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# The Morning Fax®

## Today's News. This Morning.

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**423-337-1493**

**Thursday, June 26, 2025**

**Page 1**

**Athens, Tennessee**

## 177 New Laws Take Effect in Tennessee on July 1



Beginning July 1, Tennesseans will see the impact of 177 new laws passed by the state legislature, covering a wide range of issues including education, criminal justice, immigration, health-care, and child welfare.

Among the most notable changes is the expansion of the state's school voucher program and the introduction of new immigration laws passed during a special legislative session earlier this year.

A full list of the new laws is available through the [Tennessee General Assembly's website and public information offices](#).

Key changes include:

- **Harsher Penalties for Child Abuse and underage hemp sales**
- **Stronger consequences** for non-consensual, exploitative photography
- **Foster care services extended** to young adults up to age 23

- **Laser pointer misuse** near vehicles or aircraft now a criminal offense
- **New protections against organized retail crime**
- **Reporting requirement for foreign buyers** of Tennessee farmland
- **Mandatory behavioral training** for some misdemeanor offenders
- **Hybrid learning days allowed** during extreme weather
- **Hospitals must provide post-birth health info** to new mothers
- **Wineries exempted** from the liquor-by-the-drink tax

These changes reflect growing state attention on child safety, public health, law enforcement, and consumer protections.

◆ Today on *Hope From the Well*, **Julie Tillis** invites **Connie McIntosh** back to the program to discuss "*Father's Honor*". *Hope From the Well* is heard every Thursday at 8:15 a.m. on WYXI RADIO, AM-1390 & FM-94.5.

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## McMinn County Living Heritage Museum

### Upcoming June & July Events

#### HISTORY FOR LUNCH

Civil War & Settlement in Southeast Tennessee with Aaron Astor, Professor of History @ Maryville College, will be discussing early 19th century settlement in McMinn & the county's divide during the Civil War.

**Thursday, June 26<sup>th</sup> @ noon**

\*Free admission\*

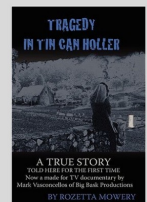
#### HERITAGE SCHOOL:

Kombucha Tea Making with Rachel Hampton-Owens  
of Starr Mountain Teas

**Sat, June 28<sup>th</sup> @ 11am \$5 or free with membership**

Tragedy in Tin Can Holler book discussion  
hosted by Veronica McCoy

**Sat, July 5<sup>th</sup> @ 11am \$5 or free with membership**



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

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

### More Information

522 W Madison Ave.

Athens, TN 37303

423-745-0329

[www.livingheritagemuseum.org](http://www.livingheritagemuseum.org)

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Thursday, June 26, 2025

Morning Fax®...Today's News This Morning Page 2

Athens, Tennessee

## Amateur Radio Field Day Set for June 28-29 at Athens Regional Park



The McMinn County Amateur Radio Club will hold its 2025 Field Day on the weekend of June 28-29 at the pavilion at Athens Regional Park. The annual event will feature radio contesting and operations with amateur (HAM) radio operators from across the country.

Setup begins Saturday at 10 a.m., with radio operations running from 2 p.m. until 9:30 a.m. Sunday. Food will be provided, and the public is welcome to attend.

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Today's News. This Morning.

The club also invites anyone interested to join its regular meetings, held on the second Monday of each month at 7 p.m. at the McMinn County Justice Center, 1319 S. White St., Athens.

For more information, visit [www.mcminnarc.com](http://www.mcminnarc.com).

## Roofer Rescued After Heat-Related Emergency in Etowah



First responders were called around 9:30 a.m. Tuesday to assist a construction worker suffering from a possible heat stroke while working on a rooftop in Etowah. Upon arrival, crews found the worker unresponsive.

A high-angle rescue was performed to safely lower the patient from the roof to an ambulance. The indi-

vidual was then transported to Starr Regional Medical Center in Etowah for treatment.

Agencies responding to the scene included Etowah Rural Fire, Etowah City Fire, AMR, Etowah City Police, and the McMinn County Sheriff's Department.

*Photos courtesy of Etowah Rural Firefighter Karley Stewart.*

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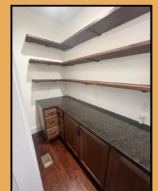


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## MOOFEST 2025 A RESOUNDING SUCCESS!

The proverbial dust has settled, reports have been filed and the results are in – MooFest 2025 can be called a community success with over 15,000 in attendance! And that success is due to the countless weeks, days and hours of planning and implementation on the part of our presenting sponsors, corporate sponsors, 280 vendors, entertainers, activities and Team Moo committee members!

First off, I'd like to give a big moo-out to our AgAvenue presenting sponsor Mayfield Dairy Farms. Special thanks to Elisha Elliott and Angie Melhorn with Mayfield's for putting together a great day of tribute to our area dairy farmers. From the milk toast to the fun filled AgAvenue in Market Park, it was a great way to celebrate our dairy rich heritage in a fun and informative way. We are so appreciative of the many folks who were under the big tent and at Market Pavilion that contributed so much to the festival- Tennessee Farm Bureau's Ag in the Classroom, Brooke Cass and McMinn 4-H, Sara Smith and Keep McMinn Beautiful, Elisa Carpenter with The Dairy Alliance, Dr. Kerri Prince with her mini herd of dairy cows, and Jason Fetzer with DFA member services. Thank you for all your behind-the-scenes support that doesn't always get its due recognition.

A festival is made up of many moving parts and we're fortunate to have several community groups participating this year. The Athens Lions Club's 17th Annual Moo Run kicked off the day at Eureka Trail with 48 runners and six walkers with all proceeds going to vision programs sponsored by the club. The McMinn Regional Humane Society reports that two cats and all dogs on the S.O.S. list were adopted and the first Mr. and Miss MooFest Pageant produced by Wheeler Dance Productions had a great turnout. The McMinn Education Foundation signed up several families for their Imagination Library program and gave out over 750 books at the Let's Read 20 Colorful Bus.

A festival of this magnitude is only as good as its committee and the Friendly City Festival MooFest group is one of the best when it comes to throwing a party! Their "whatever it takes" attitude certainly made my life easier and putting on a festival a breeze!

Thank you to Joel Webb, Integrity Sound Solutions, for providing sound for the Courthouse Steps and Market Pavilion Stage. Special thanks to Ronnie Raper for letting us use his sound system at the Downtown Beauty Lounge Stage. Festival goers were certainly entertained by Jim Brooks with his grandson Rafe Paul, Logan Cross, Nina Ricci and Roscoe Morgan on the Courthouse Steps. Further Up The Road started the line up at the Market Pavilion Stage followed by JCreek Cloggers, Cole Sitzler and Emi Sunshine kicking off the 16th season of Sounds of Summer. Downtown Beauty Lounge hosted Ronnie Raper's music students and the Mr. and Miss MooFest pageant.

I can't thank Scott Bridwell enough for taking on the daunting task of coordinating logistics and making everything come off without a hitch. Thanks to Athens City Parks and Recreation for installing the portable electric panels, delivering the Market Pavilion stage and maintaining the Market Park bathrooms and Pavilion trash cans.

We are thankful for the use of tables and chairs graciously loaned to us by the McMinn County Living Heritage Museum. Joy Early/McMinn County Mayor's office gave us invaluable back up with logistics and coordinating the County Inmate Work Detail for delivering and picking up tables and chairs from the Museum. Thanks, Grace House, for making quick work out of breaking down the tables and chairs after the festival. And we appreciate Jackie and Todd Newman for letting us store the tables and chairs after the festival in their Cherokee Hardware building.

Applause to Ben Burchfield and Deb Goins of Public Works and their entire crew for scheduling street closings, working on vendor booth space markings, dumpster delivery and trash pickup. Hats off to Mayor Larry Eaton for all his help with set up and vendor check-in and we so appreciate the use of the McMinn County Sheriff's Department for the use of their ATV as well.

Kudos to Brianna Baker, Michael Priest and Stefani Burchfield along with Bill Beasley for the countless hours they spent coordinating vendors, spread sheets, maps and vendor check in! Their hands-on expertise certainly made things go smoothly for our 280 vendors and we couldn't have a festival without them! Special thanks to Jonathan Womac, Hugh and Chelsey Willson, Frank Clark, Jake Ferrar and Scott Bridwell for making sure vendor check in went smoothly and questions were answered. And Leanne Malloy/Athens Web Designs made sure Friendly City Festival's website was informative and up to date.

And, thanks to all our local downtown businesses that supported the festival for the day. Our heartfelt thanks to our corporate sponsors who, thanks to their generous support, enable us to present these festivals free of charge: The City of Athens Tourism Fund, McMinn County Tourism Board, Madison Avenue Pharmacy, Athens Kiwanis Club, Mayfield Dairy Farms, Tennessee Overhill, Tennessee Arts Commission, Athens Insurance, Valley Oil, WarrenJackson CPAs, Simmons National Bank, Simmons Trust Department, Citizens National Bank of Sevier County, VEC Customer Shares, Pendleton's Playground, Kona Ice, DENSO, Starr Regional Medical Center, Tonya Phenix and The Retirement Guys.

Media and public relations support came from: The Daily-Post Athenian, The Morning Fax, 3 Rivers Radio Group, WCLE Mix 104, WRCB-Channel 3, WDEF-Channel 12 and WBIR-Channel 10 Knoxville. As you can see, it truly takes a community to pull off an endeavor such as this and no one does it better than McMinn County and Athens, Tennessee. Be sure to join us for the remainder of the 13th Annual Sounds of Summer concert series and Pumpkintown October 11th!

**Meredith Willson,**  
Friendly City Festivals



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## Athens Fire Department Installs Safe Haven Baby Box



A new Safe Haven Baby Box will be officially blessed on June 27 in Athens, providing a safe and anonymous option for parents to legally surrender a newborn in crisis. The box is located at the Athens Fire Department at 815 N. Jackson St.

The addition marks a significant step for the city in protecting infants and offering compassionate alternatives to abandonment. Athens joins over 350 locations nationwide—22 of them in Tennessee—equipped with these secure, climate-controlled boxes that notify first responders immediately when a baby is placed inside.

The project was made possible with support from local advocate Richelle Simcox and the Safe Haven Baby Boxes organization, founded by Monica Kelsey. Since 2017, more than 150 newborns nationwide have been safely surrendered using these boxes.

Each case is handled in cooperation with the Department of Family Services to ensure the child's well-being and future care.

For more information contact Monica at:  
[monicakelsey@safehavenbabyboxes.com](mailto:monicakelsey@safehavenbabyboxes.com)

## Obituaries

**Gladys Kay Kehrer**, age 73 of Niota, passed away Sunday, June 22, 2025 at her residence. She was a native and lifelong resident of McMinn County. Gladys enjoyed traveling, golf and doing crafts, but most of all she enjoyed being with her family and especially her grandchildren. The family would like to express an immense amount of gratitude and appreciation to the staff of Adoration Hospice of Sweetwater. Their expressions of love and kindness towards Gladys during her lengthy stay was uplifting to her surviving family. The family will receive friends Thursday, June 26, 2025 from 5-7 pm in the chapel of Laycock-Hobbs Funeral Home. The funeral service will be at 7:00 pm Thursday following the visitation in the chapel. The Rev. Jerry Stephens will be officiating. The graveside service will be 11 am Friday, June 27, 2025 at McMinn Memory Gardens. Laycock-Hobbs Funeral Home will be in charge of the arrangements.

**Michael "Mike" E. Womack**, 59 of Athens, passed away on Monday, June 23 at his residence. Mike enjoyed wood working, fishing, being on his sailboat and riding his motorcycle. He was a very free spirit, had a big heart and loved his family. He was known to his family as the "Gentle Giant." Funeral services will be 2:00 PM Saturday, June 28 at Rocky Mt. Baptist Church. Interment will follow in Niota Cemetery. The family will receive friends from 5-7 PM Friday, June 27 at Rocky Mt. Baptist Church. Laycock-Hobbs Funeral Home in Athens is in charge of the arrangements.



  
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