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Driver Airlifted After SUV Overturns on Highway 163 in Riceville

A driver was airlifted to a Chattanooga hospital following a single-vehicle crash Thursday afternoon in Riceville.

According to emergency responders, the crash occurred around 4:30 p.m. at the intersection of Highway 163 and County Road 967 when a 2015 Ford Escape left the roadway, overturned, and slid down a steep embankment.

Firefighters removed the driver from the vehicle and used a Stokes basket to carry the patient up the embankment to waiting AMR personnel. The driver was transported by ambulance to the Claxton Fire Department, where a Life Force helicopter airlifted the patient to Erlanger Hospital in Chattanooga. The crash also resulted in the destruction of a fire hydrant.

Responding agencies included Claxton Fire Department, Etowah Rural Fire Department, McMinn County Sheriff's Department, Calhoun Utilities, AMR, and Tennessee Highway Patrol Trooper Eddie Cundiff, who investigated the crash.

Photo by the Etowah Rural FD



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Tue: Decatur @ Boys and Girls Club 10:30 - 2
Wed: Madisonville @ Walmart 10:00 - 6
Thu: Athens @ Family Dollar 10:30 - 2
Fri: Sweetwater Main St Marketplace 10:30 - 2:30
CLOSED week of 11/22/2026

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Athens Announces Roadwork, Holiday Closures, Thanksgiving Traffic Impacts

The City of Athens has announced upcoming roadwork, holiday closures and traffic changes ahead of Thanksgiving.

North Jackson Street between Green Street and Railroad Avenue will be milled and repaved Nov. 16-19, weather permitting, from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily. No parking will be allowed in the work zone, and vehicles left in the area may be towed. Motorists should expect delays and use alternate routes when possible.

For **Thanksgiving**, the Athens Municipal Building, Public Works Department and Animal Shelter will be closed Nov. 26-27. The Recycle Center will be closed Nov. 26-28. All facilities will reopen Nov. 30.

Residential garbage routes Nov. 23-25 will run as normal. The Nov. 26 route will be collected Nov. 30, while the Nov. 27 route will be collected Dec. 1. Residents should place carts at the curb the night before pickup. Commercial and industrial collection will operate on a limited schedule.

Thompson Street between Shoemaker Street and West Madison Avenue will be closed from 6:30 to 10:30 a.m. on Nov. 26 for he Keith Memorial United Methodist Church Turkey Trot 5K. Drivers should watch for traffic controls, pedestrians and event participants.

Emergency services will continue operating 24 hours a day. For more information, contact Athens Public Works at 423-744-2745.

UT Extension-McMinn Announces Upcoming Programs

UT Extension-McMinn will wrap up 2026 with several community and wellness programs in Athens.

Healthy Relationships McMinn will hold its final meeting of the year Nov. 20 from 11 a.m. to noon at the UT Extension-McMinn Office, 2345 Denso Drive. The gathering will feature a holiday potluck, networking and a celebration of the coalition's work promoting healthy relationships in McMinn County.

The McMinn Grandparent Club will host a free Holiday Cookie Decorating program Dec. 2 from 1-2 p.m. at the UT Extension-McMinn Office. Guest instructor Geri Brown will teach decorating techniques using royal icing, and participants will take home their creations. Pre-registration is requested at mcminn.tennessee.edu.

Also on Dec. 2, 9 and 16, "Refresh with Tai Chi" will be offered from 10-11 a.m. at First Baptist Church of Athens, 305 Ingleside Ave. The free sessions, led by Sarah Kite, are designed for those with previous Tai Chi experience and focus on relaxation, movement and overall well-being.

For more information or to register, visit mcminn.tennessee.edu or call 423-745-2852.





McMinn County Arrest Reports

November 12, 2026

James Shelton, 43, of Athens, charged with public intoxication. Bond $1,000.

Katie Ann McDermott, 19, of Athens, charged with domestic assault. Bond $1,000.

Keith Ables, 59, of Englewood, charged with violation of probation for DUI, and driving on a revoked license. Bond $3,500.

Charles Richardson, 47, of Athens, charged with criminal trespassing. Bond $1,500.

Natasha Reeves, 45, of Palm Coast, Florida charged with state violation of probation for financial exploitation of an adult. Bond $1,000.

Daniel Tilley, 64, of Niota, charged with failure to appear for schedule 2 meth for resale, and violation of parole.

Sierra Lowe, 27, of Knoxville, charged with public intoxication, and motor vehicle burglary. Bond $3,000.

Paul Groff, 42, of Tellico Plains, charged with disorderly conduct, and resisting stop. Bond $3,000.

November 12, 2026

Richard Mason, 49, of Decatur, charged with domestic aggravated assault, and child support. Bond $65,000.

Jonathan Slager, 41, of Riceville, charged with simple possession casual exchange, and drug paraphernalia. Bond $10,000.

Lawrence Taylor, 30, of Riceville, charged with DUI.

Chris Jones, 48, of Athens, charged with violation of probation for driving on a revoked license, theft of property $2,500 to $10,000, and conspiracy to commit theft of property. Bond $20,500.

Jonathan Freeman, 45, of Riceville, charged with driving on a revoked license. Bond $1,000.

Everardo Lamas, 33, of Athens, charged with aggravated assault. Bond $30,000.

Kirk Morrow, 48, of Athens, charged with aggravated assault. Bond $15,000.

Jason West, 45, of Philadelphia, charged with DUI, and driving on a suspended license.

John Evans, 50, of Riceville, charged with domestic assault by intimidation. 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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High School Football Results

This past week, select teams from the region battled to secure victory in the High School Football Playoffs. Below are the results.



Obituaries

Donal "Woody" Woodrow Morgan, 67, of Sweetwater, passed away on Wednesday, November 11. He was brick mason, entrepreneur and cars salesman who was self employed. Funeral services will be 7:00PM on Tuesday, November 17 in the chapel of Laycock-Hobbs Funeral Home. The graveside service will be 11:00 AM Wednesday, November 18 in Cedar Grove cemetery. The family will hold visitation hours from 5-7PM prior to the funeral service. Laycock-Hobbs Funeral Home in Athens is in charge of the arrangements

Charles Edward Frye, 84, of Sweetwater, passed away on November 13. Charlie loved Jesus and found great joy in studying the Bible. He attended North Sweetwater Baptist Church, where his faith was an important part of his life. A celebration of life will be announced at a later date. Companion Funeral Home & Cremation Service is in charge of arrangements.



