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Today's News... This Morning

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Monday, February 05, 2024

Athens, Tennessee

## McMinn County Man Arrested



A search warrant conducted by the Drug task Force and the McMinn Co Sheriff's Office resulted in the arrest of a McMinn County man with drug and weapons charges. According to Sheriff Joe Guy, an investigation had been conducted

over the past few weeks on a suspect believed to be dealing methamphetamine and fentanyl. As more information came to light, a search warrant was obtained for the suspect's residence that was conducted January 31. On that date, deputies with the Sheriff's office and agents with the 10<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Drug Task Force went to the residence, a trailer camper on County Road 660 near Etowah, where they made contact with the suspect, Kendall Mooney. "During the search of the residence, significant quantities of fentanyl, methamphetamine, cocaine and other drugs were seized, as well as several firearms," said Sheriff Guy. "Mooney is already a convicted felon with a lengthy criminal history, which made the firearms possession a crime." Guy added that fentanyl and associated opioid overdoses are still affecting citizens and families in McMinn County, and additional Sheriff's Office resources are being directed toward aggressively suppressing drug and criminal activity in McMinn County. "Illegal opioids and fentanyl are killing and injuring people every week," said Sheriff Guy.

Continued on Page 2

## Festival Dates Announced

Friendly City Festivals is pleased to announce the dates for its 2024 festival/concert schedule! National MooFest, McMinn County's beloved dairy festival, is scheduled for Saturday, June 1. Taking place from 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. in historic downtown Athens, Tennessee, the festival features several popular activities including the Maggie Strutt Session, over 150 food, crafts and arts vendors, Mayfield Dairy Farms contests, Biscuit Bake-Off, all ages Cow Costume Contest, and AgAvenue. MooFest is presented by Friendly City Festivals, The City of Athens, McMinn County Tourism Board, Mayfield Dairy Farm and AgCentral. The 13th Annual Sounds of Summer concert series will once again be on Friday nights at 7:00 p.m. at Market Pavilion in historic downtown Athens. For more information on the lineup visit: [friendlycityfestivals.com/sounds-of-summer-4/](http://friendlycityfestivals.com/sounds-of-summer-4/) Continued on Page 3 See Festivals

## Etowah Woman Indicted

Special agents from the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation have obtained indictments for an Etowah woman, charging her in connection to a 2021 arson at a gas station. At the request of the Etowah Police Department, TBI special agents joined the investigation into the August 7, 2021 fire at the Marathon in the 200 block of Tennessee Avenue in Etowah. Agents subsequently determined the fire was intentionally set and later identified Holly Danielle Lunsford (DOB 2-11-1980) as the person responsible for it. On November 21<sup>st</sup>, the McMinn County Grand Jury returned indictments, charging Lunsford with one count of Arson, one count of Burglary, and one count of Vandalism over \$250,000. On January 26<sup>th</sup>, the Etowah Police Department executed an unrelated traffic stop, identified Lunsford in the vehicle, and arrested her on the outstanding charges. Authorities subsequently booked her into the McMinn County Jail where, at the time of this release, she was being held on a \$490,000 bond.

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• Wednesday-Etowah-10:30 - 2:00  
• Thursday-Athens - Harbor Freight- 10:30 -1:30  
• Friday-Sweetwater-Little Drugs-10:30 - 2:30

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Monday, February 05, 2024 Morning Fax®...Today's News This Morning Page 2 Athens, Tennessee

## Obituaries

♦**Robert T. Smith (Bob)**, age 84 of Athens, peacefully passed away on February 1, surrounded by family and friends. He was a loving husband to his wife, Rita Sue (Teague) Smith for 64 years. Bob was a devout Christian and member of Union Hill Baptist Church, where he led the choir and taught Sunday school. He loved singing and would whenever he could. When he was younger, his hobbies were golf, bowling and riding his motorcycle. But his passion was studying and teaching the Bible. On Mondays, he enjoyed Pastors Conference and Thursday prayer meetings for revival at the McMinn-Meigs Baptist Association. He helped them plan community revivals over the last few years and served as Chaplain of the Christian Motorcycle Association-Local 994. Visitation will be from 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM on Monday, February 5, at Ziegler Funeral Home. Funeral services will be held at 11:00 AM on Tuesday, February 6, at Union Hill Baptist Church with Reverend Jimmy Lewis and Reverend Van Elkins officiating. Interment will follow at Conasauga Cemetery in Etowah. Ziegler Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

## Man Arrested Continued

Continued From Page 1 "Our officers want to bring awareness to this problem and take these drug dealers off the street through focusing on the suppression of these crimes." Kendall Mooney remains in custody at the McMinn County Jail on a \$108,000 bond, charged with Possession of Fentanyl for Resale, Possession of Methamphetamine for resale, Possession of a Firearm by a Convicted felon, Possession of A Firearm During the Commission of a Dangerous Felony, Simple Possession of Cocaine, and Simple Possession of Alprazolam.

## Fire on Co Rd 890 Etowah

Fire departments had a call of a dog house on fire on Co Rd 890, Etowah close to 1:30 Friday afternoon but upon arriving it was found that there were 2 structures fully involved. Both buildings and contents were destroyed by the fire leaving the siding of the house with damage. The owner speculated that a light in the doghouse may have created the fire. No one was at home at the time of the fire. Etowah Rural Fire, Etowah City Fire, Englewood Rural, and EUB all responded with Etowah Rural Assistant Rural Fire Chief Kevin Elliott was in command of the scene. Photos by Lynn Ingram, Englewood Rural Fire Department.



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# PAGE Three

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Monday, Febauary 05, 2024

Athens, Tennessee

## Senator Marsha Blackburn Briefs Locals

U.S. Senator Marsha Blackburn was in Athens last Friday afternoon as part of her annual tour of all 95 counties in Tennessee. Blackburn briefed local government leaders, law enforcement, educators and many other local leaders about what's happening in Washington and specifically the Senate. A roundtable discussion was held at the McMinn County Living Heritage Museum. In the photo's background, left to right, is McMinn County Sheriff Joe Guy, State Senator J. Adam Lowe, Senator Blackburn, McMinn County Mayor John Gentry and State Representative Mark Cochran. In the foreground is Joe Barnett on the left, Director of Athens City Schools and Lindsey Ferguson, McMinn County Economic Development Agency Director, on the right with her back to the camera. (Staff Photo)



## Friendly City Festivals Continued

**Continued from page 1:** The 13th Annual Sounds of Summer concert series will once again be on Friday nights at 7:00 p.m. at Market Pavilion in historic downtown Athens. For more information on the lineup visit: <https://friendlycityfestivals.com/> One of the premier fall festivals in East Tennessee for 21 years, Pumpkintown, will be held on Saturday, October 12 from 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. The Scott Crisp Memorial PowWow, live entertainment on two stages, the infamous Mutt Strutt, historical walking tour, local shopping, over 200 food, craft, information and arts vendors are just a few of the treats planned for October the 12th. All Friendly City Festival events are free to the public thanks to the generous support of their sponsors. For more information call 423-887-3544, mail P.O. Box 1336 Athens, TN 37371 or visit: [wiisonthropic.org](http://wiisonthropic.org) or [friendlycityfestivals.com](http://friendlycityfestivals.com) or [facebook.com/friendlycityfestivals](https://facebook.com/friendlycityfestivals) or [Instagram@friendlycityfestivals](https://Instagram@friendlycityfestivals)

## TBI Investigates Shooting

At the request of 11th Judicial District Attorney General Coty Wamp, TBI special agents continue to investigate the circumstances of an officer-involved shooting in Hamilton County during the effort to recover a missing child from Knox County. Preliminary information indicates a man, identified as Edward Ahrens (DOB 1-8-86), had an 11-year-old girl, the subject of a Tennessee Endangered Child Alert, in his custody and was traveling south on Interstate 75 toward Georgia. Multiple law enforcement agencies, including deputies from the Knox County and Catoosa County, GA sheriff's departments, followed the vehicle as it exited the interstate at Exit 1 in East Ridge. An encounter ensued, during which preliminary information indicates Ahrens refused to comply with officer commands to surrender and attempted to hit law enforcement officers with his vehicle. As a result, at least four officers fired their weapons into the vehicle, striking Ahrens, who subsequently died. The child and responding law enforcement officers did not sustain injury in the incident. At this time, this investigation remains active and ongoing. TBI agents are working to independently determine the series of events leading to the shooting, including collecting evidence and conducting interviews. Throughout the process, investigative findings will be shared with the District Attorney General for her further review and consideration. The TBI acts solely as fact-finders in its cases and does not determine whether the actions of an officer were justified in these types of matters. That decision rests with the District Attorney General requesting TBI's involvement. The TBI does not identify the officers involved in these types of incidents and instead refers questions of that nature to the respective department to answer as it sees fit. Any available updates on this investigation will be posted online at [TBInewsroom.com](http://TBInewsroom.com)