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Monday, December 9, 2024

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Athens, Tennessee

Driver Escapes Saturday Crash with Minor Injuries



A driver lost control of a 1999 Ford Explorer near the intersection of County Roads 415 and 420 in Englewood around 2:30 p.m. on Saturday. The driver sustained minor injuries but declined transport by AMR. Responding agencies included Englewood Rural Fire Department, McMinn County Sheriff's Department, and Tennessee Highway Patrol Trooper Travis

Ryans, who investigated the scene. *(Photo credit: Lynn Ingram, Englewood Rural Fire Department)*

Community News You Can Use

- Your local American Heritage Girls Troop TN1824 invites you to join them in a wreath laying ceremony to honor American heroes. This will take place at Veterans Memorial Park (202 Sunset Drive, Athens) on Saturday, December 14 at noon. The event is open to the community.
- The Athens City Council will hold its work session today, Monday, December 9 at 5 pm in the Burkett L. Witt Council Chambers of the Athens Municipal Building. They will be discussing 2025 meeting dates, Purchase of a Downtown Building for City Hall, Disposing of the North City School Property, among other items of interest.

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• Monday - Closed
• Tuesday-Madisonville-Will Sav -10:30 - 1:30
• Wednesday-Etowah Across from Johnsons-10:30 - 2:00
• Thursday-Athens Family Dollar 10:30 -1:30
• Friday-Sweetwater-Little Drugs-10:30 - 2:30

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Athens, Tennessee

Stellantis Recalls Over 300K RAM Trucks over Faulty Brake Component



Stellantis is recalling over 317,000 Ram Heavy Duty trucks from the 2017-18 model years due to a faulty hydraulic control unit that could cause anti-

lock brake, electronic stability control, and traction control systems to malfunction. Regular braking systems remain unaffected, and the company has reported no injuries related to the issue.

The recall affects Ram 2500, 3500, 4500, and 5500 models, including a small number in Canada, Mexico, and other markets. Stellantis will notify affected customers and provide repairs free of charge. For more information, customers can contact 1-800-853-1403.

This follows recent Stellantis recalls of Jeep and Dodge SUVs as well as earlier recalls of nearly 1.5 million Ram pickups for software issues. Amid declining sales, layoffs, and rising inventory, Stellantis has also announced leadership changes, with CEO Carlos Tavares stepping down last week. Stellantis was formed in 2021 through the merger of PSA Peugeot and Fiat Chrysler Automobiles. *Source: WBIR*

Donate your Books to Let's Read 20



Friends of Let's Read 20 are calling on the community to help replenish their supply of children's books after a busy summer and fall of distributions. Gently used books can be donated at bins located at

202 Hicks Street or Athens Food City. Monetary donations are also welcome to support the program's mission of promoting literacy.

As you prepare for the holidays, consider giving the gift of reading by donating books or funds to this valuable cause. Thank you for helping enhance literacy in our community!

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Monday, December 9, 2024

Morning Fax®...Today's News This Morning Page 3

Athens, Tennessee

Monroe County Sheriff Issues Statement

The Monroe County Sheriff's Office conducted an investigation into criminal allegations of two deputies that were employed with the Sheriff's Office in 2022. During the course of the investigation, after reviewing the facts, I requested the Tenth Judicial District Attorney's Office to continue the investigation with the assistance of the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation. The two deputies resigned from their positions during the ongoing investigation. The facts and evidence was presented to the Monroe County Grand Jury on December 4, 2024 and indictments were returned on both former deputies. Both former deputies were booked into the Monroe County Jail on December 4, 2024.

As your Sheriff of Monroe County, I have promised to uphold my deputies to a higher standard. No one that wears a badge is above the law, and if a law enforcement officer breaks the public's trust by committing a crime, and violating their oath while wearing a badge, then they need to be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. When I took the office as Sheriff, I promised transparency

and will continue to be transparent throughout my service as your sheriff.

Former Deputies:

-Caleb Anthony Kirkland- Former Correction Officer, Correction Division Charges: Official Misconduct- New Bill Indictment

-Ava Desiree Hensley- Former Deputy Sheriff, Patrol Division Charges: Official Misconduct (Three Counts)- New Bill Indictment

The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation and the Tenth Judicial District Attorney's Office are the lead agencies on the case and were able to conclude the investigation and pursue charges on both former deputies. All subjects are innocent until proven guilty in the court of law.

Source: [Tommy J. Jones, II - Monroe County Sheriff](#)

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Monday, December 9, 2024

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Athens, Tennessee

2023 Cleveland Shooting Suspect Arrested in AZ

A Cleveland man who was wanted in a shooting in 2023 has been arrested in Arizona. In March of 2023, the Cleveland Police Criminal Investigations Division responded to the Classy Cat on Inman Street on a call of a shooting. Cleveland Police Department officers encountered two women who had been shot.

The investigations division identified the suspect as Brandon Crofton. Crofton fled the state and could not be located. Warrants were issued on Crofton for attempted first-degree murder (2), possession of firearm during a felony, reckless endangerment with serious injury / use of a deadly weapon. The Cleveland Police Department requested assistance from the U.S. Marshals Service. The agencies worked together, exhausting a tremendous amount of man hours, conducting interviews, and utilizing various investigative techniques to obtain a reliable source, which ultimately led law enforcement to Glendale, Az.

During a surveillance operation, the U.S. Marshals Service in Arizona observed Crofton in a vehicle and apprehended him, without incident, at a local business. Crofton is now awaiting extradition back to Tennessee. *Source: Chattanooga.com*

Man Severely Burned in Benton House Fire



A man suffered severe burns while rescuing his mother and attempting to extinguish a fire early Saturday morning on Crowe Hill Circle in Benton. The fire, which broke out around 5 a.m., heavily damaged the second story of the home, with the rest of the structure sustaining water and smoke damage.

The injured man was transported by AmeriPro EMS to a LifeForce landing zone and flown to the Wellstar Cobb Medical Center burn unit in Austell, Georgia, for treatment. Responding agencies included West Polk Fire Department, Englewood Rural Fire, Etowah Rural Fire, Polk County Sheriff's Department, and VEC. West Polk Fire Chief Keith Jeskee led the response.

Photo credit: Lynn Ingram, Englewood Rural Fire Dept.

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Monday, December 9, 2024

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Athens, Tennessee

Tennessee Football Secures No. 9 Seed in Playoffs, First-Round Road Game in Columbus



The College Football Playoff (CFP) enters a new era with the unveiling of its first 12-team bracket, marking a historic shift from the four-team format. Among the surprises, SMU earned a spot at No. 11 over perennial powerhouse Alabama, following the Mustangs' narrow ACC Championship loss to Clemson. This decision leaves Alabama out of the playoff for the first time in the CFP era, ensuring no three-loss teams except for Clemson make the cut.

The top four seeds—Georgia, Michigan, Boise State, and Arizona State—received first-round byes. Boise State and Arizona State represent notable Group of Five programs earning high seeds in a field otherwise dominated by traditional powerhouses.

First-Round Matchups

The first round kicks off on Dec. 20, featuring the following matchups:

- **No. 10 Indiana v. No. 7 Notre Dame** (12/20, 8pm, ABC)
- **No. 11 SMU v. No. 6 Penn State** (12/21, noon, TNT)
- **No. 5 Texas vs. No. 12 Clemson** (12/21, 4pm, TNT)
- **No. 9 Tennessee v. No. 8 Ohio State** (12/21, 8pm, ABC)

Winners will advance to the quarterfinals, where they will face one of the top four seeds.

Key Storylines

- **SMU's Improbable Journey:** SMU's selection over Alabama reflects a commitment to rewarding teams with strong seasons, despite setbacks like their ACC Championship loss.
- **Alabama's Exclusion:** The Crimson Tide's absence marks a dramatic change, leaving just three SEC teams in the playoff field. Alabama's exclusion was a disappointment for first-year head coach Kalen DeBoer, who faced a challenging transition season in Tuscaloosa.
- **Group of Five Representation:** In addition to SMU, Boise State's No. 3 seed highlights the growing competitiveness of non-Power Five programs. Army, UNLV, and Memphis also appeared in the final Top 25 rankings.

Expanded Playoff Impact

This expanded format introduces 11 games, significantly increasing the number of high-stakes matchups. Previously, the CFP featured just two semifinal games and a championship. The new structure ensures more opportunities for teams to compete for a national title and enhances excitement for fans.

The first round begins Dec. 20, with matchups airing across major networks. Tennessee vs. Ohio State headlines the schedule on Dec. 21, setting the tone for the playoffs' inaugural 12-team season. Fans and programs alike are eagerly anticipating this new chapter in college football history.

Championship Week Scores

Friday

(#20) UNLV 7 v. (#10) **Boise State 21** (Mtn. West)
Tulane 14 v. (#24) **Army 35** (AAC)

Saturday

(#3) Penn State **37** v. (#1) **Oregon 45** (Big 10)
(#5) **Georgia 22** v. (#2) Texas 19 (SEC)
(#17) **Clemson 34** v. (#8) SMU) 31 (ACC)
(#16) Iowa State 19 v. (#15) **Arizona State 45** (Big 12)