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Friday, March 28, 2025

Page 1

Athens, Tennessee

TBI agents arrest, charge Meigs County man in Georgetown arson investigation



Tennessee Bureau of Investigation special agents specializing in fire investigations, working alongside the Meigs County Sheriff's Office, have arrested and charged a Georgetown man in connection with an arson investigation.

On June 15, 2023, agents began investigating a suspicious fire that destroyed a detached garage at a home in the 3000 block of Sugar Creek Road in Georgetown. During the course of the investigation, authorities determined that the property owner, James Harry Burch, was the individual responsible for starting the fire.

Burch was arrested on March 19th and charged with one count of Arson, one count of Burning Personal Property, one count of Filing a False Report, one count of Tampering with Evidence, one count of Insurance Fraud \$10,000-\$60,000, and one count of Insurance Fraud \$60,000-\$250,000. He was booked into the Meigs County Jail on \$25,000 bond.

The charges and allegations referenced in this release are merely accusations of criminal conduct and not evidence. The defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt and convicted through due process of law. If you have information about an intentionally set fire, call the Tennessee Arson Hotline at 1-800-762-3017. *Source:* TBINewsroom.com

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Friday, March 28, 2025

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Athens, Tennessee

Obituaries

Lillian Marie “Ninney” Gaines, 97, passed away on Wednesday, March 26. She worshipped at Trinity United Methodist Church in Cleveland. She was proud to be the first African American woman hired at American Uniform and served as one of Bradley Memorial’s first Grey Ladies at Bradley Medical Center. She also worked as a receiving clerk at Park Belk’s and spent 17 years providing compassionate home healthcare for the State of Tennessee. After retiring, Ninney continued to give back to her community as the Nutrition Coordinator at Walker Street Nutrition Site. Ninney had a passion for the arts and was an active participant in the Ocoee Players' productions and church skits. A graveside service will take place at the Chattanooga Veteran Memorial Cemetery on Thursday, April 3rd, 2025 at 11 am. M.D. Dotson & Sons Funeral Home & Cremation Service in charge of arrangements.

Athens Road Closures

The City of Athens Public Works Department has announced two upcoming street closures to accommodate local events.

Keith Lane Closure – March 29, 2025

- **Location:** Keith Lane (from Powers Path to Crestway Drive)
- **Date & Time:** Saturday, March 29, 2025, from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
- **Reason:** Athens City Intermediate School’s **Happy Health Kids Fest**

College Street Closure – April 1, 2025

- **Location:** College Street (from Jackson Street to Long Street)
- **Date & Time:** Tuesday, April 1, 2025, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
- **Reason:** Tennessee Wesleyan University’s **Choose Blue Open House**

Motorist Advisory: Expect detours, traffic signage, workers, and pedestrians. Allocate extra travel time. For more details, contact the Athens Public Works Department at 423-744-2745.

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Church News & Events

- **Zion Hill Baptist Church** (269 County Road 516, Englewood) announces the next **Men's Prayer Breakfast** on Saturday, April 5 at the TWU Cafeteria in Athens. The Speaker will be Dr. Jeff Laborg from Fairview Knox Church and will include testimonies from Miracle Lake. Breakfast will begin at 8:00 am with the service immediately following at 9:45 am. Register Online at zhbc.com/breakfast
- **SRBC Kids presents: Kingdom Seekers** on Sunday Nights at 5:30 pm at **Solid Rock Baptist Church** (4975 Hwy. 11, Calhoun) This event combines, God, music, games and fun into a very special all ages affair. (See their Easter ad on page 4)
- **Planted In Christ Outreach Fellowship** (317 Maple Street, Athens) holds Outreach Deliverance Classes every Thursday at 7:00 p.m.
- **Celebrate Recovery** meets every **Tuesday** at 6:00 P.M. at Woodward Ave. Church of God (507 Woodward Ave., Athens). They also meet every **Thursday** at 6:00 P.M. at Watts Bar Community Church (1517 TN-68, Decatur)
- **New Life Church** hosts weekly Prayer Meetings every Wednesday night beginning at 7:00 pm. The church is located at 204 Fisher St. in Athens. All are welcome.
- **Pleasant Hill Baptist Church** (1923 Pleasant Hill Rd., Ten Mile) is hosting their Church Fellowship Meal on this Saturday, March 29 from 12pm - 2pm The meal will consist of Sloppy Joes, Hot Dogs, Chili, Dessert and Drink. Everyone is welcome!
- **Solid Rock Baptist Church** will hold their **5th Annual Easter Drive-Thru** on Friday, April 4 & Saturday, April 5 from 6:00pm - 8:00pm. Solid Rock is located at 4975 Hwy 11 in Calhoun. (See ad below for singing by the Kingsmen QT)
- The next monthly Christian Men's Prayer Breakfast sponsored by New Hope Methodist Church will occur on Thursday, April 3 at 8 a.m. at Maddi Mae's Cafe in downtown Athens. This ecumenical prayer breakfast is open to all men of Christian faith plus those who want to establish a relationship with Jesus. Please contact Marcus Guinn at: marcusguinn@gmail.com or phone 423-507-7769 for more information.

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Friday, March 28, 2025

Morning Fax®...Today's News This Morning Page 4

Athens, Tennessee

Tennessee's Unemployment Rate Holds Steady at 3.7% for Six Months

Tennessee's unemployment rate remains unchanged at 3.7% for the sixth consecutive month, staying below the national average, according to the **Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development (TDLWD)**.

The state's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for February 2025 remained at 3.7%, consistent since September 2024. However, it is slightly higher than the 3.1% rate recorded in February 2024. Meanwhile, the national unemployment rate rose to 4.1%, increasing by 0.1 percentage points from January and 0.2 percentage points from a year ago.

Tennessee saw 19,200 new nonfarm jobs added over the past year, with the most growth in Government, Leisure and Hospitality, and Education and Health Services. Between January and February alone, the state added 9,100 jobs, led by Education and Health Services, Trade, Transportation and Utilities, and Leisure and Hospitality sectors.

For a full breakdown of Tennessee's February 2025 unemployment data, visit the TDLWD website [HERE](#).

Fire in Etowah Spreads Across Three Acres



A fire broke out on County Road 490 in Etowah around 6 p.m. on Tuesday after a property owner's attempt to burn household items got out of control. The flames quickly spread up a bank, reaching a large pile of tires and burning approximately three acres, including some neighboring property. Multiple fire departments responded to the scene, including Etowah Rural Fire, Englewood Rural Fire, and mutual aid from Monroe County's Conasauga Fire and Mt. Vernon Fire Departments. The incident was led by Etowah Rural Deputy Fire Chief Dustin Ruebush and Englewood Rural Fire Chief Billy Roach.

Authorities remind residents to use extreme caution when burning materials outdoors, especially in dry conditions.

Photos Courtesy of Kinzley Troutt, Etowah Rural Fire Dept.

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**April 4 & 5th
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Friday, March 28, 2025

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Athens, Tennessee

The Food Hub opens and welcomes its first patrons

On Thursday, The Food Hub (3 W. College St., Athens) opened to a successful turnout from project supporters and TWU students. The business incubator is a first of its kind in the state of Tennessee and offers a place for prospective restaurateurs to get advice on how to start their own restaurant as well as a location to start without the high overhead costs that come with starting your own venture. Interviews were conducted with many different members of the Main Street Athens board, TWU administration, Athens Chamber of Commerce and various farming vendors. The interviews aired live on WYXI RADIO FM 94.5 and AM1390.



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Main Street Athens*



*Sandra Kinney, Director,
Main Street Athens*



*Bo Perkinson,
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Mayor &
Former Main
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Board Member*



Meigs County Democratic Party to Elect New Leaders at Reorganization Convention

All County Democrats Welcome

Decatur, TN -- The Meigs County Democratic Party will hold a Reorganization Convention to elect new leaders on Saturday, March 29th. The meeting will take place at the Meigs County Courthouse, Decatur. Doors open for registration at 12:00 p.m., convention start time is 1:00 p.m.

All Democrats who are registered voters of Meigs County are urged to attend. During the Convention the voting delegation will adopt County Party bylaws and elect new leadership. Local Democrats will elect a Chair, Vice Chair(s), Secretary, Treasurer and the Executive Committee members from all areas of the county for a two-year term.

The County Party Reorganization Convention welcomes all Meigs County Democrats and independent voters. Attendees should arrive early to complete credentialing forms and be admitted to the convention prior to 1:00 p.m. when the meeting will begin.

Paid for by the Meigs County Democrat Party

