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Wednesday, June 4, 2025

Page 1

Athens, Tennessee

Bear spotted near Mayes Avenue in Sweetwater; Police urge caution



The Sweetwater Police Department is advising residents to use caution after a bear was spotted in the area of Mayes Avenue and North Main Street on Monday.

Authorities are working alongside the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) to monitor the situation and safely relocate the animal. As of press time, the bear had not been captured and remains in the area.

Residents are reminded not to approach or feed the bear and to remain alert while in the vicinity. Anyone who observes aggressive behavior from the animal should call the non-emergency number at (423) 442-4357.

The department thanked the public for its cooperation in helping ensure the safety of both the community and local wildlife.

Source: [Sweetwater Police Dept - Facebook](#)

Community News You Can Use

- The City of Athens invites you to join them for the Grand Opening of the Larry Dean Wallace Sr. Animal Shelter & Adoption Center on Saturday, June 14 at 9:00 am. The Center is located at 320 S. Jackson St. in Athens. There will be light refreshments at 9:00 am and the official ribbon cutting at 9:30 am.
- The City of Athens Parks & Recreation Department is now accepting registrations for the 2025 Co-Ed Adult Softball League, which kicks off June 24 at Athens Regional Park. Teams and individuals ages 16 and up are welcome to participate. The cost is \$400 per team or \$30 for individual free agents. Free agents will be assigned to teams after the registration period closes. Games will be held every **Tuesday night from June 24 through August 19** at Athens Regional Park. Registration opened May 23. For more details or to register, visit athenstn.gov/parks or call (423) 744-2704. See more info on the City of Athens Facebook Page [HERE](#).

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Athens, Tennessee

McMinn Senior Activity Center Welcomes New Executive Director Crystal Miller



The McMinn Senior Activity Center is pleased to announce Crystal Miller as its new Executive Director.

Miller brings more than 27 years of experience in human services and community leadership to the role. A graduate of Tennessee Wesleyan College, she has spent the last 16 years serving as Family Resource Center Director and Social Worker for Athens City Schools.

With strong ties to the community and a background in inclusive programming and wraparound services, Miller is poised to expand the Center's reach and ensure it serves older adults across McMinn County—regardless of background or circumstance. Her expertise in strategic planning and program development will support the Center's mission as it grows to meet the needs of the area's aging population.

Crystal lives in Niota with her husband, Darrin. They have two children, Shane and Emily. The Center invites the community to join them in welcoming her and celebrating this new chapter.

Source: Erin Selander, McMinn Senior Activity Center



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Athens, Tennessee

TWU Baseball grabs national spotlight with back-to-back SportsCenter Top 10 plays



Photo Credit: Spencer Farrin

Tennessee Wesleyan University's baseball team made more than just headlines at the 2025 Avista NAIA World Series—they made *SportsCenter*.

Two standout defensive plays by Bulldog players were featured on ESPN's *SportsCenter Top 10* in back-to-back games this week.

Center fielder **Kruise Newman** earned the No. 6 spot on the [May 27 edition](#) with a diving catch in the second inning against Webber International University. The [next Morning Fax](#), [Today's News. This Morning.](#) **Brayan Espinoza** claimed the No. 4 spot for a slick defensive stop that ended the sixth inning against Georgia Gwinnett College.

Both plays showcased the Bulldogs' athleticism on the national stage and highlighted TWU's strong defensive presence in the tournament.

Source: [TWU Athletics](#)

Optimist Club Pickleball Tournament Set for June 14 in Athens

Pickleball players of all ages and skill levels are invited to participate in the **Optimist Club Pickleball Tournament** on **Saturday, June 14, 2025**, at the Ingleside Pickleball Courts in Athens.



The tournament will feature **10 courts in play**, including six permanent and four overlay courts, and will offer **two age divisions** and **four skill brackets** to accommodate a wide range of players.

The event will be held at the Ingleside Pickleball Courts, **615 Forrest Avenue**, with a \$40 entry fee per player. The registration deadline is **Sunday, June 8**, and interested participants can sign up at [this link](#).

Organizers say weekly ladder leagues are also ongoing, and anyone interested in joining can reach out for more information.

For questions or details about the tournament or league play, see this Facebook post at the link [HERE](#).

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Athens, Tennessee

Vols Punch Ticket to Super Regionals with 11-5 Win Over Wake Forest



Infielder Andrew Fischer and Pitcher Liam Doyle embrace during the 2025 NCAA Baseball Regional game between the Wake Forest Demon Deacons and the Tennessee Volunteers at Lindsey Nelson Stadium in Knoxville.

Photo by: Kate Huffman/Tennessee Athletics

No. 14 Tennessee is Super Regional bound for the fifth straight year after an 11-5 victory over Wake Forest in the NCAA Knoxville Regional final Monday night at Lindsey Nelson Stadium.

Fueled by a massive seven-run fourth inning, the Volunteers pulled away in the decisive Game 7 of the regional. Home runs from Manny Marin and Andrew Fischer blew the game wide open, igniting the sellout crowd and sealing Tennessee's spot in the NCAA Fayetteville Super Regional against No. 3 seed Arkansas.

Marin, a true freshman, had a breakout performance, going 3-for-3 with two runs scored and three RBIs. Fischer added his team-leading 24th home run of the season during the rally.

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The Vols (46-17) used a combination of arms to get the job done on the mound. Starter AJ Russell struck out three in 1.2 innings before freshman Brayden Krenzler took over, earning the win after 2.2 scoreless frames. Dylan Loy, Tanner Franklin, and Liam Doyle closed out the game, with Doyle retiring the final

seven batters and striking out five to record his first save of the season.

Doyle also made history, breaking Tennessee's single-season strikeout record with 158, surpassing Luke Hochevar's mark of 154 set in 2005. Tennessee had four players named to the Knoxville All-Regional Team, including Doyle, who was honored as the tournament's Most Outstanding Player. Fischer, Dean Curley, and Marin also earned spots. Under head coach Tony Vitello, the Vols are now 17-3 in NCAA regional play and an impressive 12-1 at home regionals since his arrival.

Tennessee will face Arkansas in Fayetteville this weekend in a highly anticipated rematch. The Razorbacks took two of three from the Vols in their regular-season series. Super Regional schedules will be released Tuesday at 10 a.m. ET via NCAA Baseball's social media channels. *Source: [UTSports.com](https://www.utsports.com)*

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Athens, Tennessee

Lane closure planned on U.S. Hwy 68 at Watts Bar Dam starting June 9



The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) has announced that one lane of U.S. Highway 68 across Watts Bar Dam will be closed for approximately two weeks beginning **Monday, June 9**, to allow for bridge maintenance work.

Crews will be performing

bridge deck repairs and applying an epoxy overlay to the roadway. While the bridge will remain open to traffic, motorists should expect delays as traffic will be managed by **portable traffic control signals**.

The project is scheduled for completion by **Friday, June 20**, though TVA notes the timeline may shift depending on weather or other unforeseen factors.

Drivers are encouraged to plan ahead and allow extra time when traveling through the area. *Source: [TVA](#)*

Obituaries

Elisha Gail Ballew, 65 of Athens, passed away on Monday, June 2 at Lifecare Center of Athens. She was of the Baptist faith. She was a graduate of McMinn County High School and Tennessee Wesleyan College. She was associated with Payton's, a food distribution company, in Cleveland. A graveside service will be conducted 11:00 am, Thursday, June 5 at McMinn Memory Gardens. Smith Funeral & Cremation Services of Athens is honored to serve the family of Elisha Gail Ballew.

We encourage you to e-mail community events, church news, school sports results or other items of interest for possible use in the Morning Fax.

If you take a newsworthy photograph, send it to:

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