

Tennessee CONNECTIONS

FALL 2024 | CUSTOMER FOCUSED ⚡ COMMUNITY DRIVEN

High-Speed, Fiber Internet Arrives in Halls

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Lauderdale County 4-H members, Zachary Alverson, left, and J. B. Cannon raise the Tennessee state flag in June at Junior 4-H camp in Columbia. PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRISTIAN HAWBAKER III





Lauderdale County Fair: 20 Years of Family Fun

The Lauderdale County Fair will celebrate 20 years of bringing family entertainment to Northwest Tennessee with the foundations of faith, family, community and agriculture, said Susan Worlds, executive director of Lauderdale Chamber/Economic & Community Development.

The event features contests, livestock shows, main stage entertainment, a kiddie derby, community church service, midway carnival rides, Pick TN products, truck and car shows, antique tractor shows and a petting zoo.

“Our fair began in 2004 with a dream by the Lauderdale chamber to have something for all families to do,” Worlds said.

In the beginning, the chamber contracted with Wade Shows to bring midway rides to the fair. As the company evolved, it added different states to its schedule, and Lauderdale County fell off its route.



The 2024 Lauderdale County Fair will be Wednesday, Sept. 11, through Saturday, Sept. 14. The fair is on Co-op Drive in Halls. Admission is free.

The fair’s board of directors searched



hard for an alternative but opted to have an agricultural exhibition as the main attraction, Worlds explained. In 2016, the board found a suitable replacement and contracted with Sunshine Entertainment to play the fair.

“This was a win-win for Sunshine and Lauderdale County,” Worlds said. “To date,

through the hard work of the Lauderdale Chamber/ECD and the Lauderdale County Fair Board, and support from Mayor Eugene Pugh and the Town of Halls, over \$450,000 has been spent on improvements at the fairgrounds.”

Volunteers have also made improvements.

For example, Paul Ward with West Tennessee Pallet and Crate builds a new attraction every year. He has built a barn front at the entrance gate, a memory porch and gathering porch, a pavilion for the kids’ zone and a church as the beginning of a tiny town.

This year he’s planning to build a general store with a little counter and various items on display. “The fair is something good for the county, and it gives people something to do,” Ward said. “It keeps stuff in the county positive.”

Ward credits Worlds for her efforts to produce the fair, and he expressed gratitude to the owners of West Tennessee Pallet and Crate for their support.

Worlds encouraged everyone to come out, support the fair and join in the family fun.

“Where, you ask? Nowhere else but the Lauderdale County Fair!” ■

F High-Speed Fiber Internet Arriving in Halls

Halls residents will soon be able to connect to high-speed, fiber broadband—and transform the way they work, learn, play and stay connected with family, friends and the outside world.

Ripley Power and Light is partnering with Aeneas Internet and Telephone to bring high-speed, fiber broadband to each home and business in the footprint of the fiber buildout, which is shown in the map below.

The buildout started this summer and should be completed this fall. Ripley Power and Light will own the fiber network and lease it to Aeneas, which will initially offer telephone and tiered, internet services up to speeds of 1 Gig.

“This partnership marks a significant step forward in ensuring that Halls has access to the fastest and most reliable internet service available,” said Mike Allmand, president and CEO of Ripley Power and Light Company.

Ripley Power and Light has explored ways to bring fiber broadband to all customers, Allmand said. The most recent cost estimate to do so was \$9.8 million. The Ripley Power and Light Board, however, is reluctant to put electric customers at



Mike Allmand
President and CEO

this much of a financial risk, Allmand added.

The decision was made to start a pilot project in Halls, Allmand said. “One of the major deciding factors for Ripley Power and Light to partner with Aeneas was its ability to serve Halls customers from two different locations. If storms affect internet service from the north, our customers will be served from the south. This provides unmatched reliability.”

The Town of Halls has applied for a grant to pay for a part of the buildout. Customer response in Halls and funding options will help determine if the fiber network will expand beyond Halls to other Power and Light customers, Allmand added.

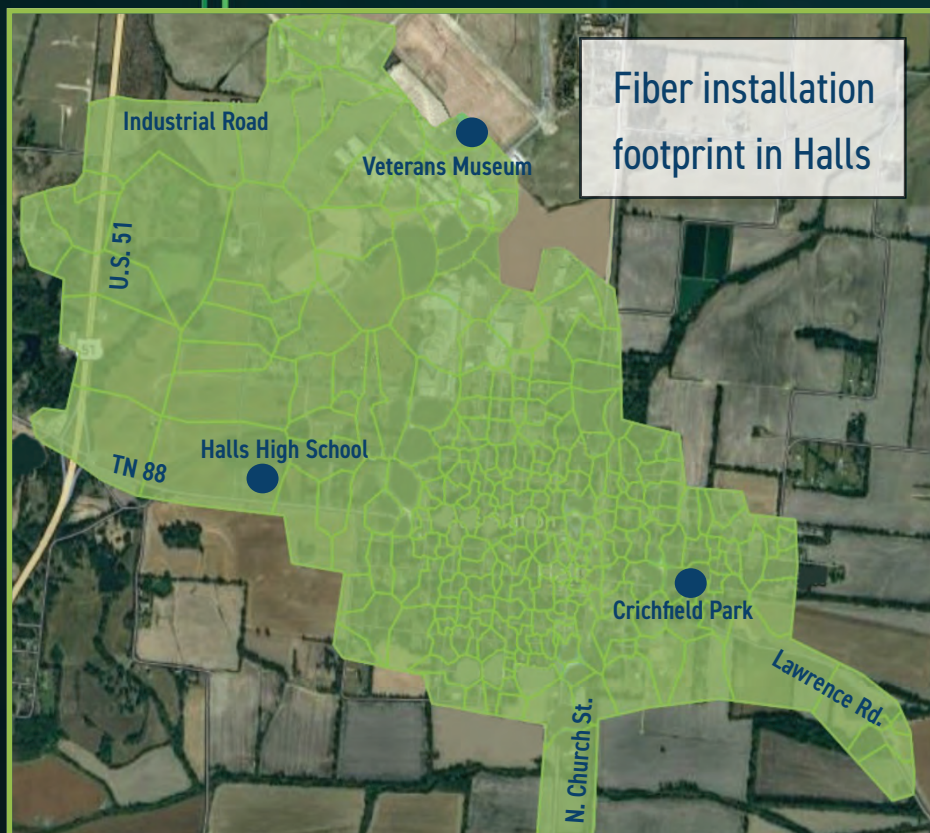
Fiber is more reliable and faster than wireless internet and copper infrastructure, said Ripley Power and Light Head Engineer Chris Mooney.

Halls residents and business owners can sign up for the service at fiber.aeneas.com. Aeneas will contact them when it becomes available.

“We hope the Halls community signs up for high-speed, fiber internet,” Allmand said. “It will change their lives.” ■



Chris Mooney
Head of Engineering



4-H Encourages Growth, Discovery



Lauderdale County 4-H member, Brielle, was homesick the first time she was away from home last summer at Junior 4-H Camp in Columbia, Tennessee.

However, with encouragement from fellow campers and counselors, she quickly began exploring the camp's opportunities. She rediscovered her passion for crafts and developed a newfound love for wildlife and nature. She met new people and forged friendships.

"Brielle's journey transformed from a daunting challenge to an enriching adventure, leaving her with cherished memories and a strengthened sense of community," said Christian Hawbaker III, Lauderdale County 4-H agent.

The annual Junior 4-H Camp is one of many opportunities young people can experience when they become members.

"The primary mission of 4-H is positive youth development," said Hawbaker. "Here in Lauderdale County, I hope to inspire, educate and enrich youth with diverse activities and opportunities through the 4-H program."

4-H is part of Tennessee Extension, a community outreach initiative created by the University of Tennessee and Tennessee State University to improve lives across the state. Lauderdale County's history with extension services dates back to 1926, marking nearly a century of community support and education.

The 4-H Youth Development program is specifically designed

to engage and educate youth, Hawbaker said.

"Through hands-on learning and development opportunities, 4-H has empowered generations of young people in Lauderdale County, fostering skills, knowledge and a sense of community."

4-H is a part of the educational experience in Lauderdale County schools.

Hawbaker visits every fourth through eighth grade classroom in Lauderdale County every month or two.

Every student can participate. Classrooms form clubs where students elect officers, fostering leadership and citizenship. The student-led clubs conduct meetings and organize local contests in areas like public speaking, photography and poster design.

Youth in 4-H receive a well-rounded education with lessons in agriculture, family consumer sciences, STEM and personal development, Hawbaker said.

Beyond the classroom, 4-H members have opportunities to participate in activities at the county, regional, state and national levels. They can join community groups to engage in livestock showmanship, wildlife judging and identification, shooting sports, culinary arts and more.

4-H in Lauderdale County also emphasizes active citizenship, encouraging members to serve and help others in their community, he said. Guided by the motto "to make the best, better," the program aims to instill a lifelong commitment to improvement and community involvement in its members.

"I strive to create an atmosphere where kids are welcomed and encouraged to have fun," Hawbaker said. "At the same time, I want to help them develop values of service and leadership. Hopefully, these values will be carried into their adulthood, just as growing up in 4-H has done for me."

Hawbaker, who grew up in Henry County, joined 4-H in fourth grade. He became a teen leader and even earned a spot to attend the National 4-H Congress in Atlanta. "4-H drastically changed who I was," he said. "I was quiet and soft-spoken. 4-H turned me into a leader, taught me how to be a speaker and gave me a love for education."

"Brielle's journey at 4-H Camp encapsulates the spirit and mission of the 4-H program in Lauderdale County. From overcoming homesickness to discovering new passions and building friendships, her experience reflects the positive youth development that 4-H strives to achieve." ■



Brielle shows off her artwork.



Mar'Kadin practices at the camp rifle range.



Enjoy a 'Taste of Lauderdale County'

The Taste of Lauderdale County, a fundraiser for the county's extension services, will feature foods made by community groups, businesses and restaurants.

The first-time event is from 5-7 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 24, in the Family Life Center of Ripley First Baptist Church, 108 Lafayette Ave.

Organizations have signed up to offer appetizers, main dishes and desserts.

Those who buy tickets to the event will sample the different dishes.

Proceeds will help fund Lauderdale County Extension community outreach programs.

Advance tickets, which are available through the Lauderdale County Extension Office, will cost \$10 for ages 5-10 and \$15 for ages 11 and up. Tickets at the door will cost \$15 for ages 5-10 and \$20 for ages 11 and up. Children 4 and under will get in free. The extension office is at 200 Crain St. in Ripley in the former health department building. For more information, call 731-635-9551.



Clockwise, from top, campers participate in a traditional camp activity—roasting marshmallows over a campfire. Davion is ready for the zipline, while Rickyah takes a break from an art activity.

PHOTOS BY CHRISTIAN HAWBAKER





RIPLEY POWER AND LIGHT COMPANY

www.ripleypower.com

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Office Hours

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- At www.ripleypower.com
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 - Through bank draft
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If you have not been receiving your bills, call our office immediately so we can verify your mailing address.

Ripley Power and Light offices will be closed ...

Monday, Nov. 11
for Veterans Day

Thursday, Nov. 28
and Friday, Nov. 29
for Thanksgiving



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Help Us Prevent Outages Be mindful of where you plant trees

Weather is the biggest cause of power outages because falling trees knock down power lines. When planting trees, follow these rules:

- Plant trees that grow no more than 30 feet at least 10 feet away from utility poles, street lights and power lines.
- Plant trees growing up to 50 feet at least 40 feet away.
- Plant trees that grow larger than 50 feet 60 feet away.



Ripley Power and Light's Tree-Trimming Program

To proactively protect its power lines, Ripley Power and Light has a crew dedicated to trimming and cutting down trees and vegetation year-round.

They look for trees and limbs that have grown too close to power lines and equipment.

Their mission is to trim or cut down trees and vegetation that threaten power lines under

strong winds or an ice storm.

They get permission from property owners before trimming or removing a tree. Customers concerned that tree branches are too close to power lines should contact Ripley Power and Light.

The ultimate goal is to keep customer lights on at all times and maintain the highest level of service reliability possible.