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# The Morning Fax<sup>®</sup>

## Today's News. This Morning.

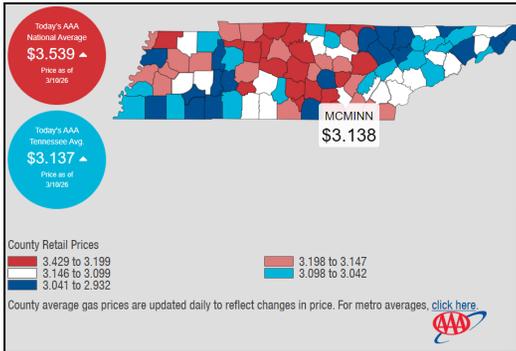
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### AMERICAN LEGION FISH FRY

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## Tennessee Gas Prices Continue Climbing, McMinn County Average Tops \$3.13



Gas prices across Tennessee continue to climb sharply as global oil prices surge. According to AAA – The Auto Club Group, the state average has now risen to \$3.137 per gallon, up from \$3.03 reported just one day earlier and marking the first time since August 2024 that Tennessee's average has moved above the \$3 mark.

The national average has also increased significantly, reaching \$3.539 per gallon.

Locally, drivers in McMinn County are seeing similar prices, with the average cost for regular gasoline now at \$3.138 per gallon. Regional averages previously reported by AAA showed Knoxville and Morristown among the lowest-priced metro areas in the state at about \$2.95, while Nashville and Chattanooga posted some of the highest averages at just over \$3 per gallon.

AAA spokeswoman Megan Cooper said the rapid price increase is closely tied to rising crude oil prices. About 60 percent of what drivers pay at the pump is directly tied to crude oil costs, mean-

ing sharp increases in oil prices typically lead to higher gasoline prices.

Crude oil prices surged 36 percent last week, closing at \$90.90 per barrel, nearly \$24 higher than the previous week and the highest price since September 2023. Oil shipments through the Strait of Hormuz — a key route that normally carries about 20 percent of the world's oil supply — have reportedly halted due to safety concerns linked to tensions involving Iran.

AAA analysts say prices could rise further depending on how long the conflict continues, when shipping through the Strait of Hormuz resumes and how global supply and demand adjust in the coming weeks.

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Wednesday, March 11, 2026

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

Athens, Tennessee

### CORRECTION: Burn Permits Required Through May 15 in Tennessee

A previous report in Tuesday's edition of The Morning Fax incorrectly stated that burn permits were required until March 15. Officials say the correct date is **May 15**.

According to the Tennessee Division of Forestry, burn permits are required **from Oct. 15 through May 15** for debris pile fires and prescribed burns across the state, including in McMinn County and surrounding areas.

The permit system allows forestry officials to determine when conditions are safe for outdoor burning and helps communicate guidelines to residents about where and how burning can take place safely.

When weather conditions create a higher fire risk, the Tennessee Division of Forestry may temporarily pause issuing permits and implement burn restrictions until conditions improve.

Permits are available online 7 days a week, 8 a.m. - 11 p.m. EST [HERE](#) or via phone by calling (877) 350-BURN (2876) Monday - Friday 8 a.m.- 4:30 p.m. Central.

### McMinn County Health Council Shares Updates on Community Programs

The McMinn County Health Council shared updates on several community programs and upcoming events during its March 5 meeting in McMinn County. Officials noted that the UTC MobileMOC mobile health clinic will visit the Etowah Senior Center on March 11 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., offering free primary care services. *A story on the clinic's visit ran in Tuesday's edition.*

Other updates included continued enrollment for Community Compass training programs, a community garden accessibility project led by students from Tennessee Wesleyan University, and a report from the Good Faith Clinic that more than 103 patients were served during its recent health fair.

Announcements also noted that Nurture the Next is accepting referrals and Head Start is taking applications for the upcoming school year. A community resource day hosted by Grace and Mercy Ministries is scheduled for May 14 from 9 a.m. to noon at Market Park Pavilion.

The council's next meeting is scheduled for May 7 and will include a presentation on the community health assessment and previous survey results.

Source: Caitlyn Tate, TN Dept. of Health

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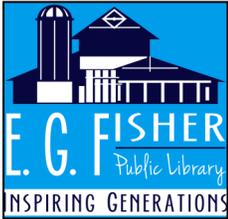
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**Wednesday, March 11, 2026** Morning Fax®...Today's News This Morning Page 3 **Athens, Tennessee**

## Fisher Library Announces March Programs and Spring Break Activities



The E.G. Fisher Public Library has announced a full schedule of free programs and activities for residents in Athens throughout March, including a chess tournament, Spring Break events for children, a teen overnight program and an adult fitness workshop.

The library will host a Chess Club Tournament on Saturday, March 14 at 12:30 p.m. using a four-round Swiss tournament format with a timed play system. Players of all skill levels are welcome, but registration is required and participants are asked to provide their skill level or rating to help create balanced matchups. Prizes will be awarded.

Families can also take part in a week of Spring Break activities from March 16–20, with programs held daily at 12:30 p.m. The schedule includes a STEM-themed Potato Derby where participants design and race potato-powered cars, a Shamrock Search and outdoor play day, Bug Hotel Builders where children create insect habitats from natural materials, a pony bead keychain craft, and a storybook-themed party featuring games, crafts and refreshments inspired by favorite children’s books.

During Spring Break, the library will also provide free meals for youth and teens Monday through Friday from noon to 12:30 p.m., along with an afternoon snack from 4 to 4:30 p.m. Meals are served on-site at the library. Outside of Spring Break, free snacks are available weekday afternoons and lunch is offered on Saturdays.

Teens ages 12–17 can register for an overnight Teen Lock-In from 8 p.m. March 19 to 8 a.m. March 20, featuring games, challenges, snacks and supervised activities throughout the night. Participation requires advance registration and a signed parent or guardian waiver.

The library will also host an Adult Chair Fitness Workshop on March 25 from 10 to 11 a.m., led by a YMCA-certified trainer. The session focuses on strength and mobility exercises using a chair for support and is designed for a variety of fitness levels.

Most programs require advance registration due to limited space. For more information or to sign up, contact the library at 423-745-7782 or visit the front desk at the library.

# PROOF



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# McMinn County Arrest Reports

## March 09, 2026

- Clay Spangler**, 47 of Athens charged with criminal trespassing, vandalism, and public intoxication. Bond \$4,000.
- Lacey Holloway**, 43 of Athens, charged with shoplifting, Bond \$12,000 bond.
- Juan Gonzalez Hernandez**, 37 of Chicago, Illinois, charged with drug paraphernalia, schedule 2 meth, failure to surrender license and registration, failure to have insurance, driving without a license, speeding, and unlawful carry or possession of a weapon, Bond \$28,000.
- Roy Hall**, 39 of Madisonville, charged with state violation of probation for possession of meth for resale.
- Hector Vidal**, 54 of Athens, charged with criminal trespassing, Bond \$1,000.
- Rajesh Stone**, 50 of Chattanooga charged with domestic assault by intimidation, Bond \$4,000.
- Allison Davis**, 31 of Loudon, charged with violation of probation for inciting a riot, Bond \$603.45.
- Christopher Cook**, 50 of Athens, Charged with forgery, introduction of schedule 2 meth into a penal facility, casual exchange, possession of meth, Bond \$13,000.
- Gary Wallace**, 45 of Etowah, charged with shoplifting, Bond \$12,000.
- Tracy Lowry**, 54 of Charleston, charged with possession of meth and schedule 4, and Simple Possession, Bond \$20,000.
- Caitlin Lynn**, 20 of Niota, charged with drug paraphernalia, and simple possession of schedule II, Bond \$8,000.

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



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Wednesday, March 11, 2026

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

Athens, Tennessee

## Obituaries

**Bradley Logan Trent**, 56, of Riceville, passed away on Friday, March 6 at Starr Regional Medical Center. He was associated with Riceville Wallpaper. A private graveside service will be conducted at a later date. Smith Funeral & Cremation Services of Athens is honored to serve the family of Bradley Logan Trent.

**Mark Middlebrook**, 74, formerly of Ponte Vedra Beach, FL, passed away on Sunday, March 1 at his home in Spring City, Tennessee. He was drafted into the United States Army in 1971 and served in both the U.S. Army and the Virginia National Guard. He later earned a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Virginia in 1981. Mark began his journalism career as a reporter and photographer in Virginia and then Florida, where he became an award-winning investigative reporter and later an editor. He also briefly worked as an on-air reporter. Later, while serving on the staff of Jacksonville Mayor John Delaney, Mark played a key role in land preservation efforts. Companion Funeral Home of Athens and the Cody family are honored to assist the family with these arrangements

**Mary Ellen Allmon Mincey Grindell**, 91, passed away on Sunday, March 8. She was of the Baptist faith. Visitation will be held from 12:30-1:30 PM at Ziegler Funeral Home on Wednesday, March 11. A graveside service will follow at 2:00 PM at Green Hill Cemetery. Ziegler Funeral Home has been entrusted with the care of Mary Ellen Allmon Mincey Grindell.

**John David Hixson**, 40, passed away on Monday, March 2. David went to school in Soddy Daisy, TN. He worked many years at landscaping. He worked at Hiwassee Building Supply in Athens, TN building trusses at the time of his passing. He was living at Grace Rehab since 2024 and was doing very well. He turned his life over to the Lord and was attending Bible study groups and Sunday services. David had finally found peace after struggling with addiction for many years. No services will be held at this time. Companion Funeral Home of Athens and the Cody family are honored to assist the family with these arrangements.

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