



# Morning Fax<sup>®</sup>

Today's News... This Morning

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Thursday, March 6, 2024

Athens, Tennessee

## \$10 Million Federal Lawsuit Filed

Nathan Alexander Smith, the son of Tabitha Marie Smith, who tragically drowned in the back seat of a Meigs County Sheriff's Office patrol car along with the deputy driving the vehicle, has filed a \$10 million federal lawsuit. The incident occurred on February 14 when Deputy Robert John "R.J." Leonard Jr. inadvertently drove the car into the Tennessee River. The lawsuit,



seeking nominal, punitive, compensatory, and presumed damages for Tabitha Smith's drowning death, was

filed in U.S. District Court in Chattanooga. Defendants in the case include Meigs County government and Deputy Leonard. Tabitha Smith, a 35-year-old mother of four, originally from Chicago, had three minor siblings.

## Community News You Can Use

✓Next up in the 2023-24 House Blend Concert Series is Evening with the Stars at the Sue E. Trotter Black Box Theater on Friday, March 22, 2024, at 7:30 PM. This showcase of regional talent will hold auditions TODAY, Thursday, March 7, 2024, at 6:30 PM at The Arts Center. Those interested in auditioning should arrive at The Arts Center ready to perform. A pianist will be available to play live accompaniment if needed. Auditioners should bring sheet music if the accompanist is needed. AACA house band, September Song, will be on stage during rehearsals (Monday March 18 and Thursday March 21, both at 6:30 PM) and during the show, to back-up solo acts.

✓March is Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month and the McMinn-Meigs-Monroe MS Support Group will be meeting next Tuesday, March 12 at 1PM at Keith Memorial United Methodist Church located at 600 W. Madison Avenue in Athens.

We encourage you to e-mail community events, church news, or other items of interest for possible use in the Morning Fax. If you take a newsworthy photograph, send it to: [wyradio@gmail.com](mailto:wyradio@gmail.com)

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THURS - SAT  
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**WEATHER FORECAST**

**Thursday** - Mostly cloudy with possible sunshine later. High of 67.

**Thurs. Night** - Mostly cloudy with light winds. Low of 52.

**Friday** - Cloudy with increasing winds throughout the day. High of 65 with a 40% chance of showers.

**Friday Night** - Chance of rain 90%. Low of 53

**IT'S TAX TIME AGAIN FOLKS!**  
 Time for spring cleaning & fresh new flooring! Times are tight now & we understand that, so as everything else is going up, our flooring prices are coming down. We have carpet specials starting at .69 cents a sq ft. Sheet vinyl .89 cents a sq ft & waterproof plank flooring starting at \$1.49 a sq ft! Also, high end flooring from Shaw & Coretec for drastically reduced prices while supplies last! Ask us about our match & beat any price policy! Also ask about our boat carpets & gorgeous grass yard turfs. We have the largest selection of in stock ready to go floorings at Dalton prices right here in beautiful Athens, TN! Everything we sell can be installed by the best of the best professional installers & most installs within 1 to 2 weeks of purchase! We are & easy to find & absolutely worth the drive!  
 (Across from McMinn County High School)

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Thursday, March 7, 2024

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Athens, Tennessee

## Mama Bertha Ribbon Cutting

A ribbon cutting was celebrated recently for new Athens Chamber of Commerce member, Mama Bertha Taqueria, located at 509 W Madison Ave., Athens. Chamber friends joining the celebration and pictured here left to right:



Front: Paul Semenoff (Chamber Diplomat), Holly Goines, Wesley Skinner (Chamber Diplomat), Lizbeth Pantoju (Mama Bertha Taqueria), Alonzo Chaman (Mama Bertha Taqueria), Alejandra Celama (Mama Bertha Taqueria), Camilo Chamam (Mama Bertha Taqueria), McMinn County Mayor John Gentry.

Back: Angela Alvarez, Jordon Perleoni, John Rodriguez (Chamber Board), Rob Preston (Chamber President/CEO), Summer Jones, Karen Sullivan (Athens Chamber), Stephanie Devine, Walt Bowman, Stacy Hester (Chamber Diplomat), Hugh Willson (Chamber Diplomat), Hannah Myers, Brandon Johnson, Shannon Willis, Joseph Ladner (Chamber Board), Traci White (Chamber Board), Doug Bailey (Chamber Diplomat), Larae Graves (Chamber Diplomat).

## Fleischmann Commends New Bill

Chairman of Energy and Water Appropriations, U.S. Representative Chuck Fleischmann, praised the approval of the fiscal year 2024 Energy and Water Development appropriations bill. The bill is commended for its historic investments in enhancing and modernizing the U.S. nuclear stockpile, promoting the country's New Nuclear Future, and providing crucial support for basic science and energy security initiatives at the Oak Ridge National Lab (ORNL) and across the nation.

## TWRA Seeking Angler Feedback

The Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) is actively seeking feedback for the revision of its trout plan, specifically focusing on the management of the Hiwassee River Trout Fishery. To ensure the ongoing effectiveness and relevance of management strategies, the TWRA regularly updates the Hiwassee River Trout Fishery Management Plan. A recent in-person meeting at Lee University drew over 50 attendees, featuring presentations and Q&A sessions with staff from TVA, U.S. Forest Service, and Tellico Hatchery, providing a platform for comments and input. The recorded presentation and survey will be available through April 4, 2024. Anglers should visit <https://arcg.is/0SzuLL> to access the presentation and information.



## McMinn County Living Heritage Museum

### Upcoming Events

#### HERITAGE SCHOOL:

ITALIAN LESSONS III WITH JOYCE SIMPSON  
SATURDAY, MARCH 9TH @ 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM  
LEARN HOW TO BUY ITEMS FROM A GROCERY STORE OR DEPARTMENT STORE. GREAT CLASS FOR BEGINNERS OR TRAVELERS! PART III/III  
FREE FOR MEMBERS \$5 FOR NONMEMBERS

**TRASH & TREASURE**  
RECEIVING DONATIONS  
FOR 2024  
SATURDAY, March 30TH  
NOON - 3:00 PM

MUSEUM ANNEX ONLY  
405 WASHINGTON AVE.  
ATHENS, TN

#### HISTORY FOR LUNCH:

HISTORY OF THE WHITE CLIFF HOTEL AND STARR MOUNTAIN WITH JOE GUY  
THURSDAY, MARCH 28TH @ NOON  
BRING YOUR LUNCH & LISTEN TO THE INTERESTING HISTORY BEHIND THE WHITE CLIFF HOTEL  
FREE ADMISSION



Programs sponsored by C. Scott & Muriel S. Mayfield Family Foundation, Tennessee Arts Commission, Hugh M. Willson Family Foundation, and City of Athens

**Hours:**  
Tuesday - Friday: 10 AM - 5 PM  
Saturday: 10 AM - 1 PM  
Sunday - Monday: Closed

#### More Information

522 W Madison Ave.  
Athens, TN 37303  
423-745-0329  
[www.livingheritagemuseum.org](http://www.livingheritagemuseum.org)

**Admission:**  
Adults: \$5.00  
Senior 60+: \$3.00  
Students: \$3.00

## BENEFIT VETERINARY PIANO CONCERT

New Songs and New Tales

Dr. Hugh McCampbell  
Broad St. Elementary School  
Sweetwater, TN



Special Guest Artists:  
Early Morning String Dusters  
Bluegrass Band from Loudon, TN

Saturday, March 16, 2024 • 7:00 pm

Sweetwater Broad Street Elementary School

Sweetwater Tennessee

Benefit Concert in Cooperation with the SWEETWATER VALLEY CITIZENS FOR THE ARTS  
To Benefit:  
Prostate Cancer Foundation  
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Adults: \$15 • Students: \$10 • Pre-School: Free  
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