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Athens-McMinn YMCA Participating in National Child Safety Campaign

The Athens-McMinn Family YMCA is joining YMCAs nationwide this week in the Five Days of Action[®] campaign, a child safety initiative held April 13–17 that focuses on protecting children, including in digital spaces.

Throughout the week, the local YMCA is sharing resources and educational materials to help parents and caregivers better understand the risks children may face online. Officials say the campaign highlights the importance of adults working together to ensure children's safety both in person and on digital platforms.

"Technology is an amazing tool for learning and connection, but it also presents new risks," said Matt Roberts, senior director of youth and family programs. "By working together and staying informed, we can create safer digital spaces for all children."

As part of the 2026 campaign, the YMCA is partnering with organizations such as Praesidium, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, Lauren's Kids, and the National Children's Alliance to provide additional tools and guidance.

The initiative encourages adults to recognize warning signs of abuse, maintain open communication with children, and utilize available resources to promote online safety. More information and the official pledge can be found at fivedaysofaction.org.

Early Morning Fire Destroys Industrial Building in Polk County

A large industrial building at Con-sauga Wood on Delta Drive was destroyed by fire early Monday morning, prompting a multi-agency response from across the region.



The fire was reported shortly before 2 a.m., with West Polk Fire Department requesting mutual aid as crews worked to contain the blaze. The structure, measuring approximately 30 by 150 feet, housed a lumber separator used in the treatment of wood products. Officials said the building and its contents were a total loss.

Multiple agencies responded to assist, including Bradley County Fire, Murray County Fire (Georgia), Englewood Rural Fire, Eto-wah Rural Fire, Claxton Fire, Volunteer Electric Cooperative (Benton), and AmeriPro EMS of Polk County.

West Polk Fire Chief Keith Jeskee served as incident commander. No injuries were reported. The cause of the fire has not been released. *Photo courtesy of Lynn Ingram, Englewood Rural FD*

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Athens, Tennessee

Dooley Tractor Event Draws Crowd for WYXI Live Broadcast



WYXI General Manager Mark Lefler, interviews longtime Dooley Tractor customer, Winona Pless

A large crowd turned out last week for a live remote broadcast hosted by WYXI Radio at Dooley Tractor Company, as the business combined its annual Kubota Orange Days sales event with a day of giveaways, food, and community fellowship.

The event began early in the morning with free doughnuts and coffee, followed by a lunchtime crowd enjoying complimentary chicken sandwiches from Bojangles and ice cream provided by Mayfield Dairy. Throughout the day, visitors filled the showroom and grounds, browsing tractors, implements, and side-by-side vehicles while taking advantage of significant event-day discounts.

Attendees also registered for a wide variety of giveaways, with several local winners announced. Among them were Charlie Elrod, winner of tickets to Soaky Mountain Waterpark; Wayne Covington, who won a 30-minute massage with Lena Perkins, LMT; Debbie Cardin, who received tickets to see "Steel Magnolias" at The Arts Center; Mike Womack, winner of a free oil change from Matlock Tire; and other winners that took home gift cards for food to McAlister's and Gondolier. Organizers noted

that many additional prizes were awarded throughout the day.

WYXI personalities Cousin Mark Lefler and Brother Barry Sullivan broadcast live from the event, interviewing several community figures, Dooley Tractor employees and guests including longtime Dooley Tractor customer, Winona Pless, pictured above. Organizers described the event as one of the busiest days of the year, with steady foot traffic throughout the broadcast. The combination of promotional pricing, community interaction, and live radio coverage created what many described as a successful and enjoyable day for both the business and attendees.

The event was open to the public and aimed at highlighting Dooley Tractor's equipment and services while bringing the community together in a festive atmosphere. *If you are interested in a live radio broadcast for your business or event, please call our Account Sales Representative, Stephanie Devine at (423)462-5309 for more information.*

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McMinn County Arrest Reports

April 13, 2026

Josiah Glodfelter, 22 of Athens, charged with DUI and violation of the open container law, Bond \$3,000.

Kelsa Spivak, 36 of Madisonville, charged with violation of probation, Bond \$3,340.80

Jeff Stratton, 64 of Knoxville, charged with failure to appear, Bond \$86,000.

Brandon Mullis, 32 of Etowah, charged with DUI, driving on a revoked license, and violation of implied consent, Bond \$4,000.

Javante Dance, 25 of Athens, charged with resisting stop, traffic violations, and driving without a license, Bond \$1,500.

Terry Wilkinson, 33 of Athens, charged with driving on a revoked license, Bond \$2,000.

Tony Highsmith, 49 of Athens, charged with driving on a revoked license, altering titles or assignment of plates, and failure to surrender auto license or registration upon revocation, Bond \$8,000.

**Those accused are considered innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.
Information gathered using public sources.**

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Thank you

ELECTION DATES:

Early Voting for the Primary
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Primary Election Day
May 5



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Wednesday, April 15, 2026

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Athens, Tennessee

Mother's Day Southern Tea Planned in Downtown Athens

The Food Hub at Main Street Athens will host a special Mother's Day Southern Tea on Saturday, May 9, in partnership with tenant bakery Down Home Bakes.

The event will take place at the Food Hub's location on West College Street and will feature two seatings at 12 p.m. and 3:30 p.m., each limited to 50 guests. Organizers say attendees can expect a full tea service complete with sweet and savory selections, along with signature desserts prepared by Down Home Bakes. Live musical entertainment is also planned throughout the afternoon.

Tickets are priced at \$30 per guest, and space is limited for both seatings.

The event is open to the public, and guests are encouraged to dress in their Sunday best for what organizers describe as a memorable afternoon celebrating mothers and loved ones.

Source: Maggie Blaine, Main Street Athens

Athens Little League Celebrates Opening Day at New Turf Fields



Little League Opening Day at Athens Regional Park recently featured a ribbon-cutting ceremony and the debut of brand-new turf fields, drawing children and families from across the community.

City officials and Parks and Recreation staff attended the event, celebrating the upgraded facilities designed to improve youth sports and expand opportunities for local leagues and tournaments. Those present included City Councilmember John Duggan, Parks and Recreation Director Matt Siniard, Program Coordinator Derek Phillips, Assistant Program Coordinator Reya Ingraham-Curtiss, staff members Ace Cagle, Cayden Holland and Aven Hennessee, and Athens Area Chamber of Commerce representative Julie Simbeck.

The new fields are available for league play and rental through the city's Parks and Recreation facility reservation system.

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Wednesday, April 15, 2026

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Athens, Tennessee

Obituaries

Charlene Cagle Gibbs, 89, of Spring City, passed away on Monday, April 13. Charlene served as a teacher's aide at Spring City Elementary School. Prior to her work in education, Charlene was a proud beautician in Spring City for many years, a role she truly cherished. The family will hold a private graveside service. Companion Funeral Home of Athens and the Cody family are honored to assist the family with these arrangements.

James Raymond "J.R." Griggs, 82 of Athens, passed away on Saturday, April 11. James served in the U.S. Army with the Signal Corp, and worked at TVA Watts Bar Nuclear Plant as an Engineer. Notably he had a part in working on the Swing Arms for the Saturn V moon rocket. James also was a member of Allen Memorial United Methodist Church where he served as Sunday School Superintendant. A Celebration of Life Service will be announced at a later date. Laycock-Hobbs Funeral Home will be in charge of the arrangements.

Rebecca Ann Ratledge, 57, of Athens, passed away on Saturday, April 11. The family will host a private memorial service at a later date. Companion Funeral Home of Athens and the Cody family are honored to assist with these arrangements.

Viola Duncan, 87 of Murfreesboro, TN, natively of Athens, TN, passed away on Sunday, April 5. She worked as a warehouse supervisor in both Illinois and Tennessee before retiring in 2004. After retirement, she worked as a security officer with Securitas for 19 years. A visitation will be held at Woodfin Memorial Chapel, Murfreesboro on Sunday, April 12, 2026, from 1:00 until 5:00 pm CST. Additionally, family and friends will gather at Ziegler Funeral Home in Athens on Saturday, April 18 from 11:00 AM-1:00 PM, with a funeral service to be held at 1:00 PM. Interment will follow at Clearwater Cemetery. Ziegler Funeral Home has been entrusted with the care of Viola Duncan.

Bobby Ray Blackwell, 70, of Athens, passed away on Saturday, April 11. Bobby was a skilled carpenter for most of his life. A graveside service will be held on Saturday, April 18 at 1:00 PM at Liberty Hill Cemetery (121 County Road 470, Englewood, TN 37329). Companion Funeral Home of Athens and the Cody family are honored to assist with these arrangements.

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