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Tuesday, December 24, 2024

Page 1

Athens, Tennessee

### Porch Pirates Identified, Arrested on Charges in McMinn, Bradley, Hamilton Counties



A McMinn Co. man and woman are facing charges in both McMinn and Bradley Counties after allegedly stealing packages from area porches.

According to Sheriff Joe Guy, on December 14, McMinn deputies responded to a residence on County Road 7030 to a report of packages being stolen from the residents' porch. *Continued on Page 3*

**LISTENING REMINDER:** TODAY on *Main Street Moments*: Host Sandra Kinney interviews out-going chair, Lisa Mayfield and in-coming chair, Stuart Mason. Airtime is at 8:15 a.m. TODAY on WYXI RADIO: AM-1390 and FM-94.5.

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**BEST OF THE BEST**  
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# Obituaries

# TBI Identifies Man Dead after I-40 Standoff

**Kristi Lynn Ricker**, 48 of Decatur, passed away on Friday, December 20. She was outgoing and liked to camp. A memorial service will be held at a later date. Decatur Funeral Home & Cremation Services is honored to serve the Ricker Family.

**Betty Carolyn Ward**, 88 of Decatur, passed away on Sunday, December 22. She was a Librarian at Meigs County High School for many years. She was an avid fan of Dolly Parton and was very active in the Imagination Library Books. She was a very active member of Decatur United Methodist Church. The family will receive friends from 1 – 2 p.m. on Wednesday, January 8, 2025, in the chapel of Decatur Funeral Home & Cremation Services. A graveside service will follow in the Decatur Cemetery. Decatur Funeral Home & Cremation Services is honored to serve the Ward Family.

**Wanda Starr Patterson**, age 89 of Athens, passed away Monday, Dec. 23, 2024 surrounded by her family at her home. She was a native and lifelong resident of McMinn County and was a charter member of Fairview Baptist Church. She had worked at Alfred's, A&P and Earl's Supermarkets. Funeral services will be 7 pm Thursday, December 26, 2024 at Fairview Baptist Church with visitation from 5 – 7 pm. A graveside service will be 11 am Friday at McMinn Memory Gardens. Laycock-Hobbs Funeral Home is in charge of the arrangements.

The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI) has identified James Cody John, 34, of Cookeville, as the man who died following a standoff on Interstate 40 near the Cumberland/Roane County line on Friday.

Around 7am CST, John reportedly shot two individuals at the Hutchinson Plant. One victim was transported to a local hospital, and the other to a Nashville hospital. Both remain in stable condition. John fled the scene, prompting a pursuit by law enforcement down I-40. The chase ended near the Cumberland/Roane County line, where John barricaded himself in his car. Negotiations were attempted, but John was later found deceased from a self-inflicted gunshot wound. The standoff prompted the closure of I-40 in both directions. The eastbound lanes reopened around 2 p.m., and westbound lanes reopened at 12:45 p.m. A nearby accident involving a semi-truck occurred during the closures, but no serious injuries were reported.

The TBI is leading the investigation into the incident at the request of Roane County Attorney General Russell Johnson.

Source: [WBIR Channel 10](http://WBIRChannel10.com)

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## WEATHER FORECAST

**Tuesday:** Sunny. High 47.  
**Tue Night:** Partly Cloudy. Low 31.  
**Wednesday:** Partly Sunny. High 58.  
**Wed Night:** Mostly Cloudy. Low 40.

More Weather at: [wyxi.com](http://wyxi.com)

**Tuesday, December 24, 2024** Morning Fax<sup>®</sup>...Today's News This Morning Page 3 **Athens, Tennessee**

## Porch Pirates (Continued)

Sgt. Jason Lee arrived and spoke with Dann Mekkers, who said he had noticed packages missing from his front porch and after reviewing his security cameras, saw a male suspect come up and take the packages and run back to a maroon or burgundy car driven by a separate person. Sgt. Lee looked through social media and saw a similar vehicle suspected in the same type of thefts recently in Bradley County.

Sgt. Lee notified Detective Amber Cook, who was contacted by Detectives in Bradley County who believed that they had developed a suspect living in Riceville that might be involved in both their cases as well as the one in McMinn County. The group of detectives developed a case and made contact with suspect Johnathan Witt, 24, of County Road 759 in Riceville. Witt was at the time in custody in the Bradley County Jail.


“Presented with the evidence, Mr. Witt confessed to taking packages in both McMinn and Bradley Counties, and also in Hamilton County,” said Sheriff Guy. “It appears Witt and his girlfriend, Brianna Ervin, 27, of Athens, were operating a Door Dash delivery business and while on deliveries, would steal packages they saw while making deliveries.” Some of the property was recovered and both Witt and Ervin charged. Ervin was located at the residence on County Road 759 and was taken to the Bradley County Jail.



“Unfortunately, this type of crime is common around the holidays,” said Sheriff Guy. “We hope homeowners will track packages closely, be observant for suspicious vehicles, and try to get packages inside as quickly as possible.”

### The Pint Before Christmas...

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**Tuesday, December 24, 2024**

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**Athens, Tennessee**

### SEC Documentary Coming to Netflix, Tennessee Vols to be Featured

### Tennessee Men's Basketball Ranked No. 1 for Third Consecutive Week



Netflix announced an upcoming eight-episode docuseries focusing on Southeastern Conference (SEC) football during the 2024 season. Produced by Box To Box Films, creators of *Formula 1: Drive to Survive*, the series will offer behind-the-scenes access to players, coaches, locker rooms, and more.

SEC Commissioner Greg Sankey highlighted the series as a showcase of the league's drama and tradition for a global audience. The University of Tennessee confirmed its involvement, with Netflix crews filming at games and press conferences, including quarterback Nico Iamaleava.

The series will premiere on Netflix next summer.

The University of Tennessee men's basketball team remains atop both the AP Top 25 and USA TODAY Coaches Poll for the third week in a row. The undefeated Volunteers (11-0) continue their dominant streak under head coach Rick Barnes, marking their eighth time at No. 1 overall in program history and their seventh No. 1 ranking during Barnes' tenure.

The Vols have maintained a spot in the AP Poll for 67 consecutive weeks, the third-longest active streak nationally. They lead the SEC with consistent top rankings, outpacing traditional powerhouse programs like Kentucky.

Last week, Tennessee secured an 84-36 victory over Western Carolina, with standout performances from guard Chaz Lanier and senior Zakai Zeigler. The win marked one of their most dominant showings in recent history.

Tennessee next faces Middle Tennessee State at Food City Center on Monday, aiming to extend their undefeated run. The game will air on SEC Network at 7 p.m. *Source [UTSports.com](http://UTSports.com)*

**Join us at 12:00 noon today for our family friendly Christmas music with limited interruption. It will continue until 6 am on Thursday, December 26th. Tune to WYXI FM 94.5 or AM 1390.**

**The Morning Fax staff will be spending Christmas Day with our families. See you again Thursday, December 26th.**

# MERRY CHRISTMAS!

## JOY *to the* WORLD

May the divine peace of our Lord Jesus Christ fill your heart and home with serenity and love this Christmas season. As we celebrate the birth of our Savior, may His light guide you, His love envelop you, and His joy uplift your spirit.



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