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AUGUST

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14

EDDIE PENNINGTON

Humble, kind and possibly the best thumbpicker alive, Eddie Pennington shares about his love for music and the value of a good mentor. While his accolades are many, he and his wife still call Princeton home.

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READY, SET, WORK!

Work Ready Kentucky Scholarships can provide students training in in-demand fields with little to no out-of-pocket tuition expenses. Learn more about the program and hear from students turning their training into careers.

ON THE COVER A bloom stands tall at Thomas Dairy Farm and Market's sunflower field in Cecilia. Kentucky has plentiful options to stand among the sunflowers for photos—or just for a moment that will surely make you smile. Photo: Brian Bohannon

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What does it take to become great?

Mentorship and deliberate practice

YEARS AGO, I read Malcolm Gladwell's book, *Outliers*, which popularized the idea that 10,000 hours of practice separates the great from the good. The figure traces back to research on violinists by psychologist Anders Ericsson. It's a compelling number, but Ericsson's actual point gets lost in the simplified version:

it was never just about logging hours. It was about deliberate practice—training specifically designed to push you just past your current ability.

Repeating a task doesn't cause growth. Real growth requires being pushed, corrected and stretched, again and again, by someone who can see what you can't see in yourself.

That's where mentors come in. Guitarist Eddie Pennington, shown above, knows that. You can read about Eddie and his mentors on page 14. Mentors are the most underrated variable in anyone's development.

I think about my own path—I became a CEO at a young age, and frankly, was underprepared for the weight of the job. What carried me through wasn't talent or hours logged—it was a couple of mentors who stepped in with hard-won advice: stay patient, stay calm and never make a major decision when you're not in the right state of mind. That kind of wisdom usually takes a decade of mistakes to learn the hard way. A good mentor hands it to you early.

I also believe in natural ability—there's something built into the truly elite that can't be fully taught. But outside of a few fields, evidence suggests talent mostly affects how fast someone improves early on and whether they



have the temperament to sustain years of difficult practice. The rest is built.

This applies to our cooperatives right now. Our lineworker training has changed drastically, with simulation tools now compressing years of rare, high-stakes scenarios into repeatable practice.

Our engineers and accountants face a different challenge: new technology can speed up fluency with certain tools, but it cannot speed up the time it takes to build real judgment. If anything, that gap is widening, which means deliberate mentorship matters more, not less. And our customer service teams handle increasingly complicated cases—work that requires more skill than before.

The tools will keep changing, but the path to greatness will not. Greatness is built through focused effort, sustained over time, guided by people who care enough to push you further than you'd push yourself.

Chris

CHRIS PERRY
President/CEO

**KENTUCKY ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVES**



FROM THE EDITOR

TALKING WITH A FRIEND

recently, we realized that while parenthood has its similarities from family to family, you often don't *really* know what someone else is going through. However, you can guarantee they're going through something.

Whether or not you're a parent, I believe that's true for all of us. Maybe it's something that subsides at the sight of a cheerful sunflower, or perhaps it drowns in the rich notes of a guitar melody.

Maybe it's a malady you can escape in the pages of a book or a magazine—this is a good place to start.

Whatever you're going through today, even if it feels like you're going it alone, you're not alone in the struggle. The neighbor down the street or the person at the next restaurant booth likely has something front of mind, too.

Be kind and receive kindness—both can go along way in making connections, and sometimes connection is what we need.

Shannon

SHANNON BROCK,
EDITOR

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SUNFLOWERS IN THE MORNING

Find happiness growing in these fields

You'll find it hard not to smile when you're flipping through the photos of Kentucky's sunflower farms on page 35. Learn more about these farms and others at KentuckyLiving.com. There, you'll find more photos and links to websites and social media.



EDUCATE YOURSELF

Scholarships for in-demand fields

A career in an in-demand concentration can lead to job security. Learn more about the Work Ready Kentucky Scholarship program on page 22, then visit our website for the list of fields that qualify.



LIVING LEGEND

Hear it and believe it

Eddie Pennington is a master thumbpicker. Read about his musical career and his mentors on page 14. But to really appreciate his genius, hear him play in several videos at KentuckyLiving.com.



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Tuscany, revisited

Twelve years ago, Stanford author Angela Correll and her husband, Jess, felt a connection to the Tuscany region of Italy so deep that they decided to purchase a second home there. With that, these seventh-generation Kentuckians who had never lived more than 50 miles from their birthplaces embraced a new culture that complements their Southern roots.

Previously, Correll detailed their Italian home-buying experience in *Restored in Tuscany*. She follows up with her readers now in *Village Life*, a detailed look at the day-to-day rhythms found living in a close community she affectionately describes as Kentuscany.

Correll's love for her second home is evident in her eagerness to share beautiful photographs of everyday moments of the people and the countryside, recipes she has acquired from the locals and suggestions on how to bring a bit of the Tuscan way of life into readers' lives here. Covering everything from language to food to customs, Correll blends her tips with humorous stories resulting from her own learning curve. For example, a word mix-up once resulted in introducing her brother-in-law as her rabbit.

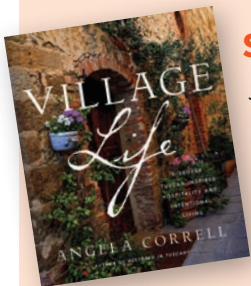
While the rural agricultural influences there are comfortably familiar, the pace, the shared spaces and the respect for rest were a happy adjustment—particularly that last quality so distinct in

the Italian culture. Correll first found it difficult to embrace the afternoon downtime due to finding businesses closed for an hour or two just when she needed to run errands. This built-in break even bleeds into simply popping in on a neighbor—rest time in the home is to be respected and not interrupted. Eventually, though, Correll came to appreciate the time to organize and regroup, to reset from the morning before facing the tasks for the rest of the day. She admits, “This never happens at home, this luxurious hour of restoration. Yet here in Tuscany, it is as natural as planting red geraniums in terra-cotta pots.”

Correll also notes the influence of living in a tight community with her Italian neighbors, like closely planted grapevines. “Maybe humans mirror creation in more ways than we can even imagine,” she observes.

The community has in turn embraced the Corrells, making them feel they are a welcome part of the village. “Someone asked me the other day what drew us to Italy. I began listing the many factors, the art, history, architecture, landscape, craftsmanship, food, wine,” she explains. “And then I paused and realized while all those things are incredible attributes of a beautiful country, those qualities were only amenities to the people in our village and the connections we made.”

» Penny Woods



Seeding Stanford

Jess and Angela Correll founded The Stanford Experience, including The Stanford Inn at Wilderness Road, The Bluebird, Esther's Wellhouse, Mama DeVechio's Pizzeria, Cerulean Catering and Kentucky Soaps & Such, all located on Main Street in Kentucky's second-oldest city. Learn more at www.angelacorrell.com.

Find *Village Life*, (Ten Peaks Press, \$34.99), at Amazon or other book retailers.

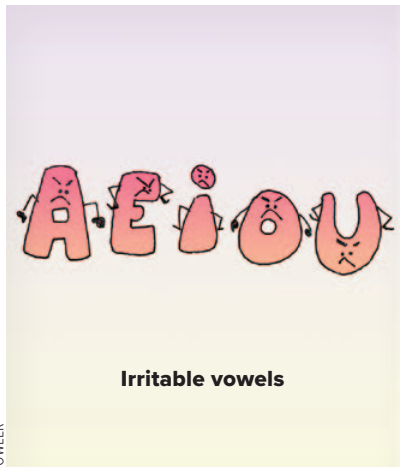
tip

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

August heat can put your air conditioner to the test, making it a great time to check your system's air filter. Inspect your filter monthly during the summer and replace it if it appears dirty. A clean filter supports efficient operation and can help you stay cool and comfortable during the hottest days of summer.



ILLUMINAPHOTOGRAPHIC/DOVE STOCK



Irritable vowels

FOWLER

New RE Magazine editor has Kentucky roots

Kentucky native Blake Whitney was named editor of *Rural Electric (RE) Magazine* in April. The flagship publication of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, *RE* has been published since 1942 and provides electric co-op directors/trustees, chief executives and front-line employees with insights to make sound decisions in the electric utility industry.

Articles and columns cover the essentials of co-op operations; highlight emerging products and services; explore business, management, communications,



safety and marketing trends; and examine policy, regulatory and power supply issues affecting electric cooperatives and the more than

42 million consumers they serve across 48 states.

Whitney is a native of Lexington, where he attended Henry Clay High School. He grew up in the shadow of the University of Kentucky campus, spending most home football Saturdays at Commonwealth Stadium with his dad. His grandparents lived in Woodford County just a stone's throw from the Woodford Reserve Distillery. Today, most of his family still lives in Fayette County, and he loves taking friends from Washington, D.C., to Keeneland.

He graduated from the E.W. Scripps School of Journalism at Ohio University in 2004 and worked for then-Host Communications in Lexington from 2004 to 2007 before moving to the nation's capital. There, he worked for *Roll Call*, a newspaper covering Capitol Hill; the *Washington Business Journal*; and as an editor at a healthcare research organization before joining NRECA in June 2021.

Whitney is the NRECA liaison for the Statewide Editors Association and works closely with the electric co-op magazine community.

featured FRAMES



Debra L. Scott's granddaughter, Birdie, cools off with the water hose and has fun doing it! Scott is a Kenergy consumer-member in Baskett.

Have a question or comment for the editor?

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



First class for the future

Apprenticeship graduates mark a milestone for lineworker training in Kentucky

JOE ARNOLD | PHOTOS BY WADE HARRIS

“I THINK IT’S MADE ME BETTER.”

In sunglasses, a hardhat and a bright yellow shirt sporting the logo of his co-op, Jackson Purchase Energy Cooperative, Gabe Defew looks across the proving ground of utility poles and equipment at Inter-County Energy in Danville.

As he completes the four-year Kentucky Electric Cooperatives Apprenticeship Program, the journeyman lineworker takes measure of the experience.

“I think it’s made *all* of us better,” he adds.

Defew is one of 14 members of the milestone first graduating class of the apprenticeship program that combines hands-on training by six Kentucky Electric Cooperatives instructors with a Northwest Lineman College curriculum that meets state and federal Department of Labor standards.

“I think they get the best of both worlds,” says Seth Rose, a Northwest Lineman College director. “They get that online book training, but then they also have the hands-on experience that we’ve been able to cultivate and grow with you all.”

Historically, much of the line trade was taught through on-the-job training passed down from one generation of lineworkers to the next. While that produced capable and resilient crews, it also meant practices could vary widely by cooperative, crew or foreman.

“Today’s operating environment demands a more consistent approach,” explains Randy Meredith, vice president of safety and loss prevention at the statewide co-op association. “Co-ops face higher reliability expectations, more energized work and greater technical complexity.”



Co-op operations staff, safety teams and leadership have been invited to observe field labs, helping build confidence in the program and encouraging broader participation.

From the handful of Kentucky co-ops that committed to the apprenticeship program when it launched four years ago, 16 now participate, with verbal commitments from two more as they hire their next apprentices.

“I would say come in with an open mind,” says Tucker Shelton, an apprentice graduate and five-year Line Tech 3 at Nolin RECC whose cousin is beginning his first apprentice class this year.

“I feel great,” Shelton adds. “This program’s brought a lot to my attention on how the other parts of the state work. I’ve made a lot of great friends, and it’s overall been an amazing experience.”

▲ Jackson Purchase Energy’s Gabe Defew and Nolin RECC’s Tucker Shelton observe as participants reinforce the skills and teamwork essential to workplace safety during hurt man training, where pole-top rescue techniques and emergency response procedures help prepare crews to safely assist an injured coworker in the field.

SCHOLARSHIPS EXTEND APPRENTICESHIP PATHWAY

Kentucky Electric Cooperatives’ first apprenticeship graduates are also first in line for scholarships that can help them turn their four-year training into an associate degree through the Kentucky Community and Technical College System. Earlier this year, the statewide association provided \$75,000 for the scholarship program, using proceeds from Kentucky’s Power for Your Community license plates. Those dollars will be matched, expanding support for lineworkers who want to continue their education. Southcentral Kentucky Community and Technical College President Michelle Trawick says the scholarships can be life-changing, “helping graduates build an opportunity to grow throughout their career.”



▲ Aerial view of Inter-County Energy's Field Lab 4, where crews gained real-world experience through collaborative, hands-on field training.

▶ At top right, Safety and Loss Prevention Instructor Kevin McCarty gives an overview of insulation, isolation and grounding of primary underground. Shown from left are Ben Bush, Fleming Mason Energy; Austin Caskey, Grayson RECC; Bryson Puyear, Nolin RECC; Evan Meenach, Owen Electric; and Trinity Gribbins, Inter-County Energy.

At bottom right, Randy Meredith, director of safety and training for Kentucky Electric Cooperatives, leads a field discussion during Inter-County Energy's Field Lab 4.

“For the association, this is a clear example of shared-service value,” says Kentucky Electric Cooperatives President and CEO Chris Perry. “Our team can provide expertise, structure and training capacity that individual co-ops may not be able to develop as efficiently on their own.”

Inter-County Energy Lineman Trinity Gribbins says his four years in the apprenticeship program have taken his eight years in the industry to another level.

“I couldn’t recommend it more because you come out here with all these different co-ops and get to see the way that other people do things, and it’s an open book of knowledge,” Gribbins says.

“For our member co-ops, the return is a safer, better-prepared workforce,” Meredith adds. “We are building a stronger safety culture and a pipeline of lineworkers trained to meet the demands of today’s electric utility environment.”

“When you get into sticky situations, you can think back on this program,” Gribbins says. “These instructors, they’re there for you. They give you their number if you need them.”

Meredith says the ultimate goal is simple: to develop professionals who can do the work safely and return home to the people who count on them.

“Nobody can be what you are at home except you,” Meredith says. “Work safely and go back home and be all you can be at home.” **KL**





UNIQUELY
Kentucky

Centenni-ale celebration

At the top of a spiral staircase and behind a locked door lies a room where the magic of a family recipe and Kentucky tradition comes to life.

Every bottle of Ale-8-One, the state's official original soft drink, is produced in Winchester, the same city where it was born just over a century ago, on July 13, 1926.

Fielding Rogers is the company's owner and chairman of the board. He still mixes the secret Ale-8-One formula from a note that was handwritten by his great-great-uncle, company founder and recipe inventor George Lee Wainscott. The mixing process takes about six hours and

produces 3 million bottles of product.

"It's so rare that a company makes it, much less makes it decades, or 100 years, or four generations," Rogers says. "We're one of the last independent bottlers left." What sets Ale-8 apart is the special relationship Kentuckians have with the brand. "You see people with an Ale-8 tattoo ... you know they're probably from Kentucky," he says.

Rogers learned how to mix the recipe from his dad and has been involved in the process for more than 20 years. He never met Wainscott, who died in 1944, but the family's secret recipe bridges the generations. The company now produces

about 240,000 bottles of Ale-8-One per day, all based on a formula that has never changed.

In celebration of the centennial, Ale-8-One has released special cartons, labels and trays, as well as anniversary displays in stores. On Aug. 1, also known as "Ale-8-One Day," the company celebrated the "centenni-ale" in downtown Winchester, near the location of the original factory, with food trucks, activities and a historical society marker unveiling.

"It's kind of a unicorn of a brand and a company," Rogers says. "I think that's partly because Kentucky is just kind of a special place."

Story: Lilly Keith

Photo: Tim Webb

A voice for broadcasters

Steve Newberry, a consumer-member of Farmers RECC, is the founder and CEO of Commonwealth Broadcasting in Glasgow. Photo: Tim Coburn

Newberry makes community impact

HISEVILLE

Steve Newberry always found comfort in the voice on the radio. During tornado warnings in his childhood home, his family would retreat to the basement where he still remembers the power in that voice.

"I would listen to the announcer that was keeping everyone calm and keeping everybody informed and let everybody know where the severe weather was," Newberry says. "I just always found it quite comforting and exciting."

Newberry, a consumer-member of Farmers RECC, is the founder and CEO of Commonwealth Broadcasting in Glasgow.

Newberry's first job in broadcasting was with WKAY at age 14. He did odd jobs around the station, then eventually worked the weekend shift.

He had plans to go to law school, but ended up buying a radio station in Cave City with the help of his family.

Several years later, Newberry got involved with broadcasting on the national level through the National Association of Broadcasters, where he once served as chairman of the board.

"It's all been driven

very much by a desire to serve the local community and to make sure that we provide that voice during those challenging times," Newberry says.

Newberry and the late Kentucky Governor Brereton C. Jones grew Commonwealth Broadcasting together, reaching up to 38 stations at one point.

"There have been so many people that have been involved in helping Commonwealth be what it has become," Newberry says. "I'm very proud of what [the stations] mean to the community."

Newberry is professionally based out of Washington, D.C., but personally based out of Hiseville. He's also

CEO of Quu, a software and services company that aims to help radio implement visual programming, including in-vehicle visuals.

Dale Thornhill has worked with Newberry for almost 42 years and serves as vice president and COO of Commonwealth Broadcasting.

"He's had a tremendous impact on broadcasting in Kentucky," Thornhill says. "I mean that from his own personal, small radio stations all the way up to major market television. He's been an advocate for local broadcasting." **KL**

LILLY KEITH is a journalism student at the University of Kentucky and communications intern for *Kentucky Living*.



A community business

Jackson Purchase Distillery is a good neighbor

LILLY KEITH

SEVEN YEARS AGO, longtime friends Lloyd Jones and David Salmon drove by a distillery they thought had never made a drop of bourbon, though it was equipped with a 34-foot, 24-inch all copper Vendome still.

The distillery owner was Ray Jamieson, who had intended to use it as a hobby. Jones and Salmon bought the distillery and officially took possession of it on April 1, 2021.

Within 103 days, Jackson Purchase Distillery started distilling bourbon. By August, they were putting it in barrels.

"It's just one of these magical things that happens, and how lucky can it be that the bourbon boom is going on, and you've got a distillery there that's got a capacity for basically 20,000 barrels of production," Jones, the CEO and president, says. Salmon is the company's chief operating officer.

Jackson Purchase Distillery, served by Gibson Electric, is in



Hickman, where the aging process of whiskey is unique. Jones says the climate in Western Kentucky is wetter and more humid, allowing whiskey to age more rapidly.

In addition, the area sits atop one of the world's largest water aquifers, Jones says.

"We're an agricultural business; everything we do is related to farming," he says. "We fortunately have a good group of people down in Fulton County."

"Strong local businesses are vital to the communities we call home,"

says Charles Phillips, Gibson Electric and Gibson Connect president and CEO. "We're grateful for the investment Jackson Purchase Distillery has made in Western Kentucky and pleased to provide the electric, internet and phone services that help support their operation."

Jackson Purchase Distillery Master Distiller Craig Beam, a seventh-generation distiller of 40 years and kin to Jim Beam, says almost all the grain, corn, wheat and rye are purchased from local farmers, which, after use, goes right back into the farming industry as cattle feed.

Head Distiller Terry Ballard says the distillery tries hard to support the community of Hickman, bringing in money to local convenience stores through trucking, employees going to get lunch and farmers having an extra buyer for their crops. Jones, a native of Hickman, knew how much the community needed an industry like JPD, Ballard says.

"We back this community 100%, as much as they back us," Ballard says. "We are one of the biggest employers in the county." **KL**



jacksonpurchase
distillery.com

LOCATION:
Hickman

INDUSTRY:
Bourbon distilling

**ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVE:**
Gibson Electric

◀ Jackson Purchase Distillery Master Distiller Craig Beam, left, and Head Distiller Terry Ballard. Photo: Jackson Purchase Distillery

A turn of events

Differing from many other Kentucky distilleries, Jackson Purchase Distillery initially served solely as a contract distillery, meaning it distilled and stored barrels for other brands. While it's still producing for contract customers, it introduced its own flagship bourbon last September.

They first introduced Batch No. 1, which received high praise during its debut at the Kentucky Bourbon Festival.

Despite the recent challenges within the bourbon industry in Kentucky, the distillery is still producing.

"This is not unusual," says Head Distiller Terry Ballard. "Any business, you're going to have ups and downs."

Last month, it released two more of its own products, Jackson Purchase Kentucky Select Bourbon and Jackson Purchase Bottled in Bond Bourbon.

Eddie P



Pennington



Part-time thumbpicker is a full-time legend

BY RYAN CRAIG | PHOTOS BY JOE IMEL

◀
Eddie Pennington poses with his Heritage Super Eagle guitar in front of his home and his 1959 Ford Galaxy 500 in Princeton.



Pennington plays his Heritage Super Eagle guitar.



IT'S NOT EASY FOR SOMEONE WHO IS HUMBLE, QUIET AND KIND TO ANSWER A QUESTION ABOUT BEING WIDELY RECOGNIZED AS ONE OF THE BEST—IF NOT THE BEST—THUMBpickERS ALIVE.

What makes Eddie Pennington so good? What made him the man often recognized for helping to keep the unique sound of thumb-picking alive?

He laughs at these questions.

"I don't even know if I'm the best in my family," he says, noting

his son, Alonzo Pennington, a multi-talented "can play anything" guitarist, has won more thumb-picking national championships than anyone and that his grandson, 21-year-old Caleb Coots, might be the best traditional thumbstyle guitarist out there.



Some of Eddie Pennington's many guitar cases at his home in Princeton.



Thumbpicking is a unique style of guitar playing where the thumb makes the rhythm while the fingers pick the melody. It was first popularized by Merle Travis in the 1940s and later by Chet Atkins. Guitarists like Pennington and his family have been carrying on the tradition.

Pennington's resume as a musician and entertainer is impressive. He has won the National Thumbpicking Contest in Mountain View, Arkansas, retiring from it in the 1980s after winning twice in a row. He has received the National Heritage Award and the Kentucky Governor's Award in the Arts. He was inducted into the National

Thumbpickers Hall of Fame in 2003, the Old Time Country Music Hall of Fame in 2011 and has an honorary doctorate from Western Kentucky University.

Pennington has played at the Smithsonian Institution, the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. and the Kentucky Derby Day Breakfast. He played at the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta and the Country Music Hall of Fame in Nashville. His music was even featured on the Kentucky Educational Television show *Kentucky Afield*. He has played in France and across America, but he was never a full-time musician—instead, he had a day job as a funeral director and

Clockwise from top left, Pennington stands with his heroes, Merle Travis and Eddie's father, Norman Pennington, in 1979. Photo: Larry Pennington; Pennington with fellow National Endowment for the Arts and blues guitarist John Cephas in 2001; Pennington plays at the National Thumbpicking Championship in Mountain View, Arkansas in 1986. Photo: Penny Pennington; Pennington poses with Merle Travis' Super 400 Gibson guitar in 1989 at the Everly Brothers Festival in Central City; Pennington, 18, with his guitar. Photo: Chi Chi Mills

Country Music Legend Grandpa Jones once signed a poster for Eddie and Penny Pennington. The poster was given to the family by Marice Jones, Grandpa's nephew who also made the frame.



eventually was elected Caldwell County Coroner for five terms.

"I left the funeral home because of my health; I was sick of it," Pennington says with a laugh. "That's sort of where my music career started. I met these people from Washington, D.C., and they had me up to play at a big festival or two. I was fortunate enough to get out and play some big places."

Now 70, he has retired from the coroner's office. While he says he received some "nice" awards over the years, he felt he had to stay grounded back in Princeton, where he lives with his wife, Penny.

"You know, I toured a whole lot of this country. I never did completely trust music with my living," he says. "As coroner, when I would be off, most of my stuff that

I played was, you know, three- or four-day stuff, maybe two days' travel, and then I'd get back to being the coroner."

Pennington also did commercial sharpening—saws, band saws and carbide tools—to make ends meet when he came off the road, a curious choice for a person who has, arguably, priceless digits at the end of his hands.

"I get it, but sharpening (a saw) is a whole lot different than running one of them," he says, chuckling. "I had respect for those saws, and I was very cautious."

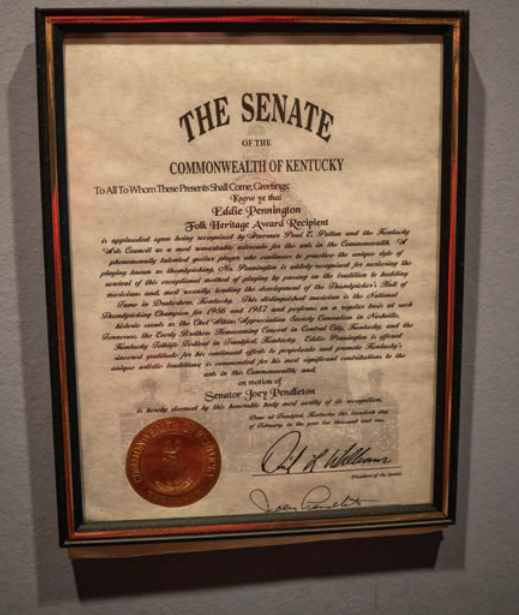
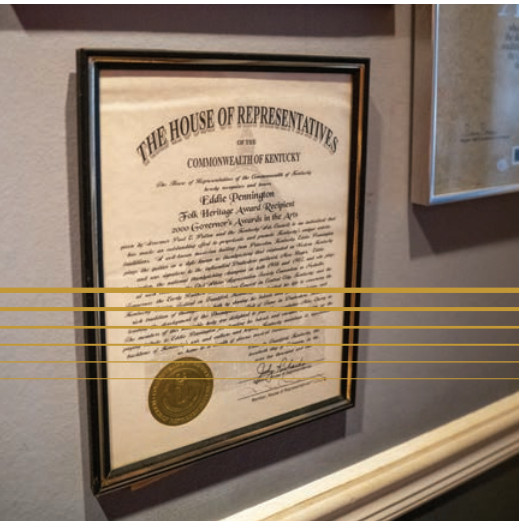
THE INFLUENCE OF MOSE RAGER AND AN UNINTENDED CONTEST

"I was 18 before I knew what Merle Travis was, or anything," Pennington says.

A fiddler since he was young and having recently acquired a secondhand guitar, he was listening to a recording of an interview of Travis and heard Travis say he



The custom leather strap on Pennington's Heritage Super Eagle guitar.



The Governor Awards of the Arts Eddie Pennington received in 2002. After being honored, Eddie played for the state Senate and state House in session in Frankfort.

was influenced by Mose Rager, who only lived about 20 miles away from where Pennington was living at the time in Nortonville.

He says he drove to Drakesboro in Muhlenberg County, found Rager's home, knocked on his door—and everything changed.

"I was over his house, just me and him there, and he showed me some chords in two or three different



▲
Left, Pennington and his children, Alonzo and Rosebud, along with Bob Sakston, play together in 1988. Photo: *Caldwell County Times*

Son, Alonzo, and father, Eddie Pennington, pose for a family photo in 2001. Photo: Penny Pennington.

Pennington plays his Heritage Super Eagle guitar at his home in Princeton.

songs that I've always really appreciated," Pennington says. "I appreciate everything he did ... he was the one, really, that I think put it all together, that made it count. That didn't mean greater ones came after him, but Mose was the foundation of it."

Pennington says he was walking on air after that. And a whole lot of the thumbpicker he became can be traced back to Rager.

"You know, it hit me heavy the first time I saw Mose Rager play," he says. "I knew I had met the master. I was so excited, I went home, I couldn't even sleep thinking about

him. And then I got to studying about Merle Travis."

Years later, Pennington had gone from being a student of thumb-picking to something more, again, through a Rager connection. At Rager's funeral, he says he heard some men talking about judging a national thumbpicking contest in Arkansas. Thom Bresh, Merle Travis' son, was doing a workshop there. Eddie was interested and a little confused about what was going on, but it really worked out.

"Well, I thought you had to enter the contest to go to the workshop," he says. "So, anyway, I entered the contest and believe it or not, I was lucky enough that I won it."

After the national title, Pennington's name was out there. He says the people he met, the contacts he made, were life changing.

"(Thumbpickers) weren't organized when Mose died, you know? It really wasn't organized when Merle Travis died," he says. "Merle and Mose, they don't have any idea the impact they've had on thousands of players around the world, not just over here in the United States or Kentucky or Tennessee, but around the world. Since the internet's come to be, I get inquiries



Pennington is all smiles in a photo taken for the National Endowment for the Arts in 2010 in Lowell, Massachusetts. Photo: Eddie Pennington

from people all the time, all over the world, about Mose Rager.”

OTHER INFLUENCES

Pennington says he owes a debt to all kinds of people over the years for showing him something on the guitar, for being a friend or for just sitting down with him and playing. He names Gene Francis, who let him play at his square dances when he was young. Pennington first met Francis on a jaunt through north Todd County, when he ended up at a house playing with Rager, Francis, the late Odell Martin—“a once-in-a-thousand years guitar player,” Eddie declares—and a couple of country music star Donna Fargo’s band members.

There was musician Freddie Russell, a great friend Pennington loved to play with; there were the people who helped run the Merle Travis Appreciation Society and those who volunteered and donated to get the Merle Travis Music Center constructed in Powderly in Muhlenberg County.

“There was always somebody better, when you’ve been around some of the best, like Odell Martin and Paul Yandell and Charlie Murphy,” he says. “I, after Merle died, really applied myself to that type of music. That is what I was best at doing.”

A FALL AND THE FUTURE

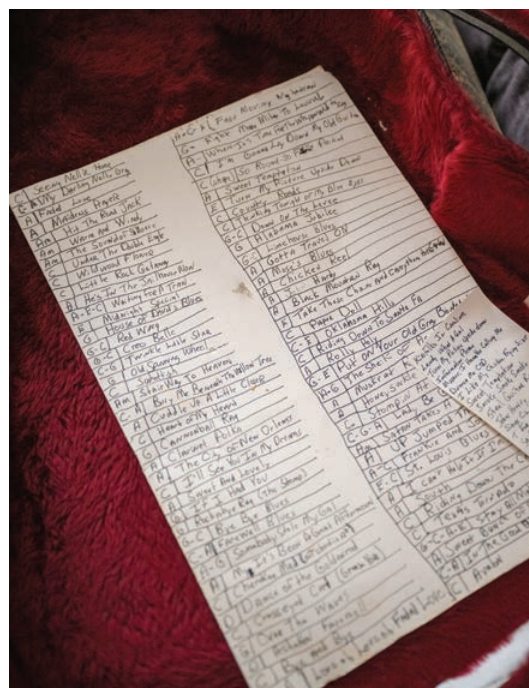
Late last year, Pennington “took a little fall,” as he put it, but got

a massive hematoma on his leg that required surgery. “Well, right now they say I’m sort of with a standstill with it,” he says. He wears a drainage pump on his leg and eventually may require more skin grafts.

But the old master says he still enjoys picking, though he doesn’t get to do it as much as he would like. This summer, he was getting ready to play at a jamboree in Cadiz with his son, his grandson and his friends and was looking forward to it.

He says he enjoys being onstage, just focusing on hearing the tune in his head.

“What goes through my mind mostly is ... my fingers sort of can find (the tune) and it comes more automatic than it does if I’m thinking it out,” Pennington says, then chuckles. “When I’m playing, I just try not to think too much.” **KL**



Pennington sat down one day and wrote all the tunes he knew on this list. He still uses it to make set lists before performances.

READY, SET, WORK!



Schools in the Kentucky Community
& Technical College System, includ-
ing Maysville Community & Technical
College, offer welding instruction.
Photo: KCTCS



Kentucky scholarship program makes career training accessible

BY ROBIN ROENKER

AFTER GRADUATING FROM DAVIESS COUNTY High School in 2023, Elijah Moore initially explored multiple career options, including several pathways in the construction industry. But when he enrolled in a welding technology program at Owensboro Community & Technical College in the fall of 2025, he knew he'd found his fit. Even better: With a Work Ready Kentucky Scholarship in hand, he was able to train for a high-demand career with no out-of-pocket tuition costs.

Having completed two semesters of college training, Moore is now working in a paid position with Owensboro-based Accurity Industrial Contractors, LLC, while he continues classwork toward his welding associate degree.

"When I started, I didn't know much about welding, to be honest," says Moore, a Kenergy consumer-member from Philpot. "I'm very thankful for the classes, because they've introduced me to heavy equipment and other forms of welding."



Nursing falls under the healthcare umbrella for the Work Ready program. These students are at Big Sandy Community & Technical College. Photo: KCTCS



Elijah Moore is going pro in welding technology. Photo: Owensboro Community & Technical College

How it works

The Work Ready Kentucky Scholarship covers up to the full cost of 60 credit hours of tuition and fees for Kentucky residents pursuing an associate degree or industry-recognized certification in five high-demand career fields (see sidebar for approved areas of study). It's administered by the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority and funded by Kentucky Lottery proceeds.

The program covers hundreds of course options and includes associate degree tracks that require about four semesters of study as well as certificate or diploma programs that can be completed in as little as four months.

To be eligible, applicants must be enrolled or accepted for enrollment in an approved program at a participating college, university or training center. The application window for the scholarship opens each year on May 1 and remains open until that year's funds are fully distributed. To apply, students should complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or FAFSA, and the Work Ready Scholarship application, which is accessed through the student's online KHEAA account portal, or by setting

up an online account with KHEAA at KHEAA.com if the student doesn't have one already.

The Work Ready Kentucky Scholarship has no GPA or need-based income criteria, but to qualify, applicants must have already earned their high school diploma or GED or be currently enrolled in a program to earn their GED. Also, they



cannot have previously completed an associate or higher degree. A separate program, the Work Ready Dual Credit Scholarship, also administered by KHEAA, allows current high school students to enroll in dual-credit career and technical education programs in approved career pathways before they graduate.

The Work Ready Kentucky Scholarship “eliminates financial barriers for Kentuckians who are seeking to upskill their current credentials to be more competitive in the workforce,” says Jo Carole Ellis, KHEAA executive director and CEO. “At the same time, it’s helping address high-demand workforce needs to help fuel Kentucky’s economy. So, it’s a win-win for students and for Kentucky’s businesses and industries that need high-skilled workers.”

Opening new career opportunities

The Work Ready Kentucky Scholarship was launched in the 2017-2018 academic year through a gubernatorial executive order before being enacted into law by the Kentucky legislature in 2019. From its launch through June 2025, the scholarship program had awarded \$74.8 million in support to 26,860 Kentuckians—\$12.8 million to 4,650 recipients in the 2024-25 school year alone, according to Becky Gilpatrick, KHEAA’s director of student aid.

The Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board is tasked with evaluating wage and employment data to determine Kentucky’s top five in-demand workforce sectors—and their findings help ensure the scholarship trains students in designated sectors with the highest expected statewide job growth.

“By focusing the scholarships on our high-demand, high-wage industry sectors, it really helps students think about how their time as students will

lead to jobs where they can immediately make a positive impact on the workforce,” says Erin Tipton, vice chancellor of advancement and workforce development at Bluegrass Community & Technical College.

Get more details

Want to see a complete list of approved programs for the Work Ready Scholarship? KentuckyLiving.com has a link to that list, to full scholarship details and more.

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GET YOUR PASS NOW



Nazly Nava Gazca and fellow students at Hopkinsville Community & Technical College. Nava Gazca is studying nursing. Photo: Nazly Nava Gazca

For Pennyrile Electric consumer-member Nazly Nava Gazca of Oak Grove, the scholarship opened the doors to her dream of studying nursing, a sector with perennially strong career potential.

After moving to Kentucky from New York to support her husband's Army career at Fort Campbell, Nava Gazca was thrilled to discover the availability of the Work Ready Kentucky Scholarship to support her own career ambitions. She is now a nursing student at Hopkinsville Community & Technical College.

Receiving the scholarship "gave me peace of mind and reassurance knowing I had support behind me," Nava Gazca says. "It jump-started everything for us. It allowed me to focus on my studies, clinicals and success in the program instead of constantly worrying about financial stress. It made me feel like I could finally do this."

Breaking down financial barriers

Students can view a Work Ready Kentucky Scholarship award estimator on the KHEAA website to better understand what their likely award might be, after accounting for Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship (KEES) money and other state and federal financial aid.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 27



PARTICIPATING COLLEGES, UNIVERSITIES AND TRAINING CENTERS

- All campuses of the Kentucky Community & Technical College System (KCTCS)
- American National University locations in Kentucky
- Beckfield College
- Campbellsville University
- College for Technical Education—Lexington campus only
- Eastern Kentucky University
- Galen College of Nursing
- Indiana Institute of Technology—Louisville campus only
- Kentucky Welding Institute
- Medical Career and Technical College
- MedQuest College
- Morehead State University
- Murray State University— CTP programs only
- Northern Kentucky University
- Ross Medical Education Center locations in Kentucky
- Sullivan University
- University of Kentucky
- University of Louisville
- University of the Cumberlands
- Western Kentucky University

NOTE: Only approved programs of study at each location qualify



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 26

“Anyone in one of these eligible programs at one of the participating schools should go ahead and complete their Work Ready Kentucky Scholarship application as soon as they can,” Gilpatrick says. “We anticipate running out of funds before the end of the calendar year. But the exact date varies from year to year, depending on the number of applicants we receive.”

While the scholarship can cover up to full tuition for eligible programs at Kentucky Community & Technical College System campuses, it does not guarantee full tuition coverage at other participating schools where tuition costs may be greater. Students enrolled at other institutions could receive a scholarship amount equivalent to the KCTCS tuition rate, which can help reduce their overall, out-of-pocket tuition and fees.

Students get hands-on experience at Maysville Community & Technical College.

A student uses a robot under the guidance of an advanced manufacturing instructor at Hopkinsville Community and Technical College.

Photos: KCTCS

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HVAC programs fall under the qualifying area of construction for Work Ready Kentucky Scholarships. Photo: KCTCS



With support from Work Ready, Robert Fallis completed his EMT training at Campbellsville University. Photo: Robert Fallis

“The majority of the students who are in the [Work Ready Kentucky Scholarship] program come from middle-income families whose finances make them ineligible to qualify for Pell Grants and other forms of low income-based financial aid assistance,” Gilpatrick says. “It’s about helping provide access and opportunity so students can come in, get their education and get back out to in-demand careers.”

“Work Ready is a godsend,” agrees Robyn Sollberger, director for financial aid at Campbellsville University. “It opens the door to degree paths and lets students—who may have been working for years in areas without lots of room for advancement—shift gears to pursue training in a field they really want to be in.”

With support from Work Ready, Robert Fallis of Campbellsville was able to complete his Emergency Medical Technician training at Campbellsville University this past spring, following roughly six months of coursework. He’s now employed as an EMT with Campbellsville-Taylor County EMS.

For the 30-year-old Taylor County RECC consumer-member, landing a job in health care feels like the fulfillment of a decade-long goal.

“Ever since getting out of high school, I always had an interest in joining the health care field,” Fallis says. “The opportunity to get the Work Ready Scholarship and train at Campbellsville made it all so seamless, and I was able to get hired right away.” **KL**

APPROVED PROGRAMS OF STUDY

These are the Work Ready Kentucky Scholarship qualifying areas for the 2026-2027 academic year.

Construction

Examples: Heating, ventilation and air conditioning mechanic; bulldozer operator; construction electrician; plumber mechanic

Education

Examples: Early childhood educator, school-age child care

Healthcare

Examples: Nursing Associate of Applied Science degree, radiography, respiratory therapist, medical receptionist, dental hygienist, advanced emergency medical technician, medical assisting, phlebotomy technician, health records specialist

Manufacturing and Logistics

Examples: Supply chain management, industrial maintenance technology, engineering and electronics technology, automotive technology, welding technology, diesel engine mechanic, utility lineworker

Professional, Scientific and Technical Services

Examples: Computer and information technologies, web programmer, digital forensics specialist, paralegal technology, mobile apps developer, remote drone pilot



Use plastic water bottles safely

Don't let summer heat hijack your drink



DI STUDIO/ADOBE STOCK

NOTHING FEELS BETTER

on a hot summer day than a nice, cold drink. It's easy to grab a reusable bottle before heading out—and even easier to pick up a bottle of water on the go. But does that convenience come with a cost?

Plastic water bottles contain chemicals like bisphenol A and phthalates that make the bottles more flexible and pliable. The way these chemicals are loosely bound to the plastic enables harmful byproducts, as well as micro- and nanoplastics, to leach from the bottle into the water we consume. These chemicals and plastic pieces are so small

that they can be absorbed into the body's cells and tissues.

What can speed up that chemical leaching process? Prolonged exposure to sunlight, or UV light and elevated temperatures—such as when plastic bottles are left in cars during the warm, sunny months. Even if the contents of the bottle were consumed right away and never left in that hot car, the bottle could have been subjected to storage and transportation conditions from the manufacturer.

What's the harm? Bisphenol A, phthalates and certain micro- and nanoplastics are

endocrine-disrupting chemicals, which means they can interfere with hormone actions throughout the endocrine system. Exposure has been linked to adverse health outcomes in humans. These include reproductive, developmental, neurological, immune and metabolic disorders.

The effects of these chemicals are cumulative, so knowing where they can be found and how they move from your water bottle to your cells can inform your decision-making as a consumer. There are steps you can take to reduce your exposure. For example, reusable stainless steel and glass

bottles not only help eliminate waste from plastic water bottles but also help mitigate risks from the chemicals in plastic. Plastic water bottles aren't the only culprit lurking in your house; consider replacing your plastic food storage containers with glass or ceramic.

When you load up the car for a summer adventure, pack some peace of mind in the form of a glass or stainless steel reusable bottle. **KL**

PATRICK HANNON, PH.D., is an assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology and a researcher in the UK College of Medicine.

Color in the shade

Browallia blooms all summer long

GROWING SUMMER ANNUAL

flowers is one of the most popular parts of gardening. Perhaps it is the lure of months of colorful flowers that motivates us. There are lots of choices when selecting annuals for sunny locations, but far fewer options for shady spots.

If you are looking for something besides a begonia or impatiens that will thrive and flower in the shade, consider planting *Browallia*, the bush violet. Appropriate for containers, ground beds and even as a houseplant, *Browallia* doesn't skip a beat when planted and blooms constantly until fall.

Two great choices are *Browallia* Endless Illumination with its blue to purple flowers and *Browallia* Endless Flirtation with its white flowers. This mounding annual can grow 12 to 16 inches tall. Some varieties can grow to 2 feet tall. All are heat tolerant, thrive in a wide variety of soils and don't require much fertilization to keep flowering.

The abundant star-like tubular flowers are attractive to hummingbirds. Bush violet has no serious disease or insect issues, but is toxic to cats and dogs if ingested.

It performs best with about four hours of sunlight and protection from the afternoon sun.



SHELLY NOLD

Other varieties of bush violet are also available, but all are blue, purple, lavender or white. They can be planted alone or mixed with other shade-tolerant annuals for a beautiful summer display. **KL**

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

ASK THE gardener

Q

What kind of fruit salad tree grows well in Kentucky?

—Lamon Baldon

A Kentucky has the climate for growing multiple fruit trees, including apples, pears, pawpaws, cherries and peaches. The 4-in-1 fruit tree, or fruit salad tree, is a multi-grafted fruit tree. Each individual graft produces different varieties of the same fruit that ripen at different times. The University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service provides detailed, research-based information on growing fruit trees in Kentucky. Visit extension.mgcafe.uky.edu to learn more. Choose disease-resistant varieties and plant in a sunny location that has nutrient-rich soil and allows for good drainage.

» Angie Oakley



SYNDY/ADOBE STOCK

Have a gardening question?

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

READER
recipe

A packable treat

Homemade Easy
Peanut Butter BarsSubmitted by Kathy Jo Underwood
Consumer-member of Inter-County Energy

There is no greater flavor combo than peanut butter and chocolate. Kathy Jo says these bars “won’t last long,” and I can attest to that! Enjoy a simple and easy to make dessert that everyone will be obsessed with.

2 C graham cracker crumbs
2 C powdered sugar
1 C butter, melted
1 C peanut butter
1½ C semisweet chocolate chips
4 Tbsp peanut butter

Mix graham cracker crumbs, powdered sugar, butter and 1 cup peanut butter in a medium bowl until well blended. Press evenly into the bottom of an ungreased 9x13-inch pan. Place chocolate chips and 4 tablespoons of peanut butter in a microwave-safe bowl. Microwave on high, stirring every 15 seconds, until smooth. Spread mixture over crust. Refrigerate at least 1 hour before cutting into squares. Yields 12 large or 24 small squares



HEATHER BILYEU

Weeknight wins

Comforting, no-fuss recipes for back-to-school nights

AUGUST FEELS LIKE a gentle reset. Everyone is getting back into the routine of earlier wake-up times for school and adjusting to new schedules. This month calls for easy weeknight meals.

This macaroni and ground beef casserole fits the bill—it’s simple, dependable and delicious. It calls for pantry staples, requires no chopping and spends just 20 minutes in the oven, coming out golden with a melty, cheesy top. Peanut butter bars are perfect for a little something sweet on weeknights after dinner or tucked into a lunchbox for a midday treat.

Easy Macaroni and Ground Beef Casserole

½ lb macaroni pasta (about half of a standard box)	1 tsp dried oregano
1 lb ground beef	½ tsp black pepper
1½ tsp salt	1 (10 oz) can diced tomatoes with green chilies
1½ tsp garlic powder	1 (28 oz) can crushed tomatoes
1½ tsp chili powder	10 oz Colby Jack cheese, shredded and divided
1 tsp onion powder	

Preheat oven to 350°. Grease a 9x13-inch baking dish. Bring a pot of salted water to a boil. Cook macaroni for 5–7 minutes, just until slightly underdone. Drain and set aside. In a large skillet over medium heat, cook ground beef until browned, about 10–15 minutes. Drain excess grease. Stir in all the spices. Add cans of tomatoes and stir. Fold in partially cooked pasta and half the shredded cheese. Pour mixture into prepared baking dish and spread evenly. Top with remaining cheese. Bake 15–20 minutes, until edges are bubbly and cheese is melted. Serves 6.

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

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HEATHER BILYEU

Go to KentuckyLiving.com/submit-a-recipe



Classing it up

Elevated home cooking at 145 Roadhouse in Campton

JOEL SAMS



HOPE THOMAS

HOPE THOMAS NEVER EXPECTED to move back to Wolfe County. By 2022, she'd been a professional chef for two decades, with experience from Chicago to Florida. But when her mother began facing health challenges, she knew it was time to go home and start something new.

After buying out one of the partners in an existing Campton restaurant, 145 Steakout, she closed it and reimagined everything from the menu to the decor. When the new business reopened as 145 Roadhouse on Aug. 4, 2023, it was a "clean slate."

"We're a rustic farm-to-table restaurant," Thomas says, describing a blend of modern and Southern sensibilities. "We know where we came from. We just like to class it up a bit."

Thomas buys fresh beef and pork each week from Halsey's Meat Processing in Pine Ridge, chicken from Elk Hollow Farms and eggs and produce from other local farms. Breakfast, served on Saturday and Sunday, features traditional favorites like cathead biscuits and gravy, and scratch-made pancakes and waffles. Popular lunch and dinner items include gourmet burgers, pork chops, steaks and salmon with bourbon-mustard sauce (recipe below). Desserts include cheesecakes, made by a baker in Salyersville, and fried apple pies based on the recipe of Thomas's childhood neighbor, Betty, and made by Betty's daughter, using apples from her trees.

"I couldn't be more proud of what we've created," Thomas says, calling out the farmers, community members and teammates who make it all possible. "A lot of people say, 'Well, look what you've done.' It's not what I've done; it's what *we've* done."

Served by Licking Valley RECC, 145 Roadhouse is located at 148 Main St. in Campton, open 3-10 p.m. Monday-Thursday; noon-midnight Friday; 9 a.m.-midnight Saturday; and 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Sunday. **KL**



145 Roadhouse 145 Salmon

Serves 4

Marinade

- ¾ C stone-ground mustard
- 2 Tbsp bourbon
- 1 Tbsp molasses
- ¼ C Worcestershire sauce
- ¼ C dried chives
- ½ Tbsp cayenne pepper
- ½ C brown sugar

Salmon

- 4 (4-oz) salmon filets
- 2 Tbsp olive oil

Bourbon-Molasses-Mustard Sauce

- ¾ C stone-ground mustard
- 2 Tbsp bourbon
- ¼ C dark molasses
- ½ C brown sugar

At least 30 minutes before cooking, combine marinade ingredients and add to medium bowl with salmon filets. Cover and refrigerate up to four hours. Meanwhile, combine sauce ingredients in bowl and whisk to combine. When ready to cook, remove filets from marinade and pat dry. Heat cast iron or other heavy-bottomed skillet on medium high and add oil. When oil shimmers, add salmon filets, skin-side down, working in batches if necessary. Cook about 5 minutes, until skin releases. Flip and cook another 1-2 minutes or until fish reaches desired doneness. Top with bourbon sauce (extra sauce will keep up to two weeks in refrigerator).



KATHLEEN THOMPSON

Energy efficiency means comfort, too



My house is hot in the summer, cold in the winter. What are some efficiency options that would help?

MIRANDA BOUTELLE

writes on energy efficiency for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

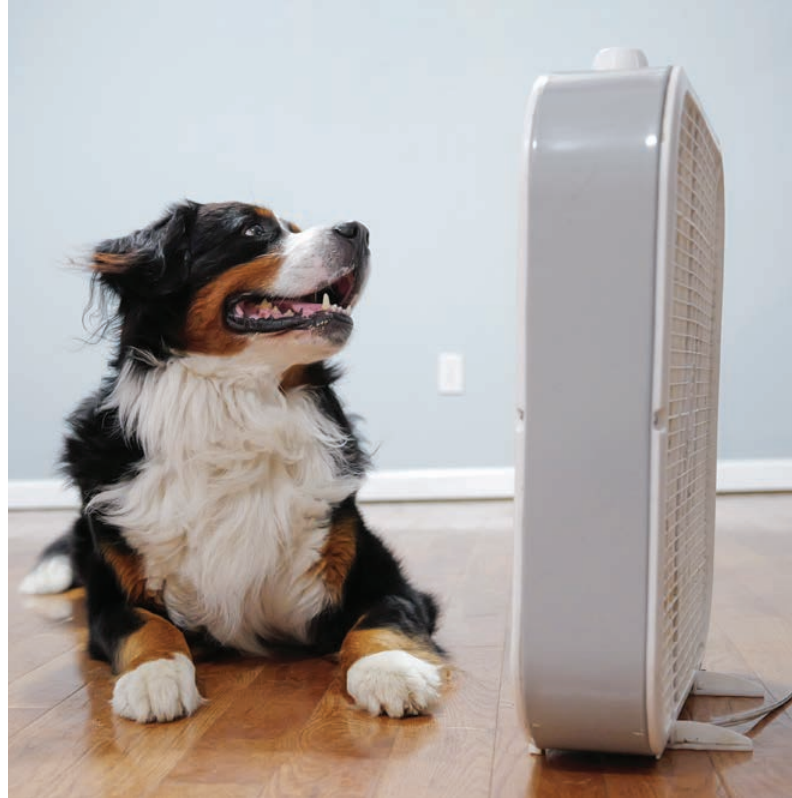
A Energy efficiency upgrades not only help you save energy, but can make your home more comfortable. If you find yourself returning to the thermostat in the winter or unable to cool off on summer days, your home needs an efficiency upgrade. Here are some areas to focus on.

Air sealing, a lesser-known efficiency upgrade, keeps air from entering and exiting the home through cracks and gaps. Some air sealing can be done from inside the home, such as using expanding foam around plumbing pipes and drains under sinks, caulking around windows or weatherstripping around doors.

Duct sealing can also improve comfort in your home. Ductwork delivers air in a forced-air HVAC system. If there are disconnections or leaks in the ducts, your air may not end up where you want it. Disconnections and leaks can cause hot or cold spots in the home.

ABOVE AND BELOW

Attics and crawl spaces offer additional opportunities to reduce air leakage. In attics, sealing gaps around top plates, open soffit areas, cove ceilings and balloon framing helps keep conditioned air where it belongs. In basements or crawl spaces, seal around plumbing pipes and drains, vents and electrical wires.



HVAC professionals can inspect or test your ducts to make sure they are connected and sealed properly.

Air and duct sealing can also improve the air quality at home. Air leakage between the conditioned areas in homes and attics or crawl spaces can introduce dust, pollen, mold or other allergens into your home. Reducing air leakage can decrease the chance of allergens in your home.

Energy-efficiency upgrades can help you and your two- and four-legged loved ones keep cool this summer. Photo: Mark Gilliland/Pioneer Utility Resources

Upgrading to a heat pump can boost comfort and efficiency. Heat pumps are often about three times as efficient as electric resistance heat. They use refrigerant to move heat instead of creating it. If you're upgrading from electric or gas heat, a heat pump can efficiently heat and cool your home.

If you have a heat pump or any forced-air HVAC system, annual maintenance and regularly changing your filter maximizes system operation and comfort. **KL**

Call before you dig

August gives a reminder to call 811

AUGUST 11 IS JUST ONE DAY

a year, but we hope the 8/11 reminder helps residents remember to call 811 before a digging project any day of the year.

811 Day reminds homeowners and professional contractors to make that call. Calling 811 to share your intent to dig will signal the appropriate utilities to mark the approximate locations of their buried infrastructure with flags, spray paint or both. This is a free service.

Whether it's electric, gas, water or communications cable, you don't want to accidentally dig into a buried utility.

Striking a single line can cause injury, repair costs, fines and inconvenient outages. Every digging project, no matter how large or small, warrants a call to 811. Installing a mailbox, building a deck, planting a tree and laying a patio are all examples of digging projects that necessitate a call to 811 before starting.

Kentucky requires two full working days' advance notice to the 811 center or online before a digging project to give the utilities enough time to mark the approximate location of their underground utilities on your property. "Working day" means every day except Saturday, Sunday and observed holidays. Each line will be marked in the color that corresponds to the appropriate utility. The marks are valid for 20 days.

Before you contact Kentucky's 811, you will need to know specific details about where you plan to dig:

- The county, town, street address, nearest intersecting street and location on the property.
- The name and phone number of the person who will be doing the digging.

It's recommended you mark the designated area with white paint or flags, so the utility operators know where you plan to excavate.



LARRY/ADOBE STOCK

Look out below

In many neighborhoods, buried power lines have become the norm. While this means there are no poles and wires running overhead to worry about, they still require special consideration:

- Underground power lines require those green boxes, called pad-mount transformers. Though it may be tempting to hide them with landscaping, please don't. Your electric cooperative needs access.
- Never allow children to play on or around the pad-mounted transformers. They contain electrical equipment with high voltage inside.
- Keep shrubs and structures at least 12 feet from the "door" of the box, and at least 3 feet from the sides.
- If landscaping is too close, inadequate air circulation can cause equipment to overheat and fail. Plantings might have to be cut and removed.
- Keep the meter on your house visible and accessible, too. **KL**



DREW AKRIDGE
Safety and Training
Coordinator at Salt
River Electric

**YEARS AT THE
CO-OP: 23**

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WORKING I'M:**
coaching and watch-
ing my girls play
softball, hunting and
traveling with my
family.



Growing happiness

Visit Kentucky sunflower fields

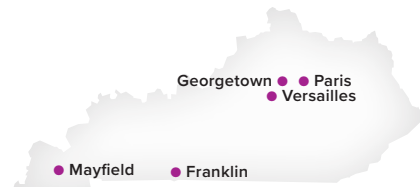
BY KATHY WITT



THEIR FACES TURNED toward the sun, ever beaming, bright and happy, sunflowers are the very picture of summer.

“Most people’s first reaction to seeing acres of sunflowers in bloom is awe,” says Laney Snider, who owns Ruby Branch Farms in Franklin with her husband, Drew. “The second reaction is to smile—and that smile tends to remain throughout their visit. It’s impossible to not be happy in a giant field of sunflowers!”

Ruby Branch, served by Warren RECC, is devoting 14 acres of its eighth-generation farm to “Kentucky’s Largest Sunflower Maze” and an additional 2 acres to its Zinnia Oasis. The maze features a traditional sea of yellow sunflowers, but the Sniders have



a separate patch of specialty-colored sunflowers in red, white, orange, bright yellow and variegated—even Teddy Bear Sunflowers that resemble feathers.

From Ruby Branch Farms’ sea of sunshine to Stepping Stone Farm’s 4-acre swath of sunflowers and more patches in between, giant fields of sunflowers all over Kentucky lure happiness seekers during their blooming season of mid-summer to early fall.

Thomas Dairy Farm & Market in Cecilia hosts an annual sunflower festival. Shown are blooms from the 2025 event. Photo: Brian Bohannon

“Visitors can pick sunflowers, which bloom during red raspberry and blackberry picking times, walk through the flowers and stop at the various swings and photo opportunities,” says Stepping Stone Farm owner Ally Vallandingham. A consumer-member of Blue Grass Energy, Vallandingham owns the eighth-generation farm with her brother and sister-in-law, Brandon and Hanna Barnett. The family has farmed the same land since 1790.

During peak bloom season, Honey Hill Farms, established in Mayfield in 1991 as a beekeeping enterprise, now has 2 to 3 acres of flowers blooming at one time, with about half of those fields dedicated to sunflowers. Dirt walking paths guide visitors through the fields, creating an immersive and scenic experience.

“The flowers stretch across roughly 5 acres of the property, creating a patchwork of color throughout the farm,” says Jared Phelps, a consumer-member of West Kentucky RECC whose family—parents David and Rebecca, sister Jordan, and nephew Oliver—own the

The farm where Ruby Branch sits can be traced back eight generations for the Snider Family. Photo: Simpson County Tourism Commission

farm. “The sunflower fields also attract plenty of wildlife and pollinators, including butterflies, bees, goldfinches and squirrels, all of which visitors enjoy spotting while walking the fields.”

They also are welcome to pick flowers throughout the summer as the fields come into bloom and check out head farmer David Phelps’ botanical wonders. According to Jared Phelps, his father

PETAL POWER

Long-lasting blooms begin at the farm

The secret to long-lasting sunflowers? When choosing the blooms, pick stems with petals that haven’t fully opened yet—tight blooms last longer in the vase. Once home, strip away all but the top leaf and trim the stem at a 45-degree angle.

“Keep the flowers in plenty of fresh water and re-cut the stem every couple of days,” advises Laney Snider, owner of Ruby Branch Farms. “It’s also helpful to keep the blooms out of direct sunlight.”

Jared Phelps of Honey Hill Farms offers this insight: “One tip we’ve found especially helpful is adding a couple drops of bleach and a splash of Sprite to the vase water. The sugar in the soda helps feed the flowers, while the bleach helps reduce bacteria that can speed up decay.”

With a little TLC, your bouquet will brighten your space for days.



During peak bloom season, Honey Hill Farms has 2–3 acres of flowers blooming at one time, with about half of those fields dedicated to sunflowers. Photo: Laymontana Photography





Sunflower season in Kentucky can arrive as early as late June and run through September and longer—depending on Mother Nature.

Jesse and Molly Steenbergen, owners of Steenbergen Sunflower Farm, take a photo with twins Wade, left, and Walker.
Photo: Marissa Mayo Photography

Featured farms

Eckert's Orchard

1396 Pinckard Pike, Versailles; eckerts.com, Facebook: Eckert's Orchard – KY, (859) 873-3097

Sunflower season at Eckert's features the Sunflower Trail and pick-your-own sunflower experiences, along with special seasonal weekends centered around the blooms. Guests can enjoy the fields alongside food, shopping, family activities and time spent on the farm for a full summertime outing.

Evans Orchard

1783 Newtown Pike, Georgetown; evansorchard.com, Facebook: Evans Orchard and Cider Mill, (502) 863-2255

The Sunflower Festival kicks off around July 25 and lasts for about two weeks, depending on the blooms. "Sunflowers typically bloom about 60 days after planting, so once they're in the ground, we'll be able to confirm the timing and release the full schedule," says Jenny Evans. Festival fun includes U-pick sunflowers, photo ops, activities in the sunflower fields and later evening opportunities to enjoy the flowers and take photos in golden summer light.

Note: Find details about bloom times, U-pick costs, special events and more on each farm's Facebook page and always call before you visit to confirm hours, admission and other information. There may be a charge for activities/events at these farms.

Honey Hill Farms

355 Leon Andrus Lane, Mayfield; Facebook: Honey Hill Farms, (270) 703-2419

Learn about pop-up events, held when the farm shop and concession stand are open, on the farm's Facebook page. Likewise, guests can schedule private flower-picking experiences and photo shoots through the page and get details about Honey Hill's annual fall festival season, which begins in mid-September and features a large community kickoff with local vendors, food trucks, games, hayrides and concessions.

Ruby Branch Farms

780 Lake Spring Road, Franklin; rubybranchfarms.com, Facebook: Ruby Branch Farm, (270) 776-4672

In addition to sunflower season (late July-early September), Touch A Tractor Weekend is August 8–9 and the farm's inaugural Watermelon Crawl Weekend is held August 28–29, with tasting flights of farm-raised melons, live 90s country music, line dancing and more.

Stepping Stone Farm

1674 Cynthiana Road, Paris, steppingstonefarmky.com, Facebook: Stepping Stone Farm, (859) 658-6060

A bustling agritourism destination, the farm hosts thousands of visitors throughout the year, picking sunflowers, strawberries, apples, pumpkins and more. The family-fun Peach, Love and Sunflowers Festival is held annually at end of July/early August (depending on the sunflowers). See Facebook page for details and updates.

Other sunflower farms

McGlasson Farms

5832 River Road, Hebron; mcglassonfarms.com, Facebook: McGlasson Farms, (859) 689-5229

Visitors are welcome to walk the sunflower fields, pick sunflowers and take photos. See Facebook page for dates and details, plus events that take place during the season.

Steenbergen Sunflower Farm

4013 Stevenson Mill Road, Russellville (Pennyrile RECC); steenbergenfarm.com, Facebook: Steenbergen Sunflower Farm, (270) 893-5527

Fields of sunflowers for U-pick, plus a Nature Playground, picnic area and Nature Scavenger Hunt. Steenbergen Farm merch is sold in the welcome shed.

Thomas Dairy Farm & Market

4625 Leitchfield Road, Cecilia (Nolin RECC); thomasdairyfarmandmarketky.com, Facebook: Thomas Dairy Farm and Market, (270) 401-2524

The Sixth Annual Sunflower Festival takes place in August (check Facebook page for exact dates, times, admission and special events/activities) and features 5 acres of sunflowers and more than 20 varieties in all sizes and colors, including the classic yellow sunflower; blooms in shades of red, pink, white and more; and giant sunflowers of over 10 feet tall.

KentuckyLiving.com

Sunflower fields forever

Is there anything cheerier than a sunflower in bloom? Visit KentuckyLiving.com for more photos of sunflower farms, as well as links to farm websites and social media accounts.

enjoys experimenting with unique sunflower varieties and has grown Autumn Beauty, known for its red-and-yellow striped petals, and Velvet Queen, a rich maroon variety. His latest endeavor? Growing the Sunfinity sunflower, especially popular with flower pickers because they continue producing blooms throughout the season.

“Traditional single-stem sunflowers remain favorites for photography sessions, though, because of their

classic appearance and towering blooms,” says Phelps.

At Evans Orchard in Georgetown, a fifth-generation family farm owned by father/daughter team Kevan Evans and Jenny Evans, an entire section of the farm is planted annually with flower fields—sunflowers, zinnias, wildflowers—as part of the summer season. This year, visitors can expect about 12 acres of flowers spreading their color across the fields, creating a beautiful walk-through experience with plenty of photo opportunities.

“We’re always looking for ways to invite families to experience the beauty of the farm in each season,” says Jenny Evans. “The sunflower

Azazel Salazar poses with a blooms as his father, Jose Salazar, of Vine Grove, and mother JoAnna Gilkey emerge from the sunflower field. Photo: Brian Bohannon




Manchester Music Fest

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Oktoberfest

Oct. 23rd-24th

Pumpkins in the Park

Oct. 22nd-24th

Music and Mud Festival

Visit our Facebook
@Williamsburg Tourist and
Convention Commission

Williamsburg Tourism

Where Visitors Become Family



fields have become one of those special summer traditions.”

The Evanses plant classic yellow sunflowers throughout their larger fields, creating that bright, cheerful sea of blooms people love to photograph. They also grow ProCut sunflowers, a variety with less pollen that works especially well for cutting and taking home.

“We create the sunflower experience with families, couples and photographers in mind, with designated walking paths through the fields and almost a dozen unique photo ops and backdrops throughout the blooms,” says Evans. “Guests find fun features like an old VW Beetle, a vintage

Evans Orchard has framed a photo-worthy view for sunflower seekers. Photo: Evans Orchard

SUNFLOWERS IN FRAMES, FICTION AND FILM

A symbol of summer (loyalty and longevity, too) and signs of happiness and optimism, sunflowers have long held a place in the cultural spotlight. Vincent van Gogh’s *Sunflowers* series remains among the most famous and beloved works in art history.

The bestselling novel, *The Secret Life of Sunflowers* by Marta Molnar, explores the life of the woman who played a key role in bringing van Gogh’s work to the world.

On screen, the sunflower motif is seen in such movies as indie favorite, *Little Miss Sunshine* (2006); Disney’s *Tangled* (2010); and the 2022 Academy Award-winning multiverse comedy, *Everything Everywhere All at Once*.

bicycle, a wooden swing, an oversized wooden picture frame and other charming setups that make the field a beautiful place to explore.”

Eckert’s Orchard in Versailles is part of Illinois-based Eckert’s Farms—the largest family-owned and operated pick-your-own orchard in the country, tracing its history back eight generations

to 1837. The Versailles location began growing sunflowers in 2020.

“Since then, the sunflower fields have quickly become one of our most popular summer traditions, drawing families, photographers and visitors looking to experience the beauty of the blooms each season,” says Eckert’s Marketing Director Amanda Morgan.





About 1.5 acres of the NuSun sunflower—known for its classic bright golden petals and strong stems—are planted, with a Sunflower Trail created for an immersive walk-through experience.

“The sunflower fields are also designed with photography in mind, featuring scenic views, wide-open walking rows and seasonal photo opportunities that make the perfect backdrop,” says Morgan.

“There’s something about seeing thousands of sunflowers stretching across the landscape that feels peaceful and joyful,” she adds. “Most people immediately

stop and smile and often comment on how beautiful and uplifting the experience is in person.” **KL**

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

Visitors to Eckert’s Orchard can enjoy Pick-Your-Own sunflowers during the season, plus special seasonal weekends centered around the blooms. Photo: Eckert’s Orchard



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Beautify the Bluegrass

FINALISTS ANNOUNCED AUGUST 19

Kentucky’s electric cooperatives and Governor Andy Beshear are teaming up to recognize beautification efforts in local communities.

Finalists will be announced on August 19 during *Kentucky Living’s* 2026 Best in Kentucky awards show.

KentuckyLiving



EVENT CALENDAR



1 FOLKLIFE AND FUN

It's the 40th year for Bluegrass in the Park Folklife and Music Festival, August 7–8 in Henderson's Audubon Mill Park. Live bluegrass music, food and artisan vendors, folklife demonstrations and children's activities like a harmonica workshop and hands-on instruments. Admission and all music and folklife events are free. Hours: noon–11 p.m. Friday; 8 a.m.–11 p.m. Saturday, with fundraising breakfast until 10:30 a.m. Facebook: Bluegrass in the Park Folklife Festival.

2 BALLOONS & MORE

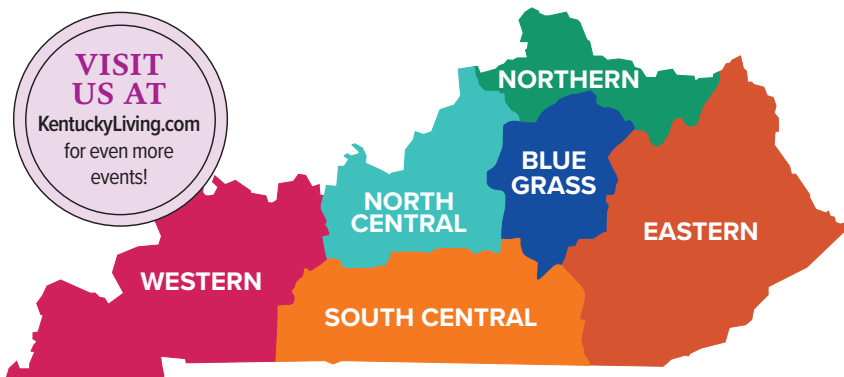
Balloons Over the Bluegrass Hot Air Balloon Festival takes on a patriotic flair for America's 250th birthday. The August 9 event is 4–9 p.m. at the Danville-Boyle County Airport, with hot air balloon launches and tethered hot air balloon rides, plus food trucks, static aircraft displays and kids activities. Show your artistic side by contributing to a community mural! Lawn chairs welcome. Free admission. Info, Facebook: Balloons Over the Bluegrass Festival.

3 RIVER CLEANUP

Paddle or prowl the banks of the South Fork Kentucky River on August 15 to help beautify it. The River Cleanup Paddle in Lee County is 10 a.m.–5 p.m. Volunteers can participate by land or water, and those with canoes, kayaks or boats are encouraged to bring them. Check-in starts 9 a.m. at 2470 Pine Grove Road in Beattyville. Transportation to the launch site is provided. Details, fireflyhillskentucky.com, click Explore; (606) 208-0993.

4 GOOD VIBE-RATIONS

Head to the historic square in downtown Franklin on August 22 for its annual Summer Vibes Music Fest. The free event features top talent along with local and upcoming artists, plus food trucks and a beer garden on-site. Kickoff is at noon with a local songwriters' showcase, followed by regional performers. Headliners Quiet Riot and Hinder keep the music going starting at 6:30 p.m. until 10:30 p.m. For info, summervibesfranklinsky.com, (270) 586-3040.



BLUEGRASS

SATURDAY, AUGUST 8

Roller Derby of Central KY, (859) 246-1603, Central Bank Center, Lexington

THURSDAY, AUGUST 13

Kings and Queens! A Night of Elvis, Dolly, and Loretta, thru 15th, (859) 236-2747, Pioneer Playhouse, Danville

Celtic Festival, thru 16th, (859) 248-0690, Berea

Pioneer Days, (859) 734-2365, Old Fort Harrod State Park, Harrodsburg

SATURDAY, AUGUST 15

Grow Your Perspective: Tour an Organic, Regenerative Farm, (859) 621-0755, Elmwood Stock Farm, Georgetown

Boone: The Man, The Myth, The Legend Walking Tour, (502) 564-1792, Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort

TUESDAY, AUGUST 18

Waveland's Tea Tuesday, 25th, (859) 272-3611, Waveland State Historic Site, Lexington

SATURDAY, AUGUST 22

Kentucky Bourbon Jam Music Festival, (859) 626-8474, Richmond

THURSDAY, AUGUST 27

Waveland's Tea and Talk: Bryan Station and the William Bryan Cabin, (859) 272-3611, Waveland State Historic Site, Lexington

FRIDAY, AUGUST 28

KHP Foundation Battle in the Saddle, (859) 233-4303, Kentucky State Horse Park, Lexington

SATURDAY, AUGUST 29

Dueling Pianos, (859) 277-6869, Oleika Shrine Temple, Lexington

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 1

Waveland's Tea Tuesday, (859) 272-3611, Waveland State Historic Site, Lexington

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3

America's 250: Williams Wells Brown: How I Got My Name, (859) 873-7902, Jack Jouett House Historic Site, Versailles

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 4

Legacy Nights: Free Movie Night, (859) 385-4044, Legacy Grove, Winchester

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 5

Daniel Boone Pioneer Festival, thru 6th, (859) 744-0556, Winchester

EASTERN

FRIDAY, AUGUST 14

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

Tracy Lawrence: No Alibis Tour, (606) 444-5500, Appalachian Wireless Arena, Pikeville

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 26

August Moonbow, thru 30th, (606) 528-4121, Cumberland Falls State Resort Park, Corbin

THURSDAY, AUGUST 27

Duck Duck Jeep End of Summer Bash, (606) 256-3437, Mt Vernon

FRIDAY, AUGUST 28

Laurel County Homecoming, thru 29th, (606) 330-0501, London

Moonbow Nights, (606) 528-8860, Nibroc Park, Corbin

Appalachian Literary Arts Festival, thru 30th, (606) 784-8364, Fuzzy Duck Coffee Shop, Morehead

SATURDAY, AUGUST 29

Kentucky Untamed Hiking Series, (606) 528-4121, Cumberland Falls State Resort Park, Corbin

Dog Days, (606) 573-4156, Harlan

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2

Craftin' Around, (606) 784-7137, Rowan County Public Library, Morehead

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3

Manchester Music Fest, thru 5th, (606) 391-6161

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 4

Medieval Times, thru 6th, (606) 528-1534, Corbin/Laurel Lake KOA Journey

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 5

HopeFest, (859) 498-8732, Botts Park, Mt. Sterling

NORTH CENTRAL

SATURDAY, AUGUST 8

Jammin' at Jephtha: Colt Ford, (502) 487-5007, Jephtha Creed Distillery, Shelbyville

Summer Sizzler Race, (760) 669-6471, Cherokee Park, Louisville

SmallTown America Festival
Saturday, August 8th
Downtown Mt. Sterling

Car Show, Farmers Market, Sterling Health Fair, 5K, Rumpke Talent Show, Cornhole Tournament, Kids Zone, Paint the SmallTown, Shopping and Food Vendors.

mtsterlingtourism.com
View & sign up for events on Facebook

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OF THE
Little Mountains
LABOR DAY WEEKEND
★ SEPT 4 & 5 ★
★ MONTICELLO, KY ★
★ 606-340-0015 ★

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 September 1 for the November issue.**

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

Caufield's Creepfest, thru 9th, (502) 583-0636, Caufield's Novelty, Louisville

Summer Concert Series, (502) 347-2908, The Kitchen Table at James B. Beam Distillery, Clermont

FRIDAY, AUGUST 14

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

Summer Jam at the AMP, (502) 251-4214, Wesbanco Amphitheater, Mt. Washington

SATURDAY, AUGUST 15

Street Concert: JD Shelburne, (502) 564-4930, Bloomfield

CONNECT @ Bernheim, (502) 215-7139, Bernheim Forest & Arboretum, Clermont

Goodtime Cruisers Car Cruise, (270) 358-3163, Lincoln Square, Hodgenville

THURSDAY, AUGUST 20

Kentucky State Fair, thru 30th, (502) 367-5000, Kentucky Exposition Center, Louisville

FRIDAY, AUGUST 21

Light the Night 5K: Grayson County, (270) 982-2274, James D. Beville City Park, Leitchfield

Cruise-in, (502) 543-8656, Shepherdsville City Park

THURSDAY, AUGUST 27

Buttermilk Days Festival, thru 29th, (502) 348-4877, Bardstown

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 4

Stand Down, (270) 982-2170, Goodwill Opportunity Center, Elizabethtown

First Friday: Summer Concert Series, (270) 358-3163, Lincoln Square, Hodgenville

NORTHERN

SATURDAY, AUGUST 8

Somewhat Zen Craft Show, (859) 888-4313, American Legion, Florence

Arcade Music Fest, thru 9th, (859) 261-4677, Covington

THURSDAY, AUGUST 13

Great Inland Seafood Festival, thru 16th, (513) 560-4333, Newport Festival Park

FRIDAY, AUGUST 14

La Cage Aux Folles, thru 23rd, (859) 957-1940, The Carnegie, Covington

SATURDAY, AUGUST 15

Festival on the Lake, (859) 547-3681, AJ Jolly Park, Alexandria

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 16

Farmers & Artisan Market, (859) 485-3544, Verona Vineyards & Winery

SATURDAY, AUGUST 22

Life of Christ Drama, thru 23rd, (859) 428-2200, Sherman Full Gospel, Dry Ridge

SUNDAY, AUGUST 23

Park and Ride for Heroes Car Show, (859) 292-3838, AJ Jolly Park, Alexandria

SATURDAY, AUGUST 29

Get All Dolly'd Up, (513) 490-9612, Blacksheep Farmstead, Falmouth

Chrome & Cruise Car Show, (606) 563-2596, Maysville

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 5

Pickers & Gridders Artisan Market, (606) 563-2596, Limestone Park, Maysville

Kentucky Symphony Orchestra: Living in America, (859) 431-6216, Devou Park, Covington

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

Farmers & Artisan Market, (859) 485-3544, Verona Vineyards & Winery

Kentucky Symphony Orchestra: Living in America, (859) 431-6216, Tower Park, Fort Thomas

SOUTH CENTRAL

SATURDAY, AUGUST 8

River Festivus: Family Fun Run, (270) 864-5890, Veteran's Memorial Park, Burkesville

River Festivus: Trout Fishing Tournament, (270) 459-3171, Cumberland River, Burkesville

FRIDAY, AUGUST 14

Concerts in the Park Series, 21st, 28th, (270) 904-1880, Circus Square Park, Bowling Green

River Festivus, thru 15th, (270) 864-5890, Veteran's Memorial Park, Burkesville

Summer Music Series: Cam Clark & His Orchestra, (606) 706-7777, City Green Stage, Liberty

SATURDAY, AUGUST 15

Summer Flea-cation!, thru 16th, (270) 843-1978, Flea Land, Bowling Green

Government Cheese with the Rusty Nails, (270) 269-4263, The Grove, Glasgow

FRIDAY, AUGUST 21

Cruisin' on Main, (270) 469-0053, Campbellsville

Lake Cumberland Bluegrass Festival, thru 22nd, (270) 566-1488, KOA Journey, Russell Springs

SATURDAY, AUGUST 22

Peter Antoniou: Psychic Comedian, (606) 679-6366, The Virginia Theater, Somerset

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

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 4

First Friday Street Fair + Car Show, (270) 943-2433, Scottsville Historic District

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

Quilt Show of the Little Mountains, thru 5th, (606) 340-0015, Monticello

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 5

Cave City Cars and Coffee, (270) 479-7259

Thunder Over Burnside, (800) 240-2531

WESTERN

SATURDAY, AUGUST 8

Owensboro Reptile and Exotics, (270) 687-8800, Owensboro Convention Center

SATURDAY, AUGUST 15

Show & Go Car Club Cruise, (270) 821-4171, Madisonville City Park

FRIDAY, AUGUST 21

Wicked Paducah: A Walk Through Paducah's Unsavory Past, Sept. 4th, (731) 336-3524, Columbia Theatre

SATURDAY, AUGUST 22

Christian County Art Loop, (270) 962-7307, Hopkinsville

America's 250: Let the Earth Breathe, (270) 826-3712, Henderson County Public Library, Henderson

Street Dance, (270) 362-0152, Grand Rivers

THURSDAY, AUGUST 27

The Cane Ridge Revival: The Great Revival that Transformed Kentucky, 270-639-9171, Webster County Public Library, Dixon

FRIDAY, AUGUST 28

Tri-State Farm Show, thru 29th, (270) 374-4199, Union County Expo Center, Sturgis

Jewelry Extravaganza, thru 29th, (270) 759-2199, Murray Art Guild

Madisonville Illuminated, (270) 584-9017, Mahr Park Arboretum

SATURDAY, AUGUST 29

Dwight Yoakam, (270) 274-7106, Beaver Dam Amphitheater

Dragon Boat Festival, (270) 575-9958, Paducah Riverfront

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3

Fall Open House, thru 5th, (270) 443-0858, Troutt Old Time General Store & Market, Paducah

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 5

Groovin' on the Green, (270) 926-1100, Owensboro Convention Center Front Lawn

Labor Day Weekend Arts & Crafts Festival, thru 7th, (270) 362-0152, Little Lake Park, Grand Rivers



1 TINY BEAUTY

This hummingbird spent about five minutes on Zach Looney's hand. Photo submitted by Zach's wife, Sophie. They are Fleming-Mason Energy consumer-members in Owingsville.

2 ALL ABOARD!

Ellie Ashworth gives a thumbs up to the Big South Fork Scenic Railway ride to the Blue Heron Coal Mining Camp. Photo by grandmother Kim Ashworth of Union, consumer-member of Owen Electric.

3 DOUBLE THE FUN

Twins Kade and Olivia Norris have fun in the sprinkler at Meme and Pa's in Rochester. Photo submitted by Jimmy and Wanda Vincent, consumer-members of Pennyrite Electric.

4 SUNNY SURPRISE

A "volunteer" sunflower making itself known in Nicholasville. Photo by Blue Grass Energy consumer-member Carol Tudor.

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

Afternoon snack

Foods that are high in protein, like nuts, hard-boiled eggs or leftover baked chicken, are great snacks that help keep you feeling full.



Green Team Tip

When traveling, put a bag in your vehicle for trash so you do not litter.

— Norah Nolan,
age 7



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)
Magazine/Submissions for
a chance to win a prize!

QUOKKAS

Quokkas are small, furry animals that live in Australia. They are related to kangaroos and wallabies, and their babies, called joeys, ride safely in their mother's pouch. Quokkas are about the size of a house cat and can hop across the ground.

These cute animals sleep during the day and come out at night to look for food. They are also great climbers and can climb small trees to reach a tasty snack!



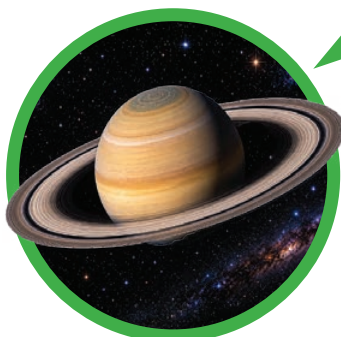
Quokkas
love to
eat plants,
leaves and
grasses.

Do the math

Tammy does 19 jumping jacks, William does 22 jumping jacks and Patty does 31 jumping jacks. What is the total number of jumping jacks?



Answer: 72
Jumping jacks.



Did You
Know?

Saturn's rings are made mostly of ice and rock. Despite looking solid, they are surprisingly thin.

Tell
us a joke!

What do you
call a lazy
baby kangaroo?
A pouch potato.

— Shelby Chaffins,
age 7



GREAT OUTDOORS

Growing bigger fish

Kentucky's Thoroughbred Bass Program

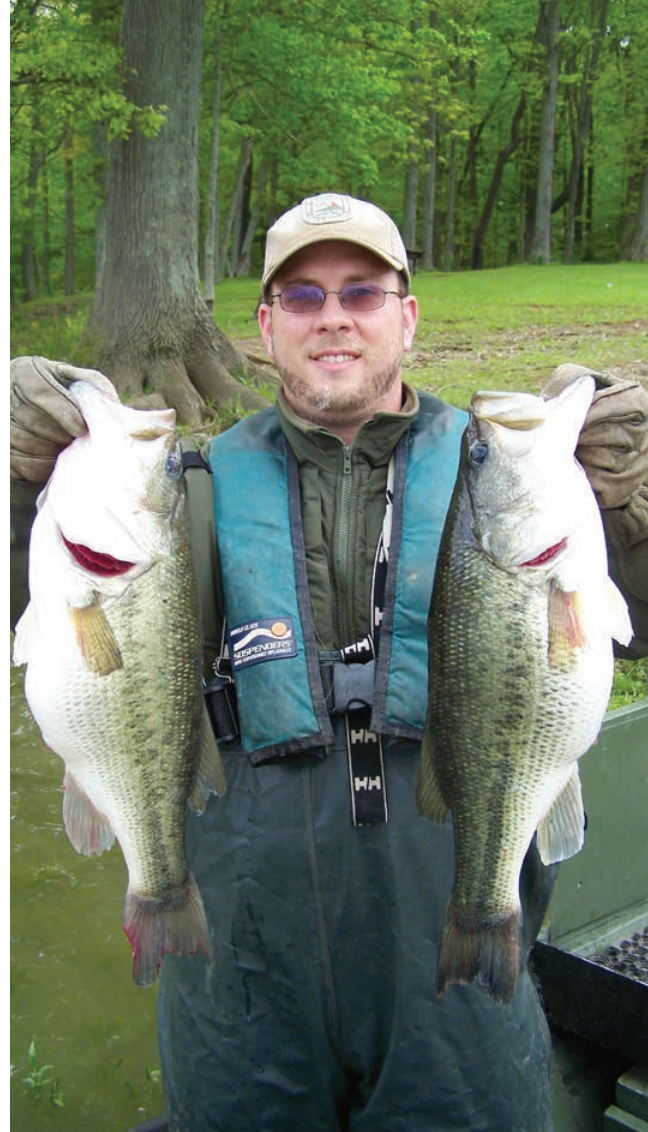
I REMEMBER WHEN big Florida-strain bass were introduced to Kentucky Lake, back in my bass tournament days. Having fished for largemouth bass for many years as a boy in Florida, I knew how big they grew there. I was excited to hear about this release program, and hoped to land some giant bass here in Kentucky.

Kentucky Lake was, and still is, a great fishery for both largemouth and smallmouth bass. But the goal at the time was to offer anglers more opportunities to catch a double-digit bass—one weighing 10 pounds or more—which is rare on most lakes around the country.

The Florida strain bass program worked sporadically in Kentucky, seeing better success in states further south. The main problem was our colder winters, which made survival tough for the fish. If you have ever fished for Florida bass, you know how hard it is to get a bite when the slightest cold front moves through. Because of these low temperatures, the Florida bass didn't thrive and were nearly impossible for anglers to catch during the winter months. However, research never slowed. With time and effort, fishery biologists with the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources found a way to breed bigger bass using Kentucky's native fish.

Adam Martin is the program coordinator for the state wildlife agency's Western Fishery District. He says this new, science-driven study brings great hope for introducing trophy largemouth bass into Kentucky waters.

"The Thoroughbred Bass Program is based on studies that have been around for a while but only recently became financially feasible to use on largemouth bass," Martin says. "The study compares genetic markers between larger bass, say 5 to 6 pounds, and smaller bass of the same age class. There were markers found in the larger bass that were not found in the smaller bass. These markers



► Biologist David Baker holds two largemouth bass at Jericho Lake in Henry County. Photo: Jeff Crosby

can be used to determine which fish are most likely to grow larger."

At the hatchery, biologists can identify and separate fingerlings with the most promising genetic markers, Martin says, releasing some into Kentucky waterways and saving others to continue the breeding cycle at the hatchery.

Unlike the Florida strain, the largemouth bass used in this selective breeding process are native to Kentucky, which means they are naturally acclimated to the region.

"This continues the trophy-class genetics, passing them to future generations through natural reproduction to gradually transform the genetic makeup of bass populations," Martin says. "Ultimately, this program increases opportunities for anglers here in Kentucky to catch trophy-class largemouth bass." **KL**

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

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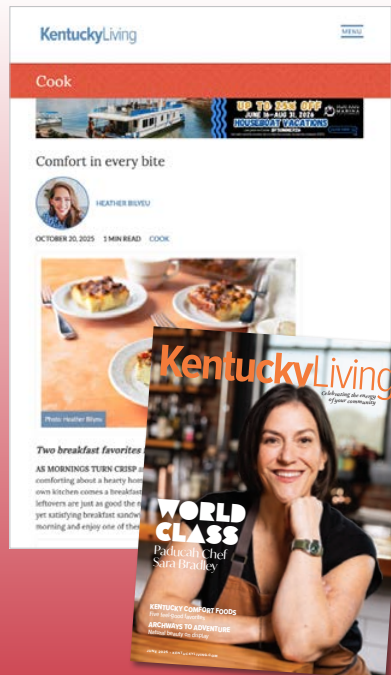
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A sage on Rough Creek

Notes from a life outdoors



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

OFTEN, WHILE READING a handwritten note from Mark Keller—usually coupled with one of his pencil sketches—I'm reminded of Henry David Thoreau's 19th century essays and other works from his alone-in-the-woods-days on the shore of Walden Pond.

Although Thoreau spent two years and two months on Walden, Mark Keller has spent 30 years on Rough Creek in Breckinridge County, living his own near-hermit life of simplicity.

Keller, too, is a naturalist, essayist, philosopher and poet. Now in his early 70s, he leads a solitary life in a shanty without television or internet service, but does have electricity from Meade County RECC. He visits the local library to email friends copies of what he calls "Rough Drafts from Rough Creek."

their green shape. Every manner of bird is busy with the work of introducing the new world to their newly-fledged young. Their songs and music are the daylong reports of a world celestial and a Great Design."

Growing up in a close family with six siblings in eastern Jefferson County, Keller remembers always being drawn to the woods. Although he attended the University of Kentucky and earned a teaching degree from Brigham Young University, his greater education grew from working as a cowboy in Texas, a lodge staffer at Yellowstone National Park, teacher in Utah, salmon grader at a cannery in Alaska and fishing guide at a remote Alaskan camp reached only by floatplane. He's been a zookeeper, caring for elephants, giraffes and cheetahs. He has worked at a veterinary clinic and has been a dog trainer, property manager, carpenter, housepainter and stonemason. He's been a news and sports reporter for a local radio station and a maker of fine archery bows crafted from native Osage orange.

When a friend, who had saved all of his many emails, returned hard copies of the collection, Keller was urged to compile a book of short stories.

Among the many subjects are taxes, tattoos, a lost summer love, full moons and a warm remembrance of a long-ago fly fishing moment with two of his nieces, Jenny and Annie, then about 9 and 11.

"Hush...listen'... Annie insisted... It was so quiet that we heard water dripping off my paddle back to its place. Then...that voice...that bird's song that so enchants me. He was singing his evening vespers some place up Copper Slick Hollow...What I next heard did not come from the hollow, but from the inspiration-filled heart of a little girl sitting in my boat with a fly-rod in her hand. She turned to address us: 'I'm in Heaven!'"

Now, three decades later, such moments live on in Keller's *Rough Drafts from Rough Creek*. **KL**



"Here I am," he wrote, "in this place of bounty, wonder and beauty; a poor man living a rich life."

Many of his observations are first penciled into notebooks during hours in the woods, or while he and one of his hounds are running his trotlines on Rough Creek:

"I can see from my canoe the raspberries are about to blush and the blackberries are taking



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