



SPORTS
Lady Pioneers tested
at tournament **1B**



LIFESTYLES
Viola native, renowned artist
to hold book signing **4B**

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James Clark photos
As Maria Lopez was traveling toward McMinnville, her car went off the left side of Viola Road, plowed through a creek bed and came to rest about 25 feet on the other side of the creek.

Woman killed in burning car

BY **JAMES CLARK**
Editor for the Southern Standard
(McMinnville, Tennessee)

A 46-year-old woman was killed in a fiery crash Saturday afternoon when her car went off Viola Road and burst into flames.

Warren County resident Maria Lopez died at the scene Saturday around 4:30 p.m.

According to the Tennessee Highway Patrol, witnesses rushed to help Lopez, who was alert and talking after the single-car crash. They tried to get her out of the car, but the dash was pushed against her body, pinning her inside. Lopez was

unable to be freed before flames consumed the car.

"The fire killed her," said state trooper Josh Sparkman. "There's going to be no way to know why she left the road or if speed played a factor."

The crash took place on Viola Road near its intersection with Natchez Lane as Lopez was traveling toward McMinnville. Lopez was the lone occupant of a Toyota Matrix and family members say they believe she was going to work.

Lopez crossed the centerline on a straight stretch of road and her car went off the left side. She traveled along a ditch line for some

300 feet before her car plowed through a creek bed, hit a concrete culvert in the creek bed, and came to rest about 25 feet on the other side of the creek.

The vehicle became engulfed in flames with Lopez unable to escape. The fire destroyed the passenger compartment.

Lopez reportedly had children who lived with her in Warren County and other family members in Antioch. She had lived here about six months.

The crash left Viola Road closed for three hours. It marks the sixth fatality on a Warren County road this year, which is down eight from this time last year.



This Toyota Matrix driven by Maria Lopez, 46, was engulfed in flames after it crashed Saturday on Viola Road. She died in the fire.



Tyler Bell gets the Midway CIC food booth clean with a pressure washer Tuesday at the Warren County A&L Fair.

Fair excitement builds

BY **JAMES CLARK**
Editor for the Southern Standard
(McMinnville, Tennessee)

The Warren County A&L Fair is so close, you can almost smell the cotton candy.

An estimated 125,000 visitors are expected to pack the fairgrounds during the nine-day event which begins this Friday. The pageantry gets under way, fittingly enough, with two pageants Friday night, along with a sheep show.

Gospel singing will fill its traditional timeslot AT 1 p.m. Sunday before Monday night brings the petting zoo, carnival rides, and the Fairest of the Fair.



The Southern Standard is holding two contests to give away fair tickets. In the photo contest, Darla Pendergraph submitted this Ferris wheel picture. Winners of the photo contest and trivia contest will be determined after the deadline Wednesday at 5 p.m.

Motlow to receive \$250K from state

Grant to support Mechatronics

Motlow State Community College will receive a \$250,000 state grant to help high school students earn two-year degrees in the high-demand field of Mechatronics.

The two-year grant will support Motlow's Middle College Mechatronics programs at Warren County High School in McMinnville and Oakland High School in Murfreesboro.

Tennessee Board of Regents Chancellor Flora W. Tydings recently announced Motlow, Chattanooga State, Cleveland State, and Roane State community colleges would receive equal funding from a \$1 million appropriation in the fiscal year 2018-19 state budget approved by the Tennessee General Assembly.

The Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development estimates a deficit of nearly 2,000 Mechatronics-qualified workers each year.

"We are excited about the opportunities presented by the Middle College Mechatronics program here at Warren County High School and other schools in the Middle Tennessee area," said Jimmy Walker, WCHS executive principal. "We are providing a 'high-demand' product so to speak, that being highly trained Mechatronics technicians who are filling a critical need for local industry. The funding provided by the MCM grant will go a long way in enabling more students to enroll in this cutting-edge program."

Because high school students don't qualify for college scholarship assistance like Tennessee Promise and Hope Scholarships until they earn their high school diplomas, most of the grant will go toward the cost of tuition, fees, textbooks and materials for students who enroll in Motlow's Middle College Mechatronics program.

Middle College programs are partnerships between community colleges and the high schools in their service areas, giving high school students opportunities to earn their associate's degrees at the same time they graduate from high school or soon after. The unique program combines the last two years of high school with the first two years of college and provides students with intensive counseling, small classes, an interdisciplinary curriculum and career guidance.

The Middle College path will also give students opportunities to earn industry training certifications as part of the degree programs. College credits earned by students in Middle College are attributed to their college career after they graduate high school.

The program will help advance Tennessee's Drive to 55 initiative to equip at least 55 percent of working-age Tennesseans with a college degree or credential by 2025. For Tennessee to remain competitive in recruiting jobs, the state must continue to produce a trained workforce.



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