

# Blue Ridge Parkway Closed in North Carolina

October 17, 2024 | Biltmore Beacon, The (Asheville, NC) Author: Staff Writer | Section: News | 427 Words OpenURL Link

The entire length of the Blue Ridge Parkway remains closed in North Carolina as emergency stabilization efforts and damage assessments continue in the wake of significant, and in some areas catastrophic, damage from Hurricane Helene. Blue Ridge Parkway crews and National Park Service employees from around the country are working on initial damage assessments and actions that will restore critical communications and re-establish safe access to facilities in need of repair.

Considerable work remains statewide, where crews have encountered tens of thousands of trees across the roadway and nearly three dozen rock and mud slides. The slides have occurred above and below the road and also have severely damaged or swept away the roadbed in numerous places. Damage in Virginia is less severe, but work remains to clear roads of trees and brush to make the parkway safe for use.

The National Park Service reminds the public that the closure of the Blue Ridge Parkway and associated park trails applies to all vehicles and uses – motor vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians. Hazards both seen and unseen endanger unauthorized users and some threats may not be obvious, such as weakened road structures or hanging limbs, which are subject to falling in changing weather conditions. The parkway is also an active work area, with vehicles and heavy equipment moving through the area.

Unauthorized public access not only endangers those entering closed areas but also slows recovery efforts, as crews must stop their work when individuals are present. One crew in North Carolina was forced to stop work over the weekend to evacuate an unauthorized user who was injured while in the park.

"The damage left behind by the storm has created dangerous conditions, some of which are not immediately visible from the road itself," said Tracy Swartout, superintendent of the Blue Ridge Parkway. "We thank the public for their cooperation in respecting closures for their safety and to allow crews to complete their work."

The National Park Service is working diligently to assess and mitigate these hazards, but until the parkway has been reopened, entering closed sections is not only dangerous to visitors and recovery crews, but also illegal and subject to enforcement under Title 36 of the Code of Federal Regulations. No schedule has been established for reopening the parkway in North Carolina. Once assessments are completed, the National Park Service will be better equipped to project timelines and costs for restoration of North Carolina.

Updates will be posted on the Blue Ridge Parkway website at www.nps.gov/blri and on the park's social media platforms at @BlueRidgeParkwayNPS (Facebook, X and Instagram), or call 828-298-0398.

Copyright, 2024, Biltmore Beacon, The, All Rights Reserved.

## • Citation (aglc Style)

Staff Writer, 'Blue Ridge Parkway Closed in North Carolina', *Biltmore Beacon, The* (online), 17 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C45AED4C0DC120">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C45AED4C0DC120</a>



## Novant Health Mobile Resources Care for WNC Communities

October 17, 2024 | Biltmore Beacon, The (Asheville, NC) Author: Staff Writer | Section: News | 327 Words OpenURL Link

In continuation of its widespread efforts to support communities across Western North Carolina, Novant Health has now deployed a mobile clinic and pharmacy to A.C. Reynolds High School in Asheville, which is part of FEMA's comfort care station effort.

Novant Health will have a community care cruiser on site to offer urgent care services, including connections to obstetric and pediatric care, as well as a mobile pharmacy. These medical resources will be available to all patients at no cost. Services will be available each day from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 1 Rocket Drive in Asheville.

This deployment includes physicians, advanced practice providers, pharmacists, and other clinical and nonclinical team member volunteers from Novant Health.

"Our teams have been on the ground in these communities and have seen the challenges people are facing to gain access to care," said Dr. Pam Oliver, executive vice president and chief medical officer, Novant Health. "We are committed to offering as much support and as many resources as possible, and we will continue to partner with communities across Western North Carolina to identify ways Novant Health can assist."

The efforts build on the health system's ongoing response, which includes:

Virtual Care Services at No Cost for Western North Carolina Residents

Virtual care offers treatment 24/7 for conditions such as fever, COVID, cold and flu, ear infections, shortness of breath, rash and common skin conditions, back pain and urinary tract infections. Virtual care should not be used for emergency care. Those experiencing a medical emergency should call 911.

Opening a Shelter in Buncombe County

In partnership with the local Red Cross for those affected by the storm. The shelter, at 1815 Hendersonville Road in Asheville, provides power, water, food and a place to sleep. For shelter details, visit RedCross.org/Shelters.

In addition to on-the-ground efforts, Novant Health is also caring for those displaced by Hurricane Helene. Patients who have evacuated from Western North Carolina to a Novant Health service area can make an appointment by visiting NovantHealth.org/doctor, or calling 855-875-8310.

Copyright, 2024, Biltmore Beacon, The, All Rights Reserved.

#### • Citation (aglc Style)

Staff Writer, 'Novant Health Mobile Resources Care for WNC Communities', *Biltmore Beacon, The* (online), 17 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C45AED57A0F340">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C45AED57A0F340</a>



# Nantahala Forest Areas Reopen Slowly

October 17, 2024 | Biltmore Beacon, The (Asheville, NC) Author: Staff Writer | Section: News | 221 Words OpenURL Link

The USDA Forest Service updated a closure order related to Hurricane Helen that cleared the way for the reopening of some areas within the Nantahala National Forest in Western North Carolina on Oct. 11.

On the Cheoah Ranger District

All developed recreation sites, trails and roads

On the Nantahala Ranger District:

All developed recreation sites, trails and roads with the exception of Appletree Group Campground, Balsam Lake Lodge, Wayehutta OHV Trail System, Wine Springs Horse Camp and Rainbow Springs Road, FSR 437

On the Tusquitee Ranger District:

All developed recreation sites, trails and roads

Closures remain in effect for the entirety of the Pisgah National Forest.

"We initially focused most of our efforts on helping our neighbors and first-responders by clearing roads and improving access to critical infrastructure throughout the area," said Forest Supervisor James Melonas. "We recognize the significance getting to connect with nature has with everyone who lives in Western North Carolina. After thoroughly assessing the conditions on the Nantahala and found that it was safe, we knew the time was right to begin inviting our neighbors back to the forest."

Hurricane impacts could still include downed and fallen trees and limbs, loose rocks, soft shoulders, and damaged or blocked trails.

For more information on Hurricane Helene closures, call the Southern Region Hurricane Hotline (404)-939-4485, or visit the forest website at www.fs.usda.gov/nfsnc.

Copyright, 2024, Biltmore Beacon, The, All Rights Reserved.

#### • Citation (aglc Style)

Staff Writer, 'Nantahala Forest Areas Reopen Slowly', *Biltmore Beacon, The* (online), 17 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C45AED5B0436C8">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C45AED5B0436C8</a>



# US 441/Newfound Gap Open to Motorists

October 17, 2024 | Biltmore Beacon, The (Asheville, NC) Author: Staff Writer | Section: News | 401 Words OpenURL Link

US 441/Newfound Gap Road in Great Smoky Mountains National Park is now open 24 hours a day. The park is lifting the overnight road closure with the help of Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians Government and Sevier County (The Cities of Gatlinburg, Pigeon Forge and Sevierville and the Sevier County Government) partners, who will assist the park in turning around commercial vehicles at checkpoints on both sides of US 441/Newfound Gap Road overnight.

The park continues to see an influx of illegal, large commercial vehicles attempting to travel the road — the park has turned away 173 commercial vehicles over five days. While the National Park Service recognizes that major routes outside the park are currently closed, Newfound Gap Road is not safe for large, commercial vehicles. Newfound Gap Road is a two-lane road with steep, continuous grades and tight curves. There are no truck lanes, runaway truck ramps or places for a large commercial vehicle to slow down and pull over.

Commercial vehicles are always prohibited on US 441/Newfound Gap Road and in all of Great Smoky Mountains National Park (with the exception of the Spur). Commercial vehicles will be stopped, turned around at checkpoints and may be subject to a federal misdemeanor violation notice and fine.

Park Closures

Balsam Mountain, Cataloochee, and Big Creek, campgrounds and roads remain closed

Foothills Parkway East near Cosby closed

Lakeview Drive closed

Prong Road is closed Monday-Thursday each week through Nov. 14 during trail maintenance work on Ramsey Cascades Trail.

Carlos Campbell Overlook on Newfound Gap Road is closed temporarily while maintenance crews assess cracks in the pavement and sidewalk. The overlook will reopen as soon as NPS and Federal Highway Administration crews make assessments and any needed repairs.

Parson Branch Road is closed for Flint Gap Fire impacts.

Mingus Mill is temporarily closed until further notice for preservation and rehabilitation work.

For updated closure information, call (865) 436-1200. Once you hear a voice, press 1, then press 1 for road information or 2 for a weather forecast. Weather-related road and facility closures may change throughout the day.

**Trail Cautions** 

Hiking and backcountry travel are not recommended in the park following Hurricane Helene impacts. Park staff are assessing trail conditions and addressing damage, but unpredictable creek crossings, potential downed trees, and other hazardous trail conditions remain. Emergency response times may be delayed with staff stretched thin and resources limited.

# • Citation (aglc Style)

Staff Writer, 'US 441/Newfound Gap Open to Motorists', *Biltmore Beacon, The* (online), 17 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C45AED7305C098">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C45AED7305C098</a>



# October Grants Total Nearly \$2 Million

October 17, 2024 | Biltmore Beacon, The (Asheville, NC) Author: Staff Writer | Section: News | 787 Words OpenURL Link

The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina (CFWNC) continues to work to mobilize resources and get funds to frontline organizations, providing relief and recovery services in Western North Carolina. Since Oct. 7, 83 grants totaling \$1,961,246 has been distributed to nonprofits from the Emergency and Disaster Response Fund.

The grants support frontline nonprofits meeting immediate needs or those whose ability to provide services was directly affected by the floods. Nonprofits use a simple, expedited process to access funds with grants awarded on a rolling basis.

"In times like these, nonprofits join other first responders in helping their communities recover, and we want to make sure that those on the frontlines have the resources they need," said President Elizabeth Brazas. "We are heartened by the level of support for this effort and are deeply grateful for every contribution and expression of concern. CFWNC and its partnering funders are committed to geographic equity and recognize that there are still isolated communities with fragile connectivity. We are here for the long haul as Western North Carolina continues to recover."

For those seeking to support communities affected by the storm, donations to Emergency and Disaster Response Fund may be made at www.cfwnc.org. Administrative fees are waived so that every dollar goes directly to assistance.

CFWNC makes grants in 18 Western North Carolina counties, including the Qualla Boundary.

\$13.4 Million Contributed to Date

"On September 29, three days after Hurricane Helene devastated Western North Carolina, CFWNC activated EDRF," said President Elizabeth Brazas. "In just over a week, generous people, foundations and corporations from across the region and the country have donated \$13.4 million to quickly provide flexible assets to frontline organizations. We are overwhelmed by the need and by this huge swell of support. We are especially grateful to our fellow funders who reached out immediately to offer support and partnership."

CFWNC is coordinating with local funding partners that share the same 18-county service area. Dogwood Health Trust made a lead gift of \$10 million to this effort. Other gifts include \$1 million from The Leon Levine Foundation and \$500,000 from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of NC Foundation. CFWNC fundholders have collectively donated \$314,000. The list of funders and donors changes daily.

\$25,000 to Asheville Poverty Initiative to provide food and other essential services in Buncombe County.

\$25,000 to Babies Need Bottoms to provide diapers and other essential baby supplies in the WNC region.

\$7,500 to Baptist Children's Homes of NC to provide food and basic essentials to displaced students in the WNC Region.

\$25,000 to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Western North Carolina to provide essential supplies and FEMA application assistance to the organization's Littles and their families in the WNC Region.

\$12,500 to Bread of Life to provide meals in Transylvania County.

\$2,600 to the Center for Domestic Peace to support hotline staff in Jackson, Haywood and Buncombe counties.

\$25,000 to Centro Comunitario Hispano-Americano to provide food and other essential services to Latino families in Transylvania and Henderson counties.

\$25,000 to Centro Unido Latino-Americano to distribute essential items in McDowell, Rutherford, Burke, Buncombe, Mitchell, Yancey and Avery counties.

\$25,000 to Co-operate WNC to distribute food and emergency supplies in Rutherford, McDowell, Buncombe and Henderson counties.

\$9,000 to Grahamtown Team toward roof repair and tree removal for community members.

\$25,000 to Hands On! — A Child's Gallery to provide on-site essential services, goods, and internet in Henderson, Polk and Buncombe counties.

\$25,000 to Haywood Christian Ministry to provide food and other essential resources in Haywood County.

\$25,000 to Hospice and Palliative Care of the Blue Ridge to provide generators and essential medical equipment to hospice patients in Mitchell, Avery, Yancey, McDowell and Madison counties.

\$25,000 to International Friendship Center to provide food and meet essential needs for people impacted by the hurricane in Macon and Jackson counties.

\$25,000 to Jewish Family Services of WNC to meet essential basic needs in Buncombe and Henderson counties.

\$25,000 to Out Of The Ashes to provide shelter and other resources to homeless people in Rutherford and Polk counties.

\$24,646 to PIVOTPoint WNC to provide mental health services at various community hubs in Haywood, Transylvania and Buncombe counties.

\$25,000 to Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards to use its trail crews to help with debris clean-up in Buncombe, McDowell and Rutherford counties.

\$20,000 to The Lord's Harvest for the Hungry to support delivery of fresh meals in Madison County.

\$25,000 to United Way of Haywood County toward housing repair and other housing needs in Haywood County.

\$25,000 to Wortham Center for the Performing Arts for an on-site City of Asheville Fire Department distribution center providing essential goods to residents in Buncombe County.

Copyright, 2024, Biltmore Beacon, The, All Rights Reserved.

#### • Citation (aglc Style)

Staff Writer, 'October Grants Total Nearly \$2 Million', *Biltmore Beacon, The* (online), 17 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C45AED643827E0">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C45AED643827E0</a>



# Food, Water, Shower, Laundry Sites & More Open Across City

October 17, 2024 | Biltmore Beacon, The (Asheville, NC) Author: Compiled by Beacon staff| Section: News| 1475 Words OpenURL Link

(Editor's note: The Biltmore Beacon will publish the Resources Guide every week to help readers locate distribution addresses and operating hours for vital community services. Information will be updated weekly as it becomes available by press time – 5 p.m. Friday. The Resources Guide also appears online at Biltmorebeacon.com. Any organization seeking to be added to the Resources Guide may email information to Biltmorebeacon@gmail.com.)

The Asheville Police Department is at full patrol staffing with additional support from outside law enforcement agencies. To request welfare checks from APD, call the non-emergency line at 828-252-1110. Reserve reporting urgent situations to 911. For the latest road conditions, download WAZE on your mobile device.

The city of Asheville curfew is in effect from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m.

Food in the form of Meals Ready to Eat (MRE), drinking water and water for flushing toilets are available at the following distribution sites. Drinking water is provided in bottles. The public will need to bring their own containers for non-potable water.

Non-potable water is water that is not safe for consumption.

For water delivery if unable to reach distribution sites, call 828-250-6100.

To volunteer at distribution sites, contact smenaya-merritt@ashevillenc.gov or rwood@ashevillenc.gov.

FOOD AND WATER DISTRIBUTION

City-sponsored distribution sites are open from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. or until supplies run out.

(MREs, two per adult, one per child per day; bottled water, one case per family per day, except at Pack Square).

Pack Square Park, 70 Court Plaza (Walk-up only, bulk water)

Asheville Middle School, 211 S. French Broad Ave.

Shiloh Community Center: 121 Shiloh Road

Linwood Crump Shiloh Community Center, 121 Shiloh Road

Lucy Herring Elementary, 98 Sulphur Springs Road

Oakley Elementary School, 753 Fairview Road

Sand Hill Elementary, 154 Sand Hill School Road (enter via Acton Circle)

North Windy Ridge Intermediate School, 20 Doan Road, Weaverville

Fairview Elementary School, 1355 Charlotte Hwy., Fairview

Ingles on NC 9 in Black Mountain

Leicester Elementary School, 31 Gilbert Road, Leicester

William W. Estes Elementary School, 275 Overlook Road

Non-potable water for flushing toilets is available at the Jewish Community Center's Pool, 40 Clyde St.

Asheville Private Distribution Sites

(Hours vary)

Franklin School of Innovation, 61 Innovation Drive, 1-3 p.m., daily

Wesley Grant Center, 285 Livingston St.

Bear's Smokehouse BBQ and World Central Kitchen,135 Coxe Ave, 1 p.m., daily

Groce UMC, 954 Tunnel Road

Woodfin Town Hall, 90 Elk Road, 2 p.m., daily

Tupelo Honey South Asheville, 1829 Hendersonville Road, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., daily

Tyson Foods Meals that Matter, Walmart Supercenter, 25 Northridge Commons Pkwy., 11 a.m. to 5 .m., daily

Beloved Asheville, 32 Old Charlotte Hwy.

Biltmore Baptist Church, 35 Clayton Road, Arden, 3 to 6 p.m.

Jewish Family Services, 53 French Broad Ave., 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Monday to Friday

The Home Depot & Operation Blessing, 795 Fairview Road

Carolina Day School, 1345 Hendersonville Road

Walmart, 60 Airport Road, Arden, noon to 4 p.m.

FBCA by Downtown YMCA: 5 Oak S.t, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., daily

Grace Covenant, 789 Merrimon Ave.

The Dharma, 697 Haywood Road, Unit C

Asheville Dream Center, 399 Beaverdam Road

Reynolds Baptist Church, 520 Rose Hill Road

New Bridge Baptist Church, 199 Elkwood Drive

ABCCM locations (open 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday

Downtown Asheville, 24 Cumberland Ave., (828) 259-5300

North Buncombe, 403 Weaverville Hwy., (828) 259-5303

Hominy Valley, 1914 Smokey Park Hwy., Candler (828) 259-5301

South Buncombe, 10 Buck Shoals Road, Arden, (828) 259-5302

**OXYGEN REFILLING STATIONS** 

Palmetto Oxygen LLC, 828-285-0239

Blue Ridge, 828-232-1110 (10 a.m. to 3 p.m. only. No deliveries, bring your old tank to 101 Caribou Road in Asheville.)

Rotech 828-456-8782

Lincare 828-255-4545

Bradshaw Oxygen LLC, 828-380-6287 (Drop off, provides portables and make repairs.)

PORTA-POTTIES AND HAND WASHING STATIONS

Orange Peel, outside, 101 Biltmore Ave.

Pack Square Park

LAUNDRY SERVICES

Laundry trailers at Basilica of Saint Lawrence, 97 Haywood St., Opens 8 a.m. daily. Detergent provided.

Walmart in Arden, 60 Airport Road

**SHOWERS** 

Reuter Family YMCA, 3 Town Square Blvd. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. Other amenities, gym, playground power charging

DISASTER UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS ELIGIBILITY

People in Buncombe County unemployed as a direct result of Hurricane Helene, business owners and self-employed individuals affected by the storm may file an application up to 60 days from Oct. 1.

Apply at des.nc.gov. Deadline: Dec. 2

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Vaya, 24/7,, 1-800-849-6127

RHA Health Services, 24/7, 1-888-573-1006

National Alliance on Mental Illness NC, 919-788-0801 or 1-800-451-9682, text, 919-999-6527

PETS, LIVESTOCK

WNC Farmers Market, 570 Brevard Road, free pet food

River Ridge Shopping Center, 800 Fairview Road., Suite C3, free pet food

Veterinary Emergency Group, 1856 Hendersonville Road Suite F, open 24/7

MedVet Asheville, 677 Brevard Road, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., daily

WNC Regional Livestock Center, 474 Stock Drive, Canton, hay, grain. Can help with delivery and animal evacuation. Text only 828-216-4496

#### FEMA DISASTER ASSISTANCE

Disaster Assistance Teams can be register survivors for FEMA assistance. Sites may change daily in order to accommodate the areas of greatest need. Open 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Call 1-800-621-3362.

Black Mountain, 550 Hwy. 9

Biltmore Village, 800 Fairview Road

Walmart, 60 Airport Road, Arden

Riceville Volunteer Fire Department, 2251 Riceville Road

North Star Academy, 90 Montford Ave. Open 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

AB Tech shelter, A-B Tech Conference Center, 16 Fernihurst Drive

Pack Square Park, 70 Court Plaza

Community of Emma, Spanish speaking 528 Emma St.

New Bridge Baptist Church, 199 Elkwood Ave.

**URGENT CARE** 

Mercy Urgent Care. Open 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

1201 Patton Ave.

61 Weaver Blvd., Weaverville

22 Trust Lane. Brevard

120 Frazier St., Waynesville

140 W. Mills St., Foothills

Novant GoHealth, 349 New Leicester Highway, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m

VA Hospital, 1100 Tunnel Road 24/7 for emergencies and inpatient services. Routine appointments canceled. Veterans needing medications, visit VA pharmacy or call 855-679-0074 and press 1

## **PHARMACIES**

View open pharmacies at https://www.ncbop.org/pharmacydisaster.html. Pharmacists can dispense one-time

emergency supply (up to 90 days) when unable to contact medical provider. One-time emergency refill (up to 30 days) of prescribed medication available.

**SHELTERS** 

WNC Agricultural Center (pets accepted), 1301 Fanning Bridge Road, Fletcher

AB Tech, 6 Fernihurst Drive, use Victoria Road entrance

AB Tech, 10 Genevieve Circle, medical emergency shelter

Old Gold's Gym, 1815 Hendersonville Road

CITY PARKS

City offices and Parks will be closed until further notice.

Cellular Service and Wi-Fi

Temporary Verizon cellular satellite trailers offer limited cellular reception within several city blocks of where they are parked. There is no longer a Verizon trailer at the YMCA on Woodfin Street

Groce United Methodist Church, 954 Tunnel Rooa

YMCA: 30 Woodfin St.

T-Mobile has set up satellite cellular on light trucks, providing cellular service along with Wi-Fi and charging stations.

Asheville Middle School, 211 S French Broad Ave.

Dr. Wesley Grant Sr. Southside Community Center, 285 Livingston St.

ITDRC, a private entity, is providing Wi-Fi hotspots and charging stations for public use at

Sam's Club, 645 Patton Ave

Haw Creek Commons, 315 Old Haw Creek Road

WI-FI HOTSPOTS & CHARGING STATIONS

Justice Center parking lot, 35 Woodfin St.

YMCA Downtown Asheville, Woodfin St

West Asheville Public Library, 942 Haywood Road

Pack Memorial Library, 67 Haywood St.

Enka Library, 1404 Sand Hill Road, Candler

Citizen Vinyl, 14 O'Henry Ave.

Moxy Hotel, 61 Biltmore Ave.

The Plug Smoke Shop, 1356 Patton Ave. Center for Craft, 67 Broadway St. Mosaic Café, 1 Town Square Blvd, Suite 150, Biltmore Park DoubleTree, 199 Haywood St., Montford ALoft on Biltmore Ave., 51 Biltmore Ave. Franklin School of Innovation parking lot, 61 Innovation Drive Buncombe County Health Department, 40 Coxe Ave. Asheville Shelter at AB Tech, Ferguson Bldg., 340 Victoria Road Library Wi-Fi password: "readmore" (one word, lowercase) SATCOM RESOURCES T-Mobile 1301 Fanning Bridge Road, Fletcher 14 Old Brevard Road 509 Biltmore Ave. 285 Livingston St. 211 S. French Broad Ave. Verizon 954 Tunnel Road **SANITATION** Trash Collection resumed regular routes along accessible roadways on Oct. 14 Bagged trash that doesn't fit into a customer's green trash cart can be placed in blue recycling carts. It is critical that storm debris not be put into recycling and trash carts at this time. These materials will be collected separately by a contractor.

## SMALL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE CENTER

The United States Small Business Administration has opened a small business assistance center at the Chamber of Commerce, 36 Montford Road. Hours 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday to Friday; 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday.

The center is focusing on providing disaster relief in the form of low interest loans for businesses, nonprofits, homeowners and renters impacted by the storm.

Visit sba.gov for more information.

# • Citation (aglc Style)

Compiled by Beacon staff, 'Food, Water, Shower, Laundry Sites & More Open Across City', *Biltmore Beacon, The* (online), 17 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C4ACBAE6409A40">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C4ACBAE6409A40</a>



# Shattered River Arts District Can Be Salvaged

October 17, 2024 | Biltmore Beacon, The (Asheville, NC) Author: JOHN BOYLE and STARR SARIEGO, Asheville Watchdog | Section: Arts | 1870 Words OpenURL Link

Sagging rooflines and toppled cinder block walls are the order of the day in the River Arts District right now, but a development team that owns 11 buildings in the district says nearly all of their buildings are salvageable.

Standing near what was the Marquee art space, a 50,000-square-foot cinder block and concrete building that is now missing large parts of the exterior walls on either end, Chris Eller, a member of the partnership group that owns the building, said without hesitation that it's salvageable.

"For sure," said Eller, a civil engineer and owner of Civil Design Concepts, an engineering firm in Asheville. "It's probably my best structurally sound building. We spent a lot of time engineering that — we actually poured solid concrete in every steel beam, every four feet, all the way along these walls. That's the reason it's still standing, and the reason plēb (Urban Winery) is not still standing."

The raging French Broad River literally wiped the winery building, which Eller's partnership group also owned, off its concrete slab Sept. 27. The partnership, Foundation Studios, has three managing members — Eller, Eddie Dewey and Brent Starck.

The water was so high in the River Arts District that two railroad ties washed into the nearly 18-foot high rafters of Marquee, where they remain. Eller said they had workers open up the Marquee building to allow the artists to come and salvage what they could.

Their engineering team checked for any structural integrity issues, with safety front of mind, and shored up the building where needed. For example, they've installed hydraulic jacks on the building's corners, he said.

But in the surrounding area, all of the other 10 buildings the partnership group owns can be repaired, despite sometimes uneven roof lines and missing cinder blocks. The buildings are off of Foundy Street, near Lyman Street.

The same holds true for Summit Coffee building, now missing the wall facing 12 Bones. The damage looks worse than it is, Eller said, noting the interior steel framework remained intact.

Dewey said they're looking into financing packaging for renovation work, and that likely would include flood insurance, FEMA disaster relief, possibly Small Business Administration loans and other grants or philanthropic donations. They'd also like to see the City of Asheville step up with some help.

The whole idea, Dewey said, is to rebuild so the RAD's artists can return. He realizes the story of the landlords' woes is not as sympathetic to some as the artists and restaurant owners' plights.

"But the reality is, these tenants were paying 25, 50 percent of market rents, and we were able to do that because we bought with value," Dewey said, referring to the older, somewhat rundown buildings the RAD was known for. "We passed that value forward to these tenants."

What they don't want to do is rebuild at such a high expense level that rents have to go up precipitously.

"We're committed to rebuilding, but we need some help," Dewey said shortly after the administrator of the Small Business Administration visited the RAD. "And the community is here. The tenants are here. We're here, but we're gonna need some help from the federal government to make it, to resurrect this."

Why rebuild in flood-prone area?

Some may question the wisdom of rebuilding in the flood-prone area, but Dewey and other property owners pointed out that the River Arts District, once Asheville's gritty industrial and warehouse district, is now a "cultural arts destination for Asheville." The area, which follows the river from Amboy Road to the north of I-240, saw a boom over the past 20 years with an influx of artists' studios, restaurants and bars, and more recently apartments.

"I think it's vital, personally, and without it, folks are gonna move somewhere else," Dewey said, referring to the artists.

Closer to the French Broad River, on Lyman Street, the mammoth Riverview Station building, also home to artists and craft workers, flooded up to the second floor.

Owner Helaine Greene said she didn't have the answers right now on how Riverview Station would proceed. She was not keen on taking on any SBA loans, though.

"I'm 72 years old, you know. I'm an old lady," Greene said. "It's taken me 30 years to build a beautiful community. That was a dream. It was absolutely a dream, and they all dreamed with me. We dreamed together. And it was gorgeous, just gorgeous and so I don't know — I don't have 30 more years to do this. I don't."

Her plan was to have her daughter Jenny Rawlings take over the building, but that's up in the air with the building needing so much work. Riverview Station actually comprises several substantial brick buildings, with most built in 1926, according to county tax records. Sitting on 5.6 acres, the structures have an appraised value of \$4.6 million.

"I don't have answers right now. Honestly, we're just digging out," Greene said. "We're helping people to get their things out. It's just really, it's too soon, too early to talk."

Her son-in-law Matt Rawlings is heading up the building cleanup and repair, and he said the building is definitely salvageable, although the first floor in particular took a beating.

"This thing's built like the proverbial brick shithouse - 17-inch thick walls on the ground floor," said Rawlings, an independent contractor working for Charlie O's general contracting.

In the coming days, they'll be removing all the wet wallboard and wood potentially affected by mold and mildew. One cinder block structure that's part of the compound is "not structurally sound anymore," Rawlings said, as it has a large hole in the side.

Rawlings said they had not brought in a structural engineer yet, but he's confident the basic structure of the building remains sound. Any restoration would probably take months at a minimum.

"And who knows what the shape will take, because it may not be suitable for gallery space on the ground floor," Rawlings said. "But the upstairs has all the studios divided up and just needs new drywall and some antimicrobial spray. And so that's a lot more manageable than what has to happen on the ground floor."

Greene said a lot of variables are in play and it's too early to know what a restoration will look like.

"We've just been saying it really depends on what the regulations are going to be, and that depends on the city and FEMA," Greene said. "We don't know. We don't have answers to those questions. It's very hard."

Another iconic RAD building, the Cotton Mill Studios building at 122 Riverside Drive, less than a mile from Riverview Station, also sustained major damage. It housed the popular Guitar Bar, artists studios and shops. At 9,316 square feet, the brick structure has an appraised tax value of \$1.4 million.

Co-owner Jannette Barrosa said damage will likely easily exceed \$500,000. River water reached up to the ceiling of

the first floor. She plans to renovate and says nearly all of her tenants are committed to coming back, but Barrosa said it's all a matter of funding, as no one there had flood insurance.

"It's pretty much stripped down at this point," Barrosa said, noting that a huge crew of artists, business owners and volunteers helped strip the waterlogged building to the studs. "So for the last two days, I've been sitting at the computer applying for grants."

Built in 1900, the Cotton Mill Studios building withstood the floods of 1916 and 2004, as well as a fire that destroyed the rest of the structure, which was even older. It boasts 17-inch thick brick walls, and the building's bones remain strong.

The building was submerged through the first floor, so they'll have to redo the electrical panel, the heating and air conditioning, four bathrooms and more.

Barrosa noted that her son Chris Barrosa also lost his Cuban cuisine food truck, Guajiro, which means "rural farmer" in Spanish and was dedicated to her grandfather, with a caricature of him on the side. Chris Barrosa lost all the food in the truck and in a storage unit, as well as a bar in the building he had just taken over, and three new HVAC units he had installed.

"Seeing your child lose everything has just been the hardest thing of all," Barrosa said.

The businesses in her building are all independently owned, and Barrosa said she wants to see them come back. She too believes in the mission of the River Arts District.

"The building owners that I've spoken to, we are all committed to keeping the character of the area," Barossa said. "We were fighting against gentrification with all these big condo buildings coming into the district, so I don't know, maybe this will be a saving grace somehow."

Will the artists come back?

Robert Nicholas, manager of the Marquee business, said they had over 300 booths in the building, which featured everything from fine art and metal work to vintage clothing and antiques. He would like to see Marquee, which would've been celebrating three years in business in December, return to its previous form.

"This was a vessel to do the vision, and so we still have the vision," Nicholas said as he stood inside the darkened building, the swept up remains of ruined artwork in the center of the floor. "I don't know that people are going to be real excited to come back to a place that just took out their livelihood, but I think that the River Arts District will in some way come back."

Natalie Laster, who operated a booth in Marquee called Vagabond Trader, selling vintage clothing and antiques, said she "absolutely" would come back.

"I've been in business over 25 years, and this is not the first time I've had to start over," Laster said. "I'm an entrepreneur. We're resilient, you know. So, yeah, we'll come back for sure."

She was sympathetic to the artists in the building, though. Laster said a lot of her items can be replaced, but the artists produce one of a kind pieces.

"I know there's some funding available, but still, it's just devastating," Laster said. "And they're really attached to their art, and it comes from a deep place inside them, and I understand that."

In Riverview Station, ceramics artist Laura Loercher said she's been in the River Arts District since "this part of town was dangerous" and vines were growing in the building. Her studio was on the second floor, which Loercher thought was safe, but on Tuesday she was removing wares that got soaked.

"I want to come back to the River Arts District. It's a great place," Loercher said. "This building is a marvelous community. And (Greene) is a much better landlord than your average landlord."

But still, Loercher hasn't decided anything and wants some time to "keep my head together enough to move forward."

Nicholas, the Marquee manager, said he wants to see the River Arts District thrive again, and he hopes the buildings will remain. But he also understands the trauma that Helene inflicted, and he knows recovery will take time, with hundreds of artists, restaurateurs and property owners having to decide individually what level of commitment they're willing to make.

He was unsure if he and the artists in the building would even want to be in the space while all the work continues.

"It's going to take a while for the whole River Arts District to be a destination again," Nicholas said.

Copyright, 2024, Biltmore Beacon, The, All Rights Reserved.

## • Citation (aglc Style)

JOHN BOYLE and STARR SARIEGO, Asheville Watchdog, 'Shattered River Arts District Can Be Salvaged', *Biltmore Beacon, The* (online), 17 Oct 2024 (https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view? p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C4ACBACB600490>



# 11th Annual Roger's Wish Donation Mission to Aid Local Homeless and Helene Disaster Relief

October 17, 2024 | BladenOnline.com (Elizabethtown, NC) Author: staff report| Section: Local News| 271 Words OpenURL Link

#### A staff report

Jeffrey Bryan has announced that the 11th annual Roger's Wish Donation Mission, which traditionally supports the local homeless and needy, will extend its reach this year to aid disaster relief efforts in Asheville, following the devastation caused by Helene. Much of the collected supplies will be redirected to help those impacted by the disaster in early November.

Donations of new or gently used blankets, sleeping bags, and winter wear are being accepted until November 1st at two locations:

- \* Bladen County Public Library, 111 North Cypress Street, Elizabethtown, NC
- \* Vertical Outreach Ministries, Elizabethtown, NC

This annual donation drive, which began in 2013 in memory of Roger, who tragically passed away in a car accident, continues to serve as a beacon of hope for those in need. Event organizers Mariea Bryant and Jeffrey Bryan are committed to honoring Roger's legacy by providing crucial support to both local individuals and victims of Helene in the western part of the state.

The distribution of supplies to local homeless and needy individuals will take place on Thursday, November 7th at the Bladen County Library's main branch in Elizabethtown. Any remaining supplies will be transported to the Asheville area by members of the Bladen Baptist Association of Elizabethtown the following day.

For more information, you can contact Library Director Sheila Nance at 910-862-6990 or Event Coordinator Jeffrey Bryan at jeffreybryan442@gmail.com.

Your generous contributions to Roger's Wish will not only make a difference in the lives of local individuals but also provide much-needed relief to those affected by the Helene disaster.

The post 11th Annual Roger's Wish Donation Mission to Aid Local Homeless and Helene Disaster Relief appeared first on .

Copyright (c) 2024, BladenOnline.com.

## • Citation (aglc Style)

staff report, '11th Annual Roger's Wish Donation Mission to Aid Local Homeless and Helene Disaster Relief', *BladenOnline.com* (online), 17 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a>
p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C4635A13BC1408>



# North Carolina students can apply to college for free during statewide College Application Week, October 21-27

October 17, 2024 | BladenOnline.com (Elizabethtown, NC) Author: staff report| Section: Announcements | 930 Words OpenURL Link

## Contributed

RALEIGH, NC (Oct. 9, 2024) – For one week in October, students throughout North Carolina can submit college applications for free to many North Carolina colleges and universities. College Application Week will run from Oct. 21-27 as part of the College Foundation of North Carolina's (CFNC) Countdown to College initiative, which highlights resources for North Carolina students and families to help plan, apply, and pay for college.

In the wake of Hurricane Helene, there is a long road of recovery ahead for many students and families across North Carolina. Some students may still apply to college this month as planned, and others may need to alter plans. Resources will be available through CFNC.org throughout the Countdown to College kick-off month of October, but this information will also be available all year long to help students and families navigate the college-going process when the time is right.

"Each year, the Countdown to College campaign helps tens of thousands of students as they prepare for college throughout their senior year," said Andrea Poole, Executive Director of the North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority. "While this is an important initiative, the aftermath of Hurricane Helene means that the college planning process will look different for many western North Carolina students. SEAA and its education partners are working diligently to provide additional resources and programs in the coming months for students impacted by the hurricane." Research from the Lumina Foundation shows that a primary barrier for students to enroll in college is cost – highlighting the positive financial impact of initiatives such as CFNC's College Application Week, which could save students hundreds of dollars during their college-going journey.

College Application Week is the highlight of the Countdown to College campaign. The initiative is a State-supported, statewide undertaking in partnership with high schools and college access organizations. Hundreds of school counselors and college advisors serve as Site Coordinators, organizing efforts to educate students on the college-going process and engage their families to share support, inspiring North Carolina high school seniors to invest in their future.

Key details about College Application Week:

- \* What: A week where many North Carolina colleges and universities waive their application fees when applying through the CFNC Application Hub.
- \* When: 7:30 a.m. ET on Oct. 21 to 11:59 p.m. ET on Oct. 27.
- \* Who: Any North Carolina student can take advantage of fee waivers to save hundreds on applying to college, including adult learners.
- \* Where: The full list of participating colleges and universities is posted to CFNC.org.
- \* How: Students must apply through the CFNC Application Hub to take advantage of fee waivers.
- \* Learn more: CFNC.org/C2C.

Countdown to College highlights the resources available to help students and families navigate the three main

steps of applying to college:

- \* Residency: Verify North Carolina residency by completing the Residency Determination Service (RDS) to be eligible for in-state tuition and other forms of financial aid to save thousands in college costs.
- \* FAFSA: Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), the first step for receiving a variety of financial aid options, including scholarships and grants that do not need to be repaid. The FAFSA is also how students apply for the Next NC Scholarship, which helps most North Carolinians making \$80,000 or less pay for their education by fully covering tuition and fees at any community college or more than half, if not all, of tuition and fees to attend any public university in the state.
- \* Applications: Fill out college applications, including during College Application Week. Students can use the CFNC Application Hub to apply to NC colleges, send official high school transcripts, and monitor their progress in a single place.

How Students and Families Can Participate: Here are ways students and families across the state can take advantage of the free resources available through CFNC.org:

- \* Create a CFNC Account to save college searches, submit applications and more. Students can take advantage of waived application fees during College Application Week, Oct. 21-27, by applying through their CFNC account. Students may also qualify for fee waivers for the ACT and SAT that would allow them to be considered for a college application fee waiver they should check with their school counselor.
- \* Complete the process to verify North Carolina residency through Residency Determination Service (RDS) to qualify for in-state tuition and other types of financial aid.
- \* Prepare for paying for college with CFNC's financial-aid tools, including guidance on submitting the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Students should create an account with studentaid.gov in order to be ready to submit the FAFSA when it becomes available in December.
- \* Research colleges, universities, and non-degree certificate programs through CFNC's College Search, where students can search by cost, academic programs, location, and other key facts.
- \* Use the CFNC Scholarship Search to find ways to additional funds for college. Search by amount, deadline, eligibility, and more.
- \* Send free transcripts through CFNC. Students and graduates of participating NC public high schools can use this service to send free official transcripts to North Carolina colleges and universities.
- \* Get a head start on applying to college with CFNC's practice application and tips on writing admission essays.

## About CFNC

College Foundation of North Carolina (CFNC) is a free service provided by the State that assists residents with planning, applying, and paying for college. This uniquely comprehensive service provides information, tools, and resources so more North Carolinians can earn the credentials they need to support the futures they want — for themselves, their families, and the communities in which they live.

The post North Carolina students can apply to college for free during statewide College Application Week, October 21-27 appeared first on .

Copyright (c) 2024, BladenOnline.com.

#### • Citation (aglc Style)

BladenOnline.com (online), 17 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a> p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C46359F3F5E140>



# From the Legislature

October 17, 2024 | Brunswick Beacon, The (Shallotte, NC) Author: Rep. Frank Iler| Section: Opinion| 477 Words OpenURL Link

Last week, the North Carolina General Assembly met to pass an emergency bill for disaster relief for Hurricane Helene impacted counties in western N.C. It also included provisions for Brunswick and New Hanover counties for damage from the unnamed storm in mid-September.

When we adjourned in September, we intended to return Oct. 9, if necessary, for further budget action or veto overrides. After Hurricane Helene hit western N.C. on Sept. 27 with unexpected rain and wind, our leadership immediately re-purposed the date for relief from our Rainy Day Fund.

As soon as the skies cleared, the House Speaker, the Senate President Pro Tem, as well as the Governor, surveyed the damage both in the air and on the ground. Many of our colleagues in the west and across the state pitched in to help with rescue efforts and donations, as did power crews and law officers.

We convened last Wednesday and passed House Bill 149 — Disaster Recovery Act of 2024. This was negotiated with all concerned parties in the Legislative and Executive branches. It passed unanimously in the House 113-0 and in the Senate 48-0, and was signed into law on last Thursday by the Governor.

It creates the Hurricane Helene Disaster Recovery Fund and the Potential Tropical Cyclone #8 (PTC8) Disaster Recovery Fund. It also extends the normal 30-day state of emergency until March 1, 2025.

Brunswick and New Hanover counties are named as impacted by PTC8, and the bill establishes a framework for funding for the two counties as soon as the damage assessments are complete. The Hurricane Helene fund has \$273 million in funding in several areas. The Dept. of Public Safety — Div. of Emergency Mgmt. will get \$250 million for all their additional expense during the ongoing rescue and recovery efforts. The Dept. of Public Instruction will get \$16 million for lost compensation for school employees in food service and other service jobs as well as other immediate costs incurred. The Office of State Budget & Mgmt. (OSBM), will get \$2 million which will be spent as grants for technical assistance with recovery funds. The State Board of Elections will get \$5 million to make and execute emergency plans for voting in the 24 impacted counties.

Many other provisions in House Bill 149 affect school instructional hours, election procedures, child care, court procedures, and recalling retired state and local employees, among others. I encourage anyone looking for further details to read the bill by going to ncleg.gov and entering House Bill 149 or H149 in the search box at the top of the page.

This is just a start. We plan to return to Raleigh on Oct. 24 for further action for these counties, as well as Brunswick and New Hanover. We have been told our Rainy Day Funds are too large. That may turn out to be incorrect in the light of these recent unforeseen events.

 $Copyright @ 2024 \ The \ Brunswick \ Beacon, \ Landmark \ Community \ Newspapers \ LLC \ (LCNI). \ All \ rights \ reserved.$ 

## • Citation (aglc Style)

Rep. Frank Iler, 'From the Legislature', *Brunswick Beacon, The*(online), 17 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C45B07B8A51940">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C45B07B8A51940</a>



## Letters to the Editor

October 17, 2024 | Brunswick Beacon, The (Shallotte, NC) Author: Staff Writer | Section: Opinion | 1656 Words OpenURL Link

World on Fire

To the editor:

Under the Biden/Harris Administration, the world has become exponentially more dangerous. The disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan demonstrated American weakness and incompetence and has led to cascading trouble. Russia invaded Ukraine, Iran and its proxies attacked both Israel and Middle Eastern shipping and China has become far more aggressive towards Taiwan, the Philippines and expanded its influence in the South China Sea, as well as Africa. Weakness and appeasement always lead to war.

The Biden/Harris Administration approved the Nord Stream pipeline, released billions to Iran and relaxed restrictions on Iranian oil. These measures helped both Russia and Iran fund their wars. In addition, the administration's war on American energy has kept energy prices high benefiting both Russia and Iran. Absurdly, Biden/Harris policies funded both sides of the wars in Ukraine and Israel.

The Biden/Harris immigration policy has left Americans less safe. Terrorists have illegally crossed our border and the latest ICE statistics regarding known illegal alien murderers, rapists and other known felons is truly alarming and indefensible. The human and economic costs are crushing cities and towns across America and leaving American taxpayers in the dust.

Biden/Harris unleashed inflation on America with their profligate spending and their war on energy and real wages declined. Harris was the deciding vote in the Senate for the costliest spending bills and has gone on record to cancel the Keystone pipeline and ban fracking.

Neither Harris nor Walz have any real foreign policy experience and appear to be no match for the enemies we face. Harris, "the last person in the room," is way more liberal than Biden and Walz is a self-described socialist knucklehead.

Save America and Western Democracy. Vote Trump/Vance.

Greg Kent

Ocean Isle Beach

Lies have consequences

To the editor:

It was once said to me that "people with nothing will do anything to get something." This piece of philosophy has stuck with me for many years. This unfortunate scenario is just what Trump and his minions are using to create fear, give an excuse and to create chaos, when he loses. He has no intention of staying out of jail and this fear tactic will energize those well-armed, having nothing to lose folks to riot, only this time all over the country, not just in the capital.

Anyone with half a brain knows Democrats are not trying to kill him. Hattians are not eating pets. These giant lies, ones of thousands he has told and Fox amplifies, will only fuel more hatred and division in the country. I have never

seen such division in this country.

I was in the military during the Viet Nam era and remember how people were opposed to the war. People in the '60s protested to get voting rights and civil rights. There was never this much lie-generated hatred in this country in my 80 trips around the sun ... a method more serious to create destruction to our democracy never seen before than what is happening today.

Donald J. Trump will do anything to stay out of jail, and he will destroy our democracy in order to avoid going to jail. Remember he is still awaiting a sentencing for his past crimes and will be assigned a "parole officer," no matter what.

Joseph Gironda

Ocean Isle Beach

Women should make decisions about their own selves

To the editor:

The authors of the Constitution did not deem women worthy of full rights. It took 72 years from the first Suffragette meeting for women to be granted the right to vote. Women, who usually bear the brunt of child-rearing in this country, did not have legal access to birth control until 1965. The Equal Rights Amendment, which reads, simply, "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex," has failed to become law. Women still earn 84 cents while men earn one dollar for the same work.

Today, Mark Robinson, a Trump protégé, tells us to just "keep our skirts down" with no responsibility for men. Donald Trump says he couldn't have abused E. Jean Carroll because she's "not his type," not that he was incapable of abusing her. Project 25, written by associates of Trump, will remove a woman's right to decide with her doctor what is best for her health and put that decision in the hands of the government. Vance has made it clear that a woman without children has nothing to offer our country.

Now we hear Trump offering to "protect" women. He will be our best friend. Everything will be rainbows and unicorns if he's elected. Shall we believe the man who has cheated on every woman he's been married to? Joked he could grab a woman's intimate areas with no regard to the actual human being he's groping?

Seems like Trump and his ilk are the ones women need protecting from, and I think it's high time that we women band together and declare that we are smart enough, responsible enough and worthy enough to make our own decisions about our own selves.

Linda Gallo

Leland

Lower quality and safety of healthcare at our hospitals

To the editor:

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, CMS, provides star ratings to help patients make decisions about where to get health care and encourage hospitals to improve the quality of care they provide. There are 14 five-star hospitals in North Carolina. Novant Health Wilmington has been a 2-star hospital from 2021 through 2024. Only 12.8% of hospitals in our country have a 2 star rating from CMS.

I wrote and called Congressman David Rouzer a total of 5 times to determine if there is a plan to improve the quality and safety of our hospital. No response. After reading last week's letter, "Rousing Rouzer," I shouldn't be

surprised by his lack of interest.

I also contacted both US senators and our state senator and state representative. No response.

While I find the lack of response both disturbing and surprising, my greater concern is the lower quality and safety of healthcare at our hospital. As a Certified Profession in Healthcare Quality, I know that where you go for health care matters. Star ratings reflect the quality of care. We deserve to have safe and high quality health care offered by the 14 five-star hospitals in the state. I just don't know who cares enough to do something about it.

Nancy Cash

Leland

Drowning in MAGA's lies

To the editor:

"Planet of the Apes" ends as Charlton Heston finds a half-buried Statue of Liberty and realizes that the nightmareworld he's trapped on is future Earth. "You maniacs," he screams, "you blew it all up! Damn you all to hell!"

Half-buried Asheville is our Charlton Heston moment. Maniacal climate-change deniers blocked action for decades despite scientists' dire warnings. Trump adds insult to injury, inciting panic with lies about Biden playing politics with relief because Trump did that as president!

Senator Thom Tillis (R-NC) praised federal responders' "extraordinary work" and begged people to stop spreading "conspiracy theory junk," which hinders the relief effort. Trump ignored them, like he ignored pleas to stop spreading dangerous lies about immigrants eating pets.

Instead of acknowledging problems and fixing them, MAGA-Republicans block progress by denying problems with their firehose of falsehoods.

National Security Adviser Robert O'Brien told Trump in January 2020 that COVID would be "the biggest national security threat" of his presidency. Trump told Bob Woodward he knew COVID was "deadly stuff" but "I wanted to always play it down." Because Trump discouraged lockdowns, mask-wearing and vaccinations ... 43% more Republicans died than Democrats. The Covid Crisis Group estimates that 500,000 Americans died needlessly.

MAGA-Republicans, like the disgraced Mark Robinson, mock school-shooting victims as "media prostitots" and block common-sense gun safety laws most Americans support. Easy access to guns is the greatest cause of death for American children. We have just 5% of the world's population but 46% of its civilian guns, and, by far, the highest gun-death rate among high-income countries.

Trump stripped women of their right to choose, then lied that they asked for it! In fact, 72% of Americans support choice, including Melania. Trump's irony-free response? "I'm not going to tell [Melania] what to do." Other American women aren't so lucky. Trump's actions caused maternal mortality to spike nationally, including a 56% jump in Texas.

Elect Harris and Walz. MAGA's lies are killing us.

Michael Maisel

Sunset Beach

Trump will worsen inflation

#### To the editor:

On Oct. 9, the Consumer Price Index reported that inflation dropped to 2.4%, even lower than Trump's 2.5% rate in January 2020. The Dow Jones and S&P 500 stock indexes closed at record highs.

Trump would flush all that away. His 60% tariff on Chinese imports and 10% tariff on imports from other countries ignores the fact that tariffs are sales taxes passed on by importers as price increases paid by consumers. The American Action Forum, a center-right think tank, estimates Trump's sales tax will cost you another \$3,650-\$4,300 every year.

Sixteen Nobel-Prize-winning economists condemned Trump's proposals, warning that his national sales tax and "fiscally irresponsible budgets" will raise prices and reignite inflation. They credited the Biden/Harris Administration's policies with "lowering long-term inflationary pressures" and called them "vastly superior."

Trump and Project 2025 propose merging airlines and oil companies, creating more monopolies, eliminating competition, increasing prices and reigniting inflation.

Trump would scrap the Biden/Harris Administration's renewable energy efforts. That would pump more greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, make climate change worse, increase costly and deadly climate disasters like Hurricanes Helene and Milton, and reignite inflation.

Trump would deport millions of immigrants employed in construction, agriculture, and food preparation, causing an economic collapse.

The US economy is the envy of the world. The dollar accounts for 60% of global foreign exchange reserves. Trump wants to squander that by devaluing the dollar to fight a trade war that will make us pay more for imports and reignite inflation.

Trump's niece says he paid someone to take his SATs. Trump's former professor at Wharton said, "Trump was the dumbest student I ever had." Trump's Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin called Trump an "idiot."

We should listen to sixteen Nobel-prize-winning economists instead of Donald J. Trump.

Nancy Briganti

## Carolina Shores

 $Copyright © 2024 \ The \ Brunswick \ Beacon, Landmark \ Community \ Newspapers \ LLC \ (LCNI). \ All \ rights \ reserved.$ 

#### • Citation (aglc Style)

Staff Writer, 'Letters to the Editor', *Brunswick Beacon, The* (online), 17 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C45B075E0FFBE0">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C45B075E0FFBE0</a>



# Pumpkin sale to benefit youth mission trip to help with hurricane relief efforts in Western Carolina

October 17, 2024 | Carteret County News-Times, The (Morehead City, NC) Author: CHERYL BURKE NEWS-TIMES | Section: News | 462 Words OpenURL Link

MOREHEAD CITY — As fall continues in full swing, so does the sale of colorful pumpkins at First Presbyterian Church — with proceeds being used to send youth to the western part of the state to help with Hurricane Helene relief efforts.

The decorative orbs appear like clockwork in October on the church's front lawn on Arendell Street.

Proceeds each year benefit youth mission trips, and Mandy Vick, director of family life ministries at First Presbyterian Church, said the church plans to send young people this summer to volunteer in Western North Carolina, given the massive destruction and long-term recovery needs.

The storm devastated the western part of the state in late September, causing wide-spread destruction, with more than 90 people still missing as of Oct. 16. There have been at least 118 deaths in North Carolina related to the hurricane, accounting for half of the 243 killed by the storm across multiple states. Helene made landfall Sept. 26 on the Gulf Coast of Florida as a Category 4 storm, then churned its way through the Southeast.

Western Carolina is near and dear to the church's young people because the youth group goes to a retreat each year in Montreat.

"We just got notified this week that we can still bring the youth group there. They plan to be open," Vick said.

The pumpkins arrived Oct. 1 and will be on sale through 5 p.m. Oct. 31, according to Vick. Pumpkins are being sold 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday and noon to 6 p.m. on Sundays.

"We received a tractor-trailer full and we've already sold \$13,000 worth, but we still have plenty," she said.

Pumpkins range in price from \$1 for the smallest to about \$25 for the largest. They come from a Navajo reservation in New Mexico, where they are grown.

Vick said the pumpkins have become a beloved family tradition for members of the community. The church sets up a photo area each year where families can get seasonal photos.

"We've already had so many families out there getting photos," she said. "It's a really wonderful way to get to know the community. And we've actually had people here from the mountains."

As well as being available to families, school groups traditionally come each year to pick out small pumpkins.

There are a variety of colors, including orange, blue and yellow. In addition, there are many uniquely shaped multicolored gourds and green swans.

"I definitely think the unique pumpkins have been popular this year," she said. "We also have unique gourds that have been very popular. We have one this year that is shaped like a starfish."

Vick added that this year the church is taking payments through Venmo and PayPal, in addition to cash and checks.

Contact Cheryl Burke at 252-726-7081, ext. 255; email Cheryl@thenewstimes.com; or follow on Twitter

# @ cherylccnt.

Copyright 2024, The Carteret County News-Times, All Rights Reserved.

# • Citation (aglc Style)

CHERYL BURKE NEWS-TIMES, 'Pumpkin sale to benefit youth mission trip to help with hurricane relief efforts in Western Carolina', *Carteret County News-Times, The*(online), 17 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a> p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C45B5467BD5318>



# NC utilities can cut off customers despite Helene hardships. Watchdog group asks why.

October 17, 2024 | Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles (NC) Author: Joe Marusak, The Charlotte Observer | Section: north\_carolina | 700 Words OpenURL Link

Gov. Roy Cooper included no provision in his statewide Tropical Storm Helene executive order to bar utilities from disconnecting residents who are behind on their bills — unlike his mandate during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The North Carolina Utilities Commission also has enacted no such protections, unlike its orders during the pandemic.

On Oct. 7, due to Helene, Georgia Power announced it was suspending disconnections and waiving late fees until at least Dec. 15 for residential and business customers. In North Carolina, Duke Energy has made no such public announcement.

The lack of action by Cooper and utility regulators in North Carolina concerns a utility watchdog group.

"While many residents are in recovery mode and trying to put their lives back together, a constant threat haunts some: losing utilities again," Sue Sturgis, a North Carolina-based researcher with the nonprofit Energy and Policy Institute, said in an email to The Charlotte Observer.

At least 100,000 North Carolinians rely on electricity for their medical and assistive equipment and devices, she said.

Any customer can be cut off, watchdog group says

During COVID, Cooper prohibited providers of electricity, gas, water and wastewater services from disconnecting customers and collecting fees, penalties and or interest for late payments.

Cooper's COVID mandate lasted 60 days and gave residential customers at least six months to pay outstanding bills, Sturgis said. His mandate followed a North Carolina Utilities Commission order that suspended disconnections for nonpayment.

"Why aren't North Carolina's utility regulators and its largest utility doing the same for people affected by disaster?" Sturgis asked.

Cooper's press office didn't respond to four email and phone messages from the Observer over the past week.

Duke Energy and other utilities can still disconnect "any customer with a balance, despite the state of emergency that's still in effect," Sturgis said.

Duke is waiving disconnections, official says

Sam Watson, general counsel for the state utility commission, said several utilities, including Duke Energy, are voluntarily waiving disconnection and late fees, among other measures, for customers in Helene-affected areas.

Customers in need of relief from their bills should first contact their utility, Watson said. If the person they talk with is unable to resolve the issue, ask for their supervisor, he said.

If necessary, Watson said, contact the state's Public Staff Consumer Services Division at 919-733-9277 or 866-380-9816 or via email at consumer.services@psncuc.gov.

By Tuesday, Duke Energy had restored power to all but 6,500 customers in the Carolinas and to all but 2,221 by Wednesday afternoon, according to the company outage map, down from more than 2.5 million.

Power was restored to all customers in the hard-hit mountain county of Buncombe, which includes Asheville, the outage map showed.

Still, after the deadly wildfires on the island of Maui in 2023, Hawaii's Public Utilities Commission ordered disconnections suspended, Sturgis said.

"Hawaii's largest utility, Hawaii Electric, even publicly announced its moratorium on disconnections," she said. "Why aren't North Carolina's utility regulators and its largest utility doing the same for people affected by disaster?"

"The North Carolina Utilities Commission and the Public Staff know about Duke Energy's voluntary suspension of disconnections and late fees,' Sturgis said. "But how are the people struggling to rebuild their lives in disaster-stricken Western North Carolina supposed to know about the policy?"

"There's been no public announcement by the company or by any state agency," she said. "Duke Energy has repeatedly said it's committed to customer outreach, but it's failing to offer any information up front about the disconnection suspension."

"Compare this with Georgia Power's announcement via press release that it suspended disconnections and late fees through at least Dec. 15 for people affected by Helene," she said.

"Always here to assist customers"

Regarding customers who can't pay their outstanding bills due to Helene, "we are taking a flexible, personal approach to working with those that are facing financial hardships," Duke Energy spokesman Jeff Brooks said in a statement for this story.

"Those in the heavily impacted areas of upstate SC and western NC will be extended the flexibility needed to help them through this difficult time," Brooks said.

"We're always here to assist our customers," he said.

Customers without power are in the "harder and hardest hit areas," Brooks said. "So, these would be places that we are doing more rebuilding of infrastructure than repair. Some areas have been completely devastated, and all infrastructure is being rebuilt."

charlotte-reality-check-related-rh

Copyright (c) 2024 The Charlotte Observer

## • Citation (aglc Style)

Joe Marusak, The Charlotte Observer, 'NC utilities can cut off customers despite Helene hardships. Watchdog group asks why.', *Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles* (online), 17 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a> p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C4380B96007628>



# Family 'watched in horror' as Helene swept their cat away. Then son heard a meow

October 17, 2024 | Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles (NC) Author: Simone Jasper, The Charlotte Observer | Section: north\_carolina | 407 Words OpenURL Link

A family "watched in horror" as floodwaters from Hurricane Helene swept their cat away — then, more than a week later, the son heard a meow.

The faint noise led the Collins family to their beloved feline Ricardo Blanco, who survived the storm that devastated Western North Carolina, according to an animal organization.

"His family — who never gave up hope of being reunited — had returned to their property to assess the damage and discovered Ricardo Blanco had made his way back home," Best Friends Animal Society wrote in an Oct. 17 news release.

blanco cat 2\_fitted.pngRicardo Blanco the cat was found safe more than a week after Hurricane Helene hit North Carolina.

The heartwarming reunion came after Hurricane Helene hit the North Carolina mountains in late September. The deadly storm left the region with wind damage and disastrous flooding.

"While preparing to leave their property in Burnsville, NC due to rising flood waters, Nan Collins and her family watched in horror as they spotted their cat, Ricardo Blanco, desperately trying to climb up the roof of their neighbor's house as it floated downstream," the animal society wrote.

A photo shared on YouTube shows Ricardo Blanco clinging to the roof, but his "grip failed, and he slid into the rushing water." The family couldn't reach their cat and feared the worst as spotty communications made it difficult to spread the word that he was missing.

Then, when the owners returned to their home eight days later, Collins' son found the cat almost unrecognizable. The family took him to a free mobile veterinary clinic that Best Friends Animal Society had set up in the hurricane-battered region.

#### 1017-catreunionncembed

"Despite losing everything, the family wanted to make sure their kitty was OK," the organization wrote in the caption of its YouTube video.

Ricardo Blanco — also known as Blanco — received treatment for an eye infection, ear infections and ticks. Then he was back in the care of Collins, who calls him a "survivor" and a "miracle cat."

"His full name is Ricardo Blanco because he's like a little movie actor, so playful and full of life," Collins said in a post on the animal group's website. "He's like a little puppy dog, always wanting to be beside you and take a walk."

Burnsville is a roughly 35-mile drive northeast from the mountain town of Asheville.

'Friendly' dog got lost as Milton slammed Florida. See heartwarming reunion with owner

89-year-old was 'distraught' when beloved dog went missing. Then came a joyful reunion

## • Citation (aglc Style)

Simone Jasper, The Charlotte Observer, 'Family 'watched in horror' as Helene swept their cat away. Then son heard a meow', Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles (online), 17 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a> p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C45B72F0771EA8>



# Cabarrus, Union and 10 other NC counties now eligible for FEMA assistance after Helene

October 17, 2024 | Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles (NC) Author: Nora O'Neill, The Charlotte Observer | Section: north\_carolina | 292 Words OpenURL Link

People in 12 additional North Carolina counties now qualify for federal assistance following Hurricane Helene, the Federal Emergency Management Agency announced Wednesday.

Cabarrus, Cherokee, Forsyth, Graham, Iredell, Lee, Nash, Rowan, Stanly, Surry, Union and Yadkin counties are now included in the list of North Carolina counties in which people can apply for FEMA disaster assistance. That could include home repair, property loss, temporary lodging and other needs caused by the storm damage. The new additions weren't among the 25 counties in the original federal disaster declaration from President Joe Biden.

The aid is intended to help North Carolina residents impacted by Hurricane Helene, which weakened a tropical storm before hitting the state. The storm has caused almost 100 confirmed deaths statewide and was responsible for devastating rainfall and floodwaters in much of Western North Carolina.

Eligible people can apply for FEMA assistance by visiting disasterassistance.gov or calling 800-621-3362, according to a FEMA news release. Applicants will need to provide a phone number, their address at the time of the disaster and current address, a social security number, a list of damages and losses, banking information and insurance information, the release states.

The new additions mean nearly 40 counties in the state are now eligible for FEMA aid. The complete list includes Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Clay, Cleveland, Gaston, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Lincoln, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mecklenburg, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Swain, Transylvania, Watauga, Wilkes and Yancey counties and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, and the 12 new counties, according to the news release.

Because of the disaster declaration, people who lost their photo ID due to Helene can fill out a photo ID exception form on election day or with their absentee ballot, according to the North Carolina State Board of Elections.

Copyright (c) 2024 The Charlotte Observer

#### • Citation (aglc Style)

Nora O'Neill, The Charlotte Observer, 'Cabarrus, Union and 10 other NC counties now eligible for FEMA assistance after Helene', Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles (online), 17 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a> p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C461588565D218>



# What's open and safe to do in Boone after Hurricane Helene hit Western North Carolina?

October 17, 2024 | Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles (NC) Author: Heidi Finley, The Charlotte Observer | Section: c5\_travel | 1107 Words OpenURL Link

As Western North Carolina recovers from the devastation of Hurricane Helene, many restaurants and small businesses who rely on tourism dollars during the fall foliage travel season are struggling.

While major roadwork will be underway for the foreseeable future and the North Carolina Department of Transportation has called for essential travel only in the region, some towns are now accessible and cautiously welcoming back travelers.

We're taking a look at various Western North Carolina towns to consider visiting with safety in mind, as well as support for those who rely on tourism for their livelihoods.

Here is what you need to know about traveling to Boone in the near future. And as we continue our series on posthurricane traveling in Western North Carolina, you can browse our other guides here:

Beech MountainBlowing RockBrevardCherokeeHendersonville

Is travel to Boone safe?

While Boone remains under a state of emergency declaration, the town is also finding some return to normalcy, too. Appalachian State University has resumed classes, and visitors are slowly beginning to return.

David Jackson, president and CEO of the Boone Area Chamber of Commerce, said via Instagram that as those visitors make their way to Boone, they should be mindful of the destruction that took place.

"As we continue the careful return of students and visitors to our area over the days and weeks ahead, it is important to understand that you aren't coming back to the same community you saw just a few weeks ago," lackson said.

"While some areas have restored their infrastructure and ability to operate quickly, other areas throughout Watauga County and the High Country region are still deeply involved in recovery efforts, and will be for quite some time."

Jackson added, "Please be respectful and pack plenty of grace and patience," in a similar statement on the Boone area Chamber of Commerce website.

Boone's three ski resorts — Appalachian Ski Mtn., Beech Mountain and Sugar Mountain — are also preparing to reopen as normal for skiing and snowboarding.

How to get to Boone

Boone is accessible from Charlotte via I-85 North to U.S. 321 North, as well as via I-77 North to U.S. 421 North. From Raleigh or Durham, take I-40 West to U.S. 421 North. (Note: I-40 West is indefinitely closed past the Maggie Valley interchange, but traffic flowing east from Asheville has reopened.) Main roadways, including U.S. 421 South/W. King Street in downtown Boone, are open for travel. Many secondary roads are undergoing repairs, and lane closures and detours remain in place. Stay on primary routes and follow posted advisories.

RAL\_100124-HELENE-KLM-05.JPGA person walks by a section of washed out road near Highway 421 in Boone, N.C., days after Hurricane Helene brought heavy rain and flooding to the western part of the state.

Can I stay in Boone?

Many hotels and lodging facilities are filled with displaced families, aid workers and repair crews. Explore Boone recommends visitors consider making a day trip to support local shops, restaurants and businesses, adding: "Thank you for your understanding and for helping us prioritize those most in need."

What restaurants are open in Boone?

Restaurants in Boone may be operating on limited hours and menus. Here are a few local spots to check out:

Bella's of Boone Italian Restaurant

Location: 190 Boone Heights Dr, Boone, NC 28607

If an Italian meal is what you're craving, head to Bella's for pizza, a classic pasta dish or an Italian sub. There are also calzones and strombolis, flatbreads, pub fare and a few sweet treats to top off your meal. It's open Monday-Tuesday, 4-9 p.m.; and Thursday-Sunday 11 a.m.-9 p.m. (It's closed on Wednesday.)

Betty's Biscuits

Location: 640 West King Street, Boone, NC 28604

Betty's Biscuits serves up savory and sweet biscuits, plus bowls and plates, using ingredients from local farms and purveyors. Its biscuits can also be ordered by the dozen — with jam, butter or gravy — packed up in boxes to go. For now, hours are 9 a.m.-noon with a limited menu. Gift cards and store merchandise are available online, too.

**Black Cat Burrito** 

Location: 127 S. Depot St., Boone, NC 28607

Black Cat Burrito has resumed normal hours and is open in downtown Boone from Tuesday-Saturday, 11:30 a.m.-9 p.m. Of course, you'll find a variety of burritos there. (It is in the name, after all.) But there are also tacos, enchiladas, loaded fries and salad.

F.A.R.M. Cafe

Location: 617 W King St, Boone, NC 28607

In addition to making meals to donate to community members, F.A.R.M. Cafe is open for lunch Monday-Friday, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Items on the menu include breakfast burritos, soups, salads and desserts. Vegetarian, vegan, glutenfree, dairy-free and nut-free options are available.

Gamekeeper

Location: 3005 Shulls Mill Rd, Boone, NC 28607

Gamekeeper, a fine dining restaurant in the mountains between Boone and Blowing Rock, has reopened for dinner service Wednesday-Sunday from 5-9 p.m. Reservations are required for its "adventurous" menu, which includes emu, duck, elk and bison. You'll also want to take note that valet parking is offered, as the driveway and parking lots are steep and can be difficult to access. Gift cards are also available.

Melanie's Food Fantasy

Location: 664 W King St, Boone, NC 28607

For now, Melanie's Food Fantasy is open from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. daily. Customers can purchase gift cards at the cafe that will help fund the restaurant's free meals for the community. Melanie's calls its vegan-friendly menu "eclectic," and its meals include pimento cheese grits, a tempeh scramble, corned beef hash and more.

Troy's 105 Diner

Location: 1286 Highway 105, Boone, NC, 28607

Troy's 105 Diner offers breakfast all day, along with house-made soups, thick burgers, comfort food platters and a variety of salads. Daily specials and a whole lineup of desserts are among the selections. It's open Sunday-Tuesday, 7 a.m.-3 p.m., and Wednesday-Saturday, 7 a.m.-8 p.m.

Important information for Boone travelers

Here are need-to-know points for visiting Boone and the surrounding area:

A curfew from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. is in effect in Watauga County. Parts of the Blue Ridge Parkway in North Carolina are indefinitely closed for all uses, including foot and bike traffic. North Carolina State Parks, including Elk Knob State Park, will be closed for now. Hiking on Boone-area trails outside of these areas is not recommended for safety reasons, Explore Boone has said.

[STATE PARKS UPDATES: These 5 NC state parks are reopening after Hurricane Helene. But many are still closed.]

RAL\_100124-HELENE-KLM-07 (1).JPGA sign offers encouragement along Highway 421 in Boone, N.C. on Tuesday, Oct. 1, 2024, days after Hurricane Helene brought heavy rain and flooding to the North Carolina mountains.

Resources to check before you go

Storm cleanup is an ever-changing situation, so make sure to get the most up-to-date information you can before you head out.

Explore BooneTown of BooneNorth Carolina Department of TransportationVisitNC.com

RAL\_27793270-02.JPGVibrant fall foliage covers a mountainside overlooking a small farm in the Matney community in western Watauga County near Boone in 2023.

Copyright (c) 2024 The Charlotte Observer

## • Citation (aglc Style)

Heidi Finley, The Charlotte Observer, 'What's open and safe to do in Boone after Hurricane Helene hit Western North Carolina?', *Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles* (online), 17 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a> p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C4380B8D24A3A8>



# Early Voting has begun in NC. Here's your guide to casting a ballot before Election Day

October 17, 2024 | Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles (NC) Author: Evan Moore, The Charlotte Observer | Section: voter\_guide | 649 Words OpenURL Link

Early voting is officially underway in North Carolina, where millions of voters are expected to cast their ballots before the general election on Tuesday, Nov. 5.

In 2016, 62% of North Carolina voters cast early ballots, N.C. State Board of Elections (NCSBE) Executive Director Karen Brinson Bell said during a press event Tuesday. In 2020, that number jumped to 65%.

There are more than 400 early voting sites open across the state.

Here's your guide to casting a ballot during the early voting period in North Carolina.

Where can you go to vote early in NC?

You can use the NCSBE early voting search tool at vt.ncsbe.gov/EVSite to find an early voting site near you.

Just select your county you live in (or the one you're registered to vote in) from the drop-down menu for a list of early voting sites in your area and their hours of operation.

Early voting gives you more flexibility on when and where you you can vote. During the early voting period, voters can visit any early voting site in their county. While on Election Day, voters must visit their assigned polling place.

RAL\_101724-EarlyVotingTss.JPGA line curves around the parking lot of the Herb C. Young Recreation Center in Cary, N.C., Thursday morning, Oct. 17, 2024 as people wait to cast their ballots on the first day of early voting in North Carolina.

How to view your sample ballot in NC

If you're a registered voter, you can view your sample ballot by entering your information into the NCSBE voter search tool at vt.ncsbe.gov/RegLkup.

Once you've entered your information, click "Your Sample Ballot."

Do I need to bring anything when I vote early in NC?

Yes, you'll need to bring a photo ID starting this election to vote in North Carolina.

However, you can still vote without showing an ID by filling out an ID Exception Form.

On the form, voters can choose from the following permitted exceptions:

The voter has a "reasonable impediment" to showing photo ID. This means that something is preventing the voter from showing ID. The voter has a religious objection to being photographed. The voter was a victim of a natural disaster within 100 days before Election Day that resulted in a disaster declaration by the President or the Governor of North Carolina. (This is true for 25 North Carolina counties. See below for more information.)

Tips for filling out your ballot in NC

Here's what to know about filling out your ballot, according to NCSBE:

With the marking device provided or a black ball point pen, completely fill in the oval to the left of each candidate or selection of your choice as shown. Where authorized, you may write in a candidate by filling in the oval and writing the name on the write-in line. If you tear your ballot and/or mark it incorrectly, return it to an election official and request a replacement.

Can I drop my absentee ballot off at an early voting site in NC?

Yes. You can deliver your absentee ballots to an election official at an early voting site while the site is open. Ballots will be kept securely and delivered to the county board of elections for processing.

What to know about early voting in Western NC

If you're registered to vote in one of the 25 counties in Western North Carolina affected by Hurricane Helene, you can drop off your ballot at any early voting site or county board of elections office in the state, or at the state board of elections in Raleigh.

Those counties, according to FEMA, are:

Alexander Alleghany Ashe Avery Buncombe Burke Caldwell Catawba Clay Cleveland Gaston Haywood Henderson Jackson Lincoln Macon Madison McDowell Mitchell Polk Rutherford Transylvania Watauga Wilkes Yancey

When does early voting end in NC?

Early voting in North Carolina ends on Saturday, Nov. 2 at 3 p.m.

Ask NC service journalism team EMBED

Need to find your NC polling place to cast a vote for the 2024 election? Here's how.

Support these Western NC artisans + Helene storm victims at 2024 NC State Fair

Copyright (c) 2024 The Charlotte Observer

## • Citation (aglc Style)

Evan Moore, The Charlotte Observer, 'Early Voting has begun in NC. Here's your guide to casting a ballot before Election Day', *Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles* (online), 17 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a> p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C4380B874461D0>



# Mark Robinson says alleged comments in CNN report won't hurt his 2024 election chances

October 17, 2024 | Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles (NC) Author: Nora O'Neill, The Charlotte Observer | Section: election | 532 Words OpenURL Link

Republican Lt. Gov. Mark Robinson on Thursday said he doesn't think sexually explicit and racist comments attributed to him in a CNN report last month will hurt his chances at being elected governor.

Robinson, who denies he made the posts and recently announced a lawsuit was filed against CNN over the report, told The Charlotte Observer at a meet and greet in south Charlotte that the comments posted on the website Nude Africa are "ridiculous." And while Robinson has repeatedly said the comments were not made by him, he specifically condemned the content of the comments on Thursday.

The comments included Robinson saying he was a Black Nazi and that he wished slavery would return, CNN reported.

"Yes, I condemn the comments," Robinson said when asked. "I mean, as a matter of fact, the comments were ridiculous. Some of the stuff that I read that I supposedly said on this site are just nonsense. And so of course we condemn those comments."

robinsonnocrowd.jpgLt. Gov. Mark Robinson address a group of around 10 people during a meet and greet at Victory Christian Center Campus III in Charlotte on Thursday.

He called CNN a "dishonest news organization" and that "many people, including a great number of independents," have no faith in news outlets. CNN reported it found multiple online accounts under the same email address used on Nude Africa and noted connections between the comments and Robinson's other online activity.

Robinson has a history of making controversial remarks, including on abortion, LGBTQ+ rights, Jewish people and Black Lives Matter. In 2019, a Facebook video showed Robinson saying that abortion is not about protecting women but rather killing children because "you weren't responsible enough to keep your skirt down."

Recent polls show Attorney General Josh Stein polling between 10-20 points ahead of Robinson, while the race for president is much tighter in the battleground state.

Robinson spoke to the Observer at a meet and greet event at Victory Christian Center Campus III where he addressed a room of around 10 people after arriving 30 minutes late. Robinson said he wasn't concerned about the low turnout.

robinsonsmallcrowd.jpgLt. Gov. Mark Robinson address a group of around 10 people at a meet and greet in Charlotte on Thursday.

"I kind of like smaller groups. We did this kind of quickly. It wasn't something that we organized for months," he said. "We're certainly not discouraged by the size at all. We love how people can go out and be emissaries for us and give people a more in depth view of actually who we are."

Matt Hurley, a new addition to Robinson's campaign team after most of his former staff quit, said he has a big philosophy change for the campaign: instead of keeping Robinson "locked up," he wants to let Robinson speak to more people including news media. The event at Victory Christian Center Campus, Hurley said, was an attempt at outreach to the Black community.

Robinson spoke to the group about education, Hurricane Helene relief, state agencies and more, before taking questions from attendees.

"The size may look small, but there's people behind you," one attendee told Robinson at the end of his speech. "Don't be moved by what you see We're behind you. We're praying for you."

Copyright (c) 2024 The Charlotte Observer

## • Citation (aglc Style)

Nora O'Neill, The Charlotte Observer, 'Mark Robinson says alleged comments in CNN report won't hurt his 2024 election chances', *Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles* (online), 17 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C45DCC74FF1BB0">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C45DCC74FF1BB0</a>



# 'Let's lead the country, Durham': Tim Walz, Bill Clinton rally in Bull City, advocate for early voting

October 17, 2024 | Chronicle, The (Duke University) (Durham, NC) Author: Zoe Kolenovsky and Abby Spiller| Section: News| 1160 Words OpenURL Link

Former President Bill Clinton and Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz hosted a rally in Durham Thursday to support the Harris campaign on the first day of early voting in North Carolina.

The politicians focused their remarks around contrasting the two major presidential campaigns, characterizing a prospective Trump-Vance administration as dangerous for democracy, while identifying the Harris-Walz ticket as the campaign of "freedom."

"There is one political party now that is pro-democracy, and that's us," Walz said.

The event kicked off an "Early Vote bus tour" headlined by Clinton that will make stops in cities across eastern North Carolina this weekend. It marks Walz's third visit to the state since being named Harris' running mate.

Clinton and Walz took to the stage just after 4 p.m to the tune of John Mellencamp's "Small Town" at the Community Family Life and Recreation Center at Lyon Park.

In his opening remarks, Walz expressed feeling "a little bit giddy" at being onstage with "comeback kid" Clinton, "who knows a little bit something about being an underdog and being underestimated a bit" — a reference to Harris' fledgling campaign, which began less than three months ago after President Joe Biden dropped out of the race in July.

Walz then moved to acknowledge the devastation faced by communities in western North Carolina in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene.

"The Biden-Harris administration [is] doing everything they possibly can to get relief ..." Walz said. "... This is what it looks like to be unified."

He denounced efforts by Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump and his running mate, Ohio Sen. JD Vance, for spreading misinformation about people living in the U.S. legally, from Springfield, Ohio, and Colorado, even after Republican officials urged them to stop.

"Let's be honest, there are outsiders coming into communities, stealing and moving jobs away and making life harder for people living there, and they have names: Donald Trump and JD Vance," Walz said.

He then pivoted to promoting the Democratic ticket's economic platform. Walz accused airlines of price gouging in the days around when Hurricane Helene made landfall, raising prices in response to increased demand. He also promoted Harris' promise to build an opportunity economy, which prioritizes policies that support the middle class and includes a proposal to institute a federal ban on the practice.

Walz further claimed that under a Harris administration, "100 million Americans ... will see a tax cut," after the administration restores two cuts designed to help the middle class — the Child Tax Credit and the Earned Income Tax Credit — by allowing Americans to maintain more of their income.

He disparaged Trump's economic platform, which has been one of the Republican nominee's strongest selling points among supporters.

"I have met no one in my life that has less business acumen than Donald Trump," Walz said. "... He doesn't know business, and he damn sure doesn't know the middle class."

He also touched on a range of other policy issues in his address, including housing, health care, policing, gun rights and reproductive freedom.

Walz moved to discuss his Oct. 10 debate with Vance, where the senator evaded questions about whether Trump lost the 2020 presidential election. Walz shared that "yesterday ... [Vance] said Donald Trump did not lose the 2020 election."

He closed by promoting the Democratic National Committee's voter information website, where North Carolina voters can check their registration status, track their ballot and access general voting information.

Clinton then took to the podium, praising Walz's record as governor of Minnesota — and role as coach of his high school's football team.

He then moved into a more serious discussion of the danger a second Trump term could pose for the nation.

"We should realize that more than ever before in my lifetime, the fundamental protections of the Constitution — majority rule, minority rights, individual rights, the rule of law ... — those things are in great danger," Clinton said.

He compared the presidential election to a "job interview for the most important job in the world," but asserted that voters should deem Trump unfit for the position.

"Being president is a sacred duty. The sheer joy I had every day — I'll never be able to repay all of you for it," Clinton said. "Even [on] the terrible days when they were trying to tear my head off, there was always something good you could do for someone."

He accused Trump of instead leveraging the presidency to address "personal grievances" and espouse "conspiracy theories."

"It's always about him," Clinton said, referring to Trump. "One of the reasons [why] I want Kamala Harris is [because] it will be about you."

His statements were met with cheers from the crowd of over a hundred supporters packed into the venue's gymnasium, some sporting camouflage caps with "Harris Walz" in orange letters and union members wearing blue "Teamsters for Harris" t-shirts.

Clinton shared that he did not plan to "be involved with" future elections, joking that he was "too old to gild the lily" and "only too much younger than Donald Trump." However, he explained to the event's attendees that he felt a responsibility to show up to stump for Harris.

"I've been doing this a long, long time, and I can honestly say that this time, I am not here running for anything anymore except for my grandchildrens' future," Clinton said.

He encouraged attendees to vote early and "spend the rest of the time all the way up to the Election Day taking other people to the polls."

Clinton and Walz were introduced by a number of Democratic politicians at the state and local level.

Durham Mayor Pro Tempore Mark-Anthony Middleton promoted the Harris-Walz campaign's platform on critical issues like the economy, housing and reproductive rights and emphasized Durham's role in securing the state's 16 electoral votes for the Democratic ticket.

"We know that if this state is going to be won, Durham is going to have a large part to do with it," Middleton said.
"... Let's lead the country, Durham."

N.C. Sen. Natalie Murdock, who also serves as political and coalition director for the North Carolina Coordinated Campaign, detailed the state's early voting policies.

The Karsh Alumni and Visitors Center began operating as an on-campus polling site Thursday and will remain open through Nov. 2 — the end of the early voting period. Same-day registration is available during early voting.

Murdock reminded attendees about North Carolina's new photo ID requirement, which was implemented last year after a 2018 law that had previously been struck down by the N.C. Supreme Court was reinstated. Duke students can use their physical DukeCard as an acceptable form of photo ID.

Murdock also promoted the N.C. Democratic Party's voter assistance hotline, which features hundreds of operators on standby to answer questions about voter registration, early and absentee voting procedures and polling locations. North Carolinians can access the service by calling 1-833-VOTE4NC.

-----

Zoe Kolenovsky | News Editor

Zoe Kolenovsky is a Trinity junior and news editor of The Chronicle's 120th volume.

-----

Abby Spiller | Editor-in-Chief

Abby Spiller is a Trinity junior and editor-in-chief of The Chronicle's 120th volume.

Copyright (c) 2024 The Chronicle. All rights reserved.

## • Citation (aglc Style)

Zoe Kolenovsky and Abby Spiller, "Let's lead the country, Durham': Tim Walz, Bill Clinton rally in Bull City, advocate for early voting', *Chronicle, The* (online), 17 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a> p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C492A009D3ABB8>



# Voting can begin on Thursday

October 17, 2024 | Clay County Progress (NC) Author: Becky Long; Publisher | Section: News | 141 Words Page: 2 OpenURL Link

Early voting opens Thursday, Oct. 17 at the Clay County Board of Elections. Voting will be conducted at the BOE office at 75 Riverside Circle in Suite 3, on the lower level of the former Community Services Building across from the library. Early voting is open weekdays, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Oct 17 through Saturday, Nov. 2 when it is open 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Regarding absentee mail ballot requests, the Clay County BOE has received 94 ballots back and have sent out 380.

In-person early voting begins Thursday at 419 sites statewide including Clay, and the 76 sites in the 25 counties most affected by Hurricane Helene. Important dates: Oct. 17: In-person early voting begins; same-day registration available. Oct. 29: Absentee ballot request deadline (5 p.m.). Nov. 2: In-person early voting ends (3 p.m.). Nov. 5: Election Day.

Copyright © 2024 Clay County Progress, Community Newspapers, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

## • Citation (aglc Style)

Becky Long, Publisher, 'Voting can begin on Thursday', *Clay County Progress* (online), 17 Oct 2024 2 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C42C890AEDF558">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C42C890AEDF558</a>