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Wednesday, April 29, 2026

Page 1

Athens, Tennessee

Monroe County Deputies Seize Fentanyl, Arrest Suspect in Notchy Creek



The Monroe County Sheriff's Office executed a search warrant April 22 in the Notchy Creek community, resulting in the arrest of a suspected fentanyl

trafficker.

Investigators reported seizing fentanyl, drug paraphernalia, and several firearms during the search. The suspect was taken into custody without incident.

Authorities say the individual faces charges including possession of fentanyl for resale and unlawful possession of a firearm by a convicted felon.

Officials emphasized that fentanyl remains a significant threat to public safety and said efforts to combat its distribution continue to be a top priority. The case remains under investigation.

Source: [Monroe Co. Sheriff Tommy Jones](#)

Community News You Can Use

- The City of Athens Public Works Department announces a temporary closure of **Elizabeth Street**, from *Highway 30 / South White Street* to *Cedar Springs Road*, will be closed to through traffic from Monday, May 4, at 6:30 a.m. through Friday, May 8, at 5:30 p.m. for utility work related to the new McMinn County Health Department and Medical building; local residents will still have access. Motorists should expect delays, follow posted detours, and use caution around crews and equipment.
- The TVFCU Idea Leap Pitch Competition featuring Ocoee Region finalists will air Tuesday, May 5, from 11 a.m. to noon on WRCB TV / Local 3 News, highlighting local small business talent competing for a \$30,000 grand prize. Local business, Bradley Tree Service, is one of the five finalists in the Ocoee Region.

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Wednesday, April 29, 2026

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Athens, Tennessee

Historical Society to Host 'Lost State of Franklin' Program May 3



The McMinn County Historical Society will hold its next meeting Sunday, May 3, at 2 p.m. in the Blue Room of the McMinn County Courthouse, featuring a special presentation on the “Lost State of Franklin.”

Guest speakers Emileigh Brady and Morgan Reavis, hosts of the Ill-Equipped History podcast, will lead the program as part of an America 250-themed presentation. The pair, both East Tennessee natives, are known for presenting historical topics with a mix of research and humor.

Their podcast, available on major platforms, features weekly episodes exploring a wide range of historical events and figures—from ancient civilizations to modern history—often blending storytelling with lighthearted commentary. The show has built a following for its accessible approach, describing itself as “two non-historians with a passion for history” who aim to make learning about the past entertaining.

The upcoming program will focus on the short-lived State of Franklin, an early attempt at statehood in what is now East Tennessee following the American Revolution.

The meeting is open to the public.

Source: Tyler Boyd / Ill Equipped History Podcast



HAND UP RESOURCE EVENT

Thursday
May 14, 2026
9 a.m.-12 p.m.
@ Market Park Pavilion



FREE RESOURCES FOR THE
COMMUNITY

This event is Free for our community who are in need of a hand up. We will have many resources including the Health department, FREE Hair cuts (men, woman and kids), Social Security office, Hygiene packs, food/snacks, FREE Dog/ cat vaccines, FREE Spay/ Neuter vouchers form the McMinn Regional Humane Society.

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

Athens, Tennessee

Tire Recycling Effort Collects 556 Tires Despite Weekend Rain

A steady rain didn't stop McMinn County residents from showing up to recycle. Over the weekend, volunteers helped collect 556 discarded tires, marking a strong turnout for the community cleanup effort.

Organizers say the momentum isn't slowing down. The recycling event returns this Saturday, offering residents another chance to dispose of unwanted passenger vehicle tires for free.

The drop-off runs from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Athens Public Works Department, where staff will be on-site to assist with unloading and ensure the tires are properly prepared for recycling.

The initiative aims to reduce illegal dumping, improve local environmental conditions, and keep neighborhoods clean. Residents are encouraged to participate again this weekend and help push the total even higher.

Source: [City of Athens](#)

Dale Earnhardt Jr. to Headline Athens Chamber Annual Benefit July 16



The Athens Area Chamber of Commerce (AACC) has announced NASCAR Hall of Famer Dale Earnhardt Jr. will be the featured speaker for the 19th Annual Benefit on July 16 at McMinn County High School. Doors open at 6 p.m.

Tickets are available at www.athenschamber.org or by calling 423-745-0334. Table reservations can be made by emailing rob@athenschamber.org. The annual event has featured speakers including Peyton Manning, President George W. Bush, Tim Tebow, Nick Saban, Jack Nicklaus, Bo Jackson, Pete Rose, Steve Spurrier, Chipper Jones, and Lou Ferrigno. Proceeds support programs benefiting small businesses in the region.

Earnhardt Jr. is a two-time Daytona 500 winner, 26-time NASCAR Cup Series winner, and 2021 NASCAR Hall of Fame inductee. He also owns JR Motorsports, works as a broadcaster for NBC Sports NASCAR coverage, and founded The Dale Jr. Foundation, which supports underserved youth through education and opportunity programs. Source: *Rob Preston, AACofC*

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Morning Fax®...Today's News This Morning Page 4

Athens, Tennessee

Athens Community Theatre to Host 'Play On' Table Read May 19



Athens Community Theatre will continue its 2025–26 Table Read season with a reading of the comedy *Play On* on Tuesday, May 19, at 7 p.m. at The Arts Center in Athens.

Led by ACT member Sauni Reinhart, the free event is open to the public and offers participants a chance to either read a role or simply listen. Table reads are designed as a casual, low-pressure way for community members to experience live theatre and explore potential productions.

Play On follows a struggling theatre group attempting to stage a play while dealing with constant script changes from an overbearing author, leading to chaotic rehearsals and a disastrous performance filled with comedic mishaps.

ACT officials say the table read series also serves as a way to preview shows for possible future productions. Those interested in future events can request to be added to the organization's notification list.



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Wednesday, April 29, 2026

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Athens, Tennessee

McMinn County Arrest Reports

April 27, 2026

Guadalupe Sanchez, 28 of Norcross, Georgia, charged with driving without a license, failure to carry a license, and failure to move over, Bond \$3,500.

Laura Brown, 50 of Riceville, charged with state violation of probation for fentanyl for resale, and falsification of a drug test, Bond \$1,000.

Bryce McLester, 24 of Athens, charged with DUI, failure to have insurance, state violation of probation for statutory rape, Bond \$2,000.

Silas Martin, 27 of Madisonville, charged with DUI, violation of the open container law, and reckless driving, Bond \$1,500.

William White Jr., 57, charged with violation of probation.

Zachary Summerall, 27, charged with failure to appear for driving on a suspended license.

Roberto Garcia, 58 of Athens, charged with violation of an order of protection, Bond \$1,500.

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

Obituaries

Mike Byers, 71, of Etowah, passed away on Sunday, April 26. Funeral services will be held at 7:00 p.m., Thursday, April 30 in the chapel of Bordwine Funeral Home. The family will receive friends from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., Thursday prior to the service. Family and friends will assemble at Bordwine Funeral Home, Friday May 1, at 10:00 a.m., and go in procession to Green Hill Cemetery for 11:00 a.m. committal service. Bordwine Funeral Home of Etowah is in charge of arrangements.

James Thomas Helms, 77, passed away on Saturday, April 25. A retired civil engineer, James spent his career helping build and shape the communities around him, taking pride in work that will stand for generations. He was a man of Christian faith. A private remembrance will be held by those closest to him. Companion Funeral Home of Athens and the Cody family are honored to assist with these arrangements.

Leila Katherine Wear Cantrell, age 98, of Athens, Tennessee, formerly of Maryville, passed away peacefully on Monday, April 27, 2026. She was born on March 21, 1928, in Monroe County. Leila was a devoted member of Smoky View Baptist Church and lived a life grounded in faith, family, and service to others. Leila was a graduate of Englewood High School and went on to work as an X-ray technician for 32 years, a career she loved and carried out with dedication and compassion.

Family and friends will assemble for a graveside service at Grandview Mausoleum Chapel in Maryville at 12:00pm, Wednesday, April 29, 2026. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Prospect Church and Cemetery of McMinn County. Condolences may be shared at Smith Funeral and Cremation of Maryville.

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