

CONNECTION

 COLORADO VALLEY COMMUNICATIONS
WHERE CONNECTIONS MATTER ★ CVCTX.COM

★ FOOD COURT ★

Fairgrounds Fare

Food court named
after CVCTX

MODEL
MUSEUM

COWBOY
POETS





By Shirley Bloomfield, CEO
NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association

Ensuring Access for All

Supreme Court upholds
Universal Service Fund

Money raised by a small fee on your communications bill makes a critical difference throughout rural America. Earlier this year, a ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court allowed the Universal Service Fund, or USF, to continue.


I can't emphasize enough how critical this ruling is in a journey that began in 1934, when the Communications Act decreed all Americans should have access to rapid, efficient and nationwide communication services at reasonable prices.

Then, the 1996 Telecommunications Act created the USF to better connect rural areas and make voice and broadband services more affordable for rural and low-income consumers, schools, libraries and rural health care facilities.

By affirming that the Federal Communications Commission has discretion to collect the fees, the court kept this foundational tool in place. A March survey of nearly 270 NTCA members indicated that the USF programs help keep rural broadband rates more affordable. Without this funding, rural consumer rates could be more than double those in urban areas.

Policymakers in Washington, D.C., are debating how to reform universal service programs going forward, so that they can continue to serve the needs of millions of Americans.

It is essential that our elected officials understand the positive impacts the critical USF programs have had—and continue to have—on the availability, affordability and sustainability of voice and broadband services for millions of consumers, businesses and anchor institutions in rural America.

Visit ntca.org/universalservice. 



Secure Your Digital World

Keys for success


While October is National Cybersecurity Awareness Month, protecting yourself requires year-long vigilance. And everyone's needs vary based on the online tools and resources you use.

Remember, bad actors are increasingly sophisticated—they want access to your information. The FBI offers a few tips for some of the key points of emphasis, and they provide a good starting point for planning your personalized security strategy.

Create a sturdy defense. Update systems and software. Also, install a strong, reputable antivirus program.

Connect carefully. Be cautious when connecting to a public Wi-Fi network. Avoid sensitive transactions, including purchases. Create a strong and unique passphrase for each online account.

Lock down all accounts. Establish multifactor authentication. Examine the email address in all correspondence and scrutinize website URLs before responding to a message or visiting a site. Don't click on anything in unsolicited emails or text messages.

Guard your information. Be cautious about your information in online profiles and social media accounts. Sharing the names of pets, schools and family members gives scammers hints they need to guess your passwords or the answers to your account security questions. Never send payments to unknown people or organizations, particularly those urging immediate action. 

RAISING HISTORY

Heritage breed farmers preserve the past while protecting the future

Story by LES O'DELL

Farmers, ranchers, shepherds and homesteaders work to raise crops and livestock as efficiently as possible. Like any business, the goal is to maximize income and profitability.

Yet many agriculturalists also see themselves as conservationists, working to preserve the past while ensuring the future by using Earth-friendly farming methods and raising animals facing extinction.

In Pikeville, Tennessee, Amy Balog and her family raise endangered agricultural animals, also called heritage livestock breeds. “There are so many reasons why,” she says. “It’s not only keeping the genetics going. It’s the history and provenance of the breeds.”

Her Faverolles chickens, Sebastopol geese and Saxony ducks are among 180 breeds listed on the Conservation Priority List, an annual ranking of farm animals on the brink of disappearing. The list includes varieties of 11 different animals, from rabbits to cattle, horses and hogs. Many breeds fall out of favor in commercial agricultural settings. Perhaps they don’t put on weight as quickly as other breeds, for example. But they still have value.

SUSTAINABILITY

Protecting biodiversity and genetic resources is an important reason for protecting heritage breeds, says Allison Kincaid, executive director of The Livestock Conservancy. But many producers choose heritage animals because they want to make a difference.

“None of us can predict what the future of agriculture will look like. This is about keeping these breeds around as a genetic

reservoir,” she says, adding these animals are key to food security. “If we didn’t have this diversity, eventually we would narrow our food system down to where it wasn’t sustainable. There would be no backup.”

Likewise, farmer Grant Breitreutz of Redwood Falls, Minnesota, takes a conservation approach to crop production. “We’ve been no-till for 12 years for all of our crops,” he says. Grant leaves farm implements that expose the soil, such as plows and discs, in the machine shed. Instead, he plants cover crops, grasses and other plants he sows without exposing the soil in order to replenish organic nutrients and to minimize erosion.

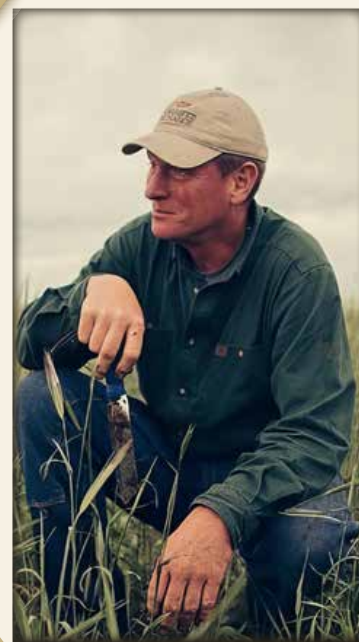
Grant pivoted to conservation farming practices to ensure his soil is healthy and hearty enough to produce bumper crops for generations to come. “If we’ve done this for 130 years of farming, how much time do we have left? So, that’s why we focus so hard on building our soils back,” he says. “It has made a world of difference, and the crops are much more drought resistant and are yielding more bushels per acre. Plus, our pastures have tripled in production over the years by taking care of the soil first.”

The Breitreutz family won the inaugural Minnesota Leopold Conservation Award, presented in 2024 by the Minnesota Soil Health Coalition. Grant says honors are not important, but preserving things for future generations is. Amy agrees.

“It’s more about quality over quantity and quality is what keeps these lines going. If we don’t do it, I’m afraid they’ll all get lost,” she says.



Amy and Daniel Balog, who live outside Pikeville, Tennessee, raise heritage animals like the Sebastopol goose she’s holding.



Grant Breitreutz uses no-till techniques that protect soil quality on his Minnesota farm.

For more about agronomic conservation, visit sandcountymn.org and to learn about livestock conservation efforts, visit livestockconservancy.org.

Photo courtesy of Amy and Daniel Balog

Photo courtesy of Grant Breitreutz

A Homework Power-up

Fast internet helps students win the game



KELLY ALLISON
General Manager

Remember when homework meant pulling out textbooks and maybe heading to the library? Those days are long gone. Instead, students need internet access as much as they need pencils and paper, if not more. It's a resource Colorado Valley Communications is excited to provide.

I've often mentioned the digital divide, describing how the performance and reliability of internet service in some rural communities lag behind the options in metropolitan areas. Bridging that gap is a fundamental reason for our commitment to create and maintain a vibrant network to serve you.

With the school year in full swing, it's an opportunity to reflect on one example of just how deeply these services benefit families and students throughout our area. It's transformative, right down to something as fundamental as homework.

Not only must students master today's digital tools, but they're also on the edge of a new frontier. Artificial Intelligence is becoming more robust and far more common, and its use will only expand. Today's students will depend on these tools.

"It's important, though, that students learn to use AI as a learning support, not a substitute for original thinking and effort," Stacey Eilers, CVCTX board member and assistant superintendent of La Grange ISD, tells me. "Students should be taught how to use AI responsibly, not to bypass thinking and do the work for the student, but to support it and help with understanding concepts. For example, using AI to check grammar, brainstorm ideas or get explanations for challenging concepts builds confidence and can breed success. Teachers can guide students on when and how AI can be a helpful learning partner and tool in their success."

Every parent or guardian must choose how best to guide a child. But let me offer a few suggestions.

Don't be intimidated by AI—dive in with your student. Try asking the same question in a Google search and then through an AI platform. Compare the answers and discover what each tool does best. This exploration helps you and your child understand how these technologies work. Where they excel. And where more work is needed.

Of course, with great digital power comes the need for smart safety practices. Consider establishing clear household rules about internet use. Emphasize why personal information should never be shared online and make sure everyone in your family knows how to spot suspicious links or downloads. October is National Cybersecurity Awareness Month, and we regularly share cybersecurity tips in this newsletter. Please pass that knowledge along to your children.

No matter what career path your children choose, digital fluency will be part of their daily reality. Today's doctors manage patient records through sophisticated software systems. Auto mechanics diagnose engine problems using online databases and diagnostic tools. Digital literacy isn't optional anymore—it's foundational.

When students have dependable internet access and understand how to harness its power, everything else falls into place. They can tap into educational resources that spark their curiosity and keep them engaged in ways that seemed impossible just a generation ago.

That's the future we're building together, one reliable connection at a time. 📶

Connection is a bimonthly newsletter published by CVCTX, ©2025. It is distributed without charge to all customers of the Cooperative.



Colorado Valley Communications
P.O. Box 130
4915 S. U.S. Highway 77
979-242-5911
800-242-5911
La Grange, TX 78945
cvctx.com

Office hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Monday through Friday
24-hour technical support
877-452-9035

Like us on Facebook
Follow us on Instagram



Sign up online

To sign up for service, to increase your bandwidth or to let us know where to build out our fiber network next, visit cvctx.com.

Customers in several parts of our service area can access fiber to the home, while expansion for access is in the works for other locations.

For more information on Colorado Valley's service area, visit cvctx.com/maps. To learn about the service available at your address, visit cvctx.com/signup.

Produced for CVCTX by:



On the Cover:



The Fayette County Fairgrounds food court now bears the name of CVCTX, which provides free internet service on the property. See story on Page 12.

Happy Labor Day!

CVCTX offices will be closed on Monday, Sept. 1, for Labor Day. Have a safe and happy holiday.



Protect Your Identity

Do you have papers you need to dispose of with sensitive information like account numbers, passwords, even your Social Security number? Take advantage of CVCTX's Shred Day to protect your personal identity.

CVCTX and Fayette Electric Cooperative will host Shred Day Oct. 3 in honor of National Cooperative Month. Check cvctx.com for details, including a new location.



Benefits of fiber

At Colorado Valley Communications, we've been committed to bringing local businesses and residents the best in communications technologies since we started. Today, we are proud to bring you the best in internet technologies with a fast, reliable, fiber-based network.

Why fiber? Here are a few of the reasons companies like ours are building fiber networks all across rural America.

FIBER IS FAST

Simply put, fiber is the fastest technology available. Traditional internet connections range from 10 to 25 Mbps, but fiber internet can be as fast as 5 Gig — that's 5,000 Mbps!

FIBER IS RELIABLE

Unlike other internet technologies, fiber internet is not slowed down by weather, physical obstructions or electromagnetic interference. That means less downtime and a more reliable connection for businesses and individuals alike.

FIBER IS FUTURE-PROOF

While copper and cable have limits, society is nowhere near inventing technologies that will outpace the speeds fiber can provide. Even as the needed bandwidths increase over time, fiber internet will continue providing sufficient speeds for years to come.

FIBER IS SCALABLE

As companies like CVCTX build out fiber networks, it's easy to lay more fiber strands than an area currently needs. This allows us to quickly increase capacity later, as the demands of technology call for it, without having to go back and build another new network for our community.

FIBER IS IDEAL FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES

Delivering a strong internet connection to rural areas can be a challenge. Because fiber is unparalleled in its ability to maintain fast speeds over long distances, it is an ideal solution for communities like ours. We are committed to bringing rural customers the same speed and reliability enjoyed by many homes and businesses in larger cities, and fiber helps us do exactly that.

With our advanced fiber network, CVCTX is providing fast, reliable internet that enables access to cutting-edge technologies for improved health care, education, agriculture, business and much more.



Mapping out your perfect road trip

Story by DREW WOOLLEY

Fall is the perfect time for travel and new experiences with family and friends. And while flying can have its conveniences, most travelers prefer to hit the road when mapping out their next adventure. According to AAA's domestic travel forecast for a recent holiday weekend, 87% of travelers planned to make trips by car.

PREPARE FOR THE ROAD AHEAD

"I usually tend to drive, and most people choose to drive. And the reason for that is, for most families and groups of people, it's the most affordable way to travel," says AAA Texas Communications Manager Doug Shupe. "It's also the most convenient. You can leave when you want to leave and return when you want to. But there definitely needs to be some preparation before taking a long road trip."

Before everyone piles into the car, make sure you're ready for the journey. That includes giving your vehicle a quick inspection, planning a route and having the supplies—and the tunes—to keep everyone happy until you reach your destination.

SAFETY CHECK

Before any lengthy road trip, Doug recommends taking your vehicle for a tuneup at a trusted repair facility. But if you can't find time for that, it's still a good idea to do a few quick checks on your own.





Check your tires to make sure they're properly inflated and in good condition.

That includes the tread. If you can put an upside-down quarter in the grooves of your tires and see the top of George Washington's head, it's probably a good idea to replace them before taking a long trip.

If your vehicle's battery is more than 3 years old, consider having it tested before getting on the road. Vibration can also cause a battery to fail sooner, so check that the terminals are secure and free of corrosion.

Examine your radiator and cooling system to make sure they're in good condition. Check belts and hoses for cracks or fraying that could lead to problems after extended use.

Ensure your wiper blades are in good shape in case you pass through a rainy patch, and have someone help you check that your headlights, taillights and turn signals are all working properly.

PLANNING YOUR ROUTE

One of the best parts of any road trip is mapping out a path, as long as there's a little room for improvisation. Plan ahead and make the most of these tools



that can help you find the right stops along the way.

Know what's coming—Apps like Roadtrippers and GasBuddy can help you pick the best place to make a pit stop. Get suggestions for must-visit restaurants and scenic drives or just scope out the most affordable gas prices so you can make the most of your detours.

Go analog—GPS is an invaluable resource on the road, but it's still smart to have a physical map to orient yourself just in case you lose signal or your battery dies. Maps can even be a fun distraction for kids and give them a hands-on way to follow along with where you are.

Track your itinerary—If you've already set up all your reservations for hotels, restaurants and attractions, TripIt can keep track of it all in one place. The app syncs with your inbox to compile an itinerary, so you don't have to search for each confirmation email, and sends you reminders so you can focus on having fun.

Don't be afraid to rest—If you're driving for multiple days, be realistic about how far you can go before resting for the night. It's better to lean toward too many stops than too few. You can even pull over for a quick 30-minute nap if you're feeling drowsy.

FUN AND GAMES

Hitting the open road also means getting to spend plenty of time with your favorite people. So don't forget



to prepare the food, games and music that will help you make the most of it.

State of play—Road trip games are classic, from the Alphabet Game and I Spy to Two Truths and a Lie and 20 Questions. Make your own fun by taking turns thinking of a movie and describing it in the worst way possible to see who can guess it. Or, learn more about each other by picking a category like songs, books or foods and building your own top-five lists.

Fight the munchies—Stops at hole-in-the-wall restaurants are a must for



any road trip. But someone is bound to get hangry in between meals. Everyone's favorite snacks will vary, but it's hard to go wrong with some trail mix or jerky. You can even pack fruit and rice cakes for healthy options.

The perfect mix—Planning out a playlist that will make everyone happy is a tall task. You want music that will fit the mood and maybe even complement the terrain you're driving through. Fortunately, you don't have to do it alone these days. If everyone shares the same music service, you can make a shared playlist that everyone can contribute to. You can even make a game out of it, guessing who's the secret Swiftie or where all those oldies came from. 📱

Flights of Fancy

Museum celebrates Stanzel brothers' legacy of innovation

Story by
MELANIE JONES

Playful dreams fill the Stanzel Model Aircraft Museum. There are model planes made from the world's first hobby kits, planes that fly on a single wire and flying toys meant for children. There are models of amusement park rides and photos honoring the people who made it all happen.

The museum tells the story of a man who, without a high school diploma, obtained dozens of patents and his brother, who turned imagination into reality. Together, they formed Victor Stanzel & Co., later the Victor Stanzel Co., bringing model aircraft and toys to life from 1933 to 2001.

As young boys, Victor and Joseph Stanzel worked on their uncle's farm. While plowing the fields, Victor was fascinated with birds in

flight and the planes buzzing overhead, according to a biography written by their nephew Ted Stanzel, president emeritus of the Stanzel Family Foundation board of directors.

"While they were supposed to be farming, they got a reputation as piddlers—always tinkering with things that seemed unimportant at the time," Stanzel Family Foundation CEO Cheryl

Pekar says. "They were experimenting, trying things out. Anything Victor could dream, Joe could build."

But those "unimportant" experiments turned into something remarkable. By the time of his death in 1997, Victor held 33 patents—many of which are on display at the museum.

EXHIBITING TALENT

"We have a combination of static and interactive exhibits in the museum," says Museum Director Cynthia Fogleman.

Victor and Joe didn't just build aircraft. They also designed their own vibrant advertisements and drafted intricate, hand-drawn plans. "There's a deep nostalgia in both," Cynthia says. "They created the art that sold the dream and the plans that made it fly."



Visitors can tour the Stanzel Brothers Factory Museum and see custom-made equipment used in the production of model airplanes.

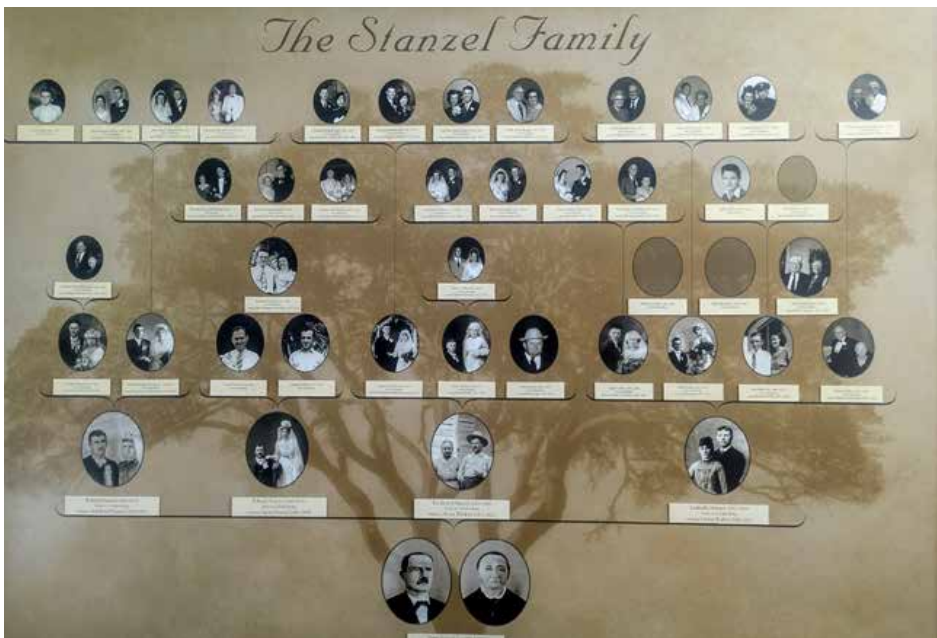


TOP: One exhibit uses mannequins of Joseph and Victor Stanzel to show how they worked together. BOTTOM: The Stanzel Aircraft Museum consists of three buildings.



The Tiger Shark is one of the Stanzel brothers' most well-known designs.

Photos courtesy of Cynthia Fogleman



The Stanzel family lineage has been traced back several generations.

The museum also honors the employees who contributed to the company's success. "Visitors often come in looking for a relative—maybe a great-aunt or grandparent who worked at Stanzel. I love helping people find those connections," Cynthia says.


Tours include the original factory, where visitors can see custom-built machines, including a converted wringer washer used to squeeze excess glue from airplane wings. Visitors can also explore the 1870s home of Victor and Joe's grandparents, Rosina and Franz Stanzel, preserved to reflect the family's early history.

Like most farm boys in the 1920s, Victor didn't graduate from high school. In 1926, at the age of 15, he earned certificates in drafting, mechanical drawing, algebra and physics through correspondence classes offered by the American School in Chicago. The following year, he earned certificates in tool making and machine shop management.

Victor enlisted Joseph's help to build balsa wood model planes, which they sold across the state. This grew into a business producing model kits, then line-controlled flyers and eventually a full range of flying toys. By the end, the brothers provided jobs for hundreds of locals.

PLANNING FOR FUTURE

The foundation hopes the museum can spark curiosity in a new generation through hands-on STEM learning and interactive exhibits like the flight simulator. Plans are underway to bring in designers to create STEM exhibits that can help visitors of all ages explore the science of flight.

"I think one of the things we try to convey at the museum is that, absolutely, Victor and Joe were fascinated with planes and the concept of flying," Cheryl says. "But it was really their values—hard work, innovation, perseverance and a passion for learning—that made them successful. They had the freedom and the courage to innovate at a time when dreaming big wasn't the norm. Yes, they built amazing models, but more importantly they lived their values every day." 

Stanzel Model Aircraft Museum Stanzel Family Foundation

311 Baumgarten St., Schulenburg

979-743-6559

979-743-9119

stanzelmuseum.org
stanzelfamilyfoundation.org

Foundation Advocates for Community

Victor Stanzel's formal education was cut short, but he made sure his younger brothers, Joseph and Reinhart, earned college degrees. Together, they built more than a business—they left a legacy of learning.

The Stanzel Family Foundation, founded in their honor, works to improve the health and education of people in Schulenburg and Weimar. Through scholarships, grants and partnerships, the foundation continues the brothers' legacy of investing in opportunity and community well-being.

The foundation trusts the community to define its own needs. "Programs like Parents as Teachers didn't start with a boardroom idea. They began with a conversation," Stanzel Family Foundation CEO Cheryl Pekar says.

"Even scholarships are about more than a check. Staff build lasting relationships with students, checking in on their well-being, not just their GPA, and offering support through both challenges and achievements."

In all its efforts, the foundation honors the Stanzel brothers' legacy not by leading from the top, but by investing in the dreams and potential of the community they loved, just as that community once invested in them. From the bank that gave them their first loan to the workers who built their products and the partners who believed in their vision, the Stanzel story is, at its heart, a shared one.

HOW THE WEST WAS HEARD

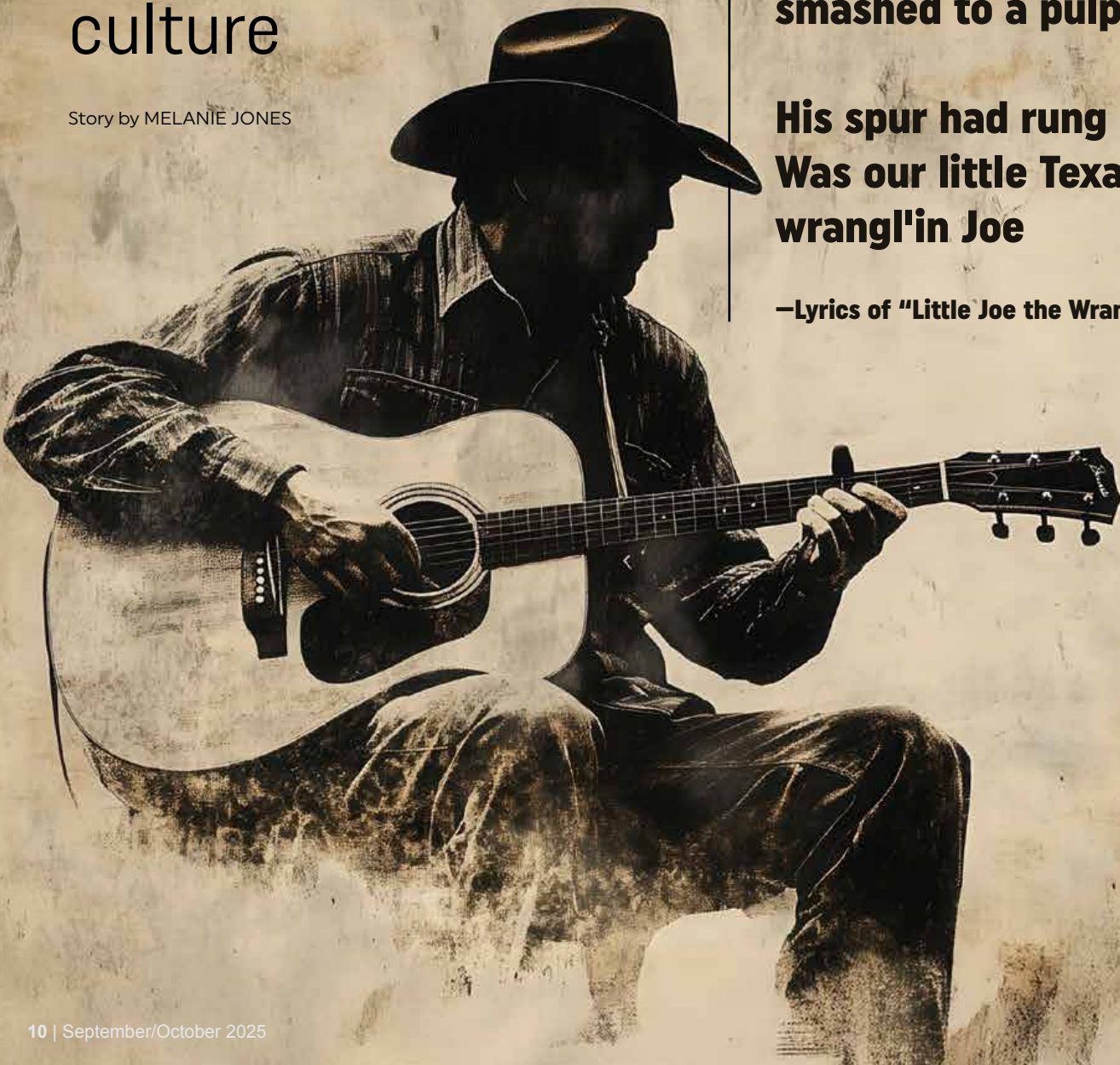
Poet and musician captures cowboy culture

Story by MELANIE JONES

**Next morn'in just
at daybreak
And beneath his horse,
smashed to a pulp**

**His spur had rung his knell
Was our little Texas Faithful,
wrangl'in Joe**

—Lyrics of “Little Joe the Wrangler”





Andy Hedges plays several instruments favored by cowboys, including the banjo.

Andy Hedges, cowboy poet, musician and podcaster, collects oral histories of the Old West the way rodeo champs collect belt buckles. He's a champion of cowboy culture, and he has the hat to prove it.

"I think there's something about that image that just resonates with people," he says. "They know cowboys represent some of the best of American values—independence, honesty, hard work. And when they hear it, they're hearing real, authentic stories from cowboy culture. They learn the real truth behind the cowboy image."

Cowboy poetry also extends to music, with songs like "Rounded Up in Glory" and "Little Joe the Wrangler." Roy Rogers and Gene Autry brought that style of music to the silver screen, although the Hollywood version is not at the heart of the genre.

Authenticity inspires events across the country, from the Cowpoke Fall Gathering in Loomis, California, to Old West Days in Valentine, Nebraska. Minnesota annually declares a Cowboy Poetry Week, and Andy is returning to Jonesborough, Tennessee, where he performed several times. Cowboy music has even made it to the world-famous Carnegie Hall.

DISCOVERY

Andy, who lives in Lubbock, Texas, is part of a movement that began in 1985, when a group of cowboys met in Elko, Nevada, for the inaugural National Cowboy Poetry Gathering. It's where cowboys swap tales, sing songs of the range and recite poetry that fills lonely days and nights.

What makes a poet a cowboy poet? Andy says his friend Vess Quinlan explains it this way: "He told me there's two ways you can make a deposit in the cowboy poetry bank. One is by being a working cowboy who writes poetry. The other one is to be a non-cowboy who writes poetry that is so good, it becomes accepted by working cowboys. And, of course, it has to be authentic. It has to ring true to those people."

"A lot of people write or recite cowboy poetry or sing the old cowboy songs or write new songs," Andy says. "The truth is a lot

of us, including myself, have never made a living as a cowboy."

Andy has spent years immersing himself in cowboy culture's history, poetry and music. "I try really hard to represent the culture in an authentic way," he says.

He grew up hearing stories of his dad, who worked the rodeo circuit before becoming a Primitive Baptist preacher. He watched old Hollywood Westerns and listened to Western music. "All I really thought I wanted to do was be a cowboy," he says.

But his true obsession with cowboy culture began when he saw an episode of "Austin City Limits" featuring Michael Martin Murphy and friends. Those friends included cowboy poet Waddie Mitchell, cowboy singer Don Edwards and the groups Sons of the San Joaquin and Riders in the Sky. "It just opened that world up to me," Andy says. "I didn't realize there were people who still sang the old songs. I'd never heard cowboy poetry before I heard Waddie on that show."

A self-taught guitarist, young Andy learned some of the old songs. "It was really the beginning of a lifelong obsession with cowboy poetry and cowboy songs," he says.

By the time he could drive, the homeschooled teen was traveling to cowboy gatherings. By 20, he made it to Elko, where he's appeared 17 times. Since recording his album of duets, "Ride On, Cowboy," he and some of the album's guests have appeared on the Grand Ole Opry and practiced, practiced, practiced their way to Carnegie Hall, where they performed for an appreciative audience in March 2024.

The music has an international audience. While travelers come to the United States for gatherings, some performers also toured overseas. Andy even traveled to Turkmenistan as part of a cultural exchange. "The cowboy has always been the folk hero of America," he says. "People identify with that image. You know, when I traveled to Turkmenistan, or just travel overseas not performing, when I wear a cowboy hat, people love that and immediately associate that image with the United States." 🇺🇸

SWAPPING STORIES

Cowboy poet and musician Andy Hedges will be the teller-in-residence at the National Storytelling Center in Jonesborough, Tennessee, Sept. 2-6. Andy has participated in the National Storytelling Festival before.

"It's a really fantastic gathering of all kinds of storytellers from different traditions," he says of the festival. "I was honored to be there representing the cowboy tradition and sharing cowboy poetry with them." As teller-in-residence, he'll perform a concert every day, make media appearances and take part in other community events. For more information on the event, go to storytellingcenter.net.

To learn more about cowboy culture, check out Andy's podcast, "Cowboy Crossroads." You can download episodes at andyhedges.com/cowboy-crossroads.

STEPPING **UP** for the *Community*

CVCTX brings free Wi-Fi and new food court to Fayette County Fairgrounds

Story by MELANIE JONES

Fun seekers at the Fayette County Fair last month had some new special attractions to enjoy, namely the Colorado Valley Communications Food Court and free fiber internet access.

“By having great facilities and great internet service, visitors will want to come to the fair, which brings dollars to area businesses and supports the nonprofits and student projects that are at the fair,” CVCTX General Manager Kelly Allison says. “It’s a great place to meet, visit and enjoy some delicious food.”

Working with the city of La Grange and the Fayette County Fair Association, CVCTX buried fiber throughout the fairgrounds. Free Wi-Fi access points are now available in key buildings, including the creative arts building, livestock barn,

ticket booth, guest services, biergarten, main stage, original fair office, pavilion, baseball office and exhibit halls. The fiber network powers private Wi-Fi for vendors and public Wi-Fi for fairgoers, providing reliable, fast internet during the fair. CVCTX maintains the network at no charge.

“We continue to place fiber network infrastructure in our service area to provide our communities with high-speed broadband services, which helps bring new business and folks to our area,” Kelly says. “We see supporting the Fayette County Fair Association as part of that economic purpose. I and the board take seriously that we’re a part of the economy here. We’re very aware of the economic impact of broadband.”



The food court will serve as a gathering place for fairgoers for years to come.



Families at the Fayette County Fair can now enjoy their meals and free Wi-Fi at the new Colorado Valley Communications Food Court.

A SOURCE OF PRIDE

The Wi-Fi network at the fairgrounds covers about 875,000 square feet, stretching from the baseball gate to the back entry gate and from the open stage to the front grass parking rows, enabling seamless connectivity for guests and participants.


Fayette County Fair Board President Michael Zuhn says that when he goes to conferences, other fair representatives—who can't get internet at their fairgrounds, let alone fiber—are amazed at the level of service available in Fayette County. "That makes us proud," Kelly says.

"We are immensely grateful for

CVCTX's generosity, including the naming of the food court," Michael says. "This significant contribution, Colorado Valley's sponsorship and willingness to offer assistance whenever needed have made a real difference in the many services we provide. The free internet they provide us throughout the year helps us, our vendors and the visitors to the fairgrounds during events."

Being part of something so integral to the culture of Fayette County isn't just an opportunity, Kelly says. It's part of CVCTX's identity. "We're proud to call this home and even prouder to invest in events and initiatives that keep our

community strong, connected and having fun," he says.

Colorado Valley Communications, which employs more than 50 people, has contributed over \$600,000 in scholarships and donations to local students and nonprofits over the past several years. Each year, CVCTX makes donations to more than 60 local organizations. In addition to supporting nonprofits, the company invests heavily in education. It has been honored by Texas A&M University as a member of the Texas A&M Foundation Legacy Society for contributing over \$100,000 in scholarships to A&M students over the years. 



Dinner on a Stick

Kabobs make for easy meals, quick cleanup

Do you ever crave an easy meal with meat and vegetables? Try putting kabobs on the menu. It's a tasty grill-friendly choice, and cleanup is easy.

Begin with a tender cut of meat like top sirloin, which is affordable. Filet also works well. If you'd like, substitute chicken or tofu. Just remember to cut your protein portions to about the same size so they cook evenly. You can add as many chopped veggies as you like.

Begin with a fresh marinade. Homemade chimichurri does double duty as a marinade and seasoning sauce—it works for any protein. Round out your meal with crunchy Asian coleslaw and a fresh apple cake for dessert.

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

GRILLED CHIMICHURRI STEAK KABOBS

CHIMICHURRI SAUCE

- 1/2 cup fresh cilantro, packed, leaves and tender stems
- 1/2 cup fresh parsley, packed
- 3 tablespoons fresh oregano or 3 teaspoons dried
- 1 lemon, zested and juiced
- 3-4 cloves of garlic
- 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 teaspoons red wine vinegar
- 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt

Put all ingredients in a food processor

and pulse until blended. Taste and season with salt and pepper as desired.

STEAK KABOBS

- 32 ounces top sirloin, or the protein of your choice, cut into 2-inch cubes
- 36-48 baby potatoes, golden or mini reds
- 2 medium bell peppers, any color, chopped into 2-inch pieces
- 2 small red onions, chopped into 2-inch pieces
- Kosher salt and ground black pepper



CRUNCHY ASIAN COLESLAW

- 2 packages ramen noodles, any flavor
- 2 16-ounce packages shredded coleslaw mix
- 1 cup slivered almonds, toasted
- 5 green onions, chopped
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 1/3 cup rice vinegar

Reserve the flavor packets from the noodles for another use or toss. Crush the

noodles and set aside. Toss together the coleslaw mix, almonds and green onions in a large salad bowl.

Whisk together the sugar, oil and vinegar in a small bowl until mixed. Add the dressing to the coleslaw mixture and toss to coat. Mix in the chopped noodles. Serve immediately. Makes 12 servings.

Note: You may prepare the salad in advance, adding the noodles just before serving so they are crunchy.

FRESH APPLE CAKE

- 1 cup oil
- 2 cups sugar
- 3 eggs
- 2 1/2 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 cup pecans or walnuts, chopped
- 3 cups apples, peeled and chopped

CREAM CHEESE FROSTING

- 1 8-ounce package cream cheese, softened
- 16 ounces powdered sugar

- 8 tablespoons butter
- 2 teaspoons vanilla

Measure oil into a large bowl, then whisk in sugar and eggs.

Mix together the flour, salt, baking powder and cinnamon, then add to the creamed mixture, beating well. Add vanilla, then fold in nuts and apples.

Pour mixture into a greased 9-by-13-inch pan. Bake at 350 F for 50 minutes or until cake tests done. Cover with foil if it gets too dark around the edges.

To make frosting: Combine all frosting ingredients and spread over cooled cake.

After reserving some of the chimichurri to use during cooking and for dipping the cooked kabobs, combine the rest of the sauce and the cubed protein in a sealable bag. Set aside to marinate. Meanwhile, soak the skewers in water a minimum of 20 minutes so they don't burn on the grill.

Add potatoes to a large pot, cover with water and 2 teaspoons of salt. Boil for 5-7 minutes or until fork tender. Drain and rinse the potatoes. Let them sit in cold water to cool. Chop veggies and have them ready to slide onto your skewers.

Now it's time to assemble: Using a soaked skewer, put either a potato or piece

of meat on first, so the rest of the veggies don't slide off the end. Then alternate between meat, potatoes and veggies.

Prepare the grill to about 500 F. Once it's ready, place steak kabobs perpendicular to the grill grates. Grill 3 minutes on each side for medium doneness. If you use chicken, cook for 5-7 minutes. Tofu needs to cook about 10 minutes. While cooking, brush the reserved chimichurri on the kabobs.

Remove the kabobs from the grill and let rest for 3-5 minutes. Use the chimichurri as an extra dipping sauce, if desired. 🍴





SIGN OF SUPPORT

With decades of dedication and support of our local communities, **Colorado Valley Communications** is proud to have its name displayed on the new food court sign at the Fayette County Fairgrounds. Rooted deeply in Texas, CVCTX has been a **trusted hometown provider of voice and internet solutions since 1953.**

The new CVCTX Food Court promises to be a lively hub of fair fun, activities and flavor, offering locals and visitors a place to gather, connect, and celebrate everything that makes Fayette County special.



979.242.5911 | 800.242.5911
cvctx.com

