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Thursday, January 15, 2026

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Athens, Tennessee

## Multi-Agency Search Warrant Leads to Recovery of Stolen Property, Drugs, and Weapons



A multi-agency investigation led to the recovery of stolen property, illegal drugs, firearms, and explosives following the execution of a search warrant earlier this week.

On Monday, Jan. 12, investigators with the McMinn County Sheriff's Office and the 10th Judicial District Drug Task Force, with assistance from the Monroe County Sheriff's Office, executed a search warrant at

a residence in Tellico Plains. During the search, officers recovered items reported stolen in a recent theft in McMinn County.

In addition to the stolen property, authorities seized methamphetamine, marijuana, firearms, and explosives from the residence. A suspect was arrested in Monroe County by the Drug Task Force. Charges related to the investigation are pending in McMinn County.

McMinn County Sheriff Joe Guy praised the cooperation between agencies in addressing criminal activity that crosses jurisdictional boundaries.

"We appreciate the ongoing cooperation between our agencies to resolve crimes across county lines," Guy said. "Criminals don't worry about county lines and city limits, and when it comes to investigating crimes, neither do we."

The investigation remains ongoing.

Source: [Sheriff Joe Guy—Facebook](#)

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**McMinn County  
Living Heritage Museum**

### Upcoming January Events

#### HISTORY FOR LUNCH:

Director Brett King continues his American 250th lecture series this month with a discussion on Article 1-7 of the U.S. Constitution

Thursday, January 15<sup>th</sup> @ Noon - Free Admission

Origins of UTK's Body Farm with Frank Murphy

Thursday, January 22<sup>nd</sup> @ Noon - Free Admission

#### HERITAGE SCHOOL:

Cooking Healthy in the New Year with  
Shelley Morgan of Mountain Medicine Farm

Saturday, January 17<sup>th</sup> @ 10:00 am \$5 or free with membership\*

Chemistry Magic Show with Dr. Al Hazari - fun for all ages!

Saturday, January 24<sup>th</sup> @ 11:00 am \$5 or free with membership\*

Programs sponsored by C. Scott & Muriel S. Mayfield Family Foundation, Tennessee Arts Commission, Hugh M. Willson Family Foundation, and City of Athens

#### Hours:

Tuesday - Friday: 10 AM - 5 PM  
Saturday: 10 AM - 1 PM  
Sunday - Monday: Closed

#### Admission:

Adults:	\$5.00
Senior 60+:	\$3.00
Students:	\$3.00

### More Information

522 W Madison Ave.  
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[www.livingheritagemuseum.org](http://www.livingheritagemuseum.org)



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**Thursday, Jan. 15, 2026**

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**Athens, Tennessee**

**Nominations Open for  
Dick Dyer Community Service Award**

**UNITED WAY  
McMinn and  
Meigs Counties**

United Way of McMinn & Meigs Counties is accepting nominations for the 2026 Dick Dyer Community Service Award, which honors an individual who demonstrates exceptional service, leadership, and dedication to the community.

Named for the organization's first director, the award recognizes someone who has made a lasting impact through church, civic, or volunteer activities. The recipient is selected by a panel of previous award winners and will be honored at the United Way Annual Meeting and Awards Luncheon on February 19, 2026.

In addition, the honoree will represent McMinn County as a Governor's Volunteer Stars Award recipient and be recognized at a ceremony hosted by Governor Bill Lee in Nashville.

Nominations may be mailed to P.O. Box 1681, Athens, TN 37371, emailed to [unitedway@unitedwavmm.org](mailto:unitedway@unitedwavmm.org), or dropped off at the United Way office at 313 Maple Street. The deadline to submit nominations is January 31, 2026.

**Community News You Can Use**

- The Athens Municipal Building, Public Works, Recycle Center, and Animal Shelter will be closed on Monday, January 19 in observance of Martin Luther King Day. Those buildings will re-open Tuesday, January 20, 2026, during regular business hours. Residential garbage routes for Monday, January 19 will be picked up on Tuesday, January 20. All other residential garbage routes will be on regular schedule.
- The Athens Utilities Board will have their Budget and Finance Committee Meeting Today, Thursday, January 15 at 11:30 AM.
- United Way of McMinn & Meigs Counties is accepting donations of clean, smoke-free, gently used or new purses, jewelry, and accessories for the 15th Annual *Power of the Purse* Fundraiser supporting 2026 programs. Donations may be dropped off now until March 2, 2026, Monday–Friday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the United Way office, 313 Maple Street in Athens.

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**OPEN INTERVIEWS**

**Friday, January 16, 2026  
Saturday, January 17, 2026  
8:00 AM - 1:00 PM  
5020 Highway 11 South  
Calhoun, Tennessee**

**Registration  
(mandatory)  
7:30 AM - 8:15 AM**

Interviews will be conducted on a first-come, first-serve basis. You must arrive during Registration in order to obtain a slot; late arrivals will not be eligible. To be considered for employment, you must bring the following required items: a valid driver license, your resume, and a copy of your GED or high school diploma. Candidates who do not meet these requirements will not be eligible for hire.

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Thursday, Jan. 15, 2026

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Athens, Tennessee

## AACA Brings Back Our Three Tenors for 'Seasons of Love' Valentine's Concert

The Athens Area Council for the Arts will welcome back a popular musical event this winter with **Our Three Tenors in *Seasons of Love***, scheduled for Friday and Saturday, Feb. 13–14, 2026. The concert marks the fourth installment of AACA's 2025–26 House Blend Concert Series.

Directed by Kay Simmons and Pam Thigpen, the program features Tim Frazier, Rusty Patterson and Mike Simmons in their first full-length performance together in more than five years. *Seasons of Love* celebrates love in all its forms through a mix of audience favorites, Great American Songbook classics, show tunes and contemporary pop selections.

Simmons, a longtime figure in the Athens music and theatre community, has served as an actor, singer, accompanist and piano teacher and was the founding director of the Athens Area Children's Choir. Thigpen, a retired Athens City Schools music teacher, is also known for directing the popular *Jazzy Little Christmas*.

The Friday, Feb. 13 performance includes light hors d'oeuvres, with tickets priced at \$25. The Saturday, Feb. 14 concert features a full meal, with tickets at \$40. Due to catering arrangements, ticket sales for the Saturday performance will end on Tuesday, Feb. 10. Advance ticket purchases are strongly encouraged, as AACA events often sell out prior to the performance dates.

## McMinn County Arrest Reports

January 13, 2026

**Christy Hardin**, 43 of Etowah, charged with violation of probation for possession of paraphernalia, Bond \$1,718.45.

**John Shepard**, 48 of Sweetwater, charged with state violation of probation for possession of firearms by a convicted felon.

**Chad Lankford**, 45 of Decatur, charged with murder out of Meigs County with no bond.

**Alicia Padilla**, 19 charged with failure to appear for theft of merchandise.

**Tracy Sherman**, 25 of Etowah, charged with state violation of probation for Schedule II fentanyl for resale, Simple possession of Schedule II fentanyl, and drug paraphernalia, Bond \$7,500.

**Billy Locke**, 56 of Etowah, charged with state violation of probation for felony evading with no bond.

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

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Athens, Tennessee

## Obituaries

**Melissa "Lisa" Duggan Underdown**, 60 of McMinn County, passed away on Tuesday, January 13. She was a manager and operator for the McMinn/Meigs Youth Softball league and attended First Baptist Church. Visitation will be held from 11:00 AM-1:00 PM on Thursday, January 15 at Ziegler Funeral Home, with graveside services to follow at 1:30 PM at South Liberty Cemetery. Ziegler Funeral Home has been entrusted with serving the family of Melissa "Lisa" Duggan Underdown.

**Robert "Bob" N. Kemph, Jr.**, 81 of Athens, passed away on Saturday, January 10. His last job was as an associate of Crye-Leike Realty in Athens. Bob was a member of First Baptist Church in Athens for 14 years. A Celebration of Life will be held at First Baptist Church of Athens on Sunday, January 25 at 2:00 PM. Ziegler Funeral Home has been entrusted with serving the family of Robert "Bob" N. Kemph, Jr.

**Melissa (Bob) Kay Key**, 49 of McMinn County, passed away on Friday, January 9. Missy's greatest joy was her beloved Chihuahuas, Muffin, Hot Wheels, and Bubba, who were truly her constant companions. A Memorial Service will be held on January 17, 2026 at 2:00pm at Companion Funeral Home of Athens. A Visitation will be held prior from 1:00-2:00. Companion Funeral Home of Athens and the Cody family are honored to assist the family with these arrangements.

**Daniel "Danny" Richard Coleman**, 63 of Athens, passed away on Saturday, January 10. Danny was a talented athlete who played college football at Murray State before fulfilling a dream of playing professionally in the NFL. After his football career, he pursued several paths before finding his true calling as a long-haul truck driver for Covenant Transportation. A Memorial Service will be held on Saturday, January 24 at Temple Baptist Church (2100 Woodrow Drive, Knoxville, TN 37918) at 11:00am. A meal will follow in the fellowship hall. Companion Funeral Home of Athens, TN and the Cody family are honored to assist the Coleman family during their time of great loss.

**Eva Leilla Gohagan Kimbro**, 76 of Athens, passed away on Sunday, January 11. She was a member of Eastanallee Baptist Church. The family will receive friends on Thursday, January 15 from 4-6 pm at Eastanallee Baptist Church in Riceville, TN, with a funeral service immediately following. The committal service will be 9:30 am, Friday, January 16 at Chattanooga National Cemetery. Smith Funeral & Cremation Services is in charge of arrangements.



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