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Wednesday, January 07, 2026

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Athens, Tennessee

Registration Open for 2026 McMinn County Little League and T-Ball



Registration is now open for the 2026 McMinn County Little League and T-Ball programs, offering youth the opportunity to participate in organized baseball and softball this spring.

Registration is open through March 1, 2026. Online registration is available exclusively from through Jan. 12. Beginning Jan. 13 through March 1,

families may register online, by phone, or in person. Phone and in-person registration will not be available on holidays or weekends. Financial assistance is available through the T-Mobile Little League Call Up Grant, which returns for the 2026 season. The grant helps cover registration fees for families facing financial challenges and will open early on Jan. 13, for families in select zip codes. Participants in McMinn and Meigs counties are eligible for early access.

Since 2020, the T-Mobile Little League Call Up Grant has helped cover registration costs for more than 70,000 families nationwide, ensuring children have the opportunity to participate regardless of financial circumstances. Additional registration details and eligibility information are available through McMinn County Little

Optimist Club of Athens Launches "Just Ask" Campaign to Promote Community Service



The Optimist Club of Athens will participate in the "Just Ask" campaign from Jan. 9–15, 2025, aimed at encouraging local residents to learn more about community service and become involved with the organization.

"The campaign was designed to spread the news about Optimist Clubs," Athens Club President Katrina Ferguson said. "People always want to know what Optimist Clubs do but never ask. We want people to ask."

The "Just Ask" campaign is intended to spark interest in the service club and invite conversations about its mission and activities. Those interested in learning more about the club or joining are encouraged to "Just Ask" a club member.

"We always want to encourage anyone interested in our club to attend a club meeting or event," Ferguson noted. Community members interested in learning about the club's programs that support city and county children are invited to attend the breakfast meeting at 7 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 15, in the TWU cafeteria meeting room.



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Athens, Tennessee

Madelyn Tallent to Celebrate New CD Release at Gem Theater



Singer-songwriter Madelyn Tallent will celebrate the release of her new CD, *Mean to Boys*, with a special release concert Friday, Jan. 16, 2026, at the historic Gem Theater in Etowah.

The show will run from 7 to 11 p.m., with doors opening at 6:30 p.m. The event marks a milestone for Tallent and her band and is expected to draw music fans from across the region for an evening of original live music.

Following the performance, attendees are invited to a meet-and-greet with Tallent and the band in the theater lobby, where fans can have merchandise signed and visit with the artists.

Tickets are **\$12 in advance through Eventbrite** and \$15 at the door. Advance tickets are encouraged, as availability is limited and sales are moving quickly.

The *Mean to Boys* CD Release Show is open to the public. Additional updates and information can be found by following Tennessee Overhill and Madelyn Tallent Music on social media.

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Athens, Tennessee

Starr Regional Medical Center Welcomes First Baby of 2026



Starr Regional Medical Center is welcoming the new year with the arrival of its first baby of 2026. The baby girl, Taeva Montanna Wilson, was born Saturday, January 3, to parents Michelle Ward and Eric Wilson. She weighed 6 pounds, 11 ounces and measured 19 inches.

"We're thrilled to welcome the first baby born at Starr Regional Medical Center in 2026. For more than 50 years, we've had the honor of supporting families through one of life's most cherished milestones," said Deborah Vaughn, MSN, RN, Chief Nursing Officer. "Our dedicated team of nurses, physicians, and pediatric specialists provides personalized, compassionate care in a family-centered environment—helping mothers feel confident, supported, and empowered throughout their birthing experience."

Starr Regional Medical Center's Women's & Children's Services department provides comprehensive care for labor, delivery and postpartum recovery. Families benefit from private patient rooms, updated security measures and a dedicated clinical team trained to support mothers and newborns at every stage. The department continues to enhance its offerings and looks forward to introducing several new services in 2026.

"We have an exceptional team committed to maintaining a safe, welcoming and comfortable environment for mothers and babies," said Matthew Marstin, DO, OB/GYN. "Helping families in our community welcome their newest additions is one of our greatest honors."

To celebrate being the first baby born at Starr Regional Medical Center in 2026, the family received several gifts, including a handmade quilt created by the Heritage Quilt Guild; gift cards from Athens Pediatrics, PLLC and Covenant Pediatrics; a gift from the McMinn County Education Foundation; and a gift basket of infant care items from Starr Regional Medical Center.

Starr Regional Medical Center's Women's & Children's Services department is located at 1114 West Madison Ave., Athens. To learn more or schedule an appointment, please call 423.744.3280 or visit StarrRegional.com.

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Athens, Tennessee

“Mic Drop” Celebrates the Divas of Pop and Rock at The Arts Center in Athens

Athens Area Council for the Arts (AACA) is pleased to present Mic Drop: The Women Who Rule Music, Friday, January 9, 2026. Directed by Traci McKenzie, Mic Drop is the next installment of AACA's 2025-26 House Blend Concert Series.

Traci McKenzie is an Athens Community Theatre director (The Adams Family, School of Rock) and performer (9 to 5: The Musical), who also directed last season's smash hit Look What You Made Us Do. Mic Drop is a diverse collection of songs that span genres and decades. And each one shares a defining trait: they were written or made popular by women.

Larae Graves will emcee the evening of legendary hits. Performers bringing the songs to the stage include Mahala Kelby in her House Blend debut, along with returning performers Miah Baker, Raegan Graves, Crystal Hall, Lindsey “Lu” Kimball, Alex Lauterbach, Natalie Leonesio, Emerson McKenzie, Kinsley Melhorn, Stephanie Roberts, and Christen Webb.

September Song, AACA's House Band, provides live accompaniment led by Andrew Kimball on guitar, Joe Littleton (bass), Kyle Littleton (lead guitar), and Matt Flowers (drums).

All House Blend Concert Series shows are in the Sue E. Trotter Black Box Theater at The Arts Center. Prices for House Blend tickets range from \$15 to \$40. Some events are catered and include light hors d'oeuvres or a full dinner; the higher ticket price for these events reflects the included meal.

McMinn County Arrests

January 5, 2026

Alexis Miller, 27 of Athens, charged on an outstanding warrant for driving on a suspended license, Bond \$1,000.

David Garvin, 36 of Piscute, New Jersey, charged with patronizing prostitution.

Monty Adams, 65 of Athens, charged with DUI - 5th offense, simple possession casual exchange of Schedule II, and is being held without bond.

Those accused are considered innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.
Information gathered using Public Sources.




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Athens, Tennessee

Obituaries

Jade Fairbanks, 32 passed away on Saturday, January 3, after a courageous fight with advanced metastatic cancer. She was stubborn in the best way-strong-willed, independent, and determined to live life to the beat of her own drum. A funeral service will be held at 7 p.m., Friday, January 9 in the chapel of Decatur Funeral Home & Cremation Services. The family will receive friends from 5 - 7 p.m, prior to the service. Decatur Funeral Home & Cremation Services is honored to serve the Fairbanks family.

Frances Sue Runyan McKee, 96 of Decatur, passed away on Tuesday, January 6. She was a member of Decatur United Methodist Church. A private graveside service will be held per Sue's Request. Decatur Funeral Home & Cremation Services is honored to serve the McKee family.

Gerald F. Linton, 80 of Athens, passed away Tuesday, January 6 at his home. Arrangements are incomplete and will be announced by Smith Funeral & Cremation Services of Athens.

Roger Lee Davis, 74 of Athens, passed away on his birthday, Thursday, January 1. Originally from Northbend, OR, he was an Eagle Scout and Tennis player. He attended Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, OK and received a Bachelors Degree in Education. Once Roger moved to Athens, he started a successful landscaping business. Laycock-Hobbs Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

Peter James Kosse III, 77 of Athens, passed away unexpectedly on Friday, January 2 at Sweetwater Hospital. Peter proudly served his country in the United States Navy for 24 years. In his free time, Peter enjoyed playing golf and was an accomplished golfer at Mouse Creek Golf Club. He will be fondly remembered for his love of the game and the friendships he formed on the course. A memorial service will be held at a later date and announced by the family. Companion Funeral Home of Athens is in charge.

Norma Jean Stanton Carroll, 95 of Athens, passed away on Tuesday, January 6, 2026 at NHC Healthcare of Athens. She was a member of Freedom Baptist Church. She was a former employee of Bowater where she worked as an Administrative Assistant having retired after 23 years of service. Funeral services will be 7:00 PM Wednesday, January 7 at Freedom Baptist Church. Graveside services will be 11:00 AM Thursday, January 8 at McMinn Memory Gardens. The family will receive friends from 5- 7 PM, Wednesday prior to the service at the church. Laycock-Hobbs Funeral Home in Athens is in charge of the arrangements.

Genny Lynn Daniels, 49 of Spring City, passed away on Monday, December 22 in Nashville. For many years, she enjoyed dirt track racing alongside her husband, Kenneth, creating countless memories together. The family will hold a private memorial service at a later time. Companion Funeral Home of Athens and the Cody family are honored to assist the Daniels family during this difficult time.

William "Sherman" Williams, 82 of Etowah, passed away on Sunday, January 4. Funeral services will be held at 1:00 p.m., Wednesday, January 7 in the chapel of Bordwine Funeral Home. The family will receive friends from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Wednesday prior to the service. Interment will follow the service in McMinn Memory Gardens. Bordwine Funeral Home of Etowah is in charge of arrangements.

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