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Massive Fire Destroys Homes and Barn Near Madisonville; Multiple Agencies Respond



A large fire on Sneed Road Thursday afternoon resulted in the total loss of two mobile homes and a barn that had been converted into a residence. The blaze broke out around 2:30 p.m., prompting a significant mutual aid response from fire departments across Monroe and surrounding counties.

The fire required the coordinated efforts of multiple fire agencies, including Notchey Creek Fire, Tri-Community Fire, Mt. Vernon Fire, Hopewell Volunteer Fire, Conasauga Fire, Tellico Plains Rural Fire, Madisonville City Fire, Englewood Rural Fire, Etowah Rural Fire, Gudger Fire, and the Tennessee Division of Forestry.

Standing by at the scene were Monroe County EMS, the Monroe County Sheriff's Department, and Fort Loudoun Electric Cooperative. Monroe County Emergency Management Agency Director Chad Leming took command of the scene.

Due to the scale of the response, Tri-State Mutual Aid coordinated coverage for the eastern side of McMinn County and the Madisonville area. Agencies providing standby coverage included Cleveland City Fire, Bradley County Fire, and West Polk County Fire. The fire completely destroyed all three structures. No injuries have been reported. The cause of the fire remains under investigation.

Photo Courtesy of Lynn Ingram, Englewood Rural FD

Mon- Closed

- Tue-Madisonville: Wil Sav -10:30 - 2
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Monday, August 04, 2025

Page 2

Athens, Tennessee

Utility Worker Injured in Backhoe Accident Near Englewood



A utility worker was injured Thursday morning after a backhoe tipped onto its side during a gas line installation on County Road 550. The incident occurred around 11:30 a.m. while an employee with the Etowah Utility Board was operating the machinery. According to emergency officials, the backhoe shifted unexpectedly, causing it to over-

turn. The operator was successfully extracted from the equipment by first responders.

The worker was initially treated at the scene by emergency personnel before being transported by AMR to the University of Tennessee Medical Center in Knoxville for further evaluation.

Englewood Rural Fire Department, Etowah Rural Fire Department, the McMinn County Sheriff's Department, and representatives from the Etowah Utility Board responded to the scene.

Photo provided by Lynn Ingram, Englewood Rural FD

Community News You Can Use

- Per the USGS (United States Geological Survey), a light magnitude 2.3 earthquake occurred at 1:03 AM on Sunday, August 3 centered around 4.5 miles south-southeast of Charleston at a depth of 12 km. Residents as far away as Cleveland and Athens may have felt minor shaking, but no damage or injuries have been reported. If you felt or experienced damage, you're asked to report the results at this website:
<https://share.google/aFDKHUE8Z3W4FfJaS>

- The Athens Area Council for the Arts is inviting local artists to participate in its annual Open Exhibit, open to residents of McMinn County and surrounding areas. The exhibit features three divisions: High School, College, and Open. Entry is free for students, while artists in the Open division may submit work for \$10 per piece. The deadline to enter is Wednesday, September 3. Full entry details are available online at:

athensartscouncil.org/open-exhibit-prospectus

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Monday, August 04, 2025 Morning Fax®...Today's News This Morning Page 3 Athens, Tennessee

Athens Resident Charged After 42 Dogs Found in Deplorable Conditions



A local resident is facing multiple charges of animal cruelty after more than 42 dogs were rescued from a home on Haley Street on Friday, where authorities say the animals were living in “deplorable conditions.”

According to a release from the Athens Police Department, officers responded to the home in the 700 block of Haley Street following a report involving animals. Upon arrival, officers observed numerous dogs on the property and attempted to contact the homeowner, but were initially unsuccessful. Officers reported seeing several more dogs inside the residence in extremely poor conditions.

After consulting with the District Attorney General’s office, police obtained a search warrant to enter the home and seize the animals.

The City of Athens Animal Shelter, McMinn County Humane Society, Public Works Department, Codes Enforcement, Athens Fire Department, and Adult Protective Services all assisted in the rescue effort. Authorities removed more than 42 small breed dogs from the residence, many of which were reportedly in poor health. All of the animals were transported to the McMinn County Humane Society for medical evaluation and treatment. The homeowner, who was found inside the house, was taken into custody and now faces several charges of animal cruelty.

“I am thankful for the cooperation amongst all the agencies involved,” said Athens Police Lieutenant Blake Witt. “Their enforcement presence and swift action will hopefully give a voice to the animals that cannot speak to this type of cruelty.”

Officials encourage anyone who suspects animal abuse or neglect to report it by calling the Athens Police Department at 423-744-2730 or the Athens Animal Shelter.

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

Athens, Tennessee

TWU Selected for Statewide Direct Admissions Pilot

Tennessee Wesleyan University has been chosen as one of 17 four-year institutions in Tennessee to participate in the Tennessee Higher Education Commission's Direct Admissions pilot program aimed at eliminating application barriers for high school seniors.

Beginning this November, qualifying seniors who complete the Tennessee Promise application by November 3, 2025, will automatically receive admission offers to participating colleges—including TWU—based solely on academic data provided by school districts and the Tennessee Department of Education.

"Direct Admissions helps students see themselves as college-bound before they even submit an application," said TWU President Dr. Tyler Forrest. "We're proud to be part of a program that puts students first."

The initiative is part of a broader effort to boost college-going rates by streamlining the transition from high school to higher education. Tennessee Wesleyan hopes the program will welcome more students into its small-class learning environment and supportive campus community.

Athens Planning Commission to Meet TODAY

The Athens Municipal-Regional Planning Commission will meet Monday, August 4 at 12:00 p.m. in the city's conference room to consider several key development proposals and planning items affecting local residential growth.

On the agenda is final plat approval for two separate residential developments. The first involves property owned by Christian M. and Cayla A. Medders, located off South Jackson Street. The proposal would reconfigure four parcels within a high-density residential zone into two lots. Also under review is a final plat submitted by Mesana Investments LLC for an 8.43-acre development off Shadows Lawn Drive, which includes 40 residential lots. The commission will also consider a recommendation on the Plan of Services for the proposed annexation of a remaining 2.35-acre portion of property off Lee Drive.

The meeting will include opportunities for public comments on each of the agenda items, followed by petitions from the audience and a staff report.

The commission is also expected to approve the minutes from its July 7 regular meeting and July 28 work session.

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Monday, August 04, 2025

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

Athens, Tennessee

Obituaries

Richard Boren, 73 of Athens, passed away on Wednesday, July 30 after a short illness. He was a graduate of Pontotoc High School in Pontotoc, MS and earned degrees from both Freed-Hardeman and the University of Mississippi. His work revolved around public safety, first as a police officer and later as a fire-fighter and then as a specialist in nuclear security with a long career with the Tennessee Valley Authority at multiple locations. In retirement, he enjoyed restoring classic cars and going to car shows. His graveside service was held at his final resting place in the Cedar Hill Cemetery in Scottsboro, AL, on Saturday, August 2. Ziegler Funeral Home and Scottsboro Funeral Home were entrusted with serving the family of Richard Boren.

Fanny Sue Jones, 81, passed away peacefully on Friday, August 1. She was known for her gentle spirit, her generous heart, and her unwavering faith in God. A Funeral Service will be held at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, August 5 in the Chapel of Decatur Funeral Home & Cremation Services. Interment will be held at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, August 6 in the Bales Cemetery. Decatur Funeral Home & Cremation Services is honored to serve the Jones Family.

Bernice Williams Elliott, 93 of Athens, passed away on Saturday, August 2 at Morning Pointe of Athens. She was a banker for 59 years, having begun her career with Farmers Bank in Englewood, Tenn. and retiring from Regions Bank. She was a member of the Liberty Hill Church of Christ. The family will receive friends from 5 p.m. - 7 p.m. on Monday, August 4 at Laycock-Hobbs Funeral Home. Funeral services will be held at 7:00 P.M. in the Chapel of Laycock-Hobbs Funeral Home. Interment will be 11:00 A.M. on Tuesday, August 5 in Liberty Hill Cemetery. Laycock-Hobbs Funeral Home, Athens, Tenn. in charge of arrangements.

Jonathan Ray Falls, 46 of Decatur passed away on Sunday, August 3. He was a member at Oak Grove Baptist Church in Riceville. He was the owner and operator of Complete Service and Repair. Funeral Services will be Tuesday, August 5 at 7:00 PM in the chapel of Laycock-Hobbs Funeral Home. A graveside service will be August 6 at 11:00 AM in McMinn Memory Gardens. The family will receive friends from 5-7 PM Tuesday prior to the service. Laycock-Hobbs Funeral Home in Athens is in charge of the arrangements.

James "John" Clinton, 95 of Philadelphia, went to be with the Lord on Thursday, July 31. He was a member of First Baptist Church of Philadelphia. John was employed at Bacon Hosiery Mill in Loudon and spent the majority of his career at Maremont in Loudon, where he retired. John is survived by his daughters-in-law, Carlene Clinton of Sweetwater and Jackie Clinton of Houston, TX; son and daughter-in-law, Mark and Pam Clinton of Athens, TN; daughter and son-in-law, Beth and Tommy "Corky" Jones of Sweetwater, TN; grandchildren, Jonathan Clinton, Hanna Clinton, Kristin Hill, Christopher Jones, Ben Jones, and Mike Jones; sister, Mae Harris of Philadelphia; numerous nieces, nephews, several great-grandchildren; and a special friend, Gary Kimsey of Philadelphia. The family extends a special thank you to the caregivers of Sweetwater Living, LLC in Sweetwater and NHC of Athens for their compassionate care. Services honoring John will be held on Monday, August 4 at 6:30 p.m. at Loudon Funeral Home Chapel. The family will receive friends from 4:30-6:30 p.m., prior to the funeral service. A graveside service will take place at 11:00 a.m. on Tuesday, August 5, at Loudon County Memorial Gardens. Loudon Funeral Home and Cremations is in charge of arrangements