

**21st Annual
Etowah Community
Christmas Concert**
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Tuesday, December 09, 2025

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Athens, Tennessee

Huge Crowd Turns Out for Old-Fashioned Downtown Christmas in Athens



Downtown Athens was packed Saturday evening as families, friends, and holiday visitors gathered for the annual **Old-Fashioned Downtown Christmas** celebration, hosted by Athens Main Street. The beloved community tradition once again transformed the city square into a festive holiday village—complete with food, music, activities, and for the first time, **falling snow** that delighted children and adults alike.

The night culminated in the lighting of the official **Athens Christmas tree**, drawing cheers from the crowd as the lights illuminated Market Park and signaled the start of the holiday season. Attendees described the atmosphere as joyful and lively, with lines forming for treats, photos, and visits with Santa and Mrs. Claus.

Earlier in the afternoon, **WYXI Radio** helped kick off the festivities with a special **live broadcast from 3 to 7 p.m.** outside Jim's Mattress & More. The broadcast featured giveaways, interviews with event organizers, and updates from around the square as the celebration unfolded. From 3 to 8 p.m., guests enjoyed a full schedule of holiday fun, including local vendors, food trucks, carolers, live entertainment, and a **Live Nativity Scene** presented by Keith Memorial UMC. With cleared sidewalks and glowing storefronts lining the streets, Athens once again delivered a picture-perfect start to the Christmas season.

WYXI Radio delivers traditional Southern Gospel music and Christian programming around the clock. Those wishing to listen through regular radio may tune in on **FM 94.5, AM 1390**. Those without a radio or from outside the broadcast area, may listen to WYXI from any internet connected device via the [Live365 stream](#). WYXI is currently airing **near-non-stop Christmas music** throughout the holiday season. *Photo by Stephanie Devine, WYXI/Morning Fax Staff; Mark Lefler of WYXI interviewing Sandra Kinney, Athens Main Street Director*

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Kimball Named Southeast Core Finalist for Tennessee Supervisor of the Year



Athens City Schools is celebrating a major achievement as Dr. Andrew Kimball has been honored as the 2025–2026 Southeast Core Finalist for the Tennessee Supervisor of the Year Award.

Dr. Kimball, who serves as ACS Supervisor of Federal Programs, Technology, and Safety, was recognized for his leadership, dedication, and continued commitment to supporting students, staff, and families throughout the district.

A photo shared by the district shows Dr. Kimball with Tennessee Commissioner of Education Lizette Reynolds, who presented the award.

Athens City Schools praised Dr. Kimball for his service and expressed pride in his accomplishments at the state level.

Source: Julie Lofland/ACS

Athens City Council Appoints Perry McCowan to Vacant Council Seat



The Athens City Council has appointed Perry McCowan to fill the vacant council seat during its special-called meeting held on December 4, 2025.

McCowan, a long-time Athens resident with more than three decades of service at Johnson Controls/Adient was selected for the position. During his 32-year tenure, he worked in a variety of roles that strengthened his understanding of local industry and workforce needs.

Before beginning his civilian career, McCowan served three years in the United States Army with the 101st Airborne Division, stationed at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, further grounding his lifelong commitment to service. McCowan is also well known for his civic engagement. His community involvement includes service on the Athens City Council Advisory Committee, as well as the Hope Center Board and the Free Hill Team Project. McCowan was sworn into office on December 4th and will serve until the next municipal election in November 2026. Administering the oath is City Judge, Mitchell Bryant. Photo taken by Athens Vice Mayor Jordan Curtis.

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Athens, Tennessee

McMinn County Arrest Reports

12-07-25

Scott Staybrook, 53 of Athens, charged with child abuse, neglect, non-violent. Bond \$5,000.

Vanette Staybrook, 59 of Athens, charged with child abuse, neglect, non-violence. Bond \$5,000.

James Phillips, 52 of Niota, charged with casual exchange, possession of meth, drug paraphernalia, and violation of probation for theft. Bond \$15,000.

Melissa Bowman, 52, of Decatur, charged with state violation or probation for Schedule II meth for resale.

Dustin Rymer, 31 of Decatur, charged with state violation of probation for burglary.

Michaelis Moore, 21 of Cleveland, charged with child support in Hamilton County.

Osto Monroe, 45 of Athens, charged with maintaining a dwelling for drug use, and drug paraphernalia. Bond \$5,000.

Travis Finney, 35 of Athens, charged with simple possession, casual exchange, of meth, and drug paraphernalia. Bond \$7,000.

Samantha Zotter, 34 of Athens, charged with simple possession casual exchange of meth and drug paraphernalia. Bond \$7,000.

Those accused are considered innocent until proven guilty in a court of law. Information gathered using public sources.

OBITUARY

Samuel Lee (Big Sam) Black, Sr. 78 of Athens, passed away Thursday, December 4, 2025 at U.T. Medical Center in Knoxville. He was a veteran of the U.S. Army and was a devoted Husband and Father; he loved old cars and guitars. Family and friends will gather at 10:00 am for a graveside service at 11:00 am, Wednesday, December 10, 2025 at McMinn Memory Gardens with visitation from 5-7 pm Tuesday, Dec. 9th at Smith Funeral & Cremation Services of Athens.

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Athens, Tennessee

Peoples Bank of East Tennessee Concludes Bank-Wide Winter Coat Drive



Peoples Bank of East Tennessee is proud to announce the successful completion of its annual Winter Coat Drive, held in partnership with United Way of Monroe County and dedicated in memory of long-time board member Doug Warren. This year's drive brought forward an incredible outpouring of generosity from employees, customers, and community members across all PBET branches.

The response far exceeded expectations. Across the bank's branch network, they collected almost 75 large trash bags filled with children's and adults' coats, jackets, hoodies, and fleeces. This remarkable volume of donations reflects the deep compassion of our customers and the continued dedication of our staff to serving the communities we call home.

Caylen Matoy from United Way of Monroe County visited the Madisonville branch to accept the donations and coordinate distribution to families in need throughout the region. Through this partnership, every item collected will directly support individuals facing the cold winter months.

United Way of Monroe County provides local families with access to essential resources, including winter clothing support, emergency assistance, and community programs. Residents needing assistance may contact United Way of Monroe County at (423) 337-7698, unitedwayofmonroecounty@gmail.com or visit www.unitedwaymonroetn.org, or stop by their office at 4277 Highway 411, Madisonville, TN, to learn more about available services.

"This coat drive continues to be a meaningful way to honor the life and legacy of Doug Warren," said Erica Warren, daughter of Doug Warren. "His heart for giving and his dedication to serving others made a lasting impact. It means so much to see that spirit carried forward through efforts like this."

Peoples Bank of East Tennessee extends heartfelt appreciation to every customer, employee, and community partner who made this year's drive possible. Your kindness and generosity offer warmth, comfort, and hope to families across East Tennessee. PBET remains committed to service, stewardship, and carrying forward the values that defined Doug Warren's legacy.



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