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Roberts Named New Principal at McMinn County High School



A familiar face in McMinn County Schools will take on a new leadership role this fall. Director of Schools Melasawn Knight has announced the appointment of Jake Roberts as the next principal of McMinn County High School, citing his experience, leadership and long-standing commitment to students and the community.

Roberts, who joined the district in 2017, brings 15 years of experience in education to the position. He holds an Education Specialist degree in instructional leadership from Lincoln Memorial University and previously served as a teacher and coach at Sequoyah High School and Mt. Juliet Christian Academy.

During his tenure in McMinn County, Roberts has played a key role in supporting school administration, particularly in areas of student attendance and discipline. School officials said his work has helped foster a structured and positive learning environment. In addition to his academic leadership, Roberts has been active in athletics, serving as an assistant football coach and, since 2022, as athletic director.

In that role, he has been credited with providing steady leadership and strengthening the school's athletic programs, while building strong relationships with students, staff and the broader community. Roberts and his wife, Shelby, live in McMinn County with their two children and are actively involved in the community. School officials said that connection, combined with his professional experience, positions him well to lead the school moving forward.

Roberts succeeds in leading McMinn County High School at a time when district leaders say stability, student achievement and community engagement remain top priorities. Officials expressed confidence that his leadership will continue to build on the school's progress.
Source: Kylie Gentry, MCS

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Monday, May 04, 2026 **Morning Fax®...Today's News This Morning Page 2** **Athens, Tennessee**

Rare Civil War-Era Document Donated to Living Heritage Museum



A rare Civil War-era document with local ties has been added to the collection at the McMinn County Living Heritage Museum, thanks to a recent donation from Larry Eaton.

Eaton contributed the original 1864 Oath of Allegiance signed by his ancestor, William Decker,

during last week's Trash and Treasure Sale. The document was used to restore Decker's U.S. citizenship following his service in the Confederacy.

Museum officials said the artifact is a rare and significant piece of local Civil War history, offering a tangible connection to the region's past. They expressed appreciation to Eaton for entrusting the museum with the preservation of the one-of-a-kind document. *Source: Brett King, Director, Living Heritage Museum*

Community News You Can Use


- The McMinn County Commissioners will be meeting in Regular Session in the Blue Room of the McMinn County Courthouse in Athens on Monday, May 11 at 6pm.
- The City of Athens Public Works Department will close Elizabeth Street from Highway 30 / South White Street to Cedar Springs Road from Monday, May 4 at 6:30 a.m. through Friday, May 8 at 5:30 p.m. for utility work related to the new McMinn Health Department building. The road will be closed to through traffic, but local residents on Elizabeth, Charlotte, Brewer and Holt streets will still have access to their homes. Motorists should expect delays, follow posted detours and use caution in the area.

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Monday, May 04, 2026 Morning Fax®...Today's News This Morning Page 3 Athens, Tennessee

Athens Arts Council Opens Registration for Spring Classes, Programs



The Athens Area Council for the Arts has announced registration for a new slate of art classes and programs for youth and adults, with offerings ranging from pottery to live drawing sessions.

Among the featured programs is "The Studio," a free monthly art club for ages 11 to 17 designed to bring together young artists in a collaborative environment. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 18, from 3 to 4:30 p.m., with participants encouraged to register in advance for each session.

Several hands-on classes are also available, including Intermediate Pottery Wheel with instructor Patricia Shook. The seven-week course, open to ages 16 and older who have completed a beginner class, will meet

Sundays from May 10 through June 21 from 1 to 3:30 p.m. The cost is \$225 and includes all materials.

A Youth Pottery Wheel workshop for ages 10 to 14 will be held May 16 and 23 from 1 to 3:30 p.m. The beginner-friendly, two-day class will cover basic wheel techniques and costs \$60, with materials provided.

In addition, the council will host its monthly Live Drawing Studio session on Wednesday, May 13, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. The session is open to ages 16 and older and all experience levels, though no formal instruction will be provided. Participants should bring their own drawing supplies; easels and boards will be available. The session is free, but a small cash contribution for the model is encouraged.

Participants are asked to register at least three days prior to the start of each class. Registration and instructor information is available online at athensartscouncil.org/classes. Registration may also be completed by phone at 423-745-8781 or in person at The Arts Center to avoid online transaction fees.

The council also announced that past and current pottery students can now reserve studio time for \$20 per month by registering over the phone or in person.


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Monday, May 04, 2026

Morning Fax®...Today's News This Morning Page 4

Athens, Tennessee

Davis Named President of Cleveland State Community College



The Tennessee Board of Regents has unanimously appointed John M. Davis as the next president of Cleveland State Community College following a special called meeting last week. Davis is expected to assume his new role in June.

The appointment concludes a months-long search that began in December, when criteria for the position were established. A search advisory committee made up of board members, faculty, staff, students, alumni and community leaders reviewed candidates and selected finalists, who participated in campus visits and public interviews. Flora W. Tydings, chancellor of the Board of Regents, then reviewed feedback, consulted with the committee and conducted additional interviews before recommending Davis.

Davis has served as vice president of administrative services at Germanna Community College since 2017 and has held administrative roles there since 2008. He earned a doctorate in educational policy, planning and leadership from the College of William and Mary, along with graduate and undergraduate degrees from Florida State University, and an associate degree from Gulf Coast Community College. Prior to Germanna, he served as director of institutional research and strategic planning at Thomas Nelson Community College.

At Cleveland State, Davis will succeed former president Andy White, who resigned last fall, and Ray Brooks, who has been serving as interim president.

"I would like to thank the Tennessee Board of Regents and Chancellor Tydings for this tremendous opportunity," Davis said in a statement. "Cleveland State is a very special place with tremendous potential, and I look forward to working with the faculty, staff and the broader Cleveland community in moving the college forward in fulfillment of its mission." *Source: Holly Appleton, CSCC*

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Monday, May 04, 2026

Morning Fax®...Today's News This Morning Page 6

Athens, Tennessee

Old Federal Road to Be Featured in "Gems of the Past" Lecture

A historic route that once shaped travel and settlement across the Southeast will be the focus of a local history program Thursday, May 7, at the Gem Theater. Doors open at 6:30 p.m., and the program begins at 7 p.m. The event is part of the lead-up to the nation's 250th anniversary and is supported in part by TN250 and the Tennessee Overhill Heritage Association.

Etowah native and author Jim Swayne will present on the Old Federal Road, an early transportation route that played a significant role in movement and development across the Southeast, including the Overhill region. Drawing from his research and published work, Swayne will trace the road's history, significance and lasting impact, with video footage from locations along the route providing additional visual context. The "Gems of the Past" series features talks from local historians, authors and subject matter experts and is open to the public.

For more information, contact the Tennessee Overhill Heritage Association at (423) 263-7232.

McMinn County Arrest Reports

Courtney Smith, 38 of Madisonville, charged with failure to appear for possession of paraphernalia, Bond \$32,000.

Roderick Wellendorf, 48 of Athens, charged with domestic assault, aggravated cruelty to animals, and aggravated burglary.

Brian Armstrong, 48 of Etowah, charged with failure to appear for simple possession of meth, and drug paraphernalia, unlawful carry or possession of a weapon, violation of probation for possession of marijuana, and driving on a suspended license second offense. Bond \$9,065.

Matthew Hanley, 31 of Athens, charged with DUI and violation of implied consent.

Chloe Green, 20 of Riceville, charged with violation of probation for possession of fentanyl and drug paraphernalia, Bond \$4,290.

Joshua Pitkey, 36 of Wild Salmon, Washington, charged with bringing contraband into a penal facility, driving on a revoked license, and failure to have insurance.

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

Information gathered using public sources.

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Monday, May 04, 2026

Morning Fax®...Today's News This Morning Page 7

Athens, Tennessee

Obituaries

Margaret Harrietta Chapman Roberts, 95, passed away on Wednesday, April 29. Harrietta was an esteemed educator, serving many years as the Attendance Supervisor, Federal Director, and Chapter 1 Supervisor for the Meigs County Board of Education. She was a charter member of the Decatur Seventh Day Adventist Church. A graveside service was held on Friday, May 1 in the Meigs County Memorial Gardens. Decatur Funeral Home & Cremation Services is honored to serve the Roberts family.

Brian Hembree, 38, passed away on Wednesday, April 29. Memorial services will be held at 4:00 p.m., Tuesday, May 5 in the chapel of Bordwine Funeral Home. The family will receive friends from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m., Tuesday prior to the service. Bordwine Funeral Home of Etowah is in charge of arrangements.

Lucy Johnson, 83 of Englewood, passed away Saturday, May 2. Funeral services will be held at 2:00 p.m., Wednesday, May 6 in the chapel of Bordwine Funeral Home. The family will receive friends from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m., Wednesday prior to the service. Interment will follow the service at Green Hill Cemetery. Bordwine Funeral Home of Etowah is in charge of arrangements.

Nancy Jane "Nan" Zipp Flowers, 82, passed away on Wednesday, April 29. Nancy was a proud Gold Star Wife in honor of her late husband, Lawrence. She was a retired CPA accountant who enjoyed traveling abroad and even bicycled across Texas. The family will receive friends at Companion Funeral Home on Saturday, May 9 from 1 pm - 3 pm, followed by a Celebration of Life service beginning at 3 pm. A graveside service will be held on Monday, May 11 at 1 pm at the committal shelter of Chattanooga National Cemetery, with interment to immediately follow where she will be laid to rest with her late husband. Companion Funeral Home of Athens, TN and the Cody family are honored to assist the family with these arrangements.

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