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Brush Fire Spreads in Etowah, Draws Fire Department Response



A controlled burn got out of hand Saturday evening around 7:30 p.m. on County Road 513 in Etowah, prompting a call for fire department assistance.

According to reports, a homeowner was burning brush when the fire began to spread beyond control. Unable to contain it alone, the resident contacted emergency services. Crews from Englewood Rural Fire and Etowah Rural Fire responded and quickly worked to contain the blaze. No injuries were reported.

Authorities remind the public that a burn permit is required from the Tennessee Division of Forestry through May 15.

Photo courtesy of Lynn Ingram, Englewood Rural Fire Department.

MEDIC Offering E-Gift Cards to O-Negative and O-Positive Donors This Week

The MEDIC Regional Blood Center is offering \$20–\$25 E-gift cards to encourage donations from O-negative and O-positive blood donors this week as demand for those blood types remains high.

From April 7–13, donors who give at any donor center or mobile drive will receive:

- \$20 E-gift card for a whole blood donation
- \$25 e-gift card for an ALYX (double red cell) donation

E-gift cards are delivered via email, and donors must provide a valid email address.

Appointments can be made at medicblood.org, through the MEDIC app, or by calling the Athens Donor Center at: 423-453-5846. Walk-ins are also welcome.

MEDIC supplies blood to 25 hospitals and air medical services across 23 counties, including Blount Memorial, UT Medical Center, Tennova, and East TN Children's Hospital. Donors are reminded that blood takes at least three days to process and that local donations stay within East Tennessee and Southeastern Kentucky.

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Tuesday, April 8, 2025 Morning Fax®...Today's News This Morning Page 2 Athens, Tennessee

The Food Hub joins the Athens Chamber of Commerce



A ribbon-cutting was celebrated recently for the new kitchen incubator, The Food Hub, located in downtown Athens at 3 West College Street.

The food hub offers flexible, fully equipped spaces designed to support a wide range of food industry businesses - whether you need prep area, storage solutions or a full set up to run your operation.

Shown here are business representatives, city officials and the Main Street Athens board members along with the Main Street Athens Director Sandra Kinney and Main Street Chairman Stuart Mason. If you're ready to take your food business or big ideas to the next level, they would love to hear from you.

Contact them today at:
info@mainstreetathens.org and
mainstreetathens.org/food-hub/

Source: Julie Simbeck, Athens Chamber





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Ford Recalls Over 33,000 Vehicles Due to Fire Risk



Ford has issued a recall for more than 33,000 vehicles due to a potential fire hazard caused by a fuel injector leak in the engine compartment.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the leak could occur near ignition sources, increasing the risk of a fire.

The recall affects 2020-2022 Ford Escape and 2021-2023 Ford Bronco Sport models. Owners can contact Ford customer service at 1-866-436-7332, referencing recall number 25S21.

Ford dealerships will provide a free software update to address the issue. Vehicle owners are encouraged to schedule service as soon as possible.

Source: [NHTSA](https://www.nhtsa.gov)

CSCC celebrates 60th anniversary of Project Gemini

Cleveland State Community College invites the community to a free lecture in commemoration of the 60th anniversary of Project Gemini on Monday, April 21, 5 p.m. in the Mary T. Barker Humanities Building on the Cleveland campus.

In 1965, the first crewed missions of Project Gemini occurred and paved the way for the Moon landings of Project Apollo. Dr. Neil Greenwood, Professor of History, will lead the lecture for students in his modern and United States history classes. He invites the public to join the class for this presentation.

Greenwood said, "Project Gemini was important to the Project Apollo Moon landings because the Gemini mission crews developed techniques in spacecraft rendezvous, spacecraft docking and extravehicular activities (space walks). Such techniques for the rendezvousing and docking of two separate spacecraft had to be developed for the lunar and command modules of the Apollo spacecraft." Greenwood has been teaching U.S. history, world history and Tennessee history at Cleveland State since 1992. He has a bachelor's degree and master's degree in history from California State University, Fullerton and the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA); he holds a doctorate degree in history from UCLA.

For more information about the program, contact Greenwood at (423) 473-2300 or ngreenwood@clevelandstatecc.edu.



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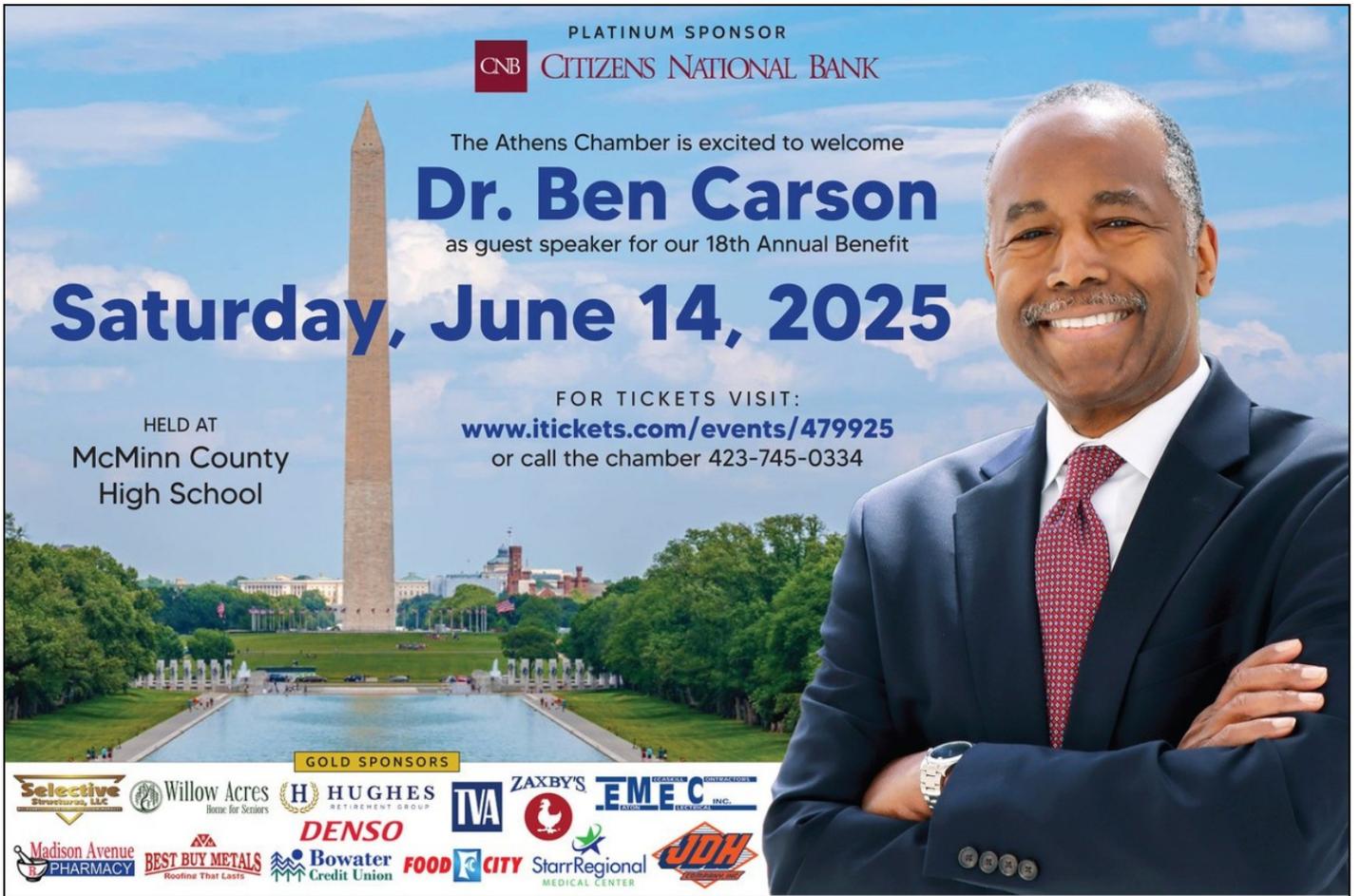
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Bring History to Downtown Athens

Help commemorate President Ronald Reagan's September 24, 1985, visit to Athens by donating to the commissioning of the "Reagan Mural."
The mural will be displayed on the outside wall of the Athens Area Chamber of Commerce building, which faces Washington Avenue in downtown Athens, Tenn.

Donations may be dropped off or mailed to:
 Athens Area Chamber of Commerce
 Attn.: Reagan Mural
 13 North Jackson Street
 Athens, TN 37303

Donors contributing \$500 or more will be recognized at the unveiling and their names will be listed on a plaque to be displayed with the mural.

The Reagan Mural is a project of the 2025 Leadership McMinn class.
 For more information about the mural or donating to the project, please email info@athenschamber.org or call 423.745.0334.





Lee University facing federal lawsuit after data breach impacts thousands



Lee University is facing a class action lawsuit after a security breach allegedly exposed the personal information of thousands of prospective students.

Michael Harris, a North Carolina resident and prospective student, filed the lawsuit on behalf of himself and others affected. The complaint includes four counts: negligence, breach of implied contract, invasion of privacy, and unjust enrichment.

The lawsuit claims that in March 2024, a third-party software breach allowed unauthorized access to Lee University's network, exposing sensitive information including names, Social Security numbers, and education-related data—referred to as

"personally identifiable information" or PII in the complaint. However, affected individuals were not notified until March 24, 2025—a full year later—a delay that the suit alleges violates Tennessee law requiring prompt notification of data breaches.

The notice letter issued by the university offered credit monitoring services, but Harris and other plaintiffs argue this is insufficient. The lawsuit states that Lee University has failed to explain how the breach occurred, whether it was contained, or what steps have been taken to ensure data security going forward.

Harris alleges that prospective students were required to provide PII as part of the inquiry process and that the university has offered no compensation for the significant time and effort now required to protect themselves from potential identity theft. Harris says he has already spent over 24 hours monitoring accounts, placing credit freezes, and addressing security concerns, resulting in financial and emotional stress.

The lawsuit seeks damages and a court order compelling Lee University to strengthen its data protection practices.

Read More at the Source: [Local 3 News](#)



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Crossroads Counseling joins Athens Area Chamber of Commerce



A ribbon cutting was celebrated recently for new Athens Area Chamber of Commerce member, Crossroads Counseling, located in downtown Athens at 1 West College St. Crossroads Counseling provides compassionate and personalized clinical therapy services. With a focus on confidentiality, they create a safe space for you to explore your feelings and work towards positive change. Their therapy sessions are tailored to your individual needs, promoting growth and self-awareness. Present for the ceremony were chamber and business representatives, family and friends and the owner Christen Robertson.

Picture Courtesy of Julie Simbeck, Athens Chamber

Monroe County Sheriff's Office Continues War on Drugs with Two Recent Fentanyl Busts



In its ongoing battle against illegal narcotics, the Monroe County Sheriff's Office has executed two recent search warrants that led to the seizure of dangerous amounts of fentanyl and two arrests.

On April 2, agents from the Sheriff's Narcotics Division and the 10th District Drug Task Force searched the Economy Inn in Sweetwater, recovering approximately 4.7 grams of fentanyl.

Just two days later, on April 4, a second search warrant was executed on Brakebill Road in Vonore, where authorities discovered around 10 grams of fentanyl.

The Sheriff's Office emphasized that fentanyl has been linked to numerous overdoses in Monroe County and remains a top enforcement priority.

Authorities remind the public that all suspects are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

Source: [Sheriff Tommy Jones - Facebook](#)

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Obituaries

Emma “Jean” Hicks, 74, passed away on December 31, 2024, while she was surrounded by her family. Her selflessness was evident in her willingness to give all she could, to all who needed. A memorial service will be held at Rocky Springs Baptist Church in Madisonville on Saturday, April 26 from 2:00PM - 4:00PM. Ziegler Funeral Home has been entrusted with the care of Emma “Jean” Hicks.

John Raymond “Jack” O’Donnell, 90 of Athens, passed away on Thursday evening, April 3 at home surrounded by family. Jack worked at Athens Insurance spanning four decades before retiring. Jack was a member of St. Mary’s Catholic Church for close to 55 years. A small memorial mass was held at St. Mary’s Catholic Church on Monday, April 7, and a Celebration of Life will be held later this summer. Smith Funeral Home & Cremation Service in charge of arrangements.

Martha Sue Lawson Plunkett, 71 of McMinn County, passed away on Sunday, April 6. She was of the Pentecostal faith. There will be no formal visitation or funeral services. Ziegler Funeral Home has been entrusted with serving the family of Martha Sue Lawson Plunkett.

Edna Britt Dixon, 93 of Flintstone, GA, passed away peacefully on Saturday, April 5. A native of Riceville, Edna was a Head Start teacher for many years and was active in and held many offices for the United Methodist Women. The family will receive friends from 1:00pm - 2:00pm Tuesday, April 8 in the chapel of Laycock-Hobbs Funeral Home. A graveside service will follow at 2:30pm at Cedar Grove Cemetery. Laycock-Hobbs Funeral Home in Athens, TN is in charge of the arrangements.

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