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Monday, July 21, 2025

Page 1

Athens, Tennessee

Soap Box Derby World Championship Final Moments



After some potentially scary weather headed to Akron towards the end of last week, it was nothing but clear blue skies when the sun came up over Derby Downs for the 87th running of the First Energy All-American Soap Box Derby Saturday. Shortly after the World Championship parade finished, our local Stock Champion, Silas Millsaps was the first heat on the track where he would accomplish a feat that no Athens Soap Box Morning Fax champion had done since 2018. Racing out of lane number 3, Silas was the first to cross the Today's News. This Morning. finish line in Heat 601 with a time of 28.761, defeating Finn Sherman of Houlton, Maine by a differential of 0.012 and Shokhida Kobilova of Brooklyn, New York by a differential of 0.039. Silas is the first Athens racer to win a 3-car World Championship heat in the All-American since Nathan Turner and Zeke Hembree back in 2018. See more photos on Page 4



Monday - Closed

- Tue-Niota-Beside Dollar General -10:30 - 2
- Wed-Etowah Across from Johnsons-10:30 - 2
- Thu-Athens Family Dollar 10:30 -1:30
- Fri-Sweetwater-Little Drugs-10:30 - 2:30

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Monday, July 21, 2025

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

Athens, Tennessee

Athens Street Closures this Week

The City of Athens Public Works Department announces the following street closure:

The areas to be affected are CRESTWAY DRIVE from Keith Lane to Ivy Lane and KEITH LANE from Powers Path to Gideon Street. These areas will be closed to through traffic from Monday, July 21, 2025 at 7:00 a.m. until Friday, August 1, 2025 at 4:00 p.m. This closure will be intermittent throughout the project. The purpose of this closure is for street repairs. For more information, please contact the Office of the Public Works Department at 423-744-2745.

ACT Presents Matilda The Musical

Athens Community Theatre (ACT) will present the Tony Award-winning, Roald Dahl's Matilda The Musical, directed by Michael Webb, August 15 - 24, 2025. Saturday August 23; ticket holders are invited to join us at 6:00 PM for Photos with Characters. Roald Dahl's Matilda The Musical opens the Athens Community Theatre Mainstage 2025 - 26 season. Show dates and times are Fridays and Saturdays, August 15, 16, 22, and 23 at 7:00 PM, and Sundays August 17 and 24 at 2:00 PM. Tickets are available now and are \$20 for adults and \$15 for students. Patrons are encouraged to purchase tickets early, as ACT events tend to sell out on, or before, the performance date.

Baseball Infields at Athens Regional Park Getting Artificial Turf

The Athens City Council has approved a major enhancement to the City's athletic infrastructure, awarding a contract to Baseline Sports Construction to install artificial turf on all five baseball infields at Athens Regional Park.

This \$1.42 million project includes the installation of artificial turf, the extension of basepaths from 70 feet to 90 feet, and the design and grading work needed to repair a longstanding drainage issue on Field 4. These improvements are designed to elevate the quality of local play, foster sports tourism, and attract a broader range of regional and statewide tournaments—ultimately increasing hotel/motel tax revenue for the community. Funding for the project will be sourced from the City's Capital Improvement Fund and the Hotel/Motel Tax Fund.

“With these enhancements, including the 90-foot baselines, we'll be able to better integrate tournament play with McMinn County High School and Tennessee Wesleyan's baseball fields,” said Athens City Manager Randall Dowling. “This creates the opportunity to host larger, more competitive events that benefit our local economy.”

Construction is expected to begin in October 2025 and will be completed by February 2026. Athens Parks and Recreation Director Matt Siniard shared his enthusiasm for the project: “Our Parks and Recreation Department is excited to have artificial turf installed on all five of our infields at Athens Regional Park.... Upon completion, the Parks and Recreation Department will begin actively marketing the upgraded fields to attract as many local, regional, and state-wide tournaments as possible. For more information about the project or to schedule a tournament for the 2026 season, please contact the Athens Parks & Recreation Department at 423-744-2704.

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EVERY WEEKDAY

Monday, July 21, 2025

Morning Fax®...Today's News This Morning Page 3

Athens, Tennessee

Ribbon Cutting at Athens Electronic Repair

A ribbon cutting was celebrated recently for new Athens Area Chamber of Commerce member, Athens Electronic Repair, located in Athens. Chamber friends Joining the celebration and pictured here left to right are: Stacey Hester (Chamber Diplomat), Tina Huckabey, Tawnya Allen, Kevin Guffey (Owner Athens Electronic Repair), Willow Allen, Traci White (Chamber Diplomat/Board), Wesley Skinner (Chamber Diplomat/Board). Back: Stephanie Devine, Rob Preston (President/CEO), Doug Bailey (Chamber Diplomat), Todd Watson (Chamber Board), Hunter Starr (Chamber Diplomat), Hugh Willson (Chamber Diplomat). Photo courtesy of Julie Simbeck





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Monday, July 21, 2025

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

Athens, Tennessee

Soap Box Derby World Championship Final Moments



Arliss Douglas was next on the track from Athens as the Local Super Stock champions were ready for their time to shine. Arliss found himself in one of the closest overall heats of the entire day of racing as his time of 28.516 was enough to defeat Skyler Sweatman of Jamestown, New York by a differential of 0.011 but not quite enough to takedown Nathaniel Merriken of Federalsburg, Maryland as he fell by just six thousandths of a second. Arliss was composed as always, even in defeat, and quickly



ARLISS & SILAS

came back down the hill to begin cheering Silas on. He was world-class ambassador for Athens Soap Box Derby and the state of Tennessee this week, and we're looking forward to seeing where his future rally career will take him.

After all of the opening round heats were completed in both the Local and Rally divisions, it was time for Silas Millsaps to head back on the track in the round of 18, this time against fellow

Tennessean, Coy Cantrell of Chattanooga. We knew this was going to be a tough test for Millsaps as Cantrell had a top 5 finish in the AAA Local Stock Challenge race on Wednesday, but Silas did not back down. This time in lane one, Silas stayed neck and neck with Cantrell the entire way down, so much so that even those positioned right at the finish line were unable to decipher who the winner was before hearing from the photo finish. When the dust settled, Cantrell's time of 28.641 bested Millsaps time of 28.649 by just eight thousandths of a second. Cantrell would eventually go on to another top 10 finish for his week, with an 8th place trophy for his racing today, and it was incredible to watch Silas at the ripe age of 7 to compete like he did and he was another perfect representation of the East Tennessee spirit on a national stage. **Source: Derek Phillips, Program Coordinator for the City of Athens.**



SILAS (background)
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Monday, July 21, 2025

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

Athens, Tennessee

Truck Fire North of Niota

On Friday July 18th around 5:30 p.m. a report of a truck fire in the 2300 block of Highway 11 North of Niota. The driver of the 2015 Chevy Silverado reported a popping noise in the engine compartment just before the fire started. Units were able to put the fire out before it got to a house nearby.

Responding to the call was Niota Rural, Athens Rural and North McMinn Rural Fire Departments.

Niota fire chief Travis Newberry was in command of the incident.

Photos, David Prater NFD



Obituaries

Charlotte Willean Miller Wilson, age 89, of Athens, Tennessee, passed away on Thursday, July 17, 2025. She lived her entire life on the Miller family homestead, which was established over 100 years ago. Charlotte attended Woodward Avenue Church of God. Visitation will be held from 11:00 AM-1:00 PM on Friday, July 25, 2025, at Ziegler Funeral Home. Funeral services will be held at 1:00 PM at the funeral home. Interment will follow at McMinn Memory Gardens. Ziegler Funeral Home has been entrusted with serving the family of Charlotte Willean Miller Wilson.

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