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Thursday, March 05, 2026

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Athens, Tennessee

Driver Extricated After Rollover Crash on County Road 250



A 64-year-old man was transported to a nearby hospital Tuesday evening following a serious single-vehicle rollover crash on County Road 250.

Just before 7:30 p.m., a 2016 Kia Soul traveling north in the 500 block left the roadway. Authorities said the driver overcorrected, causing the vehicle to flip several times before coming to rest on its side.

The driver, the sole occupant, became trapped inside the vehicle when his right leg was pinned. Rescue crews worked for approximately 15 minutes to extricate him from the wreckage before he was transported by AMR for medical treatment.

Chief Gary Dake of the Clearwater Fire Department served as incident commander. Also responding were the Niota Rural Fire Department, Athens Rural Fire Department, and the McMinn County Sheriff's Office. The crash remains under investigation by Whitney Dixon with the Tennessee Highway Patrol.

Photo by David Prater, Niota Rural FD

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Athens, Tennessee

Driver Flees After Rollover Crash in McMinn County



A single-vehicle rollover crash Monday afternoon ended with the driver fleeing the scene before being quickly apprehended by authorities.

The accident occurred around 1:30 p.m. at the intersection of County Roads 854 and 862 when a 2011 Ford F-150 lost control and overturned several times before coming to rest. Officials said the driver exited the vehicle and ran from the scene.

Deputies with the McMinn County Sheriff's Department located and apprehended the driver shortly after the crash. No medical transport was required.

Responding agencies included the Etowah Rural Fire Department and AMR. The crash was investigated by Gabriel Drybread with the McMinn County Sheriff's Department.

Photo courtesy of the Etowah Rural FD

Community News You Can Use

- Hosted by East Tennessee Arts Center and partners, the McMinn County Art Camp will be held Saturday, March 28, 2026, from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Etowah Community Center. Open to all ages. Preregister at easttnartcenter@gmail.com.
- MEDIC Regional Blood Center will host a blood drive Tuesday, March 10, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Athens City Hall Court Room, 815 N. Jackson St. All donors will receive an orange MEDIC T-shirt and a Texas Roadhouse coupon. Appointments are encouraged; walk-ins welcome. Call 423-453-5846 for details.
- The Athens City Schools Board of Education will meet on Monday, March 9 at 5:30 p.m. at the ACS Administration Building (943 Crestway Dr., Athens). The draft agenda and packet can be viewed [online at the Athens City Schools website](#).

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Athens, Tennessee

Sweetwater Man Dies in Boating Accident on Watts Bar Reservoir



A 65-year-old Sweetwater man died Feb. 27 following a boating accident on Watts Bar Reservoir, according to the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency.

First responders were dispatched around 1 p.m. after a 911 caller reported an unconscious man in the water. Authorities said Steven Hayes had been fishing from the back of a small boat while another man was positioned at the front. The companion told officers he heard a splash and saw Hayes struggling in the water. He threw flotation devices and attempted to guide him toward shallower water.

When emergency crews arrived, Hayes was found unconscious in approximately eight feet of water. Life-saving efforts were unsuccessful. He was transported to Rhea County Medical Center, where he was pronounced dead.

Officials said Hayes was not wearing a life jacket. The water temperature at the time was reported to be 48 degrees.

Responding agencies included Rhea County EMS, Fire and Rescue, the Rhea County Sheriff's Office, and Meigs County Fire and Rescue.

TWRA reported the incident marks the first boating-related fatality in Tennessee in 2026.

Source: [News Channel 9, WTVC](#)

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McMinn County Arrest Reports

Obituaries

March 03, 2026

Holly Bryan, 46, of Etowah, charged with false reporting, Bond \$1,000.

Lance Berger, 44, of Lost Lake, charged with drug paraphernalia, simple possession of schedule 3, DUI, and violation of implied consent law, Bond \$5,000.

April Thompson, 43 of Sweetwater, charged with simple possession of schedule II, drug paraphernalia, and bringing contraband into a penal facility, Bond \$15,000.

Those accused are considered innocent until proven guilty in a court of law. Information gathered using public sources.

Samantha Jewel (Long) Gilliard, 76 of Sweetwater, passed away on Saturday, February 28. She found joy in the simple and eternal things - gathering her children together, holding her grandchildren close, offering wisdom when asked, and prayer when words were not enough. Her 25 grandchildren and great-grandchildren were among her greatest treasures. Each one carried a piece of her heart. There will be a Celebration of Life service held graveside on Saturday, March 7 at 11 a.m. located at Lakeview Cemetery in Lenoir City. Companion Funeral Home of Athens, TN and the Cody Family are honored to assist the Gilliard family during this time.

We encourage you to e-mail community events, church news, 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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