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Community Honors Dolly Parton Through Surge in Imagination Library Sign-Ups

McMinn County is seeing a powerful response in the days following the loss of Dolly Parton, as families and donors rally to support the Imagination Library she championed. Local sustaining partners — including United Way of McMinn & Meigs, the Mayfield Family Foundation, Athens Federal Foundation, and the George R. Johnson Foundation — report an outpouring of new contributions to keep the book-gifting program growing.

The most striking sign of support is the jump in registrations: more than 85 children have been added to the county's Imagination Library list since last Tuesday, nearly double a typical month's enrollment. Organizers say each new sign-up reflects a community affirming its belief in children, imagination, and opportunity.

The surge underscores how strongly Parton's message continues to resonate — that every child deserves the chance to dream, learn, and explore. Local leaders thanked everyone who has donated, sponsored, enrolled a child, or helped spread the word, noting that the impact goes far beyond books. It creates bedtime stories, new adventures, and moments shared between children and the adults who read with them.

McMinn County officials say continuing Dolly's legacy — helping where you can, giving what you have, and lifting children up — is one of the most meaningful ways the community can honor her memory.

Source: Ginger Robinson, Executive Director, MCEF

Community News You Can Use

- Starr Regional Medical Center will host a career fair Tuesday, Sept. 15, 2–5 p.m. at its Athens campus, 1114 W. Madison Ave. Full-time and PRN applicants can meet hiring managers, interview on site, and learn about openings across the hospital and affiliated facilities. Bring a resumé and photo ID. Apply at:

StarrRegional.com/careers

- The City of Athens will temporarily close Athens Regional Park on Tuesday, Sept. 8 and Wednesday, Sept. 9 for paving work. The schedule is weather-dependent.
- **Heat Advisories** cover nearly all of TN through Friday/Saturday, with Extreme Heat Warnings in western Kentucky and Tennessee. Highs will reach the mid-upper 90s, with heat index values of 105–110 across Middle and East TN and up to 110 in Western TN. Outdoor workers and student athletes should take precautions: light clothing, extra fluids, shaded breaks, and checking on others, including pets and car seats. Nat. Weather Service alerts may extend as conditions evolve.



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McMinn County Living Heritage Museum

Fall Sale 2026
Trash and Treasure II
SEPTEMBER 10-12

Sponsored by The Museum Guild

Thursday 10 AM - 5 PM
First Pick Thursday: \$5 Entry at Door
Friday 10 AM - 5 PM
Saturday 10 AM - 3 PM

HISTORY FOR LUNCH:
HISTORY OF THE MELUNGEONS WITH JERRI HILL
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17TH @ NOON * FREE ADMISSION

HERITAGE SCHOOL:
BEGINNERS BASKET MAKING WITH VERONICA MCCOY & CINDY MISHTAL
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19TH @ 11:00 AM * \$5 OR FREE WITH MEMBERSHIP

Programs sponsored by C. Scott & Muriel S. Mayfield Family Foundation, Tennessee Arts Commission, Hugh M. Willson Family Foundation, and City of Athens

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

Admission:
Adults: \$5.00
Senior 60+: \$3.00
Students: \$3.00

522 W Madison Ave.
Athens, TN 37303
423-745-0329
www.livingheritagemuseum.org



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Thursday, September 03, 2026 Morning Fax®...Today's News This Morning Page 2 Athens, Tennessee

McMinn County Arrest Reports

September 01, 2026

Kathy Lunsford, 53, of Athens, charged with burglary. Bond \$12,000.

Heather Melton, 34, of Niota, charged with schedule 2 fentanyl for resale, schedule 2 meth for resale, and drug paraphernalia. Bond \$32,000.

Joshua Hicks, 33, of Ten Mile, charged with state violation of probation for burglary.

Joseph Van, 27, of Decatur, charged with failure to appear for driving on a revoked license.

Elijah Lowe, 26, of Athens, charged with violation of probation for schedule 2. Bond \$1,184.

James Heaton, 29, of Niota, charged with DUI, and driving without a license. Bond \$4,500.

Susan Anders, 67, of Athens, charged with violation of probation, and failure to appear. Bond \$2,500.

Those accused are considered innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

Information gathered using public sources.

July Unemployment Rates Fall in Most Tennessee Counties

Tennessee's job market improved in July, with 93 of 95 counties reporting lower unemployment rates, according to new data from the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development. Only Obion County held steady, while Weakley County saw a slight increase.

Statewide, 89 counties posted unemployment rates below 5%. The lowest rates—2.8%—were recorded in Cheatham, Sevier, Williamson, and Dickson counties.

Local figures show Blount County at 3.0%, placing it among the state's ten lowest rates. Meigs County reported 5.0%, ranking among the higher rates but still down from June. McMinn County was 4.5%; -0.3% from June. Monroe was 3.8%; -0.4% from June.

At the other end of the spectrum, Perry County posted the highest unemployment rate at 5.8%, followed by Hancock County at 5.7%.

Source: TN Dept of Workforce Development

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Thursday, September 03, 2026

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Athens, Tennessee

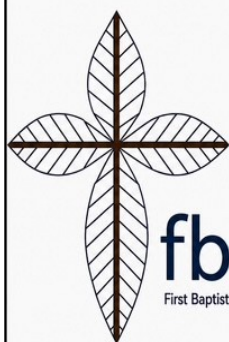
Obituaries

Jackie Glen "Jack" Rayl, 71, passed away on Wednesday, August 12. 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. A Celebration of Life will be held at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, September 8 in the Chapel of Decatur Funeral Home & Cremation Services. The family will receive friends from 5 to 6 p.m., prior to the service. [Decatur Funeral Home & Cremation Services](#) is honored to serve the Rayl family.

Helen "Joyce" Bohannon McNutt, 92, of Etowah, passed away on Monday, August 31. She lived in Athens her whole life and worked and retired from Athens Products. She was a member of Clearwater Church. [Laycock-Hobbs Funeral Home](#) is in charge of arrangements.

Carolyn "Wincie" McDaniels, 78, of Athens, passed away on Monday August 31. Survivors and arrangements to be announced. [M.D. Dotson & Sons Funeral Home & Cremation Service](#) in charge of arrangements.

David Dewayne Tinnel, 49, of Sweetwater, passed away at his residence on Monday, August 31. He was a good man who worked hard throughout his life, spending many years as a laborer with Local 818 out of Knoxville. David was a quiet and private person who tended to keep to himself, but he dearly loved his family. In his spare time, David enjoyed working on cars and had a passion for all things hot rods. He also enjoyed spending time fishing. The family will hold a private memorial service at a later date. [Companion Funeral Home of Athens](#) is honored to assist David's family during this difficult time.



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SALVATION Color Run!

Come be part of the excitement at the **Salvation Color Run** - it's an event you won't want to miss!

EUREKA TRAIL ATHENS

9:00 AM

SEPTEMBER 5, 2026

OPEN TO ALL AGES AND FITNESS LEVELS!
Everyone is welcome!

THE COURSE
Two laps on a half-mile loop. You don't have to be a runner to join in on the fun!

COLOR STATIONS
Along the way, you'll hit color stations where you'll take a quick break before getting splashed with even more vibrant colors!

Register here

SCAN ME

We're thrilled to invite you to our second annual Salvation Color Run! It's happening at the Eureka Trail in Athens at 9:00 AM on **September 5, 2026** - and best of all, it's completely **FREE!** This event is open to all ages and fitness levels. Come be part of the fun!