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**Tuesday, August 5, 2025**

**Page 1**

**Athens, Tennessee**

## Polk County Man Tried to Bomb Deputies During Arrest, Authorities Say



A Polk County man is facing a long list of criminal charges after authorities discovered 14 improvised explosive devices in his home during an arrest on Friday, August 1.

Deputies with the Polk County Sheriff's Office arrested Kevin Wade O'Neal, 54, at his residence on Amber Way in Old Fort while serving warrants related to threats he allegedly made against local law enforcement and public officials. [According to a news release from the sheriff's office](#), deputies noticed a smoldering object inside the bedroom where O'Neal was found. Upon further inspection, they spotted what appeared to be an improvised explosive device. The home was evacuated, and the Chattanooga Police Department Bomb Squad, along with federal agents from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), were called to the scene.

**A search of the residence led authorities to 14 homemade explosive devices.** Investigators believe O'Neal attempted to detonate them as deputies arrived to arrest him. O'Neal has been charged with nine counts of attempted first-degree murder for allegedly trying to kill the deputies and detectives involved in the arrest, as well as two additional counts of attempted first-degree murder for others who were present at the time. He also faces 14 counts of prohibited weapons violations and one count of possession of explosive components. O'Neal is currently being held at the Polk County Jail. His bond has not yet been set.

Polk County Sheriff Steve Ross expressed gratitude to the multiple agencies that responded, including West Polk Fire and Rescue, AmeriPro EMS, the Tennessee Highway Patrol, the 10th Judicial District Drug Task Force, ATF agents, the Chattanooga Police Bomb Squad, and the Tennessee Department of Homeland Security. **Source:** [Polk Co. Sheriff's Office - Facebook](#)

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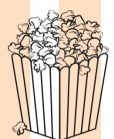


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Athens, Tennessee

## Car Fire Under Investigation After Driver Flees Scene in Englewood



Fire crews responded just before midnight Saturday to a fully involved vehicle fire at the intersection of Highway 310 and County Road 484 in Englewood. The vehicle, a 2006 Ford Fusion, was abandoned when

firefighters arrived. The driver had fled the scene. Etowah Rural Fire, Englewood Rural Fire, the Etowah Police Department, and McMinn County Sheriff's Deputy Ralph Creel all responded to the incident. The cause of the fire remains under investigation.

*Photo by Lynn Ingram, Englewood Rural FD*

## Community News You Can Use

- The Athens Area Council for the Arts will open its 2025–26 season with *TWO*, a concert of iconic duets, on Friday, August 8 at 7:00 PM in the Sue E. Trotter Black Box Theater. The show will include a wide variety of vocal duets ranging from folk tunes to powerful ballads. Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$15 for students.
- The City of Athens Public Works Department announces the following street closure:

The areas to be affected are **the sidewalk and Parking Spaces 5 and 6, as well as the Loading Zone on Jackson St. from Green St. to Madison Ave.** This closure will be **from Monday, August 4 at 6:30 a.m. until Tuesday, December 30 at 6:30 p.m.** This closing is continuous throughout the project. The purpose of this closure is for **building remodeling.**

For more information, please contact the Office of the Public Works Department at 423-744-2745.

SEE THE FAMILY-FRIENDLY FAVORITE!

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THE MUSICAL

AUGUST 15 - 24

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FEATURING:

 BREITBART NEWS DAILY HOST:  
**Mike Slater**  
FRIDAY AUGUST 8<sup>TH</sup> AT 6:00 PM  
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Athens, Tennessee

## Cleveland State to Host Nursing Information Session August 19



Cleveland State Community College will host a Nursing Information Session on Tuesday, August 19, from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. in the Health and Science Center on the Cleveland campus.

The event is open to current and prospective students interested in learning more about the CSCC nursing program. Representatives from the Nursing Department will be on hand to provide information about admission testing, program requirements, and the application process. Attendees will also receive an overview of the Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.) Nursing degree sequence and course offerings.

"This program is designed to prepare students with the knowledge, skills, and confidence they need to succeed as nurses and serve their communities," said Maureen Baksh-Griffin, Director of Nursing. "We are committed to supporting our students from the day they are accepted to the day they pass their boards and begin their careers." For more information, contact Richard Gamble, Healthcare Department Assistant, call (423) 478-6228 or email at [rgamble1@clevelandstatecc.edu](mailto:rgamble1@clevelandstatecc.edu). *Source: Andrea Byerly, CSCC*

**COMEDY and COUNTRY**  
TICKETS \$30 each  
at the Historic Gem Theater  
Etowah, Tennessee  
**Saturday, August 16, 2025**  
Doors Open at 6:30 PM / Comedy 7-7:30 & Music at 7:30  
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*Sunday, August 10, 2025*  
*Service begins at 10:30 am*



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Athens, Tennessee

## Driver Uninjured After Sliding Off Embankment in Saturday Morning Crash

A driver escaped injury Saturday morning after losing control of a 2017 Nissan Rogue on County Road 580 near Highway 39 in Athens. The vehicle slid down an embankment around 7:30 a.m. before coming to a stop. Englewood Rural Fire and Athens Rural Fire responded to the scene, and McMinn County Sheriff's Deputy Greg Sparks investigated the crash.



Photo by Lynn Ingram, Englewood Rural FD

## Obituaries

**Venyard Freeman**, 84 of Athens, passed away on Friday, July 26. He had a deep love for the outdoors and found joy spending time with his family. Good Samaritan Funeral Home in charge of arrangements.

**Floyd McClary Greene**, 77, passed away on Saturday, August 2, after a long illness. In his younger years, he shared his musical talents as a member of a Country-Western band. He was a faithful member of Lakeside Baptist Church in Ten Mile. Floyd was also a member of the Local 760 IBEW for 40 years. The family will receive friends at Companion Funeral Home in Athens, on Wednesday, August 6 from 11am-1pm, with a service starting at 1pm. Burial will immediately follow the service at McMinn Memory Gardens in Athens. Companion Funeral & Cremation Service of Athens, TN, and the Cody family are honored to assist his family with these arrangements.

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