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Athens City Schools Names Teachers of the Year



Jennifer Harrison (left) with Athens City Schools Superintendent Joe Barnett (right)



Barnett (left) with Kristen Combs (right)

Athens City Schools announced its 2026-27 Teachers of the Year, recognizing Jennifer Harrison and Kristen Combs for their dedication to students and excellence in the classroom.

Harrison was named both the district-level Teacher of the Year and the PreK-4th Grade Teacher of the Year. Combs was selected as the 5th-8th Grade Teacher of the Year.

School officials said both educators were chosen for their commitment to student success and their passion for teaching, qualities that reflect the high standards found throughout Athens City Schools.

As district winners, Harrison and Combs will advance to the Regional Teacher of the Year competition, representing Athens City Schools at the next level. The district congratulated both teachers and wished them continued success.

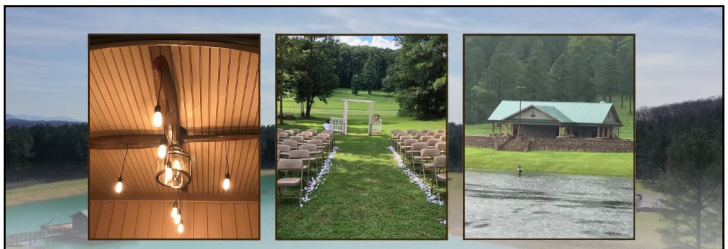
Source: Julie Lofland, Athens City Schools

The Community Art League will present the debut art show of local artist **Mona Banks** at the E.G. Fisher Public Library in Athens. The exhibit will be on display during library hours from Nov. 3-30.

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Polk County Schools Director Placed on Administrative Leave

The Polk County Board of Education voted Thursday night to place Director of Schools Dr. James Jones on administrative leave with pay during a specially called meeting.

The action comes amid a state audit and allegations that Jones misused school property. Among the claims under review is an allegation that he kept turkeys in a condemned building located on school system property.

During the meeting, school board members stressed that the action was not a determination of guilt, stating, ***"We're not saying that he's guilty of anything."***

The board named Pam Hindman as interim director of schools. Hindman told board members she would serve in the role for as long as needed but said she is uncertain how long her tenure will last.

According to officials, no additional funds will be required for the interim appointment because Hindman already holds a position within the school system at the same salary level. ***Source:*** *News Channel 9*

Weapon Found in Student Vehicle at Cleveland High School



The Cleveland High School administration and the Cleveland Police Department responded Friday morning to a report of a possible weapon on campus.

According to a statement from Cleveland City Schools, school administrators received information that a weapon may have been brought to campus and immediately contacted police.

Officers responding to the school located a weapon inside a student's vehicle. Following their investigation, authorities determined there was no indication the student intended to harm anyone at the school.

School officials said the district remains committed to taking all safety concerns seriously and will continue working closely with law enforcement to ensure student and staff safety. ***Source:*** *News Channel 9*





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Arts on the Side Returns Nov. 17 with Free Dinner, Exhibits and Music

The Athens Area Council for the Arts (AACA) will welcome the community to its next Arts on the Side event on Tuesday, Nov. 17, from 5 to 7 p.m., offering a free evening of food, music and arts programming.

Guests are invited to drop in for a complimentary soup supper catered by ARAMARK Collegiate Hospitality before enjoying two exhibit receptions at The Arts Center. The evening will also feature a "Piano Walk," allowing patrons to move throughout the facility while listening to seasonal music performed by local pianists. Performers for the Piano Walk will be announced at a later date.

Arts on the Side is designed to make the arts accessible to all members of the community. The free program combines a catered meal with arts-based activities that encourage fellowship and creativity. Events may include concerts, jam sessions, visual arts projects, table reads and other interactive experiences.

The program is open to the public, and no admission fee is required. ***Source: Athens Area Council for the Arts***

Vehicle Catches Fire After Striking Utility Pole



The driver of a 2011 Nissan Altima escaped injury after a single-vehicle crash Sunday around noon on County Road 660 in Athens.

According to reports, the vehicle left the roadway and struck a power pole before bursting into flames. The driver was able to get out of the vehicle safely and was not injured.

Responding agencies included the Claxton Fire Department, Etowah Rural Fire Department and EUB. McMinn County Sheriff's Deputy Brodie Welch investigated the accident.

Photo by Etowah Rural Fire Department.

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Vols Look to Get Back on Track as Kentucky Visits Neyland



No. 16 Tennessee returns to Neyland Stadium on Saturday night looking to bounce back from a tough loss at South Carolina when the Vols host No. 8 Kentucky in their annual Homecoming game. Tennessee enters the contest at 6-2 overall (KY 7-1) and remains very much in the hunt for a strong finish with four regular-season games remaining.

The Volunteers have already picked up wins over Auburn, Arkansas and Alabama this season, but last week's setback served as a reminder that there is little room for error in the SEC. Kentucky arrives in Knoxville ranked in the Top 10 and looking to strengthen its own position as November football takes center stage.

Tennessee will likely lean on a rushing attack led by DeSean Bishop, while quarterback George MacIntyre continues to guide the offense through a challenging schedule. The Vols have enjoyed recent success in the rivalry, winning the last four meetings against Kentucky, including a 56-34 victory last season. Tennessee also holds an 86-26-9 advantage in the all-time series.

With games against Texas A&M, LSU and Vanderbilt still ahead, Saturday's matchup feels like an important one for both teams. For Tennessee, a win would provide momentum heading into the final stretch of the season and keep the Vols moving in the right direction as the schedule grows tougher.

Written by: J.P. Vasquez, Color Analyst, Vamos Vols! (Tennessee Football en Español)



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McMinn County Arrest Report

November 01, 2026

Scott Caper, 56, of Athens, charged with being a fugitive from justice.

Rena Edge, 47, of Calhoun, Georgia, charged with being a fugitive from justice in Whitfield County, Georgia.

Nolan King, 30, of Englewood, charged with DUI. Bond $1,000.

Keyshawn Robinson, 21, of Athens, charged with domestic assault. Bond $2,000.

Howard Coffey, 58, of Athens, charged with DUI, and violation of implied consent. Bond $4,000.

Warren King, 49, of Athens, charged with DUI second offense, and violation of implied consent. Bond $6,000.

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

Obituaries

Bessie Wallace Allmon, 96, of Englewood, passed away on Saturday, October 31. She was employed by Levi Strauss and was of the Holiness faith. There will be no formal services at this time. Ziegler Funeral Home has been entrusted with serving the family of Bessie Wallace Allmon.

Alethea C Ray, 54, of Dayton, passed away on Thursday, October 22 at her home. Alethea dedicated more than 30 years of her life to nursing, a profession that reflected her caring heart and selfless spirit. Throughout her career, she touched countless lives through her dedication, gentle nature, and unwavering commitment to helping others. To Alethea, nursing was more than a career - it was a calling. Outside of her work, Alethea found joy and peace in the beauty of nature. No services will be held at this time. Companion Funeral Home of Athens and the Cody family are honored to assist the family with these arrangements.







