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Thursday, October 23, 2025

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Athens, Tennessee

AACA Revives "Arts on the Side" with Community Meal and Interactive Arts Event



The Athens Area Council for the Arts (AACA) will host its next *Arts on the Side* event on Tuesday, November 18, at The Arts Center in Athens. The evening will feature a community meal, visual arts activities, and an interactive play reading open to the public.

The event begins with a soup supper, including a vegan option, catered by ARAMARK at 5:30 p.m. in the Peggy Dow Performance Center. At 6 p.m., participants can enjoy a variety of hands-on arts experiences in the Peggy Dow Center and Visual Arts Wing. Activities include clay handbuilding with Patricia Shook, guided acrylic painting with Nancy Kyzer, and collage art with Holly Doucette and Jan Bursleson.

At 7 p.m., Athens Community Theatre will present a table read of *Mean Girls: The Musical* (rated PG-13) in the Sue E. Trotter Black Box Theater. The reading will be led by Michael Webb.

Arts on the Side builds on the success of AACA's September community meal and Pickin' Party, aiming to bring people together through food, fellowship, and creativity. The event also marks the revival of a former AACA lunchtime series of the same name, designed to make the arts accessible to all.

The program encourages community members to explore new art forms and connect with others in a welcoming environment. Participation in the table read is open to everyone—guests can choose to read a role or simply listen. All activities are free and open to the public. To receive updates on future table reads, community members can email operations@athensartscouncil.org. More information is available at athensartscouncil.org or by calling **423-745-8781**.

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Thursday, Oct 23rd @ Noon

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Paul Willson and Stan Gallery will discuss the story of the U-505 German
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Good Faith Clinic Open TODAY

Community News You Can Use



The Good Faith Clinic will be open **TODAY**, Thursday, October 23 at 3 p.m. for re-fills and at 3:30 p.m. for doctor visits.

The Good Faith Clinic is free primary health care for residents of McMinn and Meigs counties, ages of 18 -64, who do not have any form of medical insurance, including TennCare. The clinic meets on the campus of Christ Community Church at 18 S Congress Parkway in Athens.

*REMINDER: The Good Faith Clinic is open the 2nd, 4th, and 5th, **Thursdays** of each month.*

Source: Norma Barham, Good Faith Clinic

- The last monthly meeting of the Cherokee Beekeepers for 2025 will be Thursday, October 23, 2025 at 7:00 P.M. Please take note that the meeting location is now at the McMinn Senior Activity Center located at 205 McMinn Avenue, Athens, Tn. Monthly meetings will resume in January 2026. The public is always invited. You do not need to be a member to attend.
- Starr Regional Medical Center is hosting its annual flu shot fundraiser to benefit the Friendly Fellow Club's Christmas basket program on Friday, October 24 from 9 a.m. until 12 p.m. in the main lobby of the Athens hospital.
- The City of Athens Public Works Department announces the following street closure: **Thompson Street from Shoemaker Street to W. Madison Avenue.** This closure will be from Wednesday, October 29, from 5:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. The purpose of this closure is for the Keith Memorial United Methodist Church Fall Festival. For more information, please contact the Office of the Public Works Department at 423-744-2745.



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Athens' Pumpkintown 2025 Becomes Largest Festival Yet

When the 2025 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 23rd annual Pumpkintown the best ever! And, after months, weeks and days of planning, we feel our wish came true on Saturday, October 11th! Picture perfect weather ushered in toe tapping live entertainment on three stages, the beat of Native American drums, the tantalizing smell of festival food, all sorts of tempting items for sale from local businesses and 325 arts, crafts and food vendors plus a record crowd of over 35,000 visitors! So, thanks to the support of our community, sponsors, vendors and visitors, we think Pumpkintown 2025 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.

Hosted by the McMinn Regional Humane Society, the Mutt Strutt and Doggie Costume Contest featured over 52 pets in their Halloween finery and raised over \$800 for Rescue Riders in addition to two dogs and two cats adopted during the Paw Print Activity at Fullers Frame Shop.

The McMinn County Living Heritage Museum's 41st 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 and run by Valley Volleyball Academy-hosted around 300 bowlers on Jackson Street and The Arts Center reports 200 pumpkins were painted by budding artists on site.

The McMinn County Education Foundation signed up 40 new students to the Imagination Library program and the Let's Read 20 bus handed out 571 books to several children. And, the Hiking for Healing live auction hosted by Dr. John Forgety raised \$2,000 for area cancer survivors.

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 blow-gun demonstration 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 2025 along with Robert Redhawk Eldridge, Sharlene Brooks, Jack Lynn, Joey Pierce, and Medicine Scout. We greatly appreciate the commitment and dedication they've shown over the past 10 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 Darren and Jessica Casteel join us and we appreciate their help with putting out the road banners!

Jim Brooks is FCF's Entertainment executive, and we so appreciate his magic touch with booking solid entertainment for the festivals. Special thanks to Integrity Sound Solutions/Joel Webb and Nathan Haun for managing the sound for three stages.

Special thanks to vendor gurus Michael Priest and Brianna Baker. 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 three have my heartfelt gratitude. A huge shout out is in order to my sister in law Deb Willson, Ben Burchfield, Michael, Stefani, and Scott for all their help during the epic booth space numbering party – and, special thanks to Deb Goins for masterminding the way we number the booths! Checking in over 300 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 for all their efforts in making check in a breeze.

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; Josh Boggess and Brant Helms for producing Oscar worthy videos; Stefani Creates for the eye catching graphics. Special thanks to McMinn County Economic Development Authority, Athens Area Chamber of Commerce weekly newsletter, Morning Fax and The Daily Post Athenian for all the free publicity.

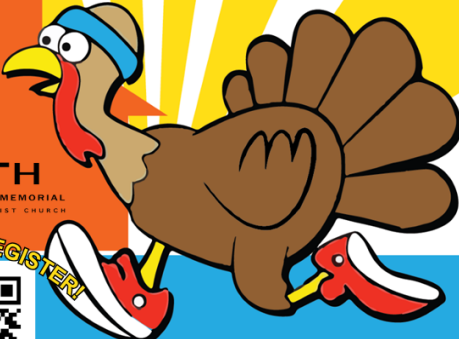
And we want to thank the many others who made this event run smoothly behind the scenes-Joy Early and Rick Clayton along with the McMinn County trustees who picked up/set out tables and chairs under Market Pavilion for the event, Todd Ford for the use of his golf cart, Rick Lay for allowing us to use his building for storage, McMinn County Living Heritage Museum for graciously donating the use of their tables and chairs for the day, Parks and Recreation department for the portable electric panels, Pavilion stage and running interference with trash and keeping the public bathrooms picked up and Public Works for always going above and beyond with coordinating trash pick up and street closings. And we are so thankful for Grace House for whisking away the tables and chairs after the festival ended.

Anytime a city our size has over 30,000 people come through, parking is invariably an issue. Friendly City Festivals is thankful for the patience and understanding shown by our downtown community, Rusty Rollins/Food City and Scott Thornton/CVS for this year and year's past. I want to especially thank Team Athens-The City- for the herculean effort they put into downtown for weeks before and during the festival. Thank you, thank you thank you-all departments did our city proud and please know you are appreciated!

Our sponsors are who make it possible for us to present our 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, Athens Insurance, Citizens National Bank of Sevier County, Athens Kiwanis Club, Simmons Bank, Simmons Wealth Management Group, Starr Regional Medical Center, Mayfield Dairy Farm, The Retirement Guys, DENSO, Warren Jackson CPAs, Madison Avenue Pharmacy, Valley Oil, Humana, VEC Customer Shares, Pendleton's Playground and Kona Ice. It's been a pleasure to chair Pumpkintown for the past 20 years with this exceptional group of volunteers, supporters and community. Stay tuned for our projects coming up in 2026!

Meredith Willson President-Friendly City Festivals

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Thursday, Oct. 23, 2025

Morning Fax®...Today's News This Morning Page 5

Athens, Tennessee

Tennessee Looks to Rebound as Kentucky Seeks to End SEC Home Drought

Another Saturday night at Kroger Field brings another chance for Kentucky football to break a streak that has haunted the Wildcats for more than two years. The task, however, won't be easy. Tennessee rolls into Lexington seeking redemption after a humbling defeat at Alabama, while Kentucky is desperate to stop its free fall in the SEC.

The Wildcats (2-4, 0-4 SEC) have not won a conference home game since toppling Florida in September 2023, which was a stunning nine straight SEC losses inside their own stadium. To make matters worse, Tennessee (5-2, 2-2 SEC) has claimed two victories in that same span at Kroger Field. If the Vols prevail again Saturday night, they'll have more SEC wins in Lexington since 2023 than Kentucky itself — a statistic that underscores just how badly the Wildcats need this one.

Both teams enter bruised and searching for answers. Tennessee was overpowered 37-20 in Tuscaloosa, while Kentucky suffered a crushing 16-13 overtime loss to Texas, a game it largely controlled before late mistakes and questionable decisions cost them the win.

Kickoff is set for 7:45 p.m. ET on the SEC Network. According to FanDuel, Tennessee is a 9.5-point favorite, with the over/under at 53.5 points. The weather forecast calls for classic fall football conditions — low 60s at kickoff, dipping into the 50s with a slight chance of light rain.

The all-time series between these border rivals dates back to 1893, but it has long been one-sided. Tennessee holds a commanding 84-26-9 advantage, including wins in 35 of the last 40 meetings.

For Tennessee, the focus this week has been on execution and consistency. Wide receivers coach **Kelsey Pope** credited the maturity and growth of young playmakers such as **Braylon Staley** and **Mike Matthews**, who have stepped into larger roles midseason.

On defense, outside linebackers coach **Levorn Harbin** emphasized discipline as his unit prepares for Kentucky's physical offensive front and power run game.

For Kentucky, the stakes are high. A win would snap the SEC drought, calm growing frustration around head coach **Mark Stoops**, and keep faint bowl hopes alive. For Tennessee, it's about staying in the SEC East race and proving that last week's setback was just a stumble, not a slide. Under the lights in Lexington, one team will leave with its season revived — the other, with even more questions than before.

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Thursday, Oct. 23, 2025

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

Athens, Tennessee

McMinn County Arrest Reports

10-21-25

Tristan Allen, 35 of Athens, charged with felony aggravated assault, Bond \$60,000

James Hatfield, 33 of Decatur, charged with simple possession, casual exchange, drug paraphernalia, and driving on a suspended license.

Justin McDaniel, 39 of Riceville, charged with aggravated burglary, Schedule II, and drug paraphernalia.

Danny Sprague, 50 of Etowah, charged with leaving the scene of an accident, and driving on a revoked license, Bond \$2,000

Glenn Whiting, 65 of Athens, charged with falsely representing himself as a lawyer.

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

Information gathered using Public Sources.

Athens City Schools to Celebrate Latino Culture Night on October 27

Athens City Schools will host a vibrant celebration of diversity and community during its upcoming Latino Culture Night, set for Monday, October 27, from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. at Athens City Intermediate School.

The family-friendly event invites students, parents, and community members to experience the rich traditions, flavors, and rhythms of Latin American cultures through a series of interactive activity stations and performances.

Guests can look forward to games, prizes, a photo booth, cultural art displays, dance and music, and activities introducing Spanish colors and numbers. The evening will also feature traditional Latin foods and a soccer skills station led by members of the Tennessee Wesleyan University soccer team.

Organizers say the event is designed to promote cultural awareness, celebrate diversity, and foster connections among families in the Athens community.

For more information, visit athenscityschools.com or contact Athens City Intermediate School directly.

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