

EXPERIENCE THE BEAUTY  
EMBRACE THE HISTORY  
ENJOY THE CHARM

# DISCOVER RHEA COUNTY



# WELCOME TO RHEA COUNTY, TENNESSEE...

...where southern hospitality, scenic beauty, and rich heritage come together.

Tucked between the Tennessee River and the Cumberland Plateau, **Rhea County** invites you to slow down, breathe in the mountain air, and discover a destination full of charm, history, and natural wonder. Whether you're here for a relaxing weekend getaway or an adventurous family trip, Rhea County offers something for everyone—year-round.

## Explore the Great Outdoors

Nature lovers will find paradise here. Hike the trails of **Laurel-Snow State Natural Area** or take in the stunning waterfalls at **Piney Falls**. Enjoy boating, kayaking, or some of the **best bass fishing in the Southeast** on **Watts Bar Lake**. With breathtaking overlooks and miles of scenic trails, outdoor adventures await around every bend.

## Step into History

Rhea County holds a special place in American history. The town of **Dayton** was the setting of the famous **1925 Scopes "Monkey" Trial**, a landmark case that drew national attention. Visit the beautifully preserved **Rhea County Courthouse**, explore the courtroom where it all happened, and learn more at the on-site museum.

## Experience Local Flavor

From the **Tennessee Strawberry Festival** each spring to charming boutiques and cozy cafés downtown, Rhea County is rich in small-town character. Browse locally owned shops, sample Southern cooking, and enjoy live music or a Friday night ballgame—just like the locals do.

## A Community That Welcomes You Like Family

One of the greatest treasures of Rhea County is its people. Visitors often say it feels like coming home. The warm, welcoming spirit of the community makes it easy to relax and enjoy all the county has to offer.

Whether you're chasing waterfalls, uncovering history, or simply searching for a slower pace of life, **Rhea County is a place you'll want to visit again and again.**

**We can't wait to welcome you.**

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# DINING



## DAYTON - DOWNTOWN

### 1ST AVENUE PIZZA BOOKS & TREATS



283 First Ave, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-570-1000

### COOKIES & CREAM



377 4th Ave, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-280-0232

### THE CORNER SPOT BAKERY & CAFE



1368 Market St, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-674-8001

### DAYTON COFFEE SHOP



280 2nd Ave Ste 1, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-775-6156

### DOWNTOWN DAYTON NUTRITION

175 Alabama Ave, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-428-9292

### HARMONY HOUSE COFFEE CO



378 1st Ave B, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-570-7656

### KENNY'S BAR & GRILL



1305 Railroad St, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-775-5001

### MONKEY TOWN BREWING CO



287 1st Ave, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-775-1800

### SCOOPY'S ICE CREAM



1422 Market St, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-570-9550

## DAYTON

### ALEXANDER'S BBQ



114 Laurel Dr, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-567-2707

# DINING - DAYTON

## ARBY'S

4331 Rhea County Hwy, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-570-8073

## AYALA'S MEXICAN RESTAURANT

1423 Maley Hollow Rd, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-775-2102

## AYALA'S GRILL & BAR

3035 Rhea Co Hwy, Next to Wal-Mart, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-428-9494

## BANJO'S BBQ

1410 Maley Hollow Rd, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-785-7606

## THE BAR

162 Locust St, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-285-5200

## BOJANGLES

3534 Rhea County Hwy, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-775-1791

## BRYAN COLLEGE DINING HALL

721 Bryan Drive, Latimer Student Center, 1st floor  
Dayton, TN 37321  
423-775-2041

## BURGER KING

3600 Rhea County Hwy, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-428-9126



# DINING - DAYTON

## CALLIE WALKER'S RESTAURANT



175 Lakeshore Drive, Dayton TN 37321

## CAPTAIN D'S



4049 Rhea County Hwy, Dayton, TN 37321

423-775-4408

## CARRABELLE'S



4370 Rhea County Hwy, Dayton, TN 37321

423-428-9441

## COMEDOR SANTIAGO



130 Calbough Rd, Dayton, TN 37321

423-428-9248

## DELIA'S MEXICAN RESTAURANT



8796 Rhea County Hwy, Dayton, TN 37321

423-570-1813

## DOMINOS



200 Able Dr Suite 11, Dayton, TN 37321

423-468-9200

## DRIP EXPRESS



190 Drip Coffee Drive, Dayton, TN 37321

423-664-5206

## DRIP KITCHEN AND COFFEE



4350 Rhea County Hwy, Dayton, TN 37321

423-664-5222

## DUNKIN'



3395 Rhea County Hwy, Dayton, TN 37321

423-518-0663

## EL SABOR

## DE MI TERRA - FLAVOR OF MY LAND



130 Calbough Rd, Dayton, TN 37321

423-428-9248

## EL TORO AUTHENTIC MEXICAN GRILL



4285 Rhea County Hwy, Unit 2, Dayton, TN 37321

423-775-2644

## FIREHOUSE SUBS



3035 Rhea County Hwy, Dayton, TN 37321

423-285-5522



## DINING - DAYTON

**HARDEE'S** 

7474 Rhea County Hwy, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-775-9126

**HUDDLE HOUSE** 

4601 Rhea County Hwy, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-775-5790

**ICE NINJA NUTRITION** 

200 Able Dr Suite 13, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-428-9008

**JENNINGS COFFEE** 

7937 Rhea Co Hwy, Suite 103, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-285-5242

**KFC** 

3586 Rhea County Hwy, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-567-5144

**KRYSTAL** 

120 Iowa Ave, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-775-9771

**LA HACIENDA 2 MEXICAN RESTAURANT**  

260 16th Ave, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-775-1390

**LITTLE CAESARS** 

3035 Rhea County Hwy, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-570-1009

**MASTER DONUTS**   

3035 Rhea County Hwy, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-428-9388



# DINING - DAYTON

## MCDONALD'S



130 Abel Dr, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-775-2023

## MEJIA'S CRAZY BURRITO



7436 Rhea County Hwy, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-428-9020

## MEJIA'S CRAZY FRUIT



4370 Rhea County Hwy, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-428-9669

## MO MO'S BAR BQ



7481 Rhea County Hwy, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-775-6868

## PANDA GARDEN



120 Locust St, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-775-5557

## PAPA JOHN'S PIZZA



4009 Rhea County Hwy, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-570-0006

## PEKING HOUSE RESTAURANT



7356 Rhea County Hwy, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-775-1011

## PIZZA HUT



7410 Rhea County Hwy, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-775-3590

## PIZZA KING



4703 Dayton Mountain Hwy, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-567-4183

## REFEREE'S



200 Able Dr, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-285-5663


# DINING - DAYTON


**RISTORANTE LUCA**    
185 Chickamauga Dr, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-428-9052

**SCOOTER'S COFFEE**   
126 Florida Ave, Dayton, TN 37321  
877-719-1288

**SCREEN DOOR KITCHEN**   
449 Delaware Ave, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-428-9493

**SONIC DRIVE-IN**   
7330 Rhea County Hwy, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-775-6571

**SUBWAY**   
4155 Rhea County Hwy, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-775-0022

**SUBWAY**   
7693 Rhea County Hwy, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-775-7792

**TACO BELL**   
7761 Rhea County Hwy, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-570-8782

**TAQUERIA LOS PRIMOS**   
488 Delaware Ave, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-605-2531

**WAFFLE HOUSE**   
150 Able Dr, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-285-5418



# DINING - DAYTON

## WENDY'S



4257 Rhea County Hwy, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-674-4005

## XANDER'S RESTAURANT



8638 Dayton Mtn. Hwy, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-567-4287

## YAMATO JAPANESE STEAK HOUSE



2668 Rhea County Hwy, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-428-9162

## ZAXBY'S



300 Able Dr, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-428-8282

## ZOMBIE ICE CREAM



1423 Maley Hollow Rd, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-799-0027

# DINING - EVENSVILLE

## LONG HOLLOW GRILL



315 Payne Ln, Evensville, TN 37332  
423-775-0045

# DINING - SPRING CITY

## AYALA'S GRILL



327 Front St., Spring City, TN 37381  
423-365-7333

## ARROWHEAD RESORT & FRONT PORCH RESTAURANT



261 Bennett Drive, Spring City, TN 37381  
423-365-6484

## BB'S CAFE



467 Front St, Spring City, TN 37381  
423-365-4875

## BLISTERED CHICKEN SALOON



433 Shut In Gap Rd, Spring City, TN 37381  
865-250-6924

## BLONDIE'S



26750 Rhea Co Hwy, Spring City, TN 37381  
423-667-0006

## CHINA PANDA BUFFET



141 Clinton Ave, Unit 5, Spring City, TN 37381  
423-365-5949

# DINING - SPRING CITY

## HARDEES

177 Front St, Spring City, TN 37381  
423-365-6834

## LA HACIENDA

178 Piccadilly Ave, Spring City, TN 37381  
423-452-0008

## MCDONALD'S

22620 Rhea Co Hwy, Spring City, TN 37381  
423-452-0832

## MONDAY'S COFFEE CORNER

207 W Rhea Ave, Spring City, TN 37381  
423-799-7082

## NICK'S LAKESIDE GRILL

2109 New Lake Rd, Spring City, TN 37381  
423-710-0605

## PAT'S BAR & GRILL

427 Mars Hill Rd, Spring City, TN 37381  
423-365-7004

## PIZZA HUT

22090 Rhea Co Hwy, Spring City, TN 37381  
423-365-0100

## SPRING CITY NUTRITION

22576 Rhea County Highway Unit 9, Spring City, TN 37381  
423-619-4023

## SUBWAY

22090 Rhea Co Hwy, Spring City, TN 37381  
423-365-5586

## SWEET JOHNNIE'S

178 Piccadilly Ave, Spring City, TN 37381

## TERRACE VIEW RESTAURANT

3367 Euclaw Chapel Rd, Spring City, TN 37381  
423-365-6060

## WATTS BAR BEER WORKS

353 Front Street, Spring City, TN 37381  
423-506-9595

## WINSTEAD'S AMERICAN GRILL & KING OF PIZZA

22456 Rhea County Hwy, Spring City, TN 37381  
423-365-2261

# ATTRACTIONS: HISTORY AND CULTURE

## RHEA COUNTY COURTHOUSE AND SCOPES TRIAL MUSEUM

1475 Market St, Dayton, TN 37321 | 423-775-7801

Explore the history of the infamous Scopes Trial, a pivotal moment in American history.

## SPRING CITY MUSEUM & DEPOT

390 Front St, Spring City, TN 37381

423-365-5210

## TENNESSEE VALLEY THEATRE

184 W Jackson Ave, Spring City, TN 37381

423-365-7529 | Experience live performances, plays, concerts, and community events.

# ATTRACTIONS: OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

## ARROWHEAD RESORT

261 Bennett Dr, Spring City, TN 37381

423-365-6181

## BLUE WATER RESORT AND MARINA

220 Blue Water Campground Rd, Dayton, TN 37321

423-775-3265

## CITY OF DAYTON

Known as "Bass Town USA"

FishDayton.com for info.

Dayton offers excellent fishing opportunities.

## CRYSTAL LANES BOWLING CENTER

2565 Old Graysville Rd, Dayton, TN 37321

423-775-1547

## CUMBERLAND STATE SCENIC TRAIL

700 Shut In Gap Rd, Spring City, TN 37381

888-867-2757 | Cumberlandtrail.org for info.

Explore the rugged Cumberland Plateau with hiking, rock climbing, and backpacking.

## DAVID CAMPBELL MEMORIAL PARK

Old Washington Hwy, Dayton, TN 37321

## DAYTON GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB

315 Payne Ln, Evensville, TN 37332

423-775-2313

## DOWNTOWN DAYTON SHOPPING, DINING & MORE

379 2nd Ave, Dayton, TN 37321

## FORT BLUFF CAMP - OVERLOOK

370 Fort Bluff Camp Rd, Dayton, TN 37321

423-775-1968

## **FRAZIER PARK**

2891 Double S Rd, Dayton, TN 37321

## **KRISTOPHER'S KINGDOM**

475 Black Track Rd, Graysville TN 37338

423-775-9242

## **LAUREL-SNOW FALLS**

Trailhead Parking, Back Valley Rd, Dayton, TN 37321

Cumberlandtrail.org for info.

## **PENDERGRASS PARK**

110 Main St, Dayton, TN 37321

## **POCKET WILDERNESS**

554 Pocket Wilderness Rd, Dayton, TN 37321

A relaxing and scenic hiking trail.

## **RHEA COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS**

Harold Robbins Ln, Evensville, TN 37332

## **RHEA COUNTY SPARTANS - TENNESSEE CIVIL WAR TRAILS**

390 Front St, Spring City, TN 37381

## **RHEA HARBOR RESORT & MARINA**

385 Lakeshire Dr, Spring City, TN 37381

423-365-6851

## **RHEA SPRINGS CAMPGROUND**

1609-1502 Rhea Springs Rd, Spring City, TN 37381

423-775-7801

## **ROARING CREEK OVERLOOK**

1663 Brayton Rd, Graysville, TN

Cumberlandtrail.org for info | Fairly challenging

hiking trail with breathtaking views.

## **STINGING FORK FALLS**

Spring City, TN 37381

## **SWINGING BRIDGE PARK**

275 Washington St, Dayton, TN 37321

A low-impact park for a nature walk.

## **TERRACE VIEW MARINA**

3367 Euchee Chapel Rd, Spring City, TN 37381

423-365-6060

## **WATTS BAR LAKE AND DAM**

Watts Bar Lake, Spring City, TN 37381

Enjoy water sports, fishing, and boating.

# **FARMS:**

## **LORENZEN FLOWER FARM**

1374 New Bethel Rd, Dayton, TN 37321

423-883-4400

U-pick flower bouquets.

# LODGING

## **BEST WESTERN**

7835 Rhea County Highway, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-775-6560

## **COMFORT INN**

2650 Rhea County Highway, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-570-0080

## **SLEEP INN & SUITES**

4450 Rhea County Highway, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-693-0963

## **ECONO LODGE**

8763 Rhea County Highway, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-664-0667

## **SCOTTISH INNS & SUITES DAYTON**

3914 Rhea County Highway, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-775-9718

## **KELLY MOTEL**

4187 Rhea County Highway, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-775-1181

## **AMERICAS BEST VALUE INN**

7875 Rhea County Highway, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-775-9190

## **GRAND HOTEL**

22500 Rhea County Highway, Spring City, TN 37381  
423-365-9191

## **RHEA HARBOR RESORT & MARINA**

385 Lakeshire Dr, Spring City, TN 37381  
423-365-6851

## **ARROWHEAD RESORT**

261 Bennett Drive, Spring City, TN 37381  
423-365-6484

## **PINEY POINT FISHING RESORT**

1093 Piney Point Rd, Spring City, TN 37381  
423-365-6262

## **GRANDVIEW MOUNTAIN COTTAGES**

2392 Possum Trot Rd, Grandview, TN 37337  
423-365-4412

## **TERRACE VIEW RESORT & MARINA**

3367 Euchee Chapel Rd, Spring City, TN 37381  
423-365-6060

## **WYATT'S COUNTRY HOME BED & BREAKFAST**

4438 Hendon Rd, Graysville, TN 37338  
423-554-4360

## **AWAKENING ADVENTURES**

265 Neck Rd, Grandview, TN 37337  
765-543-1153

# LODGING

## **BLUE WATER RV RESORT**

220 Bluewater Campground Rd, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-775-3265

## **FORT BLUFF CAMP**

370 Fort Bluff Camp Road, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-775-0488

# RV PARKS

## **BLUE WATER RV RESORT**

220 Bluewater Campground Rd, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-775-3265

## **BOO AND BITTY'S CAMPGROUND**

460 Pine Hollow Rd, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-799-1250

## **CEDAR POINT RV PARK & CAMPGROUND**

5265 Wolf Creek Rd, Spring City, TN 37381  
423-799-0084

## **RV LOTS FOR RENT ON WATTS BAR LAKE**

495 Doc Smith Rd, Spring City, TN 37381  
423-285-7970

## **SPRING CITY RV PARK AND STORAGE**

3851 Watts Bar Hwy, Spring City, TN 37381  
423-702-1931

## **RHEA SPRINGS CAMPGROUND**

1609-1503 Rhea Springs Rd, Spring City, TN 37381  
423-775-7801

## **UNIT 3 RV PARK**

691 Breedenton Ferry Rd, Evensville, TN 37332  
423-365-9755

## **LAKE LODGE OF CHICKAMAUGA**

250 Rose Robinson Ln, Dayton, TN 37321  
865-773-5329

## **WATTS BAR CAMP AND RV**

230 Creek View Dr, Spring City, TN 37381  
843-200-3305

## **WOLF CREEK COVE RV PARK**

2000 Watts Bar Hwy, Spring City, TN 37381  
423-775-5646

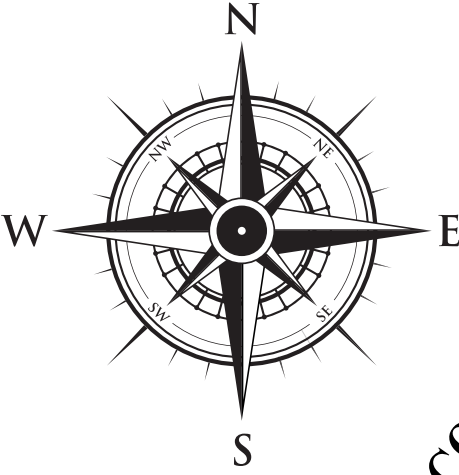
## **EDEN MARINA AND CAMPGROUND**

653 Scenic Lakeview Dr, Spring City, TN 37381  
423-365-6929

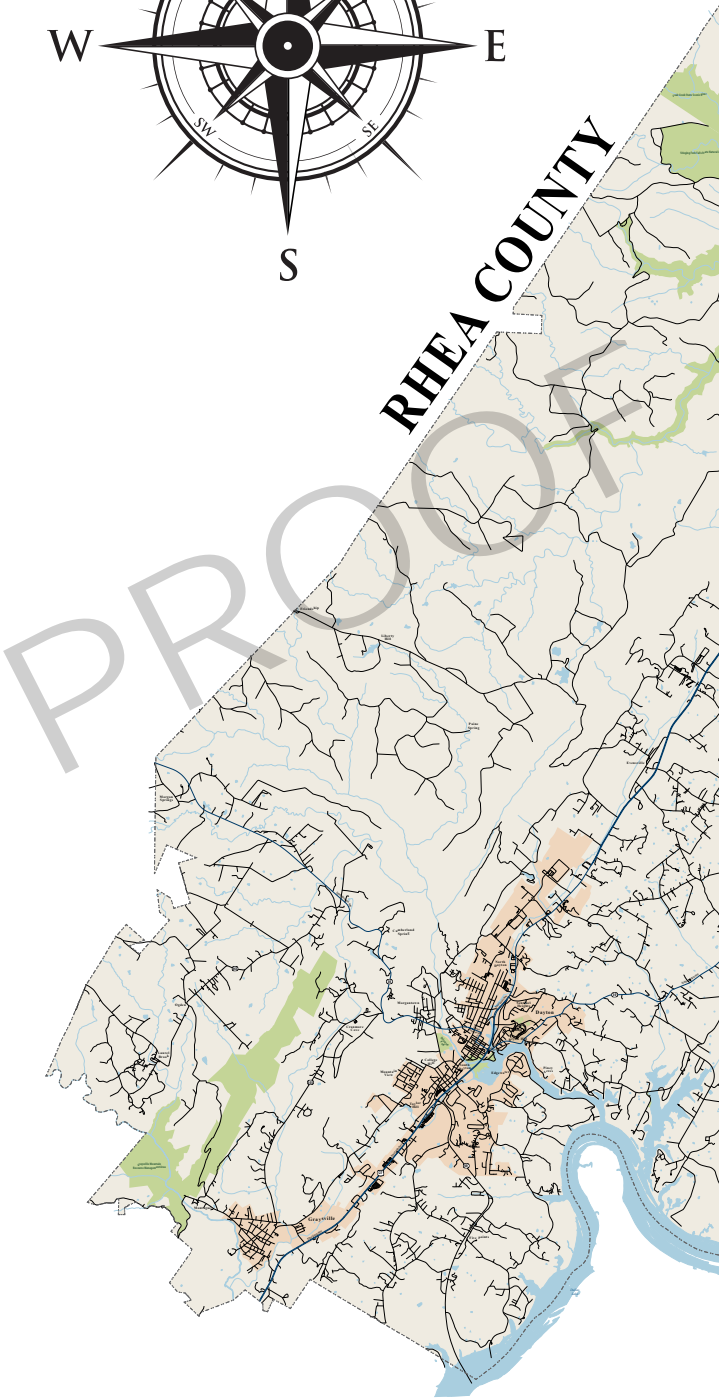
## **GRANDVIEW RV PARK**

5750 Wassom Memorial Hwy, Grandview, TN 37337  
423-405-3508

# MAPS



**RHEA COUNTY**





# EVENTS

There's always something to look forward to!  
A few of the events are:

## DAYTON | GRAYSVILLE | EVENSVILLE

Strawberry Festival, Dayton

Nokian Tyres Summer Nights Festival, Dayton

Beach Bash Parade and Cruise In, Graysville

Scopes Festival, Dayton

Freedom Fest, Graysville

Farm to Table Dinner, Dayton

Rhea County Fair, Evensville

Pumpkinfest, Dayton

Wings on Display, Dayton

Holiday Festivities, Dayton

## SPRING CITY

Blooms Festival, Spring City

Shake the Lake, Spring City

Summer Nights, Spring City

Autumn Festival, Spring City

Lighting the Way to Christmas, Spring City

Christmas at the Depot, Spring City



Scan the QR  
code to view the  
events that are  
going on around  
the county.

# VENUES *(K = Kitchen, C = Catering)*

## RHEA COUNTY COURTHOUSE

1475 Market St, Dayton, TN 37321 | 423-775-7818

## FORT BLUFF | K & C

370 Fort Bluff Camp Road, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-775-0488

## EL TORO | C

4285 Rhea County Hwy, Dayton, TN 37321  
(banquet room) 423-775-2644

## CARABELLE'S | C

4370 Rhea County Hwy, Dayton, TN 37321  
(banquet room) 423-428-9441

# VENUES *(K = Kitchen, C = Catering)*

## **DAYTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BUILDING | K**

107 Main St, Dayton, TN 37321 | 423-775-0361

## **VENUE 27**

7901 Rhea County Hwy Suite 1, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-713-1387

## **TRINITY CHAPEL**

240 1st Ave, Dayton, TN 37321 | 423-435-2987

## **RHEA COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS**

Harold Robbins Ln, Evensville TN 37332 | 423-785-6590

## **BRYAN COLLEGE | K & C**

721 Bryan Drive, Dayton, TN 37321 | 423-775-2041

## **MONKEY TOWN BREWING COMPANY | C**

287 1st Ave, Dayton, TN 37321  
(banquet room) 423-775-1800

## **RHEA COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL**

885 Eagle Ln, Evensville, TN 37332  
(auditorium) 423-285-6833

## **DAYTON CITY SCHOOL CAFETORIUM**

520 Cherry St, Dayton, TN 37321 | 423-775-8414

## **CENTENNIAL PARK**

2nd Avenue, Dayton, TN 37321 | 423-775-1817

## **POINT PARK**

Chickamauga Dr, Dayton, TN 37321 | 423-775-1818

## **CUMBERLAND SPRINGS CAMP | K**

Cumberland Springs Rd, Dayton, TN 37321  
423-775-3148

## **RUSTIC FARMS VENUE**

200 Hastings Dr, Dayton, TN 37321 | 423-567-5343

## **WALDEN'S RIDGE COMMUNITY CENTER**

5364 Dayton Mountain Hwy, Dayton, TN 37321

## **ECLIPSE EVENTS**

1336 Market Street Dayton, TN 37321

## **MEJIA'S CRAZY BURRITO | C**

7436 Rhea Co Hwy, Dayton, TN 37321 | 423-428-9020

## **DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM**

125 Court St, Ste 1, Dayton, TN 37321 | 423-775-7801

# NATURAL RESOURCE TRAILS

Scan QR code to access maps and information provided by [cumberlandtrail.org](http://cumberlandtrail.org)



## LAUREL FALLS

Length: 4.6 mi.

Elevation: 698 ft.

Estimated Time: 2h 3m (out & back)

Dogs are welcome but must be on a leash.

Scan QR code to access maps and information on Laurel-Snow segment



## SNOW FALLS

Length: 9.7 mi.

Elevation: 1,328 ft.

Estimated Time: 4h 9m (out & back)

Dogs are welcome but must be on a leash.

Camping is allowed.

## POCKET WILDERNESS

554 Pocket Wilderness Rd, Dayton, TN 37321

Hiking trails, swimming in the Blue Hole, and daring the rope swing.

Scan QR code to access maps and information provided Graysville Mountain RMA



## GRAYSVILLE MOUNTAIN RMA

Length: 9 mi. one way (18 round trip)

Elevation: 900 ft.

Caution: Steep bluffs at overlook

No designated campsites.





# NATURAL RESOURCE TRAILS

Scan QR code to access maps and information on The Falls segment



## THE FALLS SEGMENT - STINGING FORK FALLS

Length: 2.8 mi.

Elevation: 400 ft.

Estimated Time: 58m (out & back)

Dogs are welcome but must be on a leash.

Kid friendly.

Scan QR code to access maps and information on Piney River Trails



## LOWER PINEY RIVER SEGMENT

Length: 8.5 mi. one way

Elevation: 772 ft.

Estimated Time: 5 hr.

Dogs not allowed. Caves. Kid friendly.

## THE FALLS SEGMENT - SOAK CREEK TRAIL

Length: 4.6 mi.

Estimated Time: 2h 54m (point to point)

Dogs not allowed. Caves.

# HISTORY

## **A Land of Ancient Footsteps and Frontier Dreams**

Long before it was part of Tennessee, the land that would become Rhea County was home to generations of Indigenous peoples, including the Cherokee, whose trails and towns once traced the riverbanks and ridgelines. The Tennessee River, winding through the heart of the county, served as both a natural boundary and a vital highway for trade and travel. In the late 1700s, frontier settlers arrived, drawn by fertile land, abundant game, and the promise of opportunity. By 1807, Rhea County was officially established, named in honor of Congressman John Rhea, a Revolutionary War veteran and advocate for westward expansion.



## **River Towns and Railroad Dreams**

Throughout the 19th century, Rhea County grew through agriculture, river trade, and the rise of towns like Washington and Dayton. Washington, the original county seat, thrived as a river port until the Civil War and shifting trade routes brought its decline. The county seat moved to Dayton in 1889, just as the arrival of the railroad breathed new life into the area's economy. Mining, timber, and manufacturing followed, transforming Dayton into a vibrant industrial town while surrounding communities remained rooted in farming and tradition.





# HISTORY

## **The Trial That Echoed Around the World**

In 1925, Rhea County captured global attention with the Scopes Trial, a legal battle over the teaching of evolution in public schools. Held in Dayton's historic courthouse, the trial featured two of America's greatest orators—William Jennings Bryan for the prosecution and Clarence Darrow for the defense—and ignited a national debate on science, religion, and education. Though the trial was technically about one teacher, it became a symbol of a larger cultural clash between modernity and tradition. Today, the courthouse still stands as a national historic landmark and museum, drawing thousands of visitors each year.

## **Education and Innovation**

Education has played a central role in Rhea County's identity, especially with the founding of Bryan College in Dayton in 1930. Established as a memorial to William Jennings Bryan following the Scopes Trial, the college has grown into a respected institution of Christian higher learning. Local public schools have also evolved over the decades, adapting to changing times while continuing to serve as vital centers of learning, sports, and community pride.





# HISTORY

## **The Power of the River**

The Tennessee River, once a lifeline for trade and travel, took on a new role in the 20th century with the creation of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). The construction of Watts Bar Dam in the 1940s brought electricity, flood control, and economic revitalization to Rhea County during the hardships of the Great Depression and World War II. Decades later, the Watts Bar Nuclear Plant extended that impact into the modern age, making the county a key player in regional power production and technological advancement.

## **Community, Culture, and Change**

From its annual festivals and farmers' markets to its churches, schools, and civic organizations, Rhea County has long nurtured a strong sense of community. Towns like Spring City, Graysville, and Evensville each carry their own distinct character



while contributing to the county's shared story. Though shaped by change, Rhea County's cultural roots remain deep—grounded in faith, hard work, and a spirit of perseverance that continues to define its people.

## **Preserving Heritage, Embracing the Future**

Rhea County continues to honor its rich and complex past through museums, historical societies, and preservation efforts. From Civil War sites and Native American heritage to early industry and landmark legal history, the county offers a deep well of stories that shaped both local and national identity. At the same time, Rhea County looks ahead—its economy supported by energy production, small businesses, and outdoor tourism fueled by the beauty of the river and mountains. Here, the past is not forgotten; it's a foundation for what comes next.

# HISTORY

## Natural Beauty and Outdoor Life

Beyond its historical and industrial significance, Rhea County is celebrated for its natural beauty. With Chickamauga and Watts Bar Lakes offering boating, fishing, and scenic retreats, and trails winding through the Cumberland Plateau and



Pocket Wilderness, the county has become a haven for outdoor enthusiasts. Whether hiking in Piney Falls or birdwatching during the Sandhill Crane migration, visitors and residents alike find renewal in the landscapes that have shaped generations.



# HISTORIC LOCATIONS

## Exploring Rhea Count's Natural Treasures: Forests, Waterways, and Wildlife

Welcome to our directory of the natural resources of Rhea County, Tennessee! Discover the rich diversity of forests, waterways, and wildlife that make this region a haven for outdoor enthusiasts, conservationists, and nature lovers alike.

### IN THE NORTH

#### Boy Scout Memorial

Erected in 1932, this monument memorializes the tragic deaths of boy scouts and their scout master, who perished during a flash flooding of Whites Creek. Located alongside the Whites Creek bridge between Rhea and Roane Counties, the memorial can be visited by traveling south on State Highway 27, taking the first right turn after crossing the bridge, then turning under the bridge.



#### Grand View Normal Institute Memorial Library & Archive

Library, school records, photographs and exhibits pertaining to a unique boarding school offering twelve grades of education, 1884-1921. The library contains over 5300 volumes, including the state's largest collection of school textbooks. Students attending the school came from 16 U.S. states, and graduates received full college scholarships. Visit [grandviewheritage.org](http://grandviewheritage.org) for more information.



#### Piney Falls Natural Area

Covering 818 acres, it is one of only fourteen National Natural Landmarks so designated in Tennessee. Its loop trail to Upper Piney Falls is one of the most popular short hikes in the state, being only 1.7 miles in length. The parking area can be reached by turning south off State Highway 68 at Grandview, Tennessee, and following the signs.



#### Gum Gap Picnic Area

Located between Spring City and Grandview on State Highway 68, it was once the site of a railroad trestle 200 feet in height — believed to be the tallest land-based trestle constructed



in the State of Tennessee. Five thousand dump trucks of fill material were required for constructing the modern highway around the gap's edge. The picnic area provides a view of the Tennessee River valley stretching to North Carolina.

### **Rhea Springs Memorial**

The Rhea Springs Memorial Monument was built with donations from former Rhea Springs citizens and friends. The 14-foot carved marble columns came from the Rhea Springs Spring House. The mill stone, top center, is from the Rhea Springs grist and flour mill. The large limestone blocks used in the base came from the Rhea Springs School. The memorial can be visited at Veterans Park in Spring City.



### **Spring City Depot**

The earliest depot in Spring City, then known as Rheaville, was established in 1879. After it was destroyed by fire in 1892, a new framed depot was constructed between Front Street and the railroad tracks. Between 1910 and 1913, this framed structure was demolished and replaced with an elegant brick depot on the same site. Today, the Spring City Depot, located on Front Street, stands as the only preserved depot in Rhea County.



### **Spring City Front Street**

Front Street in Spring City, Tennessee, developed alongside the arrival of the railroad in the late 1800s, becoming the town's bustling commercial hub. Once lined with banks, hotels, general stores, and a depot, it served as the heart of daily life and trade for the growing community. Though changed by time, Front Street still reflects the charm and resilience of a town shaped by rails, river, and rural enterprise.



### **Watts Bar Dam**

Nestled along the Tennessee River, Watts Bar is home to two engineering landmarks—Watts Bar Dam, completed in 1942 as part of the New Deal, and Watts Bar Nuclear Plant, which includes the first U.S. nuclear reactor to come online in the 21st century.

Together, they provide clean, reliable energy to the Southeast and reflect the Tennessee Valley Authority's legacy of innovation and public service. Visitors can take in scenic reservoir views and discover the vital role Watts Bar has played in shaping the region's progress.



## IN THE SOUTH

### David Campbell Grave Site

David Campbell (1750–1812) was a Revolutionary War veteran who rose to the rank of major in the Continental Army and later became a prominent jurist in early Tennessee history. He served as a judge in the State of Franklin, the Southwest Territory, and the Tennessee Superior Court, and was appointed by President George Washington as a territorial judge in 1790. Campbell died in Washington, Rhea County, Tennessee, in 1812 and is buried at Old Washington Park, where his grave is marked by a memorial placed by the Daughters of the American Revolution.

### Old Washington Ferry

The Old Washington Ferry, established around 1807 by Conley Hastings, was a vital transportation link across the Tennessee River, initially connecting the town of Washington in Rhea County to the Cherokee Territory and later facilitating travel between Dayton and Decatur, the county seats of Rhea and Meigs counties, respectively. Also known as the Hastings-Locke Ferry, it operated for nearly two centuries before being replaced by a bridge in the 1990s. The ferry's historical significance is commemorated by a Tennessee Historical Commission marker near its original site.



### Cottonport Crossing

Cottonport Ford in Rhea County, Tennessee, was a strategic ford across the Tennessee River utilized by Confederate forces during the Civil War. In early October 1863, General Joseph Wheeler's cavalry crossed the river at this location to initiate a raid aimed at disrupting Union supply lines and communications. The raid inflicted significant damage, capturing hundreds of wagons and mules, and severely hampering Union logistics in the region.

### Pocket Wilderness

The Laurel-Snow Trail, or Pocket Wilderness, holds a special place in the hearts of many Rhea Countians, filled with memories of hiking trails, swimming in the Blue Hole, daring the rope swing, and exploring old mines. While a beloved natural retreat today, the area was once home to Dayton Coal & Iron Co., a vital part of the town's early industry. The company operated several mines, extracting hundreds of thousands of tons of coal before financial troubles and accidents led to its closure in 1913. A later attempt to revive mining failed, contributing to an economic downturn that set the stage for the 1925 Scopes Trial.



## **Buttram Cemetery**

Buttram Cemetery, located north of Dayton and east of U.S. Highway 27, dates back to before 1811 when John Howard first set aside land for a burial ground for his wife. Over time, the cemetery expanded through multiple land deeds, including a significant 1881 donation by Nicholas Keith to the Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church South. Between 1881 and 1920, several sections were added—creating an L-shaped layout marked by concrete lot boundaries—reflecting the cemetery's steady growth alongside the Dayton community. It is the largest cemetery in Rhea County, Tennessee.



## **William Jennings Bryan College**

Founded in the wake of the 1925 Scopes Trial, Bryan College was established as a memorial to William Jennings Bryan—renowned orator, presidential candidate, and defender of the Bible—who died in Dayton just days after the trial. Opened in 1930, it is now a fully accredited, non-denominational Christian liberal arts college. Visitors can explore Mercer Hall's commemorative plaques and the Bryan Library's rich collections on Bryan, H.L. Mencken, and the cultural clash that made Dayton famous.



## **Vine Grove Methodist Church**

Located in Morgantown, Vine Grove United Methodist Church was founded in 1833 and was the oldest church in the city of Dayton. During the Civil War, the church was used to house women, sometimes referred to as the "Rhea County Spartans," on claims they were Confederate spies. Although the church closed recently, a new congregation calls the building home today.

## **Rhea County Historic Courthouse**

Visiting the Rhea County Courthouse in Dayton, Tennessee, is a step back in time to one of the most famous legal battles in American history—the 1925 Scopes "Monkey Trial." The courtroom remains preserved as it was during the trial, offering an immersive experience for history enthusiasts. Inside the same building, the Rhea Heritage & Scopes Trial Museum features exhibits on the trial, local history, and the cultural impact of the debate over evolution and education. Together, the courthouse and museum provide a powerful look at the intersection of science, religion, and law in American society.



## **Cedar Hill**

This building on Highway 27 in Dayton was erected in 1929 by Dr. Walter Agnew Thomison and local businessmen as Dayton's first hospital. It was leased

by Bryan University from 1932-1938 and used as a women's dormitory, college dining hall, and kitchen. From 1938-1946, it was owned and operated as a tourist home by Scopes Trial juror Jess Goodrich and his wife, Rose. From 1967-1984, Bryan College owned the building and used it first for married students and then as a women's dormitory.



### **Smith's Crossroads**

TSmith's Crossroads, established around 1820, was the original name of what is now Dayton, Tennessee, named after William Smith, a New England teacher and merchant who settled in the area. Strategically located at the intersection of major Native American trails, including the Kiuka War Trace (later known as the Black Fox Trail), it became a significant junction for trade and travel. The community was renamed Dayton in 1877, coinciding with the arrival of the railroad and the development of local industries, marking a new chapter in its growth.



### **Broyles-Darwin House**

The Broyles-Darwin House, located at 108 Idaho Avenue in Dayton, Tennessee, is a historic residence built around 1860 for Stephen Sanders Decatur Broyles, a Confederate Army veteran and prominent local farmer. In 1908, the home was acquired by James Robert Darwin, and it has since been recognized for its architectural and historical significance, earning a place on the National Register of Historic Places in 1997. During the 1925 Scopes Trial, the house served as lodging for journalists covering the event, highlighting its connection to this pivotal moment in American legal and educational history.



### **Saint Genevieve's Academy**

St. Genevieve's Academy in Dayton, Tennessee, was established in 1891 by the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth to serve the children of immigrant workers employed by the Dayton Coal and Iron Company. Initially enrolling about 40 students, the school operated until 1896, when economic hardships led to its closure. The historic building at 449 Delaware Road, once home to the academy, is now a restaurant that preserves the structure's rich heritage.



### **Return Jonathan Meigs Grave Site**

Return Jonathan Meigs Sr. (1740-1823) was a distinguished officer in the Continental Army during the American Revolutionary War, renowned for leading the successful

“Meigs Raid” on Sag Harbor in 1777, which earned him a commemorative sword from Congress. Following his military service, he became a pioneer in the Northwest Territory, contributing to the founding of Marietta, Ohio, and later served as the U.S. Indian Agent to the Cherokee Nation in Tennessee from 1801 until his death. He is interred alongside his wife Grace and son Timothy in Garrison Cemetery near Dayton, Rhea County, Tennessee, close to the former Hiwassee Garrison site.



### **Graysville Seventh-Day Adventist Church**

The Graysville Seventh-day Adventist Church, established in 1888, played a pivotal role in the early expansion of Adventism in the American South, earning the town the nickname “Battle Creek of the South” due to its significance in the denomination’s development. In 1892, church leader George W. Colcord founded Graysville Academy, the first Adventist school in the region, which later evolved into Southern Adventist University; however, the academy faced challenges, including temporary closure in 1895 when faculty members were jailed for violating Tennessee’s Sunday laws by working on their Sabbath. Although the boarding school closed in 1939, the Graysville church has continued to operate a day school for local students, maintaining its longstanding commitment to faith-based education.



### **Robinson’s Drug Store and the Hotel Aqua**

Located on Main Street in Dayton, the vacant lot to the right of EdFinancial is the site of the drug store where the first local plans for the Scopes Trial were made by F.E. Robinson, George Rappleyea, and others. Next to Robinson’s Drug Store was the three-story Aqua Hotel, where the following Scopes Trial participants roomed, ate, or conferred: Arthur Garfield Hays, Dudley Field Malone, Dr. John R. Neal, Judge John T. Raulston, William Jennings Bryan, and Clarence Darrow.



### **Death Site of William Jennings Bryan**

Although the house that now stands on the southwest corner of Market Street and Georgia Avenue is not the original Rogers house, the retaining wall bordering the property is original. The Rogers family temporarily moved out to let William Jennings Bryan and his family stay there. Bryan died in the Rogers house on July 26, 1925.

COVER PHOTO - SNOW FALLS



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