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Downtown Athens Gears Up for MooFest: Street Closures Begin Friday, June 6



Final preparations are underway for MooFest, one of Athens' most anticipated annual events, which takes place on Saturday, June 7. To ensure a safe and successful festival, local officials have announced a **full street closure beginning Friday, June 6 at 3:30 PM**. All vehicles must be removed from the festival area by this time to allow crews to set up stages, booths, and safety barriers.

Event organizers are working closely with the city to ensure clear signage is posted in advance to alert drivers and residents of the closure. "We appreciate everyone's cooperation in helping us prepare downtown for the event," a spokesperson said. "Removing vehicles on time is essential to keeping everything on schedule and ensuring safety for everyone attending."

The MooFest footprint will span downtown Athens, including high-traffic areas near the **Market Pavilion, Courthouse Steps, and Eureka Trail**, where attractions like agricultural exhibits, children's activities, and more than 300 vendor booths will be located. Local businesses and streets around the **Market Park Stage, Lifestyle Stage, and Downtown Beauty Lounge Stage** will also be affected by the closure and festival setup.

Residents and visitors should expect limited access to parking in the downtown area and are encouraged to plan ahead. Alternative routes and designated parking zones will be provided where possible. Public safety teams will be on-site to assist with traffic flow and pedestrian movement throughout the event.

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Friday, May 16, 2025

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Athens, Tennessee

Community News You Can Use

- The City of Niota will have a Called Board Meeting on Monday, May 19 at 10:15 a.m. at Niota City Hall. On the agenda, they will discuss the purchase of a building for the Fire/Police Departments.
- The McMinn County Board of Education will have a Called Board Meeting on Tuesday, May 20, at 5:30 p.m. at the McMinn County Center for Educational Excellence.

We encourage you to e-mail us community events, church news, or other items of interest for possible use in the Morning Fax.

**Any items you would like us to consider,
e-mail: wyriradio@gmail.com**

Higher Utility Bills Looming: AUB Considers Rate Increase

After completing an extensive cost of service survey and following consultation with the Tennessee Comptroller's staff, the Athens Utilities Board (AUB) held the first reading recently of a proposed natural gas rate adjustment.

The Tennessee Comptroller requires municipal water, wastewater, and natural gas utilities charge sufficient retail rates to ensure positive annual net revenues. These rate changes are essential to maintain the financial stability of the gas department, and to continue safe, reliable delivery of natural gas to the Athens community.

Effective July 1, 2025, AUB will increase the monthly availability fee from \$6.00 to \$10.50. A second increase of \$2.00 to the availability fee will take effect on July 1, 2026. Additionally, there will be a \$0.02 per decatherm increase to the natural gas commodity rate. This is the first increase to AUB's availability fee in 22 years.

"These decisions are never easy, and we understand the impact any increase can have on our customers," said Craig Brymer, Superintendent of Natural Gas at AUB. "But after thorough analysis and discussions, it's clear that these changes are necessary to maintain the level of service and safety our customers rely on. We're committed to being transparent and fiscally responsible as we plan for the future."

The final reading and approval of the rate change will occur at the June AUB Board meeting.



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GoComics

Friday, May 16, 2025

Page 3

Athens, Tennessee

Church News and Events

- **Planted In Christ Outreach Fellowship** (317 Maple Street, Athens) holds Outreach Deliverance Classes every Thursday at 7:00pm.
- Community Revival meeting at **Mt. Verd Baptist Church** 252 Co. Rd. 249 Athens. Sun. May 18 at 6 pm & Mon.-Fri. May 19-23 @ 7pm. A different Pastor each night. All are welcome!
- The Etowah Chamber of Commerce, in conjunction with Etowah Main Street, will host the special "Family & Faith" Festival on Saturday May 17, at the L&N Depot
- **SRBC Kids presents: Kingdom Seekers** on Sunday Nights at 5:30pm at **Solid Rock Baptist Church** (4975 Hwy. 11, Calhoun) This event combines, God, music, games and fun into a very special all ages affair.
- Star Bethel Baptist church, located at 331 County Road 890 in Etowah, would like to invite you to their Womens Day Celebration on Sunday, May 18 at 11:00 a.m.. Rev. M. Benton of Cleveland, TN will be the special guest speaker.
- **Niota UMC** will be hosting a free week-long summer camp on July 14-18 in partnership with Camp in the Community at their church in Niota. The summer camp is open to all children ages 5-14 The camp will run from 8:30-4:30pm (Friday ends at 2pm) and includes breakfast and lunch. Space is limited, make sure to sign up soon to secure your spot. To register, visit <https://www.campinthecommunity.org/host/niota>
- **Celebrate Recovery** meets every **Tuesday** at 6:00pm at Woodward Ave. Church of God (507 Woodward Ave., Athens). They also meet every **Thursday** at 6:00pm at Watts Bar Community Church (1517 TN-68, Decatur)
- **New Life Church** hosts weekly Prayer Meetings every Wednesday night beginning at 7:00pm. The church is located at 204 Fisher St. in Athens. All are welcome.
- Athens Lutheran Church (710 Forrest Ave, Athens) invites children ages 6-12 to their Vacation Bible School/ From June 23 - 27 from 9 a.m. to 12:30p.m. Lunch will be provided. Register online at: AthensLutheranChurch.org

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Athens, Tennessee

Two-Vehicle Collision Reported on Hwy 411N in Englewood

A two-vehicle crash occurred around 8:00 a.m. Wednesday morning on Highway 411 North at County Road 516, involving a 2016 Chevrolet Sonic and a 2024 Nissan Kicks.

Fortunately, no injuries were reported in the incident.

Responding to the scene were personnel from the Englewood Police Department, Etowah Police Department, AMR, Etowah Rural Fire Department, and Englewood Rural Fire Department. The accident was investigated by Tennessee Highway Patrol Trooper Travis Ryans.

Photos provided by: Lynn Ingram, Englewood Rural Fire Dept..



Ribbon Cutting: Riceville Utility District

With local support a ribbon cutting took place on May 12th at 2pm for the new Riceville Community Center. McMinn County and Riceville Utility District have partnered with many local and area businesses through donations of time and money to provide a clean, safe family environment for the people of Riceville and surrounding area. Facility is being managed by Riceville Utility District and will require reservations at the office Monday through Friday 8AM - 4PM.



Present from right to left bottom line 1st Community Center applicant Terry Akins, State Representative Mark Cochran, Mayor John Gentry, RUD Chairman Rick Brown, District Attorney Stephen Hatchett, County Commissioner Brent Carter, RUD Manager Virginia Jennings, McMinn County Economic Development Authority Brianna Baker, RUD Employee Destiney Everhart, next row right to left Webb Plumbing Jayson Vicars, RUD Vice-Chairman Jeff Melton, McMinn County Highway Commissioner Dan Evans, RUD Chief Operator Clinton Crisp, County Commissioner Travis Crisp, RUD Employee Jerome Wilford, McMinn County Economic Development Authority Lindsey Ferguson, Residents of Riceville Edwin and Tina Stevens.



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Friday, May 16, 2025

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Athens, Tennessee

Athens City Schools Offering Free Summer Meals for Children

Athens City Schools is once again partnering with the USDA to offer free summer meals to children 18 and under through the Summer Nutrition Program. Running from **June 2 through July 18**, the initiative ensures that local children continue to receive nutritious meals even while school is out.

The main **drive-thru meal service** will be held **Monday through Friday from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.** at **Athens City Intermediate School**, located at 255 Keith Lane. Families can pick up meals without needing to exit their vehicles, making it a convenient option for busy schedules.

In addition to the main site, several satellite locations will be serving meals during specific time windows:

- **Athens Gardens/Mews** – 11:00 to 11:20 a.m.
- **Forrest Hills Apartments** – 11:35 to 11:55 a.m.
- **Clem Jones Apartments** – 12:00 to 12:20 p.m.
- **North City School** – 1:00 to 1:20 p.m.

The SUN Meals program ensures that kids receive the nourishment they need to stay healthy and active during the summer months. Meals are completely free and available to all children under 19, with no registration required.

Organizers also invite local churches and summer camps to take advantage of the meal program. For more information about providing free meals at vacation bible schools or other summer programs, contact Athens City Schools at **423-333-3347**.

As a USDA-supported program, this initiative is part of a broader effort to address food insecurity among children during the summer. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.



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Athens, Tennessee

Obituaries

Patrick Gruetzmacher, 59, passed away on Wednesday, May 14. After graduating from Bishop Moore Catholic High School in Orlando, Florida in 1983, Patrick embarked on a rewarding career in sales, demonstrating unparalleled dedication and passion in his work. He ultimately finished his career at Cadence Petroleum. Patrick took great pride in his home and yard, finding fulfillment in the beauty of nurturing plants and creating inviting spaces. A memorial service will be at 2:00 PM Monday, May 19 at Good Samaritan Funeral Home, with visitation from 12:00 to 2:00 prior to the service. The family requests that visitors dress comfortable and wear blue to honor the memory of Patrick. Good Samaritan Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

New Mural Unveiled in Athens



A new mural featuring President Ronald Reagan, a bald eagle, and the American flag was unveiled this week at the corner of N. Jackson Street and W. Washington Avenue, on the side of the Athens Chamber of Commerce building.

The mural adds to the city's growing collection of public art, though it has sparked mixed online reviews among passersby.

Painted by muralist Sam Welty, the piece was dedicated during a ceremony attended by local officials and community members. Among the speakers was A.B. Culvahouse of Ten Mile, TN, who served as Special Counsel to President Reagan and shared reflections from his two years in the White House.

Other attendees included Athens Chamber CEO Rob Preston, McMinn Living Heritage Museum Director Brett King, City Mayor Larry Eaton, County Mayor John Gentry, and State Rep. Mark Cochran.

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