Great Fall Escapes Near Home

(StatePoint) The weather may be changing, but that's no excuse to hunker in. Many may find themselves fantasizing about a getaway once the weather gets chilly.

Luckily, there are plenty of ways to make your escape, even right outside your door.

Nearby Getaways

Faraway travel may not be in the cards this season, but that doesn't mean you can't still get out of town.

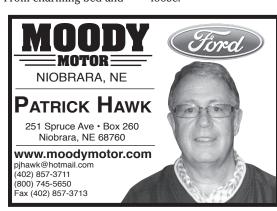
Nearby activities and locations that are new to you can help you feel you are truly getting "away," without the burden of making complicated arrangements.

From charming bed and

breakfasts where you can explore the local countryside and hiking trails, to the art, culture, shopping and nightlife of a neighboring city, there are plenty of ways to make an escape locally. And you can miss the crowds by opting for sites off the beaten path.

Try a Taste of the **Bahamas**

Nothing is more transporting than a great meal and cocktails. While fall is considered the off season in the Caribbean and many other places, true islanders and true locals know the off season is when real fun starts and the locals let loose.



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This fall, you can embrace that "off season" experience at home by toasting to the drink of the islands, during Rumtoberfest, a celebration of rum and fun hosted by Bahama Breeze Island Grille through November 9.

They will be serving up flights of tropical, rum-based cocktails, like the Bahama Mama, with Cruzan Coconut, Bacardi Black and Castillo Silver Rums, Banana Liqueur, and pineapple and orange juices. Aspiring rum aficionados can also taste three types of the liquor straight up.

Rumbash Fridays ramp up the party with live music, fortune telling, games and prizes. Guests who sign up to become "Island Insiders" are entered to win a true

Bahamian escape at Breezes Resort & Spa. To enter, visit bahamabreeze.chirpify.com/ Rumtoberfest 15.

Try Something New

Be bold and try something new in your own local area. Have you always wanted to learn the Tango? Is art a passion but not a hobby?

Take a cooking class. Attend a lecture at a museum. Don't put these bucket list items off any longer. Now is the perfect time for a getaway from your comfort zone, explore all that life has to offer, and maybe even discover new hidden talents.

Whether you travel far or stay at home, this fall, find a way to make an escape.



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New **Innovations** Bringing Faster Internet Speeds to More

Communities

(StatePoint) Fast Internet service is not just an indulgence that people want. It's something communities need in order to stay vibrant in today's economy - from students doing research and small businesses selling their products to doctors having the latest information at their fingertips.

And experts say that soon, more rural communities are going to have access to the speedy services that metropolitan areas have long enjoyed, thanks to huge, recent innovations in the field.

"Considering the unique and challenging circumstances small, communitybased telecommunications providers operate under, delivering the Internet's fastest speeds to the country's most rural and remote communities is a huge accomplishment, says Shirley Bloomfield, chief executive officer of the NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association, which represents nearly 900 independent, communitybased telecommunications companies.

With those challenges in mind, NTCA recently recognized telecom providers that have built communications networks capable of delivering Internet speeds of up to one gigabit per second (100 times faster than those currently available in many U.S. households), by naming these companies Certified Gig-Capable Providers at a recent confer-

To achieve certification, telecommunications companies must show that gigabit technology is currently commercially available within 95 percent of one or more exchanges within their serving territory and that such service can be provided without new trenching or without stringing new aerial facilities. For more information about the NTCA Gig-Capable Provider certification program, visit www.ntca.org/gigcertified.

"By building a gigabitcompanies have not only overcome huge hurdles. but they've also shattered conventional benchmarks for broadband speed," says Bloomfield. "This access will drive economic development and strengthen communities nationwide."



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