

# Tennessee CONNECTIONS

SUMMER 2024 | CUSTOMER FOCUSED  COMMUNITY DRIVEN

## Diving Into Water at Erwin Utilities

Providing clean,  
good-tasting  
water is our  
priority

Page 4

 Erwin  
Fiber

 Erwin  
Utilities

ALSO  
INSIDE

Erwin Utilities  
Authority Operator  
inspecting an  
altitude valve  
adjacent to a  
water tank.

## Summer Storm Safety

PHOTO COURTESY OF  
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AUTHORITY





Don't let summer temps make you lose your cool.

ENERGY TIP #73

Poor attic insulation can turn your home into a sauna. Keep the heat out with a **limited-time-only \$500 rebate** on new attic insulation.

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ENERGY TIP #60

Close curtains, drapes and blinds in sunny rooms during the hottest times of the day to keep things cool indoors.



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Published quarterly to keep you informed  
 of noteworthy events and important issues  
 at your utility. **Tennessee Connections** is  
 produced with the assistance of Pioneer Utility  
 Resources Inc. Formed in 1954, the not-for-  
 profit Oregon-based cooperative corporation  
 serves the communication needs of consumer-  
 owned electric utilities across the country.

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 Noncustomer subscriptions \$10 U.S. a year;  
 \$12 foreign a year. Prepayment required. Allow  
 4-8 weeks for first issue. Identify local edition  
 desired. Send orders to 5625 NE Elam Young  
 Pkwy. Ste. 100, Hillsboro, OR 97124-6422.  
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## Keep Your Family Safe During a Flood

Heavy rains often cause flooding in lowland areas, homes and basements. The prospect of an electrical accident is probably not top of mind when dealing with a flooded basement, room or even outdoors. However, it is the first thing you should consider before stepping foot in the water.

Safe Electricity reminds everyone to be alert to electrical equipment that could be energized and in contact with water, with other potential hazards that create a serious risk of electrocution. In addition, cleaning up and using water-damaged appliances carries safety risks.

Safety measures to remember include:

- Never step into a flooded basement or other room if water may be in contact with electrical outlets, appliances or cords.
- Never attempt to turn off power at the breaker box if you must stand in water to do so. If you can't reach your breaker box safely, call your electric utility to shut off power at the meter.
- Never use electric appliances or touch electric wires, switches or fuses when you're wet or standing in water.

- Keep electric tools and equipment at least 10 feet away from wet surfaces. Do not use electric yard tools if it's raining or the ground is wet.
- If an electrical appliance has been in contact with water, have a professional check it out before it is used. It may need to be repaired or replaced.

A good safety measure is to have ground fault circuit interrupters professionally installed on outlets. These safety devices can cut off power instantly if there's a problem. GFCIs are recommended for outdoor outlets and outlets near wet areas of the home, such as the kitchen, bath and laundry rooms. Also, always remember to "turn around, don't drown." Never drive on flooded roadways. ■



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Murals bring history, music, culture to life

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# Diving Into Water at Erwin Utilities

You use water for everything from taking a shower to doing laundry. But do you ever stop to think about where all that water comes from, or the processes that go into making sure the water you use is safe? Do you ever wonder about the work your utility performs for leak detection?

You probably answered no to these questions, and that's OK. When it comes to the work of water and wastewater crews, it's not a short list of tasks. Water professionals at Erwin Utilities Authority (EUA) work tirelessly to ensure water provided to customers exceeds regulatory standards annually.

Let's dive into some highlights about EUA's water processes.

The water system is located within the Nolichucky River Watershed. It's supplied by groundwater pumped from four separate locations, one spring water source, and three well water sources. In 2023, EUA's water department distributed 571,892,000 gallons of water to roughly 12,200 customers.

"It's a very unique situation to have water coming from four separate water sources, and it's a great benefit to have water that's already really, really clean," Water Treatment Supervisor Clay Hepburn says. "Based upon what we hear in public media and what we hear from our state regulators, we have very high quality water."

According to EUA's 2023 Annual Water Quality Report, the utility's water exceeds standards established by state and federal

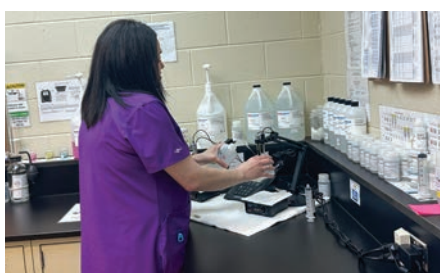
regulators. Hepburn says water undergoes various processes to maintain its high quality, including following state regulated disinfection methods and adding in a coagulate to remove fine particulates. In addition to these measures, extensive testing is done on the water each day. The full report into water quality is published online and can be viewed any time at [www.e-u.cc/wqr](http://www.e-u.cc/wqr).

The Erwin Utilities Authority Wastewater Treatment Plant is home to a certified bacteriological water laboratory. In bacteriological testing, samples are analyzed for waterborne contaminants. EUA's lab was one of the first in the area. In compliance with the state, the facility tests 10 samples a month from the area. This amount is based on the size of the population. The lab performs compliance bacteriological testing for other utilities as well. In addition to other utilities, there are also private customers who have water samples tested. EUA's lab also aids in agricultural sampling for local farmers. These samples are tested to ensure crops are free from contaminants such as listeria and salmonella.

Hepburn says the bacteriological lab is an asset to the community, and he hopes more people in the service area utilize it.

"We want to encourage not only other utilities to come and utilize our services, but also the public," says Clay. "We want people who don't have our water to trust that their drinking water has also been tested."

**Routine lab testing is performed on water samples daily. Senior Laboratory and Water Quality Specialist, Sharon Kidd performs a fluoride analysis.**



This spring serves as one of the water resources used by Erwin Utilities Authority.



Erwin Utilities Authority was named the contest winner for TAUD's Region 1 Best Drinking Water.



Since 2020, Erwin Utilities Authority has used advanced metering infrastructure (AMI). Josh Peterson installing a fixed-based acoustic monitoring system that will listen to our water pipes to detect water main breaks that may not come to the surface or otherwise be detected.



Individuals outside the service area need to go through their utility for testing. Legally, samples from other utilities cannot be tested unless the state gives the greenlight or that utility has requested the test.

EUA's water professionals hope to educate the public about their drinking water as often as they can. Sharon Kidd serves as the senior laboratory and water quality specialist at the wastewater treatment plant. Kidd says she often debunks myths surrounding drinking water in her lab results.

"One thing I hear a lot is questions over how a sample can't have bacteria in it when the water is clear," she said. "My favorite response is that the toilet water is clear too, but you don't see me drinking out of it."

According to Kidd, other myths she often debunks relate to spring and well water samples. While many people believe this is some of the best water you can drink, it can actually contain harmful bacteria such as E. coli. When presenting these findings, Kidd says she recommends measures to aid in disinfecting the water, like adding a filtration and UV disinfection system.

Customers can gain knowledge regarding the amount of water they're using through EUConnect, a web portal and mobile app provided by Erwin Utilities Authority. Water usage is updated daily on EUConnect thanks to the utility's use of advanced metering infrastructure (AMI). Customers can view the previous day's hourly use on EUConnect with AMI. This software has been used by EUA since 2020 and has been instrumental in leak detection, especially during deep freezes like Winter Storm Elliott in December 2022. Thanks to the software, EUA was able to get its water usage back to normal standards within 72 hours.

Josh Peterson, water/wastewater technologist at EUA, says AMI's leak detection allows the utility to catch leaks and warn customers in a timely manner.

"With the software we have, it will send in alarms if a customer has used excessive amounts of water over a certain period," Peterson

says. "We will go through those alarms, and we can notify the customer that they have a leak."

AMI's leak detection holds a major benefit compared to previous measures where meters were read once per month. Monthly meter reads posed threats of leaks going undetected for longer periods of time. Currently, Erwin Utilities Authority is one of the only utility companies in the area with AMI implementation for water. Customers can get started with EUConnect by going to [www.e-u.cc/euconnect](http://www.e-u.cc/euconnect).

For decades, EUA has sought to provide the best services to customers through innovation and continued dedication. It's a goal that could not be made possible without the utility's hardworking team members. The daily ins and outs of work completed by water professionals is no easy feat, but EUA's team strives to exceed standards, and it shows. In April 2024, EUA was declared the winner of the Tennessee Association of Utility Districts' Region 1 Best Drinking Water Contest.


"I have a sense of pride that I'm responsible for one little part of infrastructure for our town that most people don't give a second thought about when it's working right," Hepburn says. "But when something's wrong, everyone cares about it. For me the aspect of it is playing an important role, at least that's how I see it." ■



**Erwin Utilities Authority water professionals, back row, from left, Shawn Treadway, Gavin Casey, Clay Hepburn, Curtis Edwards, Jason Byrd and Jason Foster. Front row, from left, Josh Peterson, Chuck Edney, Jose Diaz, Tommy Howard, Sharon Kidd and Randy Arrowood.**

# PROTECT THE SOURCE

With Backflow Prevention



**Erwin Utilities**

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- COTTON SWABS
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- MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS
- DIAPERS
- FLOSS
- KITTY LITTER



### DRAIN PROTECTION

- NEVER POUR F.O.G. DOWN THE DRAIN
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- SCRAPE FOOD SCRAPS INTO THE TRASH BEFORE WASHING DISHES
- USE SINK STRAINERS TO CATCH ANY REMAINING FOOD WASTE FROM DISHES



\*Do not flush wipes even if they're advertised as "flushable."





Murals serve as storytellers. PHOTO COURTESY OF VISIT KNOXVILLE

# WALL



# at Its Best

Murals bring history, music, culture to life

By Pamela A. Keene

From the early drawings on the walls of caves, man recorded the world around him, creating storyboards of the evolution of civilization. Ancient scenes of family life, hunting, wild animals and rituals are still being discovered around the globe.

During the Depression, the Civilian Conservation Corps mural program served several purposes: provide work for American artists hired to paint murals on public buildings, create patriotic themes and rebuild national pride. It also left a permanent record of the challenges of the

time—through murals painted on federal buildings inside and out. The most famous are the post office murals, some of which still exist at their original locations.

More recently, murals continue to serve as visual storytellers, capturing historical events, reflecting the development of new ideas, commemorating cultural trends and offering colorful reports of momentous occasions, famous people and popular trends.

For cities and towns across the nation, there's been a mural revival. Closely tied to community pride, economic development





**LEFT:** The Loretto mural in Lawrence County features famous Loretto natives, the German flag—honoring the German Catholic immigrants who founded the town—and Sacred Heart Catholic Church, as well as trains, the Loretto high school logo and the Tennessee state flag.

PHOTO COURTESY OF VISITLAWRENCEBURG.COM

**BELOW:** You can find a Dolly Parton mural in Strong Alley in Knoxville. PHOTO COURTESY OF VISIT KNOXVILLE



and tourism, these oversized, colorful, visual snapshots commemorate such genres as musical history, community change, messages of hope and statements about the changing dynamics of the times.

Tennessee is home to many murals across the state.

### Lawrenceburg

Two of the five murals in Lawrence County focus on historical events, including the Trail of Tears and Women's Suffrage, which strongly connect with the area.

"Surviving the Trail of Tears," located in the

Lawrenceburg town square, is part of a series of works by muralist and Pulaski resident Bernice Davidson. Over the years, she has created murals, vignettes, mosaic works and sculptures documenting this part of American history.

The mural shows a Cherokee family with the mother holding a swaddled baby. A painting at the Old Jail Museum shows the Cherokee walking along the dirt street while residents watch.

Davidson also co-founded The Trail of Tears Museum and Tourist Information Center in Pulaski.

Oak Ridge artist Megan Lingerfelt incorporated symbolism in her 50-foot-long "Wave of Lace" mural in downtown

Lawrenceburg. It was painted in 2020 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of women receiving the right to vote. She says the white magnolia and lace recall the white dresses the suffragettes wore. A hand gestures toward a ballot box against an intricate and colorful assortment of art-deco stylized line art.

"Murals are more than just art; they are visual narratives celebrating diversity and heritage," says Kristin Doss, marketing manager of Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce. "By transforming neglected spaces into vibrant canvases, murals not only beautify our communities but also tell the stories of our past and present, enriching our cultural landscape."

### Knoxville

More than 40 murals celebrate Knoxville's musical icons, outdoor adventures from cycling to hiking—and the area's history and traditions.

The first stop is the Visit Knoxville Visitors Center, which provides a downtown mural map of walkable sites. It's also downloadable. Many visitors take selfies in front of the "Postcard from Knoxville" mural painted on the side of the center.

Knoxville muralist Curtis Glover created "Get Out" in 2021 to promote the city's active lifestyle, particularly a growing bike culture on the south side, and the city's Urban Wilderness—offering hiking, biking, climbing, paddling and other outdoor adventures. A cyclist dominates the right

side of the 75-by-25-foot mural, with other family members and two dogs chasing behind.

Known as the "patron saint of East Tennessee," a larger-than-life portrait of Dolly Parton is the highlight of "Strong Alley," which runs between Gay Street and part of Market Square. It is a big draw for locals and tourists alike who discover the high-quality graffiti and public art that has made it one of the most photographed places downtown.

Other notable murals include "Rocky Top Reunion," a tribute to the University of Tennessee and Knoxville landmarks; "Tennessee River Buddies" at Volunteer Landing Lane, featuring fish, turtles and other diverse wildlife of the river on 11 panels; and "Weaving Rainbow Mountain," painted on 43 10-foot-wide steps between the UT campus and Worlds Fair Park painted in geometric designs. A COVID-19 memorial mural on a Clinch Avenue viaduct shows a flock of fantasy birds flying upward across a blue archway.





Artist Steven Teller brings the fine details to life on the “Traditions of Appalachia” mural.  
PHOTO BY JOHNSON CITY CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU



“Get Out,” by muralist Curtis Glover. PHOTO  
COURTESY OF VISIT KNOXVILLE



This colorful mural honors the area's gospel music traditions. PHOTO COURTESY OF CITY OF LAWRENCEBURG



Shane Sandberg works on Strong Alley art.  
PHOTO COURTESY OF VISIT KNOXVILLE

## Johnson City

Johnson City's murals support community values and traditions. Created over the past eight years by a variety of artists, the murals have become a calling card for city pride and tourism. They complement the city's long-standing public art program, including sculptures, decorative bridge rails and vibrant wraps on otherwise plain metal traffic signal boxes.

Following a ban on murals within the historic district in 2017, the city's Historic Zoning Commission established guidelines for public art in this area, including location, size, and—in some cases—the kind of paint and materials used. Since then, standards have been relaxed somewhat, allowing for the creation of nearly a dozen colorful murals in and around the historic district with positive messages about the community, culture, history and tradition of Northeast Tennessee.

“We'll Always Be Together,” created by a muralist simply known as Daas. It signifies friendship, togetherness, childhood memories and an appreciation of

the natural environment. Communicating a message of hope as children grow roots in the communities in which they're raised, three children are pictured planting seeds for a future embracing diversity and racial equality. It was installed in November 2020 on a wall next to Fountain Square Plaza at the intersection of downtown's Buffalo and Market streets.

Artist Steven Teller's “Traditions of Appalachia” highlights culture, music, quilting and crafts epitomizing the Appalachian region. Teller used components from time-honored traditions, such as quilt patterns, common flowers and iconic music influences, including the Johnson City Sessions—early country music recordings conducted by Frank Walker of Columbia Records. As a colorful backdrop for the annual Blue Plum Music Festival, the mural faces Commerce Street and the parking lot next to Founders Park.

Showcasing native wildlife in Northeast Tennessee, Ernesto Maranje's “Stopping by Woods” brings together the black bear,

white-tailed deer and several iconic birds found in the region for a dual message. It was finished in fall 2022 and is on the outskirts of downtown, created on the walls of Fire Station 4, facing University Parkway and Market Street.

“Murals have infused our public spaces with a sense of meaning, humanizing our built environment,” says Cheyenne Kumbhare, management analyst at Johnson City Public Works Department. “Their visibility and often larger-than-life designs capture our attention and imaginations, signaling that we are a community that embraces and acknowledges the power of the arts in advancing the cultural, social and economic value of our area.

“In many cases, our murals have allowed us to celebrate some of our unique stories and characteristics, and this has, in turn, fostered a sense of community pride. Through our murals, we are able to contribute to the beautification of our city while also gaining a clearer image of ourselves and the things that impact us.” ■



# Coloring His World

By Pamela A. Keene

Brian Tull had to repeat third grade at Selmer Elementary School, but his constant drawing during class would become the foundation of his lifelong career.

"I was always drawing instead of paying attention in class, things like cars, trucks and, of all things, shoes—just pencil sketches," says the successful fine artist and mural artist who travels the Southeast to craft eye-catching oversized works of art. "The second time I was in third grade, I still kept doodling, but I focused more on what the teacher was saying."

By high school, he'd advanced to using colored pencils and took an art class.

"Two teachers, George Souders and Rebecca Nicely in Selmer, really encouraged me to continue to study art, so I took their advice."

As a graphic design student at the University of North Alabama in Florence, his curriculum included painting in various styles—abstract, impressionism and photorealism.

"It was a real challenge because until I went to college, I'd never played with paints," says the 49-year-old who lives in Antioch with his wife, Laura, and their 6-year-old daughter, Olive. "It challenged me and introduced me to a whole new world."

After college graduation in 1998, Brian and Laura moved to Nashville, where he began a job as a graphic designer. He also freelanced and worked at a gallery.

"I'd come home and paint at night because it was fun," he says. "The gallery owner asked to see my work and offered to hang one of my paintings there. The next thing I knew, she had sold one, then another and another. She told me that she could sell a lot of my paintings when I was ready to quit goofing around with graphic design. That's when I finally realized that I could make a living as an artist."

In 1999, he and Laura moved back to Nashville, where he continued to paint, do commissions and sell his art.

"In 2007, after a lot of answered prayers and blessings, I quit my job," he says with a smile. "I've been a full-time artist ever since."

In 2009, when Tennessee legislators renamed the state's 55-mile portion of Highway 45 "Rockabilly Highway," the city of Selmer—located along that highway—asked Brian to paint a mural to celebrate.

"It was my first mural. It's in my hometown, and, frankly, I wasn't quite sure how to begin," he says. "I sat down with Arts in McNairy founder Shawn Pitts, and we talked about what they wanted to convey. I sketched a rough idea, and the two of us refined it into what became 'Rockabilly Highway Mural I.' From then, I just had to figure it out."

Painted on the exterior wall at 124 W. Court Ave. and Second Street, the 20-by-120-foot mural's large color blocks of red and black provide a background for a guitarist and a bass fiddle player, the WSM-AM "Home of the Grand Ole Opry" logo and several three-dimensional record albums attach to the wall. "Rockabilly Highway" is emblazoned on the lower right side. The Tennessee Arts Commission and Arts in McNairy funded the project.

"I learned a great deal in a very short time, from how to translate a regular-sized image onto a massive wall, getting the scale and dimensions right to what to use to draw the mural's outline," he says. "Now I use my favorite thing to project the image onto the wall—an old-school transparency projector. It will blow a digital projector away."

Since then, he has created more than 10 murals across the Southeast and one in Chicago. In Selmer, he has added two more: Rockabilly II and Rockabilly III.

His favorite thing about painting murals?

"I love being outside, meeting people and talking with them about what I do and how I do it," he says. "Working through the challenges of the small things, the things people may not even notice, like reflections in the hood of a period automobile or the face of a guitar; that's what makes it fun." ■

Brian Tull and wife Laura are pictured.  
PHOTOS BY BRYAN HUFF HUFFOTO



Brian created Selmer's "Rockabilly I" mural.





PLUGGED IN

# UNDER THE SURFACE

Know the dangers lurking in the water before you take the plunge

By Nina Todea

With the long-awaited warmth of summer arriving soon comes the desire to spend our days outside, whether swimming, boating or camping. Although we're far more unplugged outdoors, many electrical hazards still accompany these leisurely summer activities—and they often lurk beneath the surface.

Water safety is more than just boating speeds and life jackets. Electric shock drowning, dubbed the “silent killer,” occurs when faulty wiring sends electric current into a body of water. The current then passes through the body and causes paralysis, which can ultimately result in drowning.

This current isn't nearly as visible as a bolt of lightning. According to Electrical Safety Foundation International, as little as 10 milliamps of current—1/50 the amount used by a 60-watt lightbulb—can cause

paralysis and drowning. Even the best swimmers will feel their bodies freeze as they lose muscular control.

Often misclassified as drowning, ESD injures and kills people every year, whether it happens around a dock, or in a pool or hot tub. Unfortunately, there is no ESD statistics database, and—partly due to inaccuracies in reporting—many people are still unaware of the threat.

“Most people are unaware because there is no visible warning to electrified water,” says ESFI President Brett Brenner. “Without that visual, they are unaware of the dangers of electrified water.”

## Boating and Marina

Just like your home, having your boat inspected regularly by a licensed electrician is critical. Familiarize yourself with the electrical system so you can identify and correct any potential hazards.

ESFI encourages boat owners to routinely

inspect boats and stay up to date on maintenance.

Ground fault and equipment leakage circuit interrupters—both safety devices required at marinas—should be tested monthly. A leakage test determines if electrical current is escaping the vessel.

In an emergency, an informed owner who knows where the main breakers are on the boat and the shore power source can respond quickly and effectively.

Alongside the safety of your boat's electrical system, make sure all boat operators and swimmers understand the hazards so everyone works to keep them at bay. Never allow swimming near the boat, marina or launching ramp. Residual current could flow into the water from the boat or the marina's wiring, potentially putting anyone in the water at risk of ESD.

Marina owners should do their part, too. “Plan annual safety events at your marina where owners can learn about boat and





dock electrical safety and have their boats inspected by licensed electricians,” Brett says.

### Home Recreation

Pools and hot tubs can be just as dangerous.

In 2020, a 15-year-old boy was electrocuted after touching exposed wire in a Texas hotel pool that had failed multiple inspections, according to news reports from the Harris County area.

Faulty pool lights, old wiring or even electrical equipment—such as pool heaters, vacuums, pumps or extension cords—can cause electricity to flood a pool or hot tub, resulting in serious injuries or fatalities.

Electric shock drowning at home often results from failing to install the correct protective devices. All underwater lighting circuits and lighting around pools, hot tubs and spas should have GCFI protection, as should all electrical outlets within 20 feet of a pool.

Safe Electricity recommends pools and decks be built at least 5 feet from all underground electric lines and at least 25 feet from overhead electric lines. To locate underground electric lines, call 811 before you dig.

Follow these tips from Safe Electricity to keep your family and friends safe:

- Do not put electric appliances

within 10 feet of a swimming pool. When practical, use battery-operated appliances near swimming pools.

- When you leave the pool, don’t touch any electrical appliances until you are dry. Never touch any electrical appliances when you are wet or standing in water.

### Camping

Water safety outdoors isn’t just about bodies of water—natural or artificial. Campers should also be cautious of rain when packing electric camping materials or traveling in RVs that hook up to power poles.

Always err on the safe side, whether you’re experiencing a light rain or a torrential downpour. Before connecting to or disconnecting an RV from a power pole, switch off the breaker. When you’re hooked up, make sure to use a dry, nonconductive item to turn the breaker back on. Doing so can also protect circuits within your camper.

If you’re unsure, ask a fellow traveler. If you’re parked in an RV park, there could be another camper willing to help.

The 2017 National Electrical Code requires marinas and boat docks to post electric shock warning signs where electricity is used near water; many campgrounds also have warning signs.

## You suspect a swimmer has been shocked. What do you do?

A telltale sign of electric shock drowning is the tingling that occurs when current passes through the body. But how can you tell if a swimmer is a victim of ESD if you’re not in the water with them?

A swimmer exhibiting signs of ESD can be visibly panicked and attempting to swim away from the electrified area, or they may be motionless. If you suspect someone is being shocked, do not jump in. Chances are you will be shocked, too. Instead, follow these tips to bring everyone to safety:

- ▶ Cut off all electrical power to the area. Knowing where the circuit breakers are is important to act quickly in an emergency.
- ▶ Call 911 immediately. You want a medical professional to assess the situation and administer CPR if necessary.
- ▶ If the swimmer is still mobile and can swim toward land or exit the pool, make sure there is an area where they can exit the water without using a metal ladder. If the swimmer cannot swim to safety, throw them a life ring or extend a carbon fiber rod, such as a fiberglass rescue hook. Any life-saving efforts should be made with an insulated device.

“While you cannot prevent individuals from acting on their own accord, posting signs prohibiting swimming, as required by the 2017 NEC, is an easy way to help prevent ESD,” Brett says.

However, the responsibility does not solely fall on these signs, Brett says. Swimmers, boat operators and marina owners should all be aware of electric shock hazards and how to prevent them.

“Unknowingly, many swimmers and boat and marina operators place themselves in the face of danger,” he says. “This innocent act of fun can turn tragic. Raising awareness among swimmers and marina and boat operators can help prevent ESD or other electrical injuries while out on the water.” ■



# Savor the

By Anne Braly

Though it's true summer changes up some of our party routines, from dining al fresco to grilling everything we can, some rules always stand true, primarily if you're having guests over: The party must begin with appetizers. There's also nothing wrong with treating your family to a little hors d'oeuvre now and again for an afternoon pick-me-up.

It's summer. The living is easy, and your cooking should be, too. We've waited a long time for summer produce, so here are some recipes that make the most of it so you can relish every part of the meal.



## SUMMER BRUSCHETTA

- 6 or 7 ripe tomatoes, chopped and deseeded, if desired
- 2 cloves minced garlic
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 6 to 8 basil leaves, thinly sliced or chopped
- $\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon kosher salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 baguette or loaf of French bread, sliced
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup olive oil

Place tomatoes in a bowl. Mix in the garlic, olive oil and vinegar. Stir in the basil, and add salt and pepper. Check seasonings, and add more to taste, if necessary.

Meanwhile, brush baguette slices with olive oil. Toast in the oven until lightly browned around the edges. Arrange the bread on a platter and top with tomato bruschetta, or serve the bruschetta on the side for people to top their own slices.

## SUMMER CORN SALSA

- 3 cups raw corn kernels
- 1 cup finely chopped red onion
- 1 diced ripe avocado
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup chopped cilantro
- 1 or 2 medium jalapeno peppers, deseeded and chopped
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup lime juice
- 1 tablespoon white vinegar
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon chili powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon ground cumin
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon kosher salt

Combine all ingredients and refrigerate for about an hour. Serve with tortilla chips or use as a garnish for grilled chicken.





# Season



## YELLOW SQUASH TOTS

### FOR THE TOTS:

- 3 small yellow squash, about 1-1½ pounds
- ½ medium onion, finely chopped
- 1 egg
- ¾ cup bread crumbs
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- Ground black pepper, to taste
- ¾ cup parsley leaves, finely minced
- 4 ounces grated cheddar cheese (about ½ cup grated)



### FOR THE YOGURT DIP:

- ¾ cup unsweetened Greek yogurt
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons parsley, finely minced
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- Ground black pepper, to taste

Heat oven to 400 F. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper.

Grate the squash on a fine grater or in a food processor. Add ½ teaspoon salt and mix. Put the grated squash in a colander. Let it sit while you prepare the rest of the tot ingredients.

Use your hands or a cheesecloth to squeeze extra liquid from the grated squash. You should remove about 1 cup of liquid for every pound of squash you use. You want to squeeze as much liquid from the squash as possible. Discard the liquid.

Combine all the tot ingredients in a large bowl. Mix well. The mixture should be sticky and wet, like a thick paste. Add extra bread crumbs if it is too wet. Form small tots with your hands (1½ to 2 tablespoons squash mixture per tot). Tip: Dip your hands into a bowl of cold water between every few tots to help keep the squash mixture from sticking to your hands.

Arrange the tots on the parchment-lined baking sheet. Bake for 25 minutes or until golden on top and lightly browned on the bottom. Allow to rest 5 minutes before removing them from the baking sheet to help prevent them from sticking together.

While the tots are baking, combine all the ingredients for the yogurt sauce in a small bowl. Serve as a dip for the warm tots.

## GRILLED ZUCCHINI DIP

- 3 medium-large zucchini
- Canola or peanut oil
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 3 garlic cloves, crushed
- 3 tablespoons tahini
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 2 tablespoons plain yogurt
- Extra-virgin olive oil
- Pita chips, fresh vegetables or crackers, for serving

Heat the grill to medium-low. Slice the zucchini lengthwise into about ½-inch strips and coat lightly with oil. Place the strips on the grill for 5 to 7 minutes, until they have some nice grill marks but aren't starting to char completely. Flip zucchini strips and repeat on the other side. After 10 to 12 minutes on the grill, use tongs to squeeze the zucchini. They should release water and feel a little soft between the tongs. If they're still firm and not releasing water, leave them on a few minutes longer, and adjust the grill temperature to ensure they don't char too much. Remove the zucchini and let them cool for about 10 minutes, until they're no longer piping hot. You should have about 3 cups of grilled zucchini.

Once the zucchini has cooled off, put it in the food processor with the lemon, garlic, tahini, salt and pepper. Pulse this 8 to 10 times, scrape with a spatula, and pulse twice more. When it's done, the texture should be a mix of creamy and chunky. It's OK if there are still visible bits of zucchini.

Once the dip has the right texture, put it into a mixing bowl. Fold in yogurt. Taste and adjust seasonings. If you want it looser or creamier, add a little more yogurt. If you want a vegan version, use vegan yogurt or an additional tablespoon of tahini loosened with a tablespoon of water.

Spread the dip into a shallow bowl. Top it with a few glugs of good-quality olive oil. Serve with warm pita bread, vegetables or crackers. It's also great as a sandwich spread.



# 10 Riveting Summer Reads

By Robin Howard

Is there anything better than a book that's so good you can't put it down? Here are 10 page-turners to get lost in this summer.

## **"Black Cake" by Charmaine Wilkerson**

When their mother dies, two estranged siblings are left with a curious inheritance: a black cake made from a family recipe and a voice recording revealing their mother's real history.

What they learn challenges everything they thought they knew about their mother and their own lives. Will the truth bring them together or drive them even further apart?

If you like multi-generational family drama, traditions and secrets, you will like this.

## **"The Space Between Worlds" by Micaiah Johnson**

In this story, travel between parallel universes is possible as long as you visit a universe where you aren't alive.

Cara's selves seem to be good at dying mysteriously—372 of them so far. On Earth, where she's managed to stay alive, she learns that one of her last remaining selves died under unusual circumstances. To get to the bottom of it, Cara enters a new world—with an old secret—that connects her future and past and the entire multiverse.

You will find yourself rooting for the main character, who is just trying to live a normal life in a mind-bending world.

## **"The Book of Cold Cases" by Simone St. James**

Fans of true crime podcasts will love this paranormal mystery about Shea, a receptionist who runs a true crime website. When Shea gets the opportunity to interview Beth, a famous murder suspect who was acquitted, she finds herself in Beth's creepy mansion, where things move on their own, and people

appear and disappear in front of her eyes.

Does Beth know more about the murders than she's telling, and can Shea solve the cold case before she becomes a target herself? This is an unsolved mystery with a haunted house, a love story and plenty of twists.

## **"Once There Were Wolves" by Charlotte McConaghy**

Twin sisters Inti and Aggie arrive in the Scottish Highlands to head up a team of biologists who introduce a pack of wolves to the environment. When a farmer is found dead, locals blame the wolves. However, Inti discovers something more sinister is at play. To protect the wolves she's come to love, Inti will have to find the true killer.

The writing and the setting are beautiful, and the plot will hit home for nature lovers.

## **"The Last House on Needless Street" by Catriona Ward**

At the center of this story is Ted, a recluse who is a suspect in a child's abduction. The story is told by Ted, the sister of the abducted child and Ted's cat, who turns out to be super religious. The characters maintain their secrets until a new neighbor moves in next door. The descriptions of this book are intentionally vague, so none of the mystery is spoiled. Give it a try, and you will probably be thinking about the ending of this book for a long time.





**"Wish You Were Here"****by Jodi Picoult**

Jodi Picoult doesn't disappoint with her latest page-turner. New Yorkers Diana and Finn are successful professionals about to take a dream trip to the Galapagos, where they plan to get engaged. Then a mysterious virus strikes the city, forcing Finn to work long hours at the hospital and bail out on the trip. He insists Diana go without him, which she does. When the island is quarantined, Diana must evolve to survive. She begins to question herself. Although she is on the verge of having everything she ever wanted, will she be the same person when she gets home?

This book chronicles the pandemic from the perspective of people who were truly immersed in it, and questions how it changed us and the world we live in.

**"The Paris Apartment"****by Lucy Foley**

When a young woman goes to Paris to stay with her half-brother, she's alarmed to find his luxurious apartment empty, and he is nowhere to be found. A disconcerting voicemail and an odd business card fuel her search and cast suspicion on everyone in the building.

For people who love the TV series "Only Murders in the Building," this book is a cracking whodunnit in a magnificent setting.

**"A Flicker in the Dark"****by Stacy Willingham**

When Chloe was 12, six girls went missing from her hometown and were never found. Her father was arrested for the murders, and she and her family were left to pick up the pieces. Twenty years later, Chloe is working as a psychologist when girls start to disappear again. She begins to see connections between the two events,

putting her in a position to find the true killer.

This is a fantastic psychological thriller with lots of plot twists and turns.

**"A History of Wild Places"****by Shea Ernshaw**

Travis Wren can locate missing people by holding an object belonging to the vanished person. When he takes the case of an author of fantasy children's books, he finds himself in a place that only existed in legend and disappears.

The rest of the story is told by another character, Theo, who has to unravel the mystery.

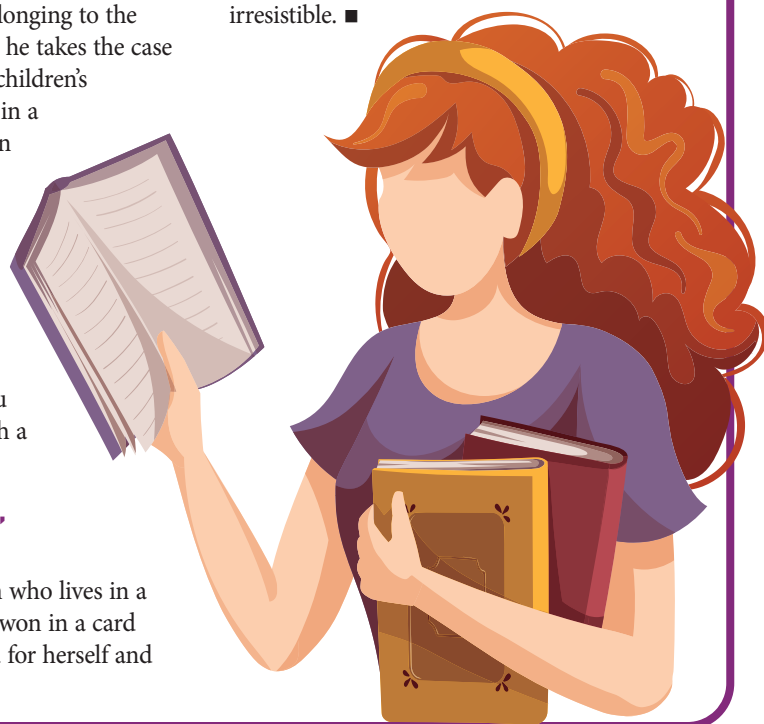
If you like M. Night Shyamalan's movies, you will enjoy this story with a surprise ending.

**"The People We Keep"****by Allison Larkin**

April is a young woman who lives in a motor home her father won in a card game. She is left to fend for herself and

works at a local diner. One night, she decides her life could be bigger and sets off to create a new future. This story chronicles her journey through the world, but the story's heart is about not letting your past define your future.

Fans of hero's-journey stories will find this brave, honest main character irresistible. ■



# TENNESSEE CONNECTIONS PLANNER

It's finally summer and time to plan your next trip. Explore the history of area towns, enjoy the trails in scenic parks or have fun at a concert or festival.

## OAK RIDGE

June 15

### Lavender Festival

The oldest lavender festival in the Southeast is on historical Jackson Square. The free festival includes live music, 130 artisan vendors and lavender learning sessions, including how to grow lavender in East Tennessee, how to make local products from lavender and a cooking-with-herbs demonstration. Children can enjoy bubbles and sidewalk chalk, the splash fountain in Jackson Square, building workshops, free train rides, The Art Spot and more.

[jacksonsquarelavenderfestival.org](http://jacksonsquarelavenderfestival.org)



PHOTO COURTESY OF LAVENDER FESTIVAL

## SPARTA

June 21, July 19, August 16,  
September 20, October 18

### Bluegrass on the Square

Enjoy live bluegrass in the Liberty Square Amphitheatre the third Friday night each month through October. A different area band is featured each month. Admission is free, and music starts at 6 p.m. If it rains, the performance moves to Sparta Civic Center.

[www.spartatn.gov/events](http://www.spartatn.gov/events)

## CLARKSVILLE

June 22

### Garden Tours

Join Montgomery County Parks and Recreation for tours at 10 a.m., 11 a.m. or noon. Tours start at the top of the hour in front of the Wade Bourne Nature Center entrance. A guide leads tours of the specialized gardens around Rotary Park, including the pollinator garden, rain

garden, community gardens, butterfly gardens, Monarch study site and native meadows. The terrain is paved and ADA-accessible. Tours are suitable for all ages, and no registration is required.

[www.visitclarksvilletn.com/event/garden-tours/2495](http://www.visitclarksvilletn.com/event/garden-tours/2495)

## DICKSON

June 29

### Robert Spicer Tennessee State Buck-Dance Championship

In honor of Dickson County native Robert Spicer, the Tennessee State Buck-Dance Championship is held annually at the Grand Old Hatchery in Dickson. Registration begins at 10 a.m., along with a workshop highlighting the style of dance he loved. The competition starts at 11 a.m. and includes seven age divisions for buck dance, a flatfoot category, and youth and adult square dance. First-place winners of each buck-dance category and the flatfoot category dance-off for the 2024 state championship.

[www.facebook.com/robertspicerdancecompetition](http://www.facebook.com/robertspicerdancecompetition)

## UNICOI

July 4

### Freedom Fest

Don't miss the fun. Bring the whole family for this free celebration featuring food, live music and fireworks. Festivities begin at 5 p.m., and fireworks launch at dark at Unicoi Elementary School. Bring your lawn chairs and blankets. Unicoi may be small, but the show never ceases to amaze crowds with eye-popping bursts of color and ear-busting booms accompanied by patriotic music from Ambrosound.

[www.unicoitn.net/freedom-fest](http://www.unicoitn.net/freedom-fest)

## RIPLEY

July 12-13

### Lauderdale County Tomato Festival

This two-day celebration honors area tomato growers. Each year, the Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce honors the Tomato Farmer of the Year at the opening ceremonies. The festival features exciting events such as carnival rides,



a petting zoo, fun games, live music, a tomato contest, tomato tasting, 5K run, a beauty contest to select Tomato Festival Royalty and more.  
[www.facebook.com/Ripleytomatoes](https://www.facebook.com/Ripleytomatoes)

## KINGSPORT

**July 23**

### 14th Annual Wolf Run

Register for this 7-mile trail race on a loop course on scenic trails of 3,550-acre Bays Mountain Park nature preserve. Registration is at Farmstead Museum, and the race starts and finishes beside the wolf habitat. This event is part of the Skelton Law Racing Series, SFTC King and Queen Competition and Trail Series Competition. The race begins at 6:30 p.m. The entry fee is \$30.

[trailrunner.com/event/wolf-run](https://trailrunner.com/event/wolf-run)

## CLARKSVILLE

**August 1**

### First Thursday Art Walk

Be inspired by the works of local artists in a communitywide self-guided tour of artistic displays at a variety of downtown businesses. This event is produced by the Downtown Clarksville Association, and admission is free. The Customs House Museum and Cultural Center is open from 5-8 p.m. with free admission during each First Thursday Art Walk.

[customhousemuseum.org/programs-events/special-events](https://customhousemuseum.org/programs-events/special-events)

## JOHNSON CITY

**August 9-10**

### Meet the Mountains Festival

Become an experienced outdoor enthusiast through numerous outdoor activities, from paddling to hiking, mountain biking and fishing at Winged Deer Park Lakefront. The gear, experts and resources are available to help you enjoy the vast landscape. Split into three zones—water, air and earth—the festival has activity stations such as a zipline, rock wall, kayak demos, dock diving by Ultimate Air Dogs, mountain bike skills clinic, ax-throwing and archery. Come out for two days of family-friendly outdoor fun.

[www.mtmfest.org](https://www.mtmfest.org)

## MORRISTOWN

**August 17**

### David Crockett's 238th Birthday Celebration

This birthday party for Tennessee's favorite son includes blacksmithing demonstrations, storytelling, reenactors, music, museum tours and birthday cake from 2-5 p.m. at the Crockett Tavern Museum. Admission is free.

[crockettavernmuseum.org](https://crockettavernmuseum.org)

## SPRINGFIELD

**August 23-24**

### Fire Cured Festival

Springfield Tourism's inaugural Fire Cured Festival features all things fire-cured: meats, beverages, tobacco, fire art, fire activities, fire safety and more at J. Travis Price Park. Live music, vendors and food are also available, plus helicopter rides by Highland Rim Aviation, allowing you to see Springfield's beautiful landscape and iconic smoking barns from new heights. Event admission is \$5 per person with a VIP add-on available for those 21 and older to enjoy high-quality food and beverage pairings.

[realspringfieldtn.com](https://realspringfieldtn.com)

## SEVIERVILLE

**August 27-September 2**

### Sevier County Fair

Get ready for seven days of fun for the entire family. A true agricultural fair, this event has something for everyone, including livestock shows, rides, games, free laser tag, nightly contests and more.

[seviercountyfair.org](https://seviercountyfair.org)



### Include Your Upcoming Event

Want to share an event with the readers of Tennessee Connections? Please visit [tinyurl.com/TennesseeEvents](https://tinyurl.com/TennesseeEvents) to submit the details. Thank you.

## SPRINGFIELD

**July 5, August 2, September 6, October 6**

### First Fridays

Join the fun the first Friday of each month through October for a free, family- and pet-friendly event in downtown Springfield. Enjoy live music, food trucks, kids' zone, specialty vehicle cruise-in, shopping with more than 80 vendors and your favorite downtown merchants. Proceeds are dedicated to the beautification of historical downtown and beyond.

[realspringfieldtn.com/main-street/1st-Fridays](https://realspringfieldtn.com/main-street/1st-Fridays)

PHOTO BY C. MOORE PHOTOGRAPHY



ADVENTURE AWAITS

Learn about the world at

# Discovery Park of America



PHOTO COURTESY OF  
DISCOVERY PARK OF  
AMERICA

## What Is It?

Wander a 100,000-square-foot museum on a 50-acre park in Union City in Northwest Tennessee at Discovery Park of America, and experience the many programs, exhibits and activities that showcase the wonder of the Earth.

## History

The park was brought to life by local businessman Robert Kirkland, who wanted to create a spot that could entertain and educate children and adults. Around 250,000 visitors come to the park each year, taking in exhibits that invite people to use all of their senses to learn about art, science and history.

## In the Museum

The museum holds 10 exhibit galleries and many hands-on experiences and interactive displays. These include a simulation of the 1800s earthquakes that shaped the region; a 20,000-gallon aquarium with aquatic species from area lakes; pre-historic artifacts, including fossils; vintage automobiles and a Titan missile.

## Out in the Park

An engineered river—with waterfalls, bridges and more—cuts through the heritage park. There are more sites to see around the park, including a re-creation of an early 1900s town with a working gristmill and windmill; various gardens; a train station with locomotive and cars; and a nature-inspired playground.

## More Info

From March through August, the park is open 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday through Saturday, and opens at 11 a.m. on Sundays. Tickets are required. Go online to find general admission or VIP ticket prices. To start planning your trip, call 731-885-5455 or visit [discoveryparkofamerica.com](http://discoveryparkofamerica.com).





# Watering Your Plants

Now that summer is upon us, the days are longer, the temperatures are higher, and your plants need extra attention. While it might seem mundane, consistently watering your plants is one of the most important gardening tasks to ensure they survive and thrive through the hottest part of the year.

Watering plants can either be a simple task or a very complex one, depending on your situation. No matter where you land on that scale, here are a few tips to help you keep those beautiful plants happy through the summer.

## When to Water

Soil and plants have ways of telling us when it is time to water. With soil, the quickest way to tell if you need to water is to check for the presence of moisture. Typically, if the soil is dry 4-6 inches below the surface level, it is time to water.

Depending on your soil type, you can check for moisture by putting your finger into the ground and feeling the soil. Alternatively, 12-inch soil probes are reasonably priced and work well for checking soil moisture. A soil probe will allow you to pull a small core from the soil and easily check for moisture below the surface level. It is also worth noting that during periods of severe drought, you may see cracking on the soil surface, which is a great visual cue it is time to water.

With plants, one of the more noticeable symptoms of insufficient water is wilting, which is when the plant becomes limp and droopy, or even lies flat. If a plant is left wilting long enough, it can eventually reach permanent wilting point, from which it will not recover. Be sure to water if you see this symptom.

Some of the other signs a plant needs water are slow growth, black spots on the leaves or stems, and browning on the outer

edges or tips of leaves. Keeping a close eye on your plants will help you identify these problems early on.

## Other Watering Tips

It is important to be aware your plants will likely have different water requirements, especially if you have a lot of different varieties.

Generally speaking, plants such as trees, shrubs and perennials require a deep and less frequent watering schedule, whereas annuals and vegetables do not usually require watering as deeply but may need a more frequent schedule to maintain growth.

No matter the plant though, do not be tempted to overwater, as it can cause poor root growth and encourage root problems. Additionally, water early in the morning when possible and take extra care to avoid wetting the foliage, stems or trunks of your plants, which will help prevent disease issues. Finally, consider using organic mulches to help with moisture retention around your plants.

It is important to note there are a lot of variables when talking about irrigation. Factors such as the age and size of the plants, soil type, weather and microclimate are all key considerations. I encourage you to contact your local UT-TSU Extension office and read the UT Extension publication W871 for more detailed and technical information on irrigation. ■



For more tips about proper watering, visit [utia.tennessee.edu/publications/wp-content/uploads/sites/269/2023/10/W871.pdf](https://utia.tennessee.edu/publications/wp-content/uploads/sites/269/2023/10/W871.pdf).

**Rylan Thompson** is a Tennessee State University Agriculture and Natural Resources/4-H Extension agent in Knox County. He specializes in residential/consumer horticulture and 4-H and is the Knox County Master Gardener coordinator.

# Summer Storm Safety

The summer sizzle is here and so are the rumbling sounds of thunder. While severe weather can happen at any time, it tends to be more prevalent during the summer months. It's always best to err on the side of caution when it comes to weather threats. Here are some safety tips to keep in mind before and during severe weather events.

## BEFORE SEVERE WEATHER

- Prepare in advance by creating a “storm kit” with items like non-perishable food, bottled water, medicine, flashlights, batteries, etc.
- Keep an eye on current and upcoming weather conditions.
- Seek shelter if you believe a storm is approaching.
- Remember the National Weather Service’s “30/30 Rule” — go indoors when, after seeing lighting, you cannot count to 30 before hearing thunder. Do not leave the house until 30 minutes after the last thunder-clap.

## DURING SEVERE WEATHER

- Remain indoors (avoid being close to windows) if possible during a severe weather event.
- If you have access to your cell phone, keep an eye on social media for outage information.
- If you are driving during a severe thunderstorm, exit the roadway, if possible, and park in a safe place. Avoid flooded areas, especially bridges.
- Do not go near any broken or downed power lines.

For an extra layer of protection when severe weather strikes, customers can add Residential Surge Protection to their services for only \$5.00 per month. In addition, customers can report power outages instantly on the EUConnect web portal and mobile app, and conveniently view electrical outage maps that are updated in real-time. To get started with EUConnect, go to [www.e-u.cc/euconnect](http://www.e-u.cc/euconnect) or search “Erwin Utilities” in the mobile device app store. ■

## Summer Strawberry Cake



Moist Strawberry  
Supreme Cake Mix  
5 eggs  
 $\frac{2}{3}$  cup melted butter/cooled  
1 oz. bag of freeze-dried  
strawberry crisps

1 cup milk  
2 sticks of butter(softened)  
4 cups of powdered sugar  
3 tbsp. heavy cream  
1 tsp. vanilla extract  
Pinch of fine salt

Follow directions on the cake mix box but add 2 more eggs, replace the oil with the doubled amount of cooled melted butter and replace the water with milk. You can make it in a 9x13 inch pan, two round cake pans, or cupcakes. Bake as directed.

For the frosting, grind up strawberries in a food processor or blender until it comes to a powder-like consistency. Using a hand mixer, mix the softened butter until creamy for about 2 minutes. Add sugar, strawberry powder, heavy cream, and vanilla. Beat for another 30 seconds or so. You can add more heavy cream if needed. Add a pinch of salt and continue to beat on high for 2 minutes.

After cake/cupcakes have completely cooled, frost cake/cupcakes. Let it sit in the fridge for several hours or overnight for icing to set. Keep leftovers refrigerated as well.



# Company Highlights



Kip Lemmon

**Job Title:**  
Director of Construction  
and Maintenance  
**Years at EU:**

29 years

**Favorite part of job:**

"My favorite part about my job is  
figuring out how to provide power to  
new customers."



Greg Helton

**Job Title:**  
Line Foreman  
**Years at EU:**

28 years

**Favorite part of job:**

"My favorite parts about my job are  
building new power lines and  
working with my coworkers."



Seth Berry

**Job Title:**  
Lineman  
**Years at EU:**

24 years

**Favorite part of job:**

"My favorite part about my job is  
helping customers."



**WELCOME**  
to our team!



*Luke Cole*  
Water Treatment Operator

**WORLD W-I-FI DAY**  
**JUNE 20**



Erwin Utilities Fiber and IT staff  
Back row, from left: Sam McInturff, Dan Steuber,  
Connor Simpson, and Steven Smith.  
Front row, from left: John Fredericks, John Folsom,  
Jonathan Blackley, Craig Buchanan, Logan Morrow  
and Howard Morris.



GET OUTSIDE

Brian Barton shows off a smallmouth bass, left, and a largemouth bass caught while fishing on Pickwick Lake on the Tennessee River system. Smallmouth and largemouth often eat the same prey and hit the same baits.  
PHOTO BY JOHN N. FELSHER

# Summertime Fun

## Tennessee waters offer great smallmouth action

By John N. Felsher

Tennessee offers some of the best smallmouth bass fishing in the nation. The current world-record smallmouth weighed 11 pounds, 15 ounces. David Hayes caught that giant in July 1955 while fishing Dale Hollow Lake near Byrdstown.

Dale Hollow still tops the list of fantastic Tennessee smallmouth lakes. Most smallmouth in the state are found from Kentucky Lake near Paris eastward to the Great Smoky Mountains. Other great smallmouth lakes include Center Hill, Percy Priest, South Holston and Watauga.

Most Tennessee River lakes hold good smallmouth. Another great spot, Pickwick Lake, runs about 53 miles through three states along the Tennessee River from the Wilson Dam near Florence, Alabama, through northeast Mississippi to the Pickwick Dam near Counce, Tennessee. Many people predict Pickwick could deliver the next world record.

Most people think of fishing for smallmouth during cold months, but fish must eat all year. As David Hayes proved decades ago, the summer can produce monster smallmouth. While their largemouth bass cousins like warmer, sluggish waters full of weeds, smallmouth like cooler temperatures, currents and places with rocky or gravel bottoms.

Largemouth and smallmouth eat many of the same prey species, particularly small fish, but they might gulp down anything they can catch. In the right spot, anglers could land a smallmouth on one cast and a largemouth on the next with the same lure.

In the summer, it's best to keep lures slower and deeper. For good summer bait for smallmouth bass, try bottom-bouncing

leadhead jigs sweetened with soft plastic trailers that mimic crawfish, a favorite snack of big smallies.

With a jighead and a plastic trailer, use just enough weight so the bait sinks to the bottom in the current. After it hits bottom, lift it a few feet so the current carries it a short distance before it sinks to the bottom again. This simulates how a crawfish moves.

In deeper water, try a Carolina rig with natural or artificial enticements. To make one, put the main line through a sliding sinker. Attach a swivel to the main line to block the sinker from sliding down to the bait. Tie about an 18- to 36-inch fluorocarbon leader to the swivel. Add a 3- to 5-inch-long live shad or a soft plastic temptation that resembles a crawfish, small fish or other prey. Drag this along the bottom, pausing periodically.

Drifting with live bait in a river with a significant current like the Tennessee can prove highly effective. Use a live threadfin shad hooked through the chin and nose. Depending upon the current, use no sinker or the lightest weight necessary to get the bait to the bottom. Just let the baitfish swim freely. The baitfish bounces along the bottom as the boat drifts down the river.

Summer fishing might not produce a massive smallmouth, but anglers can still enjoy great action if they find where the fish want to stay and—more importantly—what they want to hit. ■



**John N. Felsher** is a professional freelance writer, broadcaster, photographer, editor and consultant. An avid sportsman, he's written more than 3,600 articles for more than 170 different magazines on a wide variety of outdoors topics. He also hosts an outdoors tips show for WAVH-FM Talk 106.5 radio station in Mobile, Alabama. Contact him at [j.felsher@hotmail.com](mailto:j.felsher@hotmail.com) or through Facebook.





**SAFETY IS IN YOUR HANDS.  
EVERY DIG. EVERY TIME.**



Don't forget to have your utility lines marked before you dig this weekend.

I'm not digging very deep.

My neighbor dug through his fiber line when he forgot to call 811!

Want to be the person that cuts the power on your street?

Every dig. Every time.

Yikes...okay, I will.

Did you know you can take care of it online at [www.tenn811.com](http://www.tenn811.com)?

That was easy. Looks like they'll have it done in a few days!

## See the Forest Through the Trees

**Mighty Conifer Knife at an Impossible Price!**

**W**e know you. You're not interested in everyday, run-of-the-mill, common cutlery. You want something with a story, a unique feature that you can brag about. We've got just the thing for you. Our Mighty Conifer Knife is a unique tool with a Damascus steel blade and a handle crafted from an enhanced and stabilized natural pinecone.

Each pinecone — and therefore, each knife — has its own unique characteristics. And the back of the handle features hand tooling, a further demonstration of each piece's individual nature.

Constructed of Damascus steel, a modern reworking of the legendary metal forged by ancient swordsmiths, this nearly 5-inch blade features 256 layers that have been folded on top of each other to increase its durability. Our competitors are charging hundreds for boring, run-of-the-mill knives with no features worth bragging about. We're asking JUST \$99 for a knife unlike any you've seen before!

With full-tang construction and a genuine leather sheath, it's the choice for those who crave distinction. Call now and be among the first 700 587 callers to receive free Stauer 8x21 Compact Binoculars, valued at \$99. Satisfaction guaranteed or your money back!



### EXCLUSIVE **FREE**

Stauer 8x21  
Compact Binoculars  
a \$99 value  
with your purchase  
of the Mighty Conifer Knife



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