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Missing Children Found in GA

On October 22, 2024, Athens Police responded to a report of five missing children from the Department of Children's Services (DCS) office in Athens. The children's parents, Kurtis and Sawana Pendergrass, fled the office after being informed that the children would be placed in state custody. The family left in a white GMC Acadia, prompting authorities to issue felony warrants for Kurtis Pendergrass, 30, for defying a court order.

Investigations indicated the family was in Georgia, and Athens Police worked closely with local and federal law enforcement. Deputies from Hart County, Georgia, located all five children safely, and both parents were arrested. The children are now under the care of Georgia Family and Children Services. Further updates are expected as the case develops.

More Athens City Council Recap

Several motions passed at the recent regular Athens City Council meeting:

Revisions to a lease agreement between Tennessee Wesleyan University and the city concerning the property of the former Ingleside School passed. TWU has proposed building a sports complex at that location. Once completed, the complex would be used primarily by TWU, however citizens and the general public will have access to it as well.

Decorum and Rules of Engagement were changed to limit the time of citizens comments to 3 minutes instead of 5 minutes.

The order of business of regular city council meetings moved "Citizens Comments" from Item #7 to Item #13, which places them at the end of the Agenda.

One motion concerning a landowner's request for annexation of property located on County Road 126 (AKA Milton Road) by George Andrew Hodges was declined rather than being tabled, as we had previously reported.

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McMinn County Living Heritage Museum

Upcoming Events

ANNUAL QUILT SHOW - "QUILTED CREATIONS"
OCTOBER 1-30, 2024
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HOSTED BY HERITAGE QUILT GUILD OF McMINN COUNTY

GENERAL ADMISSION PRICING

HISTORY FOR LUNCH
Dorinda Crisp will be speaking about Crisp Century Farm & what is now the Holly House.
Thursday, Oct. 24th @ Noon *Free admission*

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SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9TH @ 11:00 AM
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Hours:
Tuesday - Friday: 10 AM - 5 PM
Saturday: 10 AM - 1 PM
Sunday - Monday: Closed

Admission:
Adults: \$5.00
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More Information
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Thursday, October 24, 2024

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Athens, Tennessee

Obituaries

Wanda "Renee" Raper, 60 of Athens, passed away peacefully on October 15, 2024, at the Memorial Hospital of Chattanooga. A Celebration of Life will be held on Monday, October 28 at 6pm at Ascension Life Church. The family will receive friends one hour prior to the service from 5 to 6pm. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to Women at the Well, a cause close to Renee's heart. Arrangements entrusted to Companion Funeral and Cremation Services.

Ailene Miller Hensley, 95 of Athens, died peacefully Tuesday afternoon, October 22, 2024 at Morning Pointe of Athens. She was a member of the First Baptist Church of Athens and former secretary to the Academic Dean at Tennessee Wesleyan College (now University) for over 10 years. The family will receive friends from 3:00-5:00 pm, Friday, October 25, 2024 at Smith Funeral Home. Family and friends will meet at Smith Funeral Home to go in procession for a graveside service to be conducted 2:00 pm, Monday, October 28, 2024, at McMinn Memory Gardens. Smith Funeral & Cremation Services of Athens is honored to serve the family of Ailene Miller Hensley.

Frances Ellis "Geneva" McNeely Jenkins, 83 of McMinn County, went home to be with the Lord on Tuesday, October 22. She was a godly, nurturing mom in each of our lives who will be forever missed by her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Visitation will be held from 5:00 PM-7:00 PM on Saturday, October 26, 2024, at Ziegler Funeral Home. Funeral services will follow at 7:00 PM at the funeral home. Interment will be held at 2:00 PM on Sunday, October 27th, at Double Springs Cemetery in Athens. Ziegler Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Frances "Geneva" McNeely Jenkins.

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: wyxiradio@gmail.com

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Sunday, October 27th from 5-7 pm

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Thursday, October 24, 2024

Page 3

Athens, Tennessee

Bridge Repair on I-75

The Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) has begun repairs on the I-75 bridge over the Tennessee River near mile marker 74 in Loudon County. The right southbound lane has been closed since Saturday evening, and the project is expected to be completed by November 2.

“What we’re doing is they’re installing a splice plate, which basically is going to be there with the two steel girders connect. This is something that we have done before over bridges and it’s really not that much out of the norm,” said TDOT spokesperson Mark Nagi.

TDOT crews are working around the clock, and drivers should anticipate delays, especially with upcoming traffic for Tennessee football games. Travelers are urged to stay alert and allow extra time for their commutes during this period.

Street Closure

The City of Athens Public Works Department announces the following street closure: The area to be affected is THOMPSON STREET from Shoemaker Street to W. Madison Avenue. This closure will be on Wednesday, October 30, 2024 from 5:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. Motorists are advised to use extreme caution, watch for traffic control signage, spectators, pedestrians, and work crews. Motorists should allocate additional time for traffic delays when traveling in this area. The purpose of this closure is for Keith Memorial United Methodist Church’s Fall Festival. For more information, please contact the Office of the Public Works Department at 423-744-2745.

McMinn County Early Voting Numbers

10-23-24: 1,225

Overall: 8,600

City Elections:

Athens: 2,071

Calhoun: 48

Niota: 111

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Thursday, October 24, 2024

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Athens, Tennessee

Economic Development Announcement Today

Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development (TNECD) Deputy Commissioner Allen Borden will make an economic development announcement in McMinn County on Thursday, October 24, 2024. The event will take place at 1:30 p.m. at DENSO Manufacturing, 2400 Denso Drive in Athens. The announcement is part of TNECD's efforts to attract corporate investment and facilitate economic growth in Tennessee, aiming to position the state as a top destination for high-quality jobs in the Southeast. Media availability will follow the announcement.

Upcoming Area Entertainment

- Sweetwater Main Street presents: "The Adventures of the Holy Rollers: The Musical" on Nov. 15, 16, 22, & 23 at 6 pm. There is a Sunday Matinee on Nov. 17 at 3 pm. All Shows will be at Sweetwater Elementary School. All tickets are \$15. Tickets can be purchased [HERE](#).
- The Athens Arts Center will present "Crooners of the 1940s," the latest in their 2024-25 House Blend Concert Series, on November 8 and 9, at 7:00 PM. The show will feature music from World War II. Local vocalists and musicians will perform at the Sue E. Trotter Black Box Theater. Tickets range from \$17.50 to \$22.50 and include catered refreshments. For more details, visit athensartscouncil.org or call 423-745-8781.

NOVEMBER

5

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ANNUAL Fish Fry

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Thursday November 7th, 2024

4:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Dine-In or To-Go

\$12 *Adults* \$7 *Children
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Dinner Includes: Fried Fish,
Coleslaw, Hushpuppies,
Pinto Beans and
Cornbread, and Dessert

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Meredith Willson Thanks Everyone for Pumpkintown

When the 2024 Friendly City Festivals group held its first Pumpkintown planning session back in June after a successful MooFest, we all agreed on one thing – to make the 21st annual event the best! And, after months, weeks and days of planning, we feel our wish came true on Saturday, October 12th. Picture perfect weather ushered in toe tapping live entertainment on two stages, the tantalizing smell of festival food, all sorts of tempting items for sale from local businesses and 330 arts, crafts and food vendors plus a crowd of over 20,000 visitors! So, thanks to the support of our community, vendors, visitors and sponsors, we think Pumpkintown 2024 was a resounding success! And, that success is due to the support of several community groups that sponsored a variety of activities that make a festival stand out. The event got off to a great start with the CASA Corridor of East Tennessee's 5k run at Eureka Trail with over 30 runners raising money for children's advocacy in McMinn, Meigs and Rhea Counties. Hosted by the McMinn Regional Humane Society, the Doggie Costume Contest featured 25 canines in the Mutt Strutt and board members report five dogs were adopted during the Paw Print Activity at Fullers Frame Shop. The McMinn County Living Heritage Museum's 38th annual quilt show brought in several visitors to tour the museum and see the colorful array of quilts on display, Pumpkin Plinko – sponsored by The City of Athens Parks and Recreation Department-hosted around 200 bowlers on Jackson Street and The Arts Center reports several pumpkins were painted by budding artists on site. And the McMinn County Education Foundation signed up 40 new students to the Imagination Library program and the Let's Read 20 bus handed out over 1,000 books to 500 children of all ages. A festival like this wouldn't be possible without a core group of dedicated committee members who magically make all this come together – and make it look easy to boot. Without a doubt, Pumpkintown's most beloved part of the festival is the Scott Crisp Memorial PowWow. This year's record crowd watched as a true intertribal gathering unfolded before their eyes making history and heritage come alive through the trooping of the colors, the feather dance and the harmony of the flute. My heartfelt thanks to Felicia and Javier Alfaro who have kept the PowWow spirit alive since Scott's death in 2015 along with Robert Redhawk Eldridge, Wes Collins, Janel Wilder, Jack Lynn, Medicine Scout, Tonya Dockery, Robin Jumper and Joey Pierce. We greatly appreciate the commitment and dedication they've shown over the past nine years to make this a true memorial to Scott and the centerpiece of Pumpkintown. Scott Bridwell makes putting on a festival a breeze with his behind the scenes logistics and can do attitude. Scott works every aspect of the festival from picking up garbage, holding my hand and hanging signs and is the glue that holds our little committee together. I can't imagine putting on an event without him. This year we were fortunate to have Frank Clark, City of Athens Tourism Director, join us and we are fortunate to have his expertise and experience. Special thanks to vendor gurus Michael Priest and Brianna Baker and joining us this year was Laken Farris and LeAnne Vaughn. Working with vendors takes a special kind of festival geek and Michael and Brianna have it down to science. From reworking the entire vendor map of downtown in coordination with graphics guru Stefani Burchfield to marking off the booth space numbers AND typing in 330 vendors into an Excel spreadsheet, these four have my heartfelt gratitude. A huge shout out is in order to my sister in law Deb Willson, Ben Burchfield, Michael, Frank and Laken for all their help during the epic booth space numbering party. Checking in 330 vendors and making sure angst is at a minimum is no easy task and a big shout out to Jonathan Womac, Michael Priest, Scott Bridwell, Chelsey and Hugh Willson and Frank Clark for all their efforts in making check in a breeze. And, very special thanks to McMinn Co. student Jake Farrar for going above and beyond the call of duty by doing anything he was asked to do. A big round of applause goes to those whose creative marketing magic produced big city advertising and publicity that rivals any New York ad agency: Leanne Malloy/Athens Web Services for our spiffy updated website; Brianna Baker for keeping us updated on Facebook; Stefani Creates for the catchy graphics; Josh Boggess/Boggess Videography for capturing the event by drone and film. Special thanks to Main Street Athens, Mix 104.1 FM, Channel 9/WTV, The Daily Post Athenian, Athens Area Chamber of Commerce weekly newsletter and Morning Fax for all the free publicity. And we so appreciate the many others who made this event run smoothly behind the scenes -David Reed, Joy Early and Rick Clayton along with the McMinn County trustees who picked up/set out tables and chairs under Market Pavilion, Jackie and Todd Newman for allowing Friendly City Festivals to utilize Cherokee Hardware for storage, McMinn County Living Heritage Museum for graciously donating the use of their tables and chairs for the day, Parks and Recreation/Gene McConkey for setting up the portable electric panels, the temporary power pole, the Pavilion stage and running interference with trash and keeping the public bathrooms picked up, Public Works for all their coordination of street closings and trash pick-up, Jim Cucciarre for picking up the slack storage wise, and McMinn Sheriff's Department for the use of their ATV. Special thanks to Grace House for whisking away the tables and chairs to Cherokee Hardware. Anytime a city our size has 20,000 people come through, parking is invariably an issue. Friendly City Festivals is thankful for the patience and understanding shown by Rusty Rollins/Food City and Scott Thornton/CVS for this year and festivals past. I want to especially thank Team Athens – aka The City-for the herculean effort they put into downtown for weeks before the event. Carmine Gallo, Sharon Griffin and Patrick Dowdy from Parks and Recreation we couldn't have done it without you. Same goes for Ben Burchfield, Deb Goins and the whole team of Public Works. Thank you, thank you, thank you – you do our city proud each and every day and know you are appreciated. Our sponsors are what makes it possible for us to present these events free of charge to the public and we are eternally grateful for: The City of Athens Hotel/Motel Tax Fund, McMinn County Tourism Board, Tennessee Overhill Association, Tennessee Arts Commission, Citizens National Bank of Sevier County, Athens Kiwanis Club, Simmons Bank, Simmons Wealth Management Group, Starr Regional Medical Center, TVA, Mayfield Dairy Farm, DENSO, WarrenJackson CPAs, Wolfenden Family Pharmacies, Valley Oil, Humana, VEC Customer Shares, Dynasty Pools and Spas. It's been a pleasure to chair Pumpkintown for the past 17 years with this exceptional group of volunteers, supporters and community. Stay tuned for our projects coming up in 2025! Meredith Willson President-Friendly City Festivals



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