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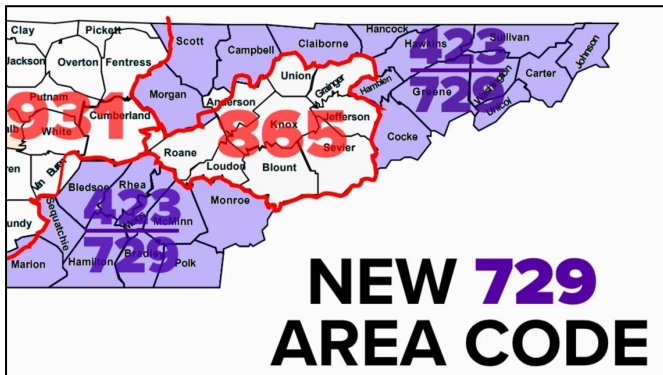
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Friday, August 01, 2025

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Athens, Tennessee

## Heads Up, East Tennessee: 10-Digit Dialing and New 729 Area Code Begin



Starting August 5, residents across Upper and Lower East Tennessee—including McMinn, Monroe, and Meigs counties—will need to start dialing 10 digits (area code + phone number) for all local calls. Dialing only seven digits will no longer work and will result in a message reminding callers to include the area code.

This change is part of the rollout of a new area code—729—which will begin appearing on new phone numbers in the 423 region beginning September 5. People with existing 423 numbers will keep their current numbers, but everyone will be re-

quired to use 10-digit dialing moving forward. The update was originally planned for early 2025 but was delayed several months following the impacts of Hurricane Helene on Northeast Tennessee.

**The change does not affect emergency services or special use numbers like 911, 311, or 988.**

The 729 area code is being added to avoid number exhaustion in the 423 region, which covers multiple East Tennessee counties including McMinn, Rhea, Hamblen, Greene, and more.

East Tennesseans may remember a similar transition in the 1990s, when the original 615 area code was split to create 423, and later, 865—an area code cleverly chosen to represent “VOL” on a phone keypad after the Tennessee Volunteers’ 1998 national championship win.

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**GoComics**

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Athens, Tennessee

## Major Fentanyl Seizure Made During Welfare Check at Dollar General



Madisonville Police report that on Wednesday afternoon, Street Crimes Officer Lance Anderson conducted a welfare check at the Dollar General on Highway 411 that led to a significant drug seizure. During the investigation, Anderson discovered nearly two dozen grams of suspected fentanyl inside a vehicle. This

amount represents hundreds of potentially deadly doses with an estimated street value of \$4,000. In addition to the fentanyl, officers also found drug paraphernalia and prescription pills.

Michael Case of McMinn County has been arrested in connection with the seizure and is currently being held at the Monroe County Justice Center without bond. Police Chief Danny Russell praised Officer Anderson for his exceptional work, noting that while this seizure is only a small part of the ongoing fight against dangerous drugs, it is a critical step toward ensuring community safety. Source: [Madisonville Police Department - Facebook](#)

## E.G. Fisher Public Library Launches New Programs for All Ages This August

E.G. Fisher Public Library is launching new programs this August for kids, teens, and adults. Highlights include "Pulse," a hands-on health and science series for children starting August 9; "Teen Connect," a casual weekly hangout every Thursday for teens with games and social activities; and a monthly Magic: The Gathering meet-up for adults. Additionally, a Minecraft Club for kids 12 and under will hold trial sessions in early August. Registration and more details are available at the library or by phone. For more information or to register, visit the library at 1289 Ingleside Avenue in Athens, call 423-745-7782. See more at their website: [fisherlibrary.org](http://fisherlibrary.org)

**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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Athens, Tennessee

## Church News and Events

- **Planted In Christ Outreach Fellowship** (317 Maple Street, Athens) holds Outreach Deliverance Classes every Thursday at 7:00pm.
- **Celebrate Recovery** meets every **Tuesday** at 6:00pm at Woodward Ave. Church of God in Athens. They also meet every **Thursday** at 6:00pm at Watts Bar Community Church in Decatur.
- Are you grieving the loss of someone close to you? Clearwater Baptist Church (964 County Road 180, Athens) is beginning a new session of Grief-Share helping those grieving find hope, comfort, and guidance. Beginning on Thursday, July 17th from 6 pm - 7:30 pm there will be an ongoing (in 13wk rotations) grief support group **that you can join at any time** and is open to the community. For more info. visit: [clearwaterbc.org/grief-share](http://clearwaterbc.org/grief-share) (Notify them in advance if childcare is needed.)
- The next Christian Men's Prayer Breakfast sponsored by New Hope Methodist Church will occur on Thursday, August 7 at 8 a.m. at Maddi Mae's Cafe in downtown Athens. This ecumenical prayer breakfast is open to all men of Christian faith plus those who want to establish a relationship with Jesus. Please contact Marcus Guinn ([marcusguinn@gmail.com](mailto:marcusguinn@gmail.com) or 423-507-7769) for more information.
- Lane's Chapel A.M.E Zion Church (904 County Road 264 Niota) will host a Fish and Fried Green Tomatoes sale this Saturday, August 2 at Lane's Chapel Church. Please come and help support this event.
- On Monday, August 4 at 6:30 p.m., St. Paul's Episcopal Church will be hosting Sheri Owen leading a tai chi class. The weekly gathering is perfect for all skill levels. Call 423-745-2224 with any questions.

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**Athens, Tennessee**

## ACT Kicks Off Season with *Matilda*, Announces Auditions for *The Mousetrap*

Athens Community Theatre (ACT) is opening its 2025–2026 Mainstage Series with *Roald Dahl's Matilda The Musical*, running August 15–24 at the Sue E. Trotter Black Box Theater. Showtimes are Fridays and Saturdays at 7:00 p.m., and Sundays at 2:00 p.m. Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$15 for students. A special "Photos with Characters" event will be held for Saturday, August 23 ticket holders at 6:00 p.m. Patrons are encouraged to purchase tickets early, as ACT performances often sell out in advance.

ACT has also announced auditions for its fall production of *Agatha Christie's The Mousetrap*, the longest-running play in theatrical history. Directed by Bob Borwick, auditions will be held Monday and Tuesday, August 18 and 19 at 6:00 p.m. at The Arts Center. Callbacks are scheduled for Wednesday, August 20. The play will run October 24 through November 2. Auditions are open to adults 18 and older and will include cold readings, basic direction, and a request to be familiar with the tune or lyrics to "Three Blind Mice." Those auditioning should bring their availability for August 20–November 2. Individuals interested in backstage or support roles are also invited to attend.

Athens Community Theatre's Mainstage Series features multigenerational productions, dramatic classics, and celebrated musicals. Ticket prices range from \$15 to \$25. For more information, visit [athensartsCouncil.org](http://athensartsCouncil.org) or follow ACT on social media.

## McMinn County Drivers Seeing Relief at the Pump

As the summer driving season enters its final month, McMinn County motorists are benefiting from some of the cheapest gas prices in the country. The county average currently sits at \$2.73 per gallon—slightly below the Tennessee state average of \$2.76 and well below the national average of \$3.14.

Experts say that despite rising oil prices and a slight uptick in gas demand, fuel costs have remained stable due to strong production levels and healthy supplies. In fact, July ended with a national monthly average of \$3.15, the lowest summer pricing seen since 2021.

While gas remains affordable in the region, electric vehicle owners are facing higher costs. Tennessee ranks among the most expensive states for public EV charging, with an average of 46 cents per kilowatt hour—tied with Hawaii and behind only West Virginia and Alaska.

Source: [AAA Gas Prices](#)



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