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Tuesday, December 16, 2025

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Athens, Tennessee

## Local Troops Participate in National Wreaths Across America Program Saturday



American Heritage Girls Troop 1824 and Boys Trail Life USA Troop 1212 recently joined volunteers nationwide by laying wreaths at memorials in Athens Veterans Park as part of the annual Wreaths Across America effort honoring fallen service members.

The initiative began in the 1990s when Maine businessman Morrill Worcester, owner of Worcester Wreath Company, donated surplus holiday wreaths to Arlington National Cemetery. That gesture eventually evolved into a national nonprofit with a stated mission of honoring veterans, supporting military families, and educating the public. The organization grew into a charity generating more than \$30 million annually. Local participation in Athens highlights the program's grassroots support.

American Heritage Girls was founded by a group of parents wanting a faith-based, scout-type character development program for their daughters in 1995. The AHG Program is dedicated to the mission of building women of integrity through service to God, family, community and country. AHG girls across the nation and the globe participate in badge

programs, service projects, leadership opportunities, and outdoor experiences, all with an emphasis on Christian values and family involvement.

Boys Trail Life USA partners with churches and parents across America as the premier national character development organization for young men, which produces generations of godly and responsible husbands, fathers, and citizens. Fathers and sons are connecting, relationships are deepening, communities are being impacted, and legacies are being established as a new generation of godly leaders rises up. First Baptist Church of Athens is the local sponsor for both groups.

*Photos submitted by Esther Strasser*



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**Athens, Tennessee**

## McMinn County Unemployment Holds at 4.5% in September

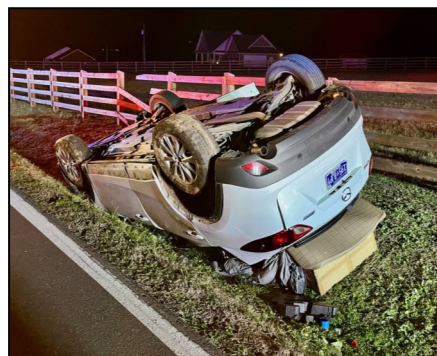
McMinn County's unemployment rate held steady at 4.5% in September, according to the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development. The rate was unchanged from August and slightly higher than the 4.2% reported in September 2024.

The county reported a labor force of 25,370, with 24,228 employed and 1,142 unemployed. McMinn County's rate remains above the statewide unemployment rate of 3.6%, which was unchanged for the month and lower than the national rate of 4.4%.

Across Tennessee, nonfarm employment increased by 3,400 jobs between August and September, with gains led by accommodation and food services, manufacturing, and government. Over the past year, employers statewide added 35,800 jobs.

Nearly all Tennessee counties reported unemployment rates below 5% in September, including neighboring Meigs County at 4.9%. County unemployment figures are not seasonally adjusted.

## Vehicle Overtakes on Highway 307 in Athens



A single-vehicle crash was reported Saturday night around 8 p.m. on Highway 307 in Athens when the driver of a 2014 Mazda CX-5 Touring ran off the roadway, lost control, and overturned.

The driver was treated at the scene and transported by AMR to Starr Regional Medical Center in Athens. The extent of injuries was not released.

Responding agencies included the McMinn County Sheriff's Department, Englewood Rural Fire Department, Athens Rural Fire Department, and Niota Rural Fire Department. Englewood Rural Fire Chief Billy Roach was in command at the scene. The crash is being investigated by Tennessee Highway Patrol Trooper Preston Meadows.

*Photo by Lynn Ingram, Englewood Rural FD*



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February 6

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Athens, Tennessee

## Obituaries

**Rickey Ervin Akins**, 65 of Athens, passed away on Friday, December 12. An outdoorsman through and through, Rickey could often be seen around his farm gardening, driving his tractor, or tending to his cows. He had recently retired after over 45 years of service at Adient. A visitation for Rickey will take place at Poole Funeral Home in Etowah on Tuesday, December 16<sup>th</sup>, from 5 to 7 P.M. His funeral service will follow. On Wednesday December 17, a graveside procession and service will begin at 9:45 A.M. at Poole Funeral Home, ending at Jones Chapel Cemetery. Poole Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

**Robert L. Jones**, 77 of Etowah, passed away on Saturday, December 13. Robert was a hardworking man who enjoyed farming. He mostly enjoyed cutting firewood, mowing yards, and working in the hay fields to help feed his cattle. Funeral services will be held at 7:00 p.m. Tuesday, December 16 in the chapel of Bordwine Funeral Home. The family will receive friends from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. Tuesday prior to the service. Family and friends will assemble at Towee Falls Cemetery on Wednesday, December 17 for the 11:00 a.m. committal service. Bordwine Funeral Home of Etowah is in charge of arrangements.

**Clara Cochran**, 96 of Englewood, passed away Sunday, December 14 at Life Care Center of Athens. Clara loved growing flowers and enjoyed driving around with her husband, oftentimes finding themselves in Murphy, NC. A graveside service will be held at 2:00 p.m., Wednesday, December 17 in McMinn Memory Gardens. No formal visitation will be held. Bordwine Funeral Home of Etowah is in charge of arrangements.

**Barbara Faye Kander**, 60 of Dayton, passed away on Sunday, December 7. Graveside services will be held on Wednesday, December 17 at Spence Cemetery in Dayton. Good Samaritan Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

**Karita Johnson**, 96 of Georgetown, passed away peacefully at her home on December 13. Karita enjoyed a 40-year career in banking, eventually retiring as a loan officer from First Tennessee Bank in Chattanooga. She was also a long-time member of Brittsville Baptist Church. A funeral service will be held at 2 p.m., Thursday, December 18 in the chapel of Decatur Funeral Home & Cremation Services Interment will follow in the Johnston Cemetery. The family will receive friends from 12 noon - 2 p.m., prior to the service. Decatur Funeral Home & Cremation Services is honored to serve the Johnson Family.

The Friendly Fellow Club has been providing food boxes at Christmas to families in need in McMinn County for nearly 90 years. The boxes contain enough food staples to help families through the winter. Because of a larger than normal number of applications for food boxes, the Friendly Fellow Club is seeking additional donations to ensure it can continue to meet needs this year.

Friendly Fellow Club is a 501(c)(3) organization. Not only are the donations tax-deductible, but because FFC operates under an all-volunteer board, 100 percent of all donations—every single penny—goes to help families in Athens and McMinn County. As always, only families residing within McMinn County are eligible for assistance, meaning your donations stay right here at home.

Online donations via credit/debit card or PayPal can be made by visiting [friendlyfellows.org](http://friendlyfellows.org). Donations can also be mailed to P.O. Box 325, Athens, TN 37371-0325 or dropped off at The Daily Post-Athenian offices in Athens. Make checks payable to Friendly Fellow Club.

Donations in honor or memory of a loved one are always a special tribute and are most welcome. Donors using the online payment portal can add an honorarium/memorial by including that information in the "Add Note" section of the donation portal.

Boxes will be packed and distributed at the National Guard Armory, located between Athens and Etowah off Highway 30. Boxes will be packaged on Monday, December 22, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. They will be distributed to members of eligible households at the same location on Tuesday, December 23, 2025, from 8:30 to 11:00 a.m. As always, community members are welcome and encouraged to come to the armory and aid with the packing.

**Paid for by Friendly Fellow Club Volunteers**

