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WEEK OF 8/23/26

MONDAY	ATHENS, Bicentennial Park (upper parking lot), Flag Football 5:30-8:30pm
TUESDAY	LOUDON, 600 Gamble St 10:30-2
WEDNESDAY	ATHENS, Starr Regional Hospital 11-2
THURSDAY	ATHENS, Family Dollar 10:30-2
FRIDAY	SWEETWATER, Main St Marketplace 10:30-2:30
SATURDAY	SWEETWATER, Grain Bin Commodities Barn Sale 5209 Heit Rd 10:30-2:30

Come see us this week! ❤️

Monday, August 24, 2026

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Athens, Tennessee

Peoples Bank of East Tennessee Recognizes Local Educators



Peoples Bank of East Tennessee surprised two local educators with \$250 appreciation gifts as part of its Good Life Educator Checking program.



Recipients included Rachael Dalton of the Monroe County Board of Education and Tellico Plains Elementary Principal Sheryl Debity, honored for their dedication to students and schools.

The Educator Checking account offers benefits such as no monthly service charge, tiered interest earnings, and loan discounts, designed specifically for teachers and school employees. Bank officials say the program is about more than banking—it's a way to thank educators for the vital role they play in the community. Learn more at PBET.bank/educator or by contacting a local branch.

Athens Public Works Announces Street Closures and New Traffic Controls

The City of Athens Public Works Department has issued several traffic notices affecting downtown streets beginning the day after publication and continuing through the following week.

Jackson Street Night Closures for Mural Project: Jackson Street, from Washington Avenue to College Street, will close nightly Aug. 26–28, from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m. Sidewalks and parking spaces 16, 17, 18, 350, and 19 between Washington Avenue and Hornsby Street will remain closed Aug. 25–Oct. 9 for the Patriot Memorial Project mural painting.

Closures for Battle of Athens Event: On Aug. 27, Jackson Street (Washington Ave. to Coach Farmer Dr.), College Street (Jackson to White), and Hornsby Street (White to Long) will close to all traffic from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. for Tennessee Wesleyan University's Battle of Athens presentation and walking tour.

New All-Way Stop at Jackson & Eaves Streets:

The intersection of Jackson Street and both Eaves Streets has become an all-way stop with the addition of a northbound stop sign.

For details on these and other traffic matters in the city, contact the Public Works Department at 423-744-2745.

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Monday, August 24, 2026

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Athens, Tennessee

Riceville Students Compete in 4-H Public Speaking Contest



Two Riceville Elementary School students represented McMinn County at the 4-H Public Speaking Contest during the Tennessee State Fair in Nashville, advancing through multiple rounds of competition to reach the state stage.

Annie Roberts (left) competed in the junior division for fourth and fifth graders, winning at the class, district, and regional levels to earn her place at the state competition.

Belle Talkington competed in the middle division for sixth through eighth graders, placing second out of 33 competitors.

The 4-H Public Speaking Contest challenges students to research a topic, organize their ideas, and deliver their message with poise—building confidence and communication skills that last well beyond the competition.

4-H (Head, Heart, Hands & Health) is the largest youth development organization in the U.S. It was founded in 1902.

Etowah Rural Fire Department Receives \$10,000 Safety Grant

The Etowah Rural Fire Department and Rescue Squad has been awarded a \$10,000 grant through the State Farm Good Neighbor Firefighter Safety Program, a national initiative supporting volunteer fire departments with essential safety equipment. The program, created in partnership with the National Volunteer Fire Council, awarded 150 grants nationwide this year, including several other volunteer departments across Tennessee.

The funding helps volunteer agencies—many operating with limited budgets—purchase critical items such as protective gear, EMS and rescue tools, and communication equipment. Since launching in 2024, the program has provided \$4 million to volunteer departments across the country.

Program leaders say the grants address a widespread need, as most U.S. fire departments rely heavily on volunteers and often must work with outdated or insufficient equipment. State Farm representatives emphasized the company's commitment to building safer, stronger communities by supporting local responders.

The announcement was made on Volunteer Firefighters Recognition Day, underscoring the vital role volunteer firefighters play statewide. More information about the program is available at nvfc.org/statefarm.

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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
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Monday, August 24, 2026

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Athens, Tennessee

McMinn County Arrest Reports

August 20, 2026

Mark Simpson, 72, of Knoxville, charged with DUI.

Jade Sherlin, 28, of Sweetwater, charged with forgery, Bond \$2,000.

Anthony Taylor, 29, of Athens, charged with evading arrest, driving on a revoked license, receiving or concealing stolen property, and drug paraphernalia. Bond \$32,000.

Molly Wartman, 34, of Niota, charged with domestic assault. Bond \$1,000.

August 21, 2026

Lucas Howard, 27, of Athens, charged with failure to appear for drug paraphernalia. Bond \$2,000.

Gabriel McMeans, 20, of Mascot, Tennessee, charged with failure to appear for driving on a revoked license. Bond \$2,000.

Jeffrey Potts, 47, of Etowah, charged with violation of probation for possession of fentanyl. Bond \$3,000.

Joseph Sledge, 32, of Cleveland, charged with failure to appear for schedule 2 cocaine. Bond \$30,000.

Preston Ford, 36, of Sweetwater, charged with DUI, violation of probation for reckless driving, and child support in Meigs County. Bond \$728.95.

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



McMinn County
Living Heritage Museum



WE ARE HIRING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The McMinn county Living Heritage Museum is seeking a dynamic and visionary individual to join our team as the Executive Director. We are looking for someone who is not only appreciative of McMinn County's history and artifacts but also possesses strong leadership skills and a passion for community engagement.

- Strategic thinker and problem solver
- Program and grant writing experience
- Budget experience
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills

Application Deadline: August 28th
Send resume & references to:
bking.livingheritagemuseum@gmail.com

For More information please visit our website:
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Monday, August 24, 2026

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Athens, Tennessee

Obituaries

Jackie Glen "Jack" Rayl, 71, of Meigs County, passed away on Wednesday, August 12. Jack devoted much of his life to education, athletics, and the young people of Meigs County. He retired from the Meigs County Board of Education after serving as an assistant principal and spent many years as a teacher and football coach at Meigs High School, where he was known as Coach Rayl. Football was a passion, but his greatest impact came through the young people he taught, coached, encouraged, and mentored. A memorial service will be held at a later date. [Decatur Funeral Home & Cremation Services](#) is honored to serve the Rayl family.

Frankie Upchurch Brown-Elliott, 90, of Athens, passed away on Thursday, August 20. She was a former employee of Athens Federal Savings and Loan Company where she worked as a former Property Appraiser and Assistant Vice-president, having retired after more than 30 years of service. A private graveside service will be held at McMinn Memory Gardens. [Laycock-Hobbs Funeral Home](#) in Athens is in charge of the arrangements.

Richard Roberts, 83, of Athens, passed away on Thursday, August 20. He worked as a block and brick mason before becoming a carpenter. Richard was a Baptist and a man who took great pride in his family, his home, and the things he could create with his hands. Visitation will be held on Monday, August 24, from 4:00-7:00 p.m. at the Chapel of Companion Funeral Home of Athens. A celebration of life service will follow at 7:00 p.m. A brief graveside service and burial will be held on Tuesday, August 25 at 11:00 a.m. at Idlewild Baptist Church Cemetery in Athens. [Companion Funeral Home of Athens](#) is in charge of arrangements.

Ophelia Ball, 93, of Cleveland, passed away on Saturday, August 22, at her home surrounded by her loving family. Survivors and funeral arrangements to be announced by [M.D. Dotson and Sons Funeral Home & Cremation Service](#).

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