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Friday, January 23, 2026

Page 1

Athens, Tennessee

Athens Police Seek Suspect in Stabbing Investigation



2005 Toyota Highlander (Silver)
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Athens Police are investigating a stabbing incident that occurred Tuesday, Jan. 21, at approximately 711 Hamby Street, Lot 23, in Athens.

According to the Athens Police Department, **David Rodriguez Cruz**, a 32-year-old Hispanic male, is wanted in connection with the incident and is facing charges of attempted first-degree murder.

Police said Cruz is not believed to still be in the immediate area, but officials are urging the public not to approach him if located, as he is considered dangerous.

Anyone with information regarding Cruz's whereabouts or related details is asked to contact the Athens Police Department immediately or call 911. Tips may also be submitted anonymously through local crime reporting channels.

The victim, whose identity has not yet been released, was transported to a local hospital for further treatment of injuries. Police said the investigation remains ongoing and additional information will be released as it becomes available.

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Friday, Jan. 23, 2026

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

Athens, Tennessee

McMinn Warming Center seeks generator, volunteers ahead of possible power outages

The McMinn Warming Center is asking for community support as it prepares for possible power outages during the upcoming weekend amid winter weather concerns.

The center is seeking to borrow a portable generator and is also requesting battery-operated lanterns and lights. Organizers said the building is older and not well insulated, which could cause indoor temperatures to drop quickly if electricity is lost.

In addition to equipment needs, the warming center is also calling for volunteers. "After reviewing weather forecasts, the center announced it plans to open **Friday through Sunday, Jan. 23-25.**" Volunteers are needed beginning at 6 p.m. Friday and continuing throughout the weekend, including both daytime and overnight shifts. The center said it relies entirely on volunteers to remain operational.

Anyone able to loan a generator, donate battery-powered lights, or volunteer is encouraged to contact the center's coordinator at 208-241-7806. Volunteer sign-ups are also available online at mcminnwarmingcenter.com.

The McMinn Warming Center provides shelter and warmth during periods of extreme cold for individuals without safe or reliable heating options.

Community News You Can Use

- The McMinn County Library Board will meet Monday, January 26 at 6 p.m. at E.G. Fisher Public Library. The meeting will be rescheduled if weather conditions become an issue.
- The City of Athens Board of Zoning Appeals meeting scheduled for **Wednesday, January 28**, has been **cancelled**.
- Tennessee's unemployment rate remained at **3.6% in December**, holding steady from November and staying **below the national rate of 4.4%**, according to the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development. Over the past year, the state added **23,000 nonfarm jobs**, though employment declined by **5,100 jobs in December**, with losses mainly in trade, transportation, utilities, accommodation and food services, and manufacturing.



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THIS WEEK
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EVERY WEEK

Friday, Jan. 23, 2026

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

Athens, Tennessee

Church News & Events

- Southern Gospel Music Promotions will host [An Evening of Gospel Music](#), a benefit concert for Mary Ann Casey and her family, on Saturday, January 24, 2026, from 2 to 6 p.m. The event will be held at the Athens City Middle School Auditorium, located at 200 Keith Lane in Athens. Featured groups include Psalms 51, Clear Vision (Grand Stage NQC), and Saved by Grace. Admission is \$5. If the event must be postponed, it will be rescheduled for February 21. For more information, contact Randy Key at 423-920-6044, Mark Greeno at 304-445-5396, or Sue Granger at 423-507-4631.
- [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.
- The gospel singing group [The Lawsons](#) will be featured in concert on Sunday, February 8, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. at Solid Rock Baptist Church, located at 4975 Highway 11 South in Calhoun. The event is open to the public, and everyone is welcome to attend.
- [St. Mary's Legacy Clinic](#) offers free mobile medical care for the uninsured. Anyone who is medically uninsured is eligible to receive care. *St. Mary's Catholic Church (1291 E Madison Ave, Athens) is the McMinn County location and accepts patients every 3rd Thursday of the month.*
- Are you grieving the loss of someone close to you? Clearwater Baptist Church (964 County Road 180, Athens) is starting a new session of Grief Share helping those grieving find hope, comfort, and guidance. Beginning on Thursday, February 5th from 6 pm - 7:30 pm there will be an ongoing (in 13wk rotations) grief support group that you can join at any time and is open to the community. For more info or sign up visit: clearwaterbc.org/grief-share
- St. Paul's Episcopal Church has started "Harmony and Hugs" a ministry that provides one hour of casual singing at Athens assisted living facilities. With a guitar accompanist, this joyful amateur volunteer group brings music and joy to residents by singing gospel songs, classic country, and oldies. The group's next gathering is scheduled for Tuesday, January 27th, at 10:00 a.m. For more info contact St. Paul's at 423-745-2224.

Tennessee Wesleyan University invites qualified individuals to apply for the following positions:

Executive Graduate Program Recruiter

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Friday, Jan. 23, 2026

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Athens, Tennessee

Early Morning Chimney Fire Damages Madisonville Home



A residential fire early Wednesday morning caused damage to a home on County Road 404 in Madisonville.

According to fire officials, the occupant reported the fire began around 1 a.m. at a pipe

leading from the chimney. The fire spread up the wall and into the attic, resulting in fire and water damage to portions of the attic and living room.

Multiple agencies responded to the scene, including Englewood Rural Fire, Niota Rural Fire, Madisonville City Fire, Christianburg Fire, Athens Utilities Board (AUB), and AMR. Englewood Rural Fire Chief Billy Roach served as incident commander.

No additional injuries were reported. Fire officials are using the incident as a reminder to residents to have chimneys inspected and cleaned annually to help prevent chimney-related fires.

Photos provided by Lynn Ingram, Englewood Rural FD

McMinn County Arrest Reports

January 21, 2026

Wayland Shell, 44 of Athens, charged with theft of property, Simple possession of schedule I mushrooms, simple possession of schedule II, meth and fentanyl.

Randall Bledsoe, 25 of Etowah, charge with criminal impersonation, drug paraphernalia, public intoxication, failure to appear for drug paraphernalia, simple possession schedule II fentanyl, Bond \$10,000.

Jessica Daniels, 25 of Philadelphia, charged with felony aggravated assault by intimidation, Bond \$15,000.

William Renfro, 21 of Corryton, TN, charged with driving on a suspended license, Bond \$2,000.

Nathan Tipton, 41 of Etowah, charged with state violation of probation for schedule II meth for resale, DUI, simple possession schedule II fentanyl, simple possession schedule 4 xanax, altering vehicle registration, and drug paraphernalia, Bond \$10,000.

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

Barbara Dean Scoggins Curtis, 76 of Athens, passed away Wednesday, January 21 at her home. She was a member of Eastanallee Baptist Church. She was Salutatorian of her Senior Class at Chattanooga Central High School. She received her Bachelor's degree in Sociology and Religion from Berea College. She was an ISO Coordinator for Tennessee Packaging until her retirement. A funeral service will be 4:00 pm, Friday, January 30 in the chapel of Smith Funeral Home. The interment will be at 11:00am on Saturday, January 31 at Womac Cemetery. The family will receive friends Friday, from 2:00-4:00pm at the funeral home prior to the service. Smith Funeral & Cremation Services of Athens is honored to serve the family of Barbara Dean Scoggins Curtis.

Sara Bell Cupp, 82 of Decatur, passed away on Thursday, January 15. She was a faithful member of Concord Missionary Baptist Church. A funeral service will be held at 7 p.m. on Friday, January 23 in the chapel of Decatur Funeral Home & Cremation Services. Interment will be held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, January 24 in the Meigs County Memorial Gardens. The family will receive friends from 5 - 7 p.m., prior to the service. Decatur Funeral Home & Cremation Services is honored to serve the Cupp Family.

Albert Cager Peters, affectionately known as "Junior," passed away peacefully at his residence on Wednesday, January 21. Junior was marked by his kindness and welcoming personality, always making those around him feel at ease. A visitation honoring Junior will take place on Thursday, January 29 from 12:00 PM to 2:00 PM at Bordwine Funeral Home, located at 203 Ohio Ave, Etowah, TN 37331, followed by a Celebration of Life from 2:00 PM at the same location. Bordwine Funeral Home of Etowah is in charge of arrangements.

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