

Everyone is Invited!

### McMinn County Historical Society Monthly Meeting

Sunday at 2:00 pm  
in Blueroom of Courthouse



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Friday, May 01, 2026

Page 1

Athens, Tennessee

## Monroe County Authorities Seek Man on Probation Violation



The Monroe County Sheriff's Office is asking for the public's help in locating a man wanted on a probation violation.

Authorities have identified the individual as Christopher Michael McLemore, 53, who is wanted in connection with a

violation stemming from an original charge of possession of methamphetamine for resale.

McLemore is described as a white male, 6 feet 2 inches tall, weighing approximately 235 pounds, with gray hair and blue eyes.

Anyone with information on his whereabouts is urged to contact the Monroe County Sheriff's Office at 423-442-5002, extension 5, or Monroe County Dispatch at 423-442-4357. *Source: [Monroe Co. Sheriff, Tommy Jones](#)*

## Community News You Can Use

- The *Spring Around the Square* vendor event is being hosted on Saturday, May 2 from 10am-3pm around the Meigs County Courthouse Square.
- The Athens Board of Zoning Appeals will hold a called meeting on May 6 at 1 p.m. in City Council Chambers. Agenda items include consideration of a variance request and a use-on-review request from Best & Associates Architects for property on Burkett Witt Blvd and Denso Drive.
- The City of Athens Public Works Department will close Jackson Street (Green Street to Washington Avenue) and Madison Avenue (White Street to Green Street) on Saturday, May 16, from 2-7 p.m. for the Athens Travelers Car Club Cruise-In. Motorists should expect delays and use caution in the area.

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Friday, May 01, 2026      Morning Fax®...Today's News This Morning Page 2      Athens, Tennessee

## Athens Area Council for the Arts Announces Full Summer Camp Lineup



The Athens Area Council for the Arts has opened registration for its 2026 Summer Arts Camps, offering a range of programs for students from kindergarten through high school at The Arts Center.

The season begins with the 29th annual **Kids Arts Camp**, scheduled for June 1–5 and June 8–12 for grades K–6. Campers will participate in daily classes in art, music, drama, and dance, with each session ending in a live performance. Tuition is \$125, with a May 18 registration deadline.

**Jr. Musical Theatre Camp** will follow June 15–26 for grades 1–6, culminating in a staged production of *Finding Nemo KIDS*. The camp runs weekdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., with performances planned at the end of the session. Tuition is \$250, and registration closes June 1.

**Youth Theatre Camp**, set for July 6–17, is designed for ages 11–17 and offers a two-week intensive focused on acting, stage movement, and music. The program concludes with a performance of an original musical. Tuition is \$300, with registration due June 22.

**Visual Arts Mini Camp** (July 20–24) will provide hands-on workshops for grades K–5, while a new “*Make Your Mark*” camp (July 27–31) for grades 6–12 will focus on studying master artists and creating original work. Tuition for these camps ranges from \$75 to \$80.

Organizers say need-based scholarships are available for select camps through the Marian Biddle Trew Scholarship Fund. The scholarship application is available upon request from The Arts Center. Visit in-person, call 423-745-8781, or email [artsed@athensartscouncil.org](mailto:artsed@athensartscouncil.org) for scholarship applications. Scholarships are given on a first-come, first-served basis, so do not delay.

<p style="text-align: center; background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 5px;"><b>Knowledge. Experience. Passion to Serve</b></p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ 10 Years - Circuit court clerk's office</li> <li>✓ 4 Years - Paralegal at local law firm</li> <li>✓ Associate degree in business management</li> <li>✓ Associate degree in business technology</li> </ul> </div> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">To serve the people of McMinn County with ★ <b>PROFESSIONALISM AND INTEGRITY</b></p> <div style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> <h2 style="margin: 0;">STEPHANIE SWAFFORD</h2> <p style="margin: 0; font-weight: bold;">FOR MCMINN COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT CLERK</p> <p style="margin: 0; font-size: x-small;">PAID FOR BY THE COMMITTEE TO ELECT STEPHANIE SWAFFORD</p> </div>	<div style="text-align: center;"> <h1 style="margin: 0; color: #800000; font-weight: bold;">BANANA BALL</h1> <h2 style="margin: 0; color: #800000; font-weight: bold;">TICKET DRAWING</h2> <p style="margin: 5px 0;">May 4<sup>th</sup> - May 10<sup>th</sup></p> <p style="margin: 5px 0; font-weight: bold;">All donors are automatically entered to win a 4-pack of Banana Ball tickets!</p> <p style="margin: 5px 0; font-size: small;">The game is on May 21<sup>st</sup>.</p> <p style="margin: 5px 0; font-size: x-small;">Donors also get an admission ticket to Soaky Mountain Waterpark! Tickets are valid between May 9th and June 14th, 2026.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> </div> </div>
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# June 6th Downtown Athens

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THIS WEEK  
NEXT WEEK  
EVERY WEEK

Friday, May 01, 2026

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Athens, Tennessee

## Church News & Events

- [Celebrate Recovery](#) meets every [Tuesday](#) at 6:00pm at Woodward Ave. Church of God in Athens They also meet every [Thursday](#) at 6:00pm at Watts Bar Community Church in Decatur and Thursdays at **6:30pm** at [Spirit City Church North Etowah](#).
- [St. Mary's Legacy Clinic](#) offers free mobile medical care for the uninsured. Anyone who is medically uninsured is eligible to receive care. *St. Mary's Catholic Church (1291 E Madison Ave, Athens) is the McMinn County location and accepts patients every 3rd Thursday of the month.*
- The Etowah Christian Ministerial Association will host three community services on the National Day of Prayer, Thursday, May 7, in Etowah. A prayer breakfast will be held from 7:30 to 9 a.m. at Spirit City Church, followed by a noon service at the L & N Depot Pavilion featuring group prayer and music from the Miracle Lake Singers and the Central High School Choir will perform. An evening service is set for 6 p.m. at the Gem Theater, with prayers led by local pastors and music by The Men of Praise. For more information, contact ECMA President John Roberson at 423-263-2896.
- The New Hope Methodist Church will host its next Christian Men's Prayer Breakfast on Thursday, May 7 at 8 a.m. at Maddi Mae's Cafe in downtown Athens. The ecumenical gathering is open to men of all Christian faiths, regardless of church affiliation, as well as those seeking to build a relationship with Jesus. For more information, contact Marcus Guinn at [marcusguinn@gmail.com](mailto:marcusguinn@gmail.com) or 423-507-7769.
- Athens Lutheran Annual Rummage & Bake Sale will be held Friday and Saturday, May 1-2, from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 710 Forest Ave., across from the library and wetlands.
- One Voice Choir will host a benefit concert on Sunday, May 3 at 2:30pm at Light of Life Ministries. This special concert is to show support for Mr. Ronnie McMahan. All are welcome to come out and support the cause.
- Idlewild Baptist Church (118 County Road 104, Athens) invites the community to join them for their Homecoming Service celebrating 99 years. The service will be on Sunday, May 3 beginning at 10:30am.

GLORIFY GOD  
AMONG THE NATIONS

SEEKING HIM  
IN ALL GENERATIONS

1 CHRONICLES 16:24 NASB

THURSDAY, MAY 7, 2026

75<sup>TH</sup>



NATIONALDAYOFPRAYER.ORG



7:30-9:00am - **Prayer Breakfast**  
at Spirit City North Etowah  
(231 Pennsylvania Ave)

12:00-1:00pm - **Prayer Gathering**  
at the L&N Depot Pavilion  
(831 Tennessee Ave)

6:00-7:00pm - **Prayer & Praise Service**  
at the GEM Theater  
(700 Tennessee Ave)

The Prayer at Valley Forge ©1975 First Freedom Art Company

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Friday, May 01, 2026

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Athens, Tennessee

### Splash Pad Opens Today at Athens Regional Park; Ingleside Pool Opens Later This Month



Families looking to cool off this summer can now enjoy the splash pad at Athens Regional Park, which officially opens today for the season. The free attraction, operated by the Athens Tennessee Parks & Recreation Department, will be open daily from 10 a.m.

to 8 p.m.

The splash pad has become a popular warm-weather destination for local families, offering interactive water features, open play space, and nearby pavilion rentals for birthday parties and gatherings. Pavilion rentals in the splash pad and playground area begin at \$30 for two hours.

Meanwhile, Ingleside Pool is scheduled to open May 23. Pool hours will be Monday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sundays from 2 to 5 p.m. Admission is \$4 for youth under 18 and seniors age 55 and older, and \$5 for adults. Pool party reservations are also now being accepted, with a two-hour minimum required. It's going to be a hot summer so register your event right now! <https://secure.rec1.com/TN/athens-tn/catalog>

Source: [City of Athens](#)

### Welding Course Focuses on Recidivism Reduction

Through an Evidence-Based Programming (EBP) grant, Cleveland State Community College Workforce Development and Adult Education departments have partnered with the Polk County Justice Center to provide vocational training for inmates to prepare them for successful re-entry into the workforce after incarceration. Eight students completed the first MIG Welding Boot-camp and earned the American Welding Society (AWS) certification.



Pictured left to right: Chelsea Falana, CSCC Workforce Coordinator; CSCC Welding Instructor Chad Laxton; Tammy Newton, Darlene Crumley, Billie Kennedy, Stephanie Briggs, Tiera Wilcox, Angela Lynn, Addie Clayton, Jessica Mayberry, Officer Mark Von Roden, Polk County Sheriff's Office Reentry Specialist; Angela Cooper, Cleveland State Adult Education Director, and Polk County Sheriff Steve Ross. In back: Judge Brooklyn Townsend, Polk County General Sessions and Juvenile Judge.

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Friday, May 01, 2026

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Athens, Tennessee

## McMinn County Arrest Reports

April 29, 2026

**Chelsea York**, 32 of Athens, charged with violation of probation for possession of paraphernalia, Bond \$1,566.

**Eric Ratledge**, 41 of Athens, charged with criminal trespassing.

**Brandon Sisson**, 46 of Athens, charged with public intoxication, disorderly conduct, and assault, Bond \$2,000.

**Ezekiel Smaltz**, 36 of Athens, charged with violation of the sex offender registry, Bond \$10,000.

**Aurelio Martinez**, 37 of Niota, charged with domestic assault, and false reporting, Bond \$2,000.

**Rachel Haiser**, of Athens, charged with driving on a revoked license.

**Caitlin Spain**, of Athens, charged with violation of probation for shoplifting, and failure to appear for drug paraphernalia, Bond \$5,600.

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

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Friday, May 01, 2026

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Athens, Tennessee

## Obituaries

**Rhonda Sliger Muldovan Eiche-Bell**, 68, of Athens, TN, passed away on April 29, 2026. She was a devoted and loving mom and an incredibly proud Nana—not only to her own family, but to so many others who were welcomed into her heart as if they were her own. Her home was always open, her arms always ready, and her love knew no boundaries. She had a special way of making each person feel seen, valued, and cared for. Visitation will be held on Tuesday, May 5, 2026, from 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM with a funeral service to follow at 7:00 PM at Ziegler Funeral Home. Family and friends will meet at the funeral home at 10:00 AM on Wednesday, May 6, 2026, and go in procession to a graveside service to be held at 11:00 AM at Cedar Grove Cemetery. Ziegler Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

**Joe Axley**, age 75 of Athens, passed away at his residence Wednesday, April 29, 2026, surrounded by his family and friends. He was a native and lifelong resident of McMinn County. Joe was an active member of Central Baptist Church and retired from BellSouth after 32 years. Joe was a 1968 graduate of McMinn County High School, where he excelled in basketball and baseball. He earned a scholarship and attended Cleveland State Community College where he played both basketball and baseball. In his adult life, he became an avid runner, completing the Boston Marathon in 2001 and 2002. He enjoyed watching his children and grandchildren play sports. He was preceded in death by one grandson, Cole Puryear. Visitation is from 2-4 pm Sunday, May 3rd at Central Baptist Church with graveside services 2:00 pm Monday, May 4th at McMinn Memory Gardens. Laycock-Hobbs Funeral Home is in charge.

**Roger Croft**, 67 of Madisonville, passed away on Sunday, April 26. Roger served as a Staff Sergeant in the United States Marine Corp for 17 years, having served in Desert Storm. He worked for BP Oil Refinery in Whitting, Indiana. Roger was a Mason in Demotte, Iowa and served as a Commander at the American Legion. Good Samaritan Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

**Reverend Dr. Harry Monroe Johnson Sr.**, 86 of Cleveland, passed away on Tuesday, April 28. He was a man known for his kindness, strength, humor, and unwavering faith. Memorial services will be held Sunday, May 3 at 1:00 p.m. at Green's Chapel Presbyterian Church, 288 Wool Street, Charleston, TN with visitation beginning at 12 noon. Services of loving memory entrusted to M.D. Dotson and Sons Funeral Home – Cleveland, TN.

**Billy Gene Womac** stepped from life into life eternal Tuesday, April 28th at his home in Riceville, TN. He was a graduate of Calhoun school. He would go to work for Bowater where he labored with distinction and loyalty for 39 years. Graveside services will be held at Spring Creek Methodist Cemetery, Saturday, May 2, 2026, at 11:00 with Rev. Jonathan S. Jenkins officiating. Laycock-Hobbs Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

**Carey Rawstin Carroll Jr.**, age 64 of Knoxville, passed away Friday April 17, 2026. Born in Cleveland, Tennessee, Carey grew up in Athens. He began his career working at his father's insurance agency. In 1997, he founded Insurance Incorporated of Athens, which he successfully operated for over 20 years. Carey loved spending time with family and friends at the family home on Watts Bar Lake. He also loved trading and restoring cars, motorcycles, and boats. He was preceded in death by his father, Carey Rawstin Carroll "Ross," Sr. He is survived by his wife, Stephanie Spencer Carroll; his mother, Ann Fox Carroll; two sons and their wives and two grandchildren. Receiving of Family and Friends will be held at Berry Highland Memorial Funeral Home in Knoxville on Saturday, May 2, 2026, beginning at 2:00 pm, followed by a Celebration of Life at 4:00 pm.

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