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## Monroe County Receives State Funding for Road Safety Project in Tellico Plains



State Representative Mark Cochran of Englewood and State Senator Tom Hatcher of Maryville have secured \$131,350 in state funding for Monroe County to improve road safety near the Tellico Convenience Center in Tellico Plains, officials announced this week.

The funds will be used to construct a dedicated turn lane into the center, which serves as a site for local residents to dispose of household waste and recyclables.

"This funding will address a serious need and ensure Monroe County residents can easily utilize the Tellico Convenience Center," said the officials who advocated for the project. "Safe and efficient infrastructure is essential for the success of local communities. We thank our colleagues for recognizing the importance of this much-needed up-

grade and look forward to the completion of this turn lane."

The Tellico Convenience Center is one of five recycling facilities operated by Monroe County, offering no-cost disposal of certain materials to residents. For more information, visit the **Monroe County Department of Solid Waste** [website](#). This funding is part of the \$59.8 billion balanced budget approved by the state legislature in April.

*Source: Ben Whitehead, Senior Deputy Press Secretary*

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Friday, May 09, 2025

Morning Fax®...Today's News This Morning Page 2

Athens, Tennessee

## MTSU Professor Indicted Following Joint State Investigation



A professor at Middle Tennessee State University has been arrested following a joint investigation by the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation and the Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury.

The investigation began on May 9, 2024, at the request of 16th Judicial District Attorney General Jennings Jones. Authorities looked into allegations of financial crimes involving MTSU students. Investigators reviewed the personal financial records of Don Hong, 65, and concluded that he used his position to misappropriate state funds between 2020 and 2024.

On Monday, a Rutherford County grand jury indicted Hong on multiple charges, including two counts of Theft, one count each of Forgery, Criminal Simulation, Official Misconduct, Official Oppression, and Retaliation. He was booked into the Rutherford County Jail on Wednesday with bond set at \$500,000.

It is important to note that the charges are allegations. Hong is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty in a court of law. *Source: TBI Newsroom.com*

## Weekend Event Calendar

### Looking for something to do today or this weekend?

Follow [WYXI on Facebook](#) and check out the Morning Fax Round-Up! Included in our daily post will be a calendar listing fun events that will be happening throughout the week. Here are the events for today and this weekend!

- May 9: [Grace & Mercy Hand Up Event](#) @ 714 Walter St., Athens (9:30 am)
- May 9-10: [CLA Presents: High School Musical on Stage!](#) @ MCHS (7pm)
- May 9: [McMinn Senior Center Spring Fling Dance](#) (7-9pm)
- May 9: [90's Prom at the Athens Arts Center](#) (7pm)
- May 10: Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive (*Leave a bag of non-perishable food next to mailbox, will get picked up by mail carrier*)
- May 10: [Etowah Friendly Garden Club Sale](#) @ L&N Depot (8am - noon)
- May 10: [Spring Clean-Up Day at McMinn Senior Activity Center](#) (9 am)
- May 10: McMinn Saddle Club Tack Sale/Swap at Regional Park Shed (9am)
- May 10: [Blackout Poetry Class at the Etowah Art Gallery](#) (10AM)

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**GoComics**

Friday, May 09, 2025

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Athens, Tennessee

## 30th Annual Athens Soap Box Derby set for Saturday, May 31



The 30th Annual Athens Soap Box Derby will be held on Saturday, May 31, on Keith Lane in Athens. The Athens Soap Box Derby is a preliminary to the 87th running of the All-American Soap Box Derby World Championships, which will be held in Akron, Ohio, the week of July 13-19. Athens will be running two divisions: the Stock Division, and the Super Stock Division.

The Stock division is the beginning class designed for racers 7-13 years old and is a lean forward car. The driver and car together, in the Stock Division, race at 200 pounds.

The Super Stock Division is for racers ages 9-18 years old and can accommodate a larger racer up to approximately six feet tall and 160 pounds. The driver and car together, in the Super Stock Division, race at 240 pounds. Drivers are still being sought for both divisions with some cars available for use first-come, first-serve.

On Saturday, May 31, beginning at 4 a.m., Keith Lane from Cedar Springs to Powers Path will be closed to automobile traffic and turned into a Soap Box Derby track. Residents will be allowed to enter at the eastern side intersection of Crestway and Keith. All other access will be restricted to Soap Box Derby traffic.

A Soap Box Derby car rides approximately 3.5 inches off the ground and will attain speeds of approximately 21 miles per hour on Keith Lane. The cars are entirely gravity powered and have a brake and steering wheel. The track is approximately 950 feet of racing with a long runout area. The races are electronically timed and are double elimination, lane swap, wheel swap, time differential races. This means that each "race" consists of two runs down the hill with a common opponent. In the first phase of the heat, the cars race on their own wheels in a starting lane. When the cars cross the finish line, the timer records the difference of the two racers. The racers are taken back to the top where they will switch wheels and lanes and make a second run. The lowest total time down the hill, in two runs under the same conditions, is declared the winner of the race. The Soap Box Derby practice begins at 7:15 a.m., with opening ceremonies scheduled for 8:00 a.m. and the first heats immediately following.

Live race coverage can be heard on WYXI Radio AM 1390 and FM 94.5. Admission to the Athens Soap Box Derby is free.

For more information, please contact the Office of Parks & Recreation at (423) 744-2704.

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Friday, May 09, 2025

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Athens, Tennessee

## Community News You Can Use

- The Athens City School (ACS) Board of Education meeting is set for Monday, May 12 at 5:30 pm at the ACS Administration Building.
- The McMinn County Election Commission will be holding their regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, May 13 at 5:00 pm in the conference room of the McMinn County Courthouse to conduct any Election Business to come before the board. The meeting on Tuesday, May 20th will be cancelled.
- If you are an alumni of E.H.S., and are interested in attending the last Etowah High School Decades Reunion on Saturday, June 14 at the L&N Depot from 10:00 am - 3:00 pm, with Free Lunch served at 12:00 noon, please RSVP ASAP with your name and one guest to: E.H.S. Alumni Association, P.O. Box 24, Etowah, TN 37331 or by phone to 423-506-9097. Bring your own lawn chair!

## Church News & Events

- [Niota UMC](#) will be hosting a free week-long summer camp on July 14-18 in partnership with Camp in the Community at their church in Niota. The summer camp is open to all children ages 5-14. The camp will run from 8:30-4:30pm (Friday ends at 2pm) and includes breakfast and lunch. Space is limited, make sure to sign up soon to secure your spot. To register, visit <https://www.campinthecommunity.org/host/niota>
- [Planted In Christ Outreach Fellowship](#) (317 Maple Street, Athens) holds Outreach Deliverance Classes every Thursday at 7:00pm.
- [Celebrate Recovery](#) meets every [Tuesday](#) at 6:00pm at Woodward Ave. Church of God (507 Woodward Ave., Athens). They also meet every [Thursday](#) at 6:00pm at Watts Bar Community Church (1517 TN-68, Decatur)
- [New Life Church](#) hosts weekly Prayer Meetings every Wednesday night beginning at 7:00pm. The church is located at 204 Fisher St. in Athens. All are welcome.
- [SRBC Kids presents: Kingdom Seekers](#) on Sunday Nights at 5:30pm at [Solid Rock Baptist Church](#) (4975 Hwy. 11, Calhoun). This event combines, God, music, games and fun into a very special all ages affair.

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A member of Woodward Ave. Church of God in Athens, Ashley finds joy in honoring God through service to seniors.

She'll share insights on Dominion's offerings, how Dominion helps families navigate through the admission process, and support you can expect to receive.

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Friday, May 09, 2025

Morning Fax®...Today's News This Morning Page 5

Athens, Tennessee

## Athens Couple Says Contractor Took Payment, Left Job Unfinished



An Athens couple is speaking out after claiming a contractor they hired took more than \$9,000 upfront and failed to complete the work he was paid to do.

Johnny and Amy Guillot, who run a dog training and boarding business from their home, hired contractor Jerry Gardner of Decatur in February to complete several home improvement projects. The job included installing new flooring, ceiling work in the basement, adding lighting fixtures, and structural leveling. The work was expected to take less than a week.



While Gardner started part of the flooring, the Guillots say he never worked a full day, frequently gave excuses, and eventually stopped showing up altogether. The hallway floor that was installed is already coming apart, and the rest of the contracted work remains undone.

The Guillots sent a demand letter on April 14 requesting Gardner respond within 10 days—he did not. They have since filed a formal complaint with the Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance and issued a second demand letter.

Experts warn homeowners against paying contractors in full upfront. Standard practice recommends an initial deposit of 10–25%, with additional payments made as work progresses, and the final balance paid only upon completion.

The Guillots hope sharing their story will prevent others from facing the same costly mistake.

Top Photo: Amy & Johnny  
Guillot

Bottom Photo: Jerry Gardner

Source: [WATE 6 News](#), Photos taken from video coverage at source

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Athens, Tennessee

## Obituaries

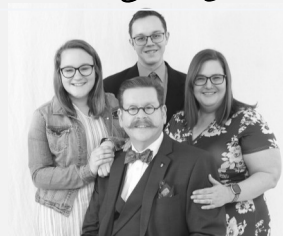
**Lois Jean Bosworth McHone**, 85 of Decatur, passed away on Wednesday, May 7. She enjoyed working at TVA where she was an Administrative Officer, retiring in 1994. A Graveside service will be held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, May 10 in the Meigs County Memorial Gardens. Decatur Funeral Home & Cremation Services is honored to serve the McHone Family.

**David C. Thompson**, 70 of Sweetwater, passed away at his home on Friday, April 11. He was a native of Detroit and a proud graduate of Roosevelt High School. He later retired from NGK in Sweetwater, where he worked for many years. While there will be no formal memorial service, instead, the family will host a Celebration of Life with loved ones to honor him the way he would have wanted-with stories, laughter, and music played loud! Companion Funeral & Cremation Service of Athens and the Cody family are honored to assist the Thompson family with these arrangements.

**Joan M. Sanders**, 70 of Decatur, passed peacefully on Tuesday, May 6, at her home. She was a member of Good Hope Baptist Church in Decatur. The family will have a Graveside Service at Beta Cemetery in Decatur, TN at 2:00pm on Monday, May 12. Companion Funeral & Cremation Service of Athens and the Cody family are honored to assist the Sanders family with these arrangements.

**Charles Ray Shelton**, 81 of Athens, passed away on Wednesday, May 7. He was a member at Short Creek Baptist Church and was retired from Shaw Industries having worked for 34 years. Visitation will be 12-2 pm Tuesday, May 13 in the chapel of Laycock-Hobbs Funeral Home with the funeral service to follow at 2 pm. The interment will be at Short Creek Cemetery following the funeral. Laycock-Hobbs Funeral Home will be in charge of the arrangements.

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