

# FOUNDATIONS

## McMINN & MEIGS COUNTY:

A history of service with  
an eye on the future.



A *FREE* publication of  
*The Daily Post-Athenian*

# FOUNDATIONS

## BUSINESS & INDUSTRY

# Heil expansion to bring jobs, money to community

SPECIAL TO THE DPA

A longstanding McMinn County business has announced an expansion expected to bring new jobs and new money into the community.

Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee, Deputy Gov. and Department of Economic and Community Development Commissioner Stuart C. McWhorter and Heil Trailer International officials announced the company is expanding its manufacturing operations in Athens.

Heil Trailer officials plan to create 18 new jobs and invest \$9.8 million following the securement of a 10-year U.S. Department of the Army contract for the company's Tactical Fuel Distribution System (TFDS). The project comprises the construction of new warehousing space, state-of-the-art automated paint and welding systems that will create new opportunities for automation technicians, new testing area and an expanded welding and training school.

"EnTrans proudly supports Heil Trailer's TFDS manufacturing program, a milestone initiative that underscores both the strength of our partnership with the U.S. Army and our long-standing commitment to Athens, Tennessee,"



EnTrans International CEO Ryan Rockafellow said. "The support we have received from the city, county and the state for this important program exemplifies the pro-business environment we've grown accustomed to here."

Rockafellow noted the importance he believes this expansion will have on the local community.

"The TFDS program represents a monumental win for Heil Trailer, EnTrans and the Athens community, aligning directly with the Army's Transformation Initiative to deliver critical capabilities to soldiers rapidly, at scale and affordably," he explained. "In support of this mission, Heil Trailer is expanding its Athens facility to ensure TFDS orders are produced on time and on budget." Founded

in 1901 as the Heil Rail Joint Welding Company, the company is now part of the EnTrans International family of brands, with operations spanning two continents, facilities in four countries and more than 1,850 employees serving customers in over 85 countries worldwide.

The Athens facility has been home to Heil Trailer since 1977 and will celebrate its 50th anniversary in Tennessee next year.

"Heil Trailer's continued investment in Athens and McMinn County is a testament to the strength of our community and the partnerships that drive economic growth," Athens Mayor Larry Eaton said. "Investments like this not only create jobs but also reaffirm that Athens is a place where

businesses can thrive. We are committed to supporting companies that choose to grow here because every investment strengthens our local economy and enhances the quality of life for our residents."

This will also be a benefit for the county at large, McMinn County Mayor John Gentry noted.

"Heil Trailer produces approximately 50% of all tankers in the U.S., which means McMinn County's excellence and craftsmanship are on display throughout the nation," he said. "I'm proud Heil Trailer has made yet another investment in our workforce and will continue its presence in our community that has existed for 48 years."

The expansion's impact is also likely to spread to the local area and State Rep. Mark

Cochran and State Sen. Adam Lowe pointed out the importance on the entire region with this growth.

"This announcement is a testament to the strength of Tennessee's business-friendly climate. Heil Trailer International is an industry leader and a vital partner in the Volunteer State's booming automotive and transportation sectors," Cochran said. "I'm thrilled the company has chosen to continue investing in our community, creating new jobs and further strengthening our local economy."

Lowe added that this expansion reflects well on the local area.

"Heil Trailer's decision to grow in McMinn County speaks volumes about the strength of our workforce and the quality of our business

climate," he said. "This investment will support good-paying jobs and reinforce the manufacturing foundation that keeps our region competitive. We're grateful for their continued commitment to Athens and to Tennessee."

The announcement also had statewide reverberations as Lee and McWhorter also spoke on it.

"Today's announcement further underscores why Tennessee is leading the nation as the best place to live, work and raise a family, thanks to companies like Heil Trailer that continue to invest and grow in our state," Lee said. "I look forward to this company's continued success and the lasting impact this project will have on our southeast region."

"When companies choose to stay and expand in Tennessee, it's a strong endorsement of our skilled workforce and pro-business climate," McWhorter added. "This expansion reflects the momentum we're building across the state and the confidence employers have in our ability to support their long-term success. We appreciate Heil Trailer's continued investment and stand ready to support the company's continued growth."

## SRMC announces growth in Etowah

The City of Etowah is seeing growth in its hospital as Starr Regional Medical Center's Etowah campus celebrated a recent milestone.

Hospital officials along with city and county representatives gathered at the newly-dubbed Starr Regional Behavioral Health unit to hold a ribbon cutting.

Along with the name change, the unit recently expanded from 18 beds to 24.

"This is an exciting time for our community in Etowah," Program Director Garrett Byrd said.

The behavioral health unit provides 24/7 supervised mental health treatment and crisis support for people 50 and older who experience "a wide range of concerns related to cognitive disorders, dementia, loss or adjustment concerns, or other physical health issues.

Included in what they treat are depres-

sion, anxiety, bipolar disorder or schizophrenia, thoughts of harm to self or others and psychosis.

While the name has changed — it was previously the Senior Care unit — Byrd said the services are staying the same.

Starr Regional CEO John McLain said he learned early in his career the importance of treating these types of needs. He said he began his career as a patient advocate at a geriatric hospital.

"I learned how important it is to treat the clinical needs of the patient, but also the family around them," he said. "It's not just the patient in front of us — that's our priority. But the people that wrap around that patient are just as important."

He also noted the importance of this type of expansion of the hospital's services.

"It's really great when we get to celebrate an expansion," he

said. "This will help the vulnerable population that needs the care."

McLain said affected people will often not be able to identify the issues they're struggling with, but they're noticed by family members and those around them.

"You refer them to us and they're put into the hands of caregivers that can address that, get them to a healthier spot where they can go back to that community spot they came from," he explained.

McLain thanked those who work in the unit and looked back on the history of it.

The program has been around for about 20 years, he said, since the hospital was Woods Memorial. It had just expanded to 18 beds when he arrived and he said he sought to do more.

"We invested a lot of money to create a much more safe environment," he said, adding on technology meant to aid patients.

**Be part of a growing company!**



**STORM**  
POWER COMPONENTS



**Apply Online: [stormpowercomponents.com](http://stormpowercomponents.com)**

240 Industrial Park Lane, Decatur, TN 37322



**831 Tennessee Avenue  
Etowah, TN 37331  
423-263-3099**

**Large enough to meet all your appliance needs.  
Small enough to appreciate your business.**

# IronCraft makes donation to benefit MCHS students

IronCraft recently donated blueprints and equipment to McMinn County High School's Career and Technical Education Center students.

According to IronCraft Production Supervisor David McKeehan, this donation was brought about as a followup to the school's visitation to IronCraft last month.

"The school came for a visit as a field trip and we showed them what we do over there," McKeehan said. "We showed them the process that we go through and we ended up donating a disc harrow that the students would be able to take apart and reassemble using the information that we provided them for the assembly."

A disc harrow is a large piece of agriculture equipment used for soil preparation, such as breaking up clods, controlling weeds and more.

"This donation is very important, especially to the children in this class, because this provides them with real world experience," McKeehan expressed. "This is exactly what we are doing (at IronCraft), so



if any of the children here apply for a job like this in the future they will already have experience working with this."

He hopes the students will acquire a

lot of practical knowledge that they can carry with them into the workforce.

"Getting this type of experience should be very helpful to the students," McKeehan

said. "We hope to increase our partnership with the school. We currently have one part-time student right now and we have two students in Meigs County Schools, so we

hope to keep making efforts in our partnerships with the schools to provide as many students as possible with these real world experiences."

The disc harrow

was delivered to the school and is providing many students the opportunity to acquire more "hands on" training through the county's CTE program.

## Dominion remembers community members with fountain

SPECIAL TO THE DPA

meaningful way.

"Betty's presence was a blessing to everyone she met. When she passed, our community felt a deep loss," stated Weeks. "Alongside her, we also cherished her daughter, Karen. She rarely missed an event, and she visited her mother daily. The two of them especially enjoyed sitting on the porch together, looking out over the pond and watching the geese."

Hutsell loved the pond and would often ask to watch the sunrise over the pond each

morning from her apartment. It seemed fitting to dedicate a fountain in her favorite place of beauty. With donations and time and labor from Henry's Landscaping, the Ferry family and staff, everything came together to reveal the fountain in time for Dominion's family night.

"On Sept. 12, as we closed out an incredible week of celebrating National Assisted Living Week, families, friends and our entire Dominion community gathered for the dedication," Weeks continued.

"Our resident choir sang beautifully, filling the evening with joy. Then, we stepped onto the back porch, counted down together and

turned on the fountain for the very first time."

A news release stated, "The fountain will run continuously as a gentle reminder of Betty's kind-

ness, Karen's dedication and the lasting legacy of two extraordinary women who touched so many lives at Dominion Senior Living of Athens."



Courtesy of Dominion Senior Living



Your Neighborhood Expert

- FURNITURE
- APPLIANCES
- BEDDING
- SERVICE



1609 Congress Pkwy. South, Athens (423) 745-0502



Specializing in Prescription Drug Compounding

Free Local Prescription Delivery Service!

725 Tennessee Avenue Etowah, TN 37331 (423) 263-7824 www.andersondrugs.com

# Earnhardt to speak at Athens Chamber benefit

SPECIAL TO THE DPA

A top NASCAR driver will be visiting Athens next year as the guest of the Athens Area Chamber of Commerce. Chamber officials have announced that Dale Earnhardt Jr. will be the speaker for the 19th Annual Benefit on July 16. The event will be held at McMinn County High School with the doors opening at 6 p.m. Interested parties can purchase tickets online at <http://www.itickets.com/events/483928.html> or by calling the chamber at 745-0334. They can also purchase tickets at the chamber office in downtown Athens.



Paul J. Bergstrom | AP

Earnhardt Jr. is a third-generation racer in a family forever connected to American motorsports. He has earned 50 victories and two championships in NASCAR's top two national touring series, but he has also found popularity well beyond the race track, resulting

in a record 15 consecutive NASCAR Most Popular Driver awards. His performance on the track and off resulted in his election to the NASCAR Hall of Fame in 2021. Earnhardt Jr. won 26 NASCAR Cup races and is one of only 12 drivers to have mul-

iple victories in the sport's most prestigious race, the Daytona 500, winning in 2004 and 2014. As owner of JR Motorsports, Earnhardt Jr.'s NASCAR Xfinity Series team has won 64 races and series championships in 2014, 2017 and 2018. In 2018, Earnhardt

Jr. joined NBC Sports Group as an analyst and influencer in its NASCAR coverage. Also in 2018, Earnhardt Jr. penned "Racing to the Finish: My Story," with ESPN scribe Ryan McGee, detailing his battle with multiple concussions that affected his life,

his livelihood and his future in the sport. In 2006, he started Hammerhead Entertainment, a one-stop-shop production company that produces shows for multiple national television networks. In April 2008, Earnhardt extended his entrepreneurship

into the Charlotte, North Carolina, entertainment scene, as he opened Whisky River, an uptown bar and nightclub located in the EpiCentre. In May 2015, Whisky River expanded to include a location at the Charlotte Douglas International Airport. Earnhardt launched "Dirty Mo Radio," a podcast network, in February 2013, which features race recaps as well as behind-the-scenes insight from Earnhardt, team members, family members and others. He is also the co-owner of FilterTime, High Rock Vodka and the CARS Tour. Earnhardt is active in charities and non-profit organizations. In 2007, he launched The Dale Jr. Foundation, a charity dedicated to giving underprivileged individuals, with a focus on youth, the resources to improve their confidence, education and the opportunity to achieve extraordinary goals.

# Lowe's receives VIVID Award for aiding wildlife

Wildlife in the local area were having problems that sometimes led to euthanasia and a local company stepped up to assist them. That action netted Lowe's Home Improvement's Athens location the Very Important Volunteer Individual (VIVID) Award during January's Athens City Council meeting. Athens Mayor Larry Eaton presented the award, noting that last summer an issue arose with several ducks and water fowl in the city parks' ponds. "This past summer we had issues at some of the parks with water fowl having some damage to their legs and wings," he said. "Some had to be euthanized because of the damage from fishing line and that sort of thing." Eaton said that people will often toss fishing line out when they're done using it or it gets "curled up" and unusable. "A lot of times it gets around ducks and water fowl's feet and basically cuts their circulation off and they have to

be euthanized," he explained. He added that people will also toss out hooks and things like that which scavengers like opossums and raccoons will grab and injure themselves with. To figure out a solution, Eaton said he contacted the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) and they gave him an idea on that - a fishing line recycling station. The Athens Lowe's, he said, pledged to donate all materials needed to have those stations at every pond in the city parks. "We have the devices in all our parks with ponds," he said. "People can now discard their waste and protect the wildlife. It's a very big thing for us to be able to help our parks." Reading from the proclamation from the city to Lowe's, Eaton noted that the business "consistently has shown a strong commitment to help the City of Athens and local organizations year after year." "Their generosity has helped many groups, including our veter-



ans across all groups," Eaton continued. "Their impact can be seen throughout our community. This made

a real impact with discarded waste." He added that this act will have an impact moving forward for the

city and its residents and guests. "Their support protects wildlife, keeps our parks cleaner and

ensures families can enjoy the Athens parks," Eaton said. "They're a true community partner."

**BORDWINE FUNERAL HOME**

**COMPASSION AND UNDERSTANDING IN YOUR TIME OF NEED**

The friendly and dedicated staff at Bordwine Funeral Home are here to assist and guide you with the highest degree of respect. We commit to always providing compassionate care, trust, and the most fitting service for your individual needs.

Celebrating 56 years of services to the community. We look forward to serving you 56 more!

"Ministering to the needs of bereaved families since 1969"

203 Ohio Avenue Etowah, TN 37331 | 423-263-7033  
Locally Owned and Operated

**AUB Supports Economic Development**  
Providing Power, Water, Natural Gas and Wastewater Service For A Vital Growing Community

**Athens Utilities Board**  
Your Neighbor. Your Utility.  
745-4501 • [www.aub.org](http://www.aub.org)

# Food Hub in operation in Athens

There is a new place to create and grow businesses in the City of Athens.

Last year, The Food Hub opened at 3 W. College Street in Athens as a part of Main Street Athens. The Food Hub is a business incubator that is "designed to support food and beverage entrepreneurs by reducing the high costs and risks of starting a new business," according to the Food Hub website at <https://www.mainstreetathens.org/food-hub>

The hub is connected to White Street Market with a kitchen and two places to eat — one outdoors and another inside in what is dubbed the Farm Kiosk.

"It gives local farmers more places to sell their product," Main Street Director Sandra Kinney said of the Farm Kiosk.

She noted that the entire Food Hub is "a different concept to try to bring entrepreneurship" to Athens.

"This takes away the expenses to entrance and barriers to starting a business," Kinney said.

The hub provides a shared kitchen for up to three full time restaurants and the hub provides a chance for food trucks to prepare and bakers come in early morning hours to bake.

For 18 months to two years, tenants can set up and shop and, Kinney hopes, "be ready

to move out to their own brick and mortar business."

Once spaces are rented out in the Food Hub, Kinney said people will be able to come in and eat, treating it like a normal restaurant.

It also caters to Tennessee Wesleyan University students who want to be involved and "provides an outlet" for students to come by to work and study.

"We hope we'll get some people in here who want to start a business," she said.

For more information on the Food Hub, interested parties can email Kinney at [info@mainstreetathens.org](mailto:info@mainstreetathens.org)



## McMinn Tank



## & Pipe

**We offer same day & next day delivery!**

- 1,000 & 1,500 gal Tank & Lowboys
- 1,000 & 1,500 gal Pump Tanks
- 2' & 3' Chamber Pipe
- 3" Schedule 40 Pipe
- Risers in Lids for Easy Pumping

**423-507-9487**

**423-744-0121**

**If it's not listed, call us!**

## HIDDEN VIEW LAKE

**Turn Your Dreams Into Reality**



We allow a variety of different events. We do not require any specific vendor for any events.

- Weddings
- Anniversaries
- Baby Showers
- Parties
- Reunions
- School Proms

900 County Road 172, Athens

423-507-2619

[hiddenviewlake@yahoo.com](mailto:hiddenviewlake@yahoo.com)

[hiddenviewlake.com](http://hiddenviewlake.com)

**BOOK YOUR DATE TODAY**

# FOUNDATIONS

## COMMUNITY

# Former Meigs County standout sets world records

When Dean Jarvis, at 16 years old, saw his competitive basketball career end after a devastating diagnosis — which ultimately led to the above-the-knee amputation of his left leg — he could not have imagined some 40 years later that he would enter his name in the world record books for anything to do with the sport.

But that is exactly what the former Meigs County Tigers standout has accomplished over the past two years. Jarvis, 57, set three different world records, officially acknowledged by the Record Holders Republic Registry of Official World Records, in consecutive free throws banked off the backboard made over 2024 and 2025, with each record corresponding to a different shooting technique.

Jarvis set the most recent of those records Dec. 16, 2025, in which he drained 600 straight banked shots from a seated position. The Decatur native had set his first record April 20, 2024, making 545 consecutive banked shots standing and shooting overhanded. Jarvis had followed that first record up with 516 makes in a row shooting his free throws underhanded and banked on Feb. 28, 2025. Recorded videos of each of Jarvis' world record streaks are on YouTube at @ZeroFreeThrow.

"It's just kind of unexpected," said Jarvis in an interview with The Daily Post-Athenian. "You just don't think a basketball player whose days of shooting a basketball effectively ended at age 16. And then all of a sudden, four decades later, you're making 600 and 545 and 516 in a row with three different shooting techniques. And it's really unusual that some of the disadvantages in other sports through research, I figured out how to turn them into an advantage."

Currently an insurance agent in Maryville, Jarvis first got the idea that led to his accomplishments in September 2023, after reading several articles on players in a Korean basketball league banking in their free throws — something unusual in the sport through most of the rest of the world.

And that idea quickly led to action. Seven months later, Jarvis had set the first of his records. He would set that record and his subsequent ones on a return system that he built in his backyard.

"I thought, 'It never crossed my mind,'" Jarvis said. "The Wall Street Journal, the New York Times, lots and lots of publications were writing and putting on the internet about banking free throws in the Korean basketball league. And I thought, 'You know, I've got to try that.' I went down to the park and

I had to chase the ball down, so I thought, 'Well, I'll just build me a return system.' And that's when I started shooting banking shots."

Once he set that first record shooting the traditional standing overhand way, Jarvis moved on to the underhand shot — a technique most famously used by basketball great Rick Barry, who had retired with a 90% career free throw percentage. Just a little over 10 months later Jarvis had that record in hand as well.

Later in 2025, which Jarvis reckons was some time in September, Jarvis had an idea for another record to pursue, which was to shoot them while seated. And Jarvis had another reason for pursuing that particular record beyond just his personal achievement.

"I thought, 'Well, let me start shooting from the chair,'" Jarvis said. "Because I was thinking if somehow this could help wheelchair basketball shooters, this could be something that could potentially be productive."

Less than three months later, that record was his, too, and with his highest number of consecutive makes — and being seated was something Jarvis considered an advantage in his latest mark.

"My balance is better sitting in a chair than me standing on my legs," Jarvis said.

The technique for each banked free throw discipline is something that Jarvis has dubbed the "Zero Free Throw" — which means zero contact with the rim after hitting the backboard. In all of his record streaks, none of Jarvis' shots that went in hit any part of the rim. And, Jarvis explains, that is by design, with one disadvantage but also one significant advantage compared to the standard free throw without the backboard most basketball players shoot.

"Where other shooters, they can hit the rim and it can bounce forward and result in a make," Jarvis said. "And with my shot, that never happens. But I've got the advantage coming back as the ball travels down from the backboard, it's basically accessing a wider target."

Banked free throws do, however, require that the shooter consistently hit the shooter's square on the backboard dead center. If the ball is off target to either side, that ball is not likely to bounce into the hoop after hitting the side of the rim.

"I have two kinds of shots," Jarvis said. "If it doesn't bounce, it's a make. And if it bounces, it's a miss. Because the ball is traveling back at me in the opposite direction. So if it comes off

the backboard and it hits the far left rim or the far right rim, then basically it's coming back at me, there's no backboard or anything to save it. When they drift far right or far left, there's a name for it, and it's a miss."

Jarvis compares his banked free throw to putting strategy in golf, as well as to a baseball or softball pitcher aiming for the strike zone — for the latter using one example that Meigs softball fans, of which he is one, know very well.

"It's kind of like when Ashley Rogers throwing that softball through the strike zone pitch after pitch after pitch," Jarvis said. "It's like for a free throw shooter, if you're banking the ball off the backboard, you just think of that shooter's square like a strike zone. If you put it in that strike zone then it's going to be a make."

Jarvis had planted the seed for his world record streaks in his youth, when he would shoot many of his shots on his basketball goal off the backboard because he did not want to chase his ball down the hill from his house every time. And it was a shooting technique that he would employ through the high school part of his basketball career with the Tigers.

"I grew up on a hill in Meigs County, and on my goal, I shot lots and lots and lots of bank shots, but they were all from the wing areas," Jarvis said. "But it was just because I didn't want the ball to go down the hill and have to chase it down the hill and walk back up the hill. So I always shot bank shots, and even when I played at Meigs County, looking back on it, there's a high percentage of my shots that touched the backboard before they went in to the hoop. I never really shot beyond 15 feet. I had my distance and these are the shots I shoot and I didn't wander outside of that."

His life changed Through the first half of the Tigers' 1984-1985 basketball season, Jarvis, in his junior year, was averaging 24.5 points per game, which was the highest scoring average among high school players in Meigs and McMinn counties combined. And Jarvis was doing that despite fracturing his left knee, which he believed happened in a pre-season scrimmage when he attempted a dunk but came off the rim and crashed to the court on that knee.

Still, Jarvis would play the entire first half of that season, even as he came to the school on crutches over that time. But in late December, the pain got to be too much for him to continue playing.

"I'd go throughout the day on crutches to put the least amount of

stress on my leg and knee as possible," Jarvis said. "But then when practice arrived and the games arrived, then basically you just had to suck it up. It's weird when you're in a lot of pain, but I'll never forget just taking Icy Hot — I never wore knee pads or anything like that before — but basically I would take Icy Hot, a handful and put it on it and get it as hot as I could get it, and then pull a little liner over it to keep the heat in. And it hurt, but I made it as far as I could go, and then I knew there's no more playing and there's no more walking."

And with that fractured knee also came that life-altering discovery: Jarvis had been diagnosed with osteosarcoma, or bone cancer, around that left knee. The treatment included a reconstruction of his leg, with his calf being moved from the back of his lower leg to the front of it, and a steel rod installed from his hip to his ankle. The treatment kept Jarvis out of school for a whole calendar year, putting him a grade behind.

But even on his reconstructed leg, Jarvis still attended a basketball camp the summer immediately following his reconstruction with several of his Meigs teammates — including Ronnie Woods and Jason Powell — at the University of Tennessee, even finishing that camp as the runner-up in the one-on-one event. And it was that camp performance that led Jarvis to believe he could get back on the court for the Tigers.

"I was happy to make the championship game in one-and-one for the whole tournament, because I won it the summer before," Jarvis said. "But I'd have liked it a whole lot more if I had won. But I was optimistic that I would play, but I never got to play for one second. I felt like I could play, and at that University of Tennessee camp I felt like I demonstrated that I could play."

But while Jarvis was on the roster for Meigs in the second part of that 1985-1986 season, which resulted in a state tournament appearance and a state semifinals finish, he never took the floor.

"I was basically a fan with a front-row seat at the end of the bench," Jarvis said.

Jarvis did, however, play baseball in the spring of 1986, even earning All-Tri-State honors as a designated hitter for Meigs. Jarvis then finished out his senior year of high school at McMinn County, graduating in 1987. Jarvis went on to play baseball as a designated hitter at Cleveland State and also played intramural basketball while there, keeping athletically active, steel rod



in his left leg and all.

But one day, which Jarvis estimated at between three or four years after his initial leg reconstruction, the steel rod in his left leg snapped. And that resulted in his left leg being amputated outright above the knee, with hamstrings remaining unattached.

"I guess from just playing sports and the constant wear and tear, my leg just snapped, or the steel rod snapped, and I went down like a sack of potatoes," Jarvis said.

Even after his amputation, Jarvis still played one season in a basketball league in 1992 and 1993 at the North River YMCA in Chattanooga, where he had gotten a job. After that one season, Jarvis' athletic involvement was playing recreational golf.

A new process In 2013, Jarvis founded the ParaLong Drive World Championship — a long drive golf competition for athletes with disabilities. Competing himself in ParaLong Drive was a process of self-discovery for Jarvis.

"I didn't know what was normal for an amputee," Jarvis said. "And so I didn't know and for decades I did not have use of my hamstrings. They balled up like a window shade, so when my brain tells my left leg to drive into the ground to create ground force, it basically just measures 0.00. It just doesn't work. But because I did ParaLong Drive, it helped me to train and then to pick out sports that fit my situation better."

A few years later, Jarvis also began long-distance swimming, doing a submerged dog paddle stroke, being featured in a Wall Street Journal article May 29, 2021, after he did a 16-mile swim in 18 hours. And, Jarvis notes, that experience in swim-

ming also helped him develop his upper body to the point he could shoot free throws using just his upper body.

"Training in submerged swimming helps me create a lot of power in the upper body," Jarvis said. "So basically I'm well equipped to shoot an upper-body shot. And basically if I'm standing, I just try to lock my legs. I've got a prosthetic microprocessor knee that I can lock it. And when you've got the left side locked, then the right side, my good knee, doesn't really move, either."

And as it also turned out, Jarvis' inability to use his hamstrings, which he got accustomed to while competing in ParaLong Drive, became an advantage he would later utilize to put his name on the free throw records.

"The lack of hamstrings actually turned into an advantage because my head doesn't bobble up and down when I shoot a free throw," Jarvis said. "My knees don't bend, I don't bend up and down like an accordion. My head and eyes are fixated in place, so whenever I shoot the ball, all I'm doing is extending my arms upward and basically my lower body doesn't move. So it helps me focus and fixate on the target better."

With that experience from ParaLong Drive and long-distance swimming also came research that led to his latest achievement.

"As I've been studying and earning from some of the top shooters, then it's just been a process, as Nick Saban would say," Jarvis said. "It's been a process, and I'm trying to stack every little advantage I could find. And then as I've continued forward, then finally it's coming together faster and faster."

# Love Thy Neighbor provides for those in need



Love Thy Neighbor was a featured guest at the Athens Federal Foundation's annual event late last year, with its leader telling those in attendance about the charitable program.

Love Thy Neighbor is a charitable assistance program located by CVS in Athens on Tennessee Wesleyan University's campus. Vicky Webber serves as the Love Thy Neighbor VISTA leader and she spoke to those in attendance at the event.

"We handle a lot of different projects," Webber said. "I absolutely love it."

She noted that Love Thy Neighbor is an AmeriCorps program, meaning that it operates annually as it's approved by the federal government.

Webber noted it started around 2013 by a TWU student to assist those on campus who

needed help with food. It began as a campus food ministry and now it primarily remains a food pantry, but has expanded to the general public as well.

"It has grown tremendously," Webber said.

The program now serves more than 1,800 families in the local area each month. It is open twice a week — every Tuesday and Thursday from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. — and, while appointments are available, anyone can stop by.

They also hold a mobile pantry once per month in several different cities across the county "for those who may not be able to get to us."

That is a drive-through event that serves around 100 families. However, as a result of the government shutdown late last year, that number climbed to 250

in October.

Love Thy Neighbor also has a program that delivers meals to low-income students in the local county schools.

"It's for low-income students who can't afford to eat over the weekend," she said.

The program provides two breakfast items, two lunch items, two drinks and snacks for children.

Also, the organization has an Angel Tree program that served 287 during the holiday season.

"We're always looking for new places to set up our mobile pantry," Webber said. "If anybody has a site and you'd like to have us come out there, please feel free to reach out. We always love to come out and meet community members we may not have gotten to."

## Historic site Saulpaw Mill Dam still stands

A piece of Calhoun's history will stay intact after a reversal by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA).

For the past couple of years, TVA officials have considered the possibility of removing the Saulpaw Mill Dam in Calhoun.

According to TVA, the potential removal was planned "to address negative environmental impacts and potential safety hazards to the recreating public.

Removal of the dam is part of a larger partnership with the Tennessee Aquatic Connectivity Team to remove barriers to aquatic life in the Tennessee River basin."

In late 2023, TVA held a public input period on the possible removal and a petition was circulated among Calhoun residents to speak out against the action. The city commission also passed a resolution discouraging the removal.

Last year, those efforts to stop the removal paid off.

According to TVA Media Senior Specialist Adam May, there would be "no significant environmental impact if the dam, which is not a TVA operational asset, were to be removed.

However, based on budget prioritizations, TVA is not taking any action at this time to remove the dam."

He added that warning signs will be placed around the dam to alert people to the "potential

hazards."

Calhoun officials celebrated the decision by TVA.

"I was grateful for the opportunity to serve as a voice for multiple generations of Calhoun residents who had expressed their concerns that such a memorable site could disappear from Calhoun history," Laura Spann, who has collected a considerable amount of history on the dam, said. "Many who spent their youth on the banks of the Hiwassee are expressing their gratitude that the evaluation of options was resolved in favor of retaining the historic structure."

Calhoun Town Manager Joe Bryan agreed with her assessment.

"The town of Calhoun and surrounding areas are thrilled that TVA has decided not to remove the Saulpaw Mill Dam. We are thankful that TVA took into consideration the historical importance of the mill dam and has chosen to let an important piece of history remain," he said. "The city looks forward to working with TVA to promote public safety at the site and to improve the overall appearance of the area surrounding the mill dam."

The dam is currently owned by TVA, but it has stood for 154 years and is in an allotment



that was reserved for Major John Walker, grandson of Nancy Ward and the man who established Calhoun in 1819.

The dam eventually came to be in the possession of George Washington Saulpaw, born a New Yorker in 1819 who moved to the area before his death in 1898.

In 1869, Saulpaw and his wife Emeline bought the farm containing the mill from a family and then upgraded the mill to begin manufacturing Silver Queen flour.

According to The Athens Post in a story on Friday, Sept. 26, 1873, the mill was "capable of grinding 600 bushels of grain every 24 hours" and was "acquiring a fine reputation."

**Good Communities Start Here...  
With Us.**

# AUB

**Proudly serving the future of our community one opportunity at a time. AUB is honored to be part of these daily efforts to enrich the lives of our local youth.**



## Good Faith Clinic reaches third decade

A mission to provide health care to those in need has turned into a three-decade success story.

Last year, the Good Faith Clinic celebrated its 30 year anniversary of providing free primary medical care to uninsured people in McMinn and Meigs counties.

"This is a special place," McMinn County Mayor John Gentry said. "How reassuring it is here doing the right thing. McMinn County is blessed."

The Good Faith Clinic was started in 1995 by, among others,

Dr. David Byrd. Its funding sources include the United Way of McMinn & Meigs Counties, state grants and donations. Officials noted it has served "tens of thousands of patients" in its 30 years of operation.

"We wish you many more decades of service," Gentry said.

State Rep. Mark Cochran and State Sen. Adam Lowe were both on hand to present a proclamation from the state on the clinic's milestone as well.

"Scripture is pretty clear about meeting God's call of providing care," Cochran said. "That's been taking

place here for 30 years."

For his part, Byrd cited Matthew 20:24-28 as part of his inspiration for what the Good Faith Clinic does. It reads "When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers. Jesus called them together and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave — just as

SEE CLINIC, C8

**Your Neighbor. Your Utility.  
745-4501  
www.aub.org**

# CLINIC

Continued from C7

the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Byrd said he was happy to have "the opportunity to make that verse count."

Lowe spoke and noted that this type of event is the "best part of what I get to do" as a senator.

"Celebrating heroes that undergird the message of what I bring to Nashville," he said. "I'm constantly reminded that the purest form of social justice is benevolence. We're (government officials) not always the solution — sometimes it's people doing good things in good spaces."

Board Member and volunteer Michelle Crafton noted that the Good Faith Clinic is 100% volunteer and has been since its inception, noting that "those who walk through the door do so out of love and commitment to others."

She also specifically pointed out Byrd, noting that "you've been our rock for 30 years. We say thank you."

Along with Byrd, other people who were involved in the Good Faith Clinic since its beginning include Carolyn Runyan, Joe Jaquish and David Harrod.

Carter Runyan, Carolyn's son and someone who has been involved since the early days of the clinic as well, spoke about Byrd's interest in getting the clinic started.



Carter Runyan noted that Byrd began to see the need for the clinic while in college at East Tennessee State University and then he started it up while he was a physician in McMinn County and his wife was working in Meigs County. The couple took inspiration

from clinics in Knox and Bradley counties, Runyan said. "It's a miracle, really, for our county," Runyan said. Laurie McNulty, a former president of the board and Harrod's daughter, called the Good Faith Clinic an "amazing institution."

"There's not one other organization or institution I've been involved with that I can say is 100% volunteer," she said. The Good Faith Clinic partners with Starr Regional Medical Center at times and the hospital's CEO John McLain noted

that "the people who need to be honored are the volunteers, Dr. Byrd and all the people who envisioned this." He said that increasing access and value in health care are vital and the Good Faith Clinic is doing a good job of both.

"You can't find a better model or more true model than the Good Faith Clinic provides," he said. "I will always look for ways we can be more of a partner." The Good Faith Clinic is located at 18 Congress Parkway South in Athens.



**Voted Best  
Preowned Auto Dealer  
23 Years in a Row!**



**The Largest Selection of Pre-Owned Autos in the Area!**  
**2022 Tennessee Independent Dealer of the Year**  
[easttennesseeeautooutlet.com](http://easttennesseeeautooutlet.com)



**Brand New  
Course!**

**2240 Hwy 30 E  
Athens, TN  
865.310.2018  
Midwayminigolf.com**

# Local ADVERTISING

## That Works as Hard as You Do



## We know how to get more eyes on your advertising!

Along with offering the most robust print advertising solutions in McMinn County, The Daily Post Athenian also offers a wide range of digital advertising including Targeted Display, Geofencing, Social Media, Streaming Video, Targeted Email and lots more!

*Call or email us today about the best locally focused print, digital and specialized advertising solutions to fit your business!*



### Sharon Livingston

General Manager

- ☎ **Direct: 423-252-1213**
- ✉ sharon.livingston@advocateanddemocrat.com
- 🌐 www.dailypostathenian.com
- 🌐 www.advocateanddemocrat.com
- 🌐 www.rheaheraldnews.com

**The Daily-Post Athenian**  
**The Advocate & Democrat**  
**The Herald News**



### Angela Alvarez

Print & Digital Solutions

- ☎ **Cell: 423-252-9940**
- ✉ angela.alvarez@dailypostathenian.com
- 📍 416 S. White St. | Athens, TN 37303
- 🌐 www.dailypostathenian.com

**The Daily-Post Athenian**



### Rebecca Hjulberg

Inside Sales Executive

- ☎ **Direct: 423-252-1208**
- ✉ rebecca.hjulberg@dailypostathenian.com
- 🌐 www.advocateanddemocrat.com
- 🌐 www.dailypostathenian.com

- Classified Advertising
- Coloring Contest
- Service Directory
- Legal Notices
- Small Space Advertising
- Obituary Services
- Themed Pages
- .....and More!

**The Daily-Post Athenian**  
**The Advocate & Democrat**



### Tina Huckabey

Print & Digital Solutions

- ☎ **Cell: 423-506-3652**
- ✉ tina.huckabey@dailypostathenian.com
- 📍 416 S. White St. | Athens, TN 37303
- 🌐 www.dailypostathenian.com

**The Daily-Post Athenian**

# The Daily-Post Athenian

## DailyPostAthenian.com



# FOUNDATIONS

## EDUCATION



# Knight named director of McMinn County Schools

McMinn County has a new director of schools.

In a called meeting earlier this month night, the McMinn County School Board voted unanimously to make Melasawn Knight the new head of the school system.

Knight will be familiar to most people around the system, as she has been with McMinn County Schools since 2011. Most recently she served as federal programs supervisor.

Prior to that, she served in various roles at Etowah City School for 18 years.

Knight replaces Dr. Julie Goodin, who passed away late last year. Knight became the interim director after Goodin's passing and then, Tuesday night, she received the permanent nod from the board.

Board member Donna Casteel made the motion to keep Knight on in the permanent role and board member Taylor Cook seconded it.

This hire was different than most as the board didn't go through a normal search process. In January, Casteel made the motion to forego that process because of the job Knight was doing as the interim. The board also went through a normal search process last year before choosing

Goodin.

While he believed Knight was the right person for the job, board member Tony Campbell did take exception to bypassing the normal process — though he acknowledged the board has the power to do so.

"I'm going to support the interim superintendent tonight," he said. "She's done an excellent job. This is not about the person, it's about the process."

He noted that the process is there for a reason and he felt following it was the right thing to do.

"Just because we can doesn't mean it's the best path," he said. "Had we followed that process, it probably would have only strengthened her as a candidate. Moving forward, we need to hold ourselves to the same standard we expect of everyone else."

With that, the vote was held and in a 9-0 tally Knight was selected as the permanent director of schools. Board member Kevin Goins was not able to be at the meeting.

"I know this process has been different," Knight told the board after her election. "Thank you for your support. I love this county, I love this school system and I

love the people. They deserve the best. I want them to know you all are behind them, I'm behind them and this office is behind them."

She also addressed Campbell's concerns about the process being bypassed.

"I understand what you're saying Mr. Campbell," she told him. "I hope the time I've served as interim shows I can follow the policies and I will follow the policies."

The system staff and teachers present at the meeting applauded Knight's appointment and board chair Jonathan Pierce congratulated her as well.



# ACS' Davis named teacher of the year



Wendy Davis was named the 2024 Teacher of the Year, sponsored by Tennessee Wesleyan University during the Athens Area Chamber of Commerce's annual meeting last year.

Davis has been teaching since 1991 across elementary, high school and college. She is currently a first grade teacher at Athens City Primary School where she also is a grade level leader and serves on the calendar committee and math and science curriculum committee.

"She believes fostering a positive learning environment and encouraging student ownership are keys to building a relationship with students," TWU Vice President of Academic Affairs Dr. Grant Willhite said. "Her expectations in her classroom are consistently high, which promotes increased confidence, motivation and academic achievement for students."

Willhite also noted that Davis stresses parental and community involvement in the classroom.

"She believes in working collaboratively with parents and students throughout the academic year to make sure

their goals are met," he said. "She believes in incorporating community leaders in the classroom in very positive ways."

She will incorporate local leaders along with college and high school students to "become reading buddies with students" that Willhite said often builds "relationships that last a lifetime."

The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go.

Dr. Seuss

**Athens Utilities Board**

*Your Neighbor. Your Utility.*

www.aub.org  
423-745-4501

# McMahan first ever for ACS jersey retirement

The first player to ever have their jersey retired in Athens City Schools history is one that has starred at every level.

During the 4th Annual Bill Martin All Sports Athletic Banquet at Athens City Middle School, a surprise ceremony was held to make Ronnie McMahan the player to receive that inaugural honor.

McMahan came to the podium to announce special recognition for someone and

then was interrupted by former Voice of the Cherokees and ACS Board member Johnny Coffman. It was then that Coffman made his presentation of McMahan's jersey retirement.

Coffman said he's known McMahan since, as a youth, McMahan would hang out around the Tennessee Wesleyan University basketball court.

"Just as soon as the game was over, he'd always have a ball and

he'd shoot until they turned the lights out," Coffman said. "Neither I nor did anyone else know that young man would go to Athens Junior High School after that time and become an outstanding player there."

After his AJHS stint, McMahan played three years at McMinn County High School where his teams went 86-15 and made the state tournament semifinals his senior year.

Then, he went on to

become a 2nd team All-SEC player at Vanderbilt and left there as the fourth leading scorer all time.

His playing career finished up with the Chicago Bulls in the NBA. He now serves on the staff of Montgomery Bell Academy in Nashville.

"He's an outstanding representative of this school system," Coffman said of McMahan. "He's outstanding in the field of athletics and out-

standing in the field of

education." Coffman noted that when he learned the Tennessee School Board Association (TSBA) allows to retire jerseys, McMahan's was "the first name that came to my mind."

McMahan then spoke about the impact the system had on both him and classmate Allen Carter, who won the inaugural Bill Martin HEART Award at the same event.

McMahan recalled Ben Wilson, the prin-

icipal at the time at Ingleside Elementary School, who would "always pour into both of us" and then both Van Hardaway and Martin himself in 7th and then 8th grade.

"There were always men in our lives outside of our homes who poured into us," McMahan said.

McMahan noted his friendship with Carter "to me has meant so much — he tries to treat people with love, kindness and respect."



**Etowah City School**  
Etowah, TN 423-263-5483  
Dr. Mike Frazier, Director of Schools



Students of the Month for "Respect"



Etowah City Schools Math Fest teams



6th grade students visit Cleveland State with the middle school CTE class



Optimist Club award winners Addison Sonnier and Lelynd Garcia



D.A.R. essay winners



Dream Achievers for 2025-2026



Teachers of the Year Ashley Duggan and Nia Smith



Perfect Attendance class award - they chose the Principal's attire



Cheerleaders celebrating 8th grade night



# EXCELLENCE IN ACTION.

McMinn County High School's engineering program is bringing learning to life through a hands-on bike shop integrated directly into the classroom. Students apply basic engineering principles by restoring and modifying donated bicycles, turning real world problems into meaningful design challenges.



**Mountain View Elementary School**  
We are so proud of our ball teams, cheerleaders, and coaches for a great season! Their hard work, dedication, and teamwork showed every time they took the court.



**Rogers Creek Elementary School**  
Rogers Creek is a reward school based off 2024-2025 school TCAP data. Current Faculty and Staff are pictured.



**E.K. Baker Elementary School**  
E.K. Baker's 3rd-5th grade students are getting ready to take flight this March for their very first production of Peter Pan



**E.K. Baker**      **McMinn High School**      **MVP** MCMINN VIRTUAL PROGRAM BY MCMINN COUNTY SCHOOLS      **Central High School**      **MOUNTAIN VIEW SCHOOL** EST. 1962

**Riceville**      **M C S**      **Rogers Creek**

**MCMINN COUNTY SCHOOLS • EXCELLENCE IN ACTION**

**ENGLEWOOD SCHOOL**      **MINKS** CALHOON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL      **mcmminnschools.com**      **mcminnvirtual.com**      **Nota Wildcats**      **MCMINN COUNTY CTE** McMinn Career Tech

# Meigs graduate Peaden honored for saving life

Some quick thinking led to a life-saving moment over the summer for Decatur resident Tynsley Peaden.

Peaden graduated from Meigs County High School in May, where she played golf and tennis. She enrolled at Tennessee Wesleyan University and is currently a freshman on the golf team there, but over the summer she still helped out with the high school golf team as a volunteer coach.

On July 31, she was serving in that role when one of the high school players — a friend of hers for the past few years who she had played tennis with as well — began to complain of her severe allergies kicking up.

Peaden was working with the player on the front nine of White Oak golf course and she noted that the grass was very dry and mowing was taking place at the time.

"She said, 'man, I'm starting to cough,'" Peaden recalled. "We were just kind of laughing it off."

The girl was planning to get an allergy shot the next day and there was no thought that this would turn into anything serious.

They continued playing to the third hole, where the girl began to cough pretty badly.

At this point, Peaden asked if they needed to return to the clubhouse, but the girl wanted to keep going.

So they did, on to

hole number six where the girl was "coughing really bad — she was bending over coughing," Peaden said.

Peaden again recommended heading back to the clubhouse and, this time, the girl agreed. They were still laughing about it and hadn't realized the seriousness of it yet, but Peaden did relinquish her shirt to the girl to use as a mask against the allergens in the air.

As they were returning, Peaden said the girl began to act like she might throw up and then began to struggle to walk. At that point, Peaden hoisted her onto her back to help her to the clubhouse, despite the girl not wanting to be carried.

"She didn't want to seem like she was being dramatic," Peaden said.

As they continued to walk back to the clubhouse, Peaden said she could feel the girl's head bob up and down.

"She started to get really bad and that's when we could tell it was more serious than we were making it out to be," Peaden said.

The girl did eventually encourage Peaden to set her down as she was concerned about throwing up on her, but as they continued walking the girl began to complain about struggling to see.

So Peaden picked her up again and began jogging with the girl on her back toward the clubhouse.

Once they were near-



## Special to The DPA

ly there, a couple of men in a golf cart saw them and offered to drive her to her truck.

"You could really tell how bad it was because when I set her down, I didn't realize she was limp," Peaden said. "I set her down and she actually fell to the ground."

Peaden loaded her into the golf cart and the men drove the girl to her truck, but another issue popped up at that point.

"She said, 'Tynsley, I don't think I can drive,'" Peaden recalled. "I was like, 'obviously you're not driving.'"

So Peaden brought her car around, the men loaded the girl into the passenger seat and

drove. Peaden and one other girl hopped in and took off. She said an ambulance wasn't a good option because cell-phone service is poor there and "there's no easy way to get there, no easy way to get back to Athens."

Peaden was determined to get her friend some help quickly, though, and said she turned about a 20 minute drive into closer to 12 minutes as she hurried out to Highway 30 and then to Starr Regional Medical Center's Athens emergency room.

Even as Peaden tried to hurry, spirits were kept light as a Megan Moroney song came on the radio while they

drove. "We said at least Megan Moroney is going to save us," Peaden joked. "That's the kind of energy we had."

Her friend kept struggling, however, as she noticed her throat swelling up and she palled out at one point on the way.

"I remember it getting really bad when I looked over and she had laid the seat all the way back, she had no color in her whatsoever and her head fell over," Peaden said.

Once at the hospital, Peaden carried her inside and they were able to contact her mother, who works nearby. Once she was admitted, Peaden and their friend who came along weren't able to go back with the girl. But they did get an update.

"The only thing they said to us was 'thank God you got here when you did, because if anything else would've happened, something a lot worse would've happened,'" Peaden recalled.

Peaden said exactly what was going on and what they were facing never really registered for her and still hasn't, to a degree.

"It was kind of fight or flight," she said. "I didn't realize what was going on. I usually get really shaky, but I was completely fine. I didn't feel super anxious until after it when I got home and started thinking of what-ifs. It still honestly

hasn't really hit me. I just did what I had to do in the moment."

Peaden said with the girl still in high school and her in college, she hasn't had a lot of time to talk about the incident with her, but she has gotten messages from her brother and mother thanking her for her actions. She was also honored by the Decatur Board of Aldermen in August with Aug. 12, 2025 being named Tynsley Peaden Day.

"It was just kind of a wow thing," Peaden said of the board recognizing her. "I didn't see this thing I had done being a big thing. I felt like anybody would do the same thing."

She said she was sure if the roles were reversed, the girl would have done the same for her.

"She would've done it for me in a split second," Peaden said.

Peaden did note that she had missed some recent practices, but had made a point of being there that day, not knowing what would come of it.

"I'm just glad I was there," she said. "I don't know if it was God saying you need to go to this practice."

Whatever led her there that day, she said she was happy to be able to help a friend in need.

"It definitely was very meaningful," Peaden said of rescuing someone she knows well. "She's a very great person."

## TODAY'S CHILD... TOMORROW'S HOPE!

**Meigs North Elementary**  
334-5454  
Justin Jennings, Principal



Meigs North Elementary held its 2026 spelling bee on Friday, January 30th.

**Meigs South Elementary**  
334-5444  
Mrs. Rachel Boshears Principal



MSE 3rd Annual Thanksgiving Day parade was off the charts thanks to 2nd grade!

**Meigs Middle School**  
334-9187  
Ronnie Woods, Principal



Meigs Middle School Title 1 project showcase, school wide art contest.

**Meigs High School**  
334-5797  
John Grissom, Principal

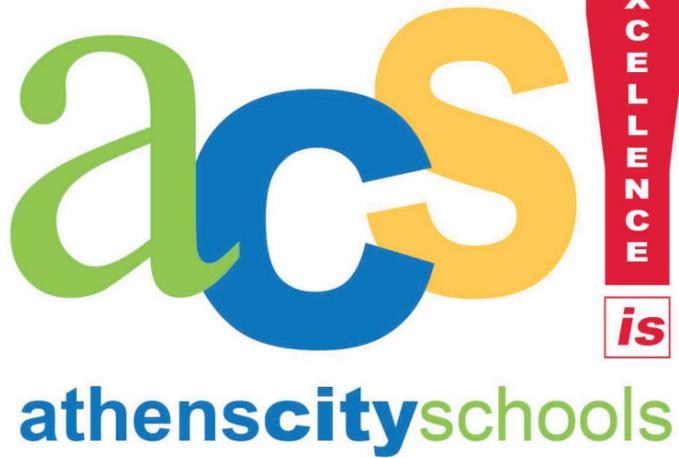


Breanna Eichenberger, Registered Dental Hygienist, spoke with Mrs. Kennedy's health science classes. They learned about job responsibilities, daily tasks, education requirements, job outlook, salary, her biggest challenges, and favorite parts of the job! The students were able to ask questions and learn more about this high demand career.

**2025-2026 Meigs County School Board**  
Clint Baker, Director of Schools • Amber Ammons, Chairperson • Amy Swanks, Vice Chairperson  
Andy Andrews • Julie Boyd • Mike McKenzie

**MEIGS COUNTY SCHOOLS**

345 North Main Street • Decatur, Tennessee • 423-334-5793



# Committed To Excellence In Education.

## Athens City Primary School



2025-2026

### ATHENS CITY SCHOOLS

Chris Adams, *Chairman*

Johnny Coffman, *Vice-Chairman*

Stan Harrison • Emily Forrest

Beth Jackson • Joyce Snyder

Mr. Joe Barnett, *Director of Schools*

## Athens City Middle School



## Athens City Intermediate School

