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Today's News...This Morning

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Monday, March 17, 2025

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Athens, Tennessee

Fire Destroys Former Sewing Factory Turned Storage Building in Madisonville



A building on New Hwy 68 in Madisonville, formerly a sewing factory but now used for storage, caught fire around 6 p.m. Wednesday. Upon arrival, firefighters found the back section fully engulfed in flames.

Multiple agencies responded, including Madisonville City Fire, Christianburg Fire, Gudger Fire, Tri-Community Fire, and Englewood Rural Fire. Additional support came from Monroe County EMS, Fort Loudoun Electric Co-Op, and Madisonville City Police. Madisonville City Firefighter Todd Torbett led the emergency response. Authorities continue to investigate the cause of the fire.

Photo by Lynn Ingram, Englewood Rural Fire Department

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Community News You Can Use

- The meeting of the City of Athens Board of Zoning Appeals originally scheduled for Wednesday, March 26 has been **cancelled**, due to not receiving any applications this month.
- The Athens City Council will be meeting in regular session in the Burkett L. Witt Council Chambers of the Athens Municipal Building on Tuesday, March 18 at 6:00 pm. They will be approving equipment purchases, a service agreement with [Kimley-Horn & Associates](#) for traffic signal re-timing as well as approving a contract of \$127,800 with the same firm for preliminary design, clearances, and data collection for downtown intersection improvements. They are also meeting to approve a contribution of \$650,000 from reserve funds to the Pension Trust Fund. They will discuss sharing \$35,000 of cost with the Athens Board of Education (BoE) to install a new playground, and discuss contributing \$1,000,000 to the Athens BoE for improvements to the former Westside School building. *These and many more items are on the agenda for the Tuesday meeting.*

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Monday, March 17, 2025

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Athens, Tennessee

Obituaries

- **Dr. Janice Hardaway** passed Thursday, March 13, at her home in Athens, surrounded by her loving family. Funeral services will be announced later by M.D. Dotson and Sons Funeral Home & Cremation Service of Athens, TN.
- **Cristoba Carter**, 90 of Englewood, passed away on Thursday, March 13. Cristoba taught at Englewood Elementary School for 32 years. She was a member of Englewood First Baptist Church. Funeral services will be held at 1:00 p.m., Tuesday, March 18 at First Baptist Church of Englewood. The family will receive friends from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Tuesday prior to the service at the church. Interment will follow the service in McMinn Memory Gardens. Bordwine Funeral Home of Etowah is in charge of arrangements.
- **Edith Carole Stepp Oran**, 78, passed away surrounded by her family on Monday, March 10. Carole loved her family fiercely and left behind many memories to be cherished. Companion Funeral Home in Athens and the Cody family are honored to assist her family with these arrangements.
- **Oliver Eugene Cranfield**, 87 of Athens, passed away on Monday, March 10. He loved hunting and playing horseshoes. Oliver owned and operated his own business for 40 years, serving Athens and surrounding areas. Companion Funeral Home in Athens and the Cody family are honored to assist his family with these arrangements.

Food City Honors Mitch Cochran as Store Manager of the Year



Mitch Cochran, Store Manager of Food City #743 in Cleveland, has been named Food City's Store Manager of the Year, the company's highest honor. Recognized for outstanding leadership, customer service, and community involvement, Cochran received the award on February 27, 2025, in Knoxville, TN.

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Cochran began his grocery career in 1972 and worked his way up through various leadership roles. After 50 years of service, he has announced his retirement, leaving behind a legacy of dedication to his employees, customers, and the community.

Source: Tammy Baumgardner, Public Relations K-VA-T Food Stores

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Monday, March 17, 2025 Morning Fax®...Today's News This Morning Page 3 Athens, Tennessee

Fire Destroys Vacant House, Spreads to Camper in Etowah



A vacant house on County Road 804 was completely destroyed by fire early Friday morning around 4 a.m. The flames spread to a camper parked nearby, where the occupant was asleep. He awoke to a popping noise, looked out the window, and saw both the house and camper engulfed in flames.

A neighboring home also sustained heat damage on one side. Multiple agencies responded, including Englewood Rural Fire, Etowah Rural Fire, Claxton Fire, AMR, and EUB. Etowah Rural Fire Chief Adam Hafley and Englewood Rural Fire Chief Billy Roach led the emergency response. Authorities are investigating the cause of the fire.

Photos by Lynn Ingram, Englewood Rural Fire Department



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Peoples Bank announcing move into Blue Ridge, GA

Peoples Bank of East Tennessee (PBET) is has announced its expansion into Blue Ridge, Georgia, reinforcing its commitment to providing personalized, relationship-focused, community banking. Through strategic planning and a deep understanding of the local market, PBET is proud to extend its services to meet the financial needs of individuals and businesses in the region. With two successful branches already serving North Georgia, the move into Blue Ridge represents a key milestone in PBET's long-term growth strategy. PBET is dedicated to building strong relationships and delivering the trusted banking experience that customers deserve.



As part of this growth, Peoples Bank of East Tennessee is pleased to welcome **Cory Callihan as a Commercial Loan Officer/VP at the new Blue Ridge location.** Cory brings a strong background in lending and a passion for helping individuals and businesses achieve their financial goals. His deep understanding of the local market and commitment to exceptional customer service will be invaluable as PBET continues to expand its presence in North Georgia. "We are excited to have Cory join our team," said Jeremy Callais, President and CEO of Peoples Bank of East Tennessee. "His experience and dedication to relationship banking align perfectly with our mission. We look forward to seeing him build meaningful connections in Blue Ridge and provide the personalized lending solutions our customers need."

Cory will be based at the new Blue Ridge location, where he will focus on helping customers with a range of lending services, from personal and mortgage loans to small business and commercial lending. His expertise and local knowledge make him a great addition to the PBET team. Peoples Bank of East Tennessee looks forward to deepening its commitment to Blue Ridge and the surrounding communities by providing exceptional lending services, fostering long-term relationships, and supporting local economic growth. *Source: Kristien Scott, Marketing Specialist, Peoples Bank of East Tennessee*

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Monday, March 17, 2025

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Athens, Tennessee

AUB celebrates National Gas Utility Workers Day



AUB will join utilities across the nation to observe national Gas Utility Workers' Day on Tuesday, March 18, 2025. This is the tenth year that a day of recognition has been set aside to honor the employees who provide one of their most valuable assets- natural gas.

The National Gas Utility Workers' Day is March 18 because that is the date of the New London, Texas school explosion in 1937 that led to the widespread odorization of natural gas and an increased emphasis on safety. Safety is a vital aspect to natural gas distribution and the employees of distribution companies endeavor to make natural gas delivery as safe as possible.

Natural gas is a vital part of the AUB portfolio. AUB Natural Gas offers quality, comfort, convenience and reliability to the homes, business, and industrial customers of McMinn County. "Many people don't realize that AUB has natural gas lines all the way into the northwestern side of the county serving homes, churches, businesses and even the elementary school," said AUB's Amy McDonald. **Morning Fax**

"Natural gas delivers heat faster to appliances such as water heaters and nothing beats cooking with gas. It is a clean-burning fuel and with TVA using natural gas to generate electricity it can dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emissions from power plants currently using fossil fuels," states Craig Brymer, AUB's Natural Gas superintendent. Today's News. This Morning.

The AUB Natural Gas department consists of only 11 employees. They are all very skilled in their trade and take their job extremely seriously. AUB currently supplies around 6,735 natural gas customers and maintains approximately 494 miles of distribution lines. As you can imagine this keeps them on their toes on a daily basis. A very important part of the gas division is the 811 Call Before You Dig location program. AUB crews completed 4,827 request tickets last year. AUB also owns and operates a Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) filling station on Holiday Drive, just off Interstate 75 exit 49.

AUB looks forward to continuing to bring safe, reliable natural gas to homes and businesses. AUB also hopes you will join them in supporting natural gas as a premier energy source for our community. As the cleanest burning fossil fuel, natural gas can help us achieve energy security and build a more competitive economy. *Source: Amy McDonald, Customer Engagement Specialist at AUB*

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