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Mayor's Hostile Work Environment Complaint Rejected Following Investigation

A complaint filed by Larry Eaton alleging that City of Athens Human Resources Director Nina Edmonds created a hostile work environment has been dismissed following an investigation conducted on behalf of the city.

Two legal memorandums dated Sept. 10 found that while Edmonds made inappropriate remarks about the mayor following a June 4 special-called city council meeting, her actions did not meet the city's definition of workplace harassment or a hostile work environment.

The dispute stemmed from comments made during and after a meeting in which the council discussed concerns involving then-City Manager Randall Dowling, who was ultimately dismissed. Eaton later filed a complaint alleging Edmonds' conduct created a hostile work environment.

According to the investigation, Edmonds acknowledged calling Eaton a liar and describing him as dishonest after the meeting. Multiple witnesses interviewed during the inquiry confirmed hearing similar statements.

The report found the remarks were discourteous and inconsistent with expectations outlined in the city's employee handbook. However, investigators concluded the comments amounted to a single incident and did not constitute harassment under the city's Workplace Harassment Policy.

The investigation also noted that Edmonds' remarks came after Eaton publicly made statements concerning her travel allowance and motivations that investigators described as inaccurate, incomplete, poorly sourced and insufficiently verified.

A separate legal opinion determined that Eaton, as an elected official, is not considered a city employee under federal employment law, the Tennessee Human Rights Act or the city's charter. However, city policy allows elected officials to file workplace harassment complaints, making the investigation appropriate under local rules.

The final report concluded that while discipline, if any, would be left to city management, Edmonds' conduct did not create a hostile work environment. The investigator further recommended that both parties apologize and move forward "for the good of the City of Athens."

SUNDAY LUNCH @ TWU
Holiday Hours Update
Nov 29: Closed
Dec 6: Last Sunday Lunch of 2026.
Sunday Lunch will resume on Jan 17, 2027!
Start your Sunday off right with our delicious and decadent Sunday Lunch on the TN Wesleyan Campus! Join us for a wide variety of lunch classics and new favorites to satisfy your cravings.
Served all you care to eat style!
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The Community Artists League are very proud to have CAL member Mona Bliscerd Banks exhibiting her amazing art in the Mayfield Family Art Gallery at the EG Fisher Public Library for the month of November.

WINTER COAT DRIVE
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Medical Emergency Sends Vehicle Off Hwy. 39E



The driver of a 2019 Toyota RAV4 was transported to Starr Regional Medical Center in Athens after suffering a medical emergency and leaving the roadway on Hwy. 39E in Englewood on Wednesday.

According to reports from the scene, the driver became unconscious, causing the vehicle to leave the roadway, travel through a ditch and come to rest off the highway.

AMR transported the driver to Starr Regional Athens for treatment.

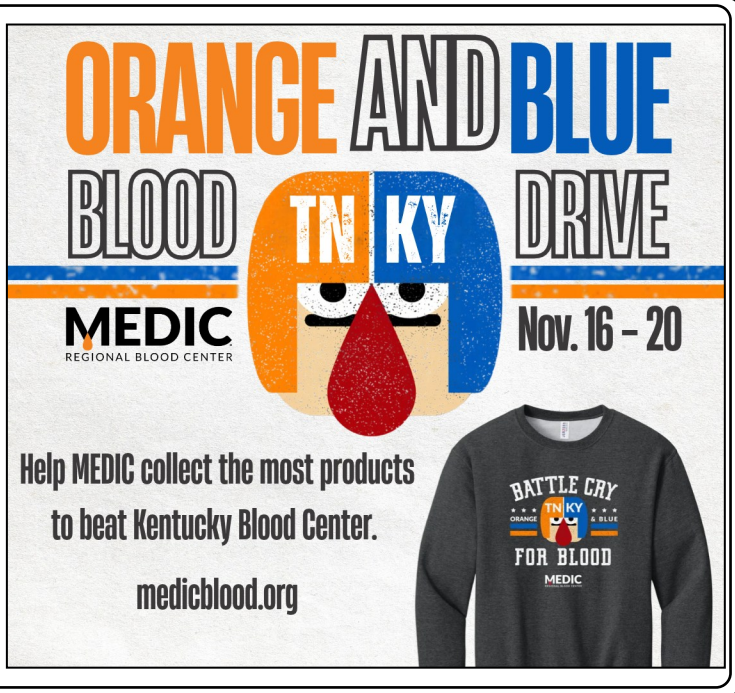
Responding agencies included Englewood Rural Fire Department, the McMinn County Sheriff's Department and Tennessee Highway Patrol Trooper Eddie Cundiff, who investigated the incident.

Photo by Lynn Ingram, Englewood Rural FD

Community News You Can Use

- A free Community Dinner will be held Sunday, Nov. 15, at 1 p.m. at Gilbert Hall, 235 Delay St. in Athens. Reservations are required due to limited seating. To reserve a spot, call 423-405-3777. Community members are invited to attend and bring a guest.
- The Athens Anchor Club is collecting donations thru Nov. 20 to assist flood victims in Copperhill, Tennessee, and McCaysville, Georgia. Needed items include bottled water, canned goods, paper towels, toilet paper, antibacterial wipes, cleaning supplies, trash bags, hand sanitizer, baby wipes and diapers. Donations may be dropped off at Citizens National Bank on Decatur Pike and Simmons Bank on Washington Avenue and Hill Street. For more information, contact an Athens Anchor Club or Athens Pilot Club member.







Church News & Events

- **Celebrate Recovery** meets every **Tuesday** at 6:00pm at Woodward Ave. Church of God in Athens They also meet every **Thursday** at 6:00pm at Watts Bar Community Church in Decatur and Thursdays at **6:30pm** at **Spirit City Church North Etowah**.
- **St. Mary's Legacy Clinic** offers free mobile medical care for the uninsured. Anyone who is medically uninsured is eligible to receive care. ***St. Mary's Catholic Church (1291 E Madison Ave, Athens) is the McMinn County location and accepts patients every 3rd Thursday of the month.***
- Union McMinn Baptist Church will host its Thanksgiving Day "Come to the Table" gathering on Thursday, Nov. 26, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at 316 County Road 316 in Niota. Guests are invited to enjoy a home-cooked meal, fellowship, worship and singing. The Leamon Family will provide special music. Everyone is welcome.
- Keith Memorial United Methodist Church invites the community to the 10th annual Turkey Trot 5K on Thanksgiving Day beginning at 8am. Register at the link **HERE**
- Mt. Verd Baptist Church, 252 County Road 249, Athens, will host a Thanksgiving drive-thru meal on Nov. 25 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Meals will be available on a first-come, first-served basis without leaving your vehicle.
- The Greater Mt. Pleasant Missionary Baptist Church's annual Pre-Thanksgiving Bake Sale will be on Tuesday, November 24, 2026 (The Tuesday before Thanksgiving) beginning at 4:00 p.m. There will be delicious pound cakes, sweet potato pies, sugar cookies and several delicious new baked items. This is a project for the church building fund. Due to the construction of the new church building, the bake sale will be held at Cooke Ministries Center at 714 Walter Street in Athens; the same location as Grace and Mercy Ministries.

More Church News & Events on Page 4





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Starr Regional Nurse Honored with DAISY Award



Nancy Austin, an LPN at Starr Regional Health & Rehabilitation, has received the DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses for the third quarter of 2026.

Austin was recognized for her compassionate patient care and dedication to supporting coworkers. A colleague's nomination praised her for comforting patients during difficult moments and encouraging fellow staff members pursuing nursing careers.

The DAISY Award is an international program recognizing nurses who provide exceptional care to patients and families.

Church News & Events

- **Onward Quartet** will be singing at Lakeview Baptist Church on Sunday, Nov. 29, at 10:45 a.m. A lunch will follow the service. The church is located at 183 County Road 126 in Athens, beside Dynasty Spas. Everyone is welcome to attend.
- Athens Lutheran Church will host a free breakfast for veterans and their families on Saturday, Nov. 14, from 8 to 11:30 a.m. at 710 Forrest Ave. in Athens. The menu will include pancakes, sausage, fruit, donuts, juice and coffee. Attendees are also encouraged to bring canned goods to support local food pantries during the holiday season. For information, call 423-745-9419.
- Good Friend Baptist Church will celebrate its church anniversary on Sunday, Nov. 15, at 3 p.m. Guest speaker will be Pastor Marvin Parks of Star Bethel Baptist Church in Etowah. The service will be held at Good Friend Baptist Church, 524 Old Cemetery Road, Madisonville. Everyone is invited to attend.
- Oak Grove United Methodist Church will host a Fall Festival Fundraiser on Saturday, Nov. 14, from 9 a.m. to noon at 25901 Hwy. 58N in Ten Mile, the former Ten Mile School. A silent auction will feature more than 100 items. Attendees are encouraged to bring canned food donations to benefit the Ten Mile Gathering Community Food Ministry. Complimentary donuts will be available during the auction with other food and beverages for purchase.





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McMinn County Arrest Report

November 11, 2026

Kelly Lawrence, 35, of Athens, charged with violation of probation for disorderly conduct. Bond $500.

Shirley South, 47, of Athens, charged with failure to appear for paraphernalia.

Waylon Roberts, 21, of Decatur, charged with state violation of probation, and failure to appear.

Nathan Frazier, 31, of Charleston, charged with DUI, violation of implied consent, and open container law. Bond $2,000.

Robert Gamera, 42, of Tellico Plains, charged with state violation of probation in Monroe County.

Clayton Shelton, 37, of Athens, charged with criminal trespassing.

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

Obituaries

James Robert Enright, 87, passed away on Monday, November 2. James was raised on a dairy farm, where he developed a strong work ethic and spent much of his life working as a dairy farmer. He also successfully owned and operated his own contracting business. **Companion Funeral and Cremation Service of Athens** is honored to assist the Enright family during this difficult time.

Karen Elaine Grissom Lyle, 66, of Georgetown, TN, passed away on Wednesday, November 11. She was a proud member of Mountain Springs Baptist Church in Old Fort, TN. She was raised in Meigs County and a proud 1978 graduate of Meigs County High School. A funeral service will be held at 4 p.m., on Saturday, November 21, 2026 at Brittsville Baptist Church with the Rev. Scottie Lyle and Rev. Dewayne Murphy officiating. Interment will follow in the Johnston Cemetery. The family will receive friends from 12 noon- 4 p.m., prior to the service. **Decatur Funeral Home & Cremation Services** is honored to serve the Lyle family.




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