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MCHS Senior Commits to Carson-Newman Football Program



Jakyran Dyer, a senior at McMinn County High School, has committed to continue his academic and athletic career at Carson-Newman University.

Dyer, known as "Peanut," plans to major in business while joining the football program as a freshman running back this fall. Family members, including his mother Desiree Dyer, expressed pride in his accomplishment and support as he begins the next chapter of his journey.

Community News You Can Use

- The Tennessee Highway Safety Office and Tennessee Highway Patrol is partnering with the Tennessee Department of Transportation and local agencies today, Wednesday, April 1, for "Operation Hands Free," a statewide effort to enforce Tennessee's Hands-Free Law during Distracted Driving Awareness Month. The campaign will include press events and enforcement efforts across the state, including in Knoxville. Officials remind drivers that it is illegal to hold a phone while driving, with violations resulting in fines and points added on a driving record.
- The Tennessee Highway Patrol will be conducting a sobriety checkpoint on Saturday, May 2 at 1:00 pm. It will be located on Hwy 11 at County Road 50. The scheduled checkpoint is contingent upon manpower and weather conditions.

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Wednesday, April 01, 2026

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Athens, Tennessee

Structure Fire Results in Total Loss in Madisonville



Multiple agencies responded to a structure fire Sunday night on Little Gudger Road in Madisonville after embers from a burn spread to a nearby building. Mutual aid was requested by the Gudger Fire Department around 8 p.m. Officials said the homeowner had been burning a feed sack when wind carried embers to the structure, which was ultimately a total loss.

Responding agencies included Notchey Creek Fire Department, Hopewell Fire Department, Madisonville City Fire Department, Englewood Rural Fire Department, Monroe County EMS, the Monroe County Sheriff's Department, and Monroe County EMA. Officials said Fire Chief Mike Smallen with Madisonville City Fire was in command of the scene.

Photo provided by Lynn Ingram, Englewood Rural FD

Better Ledgers Bookkeeping joins Athens Chamber



A ribbon cutting was celebrated recently for new Athens Area Chamber of Commerce member, Jessica Plovich, with Better Ledgers Bookkeeping and Accounting services, LLC. Contact Jessica at 865-252-3600. Shown here are chamber and business representatives, family members and Jessica Plovich, Owner & CEO of Better Ledgers.

Source: Julie Simbeck, Athens Area Chamber of Commerce

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Wednesday, April 01, 2026

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Athens, Tennessee

AUB Recognizes Dylan Coleman as Journeyman Lineman

The Athens Utilities Board has recognized Dylan Coleman for completing the requirements to become a Journeyman Lineman after finishing the utility's five-year apprentice program.

Coleman joined AUB in 2016, working in both the wastewater and water divisions before transitioning to line work. Officials said his experience across departments helped prepare him for the demanding training, which includes extensive classroom instruction and hands-on fieldwork.

AUB Superintendent of Power David St. John praised Coleman's work ethic and dedication, noting his commitment to serving the community. Coleman said he enjoys the challenges of the job and the opportunity to assist with storm restoration efforts.

AUB officials congratulated Coleman on the achievement and thanked him for his service in helping maintain reliable power for the community.

Source: Amy McDonald, AUB

Brush Fire Burns Several Acres Near Etowah



Multiple agencies responded to a brush fire Saturday afternoon on Topside Drive in Etowah after embers from a previously burned brush pile reignited and spread due to windy conditions.

The fire, reported around 1:30 p.m., burned approximately four acres, including part of a neighboring property. Responding agencies included Etowah City Fire Department, Etowah Rural Fire Department, Englewood Rural Fire Department, Claxton Fire Department, City of Athens Fire Department, the Tennessee Division of Forestry, AMR, and the Etowah Police Department.

Officials said Captain Austin Hancock with Etowah City Fire was in command of the scene.

Source: Englewood Rural FD

Steel Magnolias
by Robert Harling

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Etowah Arts Commission to Host Photography Exhibit by Local Artist

The Etowah Arts Commission, a Tennessee Overhill Initiative, is proud to present a new photography exhibit by local Overhill artist Erica McMillian of Ducktown, TN. The exhibit will run from April 2 through May 16, 2026 at the Nancy Dender Gallery in Etowah, showcasing McMillian's unique perspective on the landscapes, communities, and stories of the Overhill region.

A public artist reception will be held on Wednesday, April 8, from 5:00 -7:00 p.m., featuring light refreshments and the opportunity to meet McMillian and discuss her work.

Erica McMillian's photography captures the essence of the Overhill region with a focus on its people, culture, and natural beauty. Her work invites viewers to explore both familiar and hidden corners of Southeast Tennessee, reflecting the artistic spirit and heritage of the area.

The exhibit is generously sponsored by the Etowah Arts Commission, supporting local artists and providing the community with opportunities to experience the rich cultural landscape of the Tennessee Overhill region.

For more information about the exhibit, the artist reception, or upcoming programming, please contact the Etowah Arts Commission at (423) 263-7232 or visit www.etowah-arts.com.

Source: Adrian Lambert, Director TN Overhill Heritage Association

McMinn County Arrest Reports

March 30, 2026

Carlos Mashburn, 46 of Athens, charged with DUI, simple possession casual exchange of Schedule 6, possession of a handgun while under the influence, drug paraphernalia, and violation of the open container law.

Ayanna Edmondson, 25 of McMinn County, charged with aggravated assault by intimidation.

Zachary Crisp, 35 of Athens, charged with simple possession casual exchange of Schedule 6, Casual exchange, possession of meth, 1.4 grams, and drug paraphernalia, Bond \$8,000.

Dennis Stamey, 53 of Athens, charged with shoplifting, theft of property, Bond \$2,000.

Justin Bivens, 42 of Athens, charged with failure to appear for driving on a revoked license, and Resisting stop, Bond \$500.

Tiffany Crisp, 38 of Athens, charged with simple possession casual exchange of Schedule 6, casual exchange, possession of meth, drug paraphernalia, child abuse, neglect, nonviolent, and DUI, Bond \$11,000.

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

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Wednesday, April 01, 2026

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Athens, Tennessee

Obituaries

Mark Lancing McManaway, a native of Benton, Illinois, and former resident of Christopher, Illinois, passed away on Thursday, March 26. He was a flight paramedic for over 20 years and was a proud organ donor. Mark was a member of the Christian Veterans Motorcycle Association and the CMA. He also served in the United States Army National Guard. Celebration of Life Services will be announced at a later time. Ziegler Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Mark Lancing McManaway.

Raymond Walter Lockard Jr., of Athens, passed away on Saturday, March, 28 at his residence. The family would like to extend their gratefulness to Amedisys Hospice of Athens for their care and compassion towards Ray and their family. There will be a celebration of life memorial service held in honor of Ray at a later date announced and held by his family in accordance to his wishes. Companion Funeral Home of Athens, TN and the Cody family are honored to assist the Lockard family during this time.

Ronald "Terry" Wallace, a native of Loudon, TN, and a longtime resident of Athens, passed away on Saturday, March 28. He served as a CNA for many years and loved to play the organ and piano. Terry was a member of Hilltop Baptist Church. Graveside services will be held on Friday, April 10 at 11:00 AM at Hilltop Baptist Church. Ziegler Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Ronald "Terry" Wallace.

Ronny Borden, 88, peacefully passed away on Sunday, March 29. He was a devoted member of Englewood United Methodist Church. Funeral service will be held at 6:00 p.m., Friday, April 3 in the chapel of Bordwine Funeral Home. The family will receive friends from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m., Friday prior to the service. Family and friends will assemble at McMinn Memory Gardens, Saturday, April 4th for the 11:00 a.m. committal service. Bordwine Funeral Home of Etowah is in charge of arrangements.

Harvey Blessingame, 88 of Etowah, passed away Sunday, March 29. Funeral services will be 6:00 pm Thursday, April 2 from the Chapel of Bordwine Funeral Home in Etowah, The family will receive friends at Bordwine Funeral Home from 4:00 pm until 6:00 pm Thursday, April 2. The family will receive friends from 1:00 pm until 2:00 pm Friday, April 3, at Jones Funeral Home of Chatsworth with a graveside service to follow at 2:30 pm from Center Valley Cemetery. Bordwine Funeral Home of Etowah is in charge of local arrangements.

Renee Annette Dupont, age 59, of Madisonville, passed away on Wednesday, March 25, 2026. Renee enjoyed reading the Bible, drawing, writing poetry, and settling in for a good movie. These simple joys reflected the thoughtful, creative heart she carried and the comfort she found in quiet moments. Her memory will live on in the love she gave, the lessons she shared, and the moments, both big and small, she made meaningful for family and friends. Companion Funeral Home of Athens, TN and the Cody Family are honored to assist the family during this time.

James Dennis (Denny) Charles, 80, of Athens, passed away on Sunday, March 29, 2026, peacefully surrounded by his family. He was a member of West End Baptist Church for his entire life being a deacon, training union director, Sunday school teacher, vacation Bible school director, and bus driver. He worked as a machinist/mechanic for 40+ years until he retired. He was an avid sports fan especially all things pertaining to the Tennessee Vols. He loved fishing and camping with friends and family. The family will receive friends on Thursday, April 2, 2026, from 4:00-7:00 PM at Ziegler Funeral Home. Funeral services will be held at West End Baptist Church at 12:00 PM on Friday, April 3, 2026, with Reverend Dennis Wiseman and Reverend Herman Jordan officiating. Interment will follow at 2:00 PM at McMinn Memory Gardens. Ziegler Funeral Home is in charge of the arrangements.

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