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TBI Investigating Officer-Involved Shooting in Sweetwater

A state investigation is underway following an officer-involved shooting in Sweetwater Monday night that resulted in the death of a suspect.

According to the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, officers with the Sweetwater Police Department responded around 7:30 p.m. to a reported shoplifting incident at a business in the 900 block of South Main Street. Officers located the suspect, and a foot pursuit followed.

During the encounter, the suspect reportedly brandished a knife and advanced toward officers. One officer fired, striking the individual. The man was transported to a hospital, where he was pronounced dead. No officers were injured.

The Sweetwater Police Department confirmed late Monday that a detective was involved in the shooting but released limited details at that time.

TBI special agents are leading the investigation into the circumstances surrounding the shooting, with assistance from the McMinn County Sheriff's Office and the 10th Judicial District Attorney's Office. *Source:* WATE

Community News You Can Use

- Santa will be present at Food City #747 located at 841 US 411N in Etowah today, Wednesday, December 17.
- The Athens Area Council for the Arts is now accepting entries for its annual Student Art Show featuring middle school, high school, and college students from McMinn and surrounding counties. The entry deadline is Wednesday, Feb. 18, 2026. The exhibit will be on display at The Arts Center from March 13 through April 10, with a reception and awards ceremony set for Friday, March 27 at 5 p.m. There is no entry fee for middle and high school students; college entries are \$10 per piece. Entry details and guidelines are available at:

athensartscouncil.org

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NATURE, AND THE JOY OF CHERISHED TRADITIONS.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

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McMinn County Tourism Attractions Awarded Grants

McMinn County is celebrating a wave of new investments in its tourism sector, with multiple attractions and municipalities receiving significant grants to preserve history, enhance cultural venues, and expand outdoor recreation. These projects highlight the county's commitment to enriching visitor experiences and supporting community vitality.

The Englewood Textile Museum has been awarded \$29,800 from the Tennessee State Museum Capital Improvement and Maintenance Grant. The funding will be used for brick painting and exterior wall repairs as well as the rebuilding of an interior wall, ensuring the museum's historic structure remains sound for future generations.

The McMinn County Living Heritage Museum received \$54,280 from the Tennessee State Museum Capital Improvement Fund to install a new roof, gutters, and downspouts, protecting the museum's collection and improving safety for visitors.

In Etowah, the city secured a \$100,000 grant to renovate the historic Gem Theater, a cultural cornerstone that hosts performances, films, and community events. Renovations will enhance the theater's role as a hub for arts and entertainment.

Meanwhile, the City of Calhoun is completing its 2024 Tourism Enhancement Grant project, totaling \$87,191.37, to improve the Hiwassee River Blueway Access Point. The upgrades will be completed in time for spring river adventures in 2026, expanding opportunities for paddling, fishing, and eco-tourism.

Athens and Main Street Athens have also received a \$300,000 Downtown Improvement Grant. The funding will assist property owners with building and façade improvements, revitalizing the downtown area and enhancing its appeal for businesses, residents, and visitors. *Source: Brianna Baker, McMinn County EDA & Tourism*

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and Happy New Year

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McMinn County Arrest Reports

12-15-25

Tristan Wilson, 28 of Sweetwater, charged with drug paraphernalia, Bond \$2,000.

Herbert McCowan, 47 of Lexington, Kentucky, charged with DUI, Bond \$3,000.

Gregory Derosh, 57 of Athens, charged with tampering with evidence, Possession of Schedule II meth, burglary, and criminal trespassing, Bond \$82,500.

Crystal Brown, 43 of Philadelphia, TN. charged with criminal trespassing, Bond \$1,000.

Bradley Brabson, 41 of Athens, charged with violation of probation for theft, Bond \$2,500.

Brian Lewallen, 26 of Old Fort, TN. charged with failure to appear for driving on a suspended license, Bond \$4,000.

Susan Crumley, 27 of Englewood, charged with state violation of probation for maintaining a drug dwelling.

Robert Gaston, 54 of Englewood, charged with tampering with evidence, resisting stop, driving on a revoked license and DUI, Bond \$47,000.

Jamar Thornton, 23 of Athens, charged with domestic assault, Bond \$1,000.

Those accused are considered innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

Information gathered using Public Sources.

We encourage you to e-mail community events, church news, school sports results or other items of interest for possible use in the Morning Fax. If you take a newsworthy photograph, send it to:

wyxiradio@gmail.com



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Wednesday, Dec. 17, 2025

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Athens, Tennessee

McMinn County Elections Administrator Earns State Certification



McMinn County Administrator of Elections Bridgett Prichard has been recognized by Tennessee Secretary of State Tre Hargett (Left) and State Coordinator of Elections Mark Goins for passing the Administrator of Elections Certification Exam.

The exam, administered by the Secretary of State's Division of Elections in Nashville, is offered at least once each year and includes a comprehensive written assessment covering statutory election requirements, voter registration, and Election Day procedures.

Before taking the exam, administrators must complete extensive training on 40 topics related to election law. Passing the certification demonstrates the knowledge and preparation required to administer elections at the county level.

State officials noted that Prichard's certification helps ensure elections in McMinn County are conducted accurately, securely, and with integrity. Tennessee has been ranked first in election integrity for the fourth consecutive year by the Heritage Foundation.

Obituaries

Larry Dale Robinson, 76 of Englewood, passed away on Sunday, December 14. He was an employee for Heil Trailers for over 20 years. Funeral services will be Thursday, December 18, at 1:00 PM. The visitation will be 12-1 PM prior to the service. The graveside service will be at 2:00 PM in McMinn Memory Gardens. Laycock-Hobbs Funeral Home in Athens is in charge of the arrangements.

Dorothy Tackett, 92 of Etowah, passed away peacefully at her home, surrounded by her loving family, on Sunday, December 14. She worked as a cosmetologist for many years. Dorothy was a faithful member of Manilla Chapel Baptist Church in Englewood. A graveside service will be held on Friday, December 19 at 1:00 p.m. at Cedar Grove Cemetery in Athens. Companion Funeral Home of Athens and the Cody family are honored to assist the family with these arrangements.

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Athens, Tennessee

Obituaries

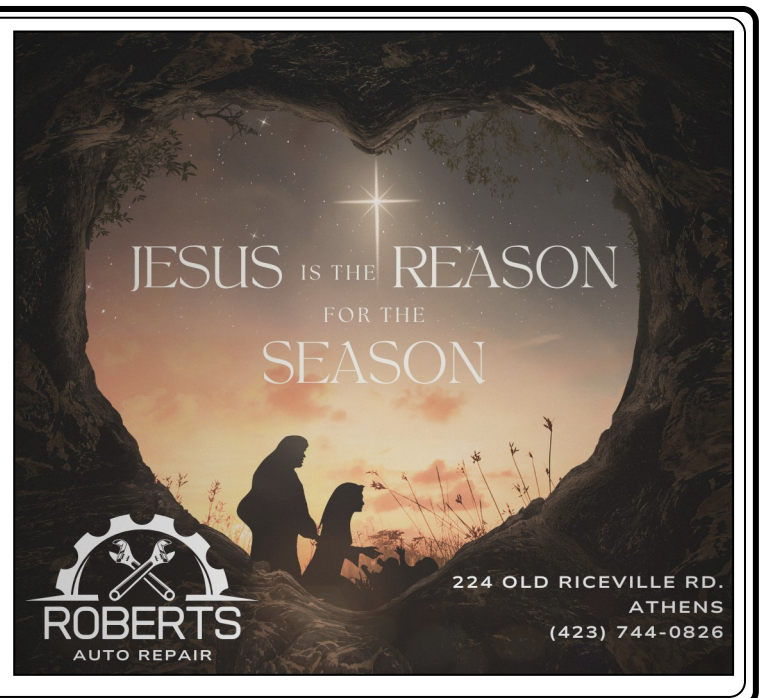
Charlotte "Nana" Pearl Lockwood, 82 of Athens, passed away on December 15. Charlotte had a creative spirit and loved arts and crafts, especially painting. She found great joy in spending time at her "home away from home", Watts Bar Lake. Charlotte was a devoted single mother who worked her way from a part-time secretary at the Tennessee Valley Authority to an Administrative Officer with the United States Attorney General's Office, where she retired. There will be no formal services held at this time. Companion Funeral Home of Athens, TN and the Cody family are honored to assist Charlotte's family during this difficult time.

Donald Wendel "Donnie" Steele Jr., 72 of Athens, passed away at Turkey Creek Medical Center in Knoxville, TN on Friday, December 12. Donnie served in the United States Army during the Korean War and later after being honorably discharged, worked as a Security guard. There are no services planned at this time in accordance with Donnie's wishes to be cremated. Companion Funeral Home of Athens and the Cody family are honored to assist the family with these arrangements.

Martha Jane Needham, 89 of Athens, passed away peacefully on Thursday, December 11. A longtime faithful member of the Church of Christ, Martha first attended Slack Road Church of Christ before helping establish the Idlewilde congregation in Athens. The family will receive friends on Saturday, December 20, 2025 from 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM in the chapel of Laycock-Hobbs Funeral Home. A funeral service will follow at 4:30. A graveside service will be held at 2:00 PM on Sunday, December 21, 2025 in McMinn Memory Gardens. Laycock-Hobbs Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

Sandra Ella Letner, of Decatur, passed away on Thursday, December 11 at Sweetwater Hospital. A graveside service will be held at a later date. Companion Funeral Home of Athens and the Cody family are honored to assist the Letner family during this difficult time.

Timothy "Timmy" Ray Hogan, 54 of Athens, passed away on Friday, December 12. He dearly loved his pet frog, Zeus. There will be no formal services at this time. Companion Funeral Home of Athens and the Cody Family are honored to assist the family during this time.





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