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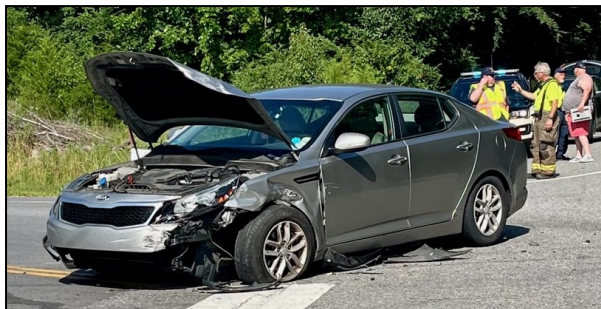
**Wednesday, July 02, 2025**

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**Athens, Tennessee**

## Two-Vehicle Crash in Riceville Sends One to Hospital

A two-vehicle collision Sunday afternoon on Highway 163 at County



Road 750 in Riceville left one driver injured. The crash occurred around 4:30 p.m. and involved a 2013 Kia Optima and a 2013 Mercedes. The driver of the Kia sustained injuries but declined transport to the hospital.

Emergency crews from Claxton Fire, Calhoun Fire, Etowah Rural Fire, and AMR responded to the scene, with Claxton Firefighter Dexter Key leading the incident response. The crash is being investigated by THP Trooper Dennis Pedigo.

*Photos by Kayne Watkins, Claxton Fire Department.*

## Applications Open for Leadership McMinn Class of 2025–2026

The Athens Area Chamber of Commerce is now accepting applications for the **Leadership McMinn Class of 2025–2026**. This long-running program, which has graduated over 600 participants since its start in 1988, offers a unique opportunity to learn more about McMinn County while building lasting personal and professional connections.

The program kicks off in **September** and meets **one day per month for nine months**, with each session focusing on a different area of the community, including local government, healthcare, industry, history, criminal justice, and volunteer opportunities. A group of **25 participants** will be selected to take part.

Applications are due by **Friday, August 15**. Interested individuals can apply by calling the Chamber at **423-745-0334**, emailing [julie@athenschamber.org](mailto:julie@athenschamber.org), or picking up an application at **13 N. Jackson St. in Athens**.

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Athens, Tennessee

## Friendly City Festivals Presents Sweet Georgia Sound on Friday, July 4

Friendly City Festivals announces the third concert in the 13th annual Sounds of Summer series. It will feature Chattanooga-based Sweet Georgia Sound on Friday, July 4.

The concert will be held in conjunction with The City of Athens Buddy Liner Fireworks display at Athens Regional Park starting at 6:45 pm. Featured food truck will be Kona Ice and concessions will be available at the Regional Park Stand beginning at 6:00 pm. Sweet Georgia Sound will be performing on a stage located at the soccer fields, adjacent to the playground and splash pad.

Sweet Georgia Sound is an 18-member ensemble that brings the American standards to the Tennessee Valley. Playing the music that people know and have danced to for generations is the hallmark of this beloved group. Sweet Georgia sound specializes in showcasing familiar tunes that have been the soundtrack to many of our lives and are pleased to return to Athens and Sounds of Summer.

The remaining line up in the 2025 Sounds of Summer series is:

**Saturday, July 19th** - Authentic Unlimited Band at Market Pavilion

**Saturday, August 9th** - Kinslee Melhorn at Market Pavilion

**Saturday, August 16th** - Nate Viele and Mendingwall

This free to the public series is produced by Friendly City Festivals, a 501(c)3 subsidiary of Willsonthropic, Inc. and is made possible by the financial support of: The City of Athens Tourism Fund, McMinn County Tourism Board, Madison Avenue Pharmacy, Tennessee Overhill Association, Tennessee Arts Commission, Mayfield Dairy Farms, DENSO, Tonya Phenix Insurance Consultant, VEC Customer Shares, Citizens National Bank of Sevier County, Valley Oil, Starr Regional Medical Center, Kona Ice, Simmons Bank, Simmons Wealth Management Group, Warren Jackson CPAs, Athens Kiwanis Club, Athens Insurance and The Retirement Guys.

Special thanks to The Daily Post Athenian, The Morning Fax and Athens Area Chamber of Commerce for media/advertising support.

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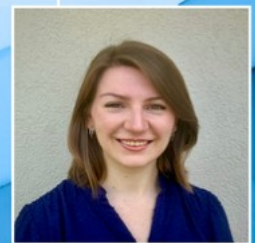
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Wednesday, July 02, 2025

Morning Fax<sup>®</sup>...Today's News This Morning Page 3

Athens, Tennessee

### McMinn County Amateur Radio Club to Host 21st Annual HamFest



The McMinn County Amateur Radio Club will host its 21st annual HamFest on Saturday, July 19, at the McMinn County Expo Center in Athens Regional Park.

The event brings together amateur radio enthusiasts to buy, sell, and trade radio equipment and accessories. For those looking to earn or upgrade their amateur radio license, written exams will be offered throughout the morning for a small fee.

To beat the heat, gates open at 7 a.m. and the event wraps up around 1 p.m. General admission is \$5, and concessions will be available from Salty Mel's.

For more details, visit [McMinnARC.com](http://McMinnARC.com).

### TWRA Cracks Down on Boating Under the Influence During July 4th Weekend

The Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) will join the nationwide Operation Dry Water campaign from July 4–6, focusing on the prevention and enforcement of boating under the influence (BUI) during one of the busiest boating weekends of the year.

TWRA officers will be out in full force across Tennessee waterways, watching for impaired boat operators and increasing public awareness about the dangers of alcohol and drug use on the water. Boaters can expect increased patrols throughout the weekend.

Alcohol is the leading contributing factor in recreational boating deaths. Sun, wind, and motion on the water can intensify the effects of alcohol and drugs, putting both operators and passengers at risk.

Operating a boat with a blood alcohol content of .08% or higher is illegal in Tennessee and carries penalties such as fines, jail time, boat impoundment, and loss of boating privileges.

Operation Dry Water, started in 2009 by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA), is supported by TWRA, the U.S. Coast Guard, and Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) to promote safer boating statewide.

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Athens, Tennessee

## City of Etowah Fourth of July All Day Celebration

The Old Fashioned 4th of July Celebration is Etowah's oldest and grandest tradition. This year's celebration will take place on Friday, July 4th, 2025, at the Etowah L&N Depot and is expected to attract thousands of visitors as the largest small-town celebration of its kind in Southeast Tennessee.

As always, the day will commence with the Independence Dash 5K Race, proudly sponsored by First Baptist Church of Etowah. Early risers will also have the pleasure of indulging in the much anticipated pancakes served up by our local Boy Scout Troop 74. Throughout the day, an array of entertainment awaits, including the highly anticipated beauty pageant, an old fashioned watermelon eating contest and inflatables for the kids. We have our largest-ever assortment of food and beverage vendors, along with a nice variety of other craft and non-profit vendor booths.

The afternoon entertainment slate includes several popular local artists including Madelyn Tallent, Bay Harbison, and the Etowah Town Band. The evening slate includes well-known local entertainers, Sammie Jones and September Song followed by a traditional Patriotic Program sponsored by the Gem Players.

The night will be headlined by Utopia—an award winning, regionally renowned cover band which promises to captivate audiences of all ages by playing the hits from the 70's to modern day. Utopia Band has been awarded The Bash (Gigmasters) Nationwide Event Booking Agency's "Best of the Year" Award 10 years. The celebration will be capped off with a grand fireworks display that will illuminate the night sky over the historical Etowah Depot. We would like to thank our generous sponsors, volunteers and community partners for making this event an annual success that continues to grow every year.

Source: The City of Etowah

## Obituaries

**Ingrid Boke Cooley**, age 84, a native of Minden, Germany and resident of McMinn County for 56 years, passed away on Tuesday, July 1, 2025. She was a licensed chef who formerly owned Pizza Hut in downtown Athens in the early 1970's, owned and operated Newton's Restaurant, was retired after 34 years as a supervisor at Johns Manville, and later owned and operated European Flair. Ingrid served as president of the VFW Post #5146 Wives Club and was a former president of the McMinn County Democratic Party. She was a member of Allen Memorial United Methodist Church. A Celebration of Life will be held on Sunday, July 13, 2025, from 1:00-4:00 PM at Ziegler Funeral Home. Ziegler Funeral Home has been entrusted with serving the family of Ingrid Boke Cooley.

**David William "Dave" Burgess**, 78 of Ten Mile, passed away on Monday, June 30. He attended Ten Mile Baptist Church. He was a United States Navy Veteran, an avid Tennessee Vols and Lady Vols Fans, and enjoyed being outdoors, especially golfing and fishing. A Funeral Service will be held at 2 p.m. on Monday, July 7, 2025, in the Chapel of Decatur Funeral Home & Cremation Services. Interment will follow in the Pisgah Cemetery. The family will receive friends from 12 – 2 p.m., prior to the service. Decatur Funeral Home & Cremation Services is honored to serve the Burgess Family.

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