

# Murphy: Sustained recovery effort, prayer needed for Western NC

October 3, 2024 | Daily Reflector, The (Greenville, NC) Author: Pat Gruner | Section: Local | 728 Words OpenURL Link

A Greenville congressman said the outpouring of support for western North Carolina communities devastated by Hurricane Helene must be sustained over what is expected to be a long road toward recovery.

U.S. Rep. Greg Murphy, who represents North Carolina's 3rd Congressional District, visited western North Carolina on Tuesday alongside U.S. Sens. Ted Budd and Thom Tillis and U.S. Rep. David Rouzer of Wilmington and N.C. Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler.

The group passed through a command station in Hickory, where Murphy said at least 20-25 private pilots flew helicopters to assist with recovery efforts. From there they went to the Asheville Regional Airport to get aerial views of the surrounding area. He said there are "a lot of good people" as well as "obvious confusion" amid relief efforts, but believes that work is moving in the right direction.

"There still are a lot of folks out in regions that are stranded and there are a lot of rescues going on," Murphy said.

Murphy was involved in disaster relief efforts after a magnitude 7 earthquake in Haiti in 2010 and Hurricane Katrina in 2005. On Tuesday he visited near Canton, west of Asheville, where he observed marked differences in how eastern and western North Carolina's terrain handles excessive water.

"Were we in the east, if we have a major hurricane flooding event we can park water and it takes awhile for the water to go down," Murphy said. "If you have 50 acres and a foot of water, it just sits on the farm. There, it comes down the mountain in a torrent, concentrates in a gully culvert and then with great speed and very fast movement of water, is a lot more damaging in the immediacy. It drains off a lot quicker, but it really can take out structures, cause landslides, really do a lot more immediate damage than the floods we see."

The Associated Press reported as of Wednesday at least 176 people have been killed across six states, including at least 57 in and around Asheville and the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Murphy said despite the difference in terrain, aspects of relief like resource gathering remain the same. He said residents need diapers, hygiene items, food and water just as they would after a storm in Greenville.

"You can extrapolate some of what we've learned in the east, but then it's a whole new venture when you go out west," Murphy said.

Gov. Roy Cooper viewed the area with President Joe Biden on Wednesday. He said hundreds of thousands of pounds of food, water and other supplies are being deployed to the region. He said FEMA has delivered about 1 million liters of water and over 600,000 meals to the cause as of Tuesday.

Cooper said that Department of Transportation crews are at work clearing debris to reopen roads. He said hundreds of people have been rescued at this point and also praised the response of President Joe Biden's administration, who he said approved assets from Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune in Jacksonville and Fort Liberty in Fayetteville to assist the efforts. More than 1,000 National Guard member now have been deployed to the area as well.

Murphy said Wednesday that washed out roads have hampered access to some communities, making helicopters essential. He said rescue efforts and providing vital resources are the immediate need. In the long term, he expects rebuilding communities to take "many, many years" due to washed out roads, homes, developments and businesses.

"Our nation is not new to relief and this is why we have a union of states where New York can come help us and we can come help them in times of need," Murphy said. "Pressing on that to my colleagues is going to be critical."

Back east, Murphy urges residents to seek out reputable, substantiated organizations if they wish to provide aid to their western neighbors. Pitt County entities including churches, Greenville Fire-Rescue, the Pitt County Sheriff's Office and Greenville Police Department have dispatched supplies and manpower to the west in recovery efforts.

"I'm a person of prayer, I'm a person of faith and I think prayer is always the first thing you should do," Murphy said. "I think the people of western North Carolina have always come to our aid when we've had hurricanes and so now it's time for us to return the favor. Not just today, not just tomorrow, not in a week but in the months to come."

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# County helping western N.C. after Helene

October 3, 2024 | Enquirer-Journal, The (Monroe, NC) Author: Union County Government | Section: Enquirer Journal | 416 Words OpenURL Link

MONROE, N.C. — In the wake of Hurricane Helene, which caused widespread damage in western North Carolina, several Union County departments have mobilized to provide disaster relief assistance and stand ready to assist when called upon by N.C. Emergency Management.

Union County Emergency Management is coordinating county resources to support the recovery efforts, deploying personnel, equipment and other vital aid as needed to help affected communities. That assistance includes:

Union County Sheriff's Office has deployed eight deputies, a mobile command bus, several specialty vehicles and a drone operator to Buncombe County to assist with search-and-rescue missions and patrol duties. Emergency Communications telecommunicators are assisting with answering 911 calls from some impacted areas and helping coordinate emergency response efforts. A crew of 10 Union County water technicians are assisting with repairs to water and wastewater infrastructure in the Asheville area. Union County water staff delivered a generator to the town of Clyde in Haywood County to borrow indefinitely. About 25 social services team members are deploying to assist with emergency evacuee shelter operations. Other social services staff members will be assisting virtually with disaster SNAP and Medicaid applications. Five environmental health specialists are pending deployment to assist with food, lodging and institutional facility inspections, as well as inspections of private drinking wells and septic systems. One public health nurse is pending deployment to assist in response efforts. A public communications team member is awaiting deployment information to assist with sharing critical information with the public in affected areas. Several departments are coordinating donation efforts, including human services, cooperative extension, emergency management, Union County Library, and the sheriff's office.

Additionally, some county employees have requested and been approved to use paid time off to volunteer with community organizations providing much needed relief.

Multiple fire departments in Union County have deployed firefighters to fill critical roles in search and rescue operations.

"Our emergency mnagement team has worked extensively the last several days to identify resources that can assist western North Carolina," said County Manager Brian Matthews. "We are fortunate to have employees who have readily volunteered to help our neighbors in need."

In addition to personnel and equipment, the county is prepared to offer additional support as the situation evolves. The coordinated response effort will continue as the full impact of Tropical Storm Helene becomes clearer, with Union County departments ready to step in wherever assistance is required.

For those looking to contribute to disaster relief efforts, visit the UC Cares webpage. The county strongly encourages residents to coordinate with official organizations to ensure donations align with the needs of the affected areas.

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# Rescue and relief efforts ongoing amid Helene impact

October 3, 2024 | Enquirer-Journal, The (Monroe, NC) Author: Michael Wayne O'Neill mwoneill@theej.com| Section: Enquirer Journal| 557 Words OpenURL Link

MONROE, N.C. — Julie and Keith Walters could not believe what they heard about the devastation Hot Springs suffered due to Hurricane Helene last week.

Luckily, their mountain home survived the flooding that destroyed the rest of the town. It survived because it was on a hill.

Julie immediately called friends, gathered supplies and said, "Let's hit the ground running."

"We need to get help immediately," she said. "We want to not (just) deliver supplies, but we want to be physically involved with their cleanup. They are having a hard time finding volunteers to help (with) the physical labor of shoveling sand and helping rebuild from the devastation."

Keith and Julie, along with Richard Price, are some of the Monroe residents who will be going to Hot Springs to help clean up the town. They plan to make several trips to the town in Madison County.

Julie said the overflowing of a creek in Hot Springs mainly caused the destruction through the town.

"The creek flooded and there's also a main river that goes through town called the French Broad River," she said.

"The French Broad River did have a little bit of flooding, but most of the flooding was the creek, and it washed out from one side of town to the other. It took the floors, windows and merchandise."

### Communication issues

Several other Union County residents have family members in the mountains whom they had trouble connecting with. Wingate resident Doris Buttrell has a parent who lives in Old Fort in McDowell County and has yet to go up to the area.

"I can't get to my mom," she said. "There is no way to get to her house right now."

The number of confirmed deaths in the region crossed the 200 threshold Thursday when North Carolina officials said the state's tally had risen to 97, a figure that later climbed to 108, according to USA Today.

In the areas with catastrophic damage, there is no power, infrastructure damage and a lack of access. As of Thursday, 105,000 Duke Energy customers in North Carolina are still without power.

#### Other helpers

Union County organizations, including JAARS and the American Red Cross Southern Piedmont Chapter, wasted no time transporting supplies and providing necessities.

Sheila Crunkleton of the American Red Cross said she was deployed to Asheville, where she was in charge of planning and operations. While there, she had difficulty keeping in touch with others.

"We lost all connectivity, much like everybody in that area," she said. "We lost power first, then we lost water, then we lost cell phone coverage that was going on across the entire area.

"We relocated to an emergency center and we rode out there for a couple of days, and then we came back to our office still without power, still without water, but we're bringing in resources to support that because it's a very difficult situation up there," Crunkleton said.

The American Red Cross had pre-storm shelters set up across North Carolina before the devastation occurred.

Crunkleton and her team urge others to pitch in more supplies and continue helping the people in the mountains.

"This is a catastrophic event; this is not a small event," she said. "And we need people to support the people up there. We need people to remember that we're not in competition. We're all working together, and we're working for the betterment of the people that have been affected by the storm."

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# State Parks west of I77 closed through October

October 3, 2024 | Enquirer-Journal, The (Monroe, NC) Author: North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources Section: Enquirer Journal | 414 Words OpenURL Link

RALEIGH, N.C. — All North Carolina state parks west of Interstate 77 are closed through at least Oct. 31, the Division of Parks and Recreation announced. These parks include Chimney Rock, Crowders Mountain, Elk Knob, Gorges, Grandfather Mountain, Lake James, Lake Norman, Mount Mitchell, New River, South Mountains, and Stone Mountains state parks, as well as Mount Jefferson State Natural Area and Rendezvous Mountain.

In addition, all events and programs at all state parks have been canceled through Oct. 31, with the exception of Dismal Day, Oct. 12, at Dismal Swamp State Park; Fear at the Fort, Oct. 18-19 and 25-26, at Fort Macon State Park; and a Schools in Parks training, Oct. 26, at Carolina Beach State Park.

The division is assisting with the statewide emergency and rescue efforts in western North Carolina, in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene. About 30 staff have been deployed on law enforcement assignments requested through the North Carolina Emergency Operations Center. Scaling back operations across the state will allow staff to continue to assist with critical deployments. In addition, the closure of western parks can help limit travel in the area while roads and other infrastructure are repaired and replaced.

"The devastation brought by Helene in many communities across western North Carolina has been profound," said State Parks Director Brian Strong. "The entire division wants to provide whatever assistance we can to our neighbors and to these areas that were hit hardest. We want to prioritize our resources, both staff and equipment, towards immediate and lifesaving needs."

State park rangers are sworn law enforcement officers, and many park field staff — rangers and maintenance technicians — are certified as emergency medical responders, are trained to operate chainsaws and large equipment, and possess a commercial driver's license. Once the vital needs of post-storm recovery efforts have been met, staff will focus on recreational facilities at parks, including trails, visitor centers, and campsites. Staff will assess conditions, clear downed trees, and address any remaining safety hazards before reopening to the public.

"In the last few days alone, we have seen the entire state come together to support each other during this difficult time," Strong said. "We know our parks are beloved by North Carolinians, but we also know our visitors are eager to help those who are grieving and those who have lost so much because of this storm."

All reservations for campsites and other facilities such as picnic shelters at western state parks through Oct. 31 have been canceled and refunded in full.

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North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, 'State Parks west of I77 closed through October', *Enquirer-Journal, The* (online), 3 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/19BFF8DA6F9A4780>



# Mayor Burns supports embattled Robinson on Monroe visit

October 3, 2024 | Enquirer-Journal, The (Monroe, NC) Author: Gene Stowe and Michael Wayne O'Neill| Section: Archives | 535 Words OpenURL Link

MONROE, N.C. — Republican gubernatorial candidate Mark Robinson, facing defections from many party leaders since a Sept. 19 CNN report detailing his past inflammatory activity on a porn website, found support from Mayor Robert Burns and others on a visit to Monroe last week.

Robinson, who has vehemently denied the report, toured downtown Monroe with Burns in the midafternoon Wednesday, Oct. 2, and thanked emergency workers for their work in the wake of catastrophic Hurricane Helene. He headlined a hastily arranged evening open town hall-style meeting with a question-and-answer session at the Belk Mansion that drew about 100 people.

"He came to thank our team," Burns said. "He saw some social media posts of our team. The first thing was we went through and he thanked everybody."

Two swift water rescue teams from the Monroe Fire Department rescued more than 100 people from floodwaters in western North Carolina, Burns said. A team of electrical line workers restored power to Prosperity, S.C., ahead of schedule. The Prosperity mayor plans to attend a Monroe City Council meeting to thank the city in person. The crew then worked in Newberry, S.C. Just before the hurricane, Monroe police officers were on the coast assisting colleagues through a mutual aid agreement.

"Our entire city has been helping all around the state," Burns said.

"Right now, Lt. Gov. Robinson and his team remain focused on doing all they can to help get much-needed relief to those impacted by Hurricane Helene," communications director Mike Lonergan said.

Burns said Robinson attracted support from passersby downtown as they visited businesses.

"He's a noticeable figure," Burns said. "As we were walking downtown, people were honking — 'you have my vote, keep fighting.' It was a good time for myself to start to get to know him."

Burns, who was out of town when Robinson visited Monroe last month at the Palace Restaurant, said he supports Robinson, while many other leaders are distancing themselves.

"Elected officials, people already there, are probably more inclined to get behind him and be more vocal about it," Burns said. "He had said what he doesn't want to do is hurt anybody else's campaign.

"There are no longer races about personalities. They are about policies," Burns said. "I'm not seeing these individuals running away in droves. I think they're just being quiet."

Many Republican officials have called on Robinson to provide evidence of his claims, while refusing to condemn him. But the Raleigh CBS affiliate reported that some Republicans for Congress and council of state seats have removed their endorsement of Robinson from their social media.

Robinson's support among Republican voters has fallen from 83% to 63%, according to an East Carolina University poll that shows him behind Democrat Josh Stein 55% to 33%. Before the report, Stein led by only 6%.

GOP presidential candidate Donald Trump, who holds a slight lead over Democrat Kamala Harris in North Carolina, endorsed Robinson during the Republican primary for governor and has compared him favorably to Martin Luther

King Jr., but he has not mentioned or appeared with Robinson since the CNN report.

Some Republican officials have vigorously defended Robinson. The New York Times reported the Forsyth County Republican Party posted on its social media that "what the Democrats have done to Robinson is a modern-day lynching."

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Gene Stowe and Michael Wayne O'Neill, 'Mayor Burns supports embattled Robinson on Monroe visit', *Enquirer-Journal, The* (online), 3 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C04B5AF3E26CC8">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C04B5AF3E26CC8</a>



# How you can help NC State football's relief efforts in aftermath of Helene

October 3, 2024 | Fayetteville Observer, The (NC) Author: Rodd Baxley; Fayetteville Observer | Section: Sports | 266 Words Page: B2 OpenURL Link

N.C. State football defensive lineman Davin Vann and the Wolfpack are collecting relief supplies to send to western North Carolina in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene.

Vann's mother, Joy Hall, owns Joyful Movers moving company in Cary. The Wolfpack will be collecting donations and filling up trucks over the next three days for communities dealing with the devastating effects of Helene.

The trucks will be at the Close-King Indoor Practice Facility from 3-8 p.m. on Monday and from noon to 8 p.m. on Tuesday and Wednesday.

N.C. State football coach Dave Doeren said they're looking for donations of bottled water, electrolyte drinks, premixed baby formula, diapers, baby wipes and other hygiene products, such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, deodorant, hand sanitizer, diapers and shampoo. Flash lights, batteries and lanterns, as well as blankets, sleeping bags and pop-top canned foods are also listed as items of need.

"Anything that anybody wants to bring over, we would love to have to fill this moving truck to take over to those folks," Doeren said Monday during his weekly press conference.

"Really proud and thankful for Davin and his family. Davin probably just came off the best game of his career, as well. For that to be what's on his mind today, I think, says a lot about that young man and his family. ... They'll gather the goods and then they'll be delivered to Durham Rescue Mission for dissemination."

According to the Asheville Citizen-Times, at least 41 fatalities have been attributed to the storm in western North Carolina. For the latest updates, visit citizen-times.com.

Staff writer Rodd Baxley can be reached at rbaxley@fayobserver.com or @RoddBaxley on X/Twitter.

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Rodd Baxley, Fayetteville Observer, 'How you can help NC State football's relief efforts in aftermath of Helene', *Fayetteville Observer, The* (online), 3 Oct 2024 B2 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a> p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BFA90EEC7E9448>



# Recently revived NC town struggles after hurricane

October 3, 2024 | Fayetteville Observer, The (NC) Author: Chris Kenning; USA TODAY| Section: News | 523 Words Page: A10 OpenURL Link

MARSHALL, N.C. – Sandra Hensley-Sprinkle, 68, grew up in Marshall, with its tiny downtown clinging to the edge of the French Broad River north of Asheville. North Carolina.

Marshall was a bustling Appalachian town with big department stores when she was young, she said. Then its fortunes waned and buildings became vacant. But in recent years, it had undergone a revival, renewed by an influx of art, music and dining. The once-dilapidated jailhouse has been turned into a boutique hotel and restaurant.

On Monday, she walked down the steep hill from her home to a downtown shattered by Hurricane Helene: streets full of thick mud, mangled debris, twisted train tracks and overturned vehicles. "We've never seen anything like this," she said.

The historic town, with a population of just under 800 in 2022, was hammered by Helene's deluge of water. Among the buildings swamped or destroyed was a railroad depot built in the 1890s that had become home to weekly old-time music shows.

The floods damaged a water treatment plant across the river and left most of the town without power or phone service. Marshall Mayor Aaron Haynie told local media there had been "some" fatalities.

Longtime residents said it was the worst flooding disaster in at least a century. Some people took to roofs, they said, and some saw semitrailers pushed downstream. One video clip shows a whole home floating down through the raging waters.

"It's a tragedy," said Keaton Griffin, as he shoveled mud and debris into a wheelbarrow.

Residents in Marshall, like elsewhere in Western North Carolina just a couple of days after the storm, scrambled to find what they needed without power or phones as National Guard helicopters buzzed above the area.

At a nearby supermarket on Monday, people offered each other tips on buying needed wares but were stymied because stores were either closed or didn't take credit cards. Some waited in long lines of cars for limited gas – if they could get cash from a working ATM.

Resident Annie Griffey, 73, said her cousin found an unusual way to deliver water and perishable food: private helicopter delivery dropped off at the local cemetery.

On Monday, after river levels lowered, cleanup crews were at work removing thick mud and pulling belongings from waterlogged homes. Excavators buzzed on the downtown streets gutted by the floods.

Chad Adamowski shoveled out mud from his eclectically decorated tattoo shop that doubles as a music studio and performance space. He pointed at a stuffed Buffalo head nearly 6 feet up a wall, its chin still wet with flood water, to show how high it got.

Adamowski, who opened his store in Marshall about 14 years ago, said the area's revival ramped up during the pandemic. "Lots of folks started coming in and opening businesses. Before you knew it, we had a thriving community."

No one can be sure whether the flood will stall that progress. But Adamowski says he and other owners are certain to rebuild. If the Buffalo head could stay up, so could he.

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# Strike could cripple response and recovery efforts, hurt economy

October 3, 2024 | Fayetteville Observer, The (NC) Author: Madison Lipe; Wilmington StarNews | Section: News | 834 Words Page: A1 OpenURL Link

"Profit over people is unacceptable, support ILA workers," read multiple signs Tuesday at the Port of Wilmington as longshoremen and other workers gathered to strike.

The Master Contract between the International Longshoreman's Association and the United States Maritime Alliance expired, and both parties have not reached a new agreement. Longshoremen across the East Coast and Gulf Coast are fighting for higher pay and fair treatment and at Wilmington's port the situation is no different.

Just days after Helene left widespread devastation in western North Carolina, U.S. Rep. David Rouzer, whose district includes the Port of Wilmington, posted on X that the strike could cripple response and recovery efforts, as well as have disastrous effects on the local economy.

According to USA TODAY, each day of the strikes across the East and Gulf coasts could cost the U.S. economy up to \$5 billion as imports and exports are blocked, some economists estimated.

The strike began Tuesday, and the Port of Wilmington has developed a contingency plan to recognize the strike. The port's South Container Gate will remain closed for pickup or delivery of cargo until an agreement is reached, according to North Carolina Ports.

The North Carolina Ports is not a party to the agreement and therefore is not a participant in the negotiations.

"North Carolina Ports is hopeful that both parties will return to the negotiating table and reach an agreement that allows all the ports of the East and Gulf Coast to resume operations," the statement said.

According to USA TODAY, Wilmington is just one of the 36 ports that has shut down as 45,000 union workers walked off the job.

The state-run Port of Wilmington is the largest and busiest of the two deepwater ports in North Carolina, the other being in Morehead City. Container traffic makes up a big chunk of the local port's business, with the U.S. Department of Transportation ranking Wilmington the 21st busiest container port in the country.

Sandwiched between the much bigger ports of Norfolk, Virginia, to the north and Charleston, South Carolina, and Savannah, Georgia, to the south, officials with the Wilmington port have aggressively marketed the local port as offering a faster, congestion-free alternative to its larger competitors.

The 284-acre port also has invested significant sums to improve its landside infrastructure to keep up with its neighboring ports and the increased size of the container ships now plying the East Coast. That includes improved berthing areas, additional intermodal rail access to get trucks off local roads and bridges, including the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge, and a new gate complex to make accessing the port faster and easier.

According to an economic impact study by the N.C. Department of Transportation and N.C. State University, port activities statewide contribute \$660 million annually in state and local tax revenues and help support more than 88,200 jobs.

Imports will be affected providing less product, cars, auto and machinery parts, clothing, pharmaceuticals, wine and spirits, holiday goods like toys and seafood, according to USA TODAY. The shutdowns come just days after

hurricane Helene caused widespread destruction to Western North Carolina.

Charles Seaton, president of the Local 1766 clerical union for the port, said he wishes the contract would be settled because he knows the impacts that the shutdowns will have.

"I hate that it's impacting the country, but at the end of the day, this is a fight for American jobs," Seaton said.

During the pandemic, Seaton said the workers at the port "never missed a lick. ... We went to work every day, every night, 24/7," and that he's ready for everyone to be compensated the way they deserve.

Seaton, who has been working for the port for over 50 years, was at the port during the last strike in 1977. He said it lasted 103 days over 80 cents. But he said the economy now isn't like it was back then as it's much more dependent upon containerization. Seaton said America works on a one-week or two-week inventory, so this is something that needs to be figured out soon.

He said the port authority has been helpful and has been working to recognize the strike, providing portable bathrooms and closing the container gate, but that he hopes that the contract will be sorted out and the hard work of his colleagues will be recognized.

One longshoreman said that during the pandemic, he and his coworkers were in harm's way handling imports from across the world, but their pay still wasn't raised. He said that needs to change. He also said that prices keep increasing to ship containers, but even though they are working to unload, they haven't gotten the increase in pay.

According to CNBC, the ILA is seeking a 61.5% increase over six years. It also wants protections against automation.

"They (USMX) don't care about us," said ILA President Harold Daggett in an online post Monday. "They would love to see automation up and down the whole East and Gulf Coast, trust me when I tell you that if it was up to them, we would have no jobs."

StarNews reporter Gareth McGrath contributed to this story.

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p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BFA90F2A032C38>



# October is typically more active hurricane month

October 3, 2024 | Gaston Gazette, The (Gastonia, NC) Author: Doyle Rice and Dinah Voyles Pulver; USA TODAY | Section: News | 568 Words Page: A8 OpenURL Link

"Right now, large-scale conditions are highly conducive for tropical cyclone formation in the eastern Atlantic."

Phil Klotzbach

Senior research scientist at Colorado State University

The 2024 Atlantic hurricane season entered its fifth month Tuesday, and experts are again taking stock of a deadly and puzzling season.

The year started with dire predictions of a hyperactive season, quickly followed by the explosive and recordbreaking landfall of Beryl in early July. Then came an odd mismatch in Pacific and Atlantic activity during a midseason Jull.

But now, Hurricane Helene's deadly and devastating rampage across the Southeast last week has obliterated any hope of a quiet hurricane season for the U.S. And unfortunately, there's plenty of the season still to go.

"October is historically an active month, particularly in the Caribbean Sea, Gulf of Mexico and off the U.S. Southeast coast," said Brian McNoldy, a hurricane research scientist at the University of Miami.

Meterorologist Michael Lowry, a hurricane specialist at WPLG-TV in Miami, expects "to see a return of big hurricanes going into the first full week of October," he wrote in his daily update Tuesday.

"I would say that Helene doesn't really have any bearing on the rest of the season's forecast, but right now, large-scale conditions are highly conducive for tropical cyclone formation in the eastern Atlantic," said Phil Klotzbach, a senior research scientist at Colorado State University.

Klotzbach said their latest forecast calls for a very busy two weeks, due to Hurricane Kirk, Invest 91L (the wave behind Kirk) and potentially a system in the northwest Caribbean/Gulf.

"Everywhere in the tropical Atlantic still has record or near-record high ocean heat content, so there's no shortage of fuel for whatever might form anywhere," said tMcNoldy.

Using the storm names that have been retired since 1953 as a proxy for storms that made landfall and had great impact, September has the most retired names, with 43, McNoldy said. August and October are essentially tied at 21 and 20, and only seven storm names have been retired from November storms.

However, it's also worth noting that October and November together have more retired storm names than June, July and August combined, he said. "So we must absolutely still be on alert for tropical cyclone threats in the remainder of hurricane season."

It's also important to remember that it doesn't take a strong hurricane to cause a lot of damage, McNoldy said. "A slow-moving, disorganized disturbance that maybe doesn't quite become a tropical storm can unleash feet of rain over an area and create terrible flash flooding," he said. "The rainfall threat from tropical systems has historically taken a back seat to the wind threat in people's minds, despite being deadlier."

Although Kirk will be turning north and staying over the open Atlantic, long-period swell from the large hurricane could reach all the way to the East Coast – from the Mid-Atlantic into coastal areas of the Northeast – by early to middle of next week, Lowry said.

Behind Kirk, Invest 91L has been designated off the coast of Africa and will develop into a named storm over the next day or two. Computer models show 91L strengthening into a powerful hurricane next week, but like Kirk, it should turn well east of the islands.

In the spring, the Colorado State team predicted 23 named storms would form, of which 11 would be hurricanes.

"Right now, large-scale conditions are highly conducive for tropical cyclone formation in the eastern Atlantic."

Phil Klotzbach

Senior research scientist at Colorado State University

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Doyle Rice and Dinah Voyles Pulver, USA TODAY, 'October is typically more active hurricane month', *Gaston Gazette, The* (online), 3 Oct 2024 A8 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BFA93BC02BA7C8">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BFA93BC02BA7C8</a>



# Single mother, children, lose home to Hurricane Helene

October 3, 2024 | Gaston Gazette, The (Gastonia, NC) Author: Kara Fohner; Gaston Gazette | Section: News | 344 Words Page: A1 OpenURL Link

On Friday evening at around 8 p.m., Latasha Stahlecker was at home in her apartment on East Charlotte Avenue in Mount Holly, preparing to watch "A Nightmare Before Christmas" with her two children, 7-year-old Everlynn and 2-year-old Wrenley, when someone knocked at her door.

"When the hurricane hit and the dams got open, all the water started to rise, and the next thing we knew, we had the fire department at our door, telling us that we needed to evacuate immediately," she said. "And to grab your shoes and to go. And we did just that."

When Stahlecker returned the next day, her apartment was flooded.

"People were using kayaks and paddleboards to get over into the apartments. We opened the door, and there's just a good two feet of water inside," she said. "Just bought a brand new couch, washer and dryer, fridge, dining room table. All of it's ruined."

It wasn't just Stahlecker's apartment that flooded. Many of the apartments at The 28 at Mount Holly flooded. Stahlecker didn't have flood insurance. Her landlord required her to get rental insurance when she moved into the apartment, but the website said nothing about the possibility of flooding, despite the fact that those apartments have flooded before. Stahlecker is originally from South Dakota, and she moved to Mount Holly in February. Now, she wishes she would have known about the possibility that the apartments could flood.

"I should have known with the river being directly behind us," she said.

Stahlecker, a single mother who works as a nanny, is currently staying with family. She isn't sure what her next move will be.

"I've seen it happen to others, but it's never happened to us," she said.

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#### • Citation (aglc Style)

Kara Fohner, Gaston Gazette, 'Single mother, children, lose home to Hurricane Helene', *Gaston Gazette, The* (online), 3 Oct 2024 A1 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BFA93BDA34EC60">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BFA93BDA34EC60</a>



# PORT OF WILMINGTON - Operations halt as workers strike

October 3, 2024 | Gaston Gazette, The (Gastonia, NC) Author: Madison Lipe; Wilmington StarNews | Section: News | 834 Words Page: A1 OpenURL Link

"Profit over people is unacceptable, support ILA workers," read multiple signs Tuesday at the Port of Wilmington as longshoremen and other workers gathered to strike.

The Master Contract between the International Longshoreman's Association and the United States Maritime Alliance expired, and both parties have not reached a new agreement. Longshoremen across the East Coast and Gulf Coast are fighting for higher pay and fair treatment and at Wilmington's port the situation is no different.

Just days after Helene left widespread devastation in western North Carolina, U.S. Rep. David Rouzer, whose district includes the Port of Wilmington, posted on X that the strike could cripple response and recovery efforts, as well as have disastrous effects on the local economy.

According to USA TODAY, each day of the strikes across the East and Gulf coasts could cost the U.S. economy up to \$5 billion as imports and exports are blocked, some economists estimated.

The strike began Tuesday, and the Port of Wilmington has developed a contingency plan to recognize the strike. The port's South Container Gate will remain closed for pickup or delivery of cargo until an agreement is reached, according to North Carolina Ports.

The North Carolina Ports is not a party to the agreement and therefore is not a participant in the negotiations.

"North Carolina Ports is hopeful that both parties will return to the negotiating table and reach an agreement that allows all the ports of the East and Gulf Coast to resume operations," the statement said.

According to USA TODAY, Wilmington is just one of the 36 ports that has shut down as 45,000 union workers walked off the job.

The state-run Port of Wilmington is the largest and busiest of the two deepwater ports in North Carolina, the other being in Morehead City. Container traffic makes up a big chunk of the local port's business, with the U.S. Department of Transportation ranking Wilmington the 21st busiest container port in the country.

Sandwiched between the much bigger ports of Norfolk, Virginia, to the north and Charleston, South Carolina, and Savannah, Georgia, to the south, officials with the Wilmington port have aggressively marketed the local port as offering a faster, congestion-free alternative to its larger competitors.

The 284-acre port also has invested significant sums to improve its landside infrastructure to keep up with its neighboring ports and the increased size of the container ships now plying the East Coast. That includes improved berthing areas, additional intermodal rail access to get trucks off local roads and bridges, including the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge, and a new gate complex to make accessing the port faster and easier.

According to an economic impact study by the N.C. Department of Transportation and N.C. State University, port activities statewide contribute \$660 million annually in state and local tax revenues and help support more than 88,200 jobs.

Imports will be affected providing less product, cars, auto and machinery parts, clothing, pharmaceuticals, wine and spirits, holiday goods like toys and seafood, according to USA TODAY. The shutdowns come just days after

hurricane Helene caused widespread destruction to Western North Carolina.

Charles Seaton, president of the Local 1766 clerical union for the port, said he wishes the contract would be settled because he knows the impacts that the shutdowns will have.

"I hate that it's impacting the country, but at the end of the day, this is a fight for American jobs," Seaton said.

During the pandemic, Seaton said the workers at the port "never missed a lick. ... We went to work every day, every night, 24/7," and that he's ready for everyone to be compensated the way they deserve.

Seaton, who has been working for the port for over 50 years, was at the port during the last strike in 1977. He said it lasted 103 days over 80 cents. But he said the economy now isn't like it was back then as it's much more dependent upon containerization. Seaton said America works on a one-week or two-week inventory, so this is something that needs to be figured out soon.

He said the port authority has been helpful and has been working to recognize the strike, providing portable bathrooms and closing the container gate, but that he hopes that the contract will be sorted out and the hard work of his colleagues will be recognized.

One longshoreman said that during the pandemic, he and his coworkers were in harm's way handling imports from across the world, but their pay still wasn't raised. He said that needs to change. He also said that prices keep increasing to ship containers, but even though they are working to unload, they haven't gotten the increase in pay.

According to CNBC, the ILA is seeking a 61.5% increase over six years. It also wants protections against automation.

"They (USMX) don't care about us," said ILA President Harold Daggett in an online post Monday. "They would love to see automation up and down the whole East and Gulf Coast, trust me when I tell you that if it was up to them, we would have no jobs."

StarNews reporter Gareth McGrath contributed to this story.

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# Gastonia, Shelby high school football Week 7 schedule

October 3, 2024 | Gaston Gazette, The (Gastonia, NC) Author: Joe L Hughes II; Gaston Gazette | Section: Sports | 272 Words Page: B1 OpenURL Link

This story has been updated with new information.

Hurricane Helene did a number on western North Carolina, its effects trickling all the way down to the high school football schedule for teams in Cleveland, Gaston and Lincoln counties.

None more so locally than Big South 3A, athletic directors deciding Tuesday to table Week 6 contests until season's end, anticipating the NCHSAA will extend the 2024 high school football season.

Should that occur, programs have agreed to play games missed at season's end.

If unable to, Big South 3A will use winning percentage to decide its two automatic playoff spots.

Week 7's games in Big South 3A will go on as scheduled, pitting undefeated teams Crest and South Point is on. Crest is 4-0 (1-0 Big South 3A), knocking off Ashbrook in its last outing, 29-12. South Point (3-0, 1-0) beat Stuart Cramer, 44-7.

It is the teams' sixth meeting in four years, with South Point holding a 3-2 edge during the stretch.

A few area teams will take the field twice over the next few days. After traveling to Maiden on Wednesday, West Lincoln's Week 7 home contest against Bunker Hill is set for Saturday evening. Also playing Wednesday is Lincolnton, which will host Newton-Conover before traveling to Bandys on Friday.

Here's the proposed Week 7 as it currently consists, with games kicking off at 7:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted.

Week 7 schedule

Ashbrook at North Gaston

Bessemer City at Burns

Bunker Hill at W. Lincoln (Sat, 6:30 p.m.)

Cherryville at East Gaston

Crest at South Point

Highland Tech at Shelby

Kings Mountain at Forestview

Lincolnton at Bandys

Mountain Island Charter at Winston-Salem Prep (Thursday, 7:30 p.m.)

North Iredell at North Lincoln

### Stuart Cramer at Hunter Huss

# West Iredell at East Lincoln

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# • Citation (aglc Style)

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# HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL - Ashbrook makes light work of rival Forestview

October 3, 2024 | Gaston Gazette, The (Gastonia, NC) Author: Joe L Hughes II; Gaston Gazette | Section: Sports | 407 Words Page: B1 OpenURL Link

GASTONIA — Tuesday isn't a typical night for a high school football game. Then again, much of the past week hasn't been normal for Ashbrook and Forestview football players.

Out of school the past several days and having no time on the practice field following Hurricane Helene, the Gastonia city rivals clashed Tuesday night at William Eccles Field at Ashbrook Stadium. The Ashbrook defense turned in another dominant effort, posting its second shutout of the season with a 34-0 victory.

However, Green Wave head man Darius James admits the time off did his team no favors.

"We weren't able to practice, and you could tell," James said. "We were sloppy throughout. But we had some kids who made plays to help overcome some of that."

Scoreless through a quarter, running back Savion Lindsay scored on a 9-yard touchdown run to give Ashbrook a 6-0 lead. On the Green Wave's following possession, quarterback A.J. McClain found all-purpose man J.J. Gordon on a 20-yard touchdown pass. It was the first of two trips to the end zone for Gordon, who also had a 20-yard TD scamper in the fourth.

McClain added a 25-yard touchdown run, while Martino Smith had a 40-yard TD run of his own.

Such was more than enough for the Ashbrook defense, which allowed two first downs in the game — one on Forestview's initial possession, the other on a roughing the kicker penalty in the second half.

"I really believe we have one of the top 10 defenses in the state," James said. "They are really playing well on that side of the football."

It was the first of two games this week for both teams. Ashbrook (4-1, 1-1 Big South 3A) travels to North Gaston on Friday night, while Forestview (1-4, 1-1) hosts Kings Mountain.

While a taste of normalcy was certainly welcomed, James reminded his team about the opportunity it has to play sports at a time some are wondering what the next day may hold.

"One of the messages we put out Saturday was for them to take advantage of what they have, it can be taken away quickly," James said. "You have guys in the mountains who don't have football right now, many of them are struggling, grieving, looking at the loss of homes, things more important than football. The past week has really put a lot of things in perspective."

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# Notable scores, highlights from area golf leagues

October 3, 2024 | Goldsboro News-Argus, The (NC) Author: Staff Report | Section: Sports | 752 Words OpenURL Link

Results of recent events submitted by area golf leagues.

#### **Brunswick Plantation LGA**

Results for Sept. 23 league day at Brunswick Golf Club. The event was Golfer of the Month. September Golfer of the Month was Becky Seibert. Flight 22 results: Becky Seibert (69 MOC), second place Karen Ritz (72 MOC), third place Betty Jennings (72 MOC), fourth place Kathy Lucyszyn (72 MOC). Flight 23: Denise Edwards (73). Closest to the pin winner were Laura Dorner on Azalea No. 2 (11 feet, 4 inches), Becky Seibert on Azalea No. 4 (3 feet, 2 inches), Barbara Johnson on Magnolia No. 4 (8 feet, 7 inches). Red Tee low gross Betty Jennings (83). Purple Tee low gross Becky Seibert (82). Birdies were carded by Becky Seibert on Magnolia No. 4, Becky Seibert on Azalea No. 4, Alcina Davis on Magnolia No. 4, Kathy Lucyszyn on Azalea No. 4, Diane DeSimone on Magnolia No. 6. Denise Edwards made a chip-in birdie on Azalea No. 2.

#### Crow Creek WGA

Results for Sept. 24 at Crow Creek. Game was Putts. First Flight: Terri Crowley (31), Helene Hamilton (32). Second Flight: Linda Allison (33), Noranne Saager (34), Kathy Shaffer (34). Third Flight: Dorine Stoecker (31), Annette Gordon (37). Birdies were carded by Robin Sharp on No. 16, Christine Young on No. 1, Beverly Farmarco on No. 10.

#### **CVGA**

Results for Sept. 23 at Meadowlands. The league played a four-man team Stableford event. Top finishing teams were Dorsey Boque, Bill Poplin, Earl Cratsley and George Futrell (+13); Skip Rosenquest, Ron Carter, Gary Guthiel and Ron Adelman (+9); Tom Seifert, Brett Schmitz, JJ Jones and Bill Zimmerman (-1). Closest to the pin winners were Ron Carter om No. 5 (10 feet, 9 inches), Matt Beairsto on No. 8 (2 feet, 8 inches), Matt Beairsto on No. 11 (3 inches), Ron Adelman on No. 15 (8 inches). Low gross was Matt Beairsto (79). Low net was Skip Rosenquest (64).

#### The Links at Brick Landing MGA

Results for Sept. 28 men's league at The Links at Brick Landing. Game was a modified Stableford event. Steve Brower and Jerry Campbell tied for first in the individual play (+5.5). Winning team was Greg Smith, Jeff Bartley, AJ Oates and Dave Deacon (+9). Second place went to the team of Ed Gurski, Alex Philippas, Charlie Smith and Kevin Finnerty (+7.5). Bob Brown held on this week to keep the lead in our ongoing race to the AJ Cup.

#### Meadowlands Ladies

Results for Sept. 23 at Meadowlands. Game was 3 Holes Back to Par. Flight 1: Debbie Proper (61), Patti Guinan (65), Bridgette Harrison (67), Jane Egan (69), Andee Calibeo (70 MOC). Flight 2: Peg Pickett (62), Missy Newton (64), Jane Glemming (64), Sandy Ricker (65 MOC), Liz Arcuri (65 MOC). Peg Pickett made a chip-in on No. 17. Birdies were carded by Renee Paugh on Nos. 5, 13 and 14; Jane Egan on No. 15, Bette Slowther on No. 15, Debbie Proper on No. 10, Patti Guinan on No. 8, Liz Arcuri on No. 4, Peg Pickett on No. 17.

Match Play results for Sept. 23: Flight 1: Winner was Jane Egan; runner-up was Renee Paugh. Flight 2: Winner was Missy Newton; runner-up was Patti Guinan. Flight 3: winner was Belinda Heflin; runner-up was Denise "Sam" Hynds.

Results for Sept. 23 on Panther's Run with 18 players participating in a four-man team event. Scoring was 2 low nets. Winning team was Rob Saffron, Steve Wanzer, Steve Mason and Gregg Golembeski (-14), besting Kevin Fitzgerald, Brain Babb, Gerry Bonini and Mike Ratchford on a match of cards.

Results for Sept. 25 on Lion's Paw with 41 players competing in an individual flighted Stableford event. Flight A: Brian Babb (-23), Jim Richards (-18) and Steve McCreedy (-18). Flight B: Kevin Fitzgerald (-18), Mike Spivey (-18) and Charlie Pruitt (-18). Flight C: George Cassidy (-24), Dan Kunec(-18) and Ralph DiVito (-17). Flight D: Jeff Smith (-14), Harry Schnitzer (-12) and Mike Burke (-12).

#### **Piperettes**

Results for Sept. 24 at Sandpiper Bay on the Piper/Bay course. Game was low gross and low net. Red Flight: low gross Maureen Kakos (95), Carol Kissal (99), Jacquie Bridge (106); low net Laurie Maesano (75), Barbara Nagle (78), Mary Lou Davis (82). Yellow Flight: low gross Judy Destefon (107); low net Sharon Millar (77). Birdies were carded by Carol Kissal on Piper No. 3, Brenda Goldsmith on Piper No. 6, Elaine Lewis on Piper No. 6, Heidi McMinn on Piper No. 6. Chip-in were made by Carol Kissal on Piper No. 3, Laurie Maesano on Piper No. 4 and 7, Sharon Millar on Piper No. 9.

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# West football plays two home games this week

October 3, 2024 | Goldsboro News-Argus, The (NC) Author: Brian Slattery Sports Editor | Section: Sports | 882 Words OpenURL Link

Storms in Brunswick County that delayed West Brunswick football's trip to Topsail until Monday, Sept 23 also had the Trojans prepping for a home game with Ashley four days later on Friday, Sept. 27.

But concern over the path of Hurricane Helene resulted in Brunswick County Schools canceling class Friday, which pushed the Trojans matchup with the Screaming Eagles to a Monday night football meeting on Sept. 30.

Then the Trojans will ready to welcome Hoggard for the second home game of the week on Friday night, Oct. 4 at 7 p.m.

"Two home games in a week, it's not an ideal situation. But you know, I feel like our kids are resilient. They'll be ready to play," West Brunswick head football coach Shane Handy said.

West will meet an Ashley squad that is 3-1 overall, 0-1 in the Mideastern Conference after a road loss against Laney.

"Ashley, before I got here, West competed with them pretty well. And last year, I think they had probably one of their best seasons. They had a bunch of seniors and they did a good job and went to the second round of the 4A playoffs. I think the coach is doing a good job there. They're trying to build something. I recruited and coach the defensive coordinator at Catawba, so I know they are good people. I feel like we match up well, I feel it's an opportunity for us to play our best.

"We're excited about an opportunity on Monday. You know, it would've been great if it was on Friday. That would be a little more ideal. But it's a home game, so that'll help some. We look forward to the challenge."

Hoggard comes to Shallotte with a 4-1 overall, 2-0 MEC record with wins over North Brunswick and Laney.

"Hoggard on Friday, they're another 4A opponent that has a ton of kids. Last year, I think they had 36 seniors. That was probably about as many people as we had on our team. But we're a little bit bigger, our numbers are a little bit bigger this year. They've got some kids coming back that are pretty good players. Again, we look forward to the challenge. And it will be here. It will be Youth Night. We'll get after it and have a good time," Handy said.

The Trojans playing two home games in a week gives the team the chance to extend their streak of success at M.H. Rourk Stadium, where they have recorded their last two wins, 32-27 over North Myrtle Beach on Sept. 6 and in last season's final game rivalry win over South Brunswick 43-42 on Oct. 27, 2023.

"Home games, obviously, are a little bit easier and better for our kids. We've done well at home, one win this year and last year at the end of the year, we won at home. So we're on a little bit of streak. Hopefully we can come back home and respond the next two games," Handy said.

Handy anticipates the team will respond to the challenge of playing twice in one week.

"I think it makes it a little bit easier to get all your stuff in and get situated. You don't feel as rushed, that kind of stuff. If it's going to be a short week, you'd rather be home, for sure," Handy said.

"I think our players, they're pretty resilient. I think they enjoy each other. And I think we're building a culture of high expectation and needing them to perform at their highest level. We want them to just keep fighting. We do that by

putting the game plan together and organizing that at practice and getting the best practice we can out of them."

"But we've got to win three phases of the game. You've got to win on special teams — we've done okay there. Nothing spectacular, but we've had a couple big plays on special teams. We're talking about really focusing on special teams and trying to get some scheme stuff to help us. To try to get some blocks and get some good plays, returns and stuff," Handy said.

"We can't turn the ball over and that's what we've done some. Whether it's our doing or somebody else's doing, we've got to take care of the football.

Defensively, we've got to get more sacks. We've only got a couple of those. We need some takeaways. We've had 15 takeaways, but now, when we get a takeaway we need to score. Offensively, we need to get the ball and go score on that takeaway. We've got to do a better job of capitalizing on getting the takeaway on defense and then going and scoring and swinging the momentum on offense."

While this week's games come against MEC 4A teams, Handy said the results of these games will have an impact on how the Trojans play the 3A Brunswick County teams and how the team will be viewed for the possibility of reaching the playoffs.

"Both these teams are in our 4A/3A split, in our 4A deal. So we've just got to fight through that and get through that. It's a good challenge for us and helps prepare us for our opportunity to make the playoffs if we can string together some wins. It's a tough schedule, but that's what we've got. We've got to capitalize on it," Handy said.

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# Perseverance through the storm - STRONG FAITH

October 3, 2024 | Graham Star (Robbinsville, NC) Author: Eric Reece | Section: News | 536 Words Page: 4 OpenURL Link

News outlets have reported Hurricane Helene as being a storm of Biblical proportions. This metaphor recalls the story of Noah and the flood in Genesis 6-8. The rain came down for 40 days and nights, and flooded the earth. The flood was caused by the wickedness of humanity. Yet, Noah found grace in the eyes of God and was spared. Humanity survived and civilization was rebuilt. Jesus commented on two disasters in Luke 13. One was a man-made tragedy, where the Romans had murdered some Galileians who were worshiping. The other was where a tower collapsed and 18 workers died. These worshipers and workers were no worse sinners than anyone else. Did these men get what they deserved?

Did they have it coming to them? Jesus' point is to not point fingers and be less concerned about the sin of others than our own. There is still time to seek forgiveness for our own sin and let God turn our lives around. It is too easy to explain human suffering is due to divine punishment. In times of disasters or tragedy, I hear it blamed on the sinfulness of people. Job's friend Eliphaz blamed Job's suffering on his sin, saying, "Think now, who that was innocent ever perished?" Job knew he was innocent and his sufferings were not caused by any sin. Job prayed for his friends that wronged him; God heard his prayer and they were forgiven. I have read a few accounts that Helene was compounded by global warming. Global warming is man-made, as we increase greenhouse emissions from burning fossil fuels. As our planet gets warmer, the weather patterns will change drastically. Storms will continue to increase in terms of hazard - putting us all in peril. It will be some time before we know the total losses from Helene. The damage is devastating. As of Monday morning, over 100 people have reportedly lost their lives. Many have lost homes and possessions. Important infrastructures, buildings, roads and bridges will take time to rebuild. We grieve

the loss of lives and pray for the families affected. In times of need, we are so grateful for the first responders, lineman and everyone working above and beyond to get everything back to normal as possible. I have witnessed so many people and groups working together to restore services. There are already many organizing collections to help the surrounding areas that were devastated. Bottled water, batteries and cash donations are two things in desperate need and are often sent on day one. I often share that in times of heartaches, we are in it for the long haul. It will take some years to recover. We pray now, help, and will continue to pray for all and the workers and volunteers helping. The Jews have a saying: "Chazak, chazak, v'nitchazei," which means "Be strong, be strong, and we will strengthen one another." The words come from Joshua 1:9. They are spoken in community after the reading of each book of the Torah. It is a reminder that together, we will strengthen each other. Eric Reece is the faith columnist for The Graham Star. He is pastor of Robbinsville United Methodist Church and can be reached via email, ereece@wnccumc.net.

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# Hurricane Helene

October 3, 2024 | Graham Star (Robbinsville, NC)

Section: News 50 Words

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Kevin Hensley/editor@grahamstar.com Stiles Heating & Cooling was just one local dropoffcenter quickly established in the wake of Hurricane Helene's devastation, as many in Graham County got right to work doing whatever it took to deliver necessities to areas of Western North Carolina significantly affected by the storm's Sept. 29 landfall.

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# Western North Carolina heavily impacted by Helene

October 3, 2024 | Graham Star (Robbinsville, NC) Author: Kevin Hensley editor@grahamstar.com| Section: News| 746 Words Page: 1 OpenURL Link

Graham County was fortunate enough to only be hit with downed trees and steady rainfall, in the wake of Hurricane Helene invading Western North Carolina on Friday. At Wednesday's press deadline, much had already been written about the widespread devastation the storm dropped on areas mostly east of Graham County. Bryson City, Cherokee and Sylva were susceptible to a mixture of flooding and power outages, but the greater Asheville region experienced the greatest blow: major floods washed homes, entire communities and sections of roadways with powerful currents. Power outages As of Tuesday evening, over 150 deaths have been directly linked to the hurricane; sadly, more than 600 individuals are still unaccounted for. The Center Square released a story Tuesday, projecting that the storm has caused \$160 billion in damages.

But in the fallout came the human instinct of helping a fellow human - and Graham County answered the call. Internet and cell service was reportedly wiped out from Charlotte and west in North Carolina, but as services were slowly restored, dozens of individuals, businesses and organizations pledged to collect supplies for delivery to Buncombe County. Collection locations were set up at the Graham County Sheriff's Office, as well as the Robbinsville Post Office and even private businesses like Stiles Heating & Cooling.

The uphill battle to recover will continue well beyond publication of this edition; I-40 between Clyde and the Tennessee state line will remain closed until October 2025, after a portion of the eastbound road was washed into the Pigeon River. Over 400 roads were deemed closed once the storm hit land, but none were in Graham County. That number had dwindled to 220 on Tuesday.

Sunday, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) issued a Major Disaster Declaration for individuals in Buncombe, Clay, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Polk, Rutherford, Transylvania, and Yancey counties - as well as the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians - to make those affected eligible for individual assistance.

The loss of 911 telecommunications had everyone on-edge, but volunteer fire departments were manned across the county in case an emergency needed to be reported. Members of the North Carolina Department of Transportation, the U.S. Forest Service and countless volunteers cleaned up fallen trees for most of the weekend.

Between North and South Carolina, Duke Energy's outage map showed 592, 338 locations were still out of power Tuesday night. Of that, 297 were in Franklin and 1, 803 were around the greater Sylva area.

A large number of Graham County workers and equipment have been dispatched to other sections of North Carolina to assist local resources in areas heavily damaged by the flooding. The Graham County Sheriff's Office said Tuesday that it had deployed personnel to assist the Buncombe County Sheriff's Office with patrol operations, as well as help affected individuals in both Avery and Transylvania counties.

Local impact Mail delivery in zip codes beginning with 287, 288 and 289 were suspended until further notice Monday night.

Graham County Schools went to a remote-learning schedule Sept. 28-29, then cancelled school district-wide until Wednesday after the county lost emergency communications. Several sporting events were also postponed; an updated list of games appears on page 12 of this week's edition.

Area institutions like Tri-County Community College, Southwestern Community College and Western Carolina

University cancelled classes for the entire week of Sept. 30 - Oct. 4. All recreation sites in both the Pisgah and Nantahala National forests were closed until further notice.

Locally, supplies ran low in the wake of the panic the aftermath brought on. Ingles was cash-only until at least Wednesday's press deadline, due to the building that houses the corporate card servers in Black Mountain being damaged by the storm. Individuals were also unable to use their store accounts to charge supplies. Fuel tankers were able to deliver gas and kept a healthy supply on hand for most stations in Robbinsville - save for Shell, which had ran out of fuel by Monday evening and told the Star that there was no estimate for when more could arrive. Shell's fuel trucks deliver to Robbinsville from the Asheville area.

Anyone having difficulty connecting to a loved one or friend can call 2-1-1 in North Carolina (888-892-1162, if out-of-state) to request a welfare check. The American Red Cross can be reached at 800-733-2767. Marshall McClung also contributed to this report.

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# 12-15 inches of rain reported in Graham County

October 3, 2024 | Graham Star (Robbinsville, NC) Author: Marshall McClung; The Graham Star | Section: News | 184 Words Page: 1 OpenURL Link

From Sept. 23-28, Graham County was hit by heavy rainfall, partly from a weather system already in place and from the remnants of Hurricane Helene hard on its heels. A rain gauge in the Hares Creek community recorded 12.75 inches of rain during the period, the most recorded in that location since 1968. Snowbird resident Nathan Stewart reported over 15 inches of rain in the community.

Oddly enough, some area stream levels did not rise as quickly or as much as they did in the past from less rainfall. This may be attributed to the fact that we have been in a drought and the dry ground soaked up much of the rain.

Before the rain, the U.S. Drought Monitor listed Graham County as being in a severe drought, the third of five levels of drought (with five being the driest level). To be listed in a severe drought, an area has to be at least 50 percent below average on rainfall, with adverse impacts on people, animals, crops and an increased fire danger to forest land. The drought index is updated weekly, on Thursdays.

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#### 'DESPERATION'

October 3, 2024 | News & Record (Greensboro, NC)

Author: SUSIE C. SPEAR Staff Reporter | Section: Main | 894 Words

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GREENSBORO - Raw. Shocked. Desperate.

Those were words volunteers at Piedmont Triad International Airport used to describe the voices and faces of hardhit mountain residents to whom they are flying critical supplies.

Volunteer Grant Mosby made calls to airports and sheriff's offices in smaller North Carolina and Tennessee mountain counties that are isolated by impassable storm damage from Hurricane Helene and still in need of life-sustaining aid. He organizes and weighs donated items on bathroom scales, then helps tailor aid packages to the needs expressed by community leaders.

And while Asheville has seen the arrival of a cargo plane full of supplies from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, it's unclear when rural areas will benefit from such help.

"One sheriff told me people were coming out of the woods with nothing on but underwear," said Mosby, 26, a student pilot limited to ground duty at the Signature Flight Solutions hangar. "The desperation was what I heard when I called one airport. They told me: 'Nobody's gotten to us. We're really struggling. We need water and food -bad."

Bent over his computer tablet, flight instructor Brooks Parker used a finger to trace the lines on his screen that detailed restricted airspace on Wednesday, a requirement for President Joe Biden's expected afternoon flyover to examine Hurricane Helene's damage.

And while President Biden and Air Force One have tried to yield most airspace to relief efforts, the commander in chief's flight will slow their efforts a tad, volunteer pilots estimated.

"They need help in Burnsville and in Transylvania and Avery counties pretty badly," said the 23-year-old Parker, who was wheels up in his Piper Aero single-engine aircraft and headed to Avery by about 10 a.m. Coincidentally, Parker was born in Avery and his family has a Christmas tree farm there.

All business when he speaks about flying, Parker breaks easily into a broad smile and wears a brown leather flight jacket and combat boots. A member of the U.S. Army National Guard, Parker's been flying since age 15.

"It's tricky to land there," he said, pointing out the tiny Avery County airport's elevation of 2,745 feet and a nearby mountain's height of about 4,300 feet. "I remember flying into that airport with my dad and you have to be really careful ... really watch for those mountains," he said.

One mission took Parker to Johnson County, Tenn., where Mountain City is in crisis.

"I took in 350 pounds of supplies and we were the first aircraft that had gotten there since the storm. It's very blocked in. Schoolchildren were there to unload the plane," Parker marveled. "And one person came up to us who hadn't eaten in two days, so we gave him a sandwich."

On Tuesday, some 15 pilots from the Triad made flights that "risked their lives" rotating in and out of a congested airspace to deliver 8,000 pounds of supplies to Johnson County. Johnson County received the heaviest attention because of its isolation, explained Aaron Elder, a flight school student who served in the U.S. Army for 10 years,

working in logistics and operational planning.

Elder's training is ideal for this task, which keeps him on the phone with pilots and packing priority goods for transport into the tight compartments of smaller planes. At his side is Rylee Gaus, a Greensboro bartender working on her commercial pilot's certificate.

"They need supplies in Transylvania County!" Gaus yelled to pilots milling about in the hangar.

Just before lunch, Craig Gillespie, a retired American Airlines pilot from Greensboro, taxied up in a small jet. He fell in with a crowd of eight other volunteers, toting giant bags of dog food, canned goods and case after case of water to load into his aircraft.

First, Gillespie packed the nose of the plane with as much water as would fit. Then the group loaded the craft to its maximum, filling seats with Chef Boyardee cans, baby wipes and giant jars of peanut butter.

Flight school student Kyle Razik, 18, of High Point was on hand to help.

"I love the mountains and I love to fly there and go hiking there," Razik said. "I wanted to do something to help them and I didn't know what to do. So I bought a couple hundred dollars worth of groceries to donate and here I am, and it feels good."

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