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Wednesday, July 15, 2026

Page 1

Athens, Tennessee

Tennessee Wesleyan University Earns National Recognition for Value and Excellence



Tennessee Wesleyan University has been named one of only 16 institutions in Tennessee to appear on Money Magazine's "Best Colleges" list, earning a 3.5 out of a 5-star rating. The designation highlights universities that deliver exceptional value to students while maintaining strong financial stability and graduation rates above the national median.

"Being named a 'Best College' by Money is a true honor," said Dr. Tyler Forrest, TWU President. "Our students are at the heart of everything we do, and we are committed to creating opportunities that make a high-quality education both accessible and meaningful. This recognition affirms the transformational experiences our students have every day at Tennessee Wesleyan."

To qualify for Money's rankings, colleges must enroll at least 500 undergraduates, demonstrate financial health, and meet or exceed national graduation benchmarks. The list emphasizes that while no single college is best for every student, standout institutions like TWU provide strong outcomes and affordability.

In addition to this honor, Tennessee Wesleyan has also been ranked the #3 Best Value College in Tennessee by Niche and the

#9 Best Regional College in the South by U.S. News & World Report for 2026, further underscoring its reputation for academic excellence and student success. *Source: Chrisi Jackson, College Editor, TWU*



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Heavy Rain Causes Drainage Overflow in Niota's Crescent Ridge Subdivision



Heavy rainfall Monday afternoon overwhelmed drainage systems in Niota's Crescent Ridge subdivision, where 6-inch drains were unable to keep up with rapid runoff, leading to localized flooding around several homes.

Crews from the Niota Fire Department and Niota Police Department responded, placing sandbags at residents' doors in an effort to prevent water from entering homes. The extent of property damage has not yet been determined.

Photos courtesy of Niota FD.

Battle of Athens Festival Returns Aug. 1 with America 250 Theme

The 6th annual Battle of Athens Festival will take place Saturday, Aug. 1, 2026, from 4–8 p.m. at Market Park in Athens, marking both the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Athens and the nation's America 250 Semiquincentennial.

This year's theme, America 250, highlights the founding principles of the United States—especially the right to vote, which was central to the 1946 conflict. The festival will feature historical displays, photographs, artifacts, campaign materials, and primary-source documents. Descendants of Battle participants will speak, and HD screens will show archival images and newspaper headlines. Audio interviews and original radio-broadcast sound from the Battle will play throughout the event, and local historians will host a Q&A session.

Historical and educational vendors, local libraries, and food trucks will return this year. Festival t-shirts and door-prize drawings will also be available.

The popular Downtown Walking Tour will be offered at 9 a.m., 7 p.m., and 8 p.m., featuring historic photos of buildings and landmarks tied to the events of 1946.

Organizers encourage families and residents to attend and learn more about the Battle of Athens, noting that its lessons remain relevant as the nation celebrates its 250th birthday.

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Athens, Tennessee

McMinn County Arrest Reports

July 13, 2026

Kenneth Allen, 51 of Niota, charged with false reports, simple possession casual exchange of schedule 6 Xanax, Bond \$5,000.

Melissa Titlow, 53 of Athens, charged with false reporting, state violation of probation for accessory after the fact, Bond \$6,000.

Sheila Ware, 59 of Athens, charged with false reporting, state violation of probation for accessory after the fact, Bond \$6,000.

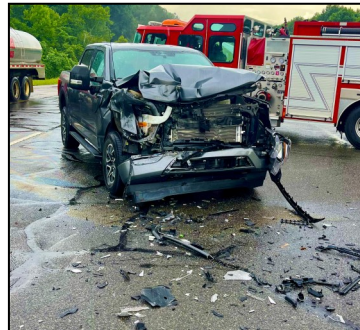
Clint Belt, 29 of Jacksonville, Texas, charged with unlawful carry or possession of a weapon, DUI, leaving the scene of an accident, drug paraphernalia, reckless driving, and reckless endangerment.

Jake Kabotix, 35 of Athens, charged with misuse of 911, resist stop, and assault against a first responder, Bond \$5,000.

Donald Call, 48 of Athens, charged with state violation of probation for felony evading, and schedule 2 meth.

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

Injured Driver Transported After Collision in Englewood Monday



A two-vehicle crash at the intersection of Highway 411 and County Road 508 in Englewood sent one driver to the hospital Monday afternoon. The collision occurred close to 3:30 p.m. and involved a 2023 Ford F-150 and a 2014 Chevy Silverado.

According to responders, the driver of the Ford sustained injuries and was transported by Englewood Fire EMS to Sweetwater Hospital for treatment. Englewood Rural Fire, the McMinn County Sheriff's Department, and THP Trooper Eddie Cundiff also responded, with Cundiff conducting the investigation.

ducting the investigation.

Photos by Lynn Ingram, Englewood Rural FD.



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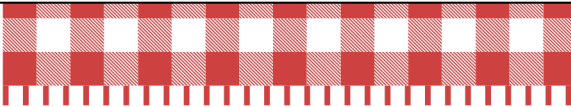


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WHEN: Monday, July 20
TIME: 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
WHERE: CENTURY 21 Legacy,
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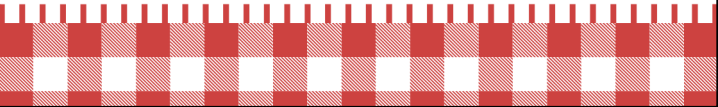
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Wednesday, July 15, 2026

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Athens, Tennessee

Obituaries

Betty Housley Bivens, age 89, of Etowah, Tennessee, passed away peacefully on Monday, July 13, 2026, surrounded by her loving family. Betty was born in Athens, Tennessee, and was a graduate of McMinn County High School. She met her future husband, Howard Bivens, while working at Foree Hospital in Athens, and they were married in 1955, and celebrated 61 beautiful years together. She was a gifted seamstress with remarkable talent and creativity. Her faith was the foundation of her life. Betty faithfully served as Treasurer of Goodsprings Baptist Church for more than 50 years and enjoyed many years of service participating in church activities. She was currently a member of First Baptist Church of Etowah. Family and friends will gather at Goodsprings Cemetery on Thursday, July 16, 2026 at 11:00 am for a graveside service. Smith Funeral & Cremation Services of Athens is in charge of the arrangements.

Hubert Stephen Turner Jr., 91 of Riceville, passed away on Monday, July 13. Hubert worked for TVA Mapping Dept. for 35 years and hand drew maps for them after having learned his drafting skills in the Army. He also served as a deacon at First Baptist Church of Chattanooga. Funeral services will be 11:00 A.M. Saturday, July 18, at Spring Creek Church of Christ. Interment will follow in Upper Spring Creek Cemetery. There will be no formal Visitation. Laycock-Hobbs Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

Leon Edward Smith, 86, of Loudon, passed away on Tuesday, June 30. He retired from Moore Business Forms in Angola, Indiana at the age of 55. Following retirement, Leon and his beloved wife, Shirley, answered God's call to serve through SOWER Ministries (Servants on Wheels Ever Ready). Together, they traveled to Christian campgrounds across the country, volunteering their time and talents to support the ministry. Family and friends will gather for a Celebration of Life Service at Fairview Baptist Tabernacle Church in Sweetwater at 1:00 on July 30. Companion Funeral Home of Athens is in charge of these arrangements.

Allan "Al" Boyd Hairris, 85, of Etowah, TN passed away Tuesday, July 14, 2026. Al loved working on the farm, and driving his tractor was one of his favorite things. When he wasn't on his beloved tractor, he could be found watching his favorite westerns or cheering on the Tennessee Volunteers. Graveside services will be announced at a later date. Bordwine Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

Christine McCabe, 94, of Spring City, passed away on Saturday, July 11. A talented seamstress, she took pride in creating with her hands and found great joy in crocheting. Christine faithfully served as a Sunday School teacher for many years. There will be a Graveside Service at a later date. Companion Funeral Home of Athens and the Cody family are honored to assist the family with these arrangements.

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