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Thursday, July 16, 2026

Page 1

Athens, Tennessee

Athens Racers Made Local Challenge Debuts at Derby Downs



Athens' two qualifiers for the First Energy National-International Soap Box Derby took to the track in Akron on Wednesday after enjoying a welcome party and a rest day earlier in the week.

On Monday night, racers attended a celebration at Yogi Bear's Jellystone Park with music, swimming, and badge trading. They then spent Tuesday exploring the area with their families, while the Rally Challenge race was held at Derby Downs.

On Wednesday, the Local Challenge races gave Hannah Johnson and Raylen Hembree their first competitive runs on the historic hill. Unlike Saturday's World Championship heats, the Local Challenge featured three lanes, wheel swaps, and lane swaps, ensuring each racer completed at least three runs.

Hannah Johnson raced first at 9:30 a.m. in the opening heat of the Local Stock division, competing against Molly Pupeck of Pottstown, Pennsylvania and Sevin Coles of Flushing Meadows, New York.

Later in the afternoon, Raylen Hembree raced in the Super Stock division, facing Steven Padin Jr. of Liberty, New York and Boden Manning of Flint, Michigan. Temperatures in Akron reached the upper 90s during her runs.

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SATURDAY, JULY 18TH @ 11:00

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Museum Hours:
Tuesday - Friday: 10 AM - 5 PM
Saturday: 10 AM - 1 PM
Sunday - Monday: Closed

Admission:
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Senior 60+: \$3.00
Students: \$3.00

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www.livingheritagemuseum.org

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Honda Accord Overturns on Blue Springs Road; Two Checked and Released



A southbound Honda Accord overturned midday Monday after failing to negotiate a rain-soaked curve on Blue Springs Road, according to first responders. The crash happened around 12 p.m., leaving the vehicle upside down and damaging a roadside mailbox.

A female driver and male passenger were evaluated by EMR personnel at the scene and released without transport. Trooper Caleb Ballard and Trooper Edwin Cundiff assisted the Niota Fire Department with the response.

Photo provided by David Prater, Niota Rural FD

Volvo Strikes Tree on County Road 660; Driver Uninjured



A 2018 Volvo XC6 traveling along County Road 660 in Athens late Monday night crashed after the driver failed to negotiate a curve around 10 p.m., according to first responders. The vehicle went off the roadway and struck a tree head-on.

The driver was not injured and did not require transport.

Etowah Rural Fire responded to the scene, and THP Trooper Scott Freeman conducted the investigation.

Photo by Etowah Rural FD



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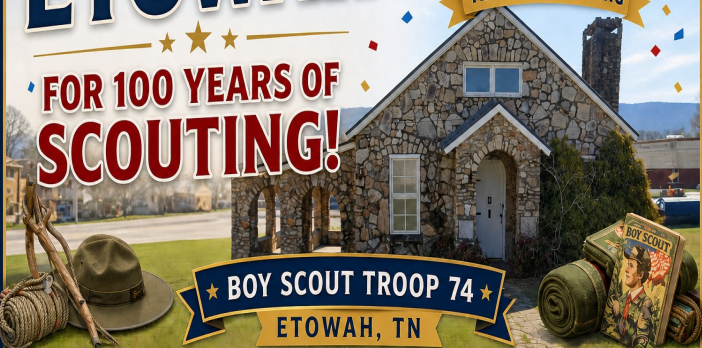


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Morning Fax®...Today's News This Morning Page 3

Athens, Tennessee

State Comptroller Approves Athens' FY 2027 Budget, Notes Low Electric Fund Cash Balance

The Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury has formally approved the City of Athens' fiscal year 2027 budget, confirming that projected revenues are sufficient to cover anticipated expenses, according to a letter sent to Mayor Larry Eaton and the City Council.

The Comptroller's Office noted that its review is limited to the financial information submitted and does not evaluate compliance with program-specific requirements for areas such as education, roads, or corrections. Local officials must ensure the budget remains balanced throughout the year and meet all maintenance-of-effort obligations. Any budget amendments must be uploaded to the state's online portal for acknowledgment.

During its review, the Comptroller flagged the city's Electric Fund, which is projected to end the fiscal year with a cash balance of 8.55% of annual cash expenses—below the recommended 15% minimum. While not considered a distress concern at this time, the letter warns that the fund could face issues if customer deposits are included in that total or if conditions change during the year.

The Comptroller recommended the city adopt a policy to maintain at least a 15% ending cash balance and consult with TVA, which regulates the Electric Fund, if any requirements conflict with TVA rules.

The Comptroller also commended city officials for adopting the FY 2027 budget before the start of the fiscal year, saying timely approval improves financial management and helps staff close accounting records in time for required audits.

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

Athens, Tennessee

Fireworks Mishap Sparks Porch Fire on Pine Street; No Injuries Reported



A fireworks accident Tuesday afternoon caused a small porch fire at a home on Pine Street in Englewood, according to first responders.

The incident happened around 1:30 p.m. when a resident was setting off fireworks and one struck the individual, while another landed on the porch, igniting the ceiling and some porch furniture. The occupant was not seriously injured.

Englewood Rural Fire, Etowah Rural Fire, and the Englewood Police Department responded and quickly contained the fire.

Photo by Lynn Ingram, Englewood Rural FD

Obituaries

Evelyn Newman Walker, 68, passed away on Monday, July 13. Though she has left this earthly life, Evelyn's legacy of love, devotion, and strength endures in the family and friends who survive her. A Graveside Service will be held in Evelyn's honor on Friday, July 17 at 11:00 a.m. at Mars Hill Cemetery. Bordwine Funeral Home in charge of arrangements.

Cynthia Diane Watson George, 68, of Riceville, passed away on Monday, July 13. She was a beloved teacher at McMinn County High School where she taught Math for 20 years. She was of the Christian Faith and had become very spiritually driven over the last six months. Funeral Services will be 3:00 PM Saturday, July 18 in the chapel of Laycock-Hobbs Funeral Home. Interment will follow at Cedar Grove Cemetery. The family will receive friends from 2:00-3:00 PM prior to the service at the funeral home. Laycock-Hobbs Funeral Home in Athens is in charge of the arrangements.

Linda Smith Allen, 84, of Athens, passed away on Monday, July 13. She retired from Athens Products after 30 years of service. She was a member of the Baptist Faith. Graveside services will be at 11:00 A.M. Thursday, July 16 in Eastanallee Cemetery. Laycock-Hobbs Funeral Home, Athens, Tenn., in charge of arrangements.

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