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One Injured in Accidental Shooting in Etowah



Emergency crews responded early Sunday morning to an accidental shooting in Etowah that left one person injured. According to reports, the McMinn County Sheriff's Department, along with AMR and Etowah Rural Fire Department, were dispatched to County Road 883 around 5:30 a.m. following a report of a gunshot injury.

Officials said the victim sustained a gunshot wound to the right leg and was treated at the scene by emergency personnel. The patient was then transported to a designated landing zone at the intersection of Highway 411 and County Road 875, where a medical helicopter arrived.

The victim was airlifted by LifeForce Air Medical to Erlanger Health System for further treatment. Authorities have not released the condition of the patient.

The incident was investigated by McMinn County Sheriff's Deputy Brian Powers, and officials confirmed the shooting was accidental.

Photo provided by the Etowah Rural FD

UT Extension Promotes Financial Wellness During America Saves Week

University of Tennessee Extension is joining organizations nationwide to celebrate America Saves Week 2026 April 6–10, encouraging individuals and families to build stronger financial futures through saving and debt reduction. This year's theme, "Own your financial story: small steps, big impact," emphasizes the value of consistent financial habits.

Since its launch in 2007, America Saves Week has grown into a national movement involving nonprofits, financial institutions, and government agencies focused on improving financial confidence and resilience. UT Extension supports that mission locally by providing research-based education and resources to Tennesseans.

Chris Sneed, a specialist with the UT Department of Family and Consumer Sciences, said the initiative offers an opportunity for individuals to evaluate their finances and take practical steps toward long-term stability, noting that small actions can lead to meaningful change. Participation is free, and individuals can take the America Saves pledge online at americasaves.org/pledge to set goals and access tools, tips, and resources designed to support financial success.

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Tuesday, March 24, 2026

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

Athens, Tennessee

Athens Community Theatre to Present Award-Winning Drama 'Proof' March 26-29

Athens Community Theatre will present the Tony Award-winning play *Proof* by David Auburn March 26-29 at the The Arts Center, closing out the company's 2025-26 Dessert Series with a thought-provoking and emotionally driven production.

Directed by longtime ACT performer and director Autumn N. Lowry, *Proof* centers on Catherine, a troubled young woman who has spent years caring for her father, a once-renowned but mentally unstable mathematician. Set over the days surrounding his death, the story explores Catherine's struggle with grief, the uncertainty of her own future, and a growing relationship with one of her father's former students. The discovery of a mysterious notebook raises questions about authorship, trust, and whether Catherine has inherited her father's brilliance, his instability, or both.

Lowry, who previously adapted and directed *A Christmas Carol* alongside writing partner J. Brad McKenzie, brings her experience both on stage and behind the scenes to this intimate production. Organizers say the show reflects the mission of the Dessert Series, which highlights experimental, character-driven works designed to challenge audiences and spark conversation.

Performances will take place Thursday through Saturday, March 26-28, at 7:30 p.m., with a Sunday matinee on March 29 at 2:00 p.m. All performances will be held in the Willson Family Theater inside the Peggy Dow Performance Center at The Arts Center.

The Dessert Series has become a staple for local theatergoers, offering smaller-scale productions that emphasize storytelling and performance in a more intimate setting. Organizers describe the series as "better after dinner," encouraging audiences to enjoy an evening out with engaging live theater. Tickets for *Proof* are available now through The Arts Center's website [HERE](#). See ad below.

PROOF



MARCH 26 - 29

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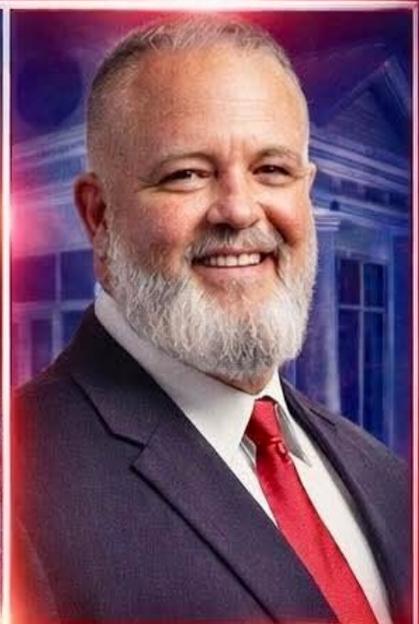
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McMinn County Arrest Reports

March 15, 2026

Clay Spangler, 47 of Athens, charged with disorderly conduct, public intoxication, criminal trespassing, resisting stop, and assault against a first responder, Bond \$12,000.

Michael Brakebill, 47 and Niota, charged with driving on a suspended license, violation of the open container law, and violation of registration laws,

Mark Spurlock, 45 of Athens, charged with failure to appear for possession of meth and criminal trespassing, Bond \$14,500.

Henderson Hampton, 64 of Cincinnati, Ohio, charged with possession of schedule 6 for resale, Bond \$6,000.

Tommy Battle, 67 of Cincinnati Ohio, charge with possession of schedule six for resale, Bond \$6000.

James Price, 38 of Charleston, charged with simple possession casual exchange of schedule II fentanyl, simple possession of Schedule 4 Xanax, drug paraphernalia, and possession of a handgun while under the influence, Bond \$24,000.

Jessica Martin, 45 of Niota, charged with child support.

Holly Womack, 49 of Knoxville, charged with simple possession of schedule II meth, simple possession of schedule II morphine, simple possession of schedule 6 marijuana, and drug paraphernalia, Bond \$28,000.

Edwin Cawley, 62 of Athens, charged with DUI, Bond \$2,000.

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

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Tuesday, March 24, 2026

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

Athens, Tennessee

Chamber Welcomes Down Home Bakes with Ribbon Cutting Ceremony



A ribbon cutting was recently held by the Athens Area Chamber of Commerce to welcome new member Down Home Bakes, located at 3 W. College St. in Athens. The bakery offers handcrafted pound cakes, cookies, brownies, and seasonal desserts inspired by family traditions. Pictured at the event are chamber and business representatives, family members, and owner Cardell Davis. For more information, Down Home Bakes can be reached at 423-788-5202.

Obituaries

Vickey Jane Bates, age 68, of Decatur, went to be with her Lord and Savior on March 21, 2026. Vickey was a devoted wife, loving mother, and proud grandmother. A funeral service will be held at 2 p.m., on Wednesday, March 25, 2026 in the Chapel of Decatur Funeral Home & Cremation Services with the Rev. Mike Couch officiating. Interment will follow in the Concord United Methodist Church Cemetery. The family will receive friends from 12 - 2 p.m., prior to the service. Decatur Funeral Home & Cremation Services is honored to serve the Bates family.

Patsy Everhart White, age 66, passed away on Friday, March 20, 2026. Patsy was born in Athens, TN and was a resident of Benton, TN. Following Patsy's wishes, she will be cremated and no formal services will be held. Companion Funeral Home of Athens and the Cody family are honored to assist the family during this time.

Charles Lewis Lingerfelt, age 90 of Sweetwater, passed away Saturday, March 21, 2026 at his residence. He was a native of Sweetwater and resident of Ten Mile and Sweetwater. Charles was retired from Olin Chemical Company and was a veteran of the U.S Army having served during the Korean Conflict. He enjoyed gardening and fishing, but most of all he cherished being surrounded by his family at the lake. The graveside service will be 2:00 pm Wednesday, March 25 at McMinn Memory Gardens with the Rev. Darrell Cardin. Laycock-Hobbs Funeral Home will be in charge of the arrangements.

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