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TCAT Athens Student Mia Suarez Named 2026 Technical College Student of the Year



Mia Suarez (right) holds the 2026 Technical College Student of the Year award presented by Tennessee Board of Regents Vice Chair Emily J. Reynolds(left).

Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT) Athens Automotive Technology student Mia Suarez has been named the 2026 Technical College Student of the Year, earning top statewide recognition at the Eighth Annual Statewide Outstanding Achievement Recognition (SOAR) Awards in Nashville.

The honor celebrates outstanding achievement in technical education across Tennessee's college system, highlighting both classroom excellence and student contributions beyond academics.

"Students like Mia Suarez go above and beyond to support what I believe is the best higher education system in the country," said Tennessee Board of Regents Chancellor Flora W. Tydings. "Mia is one of many students across the College System's technical colleges who have inspired us; her strength, perseverance and dedication will not only enrich her life but the lives of her family members as well. Congratulations to Mia on this incredible scholastic achievement."

Suarez also made history for TCAT Athens, becoming the first student from the institution to be named a finalist for the statewide award.

She is currently studying Automotive Technology and plans to pursue a career as a Master Technician. Looking ahead, Suarez hopes to eventually open her own shop and create a space where she can train and mentor future technicians. *Source Doug Kufner, TN Board of Regents*

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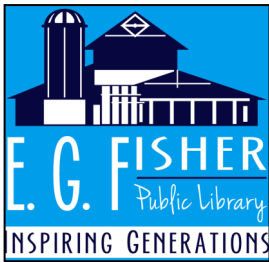
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Library Book Club to Highlight America 250

Starr Regional Medical Center Earns Third Consecutive 'A' for Patient Safety



The E.G. Fisher Public Library will host its Noon Book Club on Wednesday, May 13, at 12 p.m., featuring a discussion tied to upcoming "America 250" celebrations.

Starr Regional Medical Center has once again earned top marks for patient safety, receiving its third consecutive "A" Hospital Safety Grade from The Leapfrog Group, a national nonprofit focused on healthcare quality and safety.

According to Executive Director Becky Coleman, the featured speaker will be Brett King, executive director of the McMinn County Living History Museum. The club's selected reading is Common Sense and The American Crisis by Thomas Paine.

The Leapfrog Group evaluates hospitals across the country using evidence-based measures centered on preventable medical errors, accidents, injuries, and infections. Hospitals are graded on an A through F scale, with updates released twice a year.

Community members are invited to attend even if they have not read the book. A light lunch will be provided by the Friends of the Library (FOL).

Starr Regional leadership says the continued recognition reflects a sustained, system-wide commitment to safe, high-quality care.

Leapfrog officials also praised the hospital's performance, noting that an "A" grade signals a strong institutional focus on preventing patient harm.

Source: Becky Coleman, Library Director, E.G. Fisher Public Library

The Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade program is peer-reviewed, publicly accessible, and widely used by patients seeking to compare hospital safety performance. Grades are updated each spring and fall, and more information is available at:

HospitalSafetyGrade.org.

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NEXT WEEK
EVERY WEEK

Friday, May 08, 2026

Morning Fax®...Today's News This Morning Page 3

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 Madson Ave, Athens) is the McMinn County location and accepts patients every 3rd Thursday of the month.*
- The Senior Adult Choir of First Baptist Church of Athens will be presenting a patriotic performance on Sunday evening, May 17th at 6:00 in the sanctuary. Entitled, "America - A Pilgrim's Prayer, A Patriot's Dream", this program honors God's leading in our nation's freedom as America prepares to celebrate its 250th birthday. Everyone is invited and welcome to attend.
- Mt. Verd Baptist Church will host a **Community Revival May 17–22**. Services begin **Sunday at 6 PM** and **Monday through Friday at 7 PM**. Each evening will feature a different guest speaker, including Alex Cain, Chad Oody, Michael McLemore, Donnie Dalton, Jeremy Sneed, and Joe Arthur. The church invites everyone to join in this week of worship, renewal, and fellowship.
- The Kingsmen Quartet will be in concert at Solid Rock Baptist Church (4975 Highway 11S, Calhoun) on Saturday, May 16 beginning at 6:00 pm. Everyone is welcome.

We encourage you to e-mail us community events, church news, or other items of interest for possible use in the Morning Fax.

Any items you would like us to consider,
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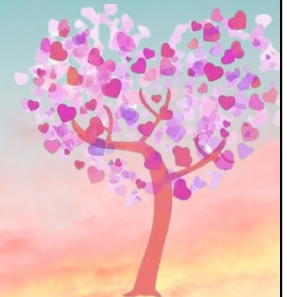


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Athens, Tennessee

Driver Critically Injured in Athens Dump Truck Crash



A dump truck driver was critically injured Tuesday afternoon after a single-vehicle crash in Athens.

The crash occurred around 4 p.m. on County Road 560 when a 1999 Freightliner dump truck left the roadway, struck a bank, and hit a fence, according to emergency responders.

First responders and American Medical Response (AMR) personnel treated the driver at the scene before he was transported to the McMinn County Airport, where he was flown by LifeForce helicopter to Erlanger for further treatment. Responding agencies included Englewood Rural Fire, the McMinn County Sheriff's Department, and Tennessee Highway Patrol Trooper Jake D. Elmotte, who investigated the crash.

No further details on the driver's condition were immediately available.

Photo by Lynn Ingram, Englewood Rural FD



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Friday, May 08, 2026

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Athens, Tennessee

McMinn County Arrest Reports

May 6, 2026

Castile Wilson, 24 of Athens, charged with domestic assault by intimidation, disorderly conduct, assault, and retaliation for past action, Bond \$8,500.

Tristan Overbay, 25 of Rutledge, Tennessee, charged with DUI, and open container law, Bond \$2,000.

David Guffey, 62 of Athens, charged with failure to appear for possession of meth.

Tracy Lowry, 54 of Charleston, charged with violation of state probation.

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

McMinn Senior Activity Center to Host Adult Line Dancing Class

Residents looking for a fun way to stay active and socialize will have the chance to step onto the dance floor this week as the McMinn Senior Activity Center hosts an adult line dancing class in Athens.

The event will take place Friday, May 8, from 6 to 8 p.m. at the center, located at 205 McMinn Ave. Organizers say the evening is designed for adults ages 18 and older and welcomes participants of all experience levels.

Admission is \$5 cash per person, and no partner is required.

The class promises a relaxed and upbeat atmosphere featuring music, movement and beginner-friendly fun. Promotional materials for the event encourage attendees to “come for the steps, stay for the smiles,” highlighting the social aspect of the evening as much as the dancing itself.

Line dancing has grown in popularity in recent years as a way for people to stay active while enjoying music and group participation. Organizers say the event is intended to offer a welcoming environment where community members can learn new dances, meet others and enjoy a night out.

Source: Crystal Spurling-Miller, Director, McMinn Senior Activity Center

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Friday, May 08, 2026

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Athens, Tennessee

McMinn County Historical Society Earns Statewide Recognition at East Tennessee Historical Society Awards



The McMinn County Historical Society (MCHSA) received multiple honors at the East Tennessee Historical Society's Awards of Excellence ceremony held May 5, highlighting the organization's growing impact in education, publishing, and historical interpretation.

The group earned the **History in the Media Award** for its cemetery walking tour, "*Twilight Tales in Cedar Grove*," a public history project that brings local heritage to life through storytelling and performance. The tour features seven historic figures portrayed by local performers and historians.

Members of the cast and organization were recognized during the ceremony, including MCHSA President Tyler Boyd and participating performers Dennis Stewart, Tiffany Stephens, Brad Mayfield, Jordan Carter, Jason Wright, and Mike Houston. County Mayor John Gentry, who also took part in the production, was unable to attend.

In addition to the group honor, individuals connected to McMinn County also received recognition. Jordan Carter, a social studies teacher at Mountain

View Elementary School, was awarded the **Teaching Excellence Award**, presented by Dr. Warren Doctker, president and CEO of the East Tennessee Historical Society.

Separately, author Jim Swayne received the **Publication Excellence Award** for his book "*The Old Federal Road*," which was also recognized during the ceremony.

The annual Awards of Excellence celebrate outstanding contributions to preserving and promoting East Tennessee history through education, scholarship, and public engagement. *Source: Tyler Boyd, MCHSA President*

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