

# BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

'100 days of summer heat' effort begins in region

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Abingdon's Trivette is the latest 'Pappy' winner

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Saturday, May 30, 2026

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TDOT

## SAFETY PROGRAM



EMILY BALL, BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

David Worrtham, highway response supervisor, talks about the different items that the Rural Service Patrol (RSP) vehicles will carry to assist motorists needing assistance in Northeast Tennessee.

### Rural Service Patrol program across Northeast Tennessee interstates launched

ROBERT SORRELL  
BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

KINGSPORT, Tenn. – A new fleet of yellow roadside assistance trucks is now patrolling rural interstate highways across Northeast Tennessee as state transportation officials expand a longtime urban safety program into the region.

The Tennessee Department of Transportation officially launched its Rural Service Patrol program Thursday during a press conference at the Tennessee Welcome Center along Interstate 26 in Kingsport, where officials said the service is expected to improve emergency response times, reduce secondary crashes and assist stranded motorists across rural sections of interstate.

The Rural Service Patrol, or RSP, expands TDOT's existing HELP Truck program, which has operated since 1999 in the state's largest metropolitan areas, including Knoxville, Chattanooga, Nashville and Memphis. In the past, the HELP program has also

assisted with event traffic for Bristol Motor Speedway.

"We've wanted to take it statewide for a while, frankly for about 11 or 12 years now," TDOT Commissioner Will Reid said. "It's been up until now that we've had the funding to be able to do that."

The new service provides free roadside assistance for motorists, including fuel, water, minor mechanical assistance, traffic control and debris removal. TDOT officials said the patrols are especially important in rural areas where higher speeds, mountainous terrain and longer distances to hospitals can create more dangerous conditions during crashes and breakdowns.

"When you have an accident in a rural area, oftentimes they're more severe," Reid said. "Speeds are higher, crashes are often more unforgiving, and it can be a further distance to medical care."

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### How Republicans are winning the war over US congressional redistricting, state by state

JOSEPH AX  
Reuters

Several Republican-led states across the South are rushing to redraw their congressional maps ahead of November's midterm elections in a bid to help save their party's narrow majority in the U.S. House of Representatives, the latest round in a year-long national fight over redistricting.

The political war began last summer, when U.S. President Donald Trump pushed Texas Republicans to install a new map targeting five Democratic-held seats. California Democrats responded with their own map taking aim at five Republican incumbents, and other states soon followed suit.

As of this spring, the two parties had fought roughly to a draw. But a pair of court decisions – a U.S. Supreme Court ruling that eviscerated protections for majority-Black districts, and a Virginia Supreme Court decision overturning a Democratic-backed map in that state – have given Republicans a decided advantage.

Republicans now appear poised to end the cycle having increased their edge in as many as 10 House seats nationwide. Democrats need to flip only three Republican-held seats from 2024 to win a majority, so every district could prove pivotal. Here is how the conflict is unfolding across the country:

#### REPUBLICAN GAINS

##### TENNESSEE – ONE SEAT

Tennessee Republican lawmakers on May 7 approved a new congressional map dismantling a majority-Black district centered in Memphis, becoming the first state to take advantage of the U.S. Supreme Court decision that hollowed out the Voting Rights Act.

The district's current representative, Democrat Steve Cohen, announced he would not seek reelection following the redistricting, all but guaranteeing Republicans will win a clean sweep of all nine seats in November.

##### SOUTH CAROLINA – EFFORT FAILED

The state Senate on May 26 rejected a new map that would have taken apart the district represented by longtime Democratic U.S. Representative Jim Clyburn. Despite pressure from the White House, several Republicans broke ranks and joined Democrats in foiling

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Airport completes emergency response exercise. **PAGE A3**

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#### Weather

Mostly cloudy  
**High:** 81  
**Low:** 57  
**Forecast:** A12



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