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Monday, August 25, 2025

Page 1

Athens, Tennessee

Autopsy Rules Jail Death a Homicide; Five Officers Suspended



The death of a 74-year-old man in the custody of the Monroe County Sheriff's Office has been reclassified as a homicide, according to an amended autopsy report.

Lester Isbill died on February 7 after being arrested for disorderly conduct and placed in a restraint chair at the county jail with a spit mask over his head. He was later found unresponsive and pronounced dead at a hospital. His death was initially ruled the result of natural causes from heart disease.

However, the Knox County Regional Forensic Center updated its findings Aug. 21, concluding that dehydration and prolonged restraint contributed to Isbill's death. The report now lists the manner of death as homicide.

Sheriff Tommy Jones said **five corrections officers** have been **suspended with pay** following the new report. He added that all staff directly involved have since been fired, suspended, or resigned.

Earlier this year, three other corrections officers left the department after an internal investigation—one was terminated and two resigned prior to being fired, while three more were suspended without pay.

The homicide ruling could lead to a criminal investigation.

Source: WATE.com

Monday - Closed

- Tue-Madisonville: Wil Sav -10:30 - 2
- Wed-Etowah Across from Johnsons-10:30 - 2
- Thu-Athens Family Dollar 10:30 -1:30
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Monday, August 25, 2025

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

Athens, Tennessee

Driver Injured After Car Goes Airborne in Delano Crash



A 1994 Nissan Altima left the roadway on Highway 163 at County Road 862 in Delano late last week, striking a culvert and going airborne before coming to rest in a nearby field. The driver was injured but treated on scene by AMR and not transported to the hospital.

Etowah Rural Fire Department, Claxton Fire Department, and the Tennessee Highway Patrol responded, with Trooper Logan Ballew investigating the crash.

Photo by Lynn Ingram, Englewood Rural FD

Community News You Can Use

- The Mid-East Tennessee Community Chorus (METCC) will open its 2025-2026 season with *A Tennessee Christmas* and the debut of a new **Children's Chorus for grades 2-8**. METCC is open to mature high school students and adults. The first rehearsal and children's choir information meeting will be held **TONIGHT Monday, August 25 at 6:30 p.m.** at TWU's Sherman Hall, 204 E. College St., Athens. The children's chorus is expected to begin rehearsals shortly after Labor Day. Registration is available at the link [HERE](#). For more information, visit themetcc.org or call 423-381-0008.
- The Athens Board of Zoning Appeals will meet on **Wednesday, August 27 at 1 p.m.** in the City Council Chambers. In addition to routine business and approval of minutes, the board will consider a **Use on Review request from River Stone Construction LLC** for preliminary approval of a **19.85-acre Residential Planned Unit Development** on Lee Drive, located in the R-3 High Density Residential District.
- Main Street Athens will hold a meeting for downtown business and building owners on **Thursday, August 28, at 6 p.m. at the Event Space downtown**. The discussion will cover a potential Downtown Improvement Grant of up to \$500,000 available through the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development. The meeting will outline how the grant could be used, its role in supporting local businesses, and its impact on downtown economic vitality.

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Porch Fire Rekindles at Etowah Home



Fire crews responded late Tuesday night to a blaze at a home on Athens Pike after a porch chair that had earlier caught fire reignited and spread to the front of the house.

According to the Etowah Rural Fire Department, a neighbor

first extinguished flames on the chair earlier in the evening using a fire extinguisher. But shortly before 10 p.m., the family inside the home noticed smoke. When they went to check, they found the chair had reignited, setting the porch ceiling on fire. Firefighters from Etowah City Fire and Etowah Rural Fire quickly brought the flames under control. The Etowah Police Department provided traffic control during the response. No injuries were reported. *Photo courtesy of Etowah Rural FD*

ACT opens 2025-26 season with Two-Part Table Read This Week

Athens Community Theatre (ACT) announces the **2025-26 Table Read season**. All ACT Table Reads take place at The Arts Center in Athens, TN. ACT's 2025-26 Table Reads are on Tuesdays at 7:00 PM unless otherwise indicated. All Table Reads are free and open to the public.

Opening the season is a two-part table read, starting with Henrik Ibsen's 1879 *A Doll's House*, followed by the Tony-winning 2023 adaptation by Amy Herzog.

The Doll's House (Ibsen) will be read **Tuesday, August 26** and *The Doll's House* (Herzog) will be read **Thursday, August 28**. Both are hosted by ACT director, Jan Burleson. Both start at **6:00 PM** in the **Peggy Dow Performance Center**. Participants can attend either or both table reads. Participants are not required to attend the reading of the original to attend the reading of the adaptation. **Henrik Ibsen's 1879 play, *The Doll's House***, thrust drama firmly into the modern age. Several mean-spirited outsiders intrude in the lives of an ordinary family. One threatens to expose a fraud. When the fraud is finally revealed, it upends the family forever.

Nearly 150 years after Ibsen's celebrated play, acclaimed playwright **Amy Herzog** refreshes the story that shocked audiences and brought forth a new era of theatre. Herzog's thrilling Tony Award-winning play is a compact and devastatingly contemporary adaptation.

Participants should mark their calendars for the following Table Reads: October 28, November 18, January 13, February 3, April 28, May 19, July 14.

Participation in a table read is a great way to "dip a toe in" to see what it's like to work with Athens Community Theatre. The play is read casually: A participant can read a part or simply listen, and change their mind at any time. ACT members host these opportunities for fun, to preview plays and musicals for consideration, or for more niche titles. *Source: Lauren Brown, AACA*

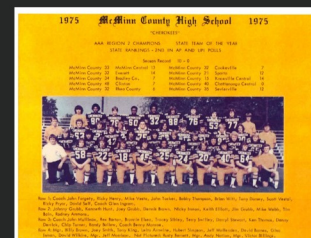
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Monday, August 25, 2025

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Athens, Tennessee

McMinn County Arrest Reports

8-21-25

Stephanie Myers, 27 of Sweetwater, charged with violation of probation for criminal impersonation. Bond \$952.45

Stephanie Reagan, 27 of Athens, charged with domestic assault. Bond \$2,000

Murray Kane, 43 of Niota, charged with failure to appear and driving on a suspended license. Bond \$2,000

Rafael Frank, 53 of Etowah, charged with state violation of probation for Schedule II Meth.

8-22-25

Michael Handy, 38 of Athens, charged with failure to appear for driving on a revoked license. Bond \$2,000

Patty Lowe, 48 of Etowah, charged with violation of probation for possession of meth. Bond \$2,125

Dylan Yearwood, 27 of Athens, charged with violation of probation for driving on a revoked license and leaving the scene of an accident. Bond \$900

Clifton Russell, 39 of Athens, charged with failure to appear for domestic assault charge. Bond \$2,000

Philip Galka, 32 of Madisonville, charged with theft of property, violation of probation, and assault. Bond \$3,323

Andrew Lovingood, 37, of Madisonville, charged with simple possession, casual exchange of fentanyl, cannabis, and possession of drug paraphernalia. Bond \$16,000

Roger Gann, 45 of Athens, charged with violation of probation for joyriding, and domestic assault. Bond \$1,800

Clifford Dockery, 40 of Athens, charged with violation of state probation for possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. Being held without bond.

Those accused are considered innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

Information gathered using
Public Sources

Obituaries

Kenneth Robert Lumbra Sr., 54 of Niota, passed away on Friday, August 22 at his residence. Originally from Connecticut, he was the proud owner of KRL Trucking, LLC. He had a heart of gold and loved living life. He made everyone feel welcome and would give anyone the shirt off his back. He loved his family and was a proud Dad of 5 children and absolutely loved his grandchildren. A Celebration of Life will be held on September 7 at 2PM at Sewee Church of God for all friends and family. Another Celebration of Life will be announced at a later date in Connecticut. Laycock-Hobbs Funeral Home, Athens, Tenn. in charge of arrangements.

Emma Webb Mason of Niota, passed away Saturday, August 23rd. Funeral arrangements are pending and will be announced by Laycock-Hobbs Funeral Home.

We encourage you to e-mail community events, church news, sports results or other items of interest for possible use in the Morning Fax. If you take a newsworthy photograph, send it to: wyradio@gmail.com

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