



OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CITY OF ATHENS PROCLAIMS SEPTEMBER 24, 2019 AS
NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION DAY

ATHENS, TENNESSEE – September 19, 2019 – The City of Athens has proclaimed September 24, 2019 as National Voter Registration Day. With this proclamation, Athens joins thousands of partners across the country in honoring this national holiday by raising awareness of voter-registration opportunities.

As a member of the Tennessee Mayors Growing Civic Engagement, the City of Athens is committed to ensuring all eligible citizens have the opportunity to participate in all local, state, and federal elections. Today, voter turnout in Tennessee consistently ranks near the bottom of the nation - #50 in 2014 and #49 in 2016. On August 20th, the City of Athens held a referendum asking citizens for their direct input on whether the local option sales tax should be increased. The voters passed the levy, but only 1,574 total votes were cast between early voting and election day. For a city with an approximate 14,000 population, of which, 7,115 are registered to vote, only about 22.5% of registered voters participated in this important decision.

“The first step in increasing participation in our elections is making sure we’re all registered to vote,” says Athens City Manager C. Seth Sumner, the first city manager invited to join the project. “The City of Athens has a unique history being the site of the Battle of Athens in 1946. People took arms against a political machine to recover seized ballot boxes, securing them against tampering, and thereby protecting the people’s right to vote. I encourage all citizens of Athens to take this opportunity to get their registrations up-to-date and I hope everyone joins me in spreading the word about National Voter Registration Day.”

Hundreds of voter registration events nationwide will leverage National Voter Registration Day to drive attention to voter registration. More than two million Americans have registered to vote on this day since the inaugural National Voter Registration Day in 2012.

In order to register to vote in the State of Tennessee, you must be a U.S. Citizen, a resident of Tennessee, and at least 18 years old on/or before the next election. In order to participate in an election, a qualified voter must be properly registered no later than thirty (30) days before the election. If you have been convicted of a felony, your eligibility to register depends upon the crime and date of conviction. Unless convicted of a crime rendering you permanently ineligible to vote, it is possible to have your voting rights restored.

Locally, you can register to vote both online at www.ovr.govote.tn.gov or in-person at the local election commission office located within the McMinn County Courthouse at 6 E. Madison Avenue, Athens, TN 37303. Hours are 8:30AM to 4PM, Monday through Friday.

About National Voter Registration Day

National Voter Registration Day is a national holiday celebrating our republic. It was first observed in 2012 and has been growing in population every year since. Held on the fourth Tuesday of September, National Voter Registration Day will take place on September 24, 2019. The holiday has been endorsed by the National Association of Secretaries of State. It is further supported by the National Association of State Election Directors, the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, and the National Association of Election Officials.

About Tennessee Mayors Growing Civic Engagement

Tennessee Mayors Growing Civic Engagement (TMGCE) is a first-in-the-nation project supporting local leaders in the development of goals and action plans to increase civic engagement in their communities. TMGCE is a project of Think*Tennessee*, a nonpartisan, results-oriented think tank working in partnership with state and local leaders to drive evidence-based policies that strengthen the voice of voters and support working families. Find out more about the project at www.thinktennessee.org.

The City of Athens is a full-service municipality nestled in the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains and has garnered the reputation as “the Friendly City.”

For more information, please contact the Office of the City Manager at (423) 744-2700 Ext. 9.