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Wednesday, August 19, 2026

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Athens, Tennessee

ETF Opens 2026 Opportunity Endowment Fund Grant Cycle



The East Tennessee Foundation is inviting nonprofit organizations across its 25-county service area to apply for competitive grants of up to \$25,000 as the 2026 Opportunity Endowment Fund grant cycle opened August 17, 2026.

The fund allows ETF to respond to emerging needs and invest strategically in communities throughout East Tennessee. This year's cycle will prioritize projects focused on the environment, natural resources, and conservation, though organizations addressing a wide range of community needs are encouraged to apply. Collaboration and matching funds will be important factors in the evaluation process.

"Unrestricted philanthropy gives us the opportunity to look across our region, understand where needs and opportunities exist, and respond in ways that can strengthen communities for the long term," said Dr. Keith Barber, ETF President & CEO. He encouraged nonprofits to bring forward strategic, collaborative projects capable of creating meaningful impact.

Eligible applicants include 501(c)(3) public charities, units of government, public educational institutions, and houses of worship. **Applications are due by 5 p.m. Eastern on September 18, 2026, with awards expected in December for terms of up to one year.**

More information is available at ETF's [website](https://www.etf.org) or by contacting Ashley Siferd Butler, Director of Competitive Grants, at abutler@etf.org.

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Wednesday, August 19, 2026

Morning Fax®...Today's News This Morning Page 2

Athens, Tennessee

Tennessee Wesleyan Kicks Off 2026–27 Academic Year with First-Day Celebrations

Tennessee Wesleyan University officially opened the 2026–27 school year on Monday, Aug. 17, welcoming new and returning Bulldogs back to campus for the first day of classes.

TWU President Dr. Tyler Forrest and Dean Scott Mashburn greeted students, faculty, and staff with free coffee and doughnuts, creating a festive start to the semester. Dr. Forrest also helped ease first-day nerves by walking new students to their classrooms, a gesture that quickly became a highlight of the morning.

“The first day of class was truly terrific,” Forrest said. “We are so excited to have our wonderful students back on campus, and we cannot wait for the rest of the semester. Go Bulldogs!”

Campus Greek organizations added to the excitement with a school-supply giveaway, offering free materials to students while promoting upcoming recruitment events. Welcome-back activities will continue throughout the week, including free ice cream, a bulldog stuffed-animal project, food trucks, and other student-focused events. Applications for the 2027–28 academic year are now open and can be accessed through the TWU application [HERE](#)

Source: Chrisi Jackson, College Editor, TWU

Community News You Can Use

- The Athens Utilities Board Budget and Finance Committee will meet on Thursday, August 20 at 11:30am. They will review July's Financial Statements, presented by Superintendent of Accounting, Michelle Millsaps and allow for both comments from pre-approved speakers of the public as well as the General Manager.
- Starr Regional Medical Center–Athens will host a career fair on Sept. 15 from 2–5 p.m. at 1114 W. Madison Ave. Job seekers can explore openings and apply online at StarrRegional.com/careers.
- Applications are now open for the 2026–27 Leadership McMinn class, sponsored by the Athens Area Chamber of Commerce. More than 600 graduates have completed the program since 1988, gaining community insight and lasting personal and professional connections. The deadline is fast approaching. Apply by calling 423-745-0334, emailing julie@athenschamber.org, or picking up an application at the Chamber office located at 13 N. Jackson St., Athens.



Athens, Tennessee

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Wednesday, August 19, 2026

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

Athens, Tennessee

McMinn County Arrest Reports

August 17, 2026

Brandon Kempson, 31, of Athens, charged with false reporting, and disorderly conduct. Bond \$2,500.

Aaron Walker, 34, of Etowah, charged with violation of probation.

Aaron Bales, 29, of Etowah, charged with disorderly conduct. Bond \$1,000.

Amanda Dougherty, 46, of Chattanooga, charged with driving on a suspended license.

Grayson Smith, 28, of Nashville, charged with public intoxication, and disorderly conduct. Bond \$2,000.

Bucky Hammonds, 52, of Riceville, charged with driving on a revoked license, and leaving the scene of an accident. Bond \$1,500.

Zachary Swanson, 31, of Riceville, charged with DUI, leaving the scene of an accident, reckless driving, vandalism, disorderly conduct, and violation of the Children's Clean Indoor Air Act. Bond \$4,000.

Paige Murphy, 58, of Etowah, charged with DUI. Bond \$1,000.

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



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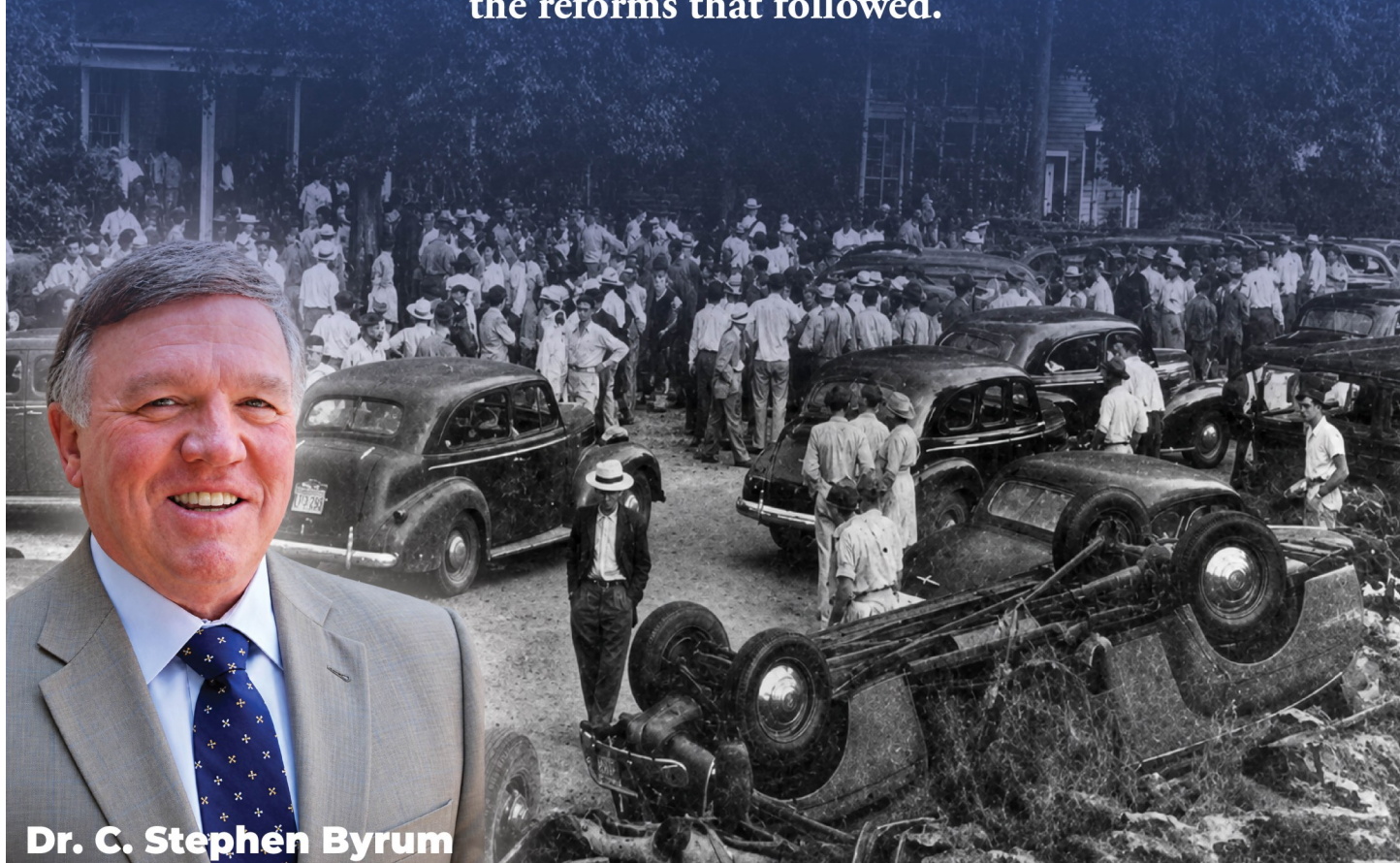
80TH ANNIVERSARY

THE BATTLE OF ATHENS

Join us as we commemorate the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Athens with a special presentation by TWU alumnus and author Dr. C. Stephen Byrum. His presentation will explore the events of August 1, 1946, the citizens who stood for change, and the reforms that followed.



Dr. C. Stephen Byrum



Thursday, August 27 | 6:00 p.m.
Tennessee Wesleyan University
Townsend Auditorium



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Wednesday, August 19, 2026

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

Athens, Tennessee

Obituaries

Barbara Mae Thomas, 88, of Monroe County, passed away on Friday, August 14. Barbara attended Oasis Ministries in Riceville. Barbara enjoyed tending to her flowers in the garden, playing bingo, and knitting. The family welcomes friends and loved ones to join them for visitation at Companion Funeral Home of Athens on Saturday, August 22 from 5:00-7:00 p.m. A Celebration of Life service will begin at 7:00 p.m. A brief graveside service and burial will be held on Sunday, August 23 at 3:00 p.m. at Lindsay Cemetery, 127 Shiners Bluff Dr., Madisonville. [Companion Funeral and Cremation Service of Athens](#), TN and the Cody Family are honored to be entrusted with assisting the family during this time.

Corey Pratt, 45, passed away on Friday, August 14 in a Cleveland, TN hospital. Survivors and arrangements to be announced. [M.D. Dotson & Sons Funeral Home & Cremation Service](#) in charge of arrangements.

Betty Jane (Brock) Derrick, 76, passed away peacefully at her residence in Englewood on Friday, August 14. She enjoyed driving a tractor, milking cows, cleaning houses and growing gardens. A Funeral Service will be held on Wednesday, August 19 at 7:00 pm at Companion Funeral Home of Athens. A Visitation will be held prior from 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm. A Graveside Service will be held on Thursday, August 20 at 2:00pm at Mars Hill

Cemetery in Englewood. [Companion Funeral Home of Athens](#) and the Cody family are honored to assist the family with these arrangements.

James Marvin Siler Sr, 74, of Decatur, passed away on Saturday, August 15. Marvin was a talented singer, guitarist, and songwriter who enjoyed writing and recording his own music. He was also an ordained minister and had a genuine desire to share his faith with everyone he met. A Graveside Service will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Friday, August 21, at Meigs Memorial Gardens, 20054 State Hwy 58 N, Decatur. [Companion Funeral Home of Athens](#) and the Cody family are honored to assist with these arrangements.

Rebecca "Jane" Morgan Trew, 91, of Delano, passed away on Monday, August 17. A faithful member of Jones Chapel Church, Jane's life was firmly rooted in her love for God and her family. She briefly taught at Claxton Elementary School and was a gifted seamstress, artist, and quilter. Funeral services will be held at 6:00 p.m., Sunday, August 23 in the chapel of Bordwine Funeral Home. The family will receive friends from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Sunday prior to the service. Family and friends will assemble at Green Hill Cemetery, Monday August 24 for the 11:00 a.m. committal service. Arrangements entrusted to [Bordwine Funeral Home](#).

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