

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2023

CONNECTION



Come on inn

Remodeler Dan Hudson follows his dream

GOT GARLIC?

LIGHTS, CAMERA,
LOCATIONS



By SHIRLEY BLOOMFIELD, CEO
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

A front row seat to history

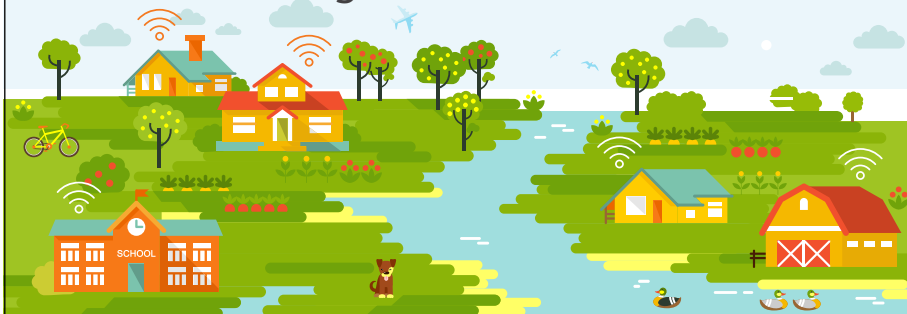
I recently spent the morning at the White House celebrating the historic announcement of \$42.5 billion allocated to all the states and territories in our union to help bridge the digital divide as part of the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment program, also known as BEAD.

The buzz in the security line was electric as folks lined up early to compare notes on why we are all passionate about broadband deployment, and I enjoyed sharing the activities of community-based broadband providers. I found myself beaming when a few people specifically referenced the fiber networks deployed by NTCA member companies. I love that the hard work of these companies and co-ops like yours is finally getting the credit that is due.

Mitch Landrieu, head of infrastructure initiatives for President Joe Biden, kicked us off and turned the podium to Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo, who is leading BEAD and has genuinely put her passion behind her work. President Biden then took the podium and got right into sharing how much this historic investment in broadband means for our country. I was delighted to hear all the administration's folks share a mindset on the importance of reliable, comparable and affordable broadband and even how fiber is really the technology of choice for this historic investment.

As Secretary Raimondo noted, it really was a "happy broadband day." And, with the support of your community-based provider, we are sure to have many more delightful broadband days in the future. 🗨️

Why is broadband vital? It strengthens rural America



Life is often lived online, including working, socializing, learning, relaxing and more. Without fast internet access, however, these day-to-day essentials grind to a halt. But for rural communities, the stakes are even higher.

While it's something we might take for granted — at least for those of us who have access to broadband — the power of fast internet to profoundly improve quality of life remains striking.



-1-

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES:

High-speed internet helps rural businesses expand their reach through e-commerce — possibly even connecting globally.



-2-

REMOTE WORK:

Rural workers can tap into a pool of work-from-home jobs, allowing residents to avoid commutes or the possibility of relocating for work.



-3-

HEALTH CARE:

Telemedicine and access to medical resources — such as time-sensitive treatments like stroke care — are critical.



-4-

EDUCATION:

Rural schools, colleges and students can tap vast resources, including virtual classrooms and distance learning programs.



-5-

AGRICULTURE:

Online resources allow farmers in rural areas to optimize crop management, monitor livestock, access weather information and more.

That's just the beginning. New opportunities will continue to appear, and rural internet providers will make the connections to bring those services to you.



©matortion/Adobe Stock

Stream it to win it

DON'T MISS A GAME THIS SEASON

Fall is prime time for sports fans. There's both college and NFL football. The baseball regular season wraps up, followed by the playoffs and World Series. The first NBA games tip off, too. And with such a rich stew of possibilities, the buffet of options for viewing sports is tastier than ever.

Once, a sports fan might be limited to viewing the feats of only regional teams, and the selection of those games was limited to the lineup a TV network offered. Now, however, sports fans can choose streaming services that best suit their interests and budgets. Pricing can change at any time, though, so verify the cost when you're ready to make a game-time decision.

SOME POTENTIAL WINNERS

► **NFL Game Pass:** For pro football fans, NFL Game Pass is a game-changer. This streaming service provides access to live out-of-market games. It's hard to beat if you're a fan who wants to keep up with a favorite team whose games typically aren't


broadcast in your TV market. NFL Game Pass also offers on-demand replays, condensed games and access to an extensive archive of previous seasons. While Game Pass is just one possibility for streaming NFL games, it's a good one.

► **NBA League Pass:** Do you love professional basketball? Thanks to NBA League Pass, there's a premium service perfect for anyone hooked on the NBA. There's coverage of live games and the opportunity to watch past games on demand. There's plenty of analysis, features, interviews and more. And it also works great on most devices.

► **Paramount+, Amazon Prime Video and Apple TV:** These services aren't known primarily as platforms that feature sports. Instead, they established footholds by offering deep libraries of new TV shows and movies, as well as catalogs of longtime favorites. But if you're already subscribing to stream from one of these services, or other

similar ones, take a closer look. You might be surprised by the sports available on a subscription you already have.

► **YouTube TV:** If you want an experience that's close to traditional TV — all the big networks and smaller ones, too — check out YouTube TV. ABC, CBS, NBC, ESPN and more are all available, and they're streaming in real time. You see the games as they're happening. You can even record events so you can watch them later.

► **ESPN+:** Are you a fan of sports other than the big leagues? ESPN+ takes a deep dive into soccer, tennis and more. There's coverage of everything from Ultimate Fighting Championship bouts to U.S. Open tennis. Smaller college conferences, such as the Ivy League and Conference USA, are showcased, with baseball, softball, hockey, wrestling and more. There's even access to a library of content from the ESPN documentary series "30 for 30." 

Co-op strong

Together we lift up our community

Our world changes quickly when it comes to technology and how we interact with one another. But ever since we built the first telephone lines, we've been devoted to providing the services you need to stay engaged, connected and secure. At times, it can prove challenging to bring cutting-edge technologies to a rural community like ours, but with your support we're succeeding.



KEVIN BEYER
Chief Executive Officer

Also, Farmers Mutual and Federated Telephone is not alone, and neither are you. We're proud to be part of a nationwide co-op family, a supportive group of like-minded companies committed to uplifting areas in rural America that for-profit companies have often ignored.

While many communities like ours are catching up, there remains a gap between the resources available in rural America versus those found in larger cities. Every day, we work to bridge this digital divide by bringing you resources like internet service at speeds that often beat those found in metropolitan areas. And we do it affordably and reliably.

Each October, during National Cooperative Month, the co-op world honors these efforts that show how neighbors helping neighbors can benefit everyone. You see, as a member of the cooperative, you are very much a part of Farmers Mutual and Federated Telephone, right down to electing the board members who direct us. When people succeed by working together, isn't it worth celebrating? We think so.

In the cooperative model, unlike with most for-profit corporations, our primary focus is on the needs of our members. Everyone at Farmers Mutual and Federated Telephone lives nearby, so we understand not only the successes our area achieves, but also the challenges we face.

Just like other companies that are part of the co-op community, we hold fast to a set of shared principles, promoting fairness, democracy and community development. Cooperative Month gives us a chance to amplify our voices and raise awareness about these efforts.

After all, we have seen firsthand the profound difference fast internet and other services can have. They opened the doors to economic development, more educational resources and a greater diversity of health care services thanks to telemedicine.

None of this, however, is possible without you. Our strength lies in your active participation and engagement with Farmers Mutual and Federated Telephone. Whether through attending meetings, volunteering or serving on the board, our members are crucial in shaping the direction of this cooperative.

Cooperative Month is significant for us, allowing time to reflect on where we've been and where we're going. It's an opportunity to celebrate our achievements, to raise awareness about the power of the cooperative world and to thank you for your help. Together, we'll continue to make our community the best it can possibly be. 📞

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Farmers Mutual Telephone Company

301 Second St. S.
Bellingham, MN 56212
farmers@farmerstel.net
320-568-2105

Federated Telephone Cooperative

201 State Hwy. 9 S. • P.O. Box 107
Morris, MN 56267
emailftc@fedtel.net
320-324-7111 or 320-585-4875

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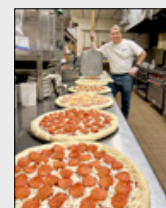
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On the Cover:



Dan Hudson regularly posts photos of the food he serves at the new restaurant he added inside The Hudson Inn. See story Page 12.

Photo courtesy of The Hudson Inn



Cybersecurity Month

October is Cybersecurity Month. Since 2004, the National Cybersecurity Alliance has championed the need to make cybersecurity a daily pursuit. Its staysafeonline.org is a rich resource to help you dodge the latest scams.

No matter which devices you're using, the site offers security tips, including:

- Update software often.
- Enable multifactor authentication.
- Use strong passwords and a password manager.
- Recognize and report phishing.

Remember, it's far easier to embrace security strategies than rebuild your identity and credit after you've been targeted.

Consider one scam strategy: An attack can start as a pop-up in a web browser that seems to be a warning from technicians from one of the biggest tech companies requesting you call a toll-free phone number that appears legitimate. Then, during the call a "technician" might use jargon as part of a bogus explanation designed to lure the caller into buying gift cards or sharing credit card information.

These schemes are sophisticated and even target those who are digitally literate. They've cost victims hundreds, or even thousands, of dollars. Larger, more sophisticated, versions have crippled hospitals, local governments and businesses through ransomware hijacking, insurance fraud, false invoices, office supply schemes and more.

The FBI estimates that more than \$10 billion was lost in 2022 — nearly triple the amount from 2020 — from Americans targeted by these online scams.

Visit staysafeonline.org and learn to protect yourself.

Providing opportunities

Earlier this year, Federated Telephone selected Kyra Vogt to serve as their delegate on the Foundation for Rural Service's annual Youth Tour of Washington, D.C.

"At first I was very nervous to leave our community, for what seemed like an eternity," Kyra says. This was her first flight alone. "Thankfully, I had a very supportive group of chaperones that met me at the airport to fly to D.C. as well for this trip."

The trip included visits to the U.S. Capitol, Arlington National Cemetery, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Smithsonian museums and more.

"It was a great experience to get out of my comfort zone, meet new people and have fun in the process," Kyra says. "I made a bunch of great friends that I still am in touch with."



Farmers Mutual and Federated Telephone wish you a wonderful Labor Day weekend. In recognition of the holiday, our offices will be closed on **Monday, Sept. 4.**

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MAKING MOVIES

Visit locations of classic films

Story by ANNE BRALY

Snowy winters, warm summers, sparkling lakes and breathtaking fall scenery make Minnesota a top spot for shooting films, including some American classics.

Take, for example, “Grumpy Old Men,” a film shot in St. Paul and along the shores of Lake Rebecca in the gently rolling hills of the Big Woods near Rockford. Though it premiered 30 years ago this December, it remains a beloved film for all ages.

“Minnesota’s stunning locales are full of character, and the talented local crews and vendors make the state a great place to produce movies of all sizes,” says Lauren Bennet McGinty with Explore Minnesota.

Movies like “Grumpy Old Men,” “Fargo” and “Purple Rain” are classics for good reason, Lauren adds. Those three, plus several others filmed around Minnesota, have an enduring quality that still captures travelers’ imaginations and makes them a must-see part of a vacation.

Here’s where to relive those moments from the silver screen and bring them to life before your eyes.

WHERE THE ‘GRUMPY OLD MEN’ LIVED

The town of Wabasha was the setting for “Grumpy Old Men,” home to neighbors John Gustafson (Jack Lemmon) and Max Goldman (Walter Matthau). The majority of the film was shot in St. Paul, where all the houses were located, and in Faribault, where the drugstore scenes were shot at the former Poirier Pharmacy on Central Avenue. But Wabasha claims the movie as its own with its annual Grumpy Old Men Festival each winter.

Visit Slippery’s Bar and Grill, mentioned in the film but not seen, or walk around and feel the essence of life in a small Minnesota town.

“I think Mark Steven Johnson, the writer of ‘Grumpy Old Men,’ did a good job of portraying life in Wabasha, and we have people stop in year-round just to visit the city,” says Courtney Schaefer, director of the Wabasha Kellogg Chamber of Commerce.

The next Grumpy Old Men Festival is scheduled for Feb. 23-24, 2024. The festivities include a Grumpy

Best-Dressed event, an ice-fishing tournament, a Grumpy Plunge into the icy waters of the Mississippi River and more.

The ice-fishing scenes in “Grumpy Old Men” were shot on Lake Rebecca in Lake Rebecca Park Reserve in Rockford. Visit in the winter and take the family ice fishing. The 2,200-acre park also has excellent hiking trails that are a haven for wildlife and offer views of magnificent trumpeter swans.



Hundreds turn out each February for the Grumpy Old Men Festival to celebrate the movie that put Wabasha on the map.

Photo courtesy of Wabasha Kellogg Chamber of Commerce

HITCHING POST MOTEL MADE FAMOUS BY 'FARGO'

Jerry Lundegaard, played by William H. Macy, was on the run in “Fargo.” He was finally apprehended at the Hitching Post Motel in Forest Lake, 23855 Forest Blvd. N. You can stay there, too. Parking is free, and pets are welcome. And while you’re there, make the short drive over to Square Lake in May, Minnesota, where “Fargo’s” infamous wood-chipper scene took place. According to fargomoorhead.org, it’s the most horrific scene in cult-classic cinema history.

The music club, First Avenue, was the setting for Prince’s movie, “Purple Rain.”

'PURPLE RAIN'

The Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul have a vibrant music scene largely centered around First Avenue — a club known for its commitment to music and the arts — as well as one of the area’s most-brilliant musicians, Prince, who put it on the map with the release of his movie, “Purple Rain.” The club was used as a backdrop and filming location, and today, Prince, his movie and the club are inextricably linked. Take a look at the club’s exterior and you’ll find his star, now painted in gold. Props and other items from the movie can be seen at the museum at Paisley Park, Prince’s former home, 801 Audubon Road, Chanhassen.

Visit First Avenue, 701 First Ave. N., where live music is played nightly. For a calendar of who’s playing, go to first-avenue.com.



Photo courtesy of First Avenue



Photo by Tyler Boland

The Fitzgerald Theater is the setting for the movie “A Prairie Home Companion,” as well as the popular live radio show.

'A PRAIRIE HOME COMPANION' AT FITZGERALD THEATER

The Fitzgerald, built in 1910, was featured on the big screen as the setting for the film “A Prairie Home Companion,” a fictional behind-the-scenes take on the National Public Radio show made famous by host Garrison Keillor. Meryl Streep, Kevin Kline, Woody Harrelson, Lily Tomlin and Lindsay Lohan starred in the movie along with Garrison. Visit today, and you’ll see the theater much as it was during the days of the live radio show, as well as the 2006 movie.

The Fitzgerald is now a venue for concerts for a wide range of musical genres, but it’s also worth a visit to sit and wonder at the architecture of St. Paul’s oldest surviving theater and Garrison Keillor’s amazing 42-year run there as host of the popular radio variety show.

THOSE 'MIGHTY DUCKS'

Take your inner child out to play at Nickelodeon Universe at Mall of America where you can relive scenes from “D2: The Mighty Ducks.” The mall was featured in the film when Charlie and Jesse skated through the mall to get to Averman at the movie theater, then on their way out of the mall, they skated through Nickelodeon Universe.

You can have the same kind of fun, more or less. While skating through the mall is not the best idea, you can take a ride on the awesome Avatar Airbender, play a round of Moose Mountain Adventure Golf or scream your way through Shredder’s Mutant Masher, three of the numerous rides and other fun available.

“While it was known as Camp Snoopy back in the famous ’90s rollerblading scene in ‘The Mighty Ducks,’ the country’s largest indoor amusement park at the Mall of America still offers the same adventure with everyone’s favorite characters, such as Dora the Explorer and SpongeBob SquarePants, among others — no skates required,” Lauren says. 📺



Photo courtesy of Nickelodeon Universe

Nickelodeon Universe at the Mall of America was one of the locations used in “D2 The Mighty Ducks.”

Backup plan

Cloud storage keeps data safe



Cloud-based services are popular for storing photos, documents and other digital assets. After all, the network of connected computers known as the cloud is so common many of us don't even think about it — the cloud just works. All your devices stay in sync so your data is with you when you need it.

There's really no end to the possibilities. Family photos. A relative's classic recipes. Tax documents. A storage solution exists for anyone's needs. Also, compared to keeping this information on one computer, the data is better protected from failing computer hardware, fires, natural disasters and theft.

There are many cloud services available that allow you to store a specific amount of data for free. After that, there is typically a monthly or annual fee for storage. For example, Apple's iCloud is simple and free up to 5GB. After that, prices begin at \$1 monthly for 50GB of storage, and prices and storage amounts increase from there. Google and Microsoft offer similar options.

While the cloud is proven and reliable, more is better when backing up information you simply don't want to risk losing, particularly photos or critical financial documents. In fact, a great rule of thumb is to back up this data three ways:

1. Store the information on a device such as a desktop or laptop computer.
2. Keep another copy on an external hard drive — readily available for less than \$100.
3. Finally, turn to the cloud as a secure off-site repository. ☁

Here are a few cloud storage options to consider, and each can be part of a sound backup plan for your data.

BACKBLAZE

The New York Times' product review website Wirecutter called Backblaze the most affordable backup service it tested. It costs \$70 for unlimited online storage for one computer, and it's easy to use on Windows and Mac products.

IDRIVE

Another favorite of Wirecutter is IDrive, which is free up to 10GB, with rates starting at about \$5 per month for 5TB of storage. It's a fairly flexible service that allows you to back up multiple computers.

DROPBOX

Dropbox integrates with most operating systems and hardware, and it's free up to 2GB. After that, it costs about \$12 a month for 2TB.

GOOGLE DRIVE

This one works best with Google Workspace, but it offers the best no-cost plan of cloud storage providers with its 15GB of free storage. After that, it starts at \$11 a month for 2TB.

PCLOUD

If you want something that will pay off in the long run, look into pCloud. It offers a lifetime subscription option and serious security features. It's free up to 10GB, then it starts at \$5 per month for 500GB.

SYNC

Sync might hold an advantage for business owners since its business plans are a little better priced than many of its competitors. It uses zero-knowledge encryption, just like pCloud. It's free up to 5GB and starts at \$6 per month for 1TB.

From clove to bulb

Garlic is a hands-on crop for family of farmers

Story by JAMIE BIESIADA



©Mettika/Andrie Stock

For the Olson and Swenson families, garlic is a family affair.

Les Olson and his wife, Jessica, and his cousin Russ Swenson and his wife, Theresa, started growing garlic about 13 years ago. A few years after that, they formed the company Big Stone Garlic in Correll. Now, every October, the families come together to plant 25,000 garlic cloves by hand before letting them overwinter into bulbs. “It is a labor of love,” Les says.

A SEED OF AN IDEA

For the Olsons and Swensons, garlic farming is a secondary pursuit to other full-time jobs, but both families have farming in their pasts.

After college, Les found a job in the construction industry in the Twin Cities. But he always felt called back to his family’s farm and spent years visiting on weekends. About five years ago, he and Jessica made the leap to the farm full time. Les marks the fifth generation of Olsons to call their farm home.

The proverbial seed for Big Stone Garlic was planted by a public television special years ago, Les said. It focused on garlic as a money-making crop. Les recalls Russ asking, “Have you ever thought about garlic? We should grow some,” he says. “We didn’t know anything about it, and we just wanted to try it.”

Big Stone Garlic gets its name from Big Stone County, where it’s located, as well as the fact that the soil in the area tends to be very rocky. Les says he and Jessica have a boulder half the size of a pickup truck in their yard.

THE PROCESS

In late October, they plant 25,000 cloves of garlic on about an acre of land. Planting the cloves relatively close together helps keep down weeding, and the plants do well thanks to natural shading. “We get a bunch of family together, a bunch of people who like garlic — because we just have all the garlic you want — we get together, we plant it, then we cover it with a mulch,” Les says.

That 8 to 10 inches of wheat straw mulch covers the plant for its entire life cycle. Garlic is a hearty, resilient plant. It stays in the ground through the winter, spring and summer, to be harvested around the first week of July. Scapes, the long green stalks that contain seed pods, are harvested earlier in the summer.

The garlic bulbs are all hand-harvested before curing for two to four weeks, Les says. 📷



It's harvest time at Big Stone Garlic for this crop.
Photos courtesy of Big Stone Garlic



Buying Big Stone Garlic

The fruits of Big Stone Garlic's efforts can be purchased on the farm's website, bigstonegarlic.com.

The company is also a vendor at the Minnesota Garlic Fest, where its garlic has won awards.

After being harvested, garlic is prepped for the curing phase by, from left, Michelle Swenson, Anika Olson, Rosa Olson and Noelle Anderson.

Photos courtesy of Big Stone Garlic

Weaving

THROUGH OUR CULTURE

Textile arts have long history in rural America

Story by CHERÉ COEN

For centuries, quilts, pieced together from fabric swatches, warmed sleeping families. Woven blankets also provided warmth and offered an opportunity for creativity in a time when women were busy working at home and had little time for the arts.

Today, quilts and blankets still cover beds around the world, but the historic art form has reached exceptional heights through the use of 3D techniques, photography, natural elements and more. “It’s not just a pretty quilt on a bed,” says Deborah Blanchette Bradley, managing director of the nonprofit Texas Quilt Museum. “This is fine art.”

The La Grange, Texas, museum began when quilters Karey Bresnenhan and Nancy O’Bryant Puentes, producers of Houston’s International Quilt Festival, wanted to share art quilts year-round and not just during the November festival. They restored an 1892 building to 95% of its original architecture and opened the museum in 2011 to exhibit quilts and educate the public on the art of textiles.

“Our purpose is to help people see and understand the world of quilting,” Deborah says. “Women were the heart of the home. Our mission is to offer and share the legacy and history — mostly women’s history — through quilting.”

The museum weaves together American textile history and modern art in its exhibits, including the recent “A Tribute



Photos courtesy of National Quilt Museum

to Mary Ann Vaca-Lambert,” whose quilts have been displayed internationally. The museum also hosted an “All Creatures” juried show with 50 quilts based on James Herriot’s novels and the popular PBS series “All Creatures Great and Small.”

ADDITIONAL INCOME

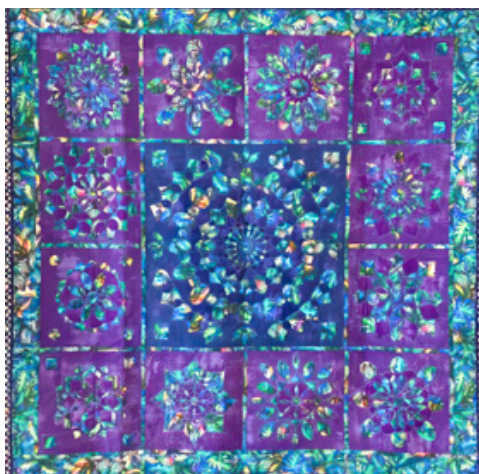
Textiles evolved from utilitarian items to high art, but they also provide many people with additional income. Many members of the McCreary Mountain Craft Center in Parkers Lake, Kentucky, sell their textiles, in addition to other works. The center started as a 4-H organization designed to preserve the craft traditions of Southeast Kentucky.



Photos courtesy of National Quilt Museum

TOP: The National Quilt Museum is in Paducah, Kentucky, one of only a handful of UNESCO Creative Cities in the United States.

ABOVE: The museum displays a wide variety of contemporary textile arts.



A display this year at the Texas Quilt Museum included artwork created by Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo blue ribbon quilt prizewinners.



Photos courtesy of Texas Quilt Museum

“The center was started by an extension agent,” says President Terri Cash. “He wanted to help people in the area make money by selling their crafts.”

The center celebrates 60 years in 2023 and is completely run by volunteers. Artists join for \$10 a year and keep 75% of their earnings. It’s a labor of love, Terri insists. “We’re definitely not out to make money because of the amount of time we put into it.”

Most members are middle-aged and above, but Terri sees young people crafting as well, so weaving and quilting continue to be American art forms. “And we’re happy to pass it down,” she says.

GETTING STARTED

Deborah sees museum visitors looking at professional quilts and other textile artwork and forlornly musing that they could never create such masterpieces. She encourages people to view these showpieces as inspiration to create. “There’s so many ways of being inspired in quilting,”

Deborah says. “You can find inspiration in everything.”

It’s the reason the museum includes education in its programming. It works with Arts for Rural Texas for after-school programs and two summer camps. Children learn skills like needle felting and quilting. “They make a nine-block quilt,” Deborah says. “They learn three patterns and do it all in one week. None of them will look alike.”

The recently opened Discover Exhibit gives children quilt block puzzles and an I Spy adventure through the museum. “It’s meant to inspire kids to learn and take on the art of fabric,” she says. “Art stretches the mind and inspires.”

In addition to the classes and lectures the museum offers, adults looking to get into quilting should find a local guild, Deborah suggests. Quilting guilds exist across the country, and group members are available to mentor and help newcomers. “That’s a great place to start,” she says. “All of these ladies — there’s men in there, too — love to share. It’s like a modern-day quilting bee. If nothing else, it helps you not do it alone.”

Another avenue is sewing classes at extension offices and through 4-H. The University of Minnesota Extension Office, for instance, offers a youth quilting workshop.


Deborah was never a quilter, she was hired to administer the museum, but she’s since taken it up and loves the community she found. “It’s been a wonderful world to become a part of,” she says. 



Photo courtesy of Texas Quilt Museum

Western art created by La Grange High School students is displayed at the Texas Quilt Museum.

Online Resources

• **Paducah, Kentucky**, is home to both the National Quilting Museum and the American Quilter’s Society, dedicated to spreading the importance of quilt making and helping quilters achieve their goals. Because of its quilting heritage and advancements of quilting worldwide, the city was named a UNESCO Creative City for Crafts & Folk Art. View textile art in Paducah’s Lower Town Arts District and visit for AQS’s QuiltWeek April 24-27, 2024. For more information, visit quiltmuseum.org or americanquilter.com.

• **McCreary Mountain Craft Center** celebrates 60 years of showcasing and selling handmade art and crafts. Located in Parkers Lake, Kentucky, near Cumberland Falls, the center sells a variety of textiles. Visit Facebook and search for the McCreary Mountain Craft Center.

• **Texas Quilt Museum** in La Grange rests between Houston and San Antonio and offers exhibits that change four times a year, youth education and one of the largest quilt research libraries in the country. Learn more at texasquiltmuseum.org.

Built to

Story by LAZ DENES

Dan Hudson is one of those individuals who's always looking for something to keep himself busy. A master plumber by trade, he is particularly passionate about renovating old buildings, "ones that nobody else wants," he says.

He once renovated a modest, 10-room hotel in his hometown of Ashland, Wisconsin. He also converted a nearby fire station into a fourplex. But Dan's latest project in the heart of the small town of Morris — a 94-room hotel,

most recently known as The Prairie Inn, complete with restaurant, bar and events center — is by far his most ambitious project yet.

He was lured six hours away from his old stomping grounds on the shores of Lake Superior back in 2021 by a pheasant hunting trip and the chance to visit his daughter Hannah and her fiancé, who is from the area. While in town, Dan also scoped out the landscape for available properties that might make for a worthwhile project one day.

DISCOVERING A TREASURE

He recognized the 67,000-square-foot hotel on Highway 28, constructed in 1971, has "good bones" and carries major significance within the community. Dan fell in love with the place and promptly bid on it, closing the deal in October thanks to the cooperative efforts of the Morris Economic Development Committee, the West Central Initiative and the State Bank of Danvers in Benson. He renamed it The Hudson Inn.

"The thing is built solid, it's built like a bunker — concrete ceilings, concrete



The Hudson Inn

200 Minnesota Highway 28

Morris, MN 56267

320-589-3030

thehudsoninnmorris.com

LEFT: Owner Dan Hudson and his daughter Hannah work together at the hotel he renovated in 2022.

BELOW: Rooms feature flat-screen TVs, minifridges, microwaves and free high-speed wireless internet.

Photos by Brooke Kern

"Almost everybody I run across seems to have memories of a birthday party or a New Year's Eve celebration or a wedding or a Christmas party here."

— Dan Hudson on The Hudson Inn



East

The Hudson Inn is a labor of love for Dan Hudson



floors
and even
the second-
floor rooms
have concrete ceilings.

And there's brick and block between each room," Dan says. "When you close the room doors, it's really quiet. A band could be marching up and down the hallway, and you wouldn't hear it."

Dan and his crew of 33 employees, including Hannah and occasionally his son Nathan, a plumber in the Twin Cities, rolled up their sleeves and started renovations in January 2022. They focused initially on upgrading the common areas, including the bar and restaurant, the full-size pool and the twin event centers that can hold up to 500 people and now offer state-of-the-art audiovisual equipment. The crew then began tackling the 94 guest rooms one by one, and with 57 rooms complete, The Hudson Inn opened for business this past spring. Dan and his crew have up to 80 rooms ready before fall.

Among the major improvements were a new roof, a new heating and cooling



FAR LEFT: Dan Hudson regularly posts photos of the food he serves at the new restaurant he added inside The Hudson Inn.

Photo by Hannah Hudson

LEFT: Some guests have direct access to the large indoor pool from their suites.

Photo by Brooke Kern

system, brand-new maintenance equipment and many coats of fresh paint. A digital phone system, wireless internet and state-of-the-art security system were also installed and connected to Federated Telephone's high-speed fiber internet. "Our security system, heating and cooling, accounting and billing — everything is cloud-based," Dan says. "The co-op has been great from the start. We already had the fiber, so most of the work went into updating my infrastructure to be compatible with their stuff."

A NOD TO THE PAST

Throughout the process of upgrading the property, Dan has been mindful of the building's history and local significance. That's driven him to keep as much of the original character of the hotel along the way, bringing attention to accents like the vintage sculpted pieces that adorn the ballroom wall.

"There are a lot of memories in this building, within these walls, for a lot of people in the area," Dan says. "Almost everybody I run across seems to have memories of a birthday party or a New Year's Eve celebration or a

wedding or a Christmas party here. There's certainly a lot of nostalgia in this building and one of our goals for this project was to bring all of that back to life for new generations of locals and people who come here from farther away. We felt like it was almost criminal that this beautiful building sat empty without more laughter and memories being built."

Dan develops deep emotional attachments to the communities where he works, digging to find what the locals might be looking for and what the community can benefit from, which motivates him to bring such old buildings back to life. His dedication to The Hudson Inn project even has him looking to pick up stakes in northern Wisconsin and make Morris his permanent home.

"I can't say enough how thankful I am for the people who believed in me and this project — the Economic Development Committee, the WCI, the Bank of Danvers. They're the reason this building is where it is today," Dan says. "And there's tremendous community support that has helped us keep going. This community has just been outstanding in welcoming us." 📱

Layers of flavors

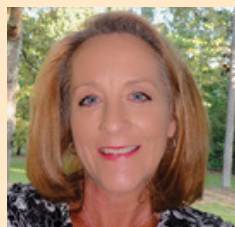
Perfect the sandwich

What makes a sandwich? We posed that question to Bridget Lancaster, host of the popular cooking show “America’s Test Kitchen.”

“A classic sandwich will have a filling between two slices of bread,” she says. “It’s portable, self-contained, and you probably won’t need a knife and fork to eat it. But then you get something like an open-faced sandwich, which is often very saucy or hot and is eaten with a knife and fork.”

Really, a sandwich is what you make it — one slice, two slices, baked, broiled, grilled in butter or served cold. Here are some sandwich tips from “America’s Test Kitchen.”

- Add a tangy sauce such as tzatziki, horseradish or a creamy salad dressing rather than mayonnaise or mustard.
- Consider other breads, such as a sturdy ciabatta or even a nut bread for extra flavor. To keep the sandwich from becoming too much to handle, use just 3-4 ounces of meat and an ounce of cheese. Toast the bread to boost the flavor and keep the sandwich from becoming soggy.
- Instead of a pickle, try chutney or a tangy relish. Instead of iceberg lettuce, try arugula, watercress or spinach. And don’t forget veggies. Consider cucumber, shredded carrots and sprouts.



**Food Editor
Anne P. Braly
is a native of
Chattanooga,
Tennessee.**

Photography by **Mark Gilliland**
Food Styling by **Rhonda Gilliland**



‘America’s Test Kitchen’ **GROWN-UP GRILLED CHEESE**

- 7 ounces aged cheddar cheese, cut into 24 equal pieces, room temperature
- 2 ounces brie, rind removed
- 2 tablespoons dry white wine or vermouth
- 4 teaspoons minced shallot
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 8 slices hearty white sandwich or rosemary bread

Process cheddar, brie and wine in a food processor until smooth paste is formed, 20 to 30 seconds. Add shallot and pulse to combine, 3 to 5 pulses. Combine butter and mustard in small bowl.

Working on a parchment paper-lined

counter, spread mustard-butter evenly over one side of slices of bread. Flip four slices of bread over and spread cheese mixture evenly over slices. Top with remaining four slices of bread, buttered sides up.

Preheat a nonstick skillet over medium heat for 2 minutes. Place two sandwiches in skillet; reduce heat to medium-low; and cook until both sides are crispy and golden brown, 6 to 9 minutes per side, moving sandwiches to ensure even browning. Remove sandwiches from skillet and let stand for 2 minutes before serving. Repeat with remaining two sandwiches.

Note: Hold sandwiches on a wire rack on a baking sheet in the oven at 250 F while the second round cooks.



Easy Reuben

- 8 slices rye bread
- 4 tablespoons butter, softened
- 1/4 cup Russian or Thousand Island dressing
- 8 slices Swiss cheese
- 1 pound corned beef
- 1 1/2 cups sauerkraut, well-drained

Butter one side of each slice of bread. On the nonbuttered side, spread Russian dressing on each slice. Top half of the slices with cheese, corned beef and sauerkraut. Top each sandwich with remaining slices, dressing side down.


Heat a medium skillet over medium heat. Place a sandwich in the skillet and cook until golden and cheese is melted, 3 minutes per side. Serve immediately.

ZIPPY BEEF BARBECUE SANDWICH

Make the barbecue the day before and assemble the sandwiches right before your hike or tailgate or wherever you spend your beautiful autumn weekend.

- 1 1/2 cups ketchup
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/2 cup picante sauce
- 1/2 cup dry red wine
- 1/4 cup balsamic vinegar
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1 beef sirloin tip roast (4 pounds)
- 4 garlic cloves, sliced
- 16 kaiser rolls, split and toasted
- 2 cups deli coleslaw

Mix first nine ingredients. Cut roast in half; cut slits in roast and insert garlic. Place in a 5-quart slow cooker. Pour sauce over top. Cook, covered, on low until tender, 8-10 hours.

Remove beef. Skim fat from cooking liquid. Shred meat with two forks; return to slow cooker and heat through. Serve on rolls with coleslaw. 



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