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2026
Food
Issue

14

22

JUNE

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14

RISE AND SHINE

ON THE COVER With ingredients as simple as water, flour and salt, home bakers create nourishing and delicious sourdough bread. Learn about the art and science of sourdough baking, plus tips from pros and resources to begin baking loaves of your own.

ON THE COVER Growing up overseas, baker Amy Coyne developed a love for European-style sourdough bread. Today, her Georgetown-based bakery sells the crusty loaves she remembers, along with sandwich bread, cinnamon rolls, croissants and more. Coyne also teaches an online sourdough baking course and is the author of a sourdough cookbook. Photo: Amy Coyne

22

A MOVEABLE FEAST

If it seems like food trucks are everywhere—you're right. Mobile food service employment nationwide has increased more than 900% since 2000. Learn about Kentucky food trucks bringing unique cuisine to their communities.

CONTENTS



32

HEATHER BILVEU



33



38

DEPARTMENTS

IN EVERY ISSUE

- 5 CO-OP COMMUNITY
- 6 FROM THE EDITOR
- 6 KENTUCKYLIVING.COM

CURRENTS

- 7 COMMONWEALTHS
Book review, TVA Leadership Academy, energy efficiency and more
- 10 OUR POWER
Co-ops in Washington, D.C.
- 12 OUR PEOPLE
Teacher of the Year
- 13 BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT
Family is the heart of Downing Cattle Company

CENTER LOCAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE NEWS

HOME

- 32 LET'S GROW
Blanket flower
- 33 AROUND THE TABLE
A Southern summer table
- 34 KENTUCKY EATS
Mrs. Sweet Strong, Paducah
- 35 CUTTING COSTS
Energy savings on the cheap
- 36 SAFETY MOMENT
Irrigation safety on the farm
- 37 SMART HEALTH
Keep your cool

TRAVEL

- 30 UNIQUELY KENTUCKY
Unwrapping ancient history
- 38 WORTH THE TRIP
Kentucky's outdoor music venues
- 45 WIN A 4-NIGHT GETAWAY
- 49 EVENT CALENDAR
Blues festival, Italianfest, Juneteenth and America 250
- 52 SNAPSHOT

BACK OF THE BOOK

- 53 KENTUCKY KIDS
- 54 GREAT OUTDOORS
Honoring Ron Wong's legacy
- 56 MARKETPLACE
- 58 BYRON CRAWFORD'S KENTUCKY
Tracking box turtles

EDITORIAL

EDITOR Shannon Brock

MANAGING EDITOR Joel Sams

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE COORDINATOR Mary Lyons

MANAGER OF COOPERATIVE OUTREACH Mallory Wafziz

COPY EDITOR Madelynn Coldiron

CONTRIBUTORS Heather Bilyeu • Miranda Boutelle

Amy Cobb • Byron Crawford • Patrick M. Grace

Ken McBroom • Shelly Nold • Brian Orms • Kevin Osbourn

Rich Prewitt • Penny Woods

ADVERTISING

ADVERTISING MANAGER Renee Williams

ADVERTISING SALES REP. Monica Pickerill

ADVERTISING SALES REP. Cynthia Whelan

ADVERTISING SALES REP. John Witt

PRODUCTION

SENIOR GRAPHIC DESIGNER Katy Hurt

GRAPHIC DESIGNER Kacey Harmeling

GRAPHIC DESIGNER Jessica Hawkins

MULTIMEDIA SPECIALIST Wade Harris

KENTUCKY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

PRESIDENT Chris Perry

VICE-PRESIDENT STRATEGIC

COMMUNICATIONS Joe Arnold

CHAIRMAN Benny Adair

VICE CHAIRMAN Tim Lindahl

SECRETARY/TREASURER Greg Lee

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

TO CONTACT US

WWW.KENTUCKYLIVING.COM

Go to KentuckyLiving.com to About/Contact, to send a Letter to the Editor or general comments

PHONE: (800) 595-4846

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PO Box 32170 (40232)

1630 Lyndon Farm Ct Ste 200 (40223) Louisville, KY (800) 595-4846

EMAIL: advertising@KentuckyLiving.com

OUR NATIONAL SALES REPRESENTATIVE

American MainStreet Publications

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Meeting the moment

Kentucky's electric cooperatives are ready to lead

A MONTH AGO, I had the opportunity to spend time with a group of lineworkers, ranging from young men to seasoned professionals, who were participating in safety training with the Kentucky Electric Cooperatives team. I enjoy opportunities to get out in the field—and this experience was a good reminder of why our work matters.

I started my career as a utility engineer. There is a real satisfaction that comes from building a new line to serve a subdivision, designing a substation that improves reliability for a county or community or helping bring electric service to a new industrial customer, school or business. When you are involved from the beginning of a project to the moment the power is connected, you see how meaningful this work is.

I don't get to be involved as much in that hands-on work anymore. My focus today is on policy, affordability, reliability and the future of energy. But being around those lineworkers was refreshing. It reminded me of the practical side of our business: how equipment works, why safety matters, why engineering decisions matter and why we build the system the way we do. It also made me think about where we need to go as a state and as a country.

We face significant energy challenges. We must grow our economy. We must keep electric rates affordable. We must meet increasing demand. We must do it in an environmentally responsible way. And we must continue to build the infrastructure to support reliable electric service. None of this will be easy.

In our industry, we talk about these challenges every day. But outside of the industry, I don't always see the same level of focus on energy. Too often, there is opposition to almost every kind of new development—generation,



CHRIS PERRY

transmission lines, distribution facilities or other critical infrastructure.

These projects affect people and communities, and I understand no one wants unnecessary disruption. But I also believe we need an honest conversation about what it will take to meet the needs of the future. Electricity is going to become more important—not less.

For our state and our nation to remain competitive, we will have to invest in energy. We will have to build. We will have to make thoughtful decisions. And we will have to be honest about the trade-offs.

The future will require a lot of energy. The question is not whether we will need it. The question is how we will plan for it, build it, pay for it and ensure the next generation of Kentuckians has the same opportunity for prosperity that we have had. That is a conversation worth having—and one that electric cooperatives are ready to lead.

Chris

CHRIS PERRY
President/CEO

**KENTUCKY ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVES**



FROM THE EDITOR

THE MONTH OF

JUNE puts us halfway through the year and looking square in the face of our country's semiquincentennial. Say that five times fast!



Knowing many events for this once-in-a-lifetime celebration will occur during the first week of July, we want to make sure you can plan for them now! So, when you turn to the events listing on page 50, you'll see the events for the whole month of June plus the first seven days in July.

This is something we plan to keep doing in the coming months.

Our magazine always mails toward the end of every month with the intent for delivery in your mailbox by the first of the next month. Most of the time that happens, but sometimes you see it after some events have passed.

So instead of missing out on a week's worth of events, we're going to bring them to you a month early. So, please, let us know what you think.

Shannon

SHANNON BROCK,
EDITOR

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AMY COYNE

FINAL PROOF

More sourdough resources

Intrigued by sourdough baking but not sure where to start? Read tips from professional bakers on page 14, then visit KentuckyLiving.com for demonstration videos, beginner-friendly recipes, a guide to sourdough lingo, links to featured bakeries and more.



FOODIE FRENZY

Food trucks behind the scenes

Across Kentucky, food trucks offer unique cuisine and community connections. Go behind the scenes with food truck owners on page 23 and visit us online to learn about permitting, watch videos and read an extended interview.



ROCK ON

More music destinations to explore

Enjoy our roundup of outdoor music destinations across the state on page 38, then visit KentuckyLiving.com for expanded articles on several featured locations, including videos, photos and interviews.



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A call and a mission

A moral compass is defined as an internal set of values, conscience or ethical principles that dictates how to determine right from wrong. It's what people do with it that sets them apart.

Bowling Green area novelist Gerry Harlan Brown, a retired fire chief and Warren RECC consumer-member, built his latest book, *Canelands*, around a moral dilemma that struck him while he was watching the evening news, which showed a fearful and emotional response from a little Guatemalan girl who had been separated from her mother at the U.S. southern border. Seeing the treatment as cruel and unnecessary, Brown's mind began to form an outline of a story similar to hers.

In his story, an unassuming and mild-mannered country preacher, Paul Lockhart, and his wife, Jennie, are reeling after their own family tragedy. Broken hearted and not grieving well, a similar image on the Lockhart television leads to a call to action for Paul. The adventure that ensues is part obedience and part healing for Paul and Jennie, while both discover new strengths in unity and forgiveness.

"The novel is in many ways a compilation of love stories: parents and children, spouses, young love, God's love for his children," Brown explains. Indeed, readers will cheer as love triumphs in

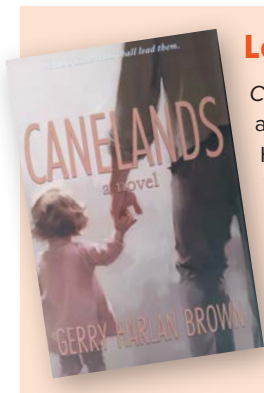
different ways and unexpected places. Brown's characters are perfectly imperfect, resulting in real struggles as hearts mend and lives change. For readers who love mystery and intrigue, though, a dark threat to Paul and his mission will keep their blood pumping.

Despite the potentially divisive topics of immigration and border control, Brown does not write from a political viewpoint. Through Paul's calling, the message is simply to act in obedience through prayer and let God handle the details.

After completing this third novel, Brown describes the writing process on his blog. "When I first started trying to write, I thought this would be a lonely process. Boy was I wrong! No sooner does the idea for a story pop into my head than these characters start showing up demanding to be in it ... Of course, I didn't just invent these people out of thin air. Somewhere along the way, different bits of life stuck in my head from my own experiences and the stories of family members and friends.

"Writers empty their pockets of memories and pick through the piles, gathering a button here, a corner of a picture there, looking for the piece that fits one of their characters as tight as a new pair of shoes."

» Penny Woods



Local inspiration

Canelands (WordCrafts Press, \$19.99) can be purchased at stores across the state as well as online at wordcrafts.net. Author Gerry Harlan Brown credits his 29 years in fire service as the greatest influence on his writing as he witnessed people from all walks of life both at their bravest and at their most devastated.

A proud consumer-member, Brown gives a personal shout-out to Warren RECC: "I never lost power in the (most) recent ice/snow event. Great job, WRECC!"

Connect with him for updates, blog posts and photos at gerryharlanbrown.com.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

tip

A smart thermostat can help keep your home comfortable while reducing cooling costs. Smart thermostats learn your routine and automatically raise the temperature when you're away and cool things down before you return, avoiding unnecessary energy use. Many smart thermostats provide reports and tips, helping you fine-tune your energy use and stay cool.

ABBY BERRY/INRECA



"You don't look anything like your profile picture ..."

Kentucky TVA Leadership Academy names first class

Ten leaders from across the Tennessee Valley Authority's Kentucky service territory recently came together as the inaugural class of the Kentucky TVA Leadership Academy.

The class will travel to sites across the region throughout the summer to learn about how TVA serves the region with reliable, affordable and resilient power; how it supports economic development in Kentucky communities; and how it manages the Tennessee River system for flood control, navigation and recreation.

"The goal of our Leadership Academy is to provide a more in-depth look at TVA and our mission to serve 10 million people of the Tennessee Valley," says Virginia Gray, TVA government and community relations

director for Kentucky. "Energy, economic development and environmental stewardship are the three fundamental principles that drive TVA, and the Kentucky leaders in this class will get to experience some of what we do firsthand. Participants will build networks and connectivity to new peers in South Central and Western Kentucky."

The academy fosters collaborative leadership in addressing energy and infrastructure challenges and encourages transparent communication among TVA, local officials and regional stakeholders.

The class will hear from TVA experts in their fields who will share insights on energy policy, grid modernization, sustainability and community impact.

Class No. 1 of Kentucky TVA Leadership Academy:

Wendy Baxter, Kentucky Lake Chamber of Commerce

Brent Childers, City of Bowling Green

Kenneth "Pete" Galloway, West Kentucky RECC and Purchase Area Development District

Kelly Gates, Christian County Public Schools

Scott Lindsey, Edmonson County Fiscal Court

Keith Martin, Houchens Food Group

Margaret Prim, Pennyroyal Arts Council

Jessica Scillian, Kentucky Lake Chamber of Commerce

Jaime Smith, Lyon County Fiscal Court

Walker Thomas, District 8 Kentucky State Representative

» Adam May

featured FRAMES

An Eastern Tiger Swallowtail butterfly feeds on a pink zinnia in Russellville.
Photo by Jennifer Jenson, a Warren RECC consumer-member.



Have a question
or comment for
the editor?



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‘An important opportunity for people like me’

Kentucky co-op leaders meet with members of Congress

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JOE ARNOLD

Farmers RECC President and CEO Toby Moss asks U.S. Rep. James Comer about the need for adequate financing from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Rural Utilities Service Electric Loan Program.

AS HE WAITED IN the security line to enter the Russell Senate Office Building in Washington, D.C., Jimmy Futrell turned to take in the view of the U.S. Capitol, the top of the dome poking above the trees while taxis and buses signaled the morning commute on Constitution Avenue.

“This may be just another day for the people who work here,” the longtime Pennyrile Electric board member said, “but this is an important opportunity for people like me to come to Capitol Hill and make sure they understand how decisions made here affect the people at the end of the line.”

Futrell was among dozens of Kentucky electric cooperative leaders who met with Kentucky’s congressional delegation to advocate for policies that

improve the ability of co-ops to provide reliable and affordable electricity.

The meetings were part of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association’s annual Legislative Conference, which brought more than 1,500 electric cooperative leaders from across the country to the nation’s capital. Their message was clear and consistent: not-for-profit, consumer-owned electric cooperatives need practical federal policies that protect reliability, control costs and recognize the realities of serving rural communities.

“We are not speaking for a corporation or investors,” Futrell says. “We are speaking for our member-owners who are our neighbors, our local businesses, our schools, our farms and communities.”



FEMA Public Assistance Program

One of the most urgent issues involves the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Public Assistance Program, which is the primary source of federal disaster recovery funding for electric co-operatives after major storms and natural disasters.

FEMA assistance helps co-ops restore critical infrastructure without placing the full financial burden on local members. But co-op leaders say delays, complex documentation requirements and inconsistent processes can slow recovery and strain rural communities.

Marty Littrel, president and CEO of Blue Grass Energy and secretary-treasurer of the NRECA Board of Directors, says modernizing FEMA is about protecting members from costs they cannot control.

"When a disaster destroys poles, wires and sub-stations, electric cooperatives move immediately to restore power because our members cannot wait," Littrel says. "But when FEMA reimbursements are delayed for months or years, the cost of recovery does not disappear. It can place pressure on local rates and on families and businesses least able to absorb it. Reforming FEMA is about making sure recovery is faster, fairer and more predictable."



Rural Utilities Service financing

Kentucky co-op leaders also urged Congress to increase support for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service Electric Loan Program. RUS financing helps electric cooperatives build and maintain the infrastructure needed to serve rural areas, especially as electricity demand grows.

Tim Sharp, president and CEO of Salt River Electric, says RUS loans remain one of the most important federal tools for rural electric reliability.

"RUS funding is not a handout," Sharp told lawmakers. "Electric cooperatives repay these loans with interest, and the program has a long record of helping rural communities build essential infrastructure. As demand grows and equipment costs rise, access to dependable financing helps co-ops make the investments our members need without creating unnecessary upward pressure on rates."

Co-op leaders also discussed the need to streamline federal permitting processes for electric transmission, generation, grid maintenance, reliability work, wildfire mitigation and vegetation management. Lengthy reviews, litigation and regulatory uncertainty can delay projects and increase costs for consumer-members.

Through each meeting, Kentucky's electric cooperative delegation emphasized a simple principle: reliable and affordable electricity does not happen by accident. It requires planning, investment and policies that reflect the needs of the communities co-ops serve. **KL**



From left, in his Capitol Hill office, U.S. Sen. Rand Paul hears concerns about the need for FEMA reform from Warren RECC Board members Dennis Ingram and Chris Gravit, and Big Rivers President and CEO Don Gully.



In his final Capitol Hill visit with electric co-op leaders before leaving office after seven terms, U.S. Sen. Mitch McConnell saluted the cooperative program.



Teacher of the Year

Michelle Gross in her
Spencer County Middle
School classroom. Photo:
Ashley McGaughey

Gross earns Kentucky's top honor

TAYLORSVILLE

Michelle Gross became interested in teaching while still in high school. She worked as an after-school peer tutor, helping a fellow student at risk of not graduating with his 1999 classmates. That student did improve his grades, and Gross was there when he received his diploma. In that moment, she felt a sense of pride, and she knew, "This is something I want to do for the rest of my life. I want to teach."

Gross, a Salt River Electric consumer-member, is Kentucky's 2026 Teacher of the Year—and she was one of five finalists for National Teacher of the Year.

Gross earned a bachelor's degree in middle school

Michelle, her husband,
Mike, and their son, Micah.
Photo: Christy Walls



education and a master's degree as a reading and writing specialist, both from University of the Cumberlands. She's also a National Board Certified Teacher. For the past 20 years, she has taught seventh grade math at Spencer County Middle School.

With a passion for creating community in the classroom through project-based learning, Gross says, "I want my classroom to be one where students are cultivating curiosity and really seeing the relevance of math in the real-world connections and giving students a voice in mathematics."

Gross's favorite class project is Dream Homearama. Students calculate dimensions to create drawn-to-scale blueprints for their dream home and then use Zillow to help price their homes, plus mortgage calculators to consider future salary needs. The assignment culminates with over 100 community professionals, like real estate agents, architects and contractors, offering the students feedback on their displayed projects.

Gross is involved with several Spencer County Middle School programs, including the academic team, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Student Technology Leadership Program and Grizzlies Beyond the Bell. She also serves as the district academic team coordinator.

A coworker nominated Gross for Kentucky's Teacher of the Year. "When you win an award such as this, it's wonderful, but it's also humbling because you're like, I'm just a teacher," says Gross. "I just do what I do."

This recognition has given Gross opportunities to discuss vibrant learning experiences on different platforms, to be a voice for students and other teachers and to represent Spencer County.

"Teachers work really, really hard," says Gross. "I watch teachers work hard, and so to be able to highlight teachers and the work that they do and celebrate that, that's important." **KL**

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



Family is the heart of Downing Cattle Company

Six generations have built Fountain Run farm

KEVIN OSBOURN

IN FOUNTAIN RUN, where Monroe and Allen counties meet, Downing Cattle Company stands as a sixth-generation Kentucky farm rooted in family, faith and the daily rhythm of raising cattle.

For 21 years, owner Jeff Downing has served as a director at Tri-County Electric, an electric co-op serving members in Kentucky and Tennessee.

Jeff grew up on the farm and, today, works the same land once tended by his great-grandfather. At the young age of 8, Jeff watched his father build the farm's original meat processing facility.

When the beef market shifted in 2008, Jeff and his wife, Melinda, saw an opportunity. They decided to market their own all-natural, antibiotic-free meat, raising cattle from start to finish on the Downing homestead.

"The processing building was here, the equipment was here—



I just had to update things," Jeff says.

In 2010, the company became USDA approved and began supplying local country stores and groceries in Kentucky and Tennessee.

Today, the Downings manage around 170 brood cows—closer to

200 when you include son Will's nearby herd.

Their most popular product, sausage, is packaged using hogs purchased from two local producers.

While selling meat pays the bills, family is the backbone of the operation. Daughter Jenna Yokley and her husband, Jeremy, have three children—Hallie, Hannah and Haven. Son Will and his wife, Bethany, have two—Clay and Eliza.

Together, the three living Downing generations work side by side to make the farm successful, and for Jeff and Melinda, that may be the greatest blessing of all.

"Our grandkids do schoolwork in the morning and farm work in the afternoon," Jeff says. "It's a way of life that keeps us all together." **KL**



Downing Cattle Company Inc.

LOCATION:
Fountain Run

INDUSTRY:
Cattle farm and meat processing

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE:
Tri-County Electric

Downing Sausage: A local favorite

Downing Cattle spans 900 acres and produces all-natural Angus beef, along with pork products sourced from local producers.

In Tennessee, their products are sold at Gammons Market in Hendersonville and at Mike's Foodland locations in Westmoreland, Lebanon and Red Boiling Springs. In Kentucky, customers can find their products at Main Street Grocery in Fountain Run and Marigold's Market in Tompkinsville.

Though cattle is the company namesake, Downing Sausage—served hot in nearby restaurants such as Nannie Joe's and Flapper's Market—is the company's most popular product.

"Our sausage is the biggest thing and one of the most popular items we make," Jeff says. "Most of the country stores around here cook it for breakfast."

◀ Jeff and Melinda Downing pose for a photo with their grandchildren on their family farm. Shown from left are Clay Downing, Hallie Yokley, Jeff, Hannah Yokley, Melinda, Haven Yokley and Eliza Downing. Photo: Jenna Yokley

Rise and



Sourdough baking is an ancient technique experiencing a modern resurgence. This loaf, made by baker, author and educator Amy Coyne, was leavened with wild yeast.

shine

The art of baking sourdough bread

BY AMY COBB

Sourdough bread dates back thousands of years to ancient Egyptian bread makers. With renewed interest among home bakers and local bakeries alike in the art of baking sourdough, these fermented baked goods are on the menu in today's Kentucky kitchens.

"If you've ever tasted real, homemade, naturally leavened sourdough bread, you know the difference," says Amy Coyne of Georgetown, a sourdough recipe developer and cookbook author. "That crispy crust and soft, airy middle create flavor and texture that are much more satisfying than store-bought bread."

Coyne's early start

When she was a child growing up overseas, Coyne's family shopped regularly for fresh sourdough bread at European bakeries. But when the family moved back to the U.S., that kind of artisanal bread wasn't readily available. Years later, Coyne's aunt brought a loaf of bread she'd made with a sourdough starter to Thanksgiving dinner. "I was like, this is the bread that I want to make," Coyne says.

By then, the married, young mom was looking for ways to feed her kids "better bread." Determined to make her own sourdough starter, she searched the internet to learn how. "It took me five or six weeks, but I was able to successfully make my first



Amy Coyne shapes an oval loaf before its final rise in a basket, called a banneton.
Photos: Amy Coyne



sourdough starter and start baking some of these incredible loaves of sourdough bread,” says Coyne. “Ever since then, I’ve been fascinated with how sourdough works and wanting to make a better product for my family.”

Now, over 14 years later, she has developed a variety of recipes, like sandwich bread, cinnamon rolls, croissants and more. She has even perfected recipes from pancakes and muffins to crackers using the sourdough discard, which is the unfed sourdough starter that’s often thrown away—but doesn’t have to be—during routine starter maintenance.

“Sourdough is a traditional way of making bread, and we all deserve good bread we can make in our own kitchens,” Coyne says. “It’s approachable, anyone can do it and it doesn’t have to be complicated.”

Bottom left, a jar of ripe starter. Top left, Amy Coyne’s offerings include sourdough loaves, cinnamon rolls and dinner rolls. Photos: Amy Coyne



Students show off their homework after a class taught by Lori Himmelsbach of The Kentucky Millstone. Photo: Lori Himmelsbach

Brianna's Bakery

Pennyrile Electric co-op consumer-member Brianna Flores always enjoyed baking. She loved the taste of sourdough and was interested in making it. After getting a neighbor's starter a year ago, Flores began baking sourdough bread for family and friends. When others wanted her sourdough, Flores decided to open a bakery in Elkton—Brianna's Bakery.

"I love the joy it brings others and the community it builds," says Flores. "It's simple, healthy and tastes great. And there is so much variety with it, too."

Her customer-favorite sourdough flavors include lemon blueberry, jalapeño cheddar and double chocolate chip—the bread itself is chocolate with cocoa powder and chocolate chips mixed in. In Flores' own kitchen, she loves to use regular sourdough for grilled cheese



SOURDOUGH CLASSES FOR BEGINNERS

Amy Coyne offers an online course that teaches beginners how to make sourdough step by step, walking bakers through everything from starting and maintaining a starter to mixing, shaping and baking their first couple of loaves.

Amybakesbread.com, click on Online Sourdough Course.

The Kentucky Millstone owner and chef Lori Himmelsbach offers these upcoming in-person classes:

Pizza Party—June 14; Introduction to Sourdough—June 20, July 18; Sourdough Bagels—June 28.

kymillstone.com, Facebook: The Kentucky Millstone, (859) 955-9099. 201 Mill St., Butler

University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension offices offer the following summer sourdough baking classes:

Campbell County Cooperative Extension, Sourdough Basics, June 3, no cost to attend.

campbell.mgcafe.uky.edu, Facebook: Campbell County Family and Consumer Sciences Extension, (859) 572-2600. 3500 Alexandria Pike, Highland Heights

Edmonson County Cooperative Extension, Sourdough Workshop geared toward youth, July 28, no cost to attend.

edmonson.mgcafe.uky.edu, Facebook: Edmonson County Cooperative Extension Family and Consumer Sciences, (270) 597-3628. 116 Mohawk St., Brownsville

Laurel County Cooperative Extension, Sourdough Summer—Hamburger Buns, June 6; Sourdough Summer—Doughnuts, July 9. \$5/class.

laurel.mgcafe.uky.edu, Facebook: Laurel County Cooperative Extension Family & Consumer Sciences, (606) 864-4167. 200 County Extension Road, London

Taylor County Cooperative Extension—Sourdough for Beginners, June 23, July 9 (morning and afternoon classes), no fees to attend.

taylor.mgcafe.uky.edu, Facebook: Taylor County Cooperative Extension Service, (270) 465-4511. 1143 South Columbia Ave., Campbellsville



Two chocolate chip loaves made by Brianna Flores cool on a rack. Photo: Brianna Flores



KentuckyLiving.com

More sourdough resources

Get links to Amy Coyne's starter and beginner-friendly sourdough bread recipe at KentuckyLiving.com, plus a link to Brianna's Bakery to see some delicious baked goods.

sandwiches. She also tops her salad with sourdough croutons.

"Every loaf is a new experience and a learning process," says Flores, who advertises her baked goods as being "handmade with real ingredients, lots of care and a whole lot of love."

The science of sourdough

Sourdough isn't made with supermarket yeast packets. "All you need is flour, water, salt and a sourdough starter, which itself is just flour and water that has been fermented with wild yeast and bacteria," Coyne says, noting she purchases flour

▲ Amy Coyne is a Georgetown-based baker, educator and author.
Photo: Marissa Noe

◀ Sourdough isn't just for hearty loaves—it makes great pizza, too.
Photo: Amy Coyne

from Weisenberger Mills in Midway.

How does the starter work? Initially, starter is simply a mixture of flour and water, but over time, wild yeast—a microorganism already present in nearly every kitchen environment—transforms it into a living culture. "The wild yeast in a sourdough starter produces carbon dioxide, which creates those beautiful air pockets and helps the dough rise," Coyne explains on her blog, *Amy Bakes Bread*, which has over 2 million monthly views. "Lactic acid bacteria and acetic acid bacteria work alongside the yeast to ferment the dough." Acting as natural preservatives, these acids also create the sourdough flavor craved by bread lovers. "And no, sourdough doesn't mean your bread will taste sour," Coyne adds.

Sourdough starter is a live culture, requiring regular feedings of flour and water to remain active. After achieving a healthy sourdough starter, Coyne says, "You can make fresh sourdough bread anytime you want."

For Flores, for example, preparation starts the night before she plans to bake

when she feeds her starter before going to bed. "And then when I wake up in the morning, most of the time, it's perfectly risen, ready to make a loaf," she says.

Additionally, since sourdough has a long fermentation, or rise, Coyne believes it's a healthier bread option, noting, "It gives the wild yeast and bacteria time to begin breaking down the gluten, which makes it an easier bread for our bodies to digest and puts it lower on the glycemic index."

Sourdough tips + tools

When it comes to a starter, Flores says there's "no shame" in getting an established starter from someone else: "And if you want to learn how to make your own in the future that's great, but it's a lot easier to get frustrated easily when you're having to make your own starter versus having one already made and being able to just jump into the bread itself."

Having learned a lot through trial and error in baking sourdough bread for over a decade, Coyne offers these helpful tips:

- Temperature matters—Wild yeast and bacteria are more sensitive to temperature than commercial yeast. Cooler kitchens mean slower fermentation, while warmer ones will move things along faster.
- Expect sticky dough—Sourdough dough is much wetter than traditional bread dough, so it will be sticky. Use slightly damp hands when handling

READ IT AND BAKE

Amy Coyne's book, *The Beginner's Guide to Sourdough*, published by Page Street Publishing, an imprint of Macmillan Publishers, is available from Amazon and Barnes & Noble. For a better understanding of the science of sourdough bread, Coyne recommends reading *The Perfect Loaf* by Maurizio Leo.

the dough. Sourdough doesn't require a mixer; gentle stretches and folds are all that's needed.

- Use the refrigerator to make sourdough fit your schedule—Some people get nervous about keeping a living starter and feel like they have to take care of it constantly. Once your starter is established, it can rest in the refrigerator until you're ready to bake again.
- Don't give up—If you're new to sourdough, it may take a few loaves before everything starts to click. Make the recipe a few times and adjust as you go.
- To avoid clogging your kitchen sink, never rinse starter or discard down drains. Always use paper towels to remove as much dough as possible from your hands and bowls.

For successful beginner baking, Coyne recommends three tools—a kitchen scale, a Dutch oven and a thermometer. "A kitchen scale helps you measure ingredients accurately, which is especially helpful since sourdough dough is much wetter than traditional doughs," she says. "A Dutch oven traps steam so your bread can rise properly in the oven, and a thermometer helps you monitor temperature, which is key to keeping your sourdough starter happy."

Flores also suggests using a Dutch oven, adding that any pot oven-safe or

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pan with a lid that holds in steam would also work for a beginner sourdough baker.

A sourdough community rises

With a passion for sourdough and armed with an education degree, Coyne launched her own cookbook in 2025, *The Beginner's Guide to Sourdough*. She also teaches online sourdough classes, including a step-by-step beginner's course. "I love sharing sourdough because I hear from people almost daily who say baking sourdough has changed their lives and their families' lives, and helping others gain that confidence in the kitchen is incredibly rewarding," she says.

Flores has learned a lot online from watching other bakers on social media. "I follow a bunch of home bakers and more actual industrial bakeries just to learn new techniques or new flavors or



Amy Coyne's website, *Amy Bakes Bread*, includes a recipe for sourdough bagels. Photo: Amy Coyne

KentuckyLiving.com

Video tutorials and more

Go to KentuckyLiving.com to watch videos from Amy Coyne that will help you get started baking sourdough bread.

even the equipment that they use," she says. One beginner-friendly cottage baker she follows on TikTok is Basil & Bloom.

The Kentucky Millstone owner and chef Lori Himmelsbach offers in-person sourdough classes in Butler. "For the beginning baker, we break down how to make sourdough bread, bagels and pizza, in manageable steps," says Himmelsbach, an Owen Electric consumer-member. "We also teach you how to fit caring for your starter into your everyday life." Beginners will learn every step—from mixing, kneading, shaping and scoring to baking—to create an amazing, tasty, beautiful loaf.

Taylor County family and consumer sciences agent Kimberly Thomas offers beginner's sourdough classes where attendees walk through the step-by-step process of turning a starter into a fresh loaf of bread—plus, they take home an established sourdough starter. "Taking a class can give you a head start because you're learning from someone who has already made the mistakes and figured out the tricks that simplify the process," says Thomas.

Coyne recently visited a park where she overheard a group of women talking about their sourdough bakes, sharing tips and laughing about their latest loaves. "It reminded me how much this kind of baking brings people together," she says. "And truly, there's nothing better than pulling the lid off your first loaf, seeing that beautiful oven spring, and realizing you created something amazing from just flour, water and salt." **KL**

Anita Travis Richter contributed reporting to this story.

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Moving A FEAS



Casey Maestos, left, Susie Robertson and Hailey Hayes share Louisiana food and culture through Pirogue's Cajun Food Truck. Photo: Joe Imel



Food trucks satisfy cravings for cuisine and community

BY GRAHAM SHELBY

HAILEY HAYES SHARES HER CAJUN HERITAGE with Kentuckians by taking it on the road—in the family’s purple, green and yellow trailer. You can find the Hayeses in the parking lots of factories, hospitals, grocery stores and businesses in and around Glasgow and Bowling Green. They serve etouffee, jambalaya, beignets and other Cajun classics made with their own family recipes, which they love to share with customers and which, in some ways, make the business as much about connection as cuisine. Hayes says, “We thrive on bringing the community together.”



Pirogue's serves etouffee, jambalaya, beignets and other Cajun classics.

Hailey gives beads to Sadie Simmons, who is being held up by her mom Tiffany Simmons of Logan County. Photos: Joe Imel

Hayes grew up in Louisiana before moving to Kentucky, where, she says, "We fell in love with the people and the land and decided to stay." Cooking was a big part of their family culture and at some point, "We thought bringing Cajun food to Kentucky would be a wonderful thing." That impulse led Hayes, her sister and their mother to open Pirogue's Cajun Food Truck.

They are among the growing number of entrepreneurs operating food trucks in Kentucky and beyond. According to the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics, the number of Americans employed in mobile food services was over 44,000, or "about 10 times its 2000 level, an increase of 907%."

The potential for food trucks to help bring people together

is well understood by the folks who sponsor events of all kinds throughout the state. Tim Ross is public events director for the City of Owensboro, which organizes more than 60 events in the city's revitalized downtown every year. "The food trucks are an important piece to each event by providing potential attendees more reasons to say, 'Yes, I want to go to see that,' and giving attendees a better experience while at the event," he says.

Among the vendors who've served food at Owensboro events are Romie and Diovy Hernandez, who opened Mangkok Filipino Cuisine in 2025. Prior to opening, Romie says, "We were scared—how are we gonna do it?" But so far, it's going well. "We meet a lot of nice people," Romie says.

Among the most gratifying things he hears is customers





Romie and Diov Hernandez prepare to feed hungry customers. They opened Mangkok Filipino Cuisine in 2025. Photos: Leslie Barr

who tell him they drove 45 minutes just to order their lumpia, pork adobo or the Hernandezes' signature creation, Mangkok Fries (see sidebar). "We love it," he says. "Every meal we serve is made from love."

There's also a kind of fraternity among food truckers, a theme that comes up again and again in conversations with vendors across the state. One focal point of that spirit may be the annual Kentucky Food Truck Championship.

Now in its sixth year, the championship invites food trucks licensed to operate in Kentucky to gather in Mt. Vernon and show judges and about 10,000 food lovers what they have to offer.

Jessica Blankenship, who oversees the festival, has observed people making strategic decisions about how to sample

A collage of images for "Visit Boy County". The main text "VISIT BOCO" is in large, stylized letters. Below it, "WHERE ART MEETS ADVENTURE" and "VisitBoydCounty.com" are written. The collage includes a woman singing into a microphone, a red off-road vehicle driving through a forest, a close-up of a dish of food, and a person golfing. A QR code and the "BOCO" logo are also present.

Win a Getaway. See page 45.

A collage of images for "Pikeville, Kentucky". The main text "SIMPLE DAYS. STARRY NIGHTS. ENDLESS SUMMER. PIKEVILLE, KENTUCKY" is in large, bold letters. Below it, "WWW.VISITPIKEVILLE.COM" and the "Pikeville, Ky" logo are shown. The collage includes a night view of a town, a bridge over a river, a green tent, a building with a mural, and a winding road through a valley.

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A food truck sampling

In many Kentucky communities, food trucks provide a much wider array of options and types of cuisine than might otherwise be available outside of the larger cities. Food trucks also provide an opportunity for aspiring chefs to innovate and to honor the culinary traditions from around the world. Here's a sampling of menu items you might have a hard time finding anywhere but on these Kentucky food trucks.

Mangkok Fries

Mangkok Filipino cuisine, Owensboro

Food truck entrepreneurs Romie and Diov Hernandez developed this dish after observing their customers' never-ending appetite for french fries. So they started with a bowl of fries and added pork adobo and candied bacon, along with barbecue, tare and sweet chili sauces. It's been a hit. "Every time, we run out," Romie says.

mangkokfilipinocuisine.com

Chimney cakes and bourbon chicken

Chimney's Food Trailer, Paducah

Some food truck owners offer dishes made from traditional family recipes or from their ancestral culture. Others build their business based on YouTube videos. Eric and Tracie Reimer were planning to open a restaurant and "looking for a unique dessert," says Tracie. That's when they stumbled on videos detailing how to make a type of traditional European pastry that has different names (including the German "*Baumstriezel*") and often involves wrapped dough cooked

over an open flame. The Reimers adapted this, tweaked the recipe to include the savory and the sweet, and Chimney's Food Trailer was born. Among their biggest sellers: Bourbon chicken.

Chimneyeats.com

Tlayuda Mixta

Taqueria Familia Tomás, Morehead

Sure, tacos are a classic. And you can get those at Taqueria Familia Tomas, where entrepreneur Miguel Tomas says, "I love to feed people well." That means offering food both for those customers who want the familiar, as well as those who want to try something more adventurous.

That's why their food trailer's menu includes traditional Oaxacan fare like the Tlayuda Mixta (pronounced tia-YOO-dah MEEEX-ta). The dish can be served flat, almost like a pizza, or folded over. It contains meat, cabbage, radish, black beans, quesillo, onions and avocado. For extra kick, ask for what one recent customer described as "a fantastic red salsa that will punch you in the lips, but is well worth it. Highly recommended."

Facebook: Taqueria Familia Tomás

the most food from the roughly three dozen vendors.

"You've got four friends—each of them goes to a different food truck. They come back and taste each other's food," she says. "It's really a party atmosphere."

Taking care of business

Of course, it takes more than the love of sharing food and community to make a food truck operation work—it also takes strategy. "You've got to be great at social media," says Central Kentucky restaurateur Ouita Michel. One of Kentucky's most preeminent chefs and a 10-time James Beard Award nominee, she recently filmed a television series exploring Kentucky's food culture.

"I'm very pro food truck," she says. "It's a way for chefs to live out their dreams of owning a business," and many go on to open brick-and-mortar restaurants. They should just remember, she cautions, "Cash flow is the dictator of your working life."

Toa Green, whose Lexington Crank & Boom Craft Ice Cream shops started out with a mobile operation, also has a cautionary word. "Food trucks are a great

Chimney's Food Trailer, based in Paducah, offers unique spins on a traditional European pastry. Photo: Chimney's Food Trailer





◀ Crank & Boom Craft Ice Cream has opened a summer pop-up at The Stave in Millville. Photo: Crank & Boom

KentuckyLiving.com

Keep on truckin'

Interested in starting your own food truck? We've gathered some information and resources for you at KentuckyLiving.com.

way to get started in the food industry," she says, "but you have to have a heart full of hustle. Be prepared to work when other people are having fun."

Maximizing the potential of a food truck involves strict accounting, along with an understanding of how to create an efficient workflow and maximize storage in a confined space where food and equipment have to be packed with a degree of efficiency that rivals what you'd find on a NASA spacecraft.

Syree Boutiette, communications director for the Louisville Food Truck Association, has heard colleagues brag about selling out their food supplies. She'd advise them to consider, "You could have (made) \$1,000 more if you'd have just thought about your refrigerators a little bit better." Still, even with the challenges food truck work presents, Boutiette says, "It is fun."

If you wonder whether there's sufficient appetite in Kentucky to sustain a food truck with



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Desaepa and Zirconia Vansauwa's food truck confidently offers a "first bite test." Their business won the 2024 Kentucky Food Truck Grand Champion prize. Photos: Vansauwa's Tacos and Vegan Eats



menu items like Jackfruit Quesadilla and vegan Black Power Tacos, the answer appears to be yes. That's been the experience of Desaepa and Zirconia Vansauwa of Hopkinsville. Vansauwa's Tacos and Vegan Eats has been in business since 2018 and Desaepa says they like going to smaller towns, rural areas or just about anywhere

they can give folks a new food experience.

The Vansauwas, who won the 2024 Kentucky Food Truck Grand Champion prize, even put a bell on the front of their truck and invite potential customers to take what Desaepa calls "the first-bite test." That means, "Take your first bite with us," he says, "if you like it, ring the bell." And they do.

So much so that, "For eight years, my food truck has carried my family of four," Deseapa says. The Vansauwas are looking to expand, possibly to open a sit-down restaurant. He says he's grateful for the people he's met and appreciates the support he, his family and his food truck business have received: "Kentucky's got a lot of love." **KL**

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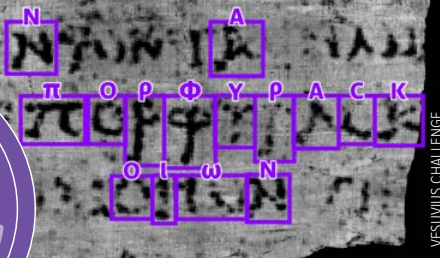
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Unwrapping secrets

What good is a treasure trove of ancient scrolls if no one can open them? Quite a lot, it turns out—just ask University of Kentucky Professor Brent Seales.

Discovered in the 18th century, the Herculaneum papyri are a collection of more than 1,800 papyrus scrolls that were burned and carbonized when Mount Vesuvius erupted in 79 A.D. The collection represents the only complete library to survive intact from the classical world, but early attempts to open the charcoal-like lumps only destroyed them.

Seales, a computer science professor at UK since 1991, applies advanced technology to ancient texts. Over the past two

decades, he's developed software enabling researchers to unwrap ancient scrolls virtually without needing to physically unfurl them, and has pioneered the use of machine learning to interpret results.

In 2023, with funding from Silicon Valley entrepreneurs, Seales launched the Vesuvius Challenge, a competition that has awarded more than \$1.7 million to researchers applying artificial intelligence to decipher passages from the Herculaneum scrolls. In 2025, Seales was awarded a prestigious European Research Council grant as part of an international team working to expand recovery of the Herculaneum papyri. In addition, Seales

leads the EduceLab at UK, connecting students with heritage science.

"I think Kentuckians are proud of the University of Kentucky, and of everything that the commonwealth here represents," Seales says, noting that he's been invited to speak about his work to the Big Blue Nation during halftime at basketball and football games. He sees his work as means of connecting the past and the present.

"I have this idea about a kind of sacred bond between a writer and a reader," he says. "The author can no longer speak for himself or herself. But the text, if we revive it, kind of repairs this bond that the author intended. ... It is a kind of resurrection."

Story: Joel Sams

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Blanket flower

Perennial makes for bright summer

GAILLARDIA ARIZONA SUN

is a great summer-blooming perennial known for its brightly colored flowers in all variations of orange and yellow. Blooms can be 1 to 3 inches wide, and all species make good cut flowers. The flowers are attractive to butterflies and other pollinators, but are deer and rabbit resistant.

Gaillardia's nickname, blanket flower, has at least two origins: its ability to blanket prairies and hillsides during the summer, and its bright colors and patterns that resemble those of Native American blankets.

This perennial plant is short-lived, but seed strains can self-seed. Heat and drought-tolerant, Gaillardia prefers good, but well drained soils and performs well when grown in containers or raised planter beds. Do not plant it in heavy clay soils.

Arizona Sun is a compact hybrid that grows only 6 to 12 inches tall and 12 to 18 inches wide, making it a good plant for the front of the perennial border. While this free-flowering plant can be dead-headed to encourage more flowers, a good reason not to deadhead is that

the summertime seed heads are a favorite of goldfinches.

If you are looking to diversify your perennial plant bed to be friendlier to bees, birds and butterflies, Gaillardia is a great option. You will be rewarded with bright and beautiful flowers this summer. **KL**



SHELLY NOLD

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



Can you move raspberries? If so, when is the best time? —Annette Hines

A Raspberries can be transplanted during the late fall and early spring. They can also be propagated by digging up suckers (primocanes) that grow from the roots. Spring is the best time to separate the suckers from the parent plant and get them in their new home. It is always a good idea to prep the new space before digging up the existing plant. The less time spent out of the ground, the better.

» Angie Oakley



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Have a gardening question?

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

READER *recipe*

Decadent dessert

No-Bake Key Lime Cheesecake

Submitted by Robyn Beatty

Consumer-member of Pennyrite Electric

The original copy of this recipe is from Robyn's mother's recipe box. She loves it because it is great to make ahead, it is simple, it serves a crowd, and it doesn't heat up the kitchen in the summer.

Crust:**1½ C graham crackers, crushed****¼ C sugar****6 Tbsp butter, melted****Filling:****2 (8-oz) blocks of cream cheese, softened****1 C sugar****1 box (3-oz) lime gelatin****1 C boiling water****1 (12-oz) can evaporated milk****1 Tbsp lemon juice****1 tsp vanilla extract**

In a bowl, mix crust ingredients. Press into an ungreased 9x13-inch glass baking dish, slightly up the sides. Freeze while preparing the filling. To make filling, beat cream cheese and sugar in a large bowl until smooth (avoid over-mixing). In a separate heat-proof bowl, dissolve lime gelatin in boiling water. Stir in evaporated milk, lemon juice and vanilla. Slowly fold gelatin mixture into cream cheese until uniform. Pour filling over chilled crust. Cover lightly with cling film sprayed with cooking spray. Chill at least 4 hours or overnight. Serve with whipped topping. Serves 15.

A Southern summer table

From porch dinners to patio parties

IT IS OFFICIALLY SUMMER, and if you know me, then you know it's my favorite time of year! Bring on the warmth, sunshine and all the dinners by the pool, please. This month's menu brings the summer Southern charm to the table with juicy pork tenderloin and a cool, creamy no-bake cheesecake to end the day. From casual porch dinners to backyard pool parties, these dishes are sure to delight.

Bacon-Wrapped Pork Tenderloin**2 lb pork tenderloin****Salt and pepper, to season****1 lb bacon****1 C peach preserves****2 Tbsp Dijon mustard****1 Tbsp apple cider vinegar****½ tsp ground thyme**

Preheat oven to 400°. Season pork tenderloin with salt and pepper. Wrap bacon slices around tenderloin, securing ends with toothpicks. Each tenderloin should take 5-6 pieces of bacon. Place bacon-wrapped pork on a baking sheet and bake 20 minutes. While pork roasts, add peach preserves, Dijon mustard, apple cider vinegar and thyme to small saucepan. Bring to a simmer over medium heat for 5-7 minutes until thickened. Turn on low and stir occasionally until 20 minutes is up, then remove pork and brush peach preserves over top. Place back in oven and roast another 10-15 minutes until internal temperature reaches 145°. Serves 6.

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

**SEE
VIDEOS**
at KentuckyLiving.com/Cook



Go to KentuckyLiving.com/submit-a-recipe



Mrs. Sweet Strong

A Brazilian-inspired bakery in McCracken County

JOEL SAMS



MERY ELLEN STRONG'S BAKERY and coffee shop was a love story from the beginning.

It starts in Brazil, where she picked up her love of cooking and her creative flair from her mother, Rozangela, who passed away in 2008. It continues in the U.S., where she met her husband, Benjamin, who pastors Equip Church in Paducah, in 2016. Today, her bakery and coffee shop, Mrs. Sweet Strong, draws on everything that came before as an expression of love for her friends and neighbors and her dream of sharing her Brazilian heritage.

"We are building a community," she says of her business, which opened in October 2024.

Mrs. Sweet Strong is a play on the couple's last name and the sweet treats Mery Ellen makes from scratch each week. The first item sold was the traditional brigadeiro—a Brazilian dessert similar to a chocolate truffle (family recipe below). Today, customer favorites also include the s'mores cookie filled with brigadeiro, Brazilian carrot cake, cinnamon rolls, blueberry muffins, quiches, Brazilian cheese bread, gluten-free treats, single-source Brazilian drip coffee and a proprietary espresso blend.

Mery Ellen is responsible for the creative side of the business, and Benjamin handles the organizational side, helps with prep during the week and serves customers.

For Mery Ellen, the business is a dream come true—a chance to share culture, food and community. "It's very beautiful to see the legacy that we are building," she says.

Served by Jackson Purchase Energy Cooperative, Mrs. Sweet Strong is located at 5965 Lovelaceville Road in Paducah, open 6 a.m.–3 p.m. Thursday and Friday and 8 a.m.–3 p.m. Saturday.

MERY ELLEN STRONG



Mrs. Sweet Strong Traditional Brigadeiro

- 1 (14-oz) can sweetened condensed milk**
- 1 Tbsp unsweetened cocoa powder**
- 1 Tbsp butter**
- Chocolate sprinkles, for coating**

Combine condensed milk, cocoa powder, and butter in a saucepan over medium heat. Cook, stirring constantly, until thickened and the mixture pulls away from the bottom of the pan, about 12–15 minutes. Transfer to a bowl and cover with plastic wrap touching the surface. Let cool completely (6–8 hours room temperature). Lightly butter your hands, roll mixture into small balls, and coat with chocolate sprinkles or other sprinkles that you would like (be creative!).

Yields about 20



MERY ELLEN STRONG

Energy savings on the cheap



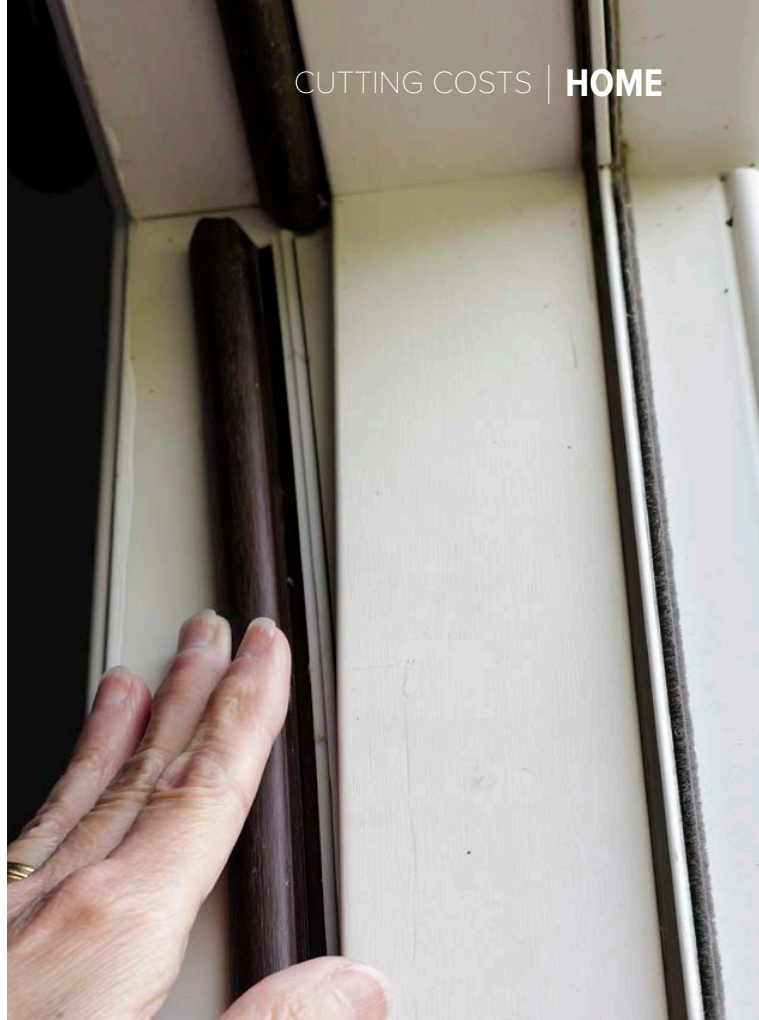
What are some ways I can cut my energy bill without spending a lot of money?

MIRANDA BOUTELLE

writes on energy efficiency for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

A You don't need to spend thousands of dollars or get the newest technology to use less energy. Here are some quick fixes to lower energy use, even on a tight budget:

- Nudge the thermostat a few degrees closer to the outside temperature, especially on extreme weather days. On the hottest and coldest days, your heating and cooling equipment must work much harder, and use more energy, to maintain the same temperature.
- Fix any hot water leaks or dripping faucets. Those tiny drips can add up to big energy waste, not to mention water waste.
- Wash clothes in cold water to avoid using the energy required to heat it, especially if you have a top-load or older washing machine that uses more water.
- Adjust the temperature on your water heater. Depending on the water heater, this



is either an easy adjustment or something a little more complicated that requires removing access panels.

Be a sealing fan

Air sealing is a do-it-yourself, beginner-friendly project. For around \$20 and a couple hours of time, you can fill gaps, cracks and holes to prevent air from leaking in and out of the home. From the

▲
Do-it-yourself, beginner-friendly projects, such as weather stripping around doors, help lower energy use at home. Photo: Mark Gilliland/Pioneer Utility Resources

inside, seal trim on windows and exterior doors with caulk for about \$4 a tube. For \$10 to \$15, you can buy weather stripping to improve the seal on exterior doors.

A can of spray foam is about \$5 and seals gaps around plumbing lines, like those pipes under your sinks or in the crawlspace or basement. Air sealing these areas gets bonus points for stopping insects and rodents from using these gaps to enter your home. **KL**

FOAM FUNDAMENTALS

Spray foam is messy and nearly impossible to get off, so wear disposable gloves and clothes you don't mind dirtying. Where you're spraying, use drop cloths to protect finished floors and move nearby items. Be careful not to get it in your hair if you're working with spray foam overhead. Carry the can in a cardboard box so you don't leave a trail of spray foam through the house.

Irrigation safety on the farm

Avoid hazards around water and electricity

DURING THE SPRING AND SUMMER, Kentucky farmers often must use irrigation equipment to supplement rainfall, but water and electricity don't mix. That's why it's essential to use safe work practices.

Follow these tips to stay safe:

- **Properly select and install equipment.** The system should be wired to the standards of the National Electrical Safety Code: It must have disconnect switches and circuit and equipment grounding. It also must use equipment and enclosures suitable for conditions. Wires must be protected from physical damage or jacketed irrigation cable used.
- **Perform routine maintenance checks.** Proactively look for faulty equipment and proper wiring installation.

Be aware before you build

Constructing a grain bin too closely to an electric power line is not only hazardous, it's a violation of the National Electrical Safety Code. There are specific minimal distances for various bin sizes that must be maintained—both horizontal and vertical clearances—between the bin and utility-owned overhead lines. Before you plan or build near a power line, contact your co-op.

- **Use safe work practices.** Turn off the power before working on an irrigation system. Be aware of overhead power lines when working with irrigation pipes, when standing on systems and when spraying water near power lines. Avoid wearing loose clothing and tie back long hair when near rotating equipment.
- **Beware of damp environments.** Operating pumps and other equipment in a damp environment increases the chance of equipment failure. Farmers who are rain-soaked and muddy are much more vulnerable to electric shock.
- **Wait to unfold.** Fold or unfold equipment extensions once you have entered the field, away from power lines. Lumber, hay, tree limbs, irrigation pipes and even bulk materials can conduct electricity, so keep them out of contact with electrical equipment. Use care when raising augers or the bed of a grain truck around power lines.
- **Train others.** Train family members and employees working on your farm about electrical hazards. Show them where electrical shut-offs are on the farm.

Farm work is rewarding, but it can be dangerous. Following these practices is an important way to stay safe during the busy summer season. **KL**



RICH PREWITT
is director of member services, economic development, marketing and safety at Cumberland Valley Electric

YEARS IN THE INDUSTRY: 14 years with the co-op

WHEN I'M NOT WORKING I'M:

When I'm not working, I'm doing something with my beautiful wife, Nina; my daughter, Megan, and her two boys, Grayson and Gavin; and my son, Ben. A man's wealth is not money. If people and family were what we measured wealth in, I'd be a billionaire!



DJORINIMO/ADOBE STOCK

Keep your cool

Beat the heat with these summer safety tips



SANGIAO PHOTOGRAPHY/ADOBE STOCK

SUMMER IS HERE, and temperatures will be rising in Kentucky. No matter how you choose to spend your time in warm weather, it's important to take care of yourself to avoid heat-related illnesses.

Too much heat is not safe for anyone, but unfortunately, the risks increase with age. Natural bodily changes make older adults more susceptible to dehydration. Additionally, they are more likely to have chronic illnesses or take medications that affect the body's ability to control its temperature.

Staying cautious and getting relief quickly is the key to avoiding heat-related

illnesses. They can happen to anyone, regardless of age or well-being. Here are some tips for staying safe in warm weather:

- Drink plenty of liquids. It's important to hydrate throughout the day by drinking water, fruit/vegetable juice or electrolyte drinks. Hydrate proactively—don't wait until you feel thirsty. Drink at least seven cups of water, or about 56 ounces, of fluids every day.
- Stay inside. The easiest way to avoid the risks of heat is to stay in air-conditioned rooms as much as possible.
- Wear appropriate clothing. In hot weather, you should

wear loose, lightweight and light-colored clothing. Cotton fabrics also tend to feel cooler and more breathable than synthetics.

- Take cool showers/baths. Water is one of the quickest ways to cool down your body when you're overheated.
- Avoid unnecessary heat in your house. Keeping your shades, blinds and/or curtains closed during the hottest hours of the day can avoid adding extra heat to your home. You should also limit the use of appliances that produce heat, such as your stove or oven.
- Wear sunscreen, SPF 15 or higher, and reapply

throughout the day. A sunburn can result in other health problems and cause you to feel warmer. Wearing hats, sunglasses and protective clothing is also helpful in protecting you from the harmful rays.

Dehydration and other heat-related illnesses can cause serious health issues. If you start experiencing dizziness, nausea, headaches or confusion, seek medical attention immediately. **KL**

PATRICK M. GRACE, M.D., is medical director of the emergency department at UK HealthCare's Albert B. Chandler Hospital.



Sets and sunsets

Experience Kentucky's outdoor music venues

STORY AND PHOTOS BY WADE HARRIS



Vixen brings pure '80s rock power to the Rock the Dam 8 in Beaver Dam.

AT OUTDOOR VENUES across Kentucky, music lovers can enjoy powerful performances in scenic settings. From small-town gems to woodland escapes, here are a few of the outdoor music venues that should make your summer set list.

Beaver Dam Amphitheater

With just over 3,600 residents, Beaver Dam is a small town—but thanks to a world-class entertainment facility, it has carved out an unlikely reputation as a major stop for nationally touring musicians.

When the Beaver Dam Amphitheater opened in 2014, built into the hillside of Beaver Dam City





A full crowd gathers beneath the iconic water tower at The Amp at Log Still.

KentuckyLiving.com

If you build it ...

One of Central Kentucky's largest outdoor music venues is slated to open in Elizabethtown in spring 2027. Read more about the project, which has planned capacity for 10,000 people, at KentuckyLiving.com.

welcome guests and help preserve the venue's friendly atmosphere.

Jammin' at Jephtha Creed

At Jephtha Creed Distillery in Shelbyville, what began as a small indoor performance lineup has grown into Jammin' at Jephtha, an outdoor concert experience.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Jephtha Creed regularly hosted indoor music for visitors. As live entertainment returned, distillery leaders saw an opportunity to expand the scale of those gatherings while staying true to its identity.

Park, organizers focused on high-quality production, thoughtful booking and ticket prices that would be accessible to a wide regional audience.

Today, the amphitheater books major touring acts, including musicians like Tyler Childers, Sheryl Crowe, Nelly, The Beach Boys and many more. Events like Rock the Dam draw thousands of fans from across Kentucky and surrounding states to see big-name talent in a more intimate setting.

"We love seeing people's eyes light up when they experience the wow factor for the first time," says Heath Eric, president and CEO of the venue's management firm.

Beyond entertainment, concert weekends bring increased traffic to local restaurants, shops and hotels, while volunteers known as "DAMBassadors"



Rock fans pack the Beaver Dam Amphitheater for Rock the Dam 8.



▲ The Bacon Brothers bring high-energy harmonies to the stage at Jephtha Creed.

► The barn-style stage at Jephtha Creed sets the scene as The Bacon Brothers perform for a crowd wrapped in rain ponchos and good spirits.

“After COVID, we decided to build the outdoor facility to host bigger concerts that the regional community can enjoy,” says Joyce Nethery, Jephtha Creed’s CEO and master distiller. “Jephtha Creed is a brand that is all about our local history, heritage and culture, so hosting live music for the community ties in perfectly.”

The venue sits on a 64-acre working farm, where the landscape plays a central role in shaping the concert experience. A gently sloping lawn influences acoustics and sightlines, while open





Caught in the moment, a fan sings and soaks in the moment as the crowd comes alive at The Amp.



Take your love of music outdoors this season at open-air music venues across Kentucky. These natural settings are found in big cities and small towns alike.

Featured Destinations

Beaver Dam Amphitheater

217 S. Main St., Beaver Dam
beaverdamtourism.com, (270) 274-7106

Jephtha Creed Distillery

500 Gordon Lane, Shelbyville
jephthacreed.com, (502) 487-5007

The Amp at Log Still

225 Dee Head Road, New Haven
logstilldistillery.com/the-amp-new2,
(502) 917-0710

The Grove

702 Happy Valley Road, Glasgow
thegroveglasgow.com, (270) 629-4263

Other outdoor venues

The Moondance Amphitheater

1152 Monarch St., Lexington
Facebook: MoonDance Amphitheater,
(859) 425-2550

Christy's Garden

720 Brent St., Louisville
paristown.com, (502) 589-9191

Iroquois Amphitheater

1080 Amphitheater Road, Louisville
iroquoisamphitheater.com,
(502) 368-5865

Laurel Cove Amphitheater

Pine Mountain State Resort Park, 1050
State Park Road, Pineville
Facebook: Laurel Cove Amphitheater;
(606) 248-2482, (606) 337-3066

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Win a Getaway. See page 45.

Adventure

Awaits

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Eastern Kentucky's City of Note
TEAM KENTUCKY

Win a Getaway. See page 45.



▲ A young girl points toward the stage while sitting on the hillside, capturing the family-friendly spirit of a summer night at The Amp.

► Bourbon & Beyond is one of Kentucky's largest outdoor concert events. It drew 210,000 attendees in 2025. Photo: Sam Shapiro Media



fields and wide skies give performances an unhurried, immersive feel. Fans settle into the space with lawn chairs and blankets, treating shows as communal gatherings rather than traditional ticketed events.

The Amp at Log Still

At Log Still Distillery in Nelson County, bourbon heritage doesn't stop at the barrel—it carries into the night under the lights of The Amp, a 2,300-seat outdoor amphitheater set amid rolling hills in the heart of bourbon country.

"The vision was never to simply build a stage; it was to create a reason to stay awhile," says Denise Ingle, chief brand strategy officer for Log Still Distillers.

Located on historic distilling land in Gethsemane, The Amp blends modern concert production with pastoral scenery, offering audiences a chance to see nationally touring artists from a variety of genres in a relaxed, scenic setting.

Tiered seating and grassy viewing areas provide clear sightlines, while professional sound and lighting deliver a polished concert experience.

Concert tickets often turn into a full bourbon tourism experience as visitors explore Log Still Distillery's guided tours, tastings, dining options, walking paths and on-site accommodations. Nearly every concert weekend at the Amp now draws visitors from across Kentucky and neighboring states,

expanding Nelson County's tourism footprint and introducing audiences to Log Still's grain-to-glass philosophy.

Woodland tunes

A secluded outdoor music venue in Glasgow, The Grove specializes in bluegrass and Americana in a welcoming, backyard atmosphere.

"We like to think of ourselves as the extension of everyone's backyard, an all-inclusive community hub where people can enjoy live music or watch their own event come to life," says Candace Barbee, public relations/marketing director for The Grove.

Concertgoers at The Grove can enjoy three fire pits, a full-service bar built



BOURBON & BEYOND

Spanning four days and five stages, Bourbon & Beyond is one of Kentucky's largest outdoor concert events, drawing 120 bands and 210,000 attendees in 2025.

From its beginnings in 2017, Bourbon & Beyond was envisioned as more than a music festival, according to Chamie McCurry, general manager of the festival's production company, Danny Wimmer Presents.

"It's a celebration of everything that makes Kentucky special," McCurry says, adding that the festival fuses "world-class music, exceptional bourbon and elevated culinary experiences into one cohesive, immersive weekend filled with discovery."

During the festival, local chefs, distillers and artisans share stages and tasting tents with nationally known names, giving Kentucky creators a platform that might otherwise be hard to replicate.

"This isn't a festival you could pick up and drop anywhere else," McCurry says. "From the bourbon and culinary experiences to the culture of Louisville woven throughout the weekend, it's distinctly Kentucky."



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HEATHER BILYEU

KentuckyLiving



▲ The Grove in Glasgow offers a secluded outdoor concert experience. Photo: Kentucky Road Trips

into the trees, a covered stage and The Treehouse, 2,000-square-foot viewing deck. In addition to offering live shows, The Grove is available to rent for

weddings or other private events.

The Grove had its origin during the COVID-19 shutdown, when owner Jason Kuykendall began to clear a wooded area on the back side of another commercial property. He envisioned an outdoor space, set in the trees, where music lovers could gather. The venue opened in June 2020, and past acts have included The Josephines, Forever Abbey Road, The Travelin' McCourys, Keller Williams, The Local Honeys, Ben Sollee and many more.

Tickets are available at the gate and online, and The Grove encourages concertgoers to download the Eventbrite app for an easy scan-in process at the gate. **KL**

WADE HARRIS is *Kentucky Living's* multimedia specialist. He's an Emmy-winning photojournalist, Kentucky native, avid concertgoer and Chicago Cubs fan.



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OCTOBER 9-10, 2026

Celebrating its 50th year, Cadiz's Trigg County Ham Festival fills downtown streets with vendors, live music, carnival fun, and famous country ham traditions.

gocadiz.com

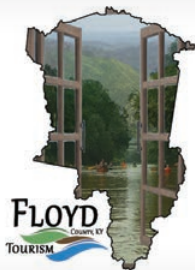


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CaveCity.com
270-773-8833



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MADISONVILLE

JUNE 26-27

The West KY Antique & Vintage Market returns during the Highway 41 Yard Sale weekend, featuring antiques, vintage décor, collectibles, and unique finds worth the drive.

270-821-4171

www.visitmadisonvilleky.com



WILLIAM ARNOLD FOUNDER'S DAY

SATURDAY, JUNE 13

Downtown Williamstown
Noon – 5 pm (heritage demonstrations,
music, vendors, family games)

Parade at 6 pm

visitgrantky.com



LIBERTY

2ND FRIDAY, MAY-SEPTEMBER

Summer Music Series
Food & Beer, 6:30 PM ET
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518 Middleburg St., Downtown Liberty
606-706-7777

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JULY 3RD – 5TH

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City Park, Madisonville
madisonvilleliving.com



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Purchase guided tours and tickets:
Quiltmuseum.org



MAYBERRY DAY

JUNE 20TH

10–2PM

100 North Thomas Street
Owenton, Kentucky 40359
502-484-5190



VISIT HISTORIC BARDSTOWN

Come visit the National Civil War Battles of the Western Theater Museum in Bardstown, KY. We have something for the whole family!

civilwarmuseumbardstown.com



Win a Getaway. See page 45.

PRESTONSBURG

JULY 4TH – 7 PM – 10 PM

Save the date for Star City Day!
Archer Park



SHEPHERDSVILLE-BULLITT COUNTY

Experience James B. Beam Distillery,
Four Roses Warehouse & Bottling,
wineries and craft breweries along
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AUGUST 29 & 30

SEPTEMBER 3, 5, 6, 7 & 9

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Franklin, Kentucky 42134
270-586-3040



SPRINGFIELD EVENTS

JUNE

- 5 & 6 America 250 Summer Tea
- 13 Wedding Festival of Thomas Lincoln & Nancy Hanks
- 27 Wine & Bourbon Tasting

JULY

- 3 Independence Day Celebration
- 4 Freedom Run 5K

springfieldkytourism.com/events



WILLIAMSBURG

June 5-6: US 25 Yard Sale

June 13: Country Meets City

July 4: Celebration at Kentucky Splash Waterpark

July 18: Jeepin on Main & Community Picnic

July 22-25: Whitley County Fair

www.williamsburgky.com



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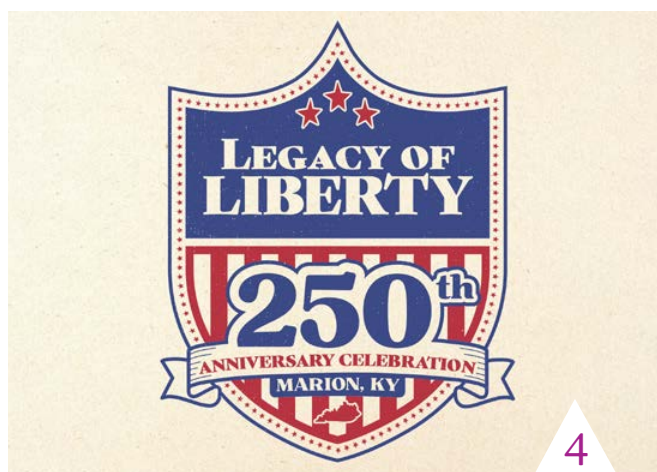
Organizing an event?

Submit an event at KentuckyLiving.com/events
or see what is happening in your part of Kentucky.

Whether it is in person or virtual, let others know how they can participate.

KentuckyLiving

EVENT CALENDAR



1 BLUES OUTDOORS

Bring a lawn chair or blanket and groove to soulful sounds at the Blues Music Festival June 6 at the Kentucky Music Hall of Fame & Museum amphitheater in Mt. Vernon. The free, outdoor celebration of blues is 6–10 p.m. with live performances from acclaimed blues artists, including Hall of Fame member Tee Dee Young, Nat Myers and Donovan Howard, shown. Food trucks and beer/wine vendors on-site. Info, kentuckymusichalloffame.com/events, (606) 256-1000.

2 FESTA ITALIANA

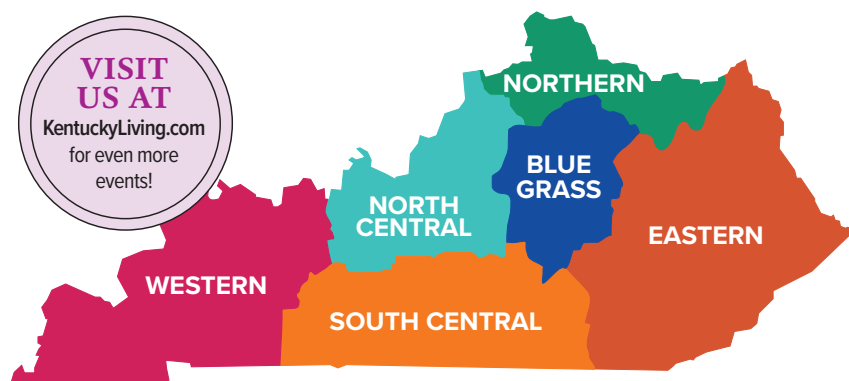
Savor authentic Italian food, music and culture at Italianfest, June 11–14 at Newport's Festival Park, with free admission. Sample foods from ravioli and stromboli to cannoli and Tuscan gnocchi. Pay tribute to Italian heritage at the photo tent honoring the community's roots, and enjoy live music each day. Inflatables for the kids (\$). Hours: 5–11 p.m. Thursday and Friday; noon–11 p.m. Saturday; noon–9 p.m. Sunday. Facebook: Newport Italianfest.

3 JOIN JUNETEENTH

Celebrate freedom, culture, community and progress at the Juneteenth Block Party in Versailles. The free June 19 event in the downtown district features local vendors, food trucks serving up anything from fried chicken to tacos to barbecue, live music with the Encore Band, kids activities, bounce houses and more. The city's karaoke contest winner also performs. Hours: 6–10 p.m. For more, Facebook: City of Versailles, (859) 873-5436.

4 250TH CELEBRATION

Take a walk through history and celebrate America's 250th at Marion's Legacy of Liberty, June 26–27. The Crittenden County community kicks off the festivities 6 p.m. Friday with a parade and living history campfire. On Saturday, experience a walk-through timeline with historical encampments, living statues, interactive exhibits, reenactments and a reading of the Declaration of Independence. Food trucks, vendors, vintage baseball game and more. Details: america250marion.com, (270) 704-1446.



BLUEGRASS

TUESDAY, JUNE 2

Waveland's Tea Tuesday, 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th, (859) 272-3611, Waveland State Historic Site, Lexington

FRIDAY, JUNE 5

The Play that Goes Wrong, thru 27th, (859) 612-2321, Pioneer Playhouse, Danville

SATURDAY, JUNE 6

Car Cruise In & Fundraiser for Love the Hungry, (502) 533-8045, Waddy

FRIDAY, JUNE 12

Food Truck Friday Summer Concert Series, (502) 839-5372, Century Bank Park, Lawrenceburg

THURSDAY, JUNE 25

Great American Brass Band Festival, thru 27th, (859) 612-2321, Centre College, Danville

Waveland's Tea and Talk: "The Wilderness Road", (859) 272-3611, Waveland State Historic Site, Lexington

SATURDAY, JUNE 27

Oleika Shriners Motorfest Car & Bike Show, (859) 277-6869, Oleika Temple, Lexington

TUESDAY, JUNE 30

The Iron Baby Angel, thru July 18th, (859) 612-2321, Pioneer Playhouse, Danville

FRIDAY, JULY 3

Independence Day Fireworks, (859) 734-9167, Anderson-Dean Community Park, Harrodsburg

Montgomery Gentry Concert

(859) 618-6433, Millennium Park, Danville

SATURDAY, JULY 4

Fourth of July Parade, (859) 618-6433, Danville

TUESDAY, JULY 7

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

EASTERN

FRIDAY, JUNE 5

U.S. 25 Yard Sale, thru 6th, (606) 549-0530, Williamsburg

SATURDAY, JUNE 6

Carter County Shrine Club-Fun Horse Show, (606) 255-0483, Olive Hill

FRIDAY, JUNE 12

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

SATURDAY, JUNE 13

Country Meets City, (606) 549-0530, Williamsburg

FRIDAY, JUNE 19

Food Truck Fridays, (606) 878-6900, London

SATURDAY, JUNE 20

Rudy Fest Bluegrass Festival, thru 27th, (606) 316-6677, Poppy Mountain, Morehead

SATURDAY, JUNE 27

Bluegrass Mountain Cup, thru 28th, (606) 886-1341, Prestonsburg

THURSDAY, JULY 2

Summer Motion, thru 4th, (606) 329-1007, Ashland

SATURDAY, JULY 4

Gateway 250: Our Hometown Celebration, (859) 498-8732, Montgomery County High School, Mt. Sterling

July 4th Celebration, (606) 549-0530, Kentucky Splash Park, Williamsburg

Star City Day, (606) 886-1341, Archer Park, Prestonsburg

NORTH CENTRAL

FRIDAY, JUNE 5

Light the Night 5K, (270) 982-2274, Buttermilk Falls Trailhead, Brandenburg

SATURDAY, JUNE 6

Day Out with Thomas, 7th, 13th 14th, (502) 549-5470, Kentucky Railway Museum, New Haven

Car Cruise In, (502) 744-7155, Happy Jack's Winery, Hardinsburg

TUESDAY, JUNE 9

The Last of the Mohicans & How I Survived the French & Indian War, (502) 513-5555, Carnegie Library Center, Shelbyville

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10

Lawn Party, 2nd Wed. thru Sept., (270) 765-6121, Elizabethtown

SATURDAY, JUNE 13

Summer Family Fun Fest, (502) 225-0870, CityPlace Expo Center, La Grange

Arts in Nature: L+A+N+D Tour, (502) 955-8512, Bernheim Forest and Arboretum, Clermont

East Main Market Summer Concert Series, 2nd & 3rd Sat. thru Aug., (270) 259-5587, Leitchfield

Reenactment of Lincoln/Hanks Wedding, (859) 336-5412 Ext. 6, Lincoln Homestead State Park, Springfield

Treat Trot, (760) 669-6471, Cherokee Park, Louisville

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17

Trivia Night, (502) 459-2181, Louisville Zoo, Louisville

SATURDAY, JUNE 20

Lunch on the Rails, (502) 549-5470, Kentucky Railway Museum, New Haven

FRIDAY, JUNE 26

Louisville Orchestra in the Park, (270) 765-6121, Elizabethtown

SATURDAY, JUNE 27

Tea on the Rails, (502) 549-5470, Kentucky Railway Museum, New Haven

Bourbon, Bands, & Public Lands

(502) 921-1593, Jephtha Creed Distillery, Shelbyville

FRIDAY, JULY 3

Independence Day Celebration, (859) 336-5412 Ext. 6, Springfield

SATURDAY, JULY 4

American 250! Reading the Declaration of Independence, 270-200-3523, Judicial Building, Leitchfield

4th of July Fireworks, (270) 358-3832, Creekfront Park, Hodgenville

Freedom Run 5K, (859) 336-5412 Ext. 6, Springfield

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 July 1 for the September issue.**

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

TUESDAY, JULY 7

Summer Concert Series: Shepherd Hieb,
(502) 445-5773, Active Heroes Retreat,
Shepherdsville

NORTHERN**FRIDAY, JUNE 4**

U.S. 25 Yard Sale, thru 6th, (800) 382-7117,
Crittenden

FRIDAY, JUNE 5

Antique Tractor and Machinery Show,
thru 6th, (859) 240-3112, Pendleton County
Fairgrounds, Falmouth

SATURDAY, JUNE 6

Art in the Garden, (606) 756-2183, Augusta

SATURDAY, JUNE 13

Maysville Uncorked! Wine and Art Festival,
(606) 584-4888

Marigold Day & Founders Day,

(859) 824-6351, Williamstown

FRIDAY, JUNE 19

Taco & Margarita Festival, thru 21st,
(859) 261-4677, Goebel Park, Covington

SATURDAY, JUNE 20

Music in the Park, (502) 732-7036, General
Butler State Resort Park, Carrollton

MONDAY, JUNE 22

Boone County 4-H & Utopia Fair, thru 27th,
(859) 802-8745, Boone County Fairgrounds,
Burlington

SATURDAY, JUNE 27

Life of Christ Drama, thru 28th, (859)
428-2200, Sherman Full Gospel, Dry Ridge

SATURDAY, JULY 4

4th of July Parade, (606) 756-2183,
Augusta

SOUTH CENTRAL**MONDAY, JUNE 1**

Taylor County Fair, thru 6th,
(270) 789-8860, Taylor County Fairgrounds,
Campbellsville

THURSDAY, JUNE 4

400 Mile Sale, thru 7th, (859) 516-2520, U.S.
Highway 68, Campbellsville

FRIDAY, JUNE 5

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

**Lady Luck Circuit: 2026 KyQHA Horse
Show,** thru 7th, (888) 367-5742, Central
Kentucky Ag Expo Center, Liberty

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

SATURDAY, JUNE 6

Classic Car Cruise, (270) 465-0236,
Peddlers Mall, Campbellsville

Monticello Market, (606) 348-5719

Roots & Rhythm Festival, (270) 526-3557,
Charles Black City Park, Morgantown

FRIDAY, JUNE 12

Pursuit of the Loot IBRA, thru 14th, (502) 235-
8598, Central Kentucky Ag Expo Center, Liberty

**Summer Music Series: The Dirty Grass
Players,** (606) 706-7777, City Green Stage,
Liberty

SATURDAY, JUNE 13

Yesterday: The Beatles Tribute, (270)
586-7778, The Mint Gaming Hall, Franklin

Marty Brown with Christian Brown,
(270) 361-2101, The Plaza Theatre, Glasgow

FRIDAY, JUNE 19

Cruisin on Main, (615) 757-2701, Campbellsville

SATURDAY, JUNE 20

**Nathan Chester & The Old Soul's Motown
Revival,** (270) 361-2101, The Plaza Theatre,
Glasgow

Spur A Spring Fun Show Series, (859) 779-
0397, Central Kentucky Ag Expo Center, Liberty

FRIDAY, JUNE 26

Kentucky Rose Regional Championship,
thru 27th, (859) 252-6942, Central Kentucky
Ag Expo Center, Liberty

SATURDAY, JUNE 27

Somernites Cruise Car Show and Cruise,
(606) 872-2277, Fountain Square, Somerset

FRIDAY, JULY 3

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

Adairville Celebrates America 250!,
(270) 770-0954, Adairville Community Park

Spur A Spring Fun Show Series, (859) 779-
0397, Central Kentucky Ag Expo Center, Liberty

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

SATURDAY, JULY 4

4th of July Celebration, (606) 706-7777,
Liberty's City Green, Liberty

WESTERN**TUESDAY, JUNE 2**

Know & Glow Firefly Festival,
(270) 993-1234, Western Kentucky Botanical
Garden, Owensboro

SATURDAY, JUNE 6

River Tin Street Rods Charity Car Show,
(270) 564-1852, Paducah

Bluegrass on the Bluff, (573) 427-8348,
Columbus-Belmont State Park

FRIDAY, JUNE 12

OMG!con 2026, thru 14th, (270) 926-1100,
Owensboro Convention Center, Owensboro

SATURDAY, JUNE 20

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

Dazzling Daylilies Festival,

(270) 993-1234, Western Kentucky Botanical
Garden, Owensboro

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24

ROMP Festival 2026, thru 27th, (270)
926-7891, Yellow Creek Park, Owensboro

FRIDAY, JUNE 26

West Kentucky Antique & Vintage Market,
thru 27th, (270) 821-4171, West Kentucky
Archery Complex, Madisonville

FRIDAY, JULY 3

4th Fest & Praise in the Park, thru 5th,
(270) 821-2100, Madisonville City Park

SATURDAY, JULY 4

Fourth of July Celebration, (502) 564-4930,
Providence Municipal Golf & Recreation Center

Independence Day Celebration,

(800) 723-8224, Wilson Stage, Paducah

Free Admission First Saturday,

(270) 993-1234, Western Kentucky Botanical
Garden, Owensboro

Ameribration, (270) 395-7138, Memorial
Park, Calvert City





1 PINK PEONY

One perfect, pink peony is an emblem of the spring season. Photo by Carol Tudor, Nicholasville, a consumer-member of Blue Grass Energy.

2 TURKEY, EGG

Frankie the turkey wanted a baby, says Heather Morgan, so she put a chicken egg in the nest. Above, Frankie's new chick takes a ride. Morgan is a Fleming-Mason Energy member from Maysville.

3 A SUNNY PATCH

Loki wasn't born yesterday. This 13-year-old cat knows how to find a good patch of sun and enjoy it properly. Photo by owner, Jodi Cassidy, Maysville, a Fleming Mason Energy consumer-member.

4 FLOWER CROWN

Lakelynn Hawk, 2, enjoys the sunshine and warm weather while wearing a flower crown. Photo by mom, Jillian Muse, Science Hill, a consumer-member of South Kentucky RECC.

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

Summertime



The summer solstice is the longest day of the year. It is when the sun stays in the sky the longest and the night is the shortest. The sun is also at its highest point in the sky.

SEASONAL CROSSWORD

Use the picture clues to help you fill in the crossword puzzle. When you are done, the letters going down will spell a secret word!



Answers: 1) Sheep 2) Duck 3) Farm 4) Pumpkin 5) Hen 6) Rooster
Down: Summer



Did You Know?

Hippos can hold their breath for five minutes and even sleep underwater, surfacing to breathe without waking.

Green Team Tip

Turn off lights when leaving a room.

— Jaxson Travis Cook, age 8

Send us your green team tips!



Enter KIDS Contest



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

F is for Firefly



Fireflies are a type of beetle, also called lightning bugs or glowworms. Fireflies use their light to communicate with each other. Their glow also sends a warning to predators: "Do not eat me, I taste bad!"

Tell us a joke!

When do astronauts eat lunch?

At "launch" time.

— Beverly Caple, age 10



GREAT OUTDOORS

Sharing the outdoors

Honoring Ron Wong's legacy



▲ Leslie Thomas learns from instructor Kent Driscoll at the first Ron Wong Legacy Foundation event at Green River Lake. Photo: Debbie Wong

THE FIRST TIME I met the late Ron Wong, he was standing over a fryer, making his famous hush puppies. Ron was an outstanding example of an outdoor communicator—always doing his best to inspire people to engage with the outdoor lifestyle. Through the lens of his ever-present camera, he helped people see the outdoors the way he did. And of course, he also loved to feed people. That's how I ended up with his hush puppy recipe, which I still use to this day.

That event was hosted by *Brushpile Fishing*, an educational crappie fishing show. In addition to its

YouTube show, *Brushpile* now has an academy to teach and inspire people to enjoy the outdoors. Attendees learn so much from instructors, who are undeniably some of the world's best crappie anglers and fishing educators.

Ron loved to fish, but even more than that, he loved getting other people started. He especially encouraged women and kids, because he said he felt that they should “get in on the fun.” After Ron passed away unexpectedly in April 2025, outdoors writer and educator Madalyn Roberts put into motion what is now the Ron Wong Legacy Foundation.

The foundation's mission is “to support the fishing community by bringing together individuals interested in fishing—especially women and children—through education, skills training, resource access and leadership development.”

The foundation's first event was hosted by the Brushpile Fishing Academy for Women and Youth at Green River Lake. It was a fitting

tribute to Ron, and a heartwarming experience for outdoor educators and communicators who are working hard to share the outdoor lifestyle with others. I know that Ron would be happy to see the legacy he left behind.

If you would like more information about the Ron Wong Legacy Foundation, be sure to visit ronwonglegacyfoundation.org, where you can donate to the foundation and help bring more people together to learn and enjoy the great outdoors. **KL**

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

Everyone loves a good before and after.



Beautify the Bluegrass

DEADLINE TO NOMINATE IS JULY 20

Across Kentucky, volunteers and communities work to Beautify the Bluegrass.

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Finalists to be announced by Gov. Andy Beshear on August 19 during *Kentucky Living's* 2026 Best in Kentucky awards.

Nominate someone today!

1. Help us recognize projects completed since August 2025.
2. Go to KentuckyLiving.com/Beautify for details.
3. Enter by July 20.

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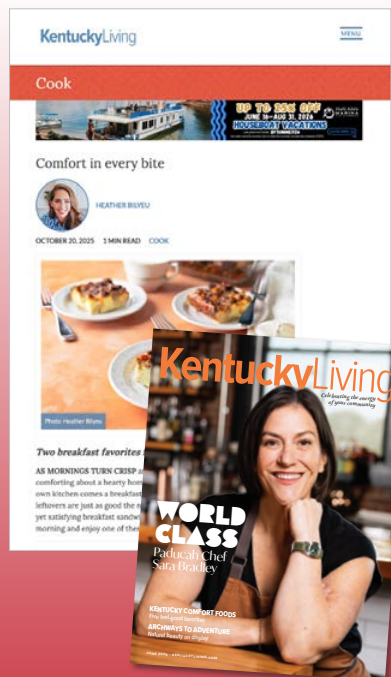
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Tracking box turtles

An easy way to aid conservation



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.

ANYONE WHO LIKES box turtles and occasionally crosses paths with one may be of help to John Abrams, a Berea College ecologist who supervises the Kentucky Box Turtle Project.

His research, part of Berea's Forestry Outreach program, is aimed at learning more about the state's threatened Eastern box turtle population, its distribution, movements, home range, growth and mortality.

"In my estimation they are a species in pretty drastic decline," Abrams says. "They're slow moving, they're collected for the pet trade; a lot of folks will move them off roadways and end up taking them to what they think is better habitat, but what they're doing is relocating a turtle that spends a significant amount of time trying to get back to its home range."

shell that are unique to each turtle, much like a fingerprint. Even old photos can be used if accompanied by a location and date. The data may eventually provide a realistic idea of how the box turtle population is distributed across the state, as well as where the greatest threats exist and where conservation projects may be useful.

Primarily through social media, Abrams invites anyone who finds a box turtle to take its photo—preferably looking down from directly above the shell—and then email the picture to him, along with the date and location where it was found (GPS coordinates if available, or the nearest landmark). Locations are kept private except to researchers. Senders' email addresses may be included if they would like to be notified of future sightings of the box turtle. Email photos to Abrams at: abramsj@berea.edu.

Some Eastern box turtles may live more than 100 years, and Abrams estimates that, of the nearly 300 turtles already documented, several are at least 60 to 70 years old. Many box turtles, he says, may spend their entire lives in an area no larger than a typical suburban yard.

"I'd like to hear from people all over the state, and I'm really interested in hearing about people's little resident turtles," he says. "You know, the ones where someone might say, 'Oh, my kids found this turtle by the creek when they were 3 years old, and then we found this other turtle eight years ago. We always wonder if it could be the same turtle.' Now we can find out.

"I have one turtle that was found underneath a mulberry tree that, exactly 364 days later, was found under that same mulberry tree again. I have a sneaking suspicion that this turtle makes a seasonal migration to this same mulberry tree, so I'm curious to see if it ends up back there again this year." **KL**



Beyond natural predators, they are also threatened by water and soil pollution from pesticides and other chemicals, as well as mowing machines and other equipment.

Abrams, a consumer-member of Blue Grass Energy, discovered a non-invasive method for tracking the turtles using only their photographs and pattern-recognition computer software to document yellow markings on the



HEATHER BLYEU



KIMBERLY DOSS



TIM WEBB



TIM WEBB



WAYNE GARMON



TIM WEBB



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