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Seven Charged in Death of Monroe County Inmate

Seven people connected to the Monroe County Jail — including five former and current sheriff's office employees and two nurses — were arraigned Monday in connection with the in-custody death of 74-year-old Lester Isbill.

The group faces a range of charges, including official misconduct, criminally negligent homicide, and filing false reports, according to court documents.

Isbill died on February 7, one day after being arrested for disorderly conduct. Monroe County Sheriff Tommy Jones previously stated that Isbill was placed in a restraint chair and fitted with a mesh spit mask during his detention.

His death was initially ruled accidental due to health complications, but the Knox County Regional Forensic Center later determined the cause of death to be homicide, citing factors including dehydration and prolonged restraint.

Isbill's daughter, Windy Duncan, said her father went nine hours without medication or basic care before his death.

Records show prior disciplinary actions for several of the defendants. Sergeant Josh Duncan was suspended after allowing falsified logs related to Isbill's restraint. Officer Tyler Finger, another defendant, was previously terminated from the Loudon County Sheriff's Office over a sexual assault allegation that did not lead to criminal charges.

Those charged include former sheriff's office employees Joshua Duncan, Tommy Reagan, Tyler Finger, Elijah Spencer, and Jerron Henry, who face official misconduct charges. Nurses Courtney Woods and Greg Mills are charged with criminally negligent homicide and filing a false report. A status hearing in the case is scheduled for February 27, 2026.

Source: hoodline.com



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Friday, Oct. 24, 2025

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

Athens, Tennessee

McMinn County Schools Closed to Mourn the Passing of Director Dr. Julie Goodin

McMinn County Schools announced the unexpected passing of Director of Schools Dr. Julie Goodin, who began leading the district in July after years of service in various educational roles.

In a statement shared with staff and families, school officials described Dr. Goodin as a *“talented and driven leader who cared deeply about students, staff, and families.”* Her leadership and vision, the district said, made a lasting impact on the school system and community.

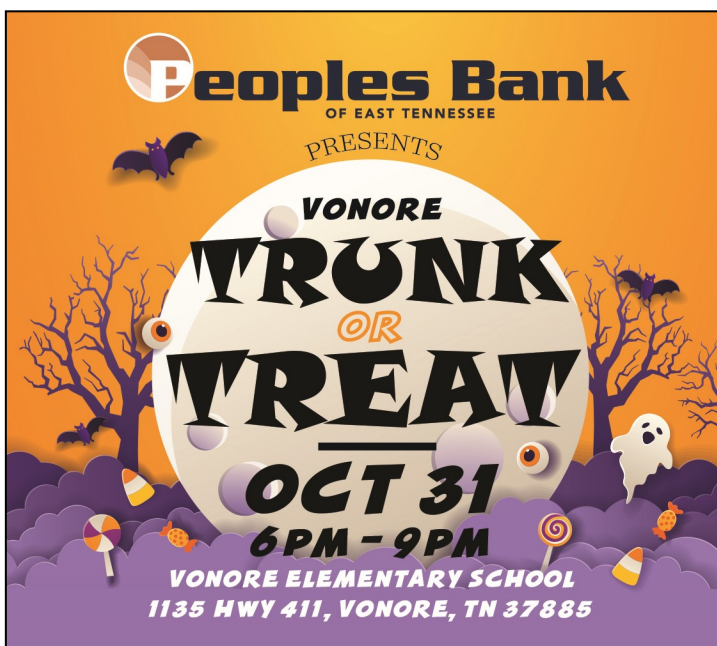
To allow time for grieving, all McMinn County schools and the district office will be closed on Friday, October 24, designated as an optional professional development day for staff to gather and receive grief counseling. Support services for students and staff will also be made available in the coming days. The district plans to share additional details about memorial arrangements soon. Updates and counseling resources will be posted on the school system's website at:

mcmminnschools.com.

District officials asked the community to keep Dr. Goodin's family and friends in their thoughts and prayers during this difficult time.

Community News You Can Use

- The Tennessee Wesleyan University Concert Choir and Chorale will present their first concert of the semester, *“Draw Us In,”* on Saturday, October 25, at 11 a.m. at Trinity United Methodist Church in Athens as part of TWU's Homecoming Weekend. The program features Scottish tunes, sacred and love songs, and traditional favorites like *“Battle Hymn of the Republic”* and *“The Lord Bless You and Keep You.”* TWU alumni are invited to join the choir for these selections, with rehearsal beginning at 10 a.m. Admission is free.
- The Mother Son Dance will be November 8th, from 6:30pm-8pm at McMinn County High School. The doors will open one hour prior to the dance for photos. Tickets can be purchased online, over the phone by calling the Parks and Recreation Office at 423-744-2704, and in person by visiting Athens City Hall at 815 North Jackson Street, Athens, TN 37303. Here's the link to buy them online: <https://secure.recl.com/TN/athens-tn/catalog>
- The City of Athens Public Works Department announces the following street closure: **WHITE STREET from Cook Drive to Coach Farmer Drive.** This closure will be from Tuesday, October 28, at 7:00 a.m. until Thursday, October 30, at 3:30 p.m. The purpose of this closure is for Tennessee Wesleyan University's sports field lighting project.



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UPCOMING CHURCH NEWS & EVENTS

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THIS WEEK
NEXT WEEK
EVERY WEEK

Friday, Oct. 24, 2025

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

Athens, Tennessee

Church News and Events

- Highway to Heaven Church (1413 Knoxville Ave., Athens) will be holding a Revival on Sunday, November 9 at 11 am and 6:30 pm. Bro. Chad Wilburn will be presiding over the services.
- Union McMinn Baptist Church (314 County Road 316, Niota) will be serving a free plate lunch for all on November 27th from 11am to 1pm. Come to the table for a free plate lunch. First Come, First Serve. The church is located right off I-75 exit 56.
- Zion Orthodox Presbyterian Church is having a Fall Theology Conference October 25 and 26. For more info visit zionopc.org
- [Planted In Christ Outreach Fellowship](#) (317 Maple Street, Athens) holds Outreach Deliverance Classes every Thursday at 7:00pm.
- [Celebrate Recovery](#) meets every [Tuesday](#) at 6:00pm at Woodward Ave. Church of God in Athens They also meet every [Thursday](#) at 6:00pm at Watts Bar Community Church in Decatur.
- Clay Hill Baptist Church (594 County Road 675, Riceville) is hosting a fall festival on Saturday, November 1 from 4:30-8pm
- Lane's Chapel AME Zion Church is hosting a Multi-Generational Grace Women's Luncheon from 11am-1:30pm on Saturday, October 25. Tickets are \$20.
- Freedman Chapel C.P. Church of Athens is hosting Women's Day this Sunday, October 26th at their 11 a.m service. The speaking minister is Marsenia Smith.

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THE KINGSMEN
November 1, 2025
6:00 p.m.



Solid Rock Baptist Church
4975 Hwy 11 Calhoun, TN 37309
Pastor Scott Martin

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OCTOBER 25 | 3:00 - 5:00PM

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A MAIN STREET ATHENS
HALLOWEEN FESTIVAL

OCTOBER 25TH
4:00 PM -12:00 AM
DOWNTOWN ATHENS



N WHITE STREET

- Haunted Barber Shop -- 4PM
- Food Trucks -- 4PM
- Vampire Cafe -- Food Hub 5PM
- Ghost of Athens' Past 6PM
- Mousetrap -- Art's Center 7PM
- Monster Mash Dance Party -
Shade Tree - 8PM
- Adult Costume Contest -
Shade Tree - 9:30PM
- Scarecrow Competition -
Knight Park - All Day

MARKET PARK

- Vendors - 4PM
- Kid's Games 4 PM
- Inspiration Dance -
4:30PM
- Wendy's Dance Studio-
6:45PM
- Costumes for Casa - 7PM
- Hocus Pocus - 7:15 PM
- Scream - 10:15 PM





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When school is in session.
Time: 11am-1:30pm
Location: Sherman Dining Hall
204 E College Street, Athens TN 37303




Friday, Oct. 24, 2025 **Morning Fax®...Today's News This Morning Page 5** **Athens, Tennessee**

TDEC Announces \$968,000 in Parks and Recreation Planning Grants

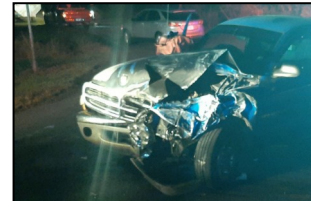
The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) announced \$968,000 in grants from the Local Parks and Recreation Fund (LPRF) for parks and recreation planning for 18 communities across the state **including \$48,000 to both the Cities of Etowah and Dayton.**

The Planning Grant Program provides state funding to match local government investments for communities who want to create or update a Parks and Recreation Systemwide Plan. This is an 80 percent state and 20 percent community matching grant.

“We appreciate all the communities who have gone through the process to receive these grants,” said Greer Tidwell, deputy director of Conservation for TDEC. “The investments will improve quality of life throughout our state. We look forward to seeing the plans that come from this assistance.”

“Outdoor spaces are at the heart of Tennessee communities,” said Brian Clifford, director of the Office of Outdoor Recreation. “With these grants, we’re helping local leaders plan for parks that inspire healthier lives, stronger economies, and lasting connections to our state’s natural beauty.”

Multiple-Vehicle Crash on Highway 11 Leaves One Injured



A chain-reaction crash involving four vehicles occurred Wednesday night around 10 p.m. on Highway 11 near County Road 326 in McMinn County.

According to reports, a Dodge Dakota traveling south on Highway 11 collided with a Dodge Ram that pulled out onto the highway, sending the Ram into a nearby ditch. Both drivers were the sole occupants of their vehicles and reported no injuries to dispatch.

Moments later, a Nissan Sentra traveling south came upon the stopped Dakota in the roadway. The driver swerved to avoid it but struck a Dodge Caravan heading north. The driver of the Nissan was transported to a local

hospital for treatment, while the passenger declined medical attention. Chad Gates with the Niota Rural Fire Department led operations at the scene. Responding agencies included AMR, Niota Fire, North McMinn, and Athens Rural Fire Departments. Tennessee Highway Patrol Trooper D.J. Taylor is leading the investigation.

Photo credit: David Prater, Niota Rural FD

Red, White & Bluegrass

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ITALIAN RESTAURANT STYLE DINNER

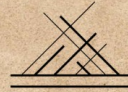
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2025
A MAIN STREET ATHENS HALLOWEEN FESTIVAL



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OCTOBER 25-26, 2025



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Friday, Oct. 24, 2025

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

Athens, Tennessee

The Mousetrap Catches Public Attention

Athens Community Theatre (ACT) is pleased to present, Agatha Christie's, *The Mousetrap*, directed by Bob Borwick, October 24 - November 2, 2025. Friday October 31 is a catered event where ticket holders are invited to join us at 6:00 PM for Mystery Maven Costume Contest.

Agatha Christie's whodunit *The Mousetrap* set in a snow-bound guest house is the longest-running play of all time and is riddled with mystery. *The Mousetrap* is the next installment of the Athens Community Theatre Mainstage 2025 - 26 season. Show dates and times are Fridays and Saturdays, October 24, 25, 31, and November 1 at 7:00 PM, and Sundays October 26 and November 2 at 2:00 PM.

Ticket holders for the catered October 31 show are invited to the Mystery Maven Costume Contest starting at 6:30 PM. To enter, simply show up dressed as any mystery character or author, AKA "mystery maven." Prizes will be awarded for best costume, best pair or group costume, and most unique interpretation of the theme. Tickets will be available starting September 12 and are \$20 for adults and \$15 for students. All tickets for October 31 are \$25. Patrons are encouraged to purchase tickets early, as ACT events tend to sell out on, or before, the performance date.

Source: Lauren Brown, AACA



Obituaries

Maria Esmeralda Cortez, 7 months old of Etowah, passed away on Tuesday, October 21. Although Maria was small, she was mighty and will be greatly missed by all. Bordwine Funeral Home of Etowah is in charge of arrangements.

Ethan Alan Hakes, 26, completed life's journey on Wednesday, October 15. He loved fishing, wrestling, and going on adventures. A Graveside service will be held at 3:30 p.m. on Monday, October 27, in the Meigs County Memorial Gardens. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Decatur Funeral Home to help ease the financial burden on his mother during this difficult time. Decatur Funeral Home & Cremation Services is honored to serve the Hakes family.

Ressie Hughes, 56, of Athens, passed away peacefully with her family by her side on Thursday, October 23. A true homebody, she found joy in the comfort of her home and loved to spend her time reading. A Funeral Service will be held on Monday, October 27, 2025 at Ascension Life Church at 2pm. A Visitation will be held prior from 12:00pm - 2:00pm. After the Funeral Service, a Graveside Service will be held at Cedar Grove Cemetery. Companion Funeral Home of Athens and the Cody family are honored to assist the family with these arrangements.

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8:00 AM - 8:30 AM**

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