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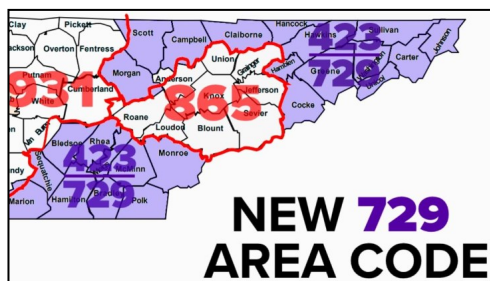
Free Outreach Deliverance Classes are held every Thursday 7:00 pm at Planted in Christ Outreach Fellowship Located at: 317 Maple Street in Athens. For more information: call 423-435-8986 HOPE to see you there!

**Wednesday, January 8, 2025**

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**Athens, Tennessee**

## Reminder: East TN's new '729' area code will go into effect soon



The Tennessee Public Utility Commission announced last year the addition of the 729 area code to the region currently served by the 423 area code. This change, known as an area code overlay, is being implemented to ensure a continued supply of new phone numbers as the 423 area code is projected to run out by the end of 2025.

Beginning **March 5, 2025**, **NEW** phone lines and services in the 423 region—which includes the areas in blue in the graphic shown to the left—will be assigned the 729 area code. The new code will coexist with the 423 area code, **meaning all calls within the region will require dialing the area code + phone number.**

Key dates to remember:

- **February 5, 2025:** Dialing **10 digits becomes mandatory** for all calls. Calls dialed with only seven digits will not be completed, and you'll need to redial using the area code.

To prepare for the change, residents and businesses should:

- Reprogram devices like speed dialers and medical monitoring systems to include the area code.
- Update contact lists, stationery, websites, and advertising materials to include the area code.
- Begin using the area code when sharing your phone number.

Long-distance calls will continue to require 1 + area code + phone number. For existing 423 numbers, no changes will be necessary aside from the new dialing procedure. This update ensures the region remains well-served as it continues to grow.

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# Never Miss an Update!



Wednesday, January 8, 2025

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Athens, Tennessee

## Obituaries

**Glen Donald Rucker, Sr.**, 84 of Sweetwater passed away on Monday, January 6. He served in the United States Army and was later employed as a truck driver with Seiler Block Company in Sweetwater. Visitation will be held at Fairview Baptist Church of Athens on Thursday, January 9 from 4:00 PM-6:00 PM with a funeral service to follow at 6:00 PM. Graveside services will be held at Sweetwater Valley Memorial Park on Friday, January 10 at 10:00 AM with full military honors. Ziegler Funeral Home has been entrusted with the care of Glen Donald Rucker, Sr.

**Chester "Nathaniel" Ellison**, age 77, of Sweetwater, TN, passed away peacefully at home surrounded by family on January 3, 2025. He was a carpenter for 53 years of his life. Nathaniel was also an avid hunter and fisherman who loved the outdoors. There will be a graveside service on Thursday, January 9, 2025 at the Sweetwater Valley Memorial Park at 3:30pm. Companion Funeral Home and the Cody family are honored to assist his family with these arrangements.

**Blanche D. Neil**, age 89 of Old Fort, Tennessee, passed away Sunday, January 5, 2025 at her residence. A native of Athens, and a resident of Old Fort for the past 12 years. She was a member of Hill Top Baptist Church and had worked for Charleston Hosiery Mill. Funeral services will be 6 pm Thursday, January 9, 2025 in the chapel of Laycock-Hobbs Funeral Home with visitation from 4-6 pm. A graveside service will be 11 am Friday, January 10, 2025 at Sullins Cemetery. Laycock-Hobbs Funeral Home is in charge of the arrangements.

## Rhea County K-9 and Drones Assist in Suspect Capture



Around midnight on Friday, January 3, the Rhea County Sheriff's Department Tracking K-9 Unit and Emergency Management drones assisted multiple agencies in

locating a suspect who fled on foot following a traffic stop.

The Athens Police Department, McMinn County Sheriff's Department, and Tennessee Highway Patrol initiated the pursuit, which ended in a wooded area near Interstate 75. K-9 Blondie quickly began tracking and located the suspect within minutes in the woodline between the interstate lanes.

The suspect was taken into custody by Athens Police and transported for booking. The collaboration highlights the effectiveness of inter-agency teamwork and specialized resources in resolving critical incidents. **Source:** [Rhea County Sheriff's Dept - Facebook](#)

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James A. Staton, Owner / Licensed Funeral Director (front),  
Standing (L-R) Audrey Staton Hall, Licensed Funeral Director, Jasper Staton, Unlicensed Funeral Assistant,  
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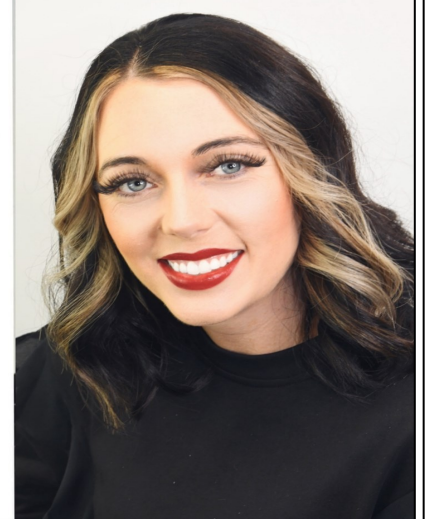


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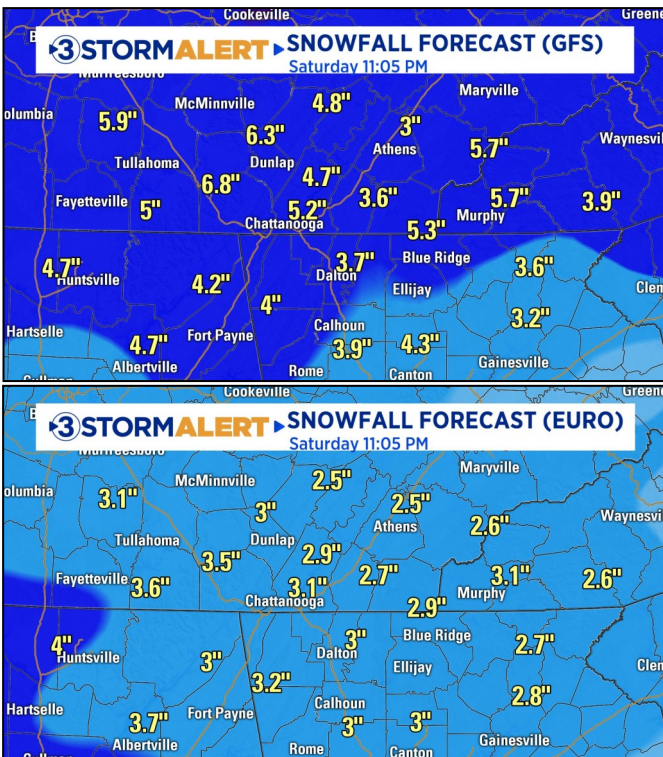


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Athens, Tennessee

## Cold Weather and Snow Possible Later This Week



The new year has started with a chill, and below-normal temperatures are expected to persist through the next two weeks. Weather models suggest that a low-pressure system passing to the south could bring a mix of cold air from the north and moisture from the south, potentially resulting in snowfall for the area.

The exact impact will depend on the track of the low. A more northern track could increase the chance of rain, while a southern track raises the likelihood of snow. Timing also varies between models. The GFS model predicts snow as early as 6 a.m. Friday, while the EURO model suggests a later arrival, mid-to-late morning.

Current projections estimate snowfall between 1 to 3+ inches, with the GFS model hinting at lingering snow showers into Saturday. Updated data suggests the snow line may shift further south, potentially increasing snowfall amounts on Friday morning through the night, tapering to lighter snow showers on Saturday.

Temperatures on Friday are forecasted to range from the 20s to low 30s, so residents should prepare for a wintry end to the week. Stay tuned (to WYXI RADIO FM 94.5 AM 1390) for updated forecasts as short-term models provide more clarity by midweek. **Source:** [David Karnes 3 - Facebook](#)



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Wednesday, January 8, 2025

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Athens, Tennessee

## CSCC Community First Award Winners Chosen

Cleveland State Community College announces the 2025 Community First Award winners. Nominations were received from the college's five-county service area, seeking to honor individuals in three categories. Nominations were judged based on the nominees' extraordinary commitment of time, talent, or treasure to the community.

"We are excited to announce the Community First Award winners for 2025. Each in their own way exemplifies the value of putting their community first," said Dr. Andy White, Cleveland State President. "This is a unique awards program, and I look forward to recognizing these outstanding individuals in February."

The categories and winners are as follows:

- **Alumni of the Year:** Matthew Coleman, Managing Partner, Attorney with Logan Thompson, PC
- **Don M. Lorton Community Servants of the Year:** Scottie & Lisa Mayfield, Retired business executives and current owners of White Street Market in Athens, TN
- **Educator of the Year:** Dr. Jason Bell, Secondary Supervisor at Polk County Schools



**Matthew Coleman**



**Scottie & Lisa Mayfield**



**Dr. Jason Bell**

The Community First Awards will be featured at *An Evening with Scott Hamilton* on Thursday, Feb. 20 in the Wacker Commons of the Partners in Industry and Education (PIE) Center in Cleveland. Presented by the Bank of Cleveland/Builtwell Banking, the event will include a reception, dinner and interview with Olympic Gold medalist, broadcaster and author, Scott Hamilton. Tickets are available through the Cleveland State website, [mycs.cc/eveningwith](https://mycs.cc/eveningwith). All proceeds from the event go to the Cleveland State Foundation, which provides support for the college and hundreds of scholarships to students each year. For more information, visit [mycs.cc/eveningwith](https://mycs.cc/eveningwith), call (423) 614-8700 or email [foundation@clevelandstatecc.edu](mailto:foundation@clevelandstatecc.edu).