency for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

**A** Buying a new appliance can feel daunting. When shopping, keep in mind that not all new appliances are high efficiency and not all old appliances are inefficient. The less efficient your current appliance, the more you will save with an upgrade.

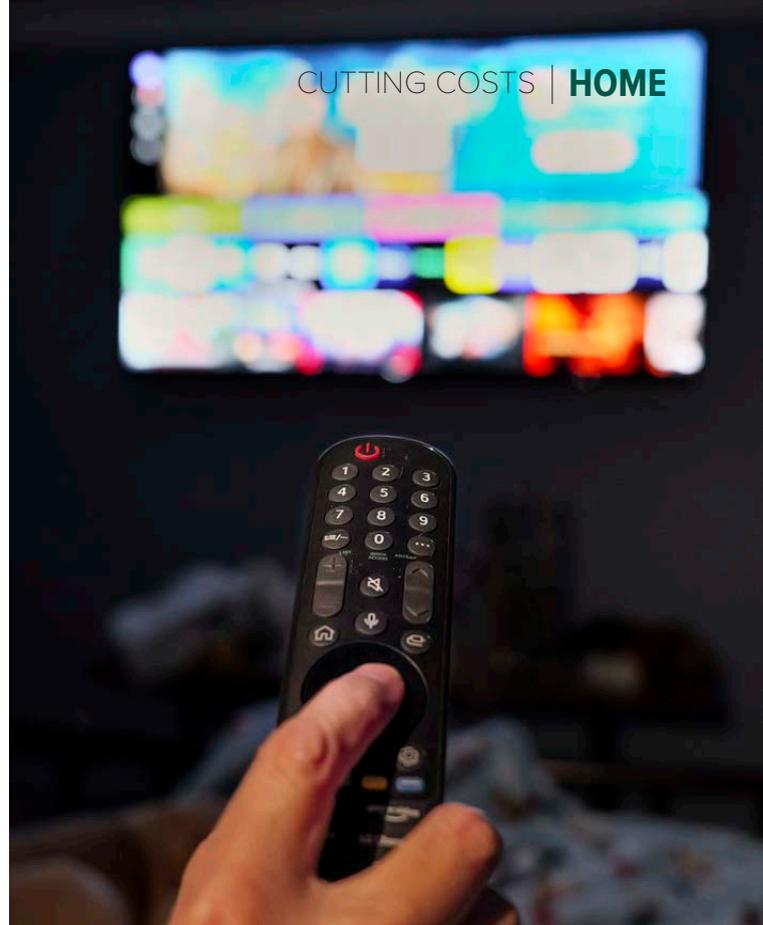
## Refrigerators

Refrigerators have seen major efficiency improvements over the years. New refrigerators use up to 73% less energy than 1970s models and about a third less than 20-year-old models.

For example, a 1980s fridge uses 2,000 kilowatt hours per year, so at 14 cents per kWh, it costs \$280 per year to operate. New Energy Star-certified refrigerator prices start at \$500 with yearly energy costs ranging from \$38 to \$122. So a new, \$1,000 Energy Star-certified refrigerator with a \$100 yearly energy cost saves \$180 per year, paying for itself in about 5 1/2 years.

## SAVINGS SOURCES

When making a decision to replace an older appliance, make [energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov) your first stop. Use the Energy Star Product Finder at [energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov) to compare products. The yellow EnergyGuide label on new appliances shows the yearly energy cost, kilowatt-hour electricity use and Energy Star logo, if certified.



## Washers and dryers

New Energy Star-certified clothes washers and dryers are also more efficient than older models.

Energy Star-certified front loaders use about 50% less energy and water than top-load agitator washers and about 25% less energy and water than top-load impeller washers that don't have an agitator.

Energy Star-certified new dryer models may produce savings compared with older ones, but, as with washers, be

▲  
If you're looking for a new TV, Energy Star-certified models are 34% more efficient than conventional models. Photo: Mark Gilliland/Pioneer Utility Resources

sure to calculate the efficiency versus the up-front cost—the upgrade may not be worth it.

## TV sets

Just like the lightbulbs in your home, LED televisions offer increased efficiency. Energy Star-certified televisions are 34% more efficient than conventional models. If you have a working LED television, swapping to an Energy Star model is more efficient but may not make up for the cost of a new TV. Instead, check the efficiency settings on your TV or buy a smart power strip that turns off other connected devices when not in use. **KL**

# Backup generator safety for your home

*Know the benefits—and the risks*

**IF YOUR HOME** goes dark from an electrical blackout, an electric generator can be a great resource, especially if the storm and damage are severe and the outage is prolonged. But small portable generators pose risks homeowners need to guard against: carbon monoxide poisoning, electrocution or electric shock, and fire.

## Carbon monoxide poisoning

Small generators use a combustion engine that usually burns gasoline or other liquid fuels. Like any gas-powered machine, these small engines produce carbon monoxide. To prevent carbon monoxide poisoning, keep generators outdoors, away from doors, windows and vents. Position your generator's exhaust away from your home and locate the generator downwind, if possible.

## Electrocution or electric shock

To avoid the risk of electrocution, do not use a generator in rainy or wet conditions. Don't handle it with wet hands.

Before plugging appliances or electronics into your generator, make sure your generator is sized appropriately for the total electric load you want it to run. Make sure the cords all fit appropriately and are undamaged.

Never plug your generator directly into your home's wiring. Known as backfeeding, this sends power from the generator throughout your house in reverse and can even feed onto your electric utility's power lines. Workers attempting to restore power could be fatally



J.J. GOJINADOBÉ/ISTOCK

shocked by this. To prevent a backfeed, have a professional install a transfer switch if you want your generator to run your home's electrical system during an outage.

## Burns and fire

Store extra generator fuel in an American National Standards Institute-approved container in a cool, well-ventilated place away from fuel-burning appliances.

Before refueling your generator, turn it off and let it cool. Gasoline spilled on hot engine parts could ignite. **KL**



**JON JONES**  
is safety coordinator  
at Gibson Electric

**YEARS IN THE  
INDUSTRY:** 35,  
with two of those at  
Gibson Electric

**WHEN I'M NOT  
WORKING I'M:**  
enjoying the  
outdoors.

## *Preventing carbon monoxide poisoning*

- Never use a generator, grill, camp stove or other gasoline, propane, natural gas or charcoal-burning device inside a home, garage, basement, crawlspace or any partially enclosed area.
- Keep generators outdoors, away from doors, windows and vents that could allow carbon monoxide to come indoors. Opening doors and windows or using fans will not prevent CO buildup in the home.
- Although CO can't be seen or smelled, it can rapidly lead to full incapacitation and death. If you start to feel sick, dizzy or weak while using a generator, get to fresh air immediately.
- Install CO detectors in central locations on every level of your home and outside sleeping areas. Test the batteries frequently and replace when needed.
- If the carbon monoxide alarm sounds, move quickly to a fresh air location outdoors if possible, or open a window or door.

*Source: Red Cross*

# Catching up on sleep

*Does it actually work?*



VIGLETT/PEOPLEIMAGES.COM/ADOBE STOCK

**IMAGINE IT'S SATURDAY MORNING**, the perfect time to slow down, relax and ... pay off debt? That's how many Americans start their weekend. No, we're not talking about the credit card bill, but many Americans are in debt-sleep debt.

## What sleep debt does to your body

Everyone has nights where they don't get the seven to nine hours recommended for adults. Short-term effects of not getting enough sleep include drowsiness, slower reaction time, impaired balance, reduced memory and decision-making skills, and increased irritability.

Chronic short sleeping—running up your sleep debt—also can increase your

risks for more serious issues like heart disease, dementia, certain cancers and depression. It has been linked to immune dysfunction, hypertension and weight gain. Sleep debt is cumulative, which means going to bed an hour later than usual for several days in a row can add up.

## Does sleeping in actually repay your sleep debt?

If your overall sleep deficit is modest, sleeping in an extra hour or two on the weekend is better than nothing. Additionally, napping can help fend off feelings of tiredness. But a larger sleep debt likely can't be made up

in one weekend. Oversleeping, often snoozing longer than the recommended nine hours, has been associated with grogginess and increased risk for depression and other more severe disease.

If you really want to make a dent in your sleep debt, plan to chip away over time. Try to gradually go to bed 30 minutes to an hour earlier each night until you're consistently getting enough sleep. You could also make a regular short nap part of your daily routine, though it is not a substitute for an adequate night of sleep. **KL**

**SUBHENDU RATH, M.D.**, is a certified sleep medicine specialist at UK HealthCare and assistant professor of neurology.

## HOW TO BETTER YOUR OVERALL SLEEP HEALTH

Good sleep hygiene includes:

- Waking up and going to bed at the same time every day.
- Having a consistent evening ritual that signals to your body that it's time for rest.
- Not drinking caffeine too late in the day.
- Avoiding alcohol and nicotine in evening.
- Avoiding blue-light-emitting screens (phones, TVs, computers) for at least a half hour before bed.



## Following the cues

Anthony Beeler believes the key to his success as a billiards instructor is conveying concepts simply, something he learned while teaching kindergarten for nine years.

In addition to his day job as an administrator with Lincoln County Schools, Beeler teaches students how to send pool balls zinging into the desired pockets with pro-level precision using his BAM (Beeler Aiming Method) technique.

Beeler, an Inter-County Energy consumer-member from Casey County, says his passion for pool began about age 8, when he and his father frequented a country store where men would gather, chat and play.

Learning from these elders, as he grew in skill and age he traveled to nearby pool halls where pros sparred, learning more, picking up games—and more and more often—winning.

After studying both education and billiards in college, Beeler has earned worldwide recognition, winning more than 300 pool tournaments. He has trained a host of pro players, built an 18,000-plus subscriber YouTube channel and in 2025 published a book, *Do You Want to Play Like a Pro?* He also writes columns for industry magazines.

He was recognized by *SPM Billiards Magazine* as its 2018 Instructor of the Year and Instructor of the Decade.

In 2011, he launched Beeler's Virtual Billiard Academy at his home in unincorporated Jacktown, where students learn online and if able, in person. His waiting list is often three to six months.

"You wouldn't think they'd drive all the way to rural Casey County to get pool lessons," he says.

New York native Jerome Jordan moved to Lexington a year ago expressly for in-person lessons in hopes of going pro. He says his skills have "exploded" since his training with Beeler. After each two-hour monthly session, Beeler assigns Jordan a technique to improve by the next.

"He probably wouldn't be nearly as good if he hadn't been a school teacher," Jordan says. "The school teaching gave him the education and abilities that most pool coaches can't touch."

Once Beeler retires from his education job, he hopes to launch traveling pool instruction services and see more of the United States in the process. "I would like to start doing clinics on the road and maybe taking 10 students at a time and doing some kind of clinic," he says.

Story: Shannon Clinton

Photo: Allie Evans

# Spring Travel Marketplace



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[kentuckydownunder.com](http://kentuckydownunder.com)



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Located three miles from Lincoln's Birthplace National Park.

[www.lincolnmuseum-ky.org](http://www.lincolnmuseum-ky.org)  
270-358-3163



## CADIZ-TRIGG COUNTY

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[www.GoCadiz.com](http://www.GoCadiz.com)  
270-522-3892



## MT. STERLING

Restaurant Week is February 9-15th! Celebrate Valentine's Day at locally owned restaurants, enjoy art and performances at the Gateway Regional Arts Center and shop in our historic downtown district.

[www.mtsterlingtourism.com](http://www.mtsterlingtourism.com)



## GRAND RIVERS

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[themintgaming.com/racing](http://themintgaming.com/racing)



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# Kentucky's capital city

Art, history, bourbon, chocolate and more

BY AMY COBB



## YOU'D EXPECT KENTUCKY'S CAPITAL

to be drenched in history, but it is not a one-trick pony. Frankfort also offers culture, natural beauty, small-town ambience and some of Kentucky's best-known distilleries.

"As the fourth-smallest state capital, Frankfort does something that few state capitals are able to do: blend natural beauty and rich history while enhancing it with small-town charm," says Randy Newcomb, Visit Frankfort executive director. "Frankfort is also special because it is the heart of bourbon country, and its six distilleries help connect visitors to Kentucky's most famous craft tradition."



## Frankfort Cemetery: Walk back in history

Established in 1845, Frankfort Cemetery is the final resting place of pioneers Daniel and Rebecca Boone, though the state of Missouri also controversially makes that claim. "A lot of people come here to see Daniel Boone," says cemetery office administrator Gary Fields, "but there's a lot of other history here, as well."

▲  
Castle & Key Distillery offers stunning gardens and architecture in a scenic location. Photo: Castle & Key Distillery

Overlooking downtown Frankfort, the cemetery encompasses around 100 acres with over 3,500 known marked graves, including those of former governors, statesmen and business owners. Two memorials—one honoring Kentucky soldiers and another dedicated to unborn children—are standouts. The grounds are also home to eight Kentucky champion trees, which means "they're the largest known documented species of their kind in the entire state," explains Fields.

Fields encourages visitors to journey back through history—locate an older monument and then go online to learn about the person buried there. “Cemeteries exist so the deceased are gone but not forgotten,” he says. “Every stone there was a person with a story worth remembering.”

**Josephine Sculpture Park:  
Art + nature**

“Every path offers a new surprise, every sculpture its own story,” says Zaq Andel, Josephine Sculpture Park’s director of engagement. The sculptures—some nature-inspired, others completely imaginative—sprout along quiet natural corridors and bloom in open meadows, “like the Earth itself is breathing art,” Andel says.

Visitors are encouraged to wander the grounds of Kentucky’s only sculpture park. View over 70 artworks along 2 miles of mowed trails across 40 acres and touch the sculptures, while listening to the birds as sunlight shifts across the bold metal and stone creations. Picnic areas and restrooms also are available. Admission is free.

“You won’t find the kind of art here that hides behind glass, meant only to be admired from a distance,” Andel explains. “Instead, you’ll be surrounded by it, immersed in the wild and in the minds of the creative voices whose work lives and grows here.”

Josephine Sculpture Park’s guests curate their own unique journey, Andel says: “Every visit feels different, because the park itself is alive, always changing with the seasons, the sky and the people who explore it.”

**Rebecca Ruth Candy:  
A sweet spot**

In 1919, before women could even vote, Rebecca Gooch and Ruth Hanly Booe co-founded their own candy enterprise—Rebecca Ruth Candy. A downturn in candy sales during the Great Depression gave Hanly Booe (by then



Daniel Boone’s final resting place is one of more than 3,500 known marked graves in the Frankfort Cemetery. Photo: Joel Sams



Josephine Sculpture Park is home to more than 70 artworks across 40 acres. Photo: Michaela Bowman/Lexington Philharmonic

Buffalo Trace Distillery offers complimentary tours seven days a week—online reservations recommended.  
Photo: Buffalo Trace Distillery



*Steeped in history, Kentucky's capital city perfectly blends small-town charm with stories of the past—creating new memories today. It offers lots of family-friendly places, and, for the over-21 crowd, world-class distilleries.*

**Featured in Frankfort**

**Frankfort Cemetery**  
215 East Main St., (502) 227-2403;  
frankfortcemetery.org

Gates open daily, sunup to sundown, barring inclement weather. Office hours: Mon.–Fri. 10 a.m.–4 p.m. Cemetery maps located outside of office door.

**Josephine Sculpture Park**  
3355 Lawrenceburg Road, (502) 352-7082;  
josephinesculpturepark.org, Facebook:  
Josephine Sculpture Park

Open daily, dawn to dusk. Winter office hours (staff available) 9 a.m.–5 p.m. Tues. and Thurs. Self-guided tours. Leashed pets allowed. Visitors needing mobility assistance can call to request to reserve a golf cart at least one week in advance. Guided “touch tours” are available upon request for visitors with vision impairments or other accommodation needs.

**Rebecca Ruth Candy**  
Three Frankfort locations: 116 East 2nd St., 3295 Versailles Road and 629 Versailles Road, (502) 223-8484; rebeccaruthonline.com, Facebook: Rebecca Ruth Candy Factory

Hours, all locations: Mon.–Sun., 10 a.m.–6 p.m. Fresh gourmet chocolates. Tours Mon.–Sat. at the 2nd Street location. Admission required. Online booking available.

**Salato Wildlife Education Center**  
1 Sportsman's Lane, Frankfort, (502) 564-7863;  
fw.ky.gov, click on Education, Facebook: Salato Wildlife Education Center  
Open seasonally, closing in late November. Opening day 2026 is March 10. Seasonal hours: Tues.–Sat., 9 a.m.–4 p.m. Admission rates apply.

**Kentucky Historical Society**  
Thomas D. Clark Center for Kentucky History, 100 West Broadway, (502) 564-1792  
Old State Capitol and Public Grounds, 300 West Broadway  
Kentucky Military History Museum, 125 East Main St.; history.ky.gov. Facebook: Kentucky Historical Society  
Hours for all three campus sites: Tues.–Sat., 10 a.m.–5 p.m. Martin F. Schmidt Research Library: Wed.–Sat., 10 a.m.–5 p.m.  
Purchase tickets on-site or online; good for admission to all three sites. Guided and self-guided tours available.

**Other Frankfort attractions**

**Buffalo Trace Distillery**  
113 Great Buffalo Trace; (866) 729-3722, buffalo tracedistillery.com, Facebook: Buffalo Trace Distillery  
America's oldest continuously-running distillery, with complimentary tastings and tours. Tour sizes are limited; check availability. Distillery and Gift Shop hours: Mon.–Sat. 9 a.m.–5 p.m.; Sun. 11 a.m.–5 p.m.

**Castle & Key Distillery**  
4445 McCracken Pike, (502) 395-9070; castleandkey.com, Facebook: Castle & Key  
Site dates back to 1887. Visitors can walk the Botanical Trail and gardens, admire the springhouse, taste Castle & Keys flagship spirits and take home a piece of history from the Boiler Room shop. No tickets required for the grounds. A variety of distillery tours available with admission fees. Check website for current hours.

**Liberty Hall Historic Site**  
202 Wilkinson St., Frankfort, (502) 227-2560; www.libertyhall.org, FB: Liberty Hall Historic Site  
Guided tours, Mon.–Sat. 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.; purchase online or on-site, \$10 adults, \$4 ages 6–12 and 5 and under free. Explore the historic home of the Brown family, a beautiful example of Federal architecture, built in 1796. Guests can also visit the 5-acre ornamental garden, open daily dawn to dusk. A tour of a new exhibit, *Journeys & Generations: The Interwoven Families of Liberty Hall*, is included with the cost of admission.



Sarah Booe is the vice president of Rebecca Ruth Candy—and the great-granddaughter of co-founder Ruth Hanly Booe. Photo: Rebecca Ruth Candy

During the Downtown Frankfort Chocolate Stroll on Feb. 7, participating businesses stay open late and offer treats from Rebecca Ruth Candy. Photo: Downtown Frankfort, Inc.



the sole business owner) plenty of time to experiment in her kitchen. A few years later, she still experimented, this time mixing candy with bourbon to create bourbon balls.

Today, those bourbon balls are just as popular as they were in the 1930s. “It’s a Kentucky staple dessert item,” says Sarah Booe, Rebecca Ruth Candy vice president and Ruth’s great-granddaughter. The fourth-generation, family-owned business now has three retail locations and recently opened a new tour center, complete with windows for viewing the candy-making process. Candy connoisseurs will learn more about Rebecca Ruth’s history and, of course, sample some chocolate.

“Rebecca Ruth Candy has been part of the community for generations,” says Booe. “We invite everyone to come out, enjoy themselves and taste a bit of our Kentucky tradition.”

### Salato Wildlife Education Center: Connecting with wildlife

In 2025, Salato Wildlife Education Center celebrated three decades of serving the community. “Salato has grown and changed over the years, but our goal remains the same—to inspire stewardship for Kentucky’s wildlife and promote opportunities for hunting, fishing, trapping and other related activities,” says Jules Foster, Conservation Education Program coordinator.

### A SWEET STROLL IN DOWNTOWN FRANKFORT

The Downtown Frankfort Chocolate Stroll is 5–8 p.m. February 7. “Our Downtown Chocolate Stroll combines chocolate and history and the charm of our downtown,” says Suzy Hosley, Downtown Frankfort Inc. executive director.

The fun kicks off at Capital City Museum, and visitors will enjoy giveaways, a photo booth and musical entertainment. Participating shops and restaurants stay open late, offering sweet samples from Rebecca Ruth Candy. Free shuttle service. Details, (502) 223-2261, downtownfrankfort.com/events.

Conservation educator Cassidy Cornett holds an American kestrel during a demonstration at the Salato Wildlife Education Center. Photo: Rachel Cummings/KDFWR



Salato offers exciting animal encounters—stand just feet from a black bear, touch a snake or peer into the eyes of a hawk—all while spotlighting how these animals fit into Kentucky’s natural landscape. The center also is home to some rare animals not typically seen in the wild, like the alligator snapping turtle, alligator gar and the eastern hellbender. Animal programs are offered daily. The center’s grounds include hiking trails, a fishing lake and picnic area.

“If you haven’t been to Salato in a while, or ever, you’ll be surprised by how much there is to see and do,” says Foster. “It’s an easy, affordable way to get outdoors and learn something new about Kentucky’s incredible wildlife.”

### Kentucky History Center: Bridging past and present

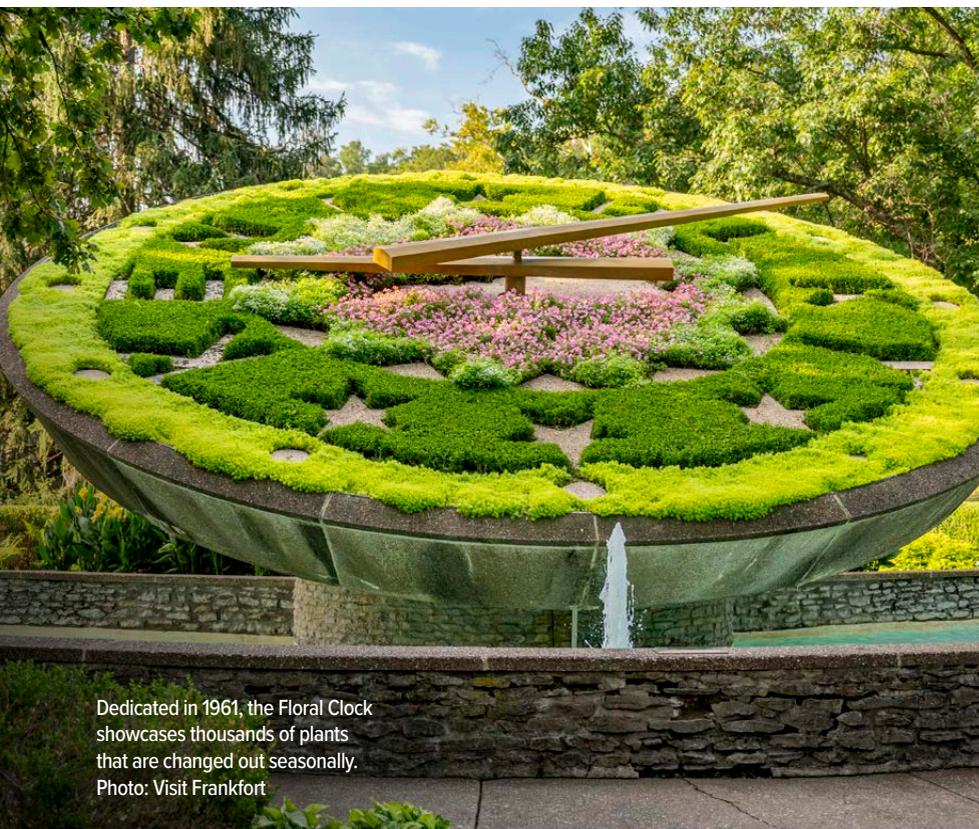
For history buffs, a Frankfort trip must include the Thomas D. Clark Center for Kentucky History, which locals call simply the Kentucky History Center. It’s part of the Kentucky Historical Society campus that also encompasses the Old State Capitol and the Kentucky Military History Museum.

### KENTUCKY FLORAL CLOCK

The giant Kentucky Floral Clock, suspended above a reflective pool on the Capitol grounds, is actually a 34-foot-wide planter weighing 100 tons.

The minute hand measures 20 feet long, while the hour hand is 15 feet long—each hand weighs approximately 500 pounds. More than 10,000 flowers, grown in local greenhouses, comprise the clock face.

In 2002, the floral clock was featured on the HGTV series *Great American Gardens*. It’s located at 700 Capital Avenue; more info, [visitfrankfort.com/art/kentucky-floral-clock](http://visitfrankfort.com/art/kentucky-floral-clock).



Dedicated in 1961, the Floral Clock showcases thousands of plants that are changed out seasonally. Photo: Visit Frankfort



Visitors admire the staircase at the Old State Capitol. It's part of the Kentucky Historical Society campus, along with the Kentucky Military History Museum and the Thomas D. Clark Center for Kentucky History. Photo: Kentucky Historical Society

KentuckyLiving.com

### Frankfort on YouTube

From wildlife to distilleries to history, find links to Frankfort attraction videos at KentuckyLiving.com

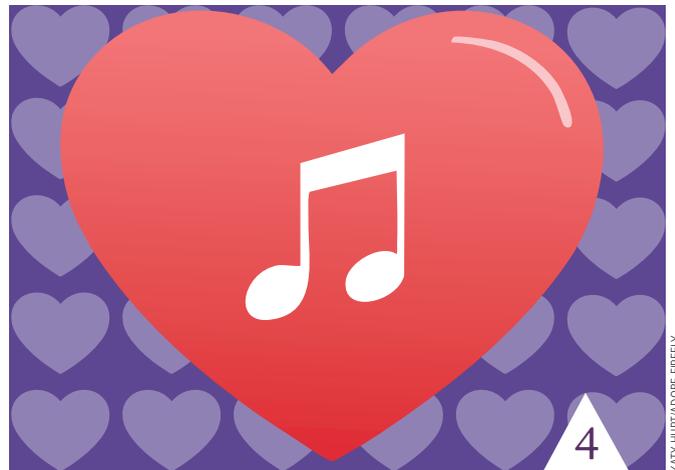
Exhibits include *A Kentucky Journey*, spanning our state's historical timeline. The Hall of Governors pays homage to past elected leaders. Over 3,000 artifacts are displayed, from campaign buttons to full-size cars and cannons. Hannah Litkenhous, Visitor Services manager, says there's something for everybody to enjoy, adding, "You can really see yourself reflected here."

You can spend an entire day exploring the history campus. The Old State Capitol is a National Historic Landmark and served as Kentucky's state capitol from 1830-1910. The building that is now the Kentucky Military History Museum was the state arsenal for more than 100 years and a Civil War-era munitions factory. Now, it preserves and explains Kentucky's military history.

"You just never know what you've missed until you come here and see this beautiful jewel that is Kentucky history," Litkenhous says. **KL**

**AMY COBB** is the author of two book series for children, *Band Geeks* and *Libby Wimbley*.

# EVENT CALENDAR



KATY HURT/ADOBE FIREFLY

## 1 SUNSET SCENE

What's more beautiful than a winter sunset? You can see one from the Pinnacle Knob fire tower—a premier spot for sunset viewing—at Cumberland Falls State Resort Park. The free February 21 outing is 3:30–5:30 p.m. Hike trail #2 to the tower, where a park naturalist will unlock the tower and guide a tour. Round trip is 1.5 miles; bring water and appropriate hiking shoes; trailhead parking is limited. Info, [parks.ky.gov/events](http://parks.ky.gov/events), (606) 528-4121.

## 2 OUTDOORS INDOORS

Adventure awaits at the Western Kentucky Outdoor Expo, February 7–8 at the Owensboro Convention Center. The one-stop shop for campers, hikers, hunters and outdoor enthusiasts—from novice to experienced—has everything from the latest technology and fishing gear to turkey calls and RVs. You might even catch a glimpse of Bigfoot! Concessions and food on site. Free admission. Hours: 9 a.m.–7 p.m. Saturday; 10 a.m.–6 p.m. Sunday. Info, [westernkyoutdoorexpo.com](http://westernkyoutdoorexpo.com), (270) 231-6131.

## 3 NPR HOSTS LIVE

Iconic National Public Radio hosts Ira Glass, pictured left, of *This American Life* and Jad Abumrad of *Radiolab* headline the Centre College Press Distinguished Lecture, 7:30 p.m. February 21 at Danville's Norton Center for the Arts. Besides insights from the speakers about their journalism careers and podcasts, the live event features video, audio clips and original music. Tickets start at \$28, at [nortoncenter.com](http://nortoncenter.com). Info, (859) 236-4692.

## 4 TIMELY TUNES

Isn't it romantic? Celebrate Valentine's Day with melodies fit for the occasion, courtesy of Orchestra Kentucky: Songs of Romance. The February 14 concert by the Southern Kentucky Performing Arts Center's professional resident orchestra begins at 7:30 p.m. Get in the mood for love with romantic standards by Cole Porter, Irving Berlin, Johnny Mercer and the Gershwins. Tickets start at \$31 at [theskypac.com](http://theskypac.com). More info, (270) 904-1880.

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20**

**The History and Legacy of the Underground Railroad in Northern Kentucky**, (859) 962-4149, Kenton County Library, Erlanger

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28**

**Americans Exhibit**, thru April 11th, (502) 732-7020, Carroll County Library, Carrollton

**SOUTH CENTRAL****WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4**

**Inherited Threads: Generations of Kentucky Quilters**, thru Nov. 2027, (270) 745-2592, Kentucky Museum, Bowling Green

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12**

**Men on Boats**, thru 22nd, (888) 394-3282, Flashback Theater Co., Somerset

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19**

**Arsenic and Old Lace**, thru March 1st, (270) 432-2276, Barn Lot Theatre, Edmonton

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21**

**Steel Magnolias**, thru 22nd, (270) 904-1880, SKYPAC, Bowling Green

**WESTERN****SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7**

**Orchid Sale in the Conservatory**, (270) 993-1234, Western Kentucky Botanical Garden, Owensboro

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17**

**Todd Hill and the Dixieland Devils**, (270) 821-2787, Glema Mahr Center for the Arts, Madisonville

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24**

**The Color Purple: The Musical**, (270) 887-4295, Alhambra Theatre, Hopkinsville

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27**

**Resurrection: A Journey Tribute**, (270) 821-2787, Glema Mahr Center for the Arts, Madisonville

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IN AN AD THIS SIZE  
CALL (800) 595-4846**

**BLUEGRASS****FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6**

**The Mountaintop**, thru 22nd, (859) 873-0648, Woodford Theatre, Versailles

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13**

**The Dinner Detective True Crime Murder Mystery Dinner Show**, 14th, 28th, (866) 496-0535, Hilton Lexington/Downtown

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 14**

**The Secret Garden**, thru 22nd, (859) 254-4546, Lexington Children's Theatre

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15**

**Marlon Wayans**, (877) 448-7469, Norton Center for the Arts, Danville

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27**

**Louisville Orchestra**, (877) 448-7469, Norton Center for the Arts, Danville

**EASTERN****SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7**

**Haunted Winter Expedition: Lewis Caveland Lodge**, (606) 286-7009, Carter Caves State Resort Park, Olive Hill

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12**

**Charlotte Dupuy: Suing for Freedom**, (606) 329-8888, Highlands Museum and Discovery Center, Ashland

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13**

**Valentines Under the Stars**, (606) 780-4342, MSU Space Science Center, Morehead

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27**

**Eastern Kentucky Outdoor Expo**, thru March 1st, (606) 776-3502, Morehead Conference Center

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28**

**The Cox Family & The Bluegrass Gospel Boys**, (606) 945-5999, Meadowgreen Appalachian Music Park, Clay City

**NORTH CENTRAL****MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2**

**NouLou Chamber Players: Strings Attached**, (615) 417-2110, Oxmoor Farm, Louisville

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7**

**Valen-Zines Adult Workshop**, (502) 589-0102, KMAC Contemporary Art Museum, Louisville

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11**

**National Farm Machinery Show**, thru 14th, (502) 367-5000, Kentucky Exposition Center, Louisville

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13**

**The Dinner Detective True Crime Murder Mystery Dinner Show**, 14th, 28th, (866) 496-0535, Tempo by Hilton Louisville Downtown NuLu

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 14**

**Clay Date Adult Workshop**, 15th, (502) 589-0102, KMAC Contemporary Art Museum, Louisville

**NORTHERN****SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1**

**Buffalo Rose & Bryce Mullins**, (484) 686-8087, DownTowne Listening Room, Burlington

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13**

**Eurydice**, thru 22nd, (859) 572-5100, NKU-Stauss Theatre, Highland Heights

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15**

**Cincinnati Camerata**, (859) 431-2060, St. Mary's Cathedral Basilica of Assumption, Covington

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17**

**Mary Settles: The Last Shaker at Pleasant Hill**, (606) 584-2915, First Presbyterian Church, Maysville

**CALL BEFORE YOU GO** as event days can change. **SUBMIT ALL EVENTS ONLINE AT KENTUCKYLIVING.COM.** For FREE print listing consideration of Kentucky events, submit two months in advance, **by March 1 for the May issue.**

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**1 BUNDLED UP**

Henry Booker was six weeks old when his mom took this photo—all layered up for the first cold days of his first winter. His parents, Levi and Renee Booker of Upton, are Farmers RECC consumer-members.

**2 POLAR PAGES**

Taylor County RECC consumer-members Russell and Phyllis Detherage visited Antarctica on a Viking Expedition cruise—and brought their December issue, too!

**3 WINTER BERRIES**

A Northern Flicker enjoys a hearty meal of sumac berries on a snowy day in Nancy. Photo by Debbie Niehaus, Lexington, a consumer-member of South Kentucky RECC.

**4 HAPPY HUSKY**

Sky is a Siberian husky—so cold weather is exciting, and snow in Kentucky is even better. Photo by Amy Gillon, Bowling Green, a Warren RECC consumer-member.

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# KENTUCKY kids



## Trying new foods

Add something new to your plate. Pick a vegetable you have never tried before. You may discover one you really enjoy!

## Green Team Tip

Grow native, pollinator-friendly plants in your garden or landscaping. You can also make beautiful bouquets from all the wildflowers.

— Krystal Sharp, age 6



Send us your green team tips!

Enter KIDS Contest

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

## FIGURING FRACTIONS

Violet earned \$30 shoveling snow in her neighbors' driveways.

She used  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the money to buy her brother a birthday present. She spent  $\frac{1}{5}$  of what was left over on a hot chocolate and put the rest in her piggy bank.



- A) How much did she spend on the present?
- B) How much did she spend on the hot chocolate?
- C) How much did she save in her piggy bank?

Answers: A)  $\$30 \times \frac{1}{3} = \$10$  B)  $\$20 \times \frac{1}{5} = \$4$  C)  $\$20 - \$4 = \$16$

## Get Up and Go!

Getting a little exercise each day—like going for a fun walk or a bike ride—can boost your health, brighten your mood and help you get better sleep.



Time to get active and energized!

## Tell us a joke!

What do you call a happy farmer?

A jolly rancher!

— Finleigh Robin, age 11



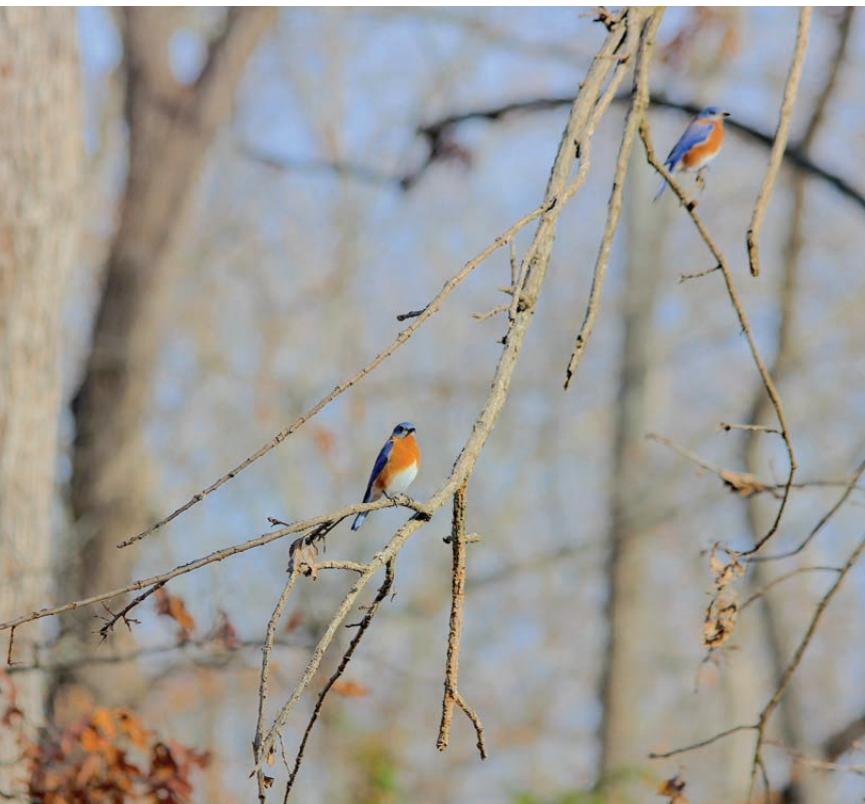
## Did You Know?

The Kentucky warbler spends much of its time close to the ground, hiding its nest in thick weeds or bushes, but it often climbs into the trees to sing.

# GREAT OUTDOORS

## Planting for wildlife

*Create your own backyard oasis*



With the right cover and food, bluebirds will find you. Photo: Ken McBroom

▲ **IF YOU LOVE TO WATCH WILDLIFE**, then you should consider planting your yard to attract animals and birds. You don't need a large area to draw wildlife if you plan and plant accordingly. Stick to native plants and create a wildlife oasis right outside your window.

Kentucky has many native wildflowers, shrubs and trees that attract many types of wildlife—even those just passing through. While deer and turkey are great to watch, they usually need larger areas than most people have. But anyone can plant for birds, bees and butterflies.

I recently decided to create an area in my yard to attract my favorite birds, like warblers, bluejays and woodpeckers. I also want to offer food for pollinators like bees and butterflies. Bird feeders

and nesting boxes are a great way to attract birds but planting habitat that the birds need for cover and food will keep them around longer.

One of the most effective ways to support habitat is also the simplest—choose an area for habitat and stop mowing. I did this a few years ago, mowing a portion of our yard just once annually. It's a shady area, and grass struggles to grow, but the native wildflowers and weeds thrive. After a couple of years, some large, blossoming wildflowers have emerged. Eventually, I saw a monarch butterfly on one of these flowers and did some research. This is where my excitement blossomed into planting my yard specifically for wildlife.

We found that letting our yard grow on its own not only reduced mowing chores but also made it beautiful all year long. It's amazing how fast wild plants will grow when left to nature. It is also surprising how fast wildlife can locate the plants that are vital to them. By allowing plants to grow naturally, you will quickly see more wildlife in your yard.

You can also give your habitat a boost by planting the right things, including wildflowers, cover thickets, native warm-season grasses, cool season grasses and monarch plantings. You can even plant specifically for one of my favorite birds, the prothonotary warbler. Find links to more information on each of these plantings at [KentuckyLiving.com](http://KentuckyLiving.com).

Sketch out your plan, beginning with the area that you want to plant. You can go all out with plants—but you can also let your yard grow wild and see what develops first, then add plants to increase wildlife appeal. Whatever you choose, planting with wildlife in mind will create outstanding viewing opportunities—and tending to a wildlife garden is one more way to enjoy Kentucky's great outdoors. **KL**

**KEN MCBROOM**, an outdoors writer/photographer, created [RamblingAngler.com](http://RamblingAngler.com). McBroom grew up in Lynchburg, Tennessee, and now lives in western Kentucky.

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- Beth Sumner, Executive Director,  
Cadiz-Trigg County Tourist &  
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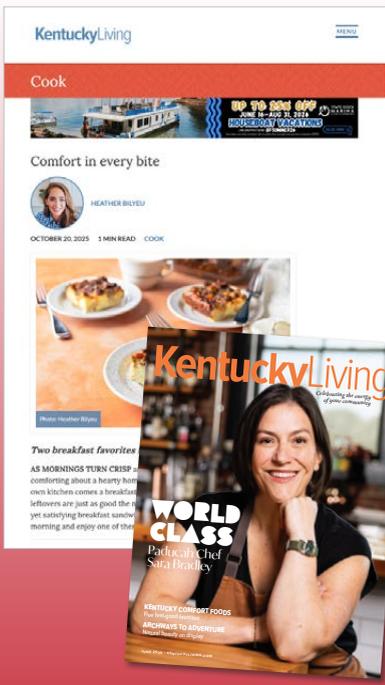
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# A handprint

*Moments becoming memories*



**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](http://KentuckyLiving.com): About/People.

**WHEN THE SUN** is filtering through the glass entry door to the kitchen some mornings, I can still see a faint little handprint left by my great-granddaughter Kinsley when she was 2.

I don't notice it much anymore, but sometimes when I turn from the coffee maker and am standing in just the right place, the small, semi-transparent hand catches my eye and brings a smile.

She lives in Utah, 1,600 miles away, so I don't see her as much as I'd like. My wife, Jackie, passed away a few months before she would have seen Kinsley for the first time; a dress for Kinsley was the last Christmas gift she bought.

So the handprint, while it may be only a smudge to some, is to me a Valentine, a Christmas gift and a little handful of poignant memories.

There was a time when I might have erased it with glass cleaner if I noticed it at all, but children's handprints, and even a few accidental crayon marks, often become treasures when viewed from life's other end. So I've been careful to avoid the handprint when cleaning the glass.

We'll never know its true composition—short of laboratory analysis—but I'm guessing it might have McNugget or Krispy Kreme properties.

When Kinsley left it, she was gazing in near disbelief out the back door at fireflies—which I call "lightning bugs"—lifting from the backyard at twilight. She had never seen them, her parents told me; they don't seem to have them where they live in Utah.

I may have given them a lecture on the dangers of bringing up a child in a place where there are no lightning bugs, before shooing them into the backyard where Kinsley hesitantly gave chase to the blinking lights with wings.

It took me back to my own lightning bug



nights and June bug days as a Kentucky farm kid, and even to a large "snap bug" (click beetle), which I kept for a while as a pet.

Kinsley eventually caught two or three lightning bugs, gently cupped them in her hands and watched, wide-eyed, as they magically produced beautiful light—without batteries, or even energy from our local rural electric cooperative!

Thus began another generation of lightning bug lovers in our family.

At last, the hand that captured light in the backyard would wave goodbye, as Kinsley and her parents left for the plane trip back to Utah. But her wonderful handprint lingers on the back door glass to wave and remind me of a quote attributed to Dr. Seuss: "Sometimes you will never know the value of a moment, until it becomes a memory."

As I write this reflection, word arrives that Kinsley, now 4 years old, has a brand-new baby brother, Brooks Garrison Crawford. Maybe there will be another tiny handprint left on the kitchen door glass, one summer evening when he sees lightning bugs for the first time. **KL**



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