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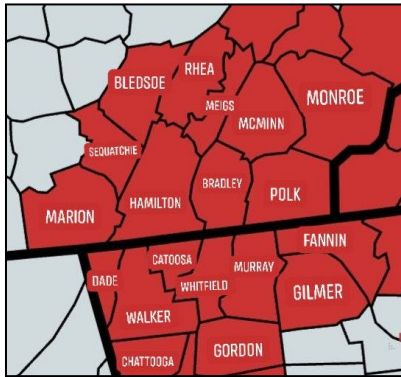


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Rabies Vaccine Baits to Be Distributed Across East Tennessee



The U.S. Department of Agriculture, in partnership with wildlife agencies and the Tennessee Department of Health, will begin distributing oral rabies vaccine baits across Tennessee and neighboring states this week as part of an ongoing effort to control the spread of the virus.

Officials say more than 300,000 baits will be dropped across Tennessee between April 8 and April 18, including in several East Tennessee counties such as McMinn, Meigs, Monroe, Bradley, and Polk. The broader regional effort will distribute approximately 1.7 million baits across parts of Tennessee, North Carolina, Virginia, and Georgia.

The bait, which attracts animals such as raccoons, contains a vaccine that immunizes wildlife against rabies, a virus that affects the central nervous system and is almost always fatal if untreated. The program is designed to prevent the westward spread of the disease.

Distribution will take place by airplane, helicopter, and ground crews, with helicopter drops planned for urban areas including Chattanooga and Johnson City. Ground teams will also operate in select locations.

Officials say the baits are safe for pets and other animals but should not be handled. Anyone who comes into contact with a bait is advised to wash the area with soap and warm water. *Source: [WBIR](#)*

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McMinn County Living Heritage Museum

Upcoming Spring Events

HERITAGE SCHOOL:
CHATTANOOGA AUDOBON SOCIETY PRESENTS - BEAK, FEET, FEATHERS
JOIN US TO LEARN ALL ABOUT BIRDS FROM JESSICA WHITEHORN
SATURDAY, APRIL 11TH @ 11:00 AM

DUTCH OVEN COOKING - PAM AND WARREN ARE BACK FOR ANOTHER COOKING CLASS! LEARN HOW TO COOK A DELICIOUS CAST IRON LASAGNA OVER AN OPEN FIRE!
SATURDAY, APRIL 18TH @ 10:00 AM

ALL HERITAGE SCHOOL PROGRAMS ARE \$5 OR FREE FOR MEMBERS.

HISTORY FOR LUNCH:
THIS WILL BE A COMPREHENSIVE HISTORY OF TENNESSEE MUSIC WITH DR. KEITH MILLS. THIS PRESENTATION WILL COVER EVERYTHING FROM THE BIRTH OF BLUEGRASS IN BRISTOL TO THE BIRTH OF ROCK 'N' ROLL IN MEMPHIS. HE WILL HIGHLIGHT THE SUPERSTARS, THE PIONEERS, AND THE LOCALS WHO MADE IT BIG.
THURSDAY, APRIL 23RD @ 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

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
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SEE WEBSITE FOR FULL PROGRAM INFORMATION



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Athens, Tennessee

Tennessee Awards Funding to Upgrade Livestock Markets

The Tennessee Department of Agriculture has announced the recipients of the Agricultural Enterprise Fund (AEF) Livestock Market Improvement Initiative, a program designed to strengthen the state's livestock economy.

The initiative provides support for upgraded infrastructure, equipment, and technology at livestock markets to improve safety, animal welfare, and operational efficiency. Eligible projects include enhancements to handling facilities, pens, scales, loading areas, roofing, and technology systems.

"Through the AEF Livestock Market Improvement Initiative, we're investing in the facilities and infrastructure that keep these markets safe, efficient and competitive," said Agriculture Commissioner Andy Holt.

Among the recipients is the Athens Regional Stockyard in McMinn County, which will benefit from these improvements.

Community News You Can Use

- The McMinn County High School Class of 1970 will host a reunion gathering on Saturday, May 2, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. in the MCHS cafeteria. The event will feature casual dress and light refreshments, with an admission cost of \$10 per person payable at the door. Classmates, their significant others, and members of other graduating classes are invited to attend. Those planning to participate are encouraged to notify organizers through the "[MCHS Class of '70](#)" Facebook page to assist with event planning and refreshments.
- The Meigs Decatur Public Library (120 E. Memorial Drive, Decatur) is offering a free art class on Saturday, April 11 at 11am. Join them to draw a beginner picture in pencil for their first adult drawing class. The class will be led by Decatur resident, Hosanna Mohr. Supplies will be provided and the class is free.

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TVFCU Announces Idea Leap Grant Finalists; Local Business Among Ocoee Region Contenders



Tennessee Valley Federal Credit Union has announced the finalists for its 9th Annual Idea Leap Grant, with \$225,000 in funding set to be awarded to small businesses across Southeast Tennessee and Northwest Georgia.

Out of more than 420 applicants, finalists have been selected to compete in regional pitch events, each offering a \$30,000 grand prize. All finalists are guaranteed at least \$10,000. The program is expected to surpass \$1 million in total grants and scholarships awarded since its launch in 2018.

In the Ocoee Region, [Bradley Tree Service](#) is among five finalists advancing to the next round, alongside Mona and Larry's, Copperhill Brewery, Heat N Eat/Hunt Family Foods, and Polk Physical Therapy. Bradley Tree Service is the only local business from the immediate area represented in the competition.

Finalists will present their business ideas during regional pitch events, with the Ocoee and Northwest Georgia competitions airing on Local 3 News. **The Ocoee Region event is scheduled to air May 5 from 11 a.m. to noon.** A separate live pitch event for Chattanooga finalists will be held May 7 at The Signal.

TVFCU officials say the Idea Leap program continues to highlight innovative entrepreneurs while investing in the region's economic growth.

Source: Amber Doolittle, TVFCU

IVAN PARKER
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Athens, Tennessee

McMinn County Arrest Reports

April 06, 2026

James Pilkey, 61 of Decatur, charged with unlawful carry or possession of a weapon by a convicted felon.

Amir Rim, 47 of Calhoun, charged with aggravated misuse of 911 and resisting stop, Bond \$1,500.

Chelsea Johnson, 35 of Delano, charged with casual exchange simple possession of meth, and driving on a revoked license, Bond \$14,000.

John Hendricks, 37 of Wyoming, charged with domestic assault, Bond \$3,000.

Mark Borden, 60 of Sweetwater, charged with resisting stop, Bond \$1500

Jennifer Borden, 50 of Athens, charged with child abuse, neglect, bond was revoked.

Christopher Vincent, 38 of Athens, charged with aggravated assault, Bond \$15,000.

Missy Hill, 44 of Madisonville, charged with violation of probation for possession of fentanyl, drug paraphernalia, and shoplifting theft of property, Bond \$9,058.35

Those accused are considered innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

Information gathered using public sources.

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Thursday, April 09, 2026

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Athens, Tennessee

AACA to Showcase Photography Exhibits, Honors Local Talent

The Athens Area Council for the Arts will present two major photography exhibits this spring—*EXPOSURE* and *Things I've Seen: Fifty Years of Analog Photography*—on display April 20 through May 22 at The Arts Center.

A longtime staple of AACA's visual arts programming, *EXPOSURE* is an annual photography competition and exhibit that highlights both amateur and professional photographers from the region. This year's exhibit will feature 45 photographs captured within the past two years, offering a wide range of styles, subjects, and perspectives. Awards will be presented for Best in Show, as well as first- and second-place honors in both amateur and professional categories.

Serving as this year's judge is veteran photographer Wayne Setser, who has been a frequent contributor to *EXPOSURE* and a consistent top award winner. In addition to judging the competition, Setser will present a featured exhibit of his own work, *Things I've Seen: Fifty Years of Analog Photography*. The collection reflects decades of experience behind the lens, focusing on moments captured on traditional film. Setser says his goal is not only to show viewers what he saw, but to help them hear and feel the moments as he experienced them.

The exhibits will be displayed throughout The Arts Center, with *EXPOSURE* featured on the Gallery Wall in the Peggy Dow Performance Center, and *Things I've Seen* showcased in the Willson Exhibit Room and Hallway Gallery.

A joint reception and awards ceremony for both exhibits will be held Friday, May 8, at 5 p.m., offering the public an opportunity to meet the artists, view the work, and celebrate the region's photography community.

The exhibits will be open to the public during regular hours—Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.—as well as during special events. Organizers say the exhibits continue AACA's mission of supporting artists and providing accessible cultural experiences for the community.

Source: Lauren Brown, Executive Director, AACA

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