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Monday, September 22, 2025

Page 1

Athens, Tennessee

Athens Bar Owner Fatally Shot; Suspect Arrested After Overnight Pursuit



A 24-year-old man has been arrested in connection with the fatal shooting of a local bar owner early Saturday morning, authorities say. According to McMinn County Sheriff Joe Guy, the incident occurred just after midnight at the Double C Bar on Highway 30 west of Athens. The suspect, identified as William Charles Thomas Sullivan of Athens, reportedly had been involved in an earlier altercation at the bar involving a knife.

"Based on witness statements, Mr. Sullivan had been asked to leave the bar by staff after making threats with a knife, though those threats were not reported to 911 at the time," Sheriff Guy said. "Later, the suspect fired shots at other patrons in the parking lot. When confronted by the bar owner, Randy Croft, Mr. Sullivan appears to have fatally shot him before taking Mr. Croft's truck and fleeing the scene."

Authorities launched a pursuit that crossed into Meigs County, where Sullivan was apprehended. He is currently being held at the McMinn County Jail on a murder charge, with additional charges pending as the investigation continues. Sheriff Guy praised the cooperation of multiple agencies in quickly apprehending the suspect. "Our thoughts are with Mr. Croft's family at this time," he said.

Residents and business owners across from the bar reported hearing gunfire and police sirens during the incident. One local resident left flowers at the bar's front door, remembering the owner and the chaotic events of early Saturday.

The investigation involved the McMinn County Sheriff's Office, Athens Police Department, Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, and Meigs County Sheriff's Office.

Monday - Closed

- Tue-Madisonville: Wil Sav -10:30 - 2
- Wed-Etowah Across from Johnsons-10:30 - 2
- Thu-Athens Family Dollar near Ingles 10:30 -2
- Fri-Sweetwater-Little Drugs-10:30 - 2:30

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1st BEST OF THE BEST 2023

Monday, Sept. 22, 2025

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

Athens, Tennessee

Fire Reported at Etowah Construction Site



Etowah City Fire Department responded early Friday morning to a fire at a new home under construction at the corner of Ohio Avenue and Second Street.

Fire crews arrived around 6:30 a.m. to find smoke coming from the crawl space beneath the house. Etowah Rural Fire Department was called in for mutual aid.

A passerby who noticed two glows under the house attempted to extinguish the flames and sustained a minor burn to the hand. AMR evaluated the injury, but no transport was required.

Utilities were shut off by EUB, and Etowah City Police assisted on the scene. The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation's Arson & Bomb Division was called to investigate. Etowah City Fire Chief Adam Hafley was in command.

Photo by Etowah Rural Fire Department

Community News You Can Use

- The Athens Utilities Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 23rd, at 5:00 P.M.
- The Athens City Schools Board of Education will hold the September Work Session on Wednesday, September 24 at the Administration Building beginning at noon.
- The McMinn County Board of Education will have a Work Session on Thursday, September 25 at 5:30 p.m. at the McMinn County Center for Educational Excellence.
- The 43rd Annual Sweetwater Christmas Parade, sponsored by the Kiwanis Club, will be held Friday, December 5, at 7 p.m. The parade begins on Mayes Avenue and ends at Plaza 68 Shopping Center. Float prizes will be awarded, and there is no registration fee. For safety, candy throwing and four-wheelers are not allowed.
- A magnitude 1.7 earthquake was recorded Thursday morning, Sept. 18 at 8:01 a.m. local time, about 3.6 miles northeast of Niota and 8.4 miles northeast of Athens. The quake, measured at a depth of 15 km, was too small to cause damage and is considered a minor seismic event. It was registered by the U.S. Geological Survey and the Southeast U.S. Seismic Network.

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Monday, Sept. 22, 2025

Morning Fax®...Today's News This Morning Page 3

Athens, Tennessee

Skid Steer Catches Fire During Bush Hogging Near Niota



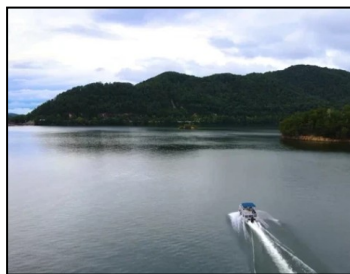
A skid steer caught fire Friday afternoon while its operator was working along Highway 11 North, but no injuries were reported, authorities say.

The incident occurred around 4:00 p.m. in the 2500 block of Highway 11 North when the operator was performing bush hogging. The Niota Rural Fire Department and North McMinn Fire Department responded to the scene. Firefighters were able to extinguish the blaze quickly.

No one was injured in the incident, and the cause of the fire is under review.

Photo by David Prater, Niota Rural FD

Tennessee Opens Ocoee River State Park



Tennessee State Parks officially dedicated the new Ocoee River State Park on September 20, separating it from the former Hiwassee/Ocoee Scenic River State Park. The standalone park aims to better protect natural

resources, expand services, and serve the community and visitors, offering more than 17 miles of river for paddlers of all skill levels—from whitewater rapids to calm stretches for beginners.

Governor Bill Lee noted the park's unique value and said it brings Tennessee's total number of state parks to 61, with 14 new parks created under his administration—a state record. The opening included a morning dedication ceremony and a public celebration featuring live music, storytelling, and food vendors, organized in partnership with the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, the Polk County Chamber of Commerce, Four Rivers Events, the Tennessee Valley Authority, and the U.S. Forest Service. *Source: Chattanooga.com*

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Monday, Sept. 22, 2025

Morning Fax®...Today's News This Morning Page 4

Athens, Tennessee

Vols Roll Past UAB, 56-24, as Heupel Earns 40th Win



No. 15 Tennessee jumped out early and never looked back Saturday afternoon, hammering UAB 56-24 before a sellout crowd of 101,915 at Neyland Stadium.

Quarterback Joey Aguilar set the tone with three touchdown passes, while running backs DeSean Bishop, Peyton Lewis and Star Thomas all found the end zone in a balanced attack that piled up 510 total yards. The Vols (3-1, 0-1 SEC) scored touchdowns on six of their first seven possessions and led 42-7 at halftime.

Bishop rushed for two scores, Lewis added 81 yards and a touchdown, and Thomas tallied both a rushing and receiving touchdown. Wide-outs Chris Brazzell II and Mike Matthews each hauled in early TD strikes as Aguilar

finished 15-of-22 for 218 yards.

Defensively, Tennessee smothered UAB's run game, holding the Blazers (2-2, 0-1 AAC) to just 23 rushing yards. Sophomore defensive back Boo Carter led the way with a career-high nine tackles, three tackles for loss, a sack, and two forced fumbles. Kaleb Beasley returned one of those fumbles 23 yards for a touchdown.

The win marked head coach Josh Heupel's 40th at Tennessee, making him just the seventh Vol coach to reach that milestone and the first since Phillip Fulmer. Under Heupel, Tennessee has now won 17 straight regular-season non-conference games.

The Vols remained No. 15 in both national polls and now turn their attention to their first road test of the season next Saturday at Mississippi State. Kickoff is set for 4:15 p.m. ET on SEC Network. *Source: UTSports.com*

HS FOOTBALL #RESULTS

SODDY DAISS	7-48	MCMINN CO.
SWEETWATER	21-19	ROANE CO.
SCOTT	14-41	MCMINN CENTRAL
POLK CO.	8-38	MEIGS CO.
WALKER VALLEY	41-6	DOLEWAH
SIGNAL MTN.	47-12	SEQUOYAH

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TULANE #13 OLE MISS	10 45	FLORIDA #4 MIAMI (FL)	7 26		
#22 AUBURN #11 OKLAHOMA	17 24	SLU #3 LSU	10 56	SAM HOUSTON #8 TEXAS	0 55

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Meigs County Couple to Graduate Together from Cleveland State



Sonny and Cindy Davis of Meigs County will celebrate a milestone this December as they graduate together from Cleveland State Community College's Electrical Engineering Technology program. The couple, married for 23 years, both work

full-time at Polartec in Cleveland while pursuing their degrees side by side.

Their educational journeys took different paths. Sonny, who left high school as a teenager, later earned his GED and enrolled at Cleveland State in 2022. His interest in electricity grew from years of maintenance work. Cindy, who previously earned an associate degree in business management, was inspired to join the program in 2024 after helping Sonny with homework assignments.

Balancing third-shift jobs with morning classes, the pair often study together, pushing each other to succeed. "Taking all the same classes together has been fun," Cindy said. "I am extremely competitive, so I want to make better grades than him, but we help each other."

Michael Haddock, an instructor in the program, praised the couple's determination. He noted their teamwork, positive attitudes, and commitment despite long work hours, calling their presence in the classroom "commendable."

Sonny will become the first in his family to graduate from college, something he hopes will inspire others. "This December, I will be a college graduate; that is awesome," he said.

The Davises will walk across the stage together at commencement, marking a shared achievement years in the making. *Source: Andrea Byerly, CSCC*

McMinn County Arrest Reports

9-19-25

Ivor Cannon, 28, of Sturgis, Missouri, charged with state violation of probation for theft of property, violation of probation for possession of meth, Bond \$3,387.35

Tyler DeMoss, 25, of Athens, charged with leaving the scene of an accident, registration laws, speeding, DUI, driving on suspended license, open container, and implied consent.

Raven Moore, 28 of Athens, charged with vehicular homicide, Bond \$60,000

Byron Dougherty, 28 of Knoxville, charged with failure to appear for vandalism in Knox County.

Ashley Branham, 42, charged with aggravated statutory rape.

Christopher Walker, 42 of Decatur, charged with burglary.

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

Information gathered using public sources.



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Monday, Sept. 22, 2025

Morning Fax®...Today's News This Morning Page 6

Athens, Tennessee

Obituaries

Frank Eddie Coulter, Sr., passed away on Friday, September 19. Funeral arrangements will be announced at a later time. Ziegler Funeral Home has been entrusted with the care of Frank Eddie Coulter, Sr.

Timothy Earl (Earl T) Hammock, 65 of Sweetwater, passed away on Tuesday, September 16 after a courageous battle with cancer. Earl will be cremated and laid to rest at The Singleton Family Graveyard in Mt Vernon, KY with a small ceremony to follow. The family will have a celebration of life in Sweetwater on October 11th with his VFW family, Earl's family, and a host of friends. Companion Funeral Home of Athens and the Cody family are honored to assist the family with these arrangements.

John Robert Johnson, 79 of Riceville, passed away peacefully on Wednesday, September 17 surrounded by his loving family in Athens. John served in the US Navy and was a member of Woodward Avenue Church of God. The immediate family will have a private, graveside service. Smith Funeral and Cremation Services of Athens is honored to serve the family of John Robert Johnson.

Wanda Brock Cooley, 91 of Etowah, passed away on Saturday, September 20. She was a member of Calvary Baptist Church. Family and friends will assemble at McMinn Memory Gardens on Friday, September 26 for the 11:00 a.m. graveside service. Bordwine Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

George "G.T." Crabtree, 79 of Riceville, passed away on Friday, September 19. He was a member of Clear Springs Bible Church and served in the US Army. Funeral service will be held at 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, September 23 in the chapel of Bordwine Funeral Home. The family will receive friends from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday prior to the service. Family and friends will assemble in McMinn Memory Gardens on Wednesday, September 24th for the 2:00 p.m. committal service. Bordwine Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

Hilda Rhea Martin Lawhorne, 81 of Etowah, passed away on Friday, September 19. In her spare time, Hilda enjoyed working crossword puzzles and watching her favorite television shows. Funeral service will be held at 7:00 p.m., Wednesday, September 24 in the chapel of Bordwine Funeral Home. The family will receive friends from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., Wednesday prior to the service. Family and friends will assemble in McMinn Memory Gardens on Thursday, September 25th for the 11:00 a.m. committal service. Bordwine Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

Brenda Karen Perry (King), 76 formerly of the local area, passed away unexpectedly on Friday, September 12. Upon retiring, she moved to Zephyrhills, Florida. A celebration of life will be held at New Zion Baptist Church in Athens on Saturday, September 27, at 11 a.m. Hodges Family Funeral Home of Zephyrhills is in charge of arrangements.

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