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**Inmates, Co-Workers Save City Employee in Dramatic Madisonville Rescue**



Quick action and teamwork turned a routine workday into a life-saving rescue Tuesday morning at Kefauver Park, where a City of Madisonville employee was pulled from beneath an overturned lawnmower in a near-drowning incident.

According to the Monroe County Sheriff's Office, the accident occurred around 9:45 a.m. as maintenance crews worked near the park's pond. Two inmates assigned to the county's work release program, identified as Brian Fernandez and Anthony Blackwell, saw a co-worker rush into the water toward an overturned mower with another employee trapped underneath.

The inmates, along with a bystander, ran to assist and worked together to free the man. Authorities said Blackwell pulled the unresponsive worker to the embankment while Fernandez helped lift him onto dry ground.

The victim was not breathing and had no pulse. A fellow city employee immediately began CPR, continuing lifesaving efforts alongside others until emergency responders arrived. During the rescue, those on the scene also worked to clear water from the man's airway.

By the time EMS arrived, the worker had regained consciousness, was breathing, and able to communicate. He was transported to a hospital for further treatment and observation. His name has not been released.

Despite the ordeal, Fernandez and Blackwell remained on site, assisting further—including helping recover the mower—and completed their work shift. When asked about their actions, Fernandez said he was thankful the victim survived, while Blackwell added, "I'm glad we were there to help." Monroe County Sheriff Tommy Jones praised the response, calling the inmates' actions heroic.

"We are extremely proud of Brian and Anthony. Today, their quick thinking and willingness to act made them heroes," Jones said. "This incident could have ended in tragedy, but because of the bravery, teamwork, and selfless actions displayed by all involved, a life was saved."

Source: [Sheriff Tommy Jones - Facebook](#)

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## HVAC Bootcamp Certifies Ten Students

Cleveland State Community College Workforce Development recently provided an HVAC Bootcamp in the Cleveland State HVAC Lab at the Partners in Industry and Education (PIE) Center in Cleveland. Partnering with City Fields, ten students completed the bootcamp and earned their Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Section 608 universal certification.



*Pictured front row left to right:* Brandon Bonine, Vitalii Poliukh, Bradley Davis, Lincoln Williams, Amos Dunn, CSCC Workforce Development Coordinator Chelsea Falana. *Back row left to right:* CSCC HVAC Instructor Jason Taylor; Deion Tenny, Christian Raper, Mike Owens, Michael Newfield, Gary Caughman, and Dr. John Squires, CSCC Vice President of Academic Affairs.

## Community News You Can Use

- The McMinn County High School Class of 1970 will host a reunion gathering on Saturday, May 2, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. in the MCHS cafeteria. The event will feature casual dress and light refreshments, with an admission cost of \$10 per person payable at the door. Classmates, their significant others, and members of other graduating classes are invited to attend. Those planning to participate are encouraged to notify organizers through the "[MCHS Class of '70](#)" Facebook page to assist with event planning and refreshments.
- The City of Athens Public Works Department has announced a temporary road closure on South Jackson Street from Highway 39/New Englewood Road to Delay Street. The closure will be in effect from 7 a.m. Monday, April 20, through 4 p.m. Friday, April 24, for **sinkhole repairs**. Motorists are urged to use caution, follow posted detours, and allow extra travel time. For additional information, call 423-744-2745.

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**Jim's Mattress & More Announces United Way Sponsorship**



Jim's Mattress & More has announced its 2026 annual sponsorship of the United Way of McMinn & Meigs Counties (UWMMC), continuing its commitment to supporting programs that strengthen families and improve quality of life across the region.

As part of the partnership, the company will contribute \$5,000 in 2026 to support initiatives focused on education, financial stability, and health—key areas United Way identifies as essential to building stronger communities in McMinn and Meigs Counties.

Based in Madisonville and Athens, Jim's Mattress & More said the decision reflects both its business philosophy and its investment in the communities it serves. The family-owned company has built its reputation on customer service while also emphasizing local involvement and community support.

"We believe strongly in giving back to the communities that support us," said April Edmonds of Jim's Mattress & More. "This partnership allows us to be part of something bigger, helping ensure our neighbors have access to the resources they need to thrive."

**Pictured above left to right:** Jackie Newman, Chairwoman, UWMM; Meloyne Adams, CFO, UWMM; Alicia Rose, CEO, United Way; April Edmonds & Kelsea Edmonds, Jim's Mattress & More; Jim Edmonds, Owner, Jim's Mattress & More

The company said it chose United Way for its broad reach and long-standing impact across the region, noting confidence that the contribution will help sustain programs that assist working families and individuals in need.

"At the end of the day, we're more than just a business—we're part of this community," Edmonds added.

Officials said the sponsorship reflects an ongoing effort to reinvest locally and support organizations working to create lasting positive change throughout McMinn and Meigs Counties. Source: April Edmonds

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Thursday, April 16, 2026

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Athens, Tennessee

## Athens Civitan Club to Host Special Olympics Event at MCHS



The Athens Civitan Club will host a Special Olympics event on Saturday, April 18, inside the gymnasium at McMinn County High School, bringing together athletes, volunteers, and the community.

Organizers say about 90 athletes have registered to participate in the event, which will begin at 10 a.m. with a parade of athletes. The day is designed to celebrate inclusion, sportsmanship, and fun.

Several high school athletic teams have committed to serve as "buddies" for participants. Additional volunteers are welcome, and community members are encouraged to attend and cheer.

Organizers say the event offers an opportunity for the community to come together and support local athletes.

## Eagle Scout Leads Flag Retirement Drive in McMinn County

A local Eagle Scout is organizing a community effort to properly retire worn American flags through a two-week collection drive in McMinn County.

Jack Hutsell, a member of Boy Scout Troop 118 and the Great Smoky Mountain Council, is leading a Flags of Honor Collection Drive as his Eagle Scout service project. Collection boxes will be available April 20-30 at the McMinn Senior Activity Center, Athens City Hall, and the McMinn County Courthouse for residents to drop off damaged or unserviceable U.S. flags.

**A public Flag Retirement Ceremony will be held Sunday, May 3 at 2 p.m. at the McMinn Senior Activity Center in Athens.** The ceremony will be conducted with traditional honors and is open to the public.

Hutsell said he chose the senior center because of its strong ties to local veterans and seniors. McMinn Senior Activity Center Executive Director Crystal Miller said the event offers a meaningful way to honor the American flag while bringing generations together in respect and gratitude.

Eagle Scout is the highest rank in Scouting, earned through years of leadership and completion of a community service project.

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Thursday, April 16, 2026

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Athens, Tennessee

# McMinn County Arrest Reports

## April 14, 2026

**Edwin Foster**, 47 of Riceville, charged with burglary, and theft of property over \$500, Bond \$12,000.

**Jessica Croft**, 35 of Etowah, charged with child support, Bond \$5000.

**Elizabeth Welsh**, 33 of Jacksonville, North Carolina, charged with possession of meth, drug paraphernalia, and failure to appear for drug paraphernalia, Bond \$25,000.

**Heather Palmer**, 31 of Cleveland, charged with driving on a revoked license, \$1,000 bond.

**Isaiah Wilkins**, 24 of Athens, charged with violation of probation for domestic assault, failure to appear for criminal trespassing, evading arrest, and criminal trespassing, Bond \$1,688.85

**Carroll Foster**, 42 of Athens, charged with domestic assault, Bond \$3,000.

**Sammy Stuckey**, 31 of Conway, South Carolina, charged with non-domestic assault, Bond \$3,000.

**Killiam Crowley**, 18 of Philadelphia, TN. charged with DUI, simple possession casual exchange of schedule 6, and possession of a handgun while under the influence.

**Those accused are considered innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.**

**Information gathered using public sources.**

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WOMEN OF THE WELL  
MINISTRIES

**ACA Announces Summer Arts Camp  
Lineup for 2026**

The Athens Area Council for the Arts (ACA) has opened registration for its 2026 summer arts camps at The Arts Center in Athens, offering programs in visual and performing arts for students from kindergarten through high school.

The summer begins with **Kids Arts Camp**, set for June 1–5 and June 8–12 for grades K–6. The popular weeklong program features instruction in art, music, drama, and dance, ending with a final performance. Tuition is \$125 and includes materials and a T-shirt. **Scholarships are available through the Marian Biddle Trew Scholarship Fund, with registration and scholarship deadlines in May.**

**Junior Musical Theatre Camp** runs June 15–26 for grades 1–6, where students audition on the first day and rehearse Disney and Pixar's *Finding Nemo KIDS*, with performances June 26–27. Tuition is \$250.

**Youth Theatre Camp** is scheduled July 6–17 for ages 11–17 and offers advanced training in acting and stage performance, culminating in an original musical production. Tuition is \$300.

Visual arts programs include **Mini Camp July 20–24 for grades K–5** and the new **Make Your Mark Camp July 27–31 for grades 6–12**, both featuring hands-on instruction and student exhibitions. Tuition ranges from \$75 to \$80.

All camps are held at The Arts Center, 320 North White Street. Officials encourage early registration due to limited space. More information is available by calling 423-745-8781 or emailing:


[artsed@athensartscouncil.org](mailto:artsed@athensartscouncil.org)

**Obituaries**

**Edward Josiah Genrik**, infant son of Leo and Diana Genrik, passed away on Tuesday, April 14. Graveside services will be held at Cedar Grove Cemetery on Friday, April 17 at 10:00 AM. Ziegler Funeral Home has been entrusted with the care of Edward Josiah Genrik.

**Paulette "Polly" Kyle McDaniel**, 71, of Tellico Plains, passed away on Monday, April 13. Polly was of the Baptist faith. A devoted caregiver, Polly spent many years caring for others, often traveling to do so, something she truly cherished. The family will receive friends on Friday, April 17 from 12:00 p.m. until 2:00 p.m. at the Chapel of Companion Funeral Home in Athens, Tennessee. A Celebration of Life service will follow at 2:00 p.m. Interment will immediately follow at Pleasant Hill United Methodist Church Cemetery (630 Paint Rock Valley Rd, Philadelphia, TN 37846). Companion Funeral Home of Athens and the Cody family are honored to assist with these arrangements.

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