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**Friday, December 27, 2024** **Page 1** **Athens, Tennessee**

## Celebrating Jeff Derrick's Hard Work and Dedication at Athens Utilities Board



At Athens Utilities Board (AUB), we take great pride in recognizing the hard work and dedication of our employees. Today, we are thrilled to celebrate team member, Jeff Derrick, who has consistently shown commitment and excellence throughout his impressive career here at AUB.

Jeff's journey with AUB began shortly after graduating high school, when he started as summer help in the warehouse. His strong work ethic quickly stood out, and within just six months, Jeff transitioned into the Natural Gas Division. Over the next several years, he would prove himself as an invaluable asset to the company in a variety of roles.

After two years of hands-on experience with the Gas Underground Construction crew, Jeff moved on to work as an Underground Utility Locator for an impressive 13 years. During this time, his deep knowledge of the system, attention to detail, and determination to ensure safety and accuracy made him a trusted expert in his field.

His dedication to the job, leadership skills, and extensive experience

in the field led to his well-deserved promotion to Natural Gas Service Foreman in February 2024. This new role reflects the years of hard work and growth Jeff has experienced, and we know he will continue to inspire his team and contribute to the success of AUB. Outside of work, Jeff enjoys a variety of activities that keep him grounded and connected to the people he loves. Whether it's camping, riding in his Jeep, traveling, or spending time with his wife Lauren and their daughter Avery, who is 8 years old, Jeff values family and adventure. He and Lauren have been happily married for 19 years, building a life filled with shared experiences and memories. Source: AUB Press Release

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**WEATHER FORECAST**

**Friday** - Cloudy, breezy. High 59.  
**Fri. Night** - Occasional rain. Night: Possible rain. Breezy. Low 51.  
**Sat.** - Cloudy, mild. High 63. Night: Possible t-storms. Low 58.  
**Sun.** Occasional rain. High 63. Night: partly cloudy & cooler. Low 41.  
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Athens, Tennessee

## Obituaries

**Kristi Lynn Ricker**, age 48, of Decatur, passed away on Friday, December 20. She was outgoing and liked to camp. A funeral service will be held at 2 p.m. on Monday, December 30 in the chapel of Decatur Funeral Home & Cremation Services. The family will receive friends from 1 - 2 p.m., prior to the service. Decatur Funeral Home & Cremation Services is honored to serve the Ricker Family.

**Mark Winter**, age 77, passed away peacefully December 24<sup>th</sup>, at Dominion Senior Living in Athens. Mark was born in New York City and grew up in Westwood, New Jersey. His father, Murray Winter, was a decorated World War II Navy pilot and later had a distinguished career as an advertising executive. His mother, Doris Winter, was a prominent businesswoman in Westwood. Mark attended Syracuse University and San Francisco State College, where he earned a Master of Fine Arts degree in Film. He went on to have a successful career in film production, working on numerous feature films, documentaries, and industrial projects. Mark had a deep love of the arts and enjoyed attending new film releases, Broadway theater, and concerts. Mark will be laid to rest at King Solomon Memorial Park, in Clifton New Jersey. Good Samaritan Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

## Obituaries-continued

**Faye Marie Bridges Harris** passed away peacefully on Christmas Eve, December 24, surrounded by love, as she entered her heavenly home. Known for her unwavering devotion to her family, passion for cooking, and love of gardening, Marie touched the lives of everyone she met with her kindness, strength, and gentle spirit. Marie was married for nearly 50 years to her first husband, James Benjamin (J.B.) Bridges, until his passing in October 2001. Years later, she found love again with Holiway Harris, with whom she shared cherished years of companionship and joy. Marie's legacy is one of love, resilience, and faith. Per Marie's final wishes, there will be no receiving of friends. Companion Funeral Home and Cremation Services of Athens is in charge of arrangements.

**Scott Armstrong**, 65, of Etowah, passed away on Wednesday, December 25. Funeral services will be held at 2:00 p.m., Saturday, December 28, in the chapel of Bordwine Funeral Home with Pastor Anthony Wynn officiating. The family will receive friends from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m., Saturday prior to the service. Interment will follow the service in Mars Hill Cemetery. Bordwine Funeral Home of Etowah is in charge of arrangements.

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## Tennessee Unemployment Rates for November 2024

The Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development (TDLWD) announced on Thursday that 91 of Tennessee's 95 counties reported unemployment rates of less than 5% for November, with unemployment rates decreasing in 17 counties. Moore and Williamson counties recorded the state's lowest unemployment rates for November at 2.6%. Those counties also reported rates of 2.6% in October. Sevier County had the state's next-lowest unemployment rate for the month.

At 2.7%, the rate was one-tenth of a percentage point higher than in October. Unicoi County in Northeast Tennessee recorded the state's highest unemployment rate for November at 6%. That was a two-tenths of a percentage point increase over its October rate of 5.8%. Bledsoe County followed with a rate for November at 5.4%. Bledsoe's rate in October was 5.1%. McNairy County reported the third-highest rate for the month at 5.3%, an uptick of one-tenth of a percentage point over its October rate. The unemployment rate in Weakley County — which reported the highest rate in Tennessee in October — dropped 2 full percentage points in November to 3.9%.

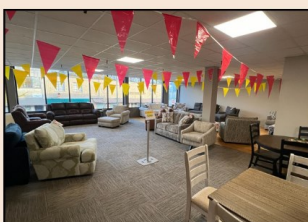
Unemployment rates remained the same in 30 counties, while rates in 48 counties increased from October to November. Area Unemployment rates appear in the chart below:

### Labor Force Estimates - Tennessee Counties

	November 2024 Pre.				October 2024 Rev.			November 2023	
	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Rate	Rate	Change	Rate	Change	
McMinn County	20,984	20,070	914	4.4	4.4	0.0	3.9	0.5	
Meigs County	4,797	4,580	217	4.5	4.5	0.0	4.5	0.0	
Monroe County	20,956	20,143	813	3.9	3.8	0.1	3.4	0.5	

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Friday, December 27, 2024

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Athens, Tennessee

## Church News & Events

- The next monthly Christian Men's Prayer Breakfast sponsored by New Hope Methodist Church will occur on Thursday, January 2 at 8 a.m. at Maddi Mae's Cafe in downtown Athens. This ecumenical prayer breakfast is open to all men of Christian faith plus those who want to establish a relationship with Jesus. Please contact Marcus Guinn by phone at (423-507-7769) or by Email at [marcusguinn@gmail.com](mailto:marcusguinn@gmail.com) for more information.
- Planted In Christ Outreach Fellowship (317 Maple Street, Athens) holds Outreach Deliverance Classes every Thursday at 7:00 p.m.
- Celebrate Recovery meets every Tuesday at 6:00 P.M. at Woodward Ave. Church of God (507 Woodward Ave., Athens).
- The Athens Christian Church, 802 S. Matlock Avenue, invites you to attend their services each week. Sunday School is at 10 a.m. and Sunday Worship is at 11 a.m. Prayer and Bible Study is held each Sunday and Wednesday at 6 p.m.

## Area News

- ◆ A drone and K-9 deputy helped track down drug suspects in Rhea County last Saturday, December 21. The Rhea County Sheriff's Office responded to the area of Walden Mountain Road in Spring City after a 9-1-1 hang-up call. Upon arrival, deputies found two individuals on the side of the road. Both ran and were eventually tracked down by a drone. The K-9 deputies led authorities to the suspects. When arrested, the suspects told officers that they were involved in a single vehicle wreck. The car was later found upside down in the woods. James Holland and Angel Bullington now face charges for evading arrest and public intoxication. Holland also faces a charge for resisting arrest. Source: WDEF 12 News
- ◆ The Sweetwater Police Department reports that three people are facing charges after several items were reportedly stolen from a Dollar General in Sweetwater. On December 19, officers responded to a burglary at the Dollar General on North Main Street, which was closed due to an arson incident. At the store, the Sweetwater Police Department said officers found a woman who was attempting to steal items. She was taken into custody. This incident led officers to review additional surveillance footage. This footage showed other people involved in recent burglaries at the store. SPD said detectives then investigated multiple residences, recovering over \$600 worth of stolen property and arresting two additional people on burglary charges. In a Social Media post on Facebook, the SPD stated: "We would like to remind the public that, regardless of the circumstances, it is illegal to enter and steal property that does not belong to you. The investigation remains ongoing, and officers are reviewing hours of surveillance footage to identify any other individuals involved." Source WATE 6 News



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