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Wednesday, October 14, 2026

Page 1

Athens, Tennessee

Meigs County Man Dies in Boating Incident on Watts Bar Reservoir



A Meigs County man was found dead Sunday night after family members reported him missing when he failed to arrive for a planned fishing trip on Watts Bar Reservoir.

According to the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA), game wardens were dispatched around 8:30 p.m. to the Tennessee Valley Authority boat ramp off Highway 68 near Watts Bar Dam to investigate an overdue boater report.

Family members told authorities that 59-year-old Lee Roy Fairbanks had not arrived for the fishing trip as expected. Concerned relatives went to the boat ramp and discovered Fairbanks' boat adrift on the water with its engine still idling, according to the report.

Rescue crews entered the water and recovered Fairbanks' body. TWRA reported that he was not wearing a life jacket when he was found.

The incident marks Tennessee's 19th boating-related fatality of 2026, according to TWRA officials, who continue to stress the importance of wearing life jackets while on the state's waterways.

The investigation remains under the jurisdiction of the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency.

Source: WSMV.com

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Wednesday, October 14, 2026 Morning Fax®...Today's News This Morning Page 2 Athens, Tennessee

Weekend Street Closures Planned for Pumpkintown, Fright Fest



Drivers should expect road closures and traffic delays in downtown Athens Oct. 23-24 as the city hosts the re-scheduled Pumpkintown Festival and Main Street Athens Fright Fest.

For Pumpkintown, Madison Avenue from Hill Street to Green Street, Washington Avenue from Church Street to Green Street, Hornsby Street from Church Street to Green Street, White Street from College Street to Bank Street, North Jackson Street from College Street to Highway 30, Long Street from Washington Avenue to Madison Avenue, and Baxter Street from Washington Avenue to Highway 30 will be closed from 4 p.m. Friday, Oct. 23, until 10 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 24.

In addition, Jackson Street from Green Street to Madison Avenue, the downtown city parking lot, and Market Park Pavilion will be closed from 1 p.m. until 11 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 24, for Main Street Athens Fright Fest.

Source: City of Athens

Driver Found Deceased After Vehicle Discovered Off Highway 30



A driver was found deceased Sunday evening after a co-worker located a vehicle that had been missing since Friday near Athens.

According to responding agencies, a co-worker discovered a 2005 Jeep WXR off Highway 30 East near County Road 556 around 6 p.m. Sunday after searching for the vehicle and its driver.

Preliminary reports indicate the Jeep left the roadway, struck a guardrail, and went airborne into a wooded area that was not visible from the highway.

Emergency responders located the driver deceased at the scene.

Responding agencies included AMR, the McMinn County Sheriff's Department, Etowah Rural Fire Department, Athens Rural Fire Department, and Tennessee Highway Patrol Trooper Jaylon Skipper, who is investigating the crash. *Photo by Etowah Rural FD*

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Wednesday, October 14, 2026 Morning Fax®...Today's News This Morning Page 3 Athens, Tennessee

Two-Vehicle Crash Injures One Near Etowah



One person was injured in a two-vehicle crash Sunday afternoon at the intersection of Highway 411 South and County Road 875 in Etowah.

According to emergency responders, a 2014 Toyota Tacoma and a 2017 Dodge Ram pulling a 2018 Seismic fifth-wheel camper collided around 12:30 p.m. The driver of the Toyota was treated at the scene and transported by AMR to Starr Regional Medical Center in Etowah. No other injuries were reported.

Etowah Rural Fire Department, Englewood Rural Fire Department, and Tennessee Highway Patrol Trooper Andrew Metelits responded to the scene.

Photos by the Etowah Rural FD

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VOTE **CHRIS TREW**

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Wednesday, October 14, 2026 Morning Fax®...Today's News This Morning Page 4 Athens, Tennessee

McMinn County Arrest Reports

October 12, 2026

James Shelton, 43, of Athens, charged with criminal trespassing, and resisting stop. Held without bond.

Angela Goins, 56 of Athens, charged with failure to appear. Held without bond.

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

Early Morning Fire Heavily Damages Etowah Home Friday



An early morning house fire Friday caused extensive damage to a residence on Jackson Street in Etowah.

According to reports from the scene, the homeowners were staying in a make-shift apartment behind the house while the structure was being fumigated. Around 3:30 a.m., the owner noticed smoke and

flames coming from the kitchen area at the rear of the residence and called for help.

When firefighters arrived, the center portion of the home was already heavily involved in flames. Crews worked to bring the blaze under control, but the residence sustained significant damage.

Responding agencies included Etowah City Fire Department, Etowah Rural Fire Department, Englewood Rural Fire Department, AMR, the McMinn County Sheriff's Department, and Etowah Utilities Board.

Etowah City Fire Captain Dustin Ruebush served as incident commander at the scene. *Photo by Lynn Ingram, Englewood Rural FD*

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Wednesday, October 14, 2026 Morning Fax®...Today's News This Morning Page 5 Athens, Tennessee

Obituaries

James Edwin Sliger, 89 of McMinn County, passed away on Saturday, October 10. Edwin worked for Bowater Southern Paper Company in Calhoun. He retired from there in 2002. Edwin was a member of Athens Lutheran Church. Funeral services will be conducted, 1:00 pm, Friday, October 16 in the chapel of Smith Funeral Home. Interment will follow in McMinn Memory Gardens. The family will receive friends from 11:00-1:00 pm, Friday at the funeral home prior to the service. [Smith Funeral & Cremation Services of Athens](#) is honored to serve the family of James Edwin Sliger.

Jackie Dale Horton, 75, of Madisonville, TN passed away Sunday, October 11. No formal services will be held. [Bordwine Funeral Home of Etowah](#) is in charge of arrangements.

Robert Franklin "Bobby" West, 85, of Ten Mile, passed away on Friday, October 9. He was a Vietnam veteran, loved farming and working on cars. Bobby retired from the Kingston Steam Plant and later worked at Ten Mile Stone Company. He was a member of Pleasant Hill Baptist Church. Visitation will be held on Friday, October 16 at Pleasant Hill Baptist Church from 1:00-3:00 PM. A funeral service will be held at 3:00 PM. Interment will follow at Pleasant Hill Baptist Church Cemetery. [Ziegler Funeral Home](#) has been entrusted with serving the family of Robert Franklin "Bobby" West.

Gene "Geno" Newman, 59, of Etowah, passed away on Sunday, October 11. Gene spent at least 40 years installing hardwood flooring in and around McMinn County. A memorial service will

be held at 6:00 p.m., Thursday, October 15 in the chapel of Bordwine Funeral Home. The family will receive friends from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., Thursday prior to the service. [Bordwine Funeral Home of Etowah](#) is in charge of arrangements.

Joyce Faye Powell Yates, age 82, a native and lifelong resident of McMinn County, passed away on Monday, October 12, 2026. She grew up in the Hillsview community near Riceville and was raised by her grandparents. Joyce attended Hillsview Elementary School and graduated from Calhoun High School. She was a lifelong member of Short Creek Baptist Church, where she accepted the Lord as her personal Saviour (while attending Bible School) around 8 years of age. Visitation will be held on Thursday, October 15, 2026, from 12:00-2:00 PM at Ziegler Funeral Home with a funeral service to follow at 2:00 PM. Interment will follow funeral services at Foster Cemetery in Niota with Reverend Jimmy Lewis and Reverend Vic King officiating. [Ziegler Funeral Home](#) has been entrusted with serving the family of Joyce Faye Powell Yates.

Lee Roy Fairbanks, age 59, a native and lifelong resident of Meigs County, passed away on Sunday, October 11, 2026. God took him while he was doing what he enjoyed most. He was an avid fisherman and hunter. Visitation will be held on Wednesday, October 14, 2026, from 1:00-3:00 PM at Ziegler Funeral Home with a funeral service to follow at 3:00 PM. Interment will follow funeral services at Walnut Grove Cemetery with Dustin Martin officiating. [Ziegler Funeral Home](#) has been entrusted with serving the family of Lee Roy Fairbanks.

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10/16/26



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