

# KentuckyLiving

*Celebrating the energy  
of your community*

## *Preserving the past*

Collaborative  
cemetery restoration

### **ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY**

Plans for growth

### **MAKE A SPLASH**

Visit amusement parks

### **COUNTRY ROOTS**

Sandy Hook's Leah Blevins

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**KENTUCKY**  
**HISTORICAL**  
**SOCIETY**



# MAY

VOL 80 | NO 5

14

## BUILDING OPPORTUNITY

Sam Howard, CEO of Trace Creek Construction is building economic opportunities in Northeastern Kentucky—not just for current workers, but also for the next generation.

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## ALL DRESSED UP

Country singer Leah Blevins draws on church connections, family stories and memories from her childhood in Sandy Hook on her new album, *All Dressed Up*, which was released March 20.

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## PRESERVING THE PAST

**ON THE COVER** May is National Historic Preservation Month. Learn more about how to preserve historic cemeteries, common challenges preservationists face and why old cemeteries still matter.

**ON THE COVER** Spencer County Historic Cemetery Preservation Coordinator Terri Cooper cleans a headstone at the McGee family cemetery in Spencer County. May is National Historic Preservation Month, but cemetery preservation groups across Kentucky are maintaining their local burial grounds every month of the year. Learn more about cemetery preservation on page 20. Photo: Joe Imel

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## OUR MISSION STATEMENT

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

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# Focused on service

*TVA leads now and into the future*

**AT A TIME** when Kentucky and America are facing serious energy questions, balancing reliability, affordability and growing demand, I am pleased to welcome the Tennessee Valley Public Power Association to Louisville for its annual meeting May 18–20. These are not abstract issues. They affect families, businesses and communities across our state, and gatherings like this one ensure those conversations stay grounded in real-world solutions.

Kentucky's 24 electric distribution cooperatives are in a unique position, receiving their electricity from different power providers. Sixteen Kentucky co-ops own and receive power from East Kentucky Power Cooperative. Three are member-owners of Big Rivers Electric Cooperative. The remaining five—Gibson Electric, Pennyrite Electric, Tri-County Electric, Warren RECC and West Kentucky RECC—are proud partners of the Tennessee Valley Authority. These five co-ops are also active members of TVPPA, and we appreciate their leadership in speaking up for Kentucky energy consumers.

Since its founding in 1933, TVA has been an integral and influential force in the development of electric power across the region. As the nation's largest public power provider, its mission to improve quality of life remains as relevant today as it was nearly a century ago. From hydroelectric generation to natural gas, coal, solar and nuclear energy, TVA continues to lead innovation across a diverse portfolio, helping ensure the reliability that co-op members depend on every day.

That leadership will only grow more important as nuclear energy becomes an increasingly vital part of America's energy future. TVA's experience operating nuclear facilities and



TIM WEBB

advancing next-generation technologies offers valuable lessons for utilities across the country. All Kentucky electric cooperative members benefit from TVA's role in our commonwealth and the broader region.

Like all electric cooperatives, TVA partners are focused on keeping power affordable and reliable in an increasingly complex environment. Co-ops must operate within the requirements of laws and regulations, even as those policies can add costs to the system. Meanwhile, inflation continues to drive up the price of materials and equipment needed to deliver electricity. These challenges will be front and center during TVPPA's time in Kentucky.

Through it all, the focus remains on the people served at the end of the line. We appreciate TVA's partnership and the shared commitment to ensuring dependable, affordable power for the communities we serve, today and into the future.

*Chris*

**CHRIS PERRY**  
President/CEO



**KENTUCKY ELECTRIC  
COOPERATIVES**

# FROM THE EDITOR

**IN MY MIND**, the month of May means transitions. Whether it's seasonal, as we get a glimpse of summer sun, or through phases of life with the end of the school year, transitions surround us.



This hits hard this year as my youngest wraps up his final year of daycare and prepares to enter kindergarten in the fall. Time waits for no one, and while it's important to look back, it's crucial to live in the present with hope for the future.

This month's issue has a little of all that—honoring the past through cemetery restoration (page 20), visiting amusement parks to truly live in the moment (page 34) and planning for economic development and prosperity in the future (page 14).

From preschool, high school and college graduations to Mother's Day on May 10 to Memorial Day at the end of the month, may you find peace in the transitions of your life.

*Shannon*

**SHANNON BROCK,  
EDITOR**

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MEEN/ENAD/BE STOCK

## CAST YOUR VOTE

### Best in Kentucky voting begins May 1

Thousands of *Kentucky Living* readers nominated their favorites in 30 categories—now it's time to vote. Visit KentuckyLiving.com to cast your vote for one of the three finalists in each category. Voting ends May 31. Thanks to this year's sponsor, Kentucky Lake CVB. Winners will be announced August 19 on KentuckyLiving.com, Facebook and YouTube.



JOE IMEL

## HONORING THE PAST

### Resources for cemetery preservation

Curious about how to get started preserving historic cemeteries? Read the story on page 20 to get inspired, then visit us online for links to articles, videos and more from the National Park Service and the Kentucky Heritage Council.



## SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY

### Deadline to apply is June 5

Women in Rural Electrification is offering three \$1,000 scholarships, open to any eligible college student whose family is served by a Kentucky electric cooperative. Visit KentuckyLiving.com and search for "WIRE 2026" or contact your local co-op.



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# A peek into the shadows

May has been designated as Mental Health Awareness Month since 1949. Today, mental health is more widely considered a part of overall health, but it hasn't always been that way.

Independence author Crystal Caudill delves into the perception of mental illness during the turn of the 19th century Gilded Age in her novel, *Sung in the Shadows*. Set in Cincinnati and involving actual businesses of the time, the story combines the world of performing arts with a dark and dangerous mystery, sprinkled with a little romance.

Once-famed opera singer Constanza Brisbane, after allegedly killing a man, has been deemed mentally unstable and institutionalized in the Longview Asylum for the Insane. The lingering threats resulting from Constanza's checkered past cause her and her family to live a life looking over one shoulder, taking extreme measures to avoid being found.

Meanwhile, her daughter, Nora, is nearing spinster age, further complicated by the overprotected and sheltered life upon that Nora's father insists she lead. She has her mother's talent, but will it ever reach an audience's ears? Not if her father has his way.

A coincidence in timing introduces Ezekiel Beaumont into Nora's life. Ezekiel's mother is also a patient in the asylum, where he visits her during breaks from his theater work. Thanks in part to Mrs. Beaumont's very expressive and cantankerous cat, Tristan, the two become acquainted, much against Nora's better judgment. Will Ezekiel open the world of opera, maybe even of love, to Nora—or will he open the door to danger for her and her family?

Be prepared for a rising heart rate and edge-of-the-seat suspense as both Constanza's and Nora's stories unfold. Caudill also candidly shares the commonly prescribed treatments mental patients endured in this time period, all in the name of recovery.

When Longview opened in 1860, it was considered the best-appointed institution of its kind in the country. With the inclusion of a chapel, a library and even a bowling alley, Longview presented more like a resort than a hospital. However, overcrowding, high staff turnover rates and a limited understanding of mental health contributed to the nightmare stories that came from its inner sanctum that visiting families were never allowed to see.

» Penny Woods

## Research and writing

Crystal Caudill grew up in Georgetown but relocated to Northern Kentucky and decided to get to know Cincinnati by setting her books there. She is a self-proclaimed history nerd who loves researching her themes as much as writing about them. Writing has been a part of her life for so long that she says, "It became the tool through which God taught and spoke to me. The stories came through my fingertips, but they were marked with His fingerprints."

*Sung in the Shadows*, (Kregel Publishing, \$17.99), can be purchased on Amazon or at any major book retailer. Connect with Caudill at [www.crystalcaudill.com](http://www.crystalcaudill.com).



## ENERGY EFFICIENCY

tip

Air sealing is often associated with keeping cold air out during winter, but it's just as important during summer. Tiny cracks and worn weather stripping allow cool, conditioned air to escape and hot, humid air to seep indoors. Take a few minutes to check for drafts, replace weather stripping and seal leaks.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)



SCOTT VAN OSDOL



## Fact check

Mantle Rock Nature Preserve, a certified site on the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail, is located in Smithland in the service territory of Jackson Purchase Energy Cooperative and managed by The Nature Conservancy. An article in our April issue mistakenly identified the location with another cooperative. We regret the error—but we're happy to call additional attention to this important historical site.



KENTUCKY TOURISM

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.

## featured FRAMES

A blanket of roses is prepared for the winner of the Kentucky Derby. Photo: Dan Dry

## Brock elected VP of national editors association

Shannon Brock, editor of *Kentucky Living*, was elected vice president of the National Rural Electric Statewide Editors Association during the group's meeting in March in Nashville.

SEA supports electric cooperative statewide consumer publications and the people who produce them through training and education activities. It includes 32 statewide magazines, which reach 12 million readers in 42 states served by cooperatives.

"Electric cooperatives have a wonderful story to tell," says Brock, who began as managing editor of *Kentucky Living* in 2015. "The editors and teams that produce our

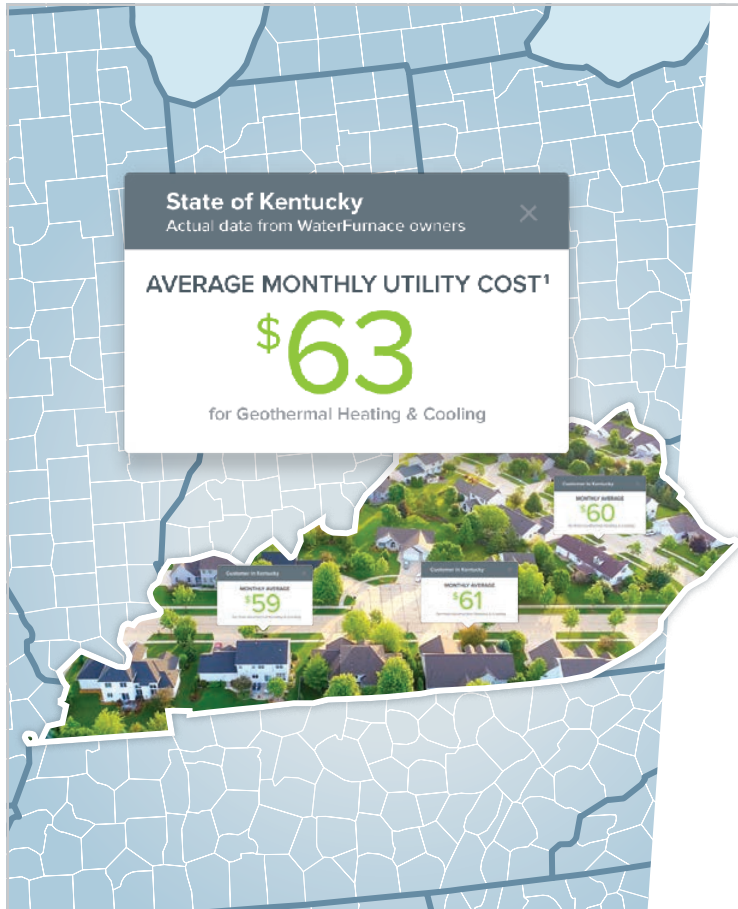
respective magazines have so much talent and passion. It's an honor to represent them and help lead our organization at this pivotal moment in the electric industry."

Brock will serve a two-year term as vice president; often, the vice president goes on to serve a two-year term as president.

The current SEA president is Leon Espinoza, senior vice president of content for Pioneer Utility Services, based in Oregon. Colten Bradford, editor of *Illinois Country Living*, was elected as the group's secretary/treasurer.



Shannon Brock speaks at a meeting in Louisville. Photo: Wade Harris



## Symphony Insight

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1. 13.22¢ kWh - Kentucky's Electricity Monthly Rate Average (December 2025) [eia.gov/electricity](http://eia.gov/electricity) | Actual data powered by Symphony

# Powering future leaders

*Co-ops Vote drives rural participation ahead of primary*

JOE ARNOLD, ERIN KELLY AND RITA ALEXANDER

**AHEAD OF THE MAY 12** primary election in Kentucky, Secretary of State Michael Adams is again partnering with Kentucky Electric Cooperatives on Co-ops Vote. Launched in 2016, the nonpartisan initiative aims to boost voter registration and turnout in areas served by cooperatives.

Though co-ops serve more than 70% of Kentucky's landmass, voter participation in rural areas has historically not kept up with other parts of the commonwealth.

"Co-ops Vote works," Adams says. "We've seen an increase in rural turnout since you all started this program. And that makes a huge difference. Historically in Kentucky, urban turnout was high and rural turnout was low. And urban turnout has remained high, but we've seen a big pop in rural turnout, I think, largely because of the success of this program."

In March, Adams addressed nearly 90 student delegates representing their local co-ops on the Frankfort Youth Tour, a leadership program that

brings high school juniors to the state's capital for a day of learning about government, meeting elected leaders and exploring issues that shape their communities and the electric coops that serve them.

In 2025, 13 students who also participated in the weeklong Washington Youth Tour were inspired to host voter registration drives in their hometowns, resulting in hundreds of newly eligible Kentucky voters becoming registered.

"Co-ops Vote helps students understand that civic engagement starts now, not someday," Adams says. "By encouraging young Kentuckians to register, speak up and get involved, we're empowering them to shape their communities and the future of our commonwealth."

## Honored for leadership

At its annual meeting in March, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association presented Tony Campbell, the outgoing president and CEO

Maeson Martin, a Kenergy Youth Tour delegate, asks a question during the Frankfort Youth Tour in March. Photo: Tim Webb



of East Kentucky Power Cooperative, with the President's Award for his outstanding leadership contributions to rural electrification and to the nation, his state and his community.

Among Campbell's most high-profile accomplishments was an invitation to speak about energy policy at the White House in April 2025.

"Tony's recent appearance at the White House was not a celebration of politics—it was a validation of persistence," writes Alan Ahrman, EKPC's board chairman, in recommending Campbell for the award. "For years, he raised concerns about the consequences of energy policies that ignored baseload realities. He didn't seek the spotlight, but he refused to stay silent while the needs of rural Kentuckians were being overlooked."

"Tony has been a strong champion of electric reliability, sounding the alarm about threats to the electric grid and stressing the importance of always-available generation resources that are critical to keeping the lights on," says NRECA President Mike Partin.

Campbell, who will retire from the co-op in June, is currently serving as an adviser to new EKPC President and CEO Don Mosier.

"I would like to accept this award for the many electric cooperative leaders across this nation who have joined me in this vital fight to protect reliability and affordability for millions of Americans," Campell says.



### New CEO at Gibson Cooperatives

After nearly 30 years at Gibson Electric Membership Corporation, Charles Phillips is the new president and CEO of both the co-op and its wholly owned, not-for-profit broadband subsidiary, Gibson Connect.

"I am grateful for the confidence and trust the board has placed in me," Phillips says. "I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to serve in this leadership role and will strive to continue Gibson Electric's and Gibson Connect's important work in supporting and providing excellent service to our members, subscribers and communities."

Phillips succeeds Dan Rodamaker, who retired on May 1 after 23 years of service.

A registered professional engineer, Phillips has held dual roles as vice president of technical services for Gibson Electric and vice president of operations for Gibson Connect since September 2017.

"He brings a unique combination of proven leadership, deep technical expertise, and a clear vision for the future of the cooperatives," says Wray Pulliam, the co-op's board chairman. "Charles understands both where Gibson Electric and Gibson Connect have been and where we need to go; and he has earned the respect of board members, employees and partners alike." Gibson Electric serves about 3,500 consumer-members in Kentucky and more than 36,000 in Tennessee. **KL**

▲ NRECA CEO Jim Matheson, right, presents Tony Campbell, outgoing president and CEO of East Kentucky Power Cooperative, with the President's Award. Photo: Denny Gainer/NRECA

◀ Charles Phillips is the fifth president and CEO in Gibson Electric's 89-year history. Photo: Gibson Electric



# “The gift that keeps on giving”



George Wilson found his calling volunteering with youth. In 2008, he received the President’s Volunteer Service Award, the highest service honor awarded by the White House to recognize deserving volunteers who dedicate hundreds of hours each year to serving others. Photos: Bo Cole

## Wilson helps youth in McCracken County

### PADUCAH

Growing up, George Wilson worked alongside his grandfather, George Reeves Jr., on the family’s 140-acre farm in Paducah. Wilson gardened, chopped firewood and learned to drive a tractor. “If I was not in school or playing ball, this is where I was at,” says Wilson, a Jackson Purchase Energy Cooperative consumer-member.

Those childhood days on the farm cultivated Wilson’s work ethic, teaching accountability and responsibility—qualities that later contributed to his successful professional football career. Wilson played wide receiver, and eventually safety, in the NFL for the Detroit Lions, Buffalo Bills and Tennessee Titans.

Wilson says he happily gives back to the community—Paducah—that gave so much to him.



In Buffalo, Wilson worked with the team’s community relations department, visiting children’s hospitals and local schools. Wilson soon identified an area he was passionate about—helping youth. In 2010, Wilson formed Saving Adolescents From the Everyday Trials of Youth (SAFETY) Foundation. He retired from the NFL in 2014 and six years later returned to Paducah, where his nonprofit organization serves the city’s youth.

Wilson says the SAFETY Foundation positions kids “to be bold and courageous in pursuing their life goals, dreams and aspirations.” The foundation is dedicated to youth mentorship, community programs and developing skills, like networking and communicating effectively. “I just want the kids to know that being successful doesn’t require perfection,” Wilson says. “It requires purpose.”

This month, Wilson will distribute three \$5,000 checks to local nonprofit groups to help finance after-school and youth enrichment programs. The funds will be awarded during a Nelly concert held at The Carson Center for Performing Arts in Paducah and hosted by Wilson’s event company, GW Experiences. Wilson says, “I’m doing that

to try to improve the quality of life in our community, give our community something to do and something to look forward to.”

On June 5-6, the SAFETY Foundation hosts a two-day Summer Sports Fest at Paducah Tilghman High School. The event features bowling, food, prizes and more for kids from preschool through high school. Learn more at [gwsafety.org](http://gwsafety.org).

Wilson is the fourth-generation steward of the farm—now called Phonograph Farms—that taught him important life lessons at a young age. He fondly refers to the land as “the gift that keeps on giving” and offers an event venue, Reevesville Manor, on the property, so others can visit to make memories, just as Wilson’s family has for over a century.

Paducah has always been special to Wilson, and he values the teachers, coaches and church congregants who impacted his life. He says, “I just wanted to come back and be able to pour into the community and invest into the community that invested in me.” **KL**

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



# Business carries on grandma's legacy

*Basket Maker's Supply in Taylorsville*

KEVIN OSBOURN

**WHEN ARDIA HERNDON** taught basket weaving on the family's Taylorsville farm decades ago, her granddaughter, Dani Sue Anderson, learned much more than how to make baskets.

Anderson, owner of Basket Maker's Supply in Taylorsville, said her grandmother taught her everything needed for life, and Anderson has used that education to build a wildly successful business.

"In her weaving space, I learned how to be a friend, a teacher and a spouse," says Anderson. "It was never just about a basket. It was about how our lives are woven together."

Although her grandmother passed seven years ago, her legacy lives on. Basket Maker's Supply is a two-year-old company served by Salt River Electric, offering professionally designed basket kits,



weaving supplies and classes that draw customers worldwide.

It all started when her grandmother attended the 1982 World's Fair in Knoxville. She brought an egg basket kit back to Taylorsville and soon started teaching others her craft.

Anderson never forgot those lessons, launching her first original basket design and teaching business in 2017. She and her husband, Christopher, returned to Taylorsville four years ago.

Two years ago, she purchased the Basket Maker's Catalog company from Beth Hester, Scott Gilbert and Mike Sims, who were retiring and looking for the right buyer. When she learned they had known her grandmother, she knew it was a match made in heaven.

"I felt like a puddle," Anderson says. "I knew in that moment, before I'd ever met the owners or walked into their warehouse, that I was the buyer of Basket Maker's Catalog."

With the business now thriving where her grandmother taught, life has come full circle.

"Only the goodness of God could orchestrate this life I'm living," she says. "I'm creative, but nowhere near creative enough to dream this life up." **KL**



Basketmakersupply.com

**LOCATIONS:**  
Taylorsville

**INDUSTRY:**  
Basket supplies

**ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE:**  
Salt River Electric



Dani Sue Anderson, left, learned basket weaving from her grandmother on the family farm in Taylorsville. She is shown with Ava Groves, who has worked for Basket Maker's Supply from its inception. Photo: Carol Herndon

## *Barn becomes family's weaving home*

A visit to Basket Maker's Supply feels like stepping into a living piece of Kentucky heritage.

Housed in Dani Sue Anderson's grandparents' beautifully renovated barn, the space features country warmth and Southern hospitality.

Visitors can browse more than 120 basket designs, buy basket and chair-caning supplies, and watch the family at work: Aunt Jill Herndon checking quality, Valerie Armstrong pulling orders, Christopher Anderson managing the website and Dani Sue teaching new designs.

Her Dad, Scott Herndon, lives nearby, along with uncle Darrell Herndon and cousin Heather Kingsolver. You may also run into Dani and Christopher's daughters, Lillie Grace, 13; Hannah Kay, 10; and Ella Rae, 7.

During open weaves, you can come to the farm and choose a project, weave at your own pace, or just come to buy materials and T-shirts. Learn more at [basketmakersupply.com](http://basketmakersupply.com).

# BUILDING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

in Northeastern Kentucky

WHIT DIXON



What was once known as a quiet corner of the state is now seeing momentum as private investment and local leadership push to grow the future of Northeastern Kentucky. In Lewis and surrounding counties, economic development is being driven not solely by outsiders, but by the people who work, live and believe in the region.



Sam Howard, CEO of Trace Creek Construction in Lewis County, is committed to investing in his home community. Photo: Tim Webb

“If those who can, won’t, who will?” asks Sam Howard, lifelong Lewis County resident and contractor. “Communities don’t grow without outside influence, but they also don’t survive without people at home willing to step up.”

For decades, counties in this region have struggled to find opportunities that would produce economic growth, mostly due to factors like population decline and limited outside interest in the area. Howard, CEO of Trace Creek Construction, has seen those challenges firsthand. Rather than waiting for change to come from elsewhere, he believes meaningful progress starts locally. His company, which was founded in 1993, has built a reputation for reliability across Kentucky.

“When we tell an owner we’ll build a project, we build it the way we’re asked to build it, and it’s completed

on time,” Howard says. That same mindset now guides his approach to economic development efforts.

While his company operates across the state, Howard has stayed committed to investing time and resources back into the community he calls home.

“I’ve never wanted to be anywhere else,” he says. “During my career, I have worked all over the country, but right here is where I belong. This is home. It’s where I want to build something that lasts.”

Howard talks about Lewis County’s future not only as a business opportunity, but as a responsibility. He believes driving growth in the region is something he is called to do. “I believe I was supposed to make a generational change in Lewis County,” Howard says. “If it takes every dime I’ve got to do it, that’s what I’ll do.”



Left, Howard with East Kentucky Power Cooperative Director of Economic Development Rodney Hitch. Photo: Tim Webb

Howard and his wife, Julee, with their nine grandchildren. Howard wants to create more opportunities for future generations in Lewis and surrounding counties. Photo: Howard family

Many other contributors are joining Howard in the drive to attract future businesses to the region. These economic development efforts include improving education and workforce infrastructure, community-focused facilities and taking meaningful action to create lasting jobs, all while keeping the values that define the region.

“These initiatives aren’t just to attract future employers,” Howard says. “We want to give young people better reasons to stay, support local schools and services and continue to positively

improve the overall well-being of the area. When communities invest in themselves, it can spark outside economic interest that leads to expansion.

“You can’t expect people to believe in a place if the people who live there don’t believe in it first.”

For Howard, that belief is deeply personal. “I have nine grandchildren that live within 15 minutes of my house,” he says. “They want to stay in Lewis County. I want them to stay in Lewis County.” Howard says he wants to help ensure the next generation of his community

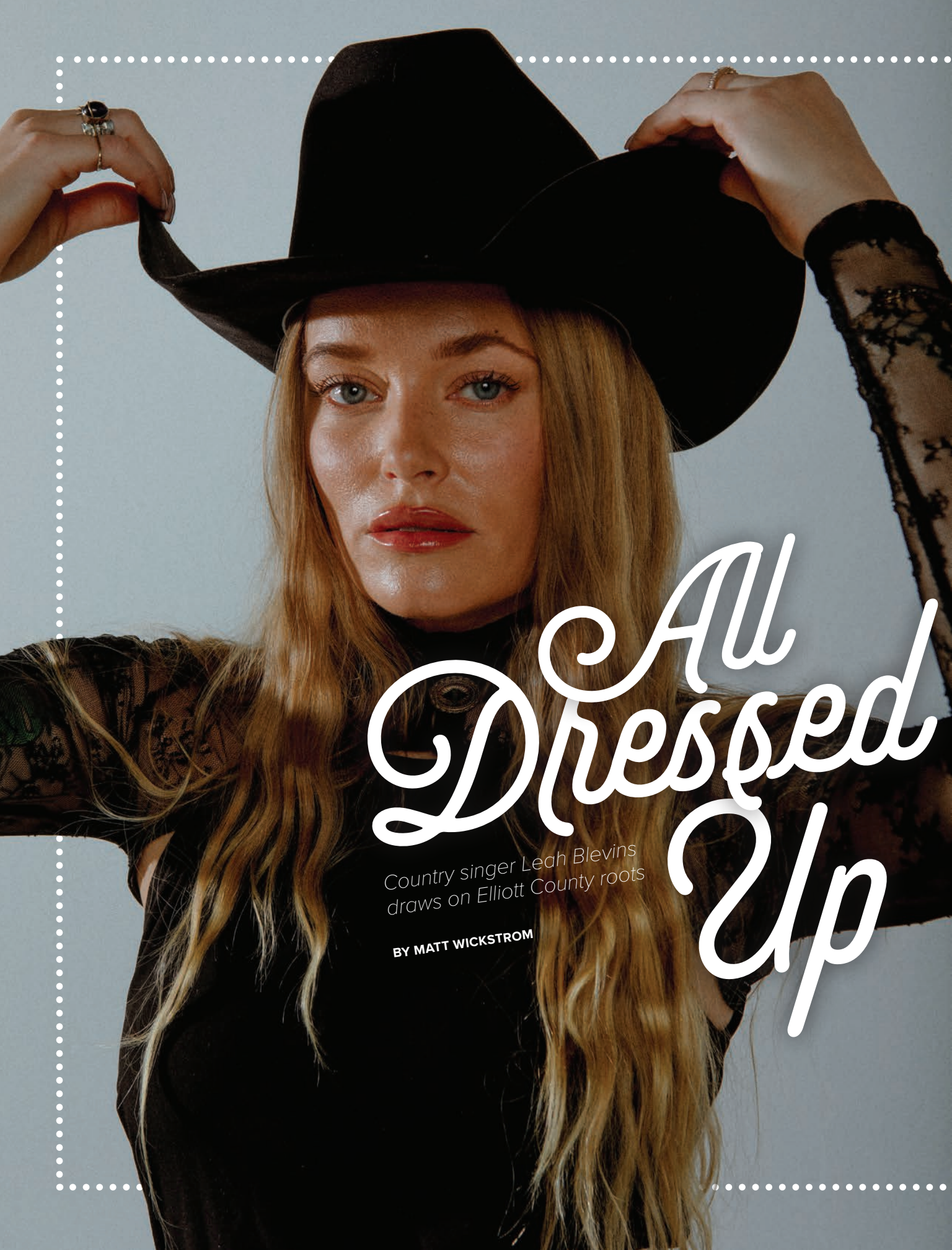
does not have to leave to build a career, and for Northeastern Kentucky to be a place for young adults to settle and raise future generations.

What would Howard consider success decades from now? “If we were to sit down and look at the results 30 years from now, I would want Eastern Kentucky to be self-sufficient,” he says. He acknowledges progress will not happen overnight, but still believes in a flourishing future for the area because of what he calls its strong Kentucky values and local leaders who truly believe in their people. **KL**



## OPPORTUNITY ABOUNDS

Sam Howard currently is working closely with the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development and local leaders to create opportunity just south of the Ohio River. Known as the Carrs Site in the Lewis County seat of Vanceburg, the nearly 1,000-acre property is being positioned as a long-term asset for the region. The site is ready to attract future industrial and business development that will generate sustainable jobs and help provide economic stability for Northeastern Kentucky.



# All Dressed Up

Country singer Leah Blevins  
draws on Elliott County roots

BY MATT WICKSTROM

**It's been said that pressure creates diamonds.** If that's the case, then Leah Blevins' latest record *All Dressed Up* is a prized gem.

On her new album, which was released March 20, the Sandy Hook-born singer delivers the most reflective and expansive collection of her career thus far.

*All Dressed Up* sees Blevins reflecting on her 20s and early 30s after moving to Nashville, but many tracks also recall the singer's childhood singing in church and listening to her grandfather's band, The Harbor Masters, in Eastern Kentucky. Blevins' church connection is particularly prevalent on songs like *Hey God, Be Careful*, *Throwing Stones* and *Diggin' In The Coal*.

"Growing up in a small town, it's often human nature to want to get out of there as soon as you can," says Blevins. "But I've come to find that back home in Kentucky is where I find the most peace, and the church is a big part of that. As I've grown up and learned more about myself, I've discovered that I enjoy being in simplicity, and that's exactly what Sandy Hook, Kentucky, provides for me."

*Diggin' In The Coal* also serves as a nod to a rough upbringing that forced Blevins to grow up fast. Like Loretta Lynn's *Coal Miner's Daughter*, Blevins is a coal miner's granddaughter. She hints at the relationship with her image of a "yellow bird"—a reference to the canaries coal miners used to test for safety before entering mines.

"I held onto that thought for so long and wound up transforming it into a song about what a personal relationship looks like," says Blevins. "To me, that means thinking about the Lord and how I came to know Jesus for myself."

On the wispy ballad *Lonely*, Blevins remembers her grandmother, who recently died—a self-described "virtuous woman" who taught her about femininity and how to be ladylike. The album's cover art by Perry Shall and photographer Jim Herrington features Blevins wearing a headdress and pearl necklace that belonged to her grandmother.

"She was everything that you could want out of someone," says Blevins. "Because of that I pull from her energy and the way that she was as much as possible, because so much about these songs feels like a return to my roots. Dan [Auerbach, her co-writer] was also very intuitive in terms of allowing me to embrace my backstory and bring this creative vision that she was such a massive part of my life."

Blevins' sound and appreciation for country music have also been inspired by Keith Whitley, a fellow Sandy Hook native and Country Music Hall of Famer who passed away in 1989. Blevins has drawn inspiration from Whitley's music, including hits like *Miami*, *My Amy* and *I'm No Stranger To The Rain*—and she's also connected to his legacy through family. She remembers going through 4-H camp with Whitley's nieces, and visiting his mother, Mamaw Faye, for chicken and dumpling dinners when she was growing up.



▲ Leah Blevins co-wrote her new album, *All Dressed Up*, with Dan Auerbach of The Black Keys. Photo: Jim Herrington; Cover art: Perry Shall

◀ Country singer Leah Blevins draws inspiration from faith, family and her childhood in Sandy Hook. Photo: Bree Marie Fish

“Everyone who loves country music knows Keith Whitley,” says Blevins, who made her second appearance on the Grand Ole Opry March 26. “It’s not dependent on me having grown up where he did. That being said, he did make a name for Sandy Hook and put us on the map, so I just always want to carry on and remember his name in any way I can.”

The new album marks Blevins’ first collaboration with Auerbach, the producer and founding member of rock duo The Black Keys. The pair met through a mutual friend, musician Marcus King, and Blevins says they hit it off right away, eventually co-writing all of the album’s 10 tracks together in a matter of days.

“There was a rhythm to everything that helped me to not overthink and get in my own way,” Blevins says. “We were truly moving at light speed, which felt like a superpower compared to how I’ve recorded in the past.”

With summer shows in the United Kingdom and a headlining stateside tour on the horizon, Blevins feels more confident than ever. *All Dressed Up* is a big reason why.

“This record has taught me that I’m capable and that I’m a force of nature,” says Blevins. “In my down days, when I feel otherwise, these songs will be a beautiful reminder that I just need to keep my blinders on, have faith in God and trust the process.” **KL**



Blevins' 2026 tour includes shows in the U.S. and the United Kingdom. Photo: Citizen Kane Wayne

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*Preserving*



# the past

May is National Historic Preservation Month. Learn how cemetery preservation secures a vulnerable link with history

BY KASSIDY COBB

*Terri Cooper still remembers visiting cemeteries with her grandparents as a 5-year-old, where they regaled her with family history as they strolled among the old gravestones.*

Years later, a school assignment tasked her kids with looking for historic sites near their Taylorsville neighborhood. But when a burial site beckoned to the Cooper family, they found it overgrown and nearly impossible to access.

“We literally crawled on our hands and knees to get back to it,” Cooper says.

Seven years later, that same cemetery boasts a sign, reflection garden and legible stones, thanks to efforts by the Cooper family and other volunteers, who have now helped preserve a total of 10 Spencer County cemeteries. Cooper says cemetery restoration projects have connected her with the commonwealth’s history and built friendships along the way. “I just love my community,” she says, “and I love what we are doing.”

May is National Historic Preservation Month, but cemetery preservation groups across Kentucky are maintaining their local burial grounds every month of the year. With thousands of cemeteries scattered across the state, an opportunity to support local history could be right in your own neighborhood.



Terri Cooper volunteers at the McGee family cemetery in Spencer County. At left, Kelly Meeks cleans an 1825 headstone. Photos: Joe Imel

## The path to preservation

Cemeteries can be located on city, county, church or private properties. Before you tackle any preservation project, it's vital to secure the proper permissions.

To preserve a cemetery in need, such as a burial ground that's overgrown or has illegible or broken grave markers, the first step is to identify the landowner, obtain necessary permissions and coordinate with cemetery caretakers, if there are any.

If you're undertaking a cemetery preservation project on private property, detailed communication with the current landowner is essential. In the rare instance a landowner is unwilling to grant access, it may be time to pick a different project. If ownership of the cemetery is unknown, preservationists can reach out to the office of their local property valuation administrator, or PVA.

"I always tell people it's very much a team effort," says Jim Seaver, a community engagement coordinator with the Kentucky Historical Society. "The two things I tell people to prioritize are safety and doing things that are legally sound, so good diplomacy is key with these kinds of projects."

Seaver also reminds preservation-minded Kentuckians to "know your limits and don't bite off more than you can chew." After all, Seaver adds, "There's no shortage of projects that are a lot easier to tackle and more manageable."

If you've never undertaken a cemetery project before, there are plenty of resources available online, but Bonnie Burks Gray, co-founder of Friends of Grove Hill Cemetery in Shelby County, cautions novices to get tips "from an accredited preservation group."

Cooper started out by attending an instructional seminar before joining Friends of Grove Hill Cemetery to do some hands-on work. "Find other people that are like you," Cooper advises. "Learn from them."



▲  
A volunteer cleans growth off of a grave marker using a plastic tool.  
Photo: Olivia Herrell

## Stone repair

As Cooper began cemetery restoration work in her own community, she found that many cemeteries contained fallen or broken stones. To repair grave markers that had toppled, Cooper and her fellow volunteers learned how to dig a hole for a foundation of concrete and gravel before putting the stone's base back in its original location. When headstones are in multiple pieces, Cooper uses a two-part epoxy that she orders from Scotland to glue the fragments back together.

When it comes to repairing grave markers, Seaver says, "The challenge is finding the perfect balance between the aesthetics, the legibility and the long-term viability of a cemetery headstone or monument." He adds that





A volunteer cleans a headstone using D/2 biological solution, which preservationists recommend for use on historic stone. Photo: Joe Imel



## *Site survey technology*

Today's cemetery preservationists have the benefit of technology that can effectively survey burial sites, even when markers are absent. Ground penetrating radar, or GPR, sends radar signals through the ground to detect anomalies.

"The technology is out there to help us," says Billy Wilkerson, operational manager for Simpson County Historical Society. "If there's an object to be seen, it reflects off of that object and sends back to the receiver on the ground penetrating radar the depth and what size."

By relaying accurate information, GPR technologies can be especially useful for burial grounds that have missing stones due to development or a lack of maintenance.

Wilkerson believes that Simpson County Historical Society's GPR program is unique in its design. "We're the only ones that actually do not charge for our service," he says, reflecting on the technology's role in recovering lost history. "We do ask for donations to the Simpson County Historical Society when we go out."

After working across four states, Wilkerson has located 2,377 unmarked graves, 18 mass graves, two body pits and five ancient Native American burials.

▲  
Volunteers assess an overturned grave marker. Photo: Bonnie Burks Gray

►  
Billy Wilkerson uses ground penetrating radar to survey a site. Photo: Simpson County Historical Society

preservationists will need to clamp any pieces in place with wooden shims while the epoxy is setting. For stones that still look unsteady, Seaver suggests using metal bars to act as brackets on either side of the stone.

### **Give stones a cleaning**

Cleaning headstones is an important part of cemetery restoration, but it must be done with care. Seaver offers memorable advice: "If you wouldn't use it on a horse, you shouldn't use it on a headstone." In other words, don't use harsh cleaners stored under your

kitchen sink, or abrasive wire-bristle brushes, which can harm the stone's surface. Instead, opt for nylon bristles, such as soft-bristle horse brushes, which can be found at your local farm supply store.

When it's time to clean grave markers at Grove Hill Cemetery, Burks Gray and her group start with a dry clean, using brushes to remove debris, before spraying water on the marker to remove embedded dirt, moss, lichen or other growth. The group then uses D/2 Biological Solution, a cleaner that gently kills off growth like mosses, lichens and mold. Burks Gray adds that D/2 will "work for months—even years—continuing to clean the stone."

### Replacing stones

While repairing and cleaning stones are positive steps toward restoration,

Terri Cooper, left, volunteers at the McGee family cemetery with Judy Stout, Sue Walls and Patsy McGee, who is a descendant of the family. Photo: Joe Imel

some cemeteries have unmarked graves or stones that are beyond repair. When that happens to a veteran's grave, Cooper reaches out to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for help. Cooper notes that applicants seeking VA-provided grave markers must find a direct descendant to fill out the application, and if the application is approved, the applicant is tasked with placing the stone. So far, Cooper has successfully set four stones for Revolutionary War veterans. "They deserve to be remembered," she says.

Chad Comer, a Tri-County Electric consumer-member who founded



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▶  
Chad Comer levels an old headstone at Gamaliel Cemetery.  
Photo: John Comer

Friends of Gamaliel Cemetery, noticed that many people buried there had either no grave marker at all or a simple limestone fieldstone. Because of exceptional record keeping, the group knows the identities of these individuals, many of whom were typhoid and cholera epidemic victims in the 1800s. Every year, Comer gathers donations and sells reprinted cemetery record books, securing funding for 5-inch by 10-inch granite grave markers inscribed with names. Comer has just 158 graves left to mark. “Some years we do as few as 10,” he says. “Our largest project was 52 in 2019.”



KentuckyLiving.com

### Resources to dig into

Visit KentuckyLiving.com for resources on cemetery conservation, documenting historic graves and more.

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## A collaborative effort

Burks Gray likes to think of cemeteries as “a place of discovery, history and beauty”—and preserving them for the future is a group effort. To ensure that people of all ages can enjoy the unique natural beauty of historic burial grounds, Friends of Grove Hill Cemetery teamed up with Shelby County High School’s junior history class in 2024. Around 200 students participated in a project-based learning program that taught young people the purpose of cemeteries, how to clean stones and proper research methods.

Olivia Herrell, president of the Henry County Historical Society, also recognizes the value of collaboration. Her group hosted RaShae Jennings, a historic preservation coordinator at the Kentucky Heritage Council, to lead a class on cemetery preservation.



Attendees learned how to properly clean stones and how to identify the meanings of symbols they might spot on historic grave markers.

“We never want to lose the history that headstones can provide for us,” Herrell says. “Sometimes it is the only record of a person that we have.” **KL**

▲  
The top portion of Patrick McGee’s headstone rests against a tree. McGee was the grandson of a Revolutionary War veteran of the same name. Photo: Joe Imel

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## Music and culture

A Lexington high school band ensemble, Mariachi Escudo de Bryan Station High School, provides participants with not only a musical education, but also a cultural and generational touchstone.

Founded in 2023 and led by Director Genaro Rascón Jr. and Assistant Director Nathan Bailey, it may be the only public school mariachi band in the commonwealth.

California native Rascón, who'd traveled the world performing mariachi, came to Kentucky in 2017 to serve as assistant mariachi director, and later director, at Berea College before accepting the BCHS role.

He says mariachi is rooted in Mexican tradition and is a must-have for special occasions.

"Mariachi is Mexico's folkloric music," he says. "If I were to relate it to Kentucky, it's Appalachian old-time music, it's bluegrass. It's the folk tradition of Mexico."

With the slogan, Pride and Tradition, the band's name includes "escudo," meaning "shield," a nod to the BSHS Defenders mascot.

About 17 advanced mariachi students play and sing at schools, at Viva Mexico restaurant and other events, performing songs like *El Cascabel* and *Tata Dios* in tailored green uniforms trimmed with gold embroidery and wearing *sombreros charros*, large-brimmed hats with a matching motif.

Their traditional mariachi instruments include a large bass guitar called *guitarron*, a round-backed *vihuela* guitar, violin, trumpet and traditional guitar.

Some mariachi students had prior music experience under their *cintos* (belts), while others had never picked up an instrument, Rascón says.

Wherever they perform, he knows someone attending will hear mariachi for the first time.

"Part of the teaching is to be proud and represent these traditions with elegance," he says. "...I want us to go out and be the best-looking, the best-performing. I want (audiences) to see us in our suits and I want them to say, 'Wow! That was so good, so beautiful!'"

Mariachi has become a way for Latino students to connect with their older relatives and even themselves, as Destiny Baltazar, a 16-year-old Lexington junior, attests.

She's in her first year playing violin with the ensemble, and her family hails from the birthplace of mariachi, Jalisco, Mexico.

"It's more than just music," she says. "Often the songs can tell a story that resonates with personal experience or culture—it's very nice to listen to."

To donate to the band's ongoing fundraising for uniforms and instruments or to request a performance, contact Bryan Station High School at (859) 422-0040 or via Instagram @mariachi.escudo.bsbs.

Story: Shannon Clinton

Photo: Mariachi Escudo de BSBS



# Queen of the climbers

*Flowering clematis is garden royalty*

**KNOWN AS** “queen of the climbers,” flowering clematis is a captivating addition to your garden. Because of the diversity in clematis types, it is important to know what type you want before purchasing or pruning.

Clematis can flower early, mid or late season, and some types flower more than once. They can have large, showy flowers, or delicate, nodding flowers. They can also be upright or non-vining, compact vining or vining up to 10 feet.

Flower colors can range from white, pink and burgundy to purple, yellow, light blue and dark blue. Full sun produces more flower buds and stronger flower color. For best performance, plant clematis in an area where the root system is sheltered or protected by other plants, but the foliage is in the sun.

Clematis prefer a well-drained site, but can benefit from watering when the weather is dry. Always mulch around clematis to protect the delicate stems at the base and to help cover and protect the surrounding soil.

Once you have selected your perfect clematis, always take note of what pruning type or group it belongs to. Type 1 flowers on old wood, where typically pruning is not needed. If you do prune, do so only lightly, right after flowering. Type 2 flowers on old wood and then again on new wood. These types are considered re-bloomers. Prune them



SHHELLY NOLD

only if necessary and very lightly in early spring. Type 3 flowers on new wood and should be pruned in late winter or early spring before new growth begins.

Clematis flowers are attractive to pollinators and butterflies, and they are rabbit resistant. You can train them on a trellis or fence or simply let them sprawl down a slope or over a stone wall. By selecting several types of clematis, you can have beautiful, showy flowers in the garden from spring to fall. **KL**

**SHHELLY 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*



*I've had an indoor lemon tree for seven years. It grows to the ceiling often and I trim it. It is pretty, but are we ever going to have lemons?—Gigi Gentry*

**A** Lemons require 8–10 hours of light each day. If possible, place your tree in a south-facing window to receive as much light as possible. Grow lights are helpful if a sunny window is not available. Since your seven-year-old tree is thriving enough to reach the ceiling, it is definitely mature enough to produce fruit. Frequent trimming might be accidentally removing the buds that could become flowers. Try a “heading” cut in late winter to keep it at a manageable 5 to 6 feet and to encourage more horizontal growth. Use a fertilizer specifically for citrus trees during the growing season, and consider using a small paintbrush to hand pollinate any blossoms that appear.

» Angie Oakley



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### Have a gardening question?

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

READER  
recipe

Fantastic Flan

Tia Luisa's Flan de Leche  
(Milk Custard)Submitted by Mayra Diaz-Ballard  
West Kentucky RECC consumer-member

Mayra's aunt Louise was a wonderful cook. She was of Hispanic heritage, born and raised in Florida. This was one of her recipes, and it is a delicious family favorite.

**¼ C sugar\***  
**¼ C water\***  
**4 large eggs**  
**2 (14 oz) cans evaporated milk**  
**1 (14 oz) can condensed milk**  
**1 Tbsp vanilla extract**  
**½ tsp cinnamon**  
**½ tsp salt**

*\*If you want more caramelized sugar syrup, increase sugar and water to 1/2 cup each.*

Preheat oven to 325°. Combine water and sugar in saucepan and bring to boil, stirring constantly, until golden brown and caramelized. Pour into 2-quart round Pyrex dish to cool. Blend remaining ingredients, then pour over cooled caramel in dish. Fill a roasting pan with 2 inches of warm water and set flan dish into it. Bake 1 1/4 to 1 1/2 hours, until set (a knife inserted in the center should come out clean). Remove and cool on a rack, then refrigerate 4–5 hours or overnight. To serve, run a knife around the edges and carefully invert onto a large plate. Serves 8–10.

## Derby Day delights

*Southern comfort meets festive flair*

**THERE IS NOTHING LIKE** the first Saturday in May here in Kentucky. The excitement in the air, the hats and fashion, cold mint juleps—and the food! If you're hosting a Derby party this year, this Hot Brown casserole is the perfect thing to serve your guests. It's all the things you love about a traditional Hot Brown, but in casserole form, so it's perfect to feed a crowd.

## Hot Brown Casserole

## Mornay sauce

**8 Tbsp butter**  
**⅓ C flour**  
**1 ½ C heavy cream**  
**1 ½ C whole milk**  
**½ tsp salt**  
**½ tsp black pepper**  
**¼ tsp nutmeg**  
**¼ tsp smoked paprika**  
**8 oz Parmesan cheese, shredded and divided in half**

## Casserole

**6-8 C sourdough bread, cubed**  
**3 C turkey breast, cooked and cubed**  
**8-9 pieces bacon, cooked and crumbled**  
**1 C cherry tomatoes, diced**  
**Parsley, minced for garnish**

Preheat oven to 350°F. Spread cubed bread on a baking sheet and toast for 15 minutes while making sauce. To make the Mornay sauce, melt butter in saucepan over medium-low heat. Whisk in flour and cook 2–3 minutes. Gradually whisk in cream, then milk, until smooth, and stir in spices. Cook 5 minutes until slightly thickened. Remove from heat and whisk in half the Parmesan. Spread 1/3 of the sauce on the bottom of a greased, 9x13-inch baking dish, then layer half the bread, turkey, bacon, and another 1/3 of the sauce. Repeat layers with remaining bread, turkey and bacon, and finish with remaining sauce. Sprinkle the remaining Parmesan on top and evenly distribute cherry tomatoes.

Bake 20–25 minutes. Let cool 5–10 minutes, garnish with parsley, and serve. Serves 12.

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

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# The Salty Hen

Home-cooked comfort in Pulaski County

JOEL SAMS



**WHEN CHRISTINA KEPHART** and her husband, Robbie, brainstormed name ideas for her new restaurant, they kept encountering images of roosters. But it wasn't going to be the rooster doing all the work, Christina complained. It was the hen. Robbie wondered aloud how the hen felt about this. "She's a little salty," Christina said—and The Salty Hen was born.

Christina's locally-famous onion rings and fried green tomatoes are hand-cut daily. The fried pickles and fried chicken are hand-battered to order, and the cornbread is made from scratch and baked in a cast-iron skillet sizzling with bacon grease. "My entire heart goes into my food," she says. "I like to feed people."

While she had food service experience before opening a restaurant, Christina had never run her own business. But with Robbie's encouragement, she took the leap. "You can talk about what could be—but unless you try, you don't know," she says.

Housed in a former filling station on State Route 1643, about 8 miles east of Somerset, the restaurant celebrated one year in business on February 15. "It has done nothing but get busier and busier and busier since I got here," Christina says, crediting her success so far to 'the best customers in the world' and her husband's tireless support. One of those world's-best customers gifted the restaurant a sculpture, made by a local artist, that now stands outside the restaurant.

"It's come a long way," she says. "I'm very proud of it. And it's not just mine—it's everybody's. It's the whole community's. That's the way I feel about it."

Served by South Kentucky RECC, The Salty Hen is located at 6521 State Route 1643 in Somerset, open 11 a.m.–8 p.m. Tuesday–Saturday, closed Sunday and Monday.

JOEL SAMS



## The Salty Hen Maw Maw's Cornbread

Serves 8-10

- ¼ C, plus 2 Tbsp bacon grease, divided
- 2 Tbsp butter, melted
- 1 C whole-milk buttermilk
- 2 large eggs
- 1½ C white cornmeal
- ¼ C all-purpose flour
- 1 Tbsp sugar
- 1 tsp salt
- 4 tsp baking powder

Preheat oven to 425°F. Place a 12-inch cast iron skillet in oven with ¼ C bacon grease. Allow it to heat as the oven comes to temperature—grease should be hot and shimmering. Meanwhile, combine 2 tablespoons bacon grease, melted butter, buttermilk and eggs in medium bowl and whisk until smooth. In separate bowl, whisk cornmeal, flour, sugar, salt and baking powder. When oven is preheated, gently combine the wet and dry ingredients. Stir just until incorporated. Do not overmix. Carefully remove the hot cast iron skillet from the oven and immediately pour batter into hot bacon grease. It should sizzle on contact. Return skillet to the oven and bake 22 minutes, or until top is golden brown and edges are crisp.



CHRISTINA KEPHART

# Be wise about smart appliances



*Are smart appliances right for my home?*

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

**A** Smart appliances—such as refrigerators, washers, ovens, thermostats and water heaters—connect to the internet and can be controlled using your smartphone, tablet or voice-assistant device.

Many smart appliances allow you to see how much energy each device consumes. That information can be helpful to better understand your energy habits and identify where energy may be going to waste.

Smart thermostats are a popular choice for managing energy use and reducing energy waste, since heating and cooling systems are usually a home's biggest sources of energy consumption.

Most energy savings from a smart thermostat come from automating temperature adjustments while you are sleeping or away from home. If you are already good at manually adjusting your thermostat, you likely won't see big savings, but you

might prefer the convenience of a programmable device you can control on an app.

## Hot water heaters

The second-highest energy user in most homes is the water heater. Smart heat pump water heaters and hybrid heat pump water heaters have smart controls, enabling you to save more energy. These water heaters may let you monitor energy use, change

settings and check hot water availability. They can also be set to vacation mode when you're leaving the house for a trip. Not all heat pump water heaters have smart technology, so be sure to check before buying.

While smart appliances can be beneficial, do some research before upgrading to understand how the features work and whether they benefit your lifestyle. In some cases, you're better off improving your energy habits with the appliances already in your home. **KL**

▲ Before buying new appliances, such as a smart dryer, research how the features work to understand whether they are beneficial to your lifestyle and help lower energy use. Photo: Samsung

## SMART QUESTIONS

Whether smart appliances are right for your home depends on your preferences and types of appliances you already have. But the better question to ask might be whether smart appliances are right for you. Do you like the newest tech and typically keep your phone within arm's reach? Do you enjoy the convenience of calling out commands to Alexa? Or do you prefer less technology or something in between?



# Be cool, be safe

*Know how to keep your A/C units safe*

**WE ALL KNOW** how to stay cool when summer temperatures are high—we turn to our air conditioning unit. But like all electric appliances, air conditioners should be used and maintained properly.

Whether you rely on a central air-conditioning system, a fan or a window A/C unit, be aware of safety threats they may pose. Knowing how to properly clean, fix and maintain them is important for your safety, and they require regular, routine checks.

Every spring, schedule professional A/C maintenance to inspect the appliance for any issues that could lead to a fire. In addition to annual maintenance check-ups, change the air filter every 30–60 days. Inspect your outdoor unit periodically to ensure it has proper airflow, remove debris and clean the condenser unit. You can even use a garden hose to periodically clean your condenser coils, but make sure you turn off the breaker first.



NRECA

Disconnect all power sources when servicing the A/C unit: Before you begin unscrewing or taking apart your unit, be sure it is unplugged to avoid electrocution or damage to the unit.

## Window units

If you rely on a window A/C unit during the summer, do not plug it into an extension cord or power strip. It should have its own dedicated outlet. Before installing it, make sure the window and frame are in good condition—there should be a metal bracket, mounting rails or some sort of firm support system. If the unit doesn't fit, do not try to force it. Never put anything on top of the unit.

Since window units are exposed to the elements, they tend to be more at risk for a fire or other dangers, so don't position them where water is or could spill. Clean or replace filters as instructed and continue to inspect cords for damage regularly.

For both central air and window units, always be aware of changes in their performance or appearance. Trouble signs: wires sticking out of the A/C unit, leaking refrigerant and noises coming from the unit. Act immediately and then call a professional for help. **KL**



**BILL TURNER**  
is Safety Coordinator  
at Licking Valley RECC

**YEARS IN THE  
INDUSTRY:** 20, but  
new in the safety role

**WHEN I'M NOT  
WORKING I'M:**  
Tending to my farm  
and spending time  
with my family.  
Farming is a good  
way to escape the  
daily grind.

## For fans of fans

If you use a fan to keep cool, here are some quick safety tips to follow this summer:

- Only purchase fans that have been tested in a recognized, independent lab.
- Check for product recalls at [cpsc.gov](http://cpsc.gov).
- Double check that air intakes are not blocked.
- Keep fans away from water.
- Switch the electric fan off immediately if you notice a burning smell or any unusual noises.
- Don't leave your fan running overnight or while you are out of the house.
- Always unplug the electric fan at the outlet when not in use.
- Don't balance the fan on the edge of the counter, or anywhere it could fall off.
- Take care that children and pets don't chew on or pull the cable.
- Consider replacing electric fans that are more than a few years old—old motors can begin to overheat.

Source: *Electrical Safety First*

# Play it safe

*Avoiding injuries on the playground*



OLGASPARROW/DOBE STOCK

**PLAYGROUNDS ARE FUN,** offering great opportunities for recreation, exploration and exercise for kids. However, they can also be a source of unintentional injuries, most commonly falls.

Some falls may result in bruises, cuts and scrapes. In more serious cases, kids might break bones or hit their head hard enough to sustain a traumatic brain injury that requires a trip to the emergency department.

From 2017–2024, Kentucky children averaged about 1,985 emergency department visits each year due to playground falls—and 52%

of them were ages 5–8. The most common playground locations for Kentucky’s kids playground-related falls were school playgrounds (41%), followed by home (21%) and public park (19%) playgrounds.

The most common body areas injured were the legs and arms (71%), followed by the head and neck (22%). More than half of these injuries seen in the emergency department were fractures, followed by superficial injuries or contusions and open wounds.

It’s important to stay attentive and engaged while

your kid plays, which may mean less phone use and conversations. You can also protect your child by inspecting the playground equipment. Here is a quick checklist to help:

- Make sure the area surrounding the playground has at least a foot of mulch, sand, wood chips, etc. to protect against falls.
- Make sure kids play on age-appropriate equipment.
- Touch playground equipment to make sure surfaces are not too hot.
- Look for any sharp points, edges or hardware sticking out from equipment.

- Look for tripping hazards including concrete, rocks and tree roots.
- Make sure all elevated surfaces have railings to prevent falls.
- Show your kids how to use playground equipment correctly.

Check playground equipment regularly, as specific equipment requires extra safety measures. **KL**

**ASHLEY BUSH, DOCTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH,** is a research program administrator with the Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center.



# Make a splash

*Kentucky amusement and water parks cater to the kid in everyone*

BY ROBIN ROENKER



**THERE'S NOTHING BETTER** than spending a warm Kentucky day at a fun park. Soaking up thrill rides, cooling off in a wave pool, trying your luck at a carnival game—it's the stuff of lasting summer memories.

Kentucky's family-friendly amusement and water parks make it easy to make the most of summer's long, lazy days. The best part: all this fun's just a short drive away.

## Kentucky Kingdom, Louisville

Situated in the heart of Derby City, Kentucky Kingdom boasts world-class roller coasters, kid-friendly amusement rides, classic carnival games, and all the floating and sliding fun you can handle at its on-site water park, Hurricane Bay.

With a massive, 750,000-gallon wave pool, two lazy rivers and more than



a dozen water slides—like the nearly vertical, 12-story Deep Water Dive—to explore, Hurricane Bay is “definitely a crowd favorite,” especially on sizzling summer days, says Logan Sanderson, Kentucky Kingdom's marketing manager.

When it's time to dry off, guests can test their mettle on Kentucky Kingdom's crowd-favorite thrill rides like Wind Chaser, known for its barrel roll drop, and Lightning Run, a 10-story steel coaster that delivers serious air time. On the park's just-added Flying Fox, a

new, \$14-million family-friendly coaster, riders can soar six stories above the park at speeds up to 37 mph.

## TODDLERS PLAY FREE

Most Kentucky amusement and water parks charge no admission fees for children ages 2 and under, though a few bump that threshold up to age 3 and under. Kentucky Kingdom even offers a Free Pre-K Season Pass for kids ages 3 to 5, if you register online at [kentuckykingdom.com/tickets/season-passes/pre-k-pass](http://kentuckykingdom.com/tickets/season-passes/pre-k-pass). If you're traveling to a park with young children, be sure to check for attraction height/age requirements and other pertinent safety guidelines.



▲ Kentucky Kingdom offers roller coasters, kid-friendly rides, a water park and more. Shown clockwise from above are Castaway Creek, an amusement park ride, the Cumberland Express train and a ride at the Hurricane Bay waterpark. Photos: Kentucky Kingdom

For those with young kids, the attractions at the park's Discovery Meadow, fully renovated and expanded in 2025, are sure to bring smiles to even the smallest visitors' face. Highlights include Scout's Squirrel Race, a roundabout ride; and Cumberland Express, which captures the fun of hopping aboard a scenic train journey.





*Kentucky's amusement parks and water parks specialize in summer fun. Consider these parks your go-to's for the perfect, one-day getaway.*

**Featured parks**

**Beech Bend**

798 Beech Bend Park Road, Bowling Green  
 beechbend.com, (270) 781-7634  
 Tickets: 1-day, \$33.99–\$46.99; 2-day, \$67.99; season pass, \$74.99

**Kentucky Kingdom**

937 Phillips Lane, Louisville  
 kentuckykingdom.com, (502) 813-8200  
 Tickets: 1-day, \$34.99–\$69.00; 2-day, \$44.99+; season pass, \$79.99–\$149.99 (payment plans available)

**SomerSplash**

1030 State Route 2227, Somerset  
 somersplash.com, (606) 679-7946  
 Tickets: 1-day weekdays: \$18.95–\$20.95; 1-day weekend and holidays: \$20.95–\$22.95; season pass: \$79.95

**Venture River Water Park**

280 FunWay Drive, Eddyville  
 ventureriver.com, (270) 388-7999  
 Tickets: 1-day, \$26 (kids under 54 inches), \$32 (people over 54 inches), \$15 (seniors 60+); season pass, \$70–\$90 (by height), \$65 (seniors)

*Note: check each park's website for the most up-to-date pricing details, as rates can vary.*

**Other fun parks**

**Kentucky Splash Waterpark**

1050 Kentucky Route 92 W., Williamsburg  
 williamsburgky.com/departments/kentucky\_splash\_waterpark  
 (606) 549-6065

Cool off in an 18,000-square-foot wave pool or the park's 900-foot winding lazy river. Zoom down looping water slides, or splash about at the kids' Tadpole Island play zone. The attraction also includes an 18-hole miniature golf course and an arcade.

Tickets: 1-day, \$20; season pass \$80

**Malibu Jack's (multiple locations)**

10699 U.S. Highway 60, Suite 102, Ashland  
 1704 North Dixie Ave., Elizabethtown  
 2520 Nicholasville Road, Lexington  
 1915 South Hurstbourne Parkway, Louisville  
 malibujacks.net or malibujacksetown.com

Enjoy an indoor amusement park—perfect for when the temperatures outside get really blistering—with go-carts, laser tag, mini golf, indoor coasters, bowling and an arcade.

Pricing varies by attraction.

**Mammoth Valley Park**

3061 Mammoth Cave Road, Cave City  
 mammothvalleypark.com, (270) 773-7000

Experience summer thrills at the only alpine slide in Kentucky. Also on-site: the state's longest twin zip line, a scenic chairlift, go-karts, bumper cars and a rock-climbing wall.

Tickets: Chairlift/alpine slide, \$10; go-carts, \$10; rock wall, \$8; zip line, \$50 each or 3 for \$125

**Venture River Water Park, Eddyville**

Cooling off is a breeze at family-run Venture River Water Park, where you can zoom down multiple, thrill-packed slides—like Cliffhanger and Twin Twisters—or simply float your cares away in the 480,000-gallon wave pool at the heart of the roughly 40-acre property.

New for 2026, the park's recently unveiled Kapuna River takes the blueprint of a lazy river and adds a bit of oomph via jetted currents that help move guests along on (somewhat) fast-paced laps. There's also a true lazy river for those who prefer to keep their rafting slow. For little ones, the park offers three kiddie pool areas where splashing and spraying are not only allowed, but encouraged.



Kentucky Kingdom's Hurricane Bay includes a 750,000-gallon wave pool, two lazy rivers and more than a dozen water slides. Photo: Kentucky Kingdom





Venture River Water Park's Matanascar Racer water slide is a four-lane, head first, mat racing experience.



Venture River Water Park's 40-acre property includes a 480,000-gallon wave pool and multiple lazy rivers. Photos: Venture River Water Park



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Beech Bend in Bowling Green is a family-favorite destination with history dating back to 1898.



“We try to have something for everyone, from toddlers to adults,” says Megan Blackburn, a Venture River manager. “I think the family-fun aspect here is what attracts everyone. It’s why people feel safe and comfortable coming here.”

### SEASON-LONG FUN

Most parks offer both single-day tickets and season passes, which can more than pay for themselves after just a couple of visits. If you plan to visit a park more than once in 2026, check into season pass pricing—and remember to factor in post-summer fun, including fall and winter festival hours at Kentucky Kingdom and a new-for-2026 Halloween season at Beech Bend.



An aerial view of Splash Lagoon water park at Beech Bend in Bowling Green.



▲  
Beech Bend's Kentucky Rumbler is a 100-foot-tall wooden coaster full of twists and turns. Photos: Beech Bend

## Beech Bend, Bowling Green

A family favorite for generations, Beech Bend traces its roots all the way back to 1898. The amusement park offers a mix of thrill rides, family-friendly rides and midway-style games and attractions—plus live entertainment and more than 1 million gallons of water-based fun at its water park, Splash Lagoon.

Adrenaline seekers won't want to miss a ride on the Kentucky Rumbler, a nearly 100-foot-tall wooden coaster billed as one of the twistiest in a seven-state region; or the rush from Zero-G, which soars to 140 feet before dropping at speeds up to 60 mph. The park offers plenty of accessible fun for families with young children, too, from bumper cars, mini golf and a haunted house to go-carts and gentle rides for kids.

On the hottest of days, though, many families take refuge in the cooling waters of Splash Lagoon, where they can play in a giant wave pool, relax in a lazy river, or slip down to a splash landing on attractions like Tidal Wave and Polynesian Plunge.

"The best thing about Beech Bend is that it's two parks in one," says Paul Blick, park operations manager. "Our water park is centrally located right in

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▲ SomerSplash waterpark includes one of Kentucky's longest lazy rivers, in addition to slides, wave pool and more. Photo: SomerSplash

the middle of our amusement park.” Beech Bend season ticket holders can leave their cash at home and pay for food and other park purchases with new RFID wristbands, which the park

is unveiling this year. In addition to its amusement and water parks, Beech Bend also includes a raceway and a 411-site campground.

### SomerSplash, Somerset

The rushing waters of speed slides mix with gentle, rolling waves and frolicking splash zones at SomerSplash, Somerset's top spot for summer water fun.

“We've got a lazy river, a wave pool, a bowl slide, a tube slide, a speed slide and body slides,” says Stephen Sims, SomerSplash's general manager.

In fact, the park's 1,200-foot-long lazy river is one of the longest in Kentucky, partially explaining why SomerSplash annually draws visitors from across the state and beyond. The water park also includes a dedicated children's play zone with a kiddie pool, kiddie slides and a kid-friendly wade area.

“I always say we have something for everybody,” Sims says. “There's an attraction for everyone, no matter your age.” **KL**

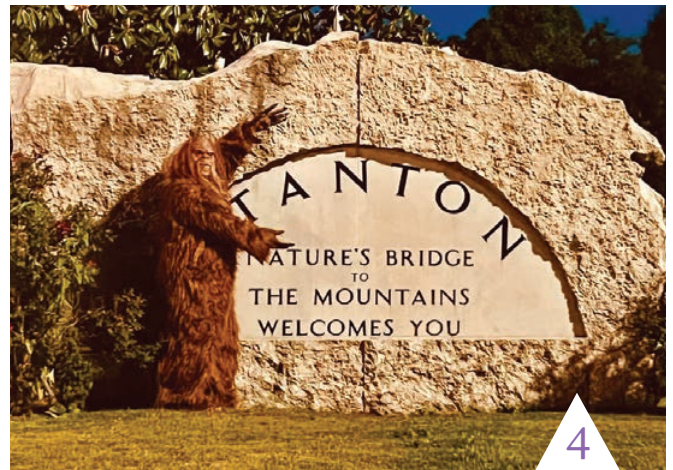
**ROBIN ROENKER**, Lexington-based freelance writer Robin Roenker is a longtime *Kentucky Living* contributor. Her work has also appeared in *AARP* magazine, *USA TODAY*, *Southern Living*, and other national and regional publications.

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# EVENT CALENDAR



## 1 TRIBUTES AND SALUTES

Pay your respects to U.S. veterans and military when the American Veterans Traveling Tributes come to Madisonville City Park, May 14–18. The free exhibit features an 80% replica of the Vietnam Veterans Wall and the Cost of Freedom memorials honoring other major wars and conflicts. The park also hosts Madisonville Salutes May 16, with military displays, first responder units, live entertainment, food and craft vendors, and kids activities. Info, [visitmadisonvilleky.com/events](http://visitmadisonvilleky.com/events), (270) 824-2100.

## 2 BARBECUE & MORE

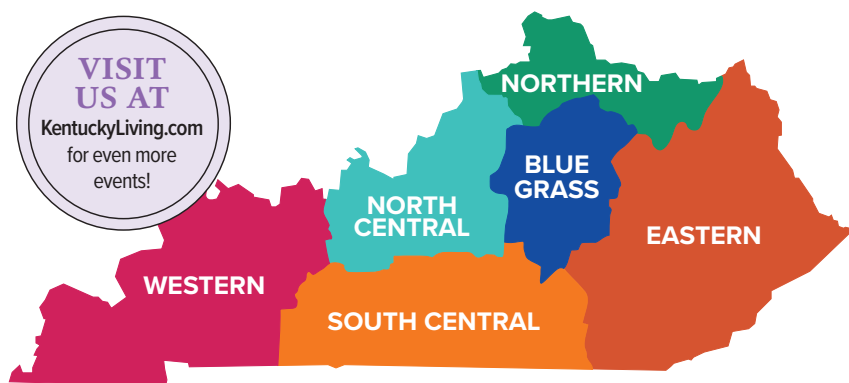
The Fountain Run BBQ Festival, May 15–16, means lots of small-town fun, with the spotlight on tasty Monroe County-style barbecue. On tap: live music, food and craft vendors, cornhole tournament, kids activities, cruise-in, barbecue sauce contest and quilt and art exhibition. Pancake breakfast and 10 a.m. parade on Saturday. Hours: 4 p.m.–8:30 p.m. Friday, 6 a.m.–8:30 p.m. Saturday. Free admission. For more, Facebook: Fountain Run BBQ Festival.

## 3 PRETTY AS A PEONY

Spring is in bloom, and so are the peonies at Warsaw's Peony Spring Festival, May 16, 10 a.m.–4 p.m. on Courthouse Square. Live music, riverboat tours (\$5), free horse and carriage rides, food and craft vendors, cornhole tournament, inflatables and face painting for the kids—and of course, peony plants for sale and raffle. Golf cart parade is at noon. Info: Facebook: Warsaw Peony Festival, (859) 643-3118.

## 4 SASQUATCH SIGHTING?

Don't know what a cryptid is? Find out at the Red River Gorge Bigfoot Fest, May 30, 10 a.m.–7 p.m. in Stanton's City Park. Bigfoot (aka Sasquatch) and cryptid-loving vendors, live entertainment, food trucks, petting zoo, inflatables and more. Hear free presentations from world-renowned researchers and check out the contests—including best cryptid costume and best Bigfoot howl. Free admission. Ticketed VIP dinner with speakers, May 29. Details, [rrgbigfoot.com](http://rrgbigfoot.com), (606) 481-1371.



NORTH CENTRAL

**SATURDAY, MAY 2**

**JHHS Project Grad Craft Fair,** (253) 970-9842, John Hardin High School, Elizabethtown

**SUNDAY, MAY 3**

**My Old Kentucky BBQ,** (502) 348-3502, My Old Kentucky Home, Bardstown

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 6**

**Wild About Shelbyville Arts & Music Festival,** (502) 633-5029

**Trivia Nights: Revenge of the Sixth,** (502) 459-2181, Louisville Zoo

**THURSDAY, MAY 7**

**Gardener's Toolbox Series: Growing Little Leafy Babies,** (270) 765-4121, Hardin County Extension Office, Elizabethtown

**Budweiser Clydesdales Parade,** (859) 336-5412 ext. 6, Springfield

**FRIDAY, MAY 8**

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

**Ohio Valley Wrestling,** (270) 692-0021, Marion County Events Center, Lebanon

**SATURDAY, MAY 9**

**Luncheon Train,** (502) 549-5470, Kentucky Railway Museum, New Haven

**Etown Wine Fest,** (270) 765-6121, Freeman Lake Park, Elizabethtown

**Clarkson Park Springfest,** (270) 242-6997 Ext. 1, Clarkson City Park

**Kentucky Elk & Outdoor Fest,** (502) 348-3594, Bardstown

**FRIDAY, MAY 15**

**Night at the Frazier,** (502) 753-5668, Frazier Kentucky History Museum, Louisville

**Louisville Horror Con,** thru 17th, (502) 367-5000, Kentucky Exposition Center

**SATURDAY, MAY 16**

**Black Rock Mafia Car Show,** (270) 259-5587, Grayson County Fair Grounds, Leitchfield

**Art in the Park,** (270) 259-4000, James D. Beville Park, Leitchfield

**FRIDAY, MAY 22**

**Shakespeare in the Park,** (270) 765-6121, Elizabethtown

**SATURDAY, MAY 30**

**Thunderstruck: America's AC/DC Tribute,** (270) 259-5587, Logsdon Valley Park, Leitchfield

BLUEGRASS

**FRIDAY, MAY 1**

**Unseen Universe,** 3rd, (859) 985-3351, Berea College Planetarium

**TUESDAY, MAY 5**

**Waveland's Tea Tuesday,** 12th, 19th, 26th, (859) 272-3611, Waveland State Historic Site, Lexington

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 6**

**Homeschool Day,** (859) 405-8065, Wendt's Wildlife Adventure, Carlisle

**SUNDAY, MAY 10**

**Mother's Day Celebration,** (859) 405-8065, Wendt's Wildlife Adventure, Carlisle

**Mother's Day at the Vineyard,**

(859) 644-5140, Harkness Edwards Vineyards, Winchester

**FRIDAY, MAY 15**

**The Hunchback of Notre Dame,** thru 31st, (859) 873-0648, Woodford Theatre, Versailles

**SATURDAY, MAY 16**

**Kentucky Sheep & Fiber Festival,** thru 17th, (502) 682-7780, Masterson Station Park, Lexington

**Jessamine Piece Quilters Quilt Show,**

(859) 312-0081, Jessamine County Extension Office, Nicholasville

**FRIDAY, MAY 22**

**Poppy Festival,** thru 25th, (859) 429-2889, Middle Springs Farm, Paris

**SATURDAY, MAY 23**

**Memorial Day Weekend,** thru 25th, (859) 405-8065, Wendt's Wildlife Adventure, Carlisle

**THURSDAY, MAY 28**

**Waveland's Tea & Talk,** (859) 272-3611, Waveland State Historic Site, Lexington

**Southland Jamboree,** (859) 425-2255, Moondance Amphitheater, Lexington

EASTERN

**FRIDAY, MAY 1**

**Mini Mystical Market,** (859) 771-0946, Rowan County Arts Center, Morehead

**FRIDAY, MAY 8**

**Homecoming & Old Engine Day,** thru 9th, (859) 556-9485, Red River Museum, Clay City

**Cornbread & Chaos,** (606) 886-1341, Prestonsburg

**SATURDAY, MAY 9**

**Bridge Day,** (606) 738-5543, Laurel Gorge Cultural Heritage Center, Sandy Hook

**FRIDAY, MAY 15**

**Farmers Trade Days,** thru 17th, (606) 780-4342, The Landing Strip Campground, Morehead

**Beattyville Appalachian Memories Festival,** thru 16th, (606) 464-5038, Beattyville Town Square

**SATURDAY, MAY 16**

**Big Perry to Dry Branch Hike,** (606) 780-4342, Sheltowee Trace National Recreation Trail-Northern Terminus, Morehead

**Carter Cares Volunteer Day,** (606) 286-7009, Carter Caves State Resort Park, Olive Hill

**Headwaters Art Festival,** (606) 573-4156, Harlan

**THURSDAY, MAY 21**

**Memory Days,** thru 24th, (606) 474-4401, Grayson

**Daniel Boone: The First Kentuckian,** (606) 638-4497 Ext. 4, Lawrence County Public Library, Louisa

**SATURDAY, MAY 30**

**Americans Exhibit,** thru July 5th, (859) 257-5932, Highlands Museum and Discovery Center, Ashland

**SUNDAY, MAY 31**

**Blue Moon Guided Hike,** (606) 286-7009, Carter Caves State Resort Park, Olive Hill

**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 June 1 for the August issue.**

**TO ADVERTISE YOUR EVENT IN PRINT, CALL (800) 595-4846**

## NORTHERN

## FRIDAY, MAY 1

**Treasures, Antiques, Junk & Community Yard Sales**, thru 2nd, (606) 756-2183, Augusta

## SATURDAY, MAY 2

**Campbell County Farm & Livestock Expo**, (859) 635-9587, Alexandria Fairgrounds, Alexandria

## SUNDAY, MAY 3

**Verona Vineyards Farmers & Artisan Market**, 17th, (513) 525-4157, Verona Vineyards

## FRIDAY, MAY 8

**Smoke on the River BBQ Fest**, (859) 261-4677, Newport Festival Park

## SATURDAY, MAY 9

**Evan Peoples Memorial Car Show**, (859) 322-3782, Pendleton County Fairgrounds, Falmouth

**Mother's Day Festival**, (502) 732-7036, Carrollton

**Spring Bash Demo Derby**, (859) 393-8693, Carroll County Fairgrounds, Carrollton

## SATURDAY, MAY 16

**Lewis and Clark Junior Ranger Day**, (859) 384-3522, Big Bone Lick State Historic Site, Union

## MONDAY, MAY 18

**Benton Farm Spring Fling Craft Show & Festival**, (859) 485-7000, Benton Family Farm, Walton

## FRIDAY, MAY 22

**Burlington Spring Horse Show**, thru 23rd, (513) 218-8678, Boone County Fairgrounds, Burlington

## SATURDAY, MAY 23

**Hispanic Fiesta**, (502) 732-7036, Point Park, Carrollton

## FRIDAY, MAY 29

**Carroll County Fair**, thru June 6th, (502) 732-8005, Carroll County Fairgrounds, Carrollton

## SOUTH CENTRAL

## FRIDAY, MAY 1

**Green River Gaited Horse Sale**, thru 2nd, (270) 634-0646, Central Kentucky Ag Expo Center, Liberty

**Friday Night Cruisers Car Show**, (606) 303-8999, Liberty

## SUNDAY, MAY 3

**The Motion of the Spheres: How Everything Stays in Orbit**, thru 31st, (270) 745-4044, Hardin Planetarium, Bowling Green

## THURSDAY, MAY 7

**Brown Bag Book Club**, (270) 456-2562, Taylor County Public Library, Campbellsville

## FRIDAY, MAY 8

**Summer Music Series: Clay Johnson & The Hard Promises**, (606) 706-7777, City Green Stage, Liberty

**Ranch Horse Association of Kentucky**, thru 10th, (606) 787-4740, Central Kentucky Ag Expo Center, Liberty

## THURSDAY, MAY 14

**Fleetwood Macbeth**, thru 24th, (888) 394-3282, The Virginia Theater, Somerset

## FRIDAY, MAY 15

**The Kentucky Yoga Festival**, thru 17th, (859) 979-7827, Barren River Magic Campground, Edmonton

## SATURDAY, MAY 16

**HavenFest 26**, (859) 740-8518, Hollow of Unrest Amphitheater, Bonnieville

**Spring Art Market**, (606) 219-0759, Center for Rural Development, Somerset

**I'm a Dam Runner**, (859) 359-2077, Green River Lake-USACE, Louisville District, Campbellsville

**Anime Fest-Show**, (416) 709-0677, National Corvette Museum, Bowling Green

## SATURDAY, MAY 23

**Live in Liberty Music Festival**, (606) 706-7777, City Green Stage, Liberty

**Somernites Cruise**, (606) 872-2277, Fountain Square, Somerset

## FRIDAY, MAY 29

**Sticktight Live**, (270) 456-3786, Campbellsville Community Center

## SATURDAY, MAY 30

**Spur A Spring Fun Show Series**, (859) 787-4740, Central Kentucky Ag Expo Center, Liberty

## WESTERN

## FRIDAY, MAY 1

**Highway 54 Spring Yard Sale**, thru 2nd, (270) 256-3934, Highway 54 Spring Yard Sale, Fordsville

## SATURDAY, MAY 2

**Derby Day Celebration Gala**, (270) 824-8593, Madisonville Community College

**Madisonville Arts & Craft Faire**, (270) 245-2970, Ballard Convention Center, Madisonville

**Native Plant Sale, 9th**, (270) 604-5655, The Bloomery, Hopkinsville

## FRIDAY, MAY 8

**Lower Town Arts & Music Festival**, thru 9th, (800) 723-8224, Paducah

**BBQ & Barrels**, thru 9th, (270) 926-1100, Owensboro Convention Center

## SATURDAY, MAY 9

**Native Plant Sale**, (270) 759-2199, Woodlands Nature Station, Cadiz

## TUESDAY, MAY 12

**Cabaret Nights**, (270) 683-5333, Trinity Centre, Owensboro

## SATURDAY, MAY 16

**Madisonville Salutes**, (270) 824-2100, Madisonville City Park

## THURSDAY, MAY 21

**Cinema Systers Film Festival**, thru 24th, (800) 723-8224, Maiden Alley Cinema, Paducah

**Strawberry Festival**, thru 23rd, (270) 274-7106, Beaver Dam

## SATURDAY, MAY 23

**Live Music: Wildflower Honey & The Hot Biscuits**, (270) 554-0010, Purple Toad Winery, Paducah

## SATURDAY, MAY 30

**Flea Market**, (270) 754-2603, Lu-Ray Park, Central City

**Monticello Spring Fest**  
May 15 & 16  
Free Rock-n-Roll Concerts both days  
Vendors, Food Trucks, Free Kids Area and Arts & Crafts  
visitmtcloy.com

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**Monticello Market**  
DOWNTOWN  
MAY 15 - 16  
May 2 - Kids Fest  
June 6 - Car and Motorcycle Show  
visitmtcloy.com

**US 25 YARD SALE**  
June 4 - June 6  
100s of sales Richwood to Berea  
GRANT COUNTY Tourist & Convention Commission visitgrantky.com TEAM KENTUCKY

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1



2



3



4

**1 FLOWER POWER**

Nothing says summer like zinnias in the sun. Lisa Bryant, of Scottsville, captured this one on her farm. Bryant is a Tri-County Electric consumer-member.

**2 LUNCH TIME**

Cows enjoy their feed during a sunny day on the Benningfield family farm. Photo by Samantha Benningfield, Magnolia, a Nolin RECC consumer-member.

**3 NEW CONNECTION**

Newton the dog meets Radar the horse for the first time. Photo by owner, Angela Wilson, Bloomfield, a Salt River Electric consumer-member.

**4 MEGAWATT SMILE**

Sarah Lawson of Horse Cave captured this photo of her dog, Goose, showing off his pearly whites for the camera.

**SEND US YOUR SNAP SHOTS!** We're looking for summer photos.

Submit up to five photos monthly for a chance to **BE FEATURED IN KENTUCKY LIVING**. Photos with people work best, as well as those with seasonal interest. Remember to identify people or pets in the photo left to right and tell us their relation to you.



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

# KENTUCKY kids



## Family time

Busy schedules can make it difficult for families to have dinner together. Plan for at least one meal a day to talk and share.

## Green Team Tip

Save water by running the dishwasher and washing machine only when you have a full load.

— Taylor Ramsey, age 16



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!



## VISIT YOUR LIBRARY

Over the summer, check to see if your local library is hosting any special events. You can pick up a book and have fun with other neighborhood kids.

Some libraries offer:

1. MUSICAL PERFORMANCES
2. BOOK READINGS
3. CRAFT SESSIONS
4. PUPPET SHOWS



Did You Know?

The maximum speed for large raindrops is about 20 mph.

## Name that vegetable

Can you fill in the blanks below to spell the name of this delicious vegetable?

B \_ \_ \_ \_

P \_ \_ \_ \_ \_



Answer: Bell Pepper

Tell us a joke!

What do you call a moose with no name?

**Anonymoose.**

— Chapman Herbert, age 11



# GREAT OUTDOORS

## How to freeze fish

*No vacuum sealer, no problem*



you to stack the fillets neatly in your freezer. Zip the bag most of the way closed, leaving about an inch open at one end, then gently lower the packaged fillets into the tub of water, allowing the water to push the air out of the bag until only the open end of the bag is above the water line. Finally, zip the bag closed, creating an air-free package.

This method helps prevent freezer burn, which decreases the quality of frozen food items. It's a great way to remove most of the oxygen in the bag before freezing your fish—no vacuum sealing machine required. This system also creates neat, stackable packages, saving freezer space.

Over the years, I've added some of my own refinements. I suggest you use a double-sealed bag for best results. If one of the locks on the bag fails, you have a second as a backup. I like to use my cooler for dipping the bags, but a 5-gallon bucket will work—or anything that is deep enough to submerge your

bag. Another tip is to put some ice in the water. It's always best to put fish in the freezer when it's already cold, so I will even refrigerate my packaged fillets for an hour or so before putting them in the freezer. Try this packaging system after your next fishing trip and enjoy fresher, firmer fillets when you decide to cook a few for dinner.

There are so many lessons and techniques that we learn while afield. Some fall by the wayside, while others stand the test of time. This lesson that I learned on the Kenai River in Alaska, so long ago, is a keeper. **KL**

▲ **YEARS AGO**, I was cleaning salmon along the Kenai River in Alaska when I noticed a man who was cleaning his fish with a tub full of water beside him. He put each fillet into a freezer bag and eased it into the water before zipping it closed. Curious, I asked him to explain his method. He graciously shared his fish freezing system, which I still use today.

The first step, he said, is to fill a container with water deep enough to completely submerge your resealable bag. Next, place fish fillets inside the bag, neatly laying them side by side. This allows

This simple method creates airtight packages of fish—no vacuum sealer required.  
Photo: Ken McBroom

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

# Always reliable

## Thank you, postal workers!

They keep us connected. They brave the elements.  
And every day, they serve the last mile.

Usually, we use these terms to describe Kentucky's electric cooperative lineworkers. But they also describe the postal workers who deliver mail—including this magazine—to every corner of the state.

Throughout our 78-year history, we've relied on postal workers to deliver *Kentucky Living*, the state's most widely circulated magazine, to hundreds of thousands of mailboxes every month. It's not an easy task.

We know better than to take electricity for granted.  
We don't take mail delivery for granted, either.  
Thanks, USPS postal workers, for everything you do.



Originally printed in 1961, this image shows Elliott County mail carrier Arlie Robinson and his mule, Kate, as well as Mae Frazier, Bruin Postmaster Sara Rose Greene and her sister, Lizzie Fraley.

From the November 2000 issue, at left Junior Collins delivered mail on a 24-mile horseback route out of Millwood in 1947. He retired after 42 years and passed down his passion to his daughter, Kim Harrell, a mail carrier, shown at right.

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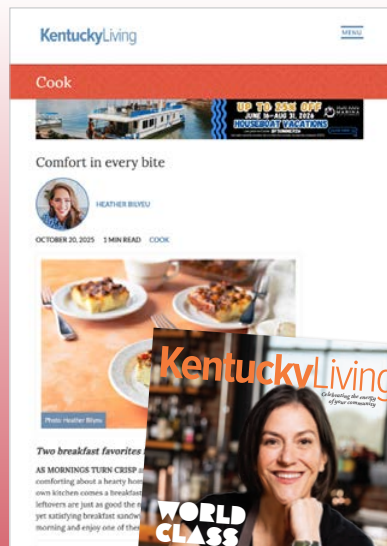
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# Kentucky's vanishing countryside

*An initiative to preserve farmland*



**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.

**SOMETIMES WHEN I GLANCE** over the countryside while traveling Kentucky, I'm reminded of the many farms of only a decade earlier that now have vanished from the landscape.

Although the disappearance of one farm may go unnoticed by most of us, such losses statewide are taking a serious toll on Kentucky's agricultural lands as more farmers retire and sell their acreage in tracts to be developed.

The Kentucky Farm Bureau cites data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture showing that Kentucky is losing an alarming average of 291 acres of farmland each day.

"The average-size farm in Kentucky is between 270 and 280 acres," says Kentucky Farm Bureau president Eddie Melton. "We're losing one of those farms every day. In 20 years we've lost over 17,000 farms and 1.4 million acres ... and about a third of that was in the last five years."

and other support for beginning farmers, young farmers, and those who want to sell their land. It offers help with information about tax benefits that may be available through the Kentucky Selling Farmer Tax Credit and the Protecting American Farmlands Act.

"This Transition Initiative is not only about selling a farm, but it's also about transitioning a farm within your own family ... to keep it in agricultural land," says Melton, a Webster County farmer and consumer-member of Kenergy.

Commercial development of prime farmland often presents a challenge, says University of Kentucky agricultural economist Will Snell, a consumer-member of Bluegrass Energy. Decision-makers face the complicated choice of balancing the potential for increasing jobs in rural areas versus the long-term jeopardy of agriculture and food production.

Finally, beyond our farmland's value for crops, the vanishing landscape of Kentucky's Bluegrass region remains a growing concern among a number of conservation and preservation groups that monitor the loss of the region's iconic horse farms and scenic landscape. World Monuments Fund included the Bluegrass region on its watch list of 100 most endangered global sites.

At that time, Karl Raitz, then chair of the Department of Geography at the University of Kentucky, explained that the historical overlay of settlements that grew from the rich limestone and fertile soil created a horse breeding culture that produced a "built environment" that has a sister in the Nashville Basin, "but other than that, generally cannot be found anywhere else in North America."

In England, an unbroken expanse of land punctuated by ancient trees might be called "park land," he told me.

"Applying that definition to much of Kentucky, instead of looking at parks in cities, we are looking at cities in a giant park many counties wide. But it's rapidly dwindling." **KL**



Melton hopes that the Kentucky Farm Bureau's Kentucky Farmland Transition Initiative will help reverse the trend by raising awareness of options for keeping farmland in the hands of active farmers. The initiative, which is supported by a network of 28 other organizations, focuses on providing technical assistance



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