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Thursday, February 12, 2026

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Athens, Tennessee

Former Liberty Christian Academy Principal Sentenced in Sexual Abuse Case



The former principal of Liberty Christian Academy in McMinn County has been sentenced in a high-profile sexual misconduct case that has drawn widespread attention since charges were first filed.

According to court records, **Jason Kennedy** was sentenced to **five years** after four charges were reduced to **sexual battery**. Records also show Kennedy will be required to **register as a sex offender for life**.

The case began in 2022 when Kennedy and the school's secretary were charged in connection with alleged improper sexual behavior involving a teenage student. Investigators said the allegations centered on misconduct that occurred while Kennedy was employed at the private Christian school.

Kennedy was initially indicted on multiple charges over the course of the investigation. A McMinn County Grand Jury previously returned additional indictments that prosecutors said involved three more victims, bringing the total number of alleged victims to four. Those indictments included charges of sexual activity involving a minor, solicitation of a minor to observe sexual conduct, sexual battery by an authority figure, violations of the Child Protect Act, and aggravated sexual battery.

Earlier arrest reports alleged the incidents occurred at Kennedy's home and involved improper sexual activity with an underage teen. Authorities said at the time that Kennedy held a position of authority over the victim.

Court records reflect that Kennedy's case has now concluded with the five-year sentence and lifetime sex offender registration requirement. **Source:** [WTVC NewsChannel 9](#)



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McMinn County Living Heritage Museum

Upcoming February Events

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HISTORY FOR LUNCH:

**THE HISTORY OF LITTLE DEBBIE WITH NATHAN MCKEE
THURSDAY, FEB 12TH @ NOON "FREE ADMISSION"**

Programs sponsored by C. Scott & Muriel S. Mayfield Family Foundation, Tennessee Arts Commission, Hugh M. Willson Family Foundation, and City of Athens



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SATURDAY, FEB 21ST @ 5:00 PM
\$30 PER PERSON
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Museum Hours:	
Tuesday - Friday:	10 AM - 5 PM
Saturday:	10 AM - 1 PM
Sunday - Monday:	Closed
Admission:	
Adults:	\$5.00
Senior 60+:	\$3.00
Students:	\$3.00

More Information

522 W Madison Ave.
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www.livingheritagemuseum.org

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Athens, Tennessee

Starr Regional Partners with Birthly for Free Virtual Childbirth Classes

Starr Regional Medical Center has partnered with Birthly to provide patients with free access to live, virtual childbirth education classes, giving expecting parents the opportunity to participate from home.

Through the partnership, patients can access a variety of perinatal classes at no additional cost. Sessions are conducted live and allow participants to connect via video with certified childbirth educators for interactive instruction and dedicated question-and-answer time.

Classes offered include Early Pregnancy Preparations; Prenatal Education Bootcamp (English and Spanish); Coping and Comfort; Breastfeeding 101 (English and Spanish); Perinatal Mental Health (English and Spanish); Pre/Postnatal Movement and Mindfulness (English and Spanish); and Newborn Care (English and Spanish). Each class is offered multiple times per month, providing flexible scheduling options and virtual access by laptop, tablet or mobile device.

To register, visit MyBirthly.com/Starr. For more information, email strr.cares@lpnt.net or info@mybirthly.com.

Camper Destroyed in Etowah Fire

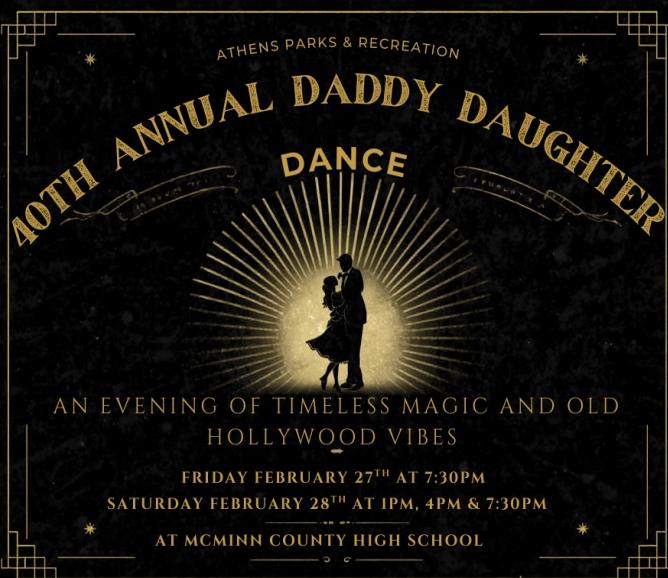


A camper was completely destroyed by fire Tuesday evening on County Road 496 in Etowah. The fire occurred around 5:30 PM, and the occupant was not home at the time.

Firefighters arriving on the scene found the camper fully engulfed in flames. Despite efforts from multiple agencies, the camper was totally destroyed.

Responding agencies included Etowah City Fire, Etowah Rural Fire, Englewood Rural Fire, Claxton Fire, EUB, AMR, and the McMinn County Sheriff's Department. Etowah Rural Fire Captain Ryland Hearn was in command of the scene. No injuries were reported.

Photo by Lynn Ingram, Englewood Rural FD



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Athens, Tennessee

Downtown Athens to Host *Make Music Athens* on June 21



Main Street Athens is excited to announce that Downtown Athens will come alive with music, art, and community on Sunday, June 21, from 1–5 PM, for Make Music Athens, a free arts and music festival celebrating the first day of summer.

Part of the global Make Music Day celebration coordinated by the Make Music Alliance, Athens will join communities worldwide by turning the downtown area into a citywide stage. Musicians will perform in storefronts, restaurants, and outdoor spaces, while local artists and makers showcase and create art throughout the district.

This family-friendly event provides a perfect opportunity for residents and visitors to gather after church and enjoy Father's Day afternoon with live music, art, food, and support for local businesses.

The festival is made possible through the support of partners METTC, The Arts Center, City of Athens, Denso, and Truist, with additional sponsors and collaborators welcome.

Musicians and venues interested in participating can sign up through the official Make Music Day Athens website, which coordinates performers with host locations. Local artists, food vendors, and volunteers are also encouraged to get involved via www.mainstreetathens.org.

More details about the event and schedule will be announced soon.



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Athens, Tennessee

McMinn County Arrest Reports

February 10, 2026

Michelle Dover, 53 of Cleveland, charged with bringing contraband into a penal facility, simple possession, casual exchange of meth.

Tyler Manheri, 20 of Englewood, charged with false reporting. Bond \$4,000.

Jason Kennedy, 50 of Athens, charged with aggravated sexual battery, and sexual battery by an authority figure.

James Gray, 67 of Athens, charged with violation of the sex offender registry, Bond \$10,000.

Joshua Pierce, 37 of Riceville, charged with violation of probation for possession of paraphernalia, Bond \$1,714.45.

Catherine Morris, 34 of Athens, charge with manufacturing, sale, delivery, or possession of fentanyl, Bond \$30,000.

Those accused are considered innocent until proven guilty in a court of law. Information gathered from Public Sources.

Obituaries

Brian Mangrum, 61, passed away on Tuesday, February 10. Brian was skilled as a welder and his proficiency with his tractor, reveling in opportunities to work outside and connect with nature. His hands-on approach to life reflected his personality; he was a man who found joy in physical labor and the beauty of the environment that surrounded him. His enjoyment of the outdoors was a defining aspect of who he was—a source of strength and solace. Funeral services will be held at 1:00 p.m., Monday, February 16 in the chapel of Bordwine Funeral Home. The family will receive friends from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m., Monday prior to the service. Interment will follow the service in McMinn Memory Gardens. Bordwine Funeral Home of Etowah is in charge of arrangements.

Charles "Ron" Morgan, 72 of Dayton, passed away on Tuesday, February 10. He was a great mechanic and could change just about anything out on anything there was to work on. He mastered building fences and taught that skill to his nephews and nieces. Companion Funeral Home of Athens and the Cody family are honored to assist the family with arrangements for Charles "Ron" Morgan.

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