

'The View': Whoopi Goldberg Is 'Sick' of Trump Getting Called 'Mr. President'

October 1, 2024 | Courier-Times, The (Roxboro, NC) Author: Amanda Bell, TV Insider | Section: Arts | 522 Words OpenURL Link

The cohosts of The View were heated about the first "Hot Topic" of the day on Tuesday's (October 1) episode, but no one was more perturbed than Whoopi Goldberg.

The first order of business on the episode was to discuss Donald Trump's recent visit to an area in Georgia affected by the landfall of Hurricane Helene, in which he falsely claimed that President Joe Biden was unreachable to the state's governor.

"Well, it's really important to remind people that this man is not the president," she declared before they rolled tape on the situation. "He has nothing to do with what the president's getting done, right? And I'm just a little sick and tired of him acting like he's got something to say."

After reviewing footage that showed Trump's claims compared to that of Governor Brian Kemp praising Biden for his communication with him, Goldberg weighed in again

Related'The View': Joy Behar Reveals Melania Trump Once Gave Her a Fake Watch

"Not only did his pointless photo op take up needed resources away from actually helping people, he straight up lied again to Americans," Goldberg said. "I have to just keep saying, 'Is the GOP brain dead? How can they allow him to continue to act as if he is in charge?'"

Goldberg wasn't the only one who had harsh words for the former president regarding this situation; Alyssa Farah Griffin, for example, agreed by saying, "I can't believe after four years of time away from him, this is still what we want." Griffin, who worked for former Vice President Mike Pence and participated in his disaster relief efforts, added, "This buffoon never misses an opportunity to politicize a tragedy."

Joy Behar pointed to Trump's reactions to natural disasters that happened during his own presidency, saying, "In the early initial days, he did not send help to blue states. He will do that again."

Sunny Hostin expounded upon that point, saying, "During disasters, he threatened to withhold money from states where he saw enemies. He proposed cutting the budget of the agency responsible for disaster relief, FEMA, and his top officials diverted money away from FEMA to deal with immigration enforcement during natural disasters." Hostin went on to add, "Finally, he withheld and delayed — and I take this personally — \$20 billion in hurricane aid of Puerto Rico and then threatened to withhold wildfire assistance to California. So if you live in a blue state, you will be screwed if anything happens."

"It doesn't matter," Goldberg concluded the segment. "People, he's not the president right now. And I'm sick of people calling him 'Mr. President.' Yeah, I'm sick of it. He's not the president. He's not been presidential. He's not offered the American people a hand, a kind word."

The View, weekdays, 11 a.m. ET, ABC

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US VP rivals to clash in 'high drama' debate

October 1, 2024 | Courier-Times, The (Roxboro, NC) Author: Angela Weiss, with Danny Kemp in Washington | Section: National | 668 Words OpenURL Link

US vice presidential contenders J.D. Vance and Tim Walz face off in what could be an unusually important undercard debate Tuesday as they compete for decisive votes in America's heartland just weeks before the election.

The showdown between Walz, the Democratic Minnesota governor chosen by Kamala Harris, and Vance, the Republican senator from Ohio who is Donald Trump's running mate, is likely to be the last of the 2024 campaign.

Trump has refused a second debate with Harris, meaning this could be the final chance to see the two tickets go head to head.

Vance, 40, and Walz, 60, each claim to be the true voice of the crucial Midwestern swing states -- including Michigan and Wisconsin -- that could decide an election that remains on a knife-edge with five weeks to go.

History suggests vice presidential debates rarely move the dial much. But in an election campaign that has seen Harris step in for US President Joe Biden unprecedentedly late in the game, Tuesday's contest may have added significance.

The race has seen Vance and Trump use increasingly divisive rhetoric and even falsely accuse immigrants of eating people's pets -- meaning that the debate is almost guaranteed to make for fiery television.

"It will whet a lot of people's appetites for November 5," Thomas Whalen, an associate professor of social sciences at Boston University, told AFP.

The CBS clash comes in the aftermath of Helene, an enormous storm which has brought misery to thousands, left at least 130 people dead across six states, and taxed the ability of federal and local authorities to respond.

Trump visited a hard-hit area in Georgia on Monday and claimed "the federal government is not being responsive."

Harris canceled campaign events, returned to Washington and met with emergency management teams to discuss the response. Her message to those affected: "Our nation is with you."

The devastation, and how to address such disasters, is likely to come up during the debate.

- 'High drama' -

Walz and Vance were each picked by their bosses to reach out to voters in the Midwestern battlegrounds where, thanks to the country's idiosyncratic electoral college system, a few thousand votes could determine who wins the White House race.

Both are military veterans with strong blue-collar credentials. Vance authored the Rust Belt memoir "Hillbilly Elegy" while Walz boasts a folksy persona as a former teacher and football coach.

The similarities end there.

The combative Vance shares Trump's penchant for courting controversy, whether by smearing Democrats as "childless cat ladies" or by boosting false claims that Haitians living in an Ohio town ate residents' pets.

His goal will be to overcome polls that initially had him as one of the least popular VP nominees in history, after a series of previous comments on women and abortion were unearthed.

"Vance has to be careful, because I think a trap has been laid for him," said Whalen.

Democrats also pulled off pre-debate hijinks Monday, projecting messages on Trump Tower, just six blocks from the debate locale at CBS Broadcast Center in New York, including a quote from Vance referring to Trump as "an idiot."

The cheery Walz will be seeking to introduce himself to a public that barely knows him, after Harris's swift rise to replace Biden as the Democratic nominee.

He became a hit with Democrats for branding Vance and Trump "weird" and for his progressive politics -- but that will be a target for Vance as he and Trump seek to paint Walz and Harris as "Marxists."

Vance "is going up against a moron, a total moron," Trump said in an interview Monday on Fox Nation.

Televised debates have already proved their ability to shock this year, with Biden forced to drop his reelection bid after a disastrous performance against Trump in June brought long-simmering concerns about his age to the fore.

Whalen said few vice presidential debates have "had any appreciable difference" in the past, but Tuesday's clash could produce "high drama" for viewers who love political theater.

The Vance-Walz debate could feature extra spice given that their microphones will be live throughout, allowing them to cut in on their rivals.

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Biden calls for return to bargaining table as port strike disruptions loom

October 1, 2024 | Courier-Times, The (Roxboro, NC) Author: Brett Rowland | The Center Square | Section: National | 373 Words OpenURL Link

(The Center Square) – President Joe Biden on Tuesday called for those on both sides of a port worker strike to return to the bargaining table as U.S. ports brace for what could be the most disruptive labor stoppage in decades.

Some 50,000 International Longshoremen's Association members went on strike Tuesday against the East and Gulf Coast ports, hobbling the flow of goods.

The International Longshoremen's Association is at odds with the United States Maritime Alliance over pay and automation.

The union wants more money and doesn't want to lose jobs to automation.

Biden said collective bargaining was the best way forward.

"I have urged USMX, which represents a group of foreign-owned carriers, to come to the table and present a fair offer to the workers of the International Longshoremen's Association that ensures they are paid appropriately in line with their invaluable contributions," the president said in a statement. "Ocean carriers have made record profits since the pandemic and in some cases profits grew in excess of 800% compared to their profits prior to the pandemic."

Biden has said he won't use powers under the Taft-Hartley Act to intervene in the labor dispute.

"As our nation climbs out of the aftermath of Hurricane Helene, dockworkers will play an essential role in getting communities the resources they need. Now is not the time for ocean carriers to refuse to negotiate a fair wage for these essential workers while raking in record profits," he said. "My Administration will be monitoring for any price gouging activity that benefits foreign ocean carriers, including those on the USMX board."

Formally known as the Labor Management Relations Act of 1947, the law empowers the president to intervene in labor disputes that could cause a national emergency.

International Longshoremen's Association President Harold J. Daggett said members want bigger paychecks.

"We are now demanding \$5 an hour increase in wages for each of the six years of a new ILA-USMX Master Contract," Daggett said Tuesday. "Plus, we want absolute airtight language that there will be no automation or semi-automation, and we are demanding all Container Royalty monies go to the ILA."

Business groups have warned the strike could pose economic risks for the nation with a strike at ports from Maine to Texas. They have also called for Biden to intervene.

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Razor-thin difference in battleground state facing catastrophe

October 1, 2024 | Courier-Times, The (Roxboro, NC) Author: Alan Wooten | The Center Square | Section: State | 971 Words OpenURL Link

(The Center Square) – In western North Carolina where a fatal flood of historic proportion has torn apart normal, the 2024 election will go on and a razor-thin difference is watched between Democratic Vice President Kamala Harris and Republican former President Donald Trump.

Asheville in Buncombe County is known for a liberal bent, many counties along the Blue Ridge Mountains are red, though it was less than two decades ago Democratic Congressman Heath Shuler carried the area.

Election Day is five weeks away. And the State Board of Elections, as has been done for hurricanes and other unplanned occurrences before, is forging ahead. So, too, will everyone else.

"It would be an ironic shame if the people who most need strong representation in the national and state legislatures play no part in selecting those representatives," Dallas Woodhouse, North Carolina executive director for American Majority-Action, wrote in an email to The Center Square.

Every effort will be made, the state board said Monday and again Tuesday at a morning presser.

"When disasters strike elections, we use this mantra: 'We do not stop an election; we figure out how to proceed,'" said Karen Brinson Bell, executive director of the State Board of Elections.

History agrees. Four years ago, it was COVID-19. Primarily in the southeastern part of the state, the 2018 midterms were preceded by Hurricane Florence the first week of September and the 2016 presidential cycle overcame Hurricane Matthew's landfall on Oct. 8.

Laws, including for state elections, are set by the General Assembly. The state board and its executive director, however, do have emergency powers granted.

"We had emergency powers of the executive director during the pandemic," Andy Jackson, director of the Civitas Center for Public Integrity, told The Center Square in a telephone interview on Monday. "There was a lot of words back and forth on that.

"With emergency authorization under regulations for the executive director, one of the things you have to consider is how much time does the General Assembly have to act? I'd imagine the General Assembly, after evaluation of what is going on and what is needed, they can go ahead and pass a bill like they did for Florence in '18. If deadlines come before, the executive director will have authority."

The Center Square was unsuccessful getting comment from Anderson Clayton, chairwoman of the North Carolina Democratic Party. The party issued a statement of concern for the area, and added, "We take care of our neighbors. We will grieve and rebuild."

Matt Mercer, spokesman for the state Republican Party, said, "We want the focus for the next few days to be on relief efforts."

Invariably, debate is coming on how the challenges to even cast votes will impact races. Neither presidential candidate is exceeding the margin of error in polling, making North Carolina a toss-up. Many downballot statewide races have polled close, too.

For context, Trump won the state four years ago by 1.3% (74,483 votes) and eight years ago by 3.6% (173,315 votes). That's fewer than the 372,000-plus customers out of power at 10 a.m. Tuesday morning.

The state, with winner-take-all 16 electoral college votes, is up to more than 7.6 million registered voters. A 75% turnout rate, as was the case in 2020, would produce more than 5.7 million voters and mean a 4% difference is fewer than 230,000 votes.

"The mountain area of North Carolina is very heavily Republican in most elections," said Dr. Tom Eamon, associate professor of political science at East Carolina University, wrote in an email to The Center Square. "Exceptions are the city of Asheville and Boone. Too early to predict overall impact."

Dr. Steven Greene, political science professor at N.C. State, agreed.

"Furthermore, on a partisan basis, yes Asheville is a liberal hub, but a liberal hub within a sea of red," he wrote in an email to The Center Square. "The 11th Congressional District, in which Asheville sits, is reliably Republican and has been affected throughout by flooding, which suggests that if there is any partisan impact it is more likely to affect Republicans."

If anything, the region since the turn of the century may well illustrate why the state is called purple – the mix of red Republican and blue Democrat.

"There were counties still voting Democratic in the 20-oughts," Jackson said. "Heath Shuler won it. In the '90s and 20-oughts, the 11th District was back and forth. There are some residual Democrats. It's generally Repbulican-leaning.

"If raw numbers, if both sides are equally motivated, it would be a net loss for Republicans statewide. Considering how close the races are looking, that could be the difference."

Prognosticators nationwide have seven consensus battleground states. And from them, few if any are acknowledging a pathway to 270 electoral college votes without at least one if not both of North Carolina and Pennsylvania (19 votes).

Seventeen days before early in-person voting is to start, Tuesday morning's 10 a.m. road closure report had 401 statewide because of Helene. The recovery work is paramount and mourning the lives lost is first.

As Bell said, the election will come and go on schedule.

"As our neighbors, friends and family in western North Carolina, deal with horrific losses of life, property, income and security, it's important that we make sure these citizens don't lose their voice in the political process," Woodhouse said. "We at American Majority-Action are already having conversations with people across the political spectrum on how to guarantee citizens the ability to vote in the flood disaster areas. We don't know exactly what that looks like, but it will be a monumental effort.

"As far as what side may or may not benefit from the changes in the electorate, we don't know, and we don't care. We are all citizens, neighbors and friends. This is so beyond partisan politics. One area American Majority Action will focus on is making sure displaced residents know how and where they can vote once those arrangements are made."

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These seven battleground states may well decide the US presidency

October 1, 2024 | Courier-Times, The (Roxboro, NC) Author: Michael Mathes | Section: National | 742 Words OpenURL Link

US Vice President Kamala Harris and former president Donald Trump are hurtling toward their November election showdown, one of the closest contests in modern American history.

And in the handful of critical states framing the 2024 race, there is little daylight between the rivals with barely a month before Election Day on November 5.

Under the US Constitution, America's founding fathers established that each of the 50 states would hold its own vote for president.

Then, under the complex Electoral College system, each state has a certain number of "electors," based on population. Most states have a winner-take-all system that awards all electors to whoever wins the popular vote.

With candidates needing 270 of the 538 electors to win, elections tend to be decided in the hotly contested "swing states" with a history of alternating between Republican and Democratic candidates.

This year, there are seven such battlegrounds, and virtually every one is a toss-up. Here is a look:

- Pennsylvania (19 Electoral College votes) -

Pennsylvania was once reliably Democratic, but these days, they don't come much tighter than the Keystone State.

Republican Trump won the most populous battleground, with 13 million residents, by 0.7 percentage points in 2016. Joe Biden claimed it by 1.2 percentage points in 2020.

Known for its "Rust Belt" cities like Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania has been blighted for decades by the steady decline of its industrial manufacturing base.

Trump and Harris have campaigned repeatedly in the eastern state. Trump, who survived an assassination attempt at a July rally there, is courting the rural white population and warning that migrants are overwhelming small towns.

Harris is touting recent infrastructure wins, and in Pittsburgh, she outlined plans to invest \$100 billion in manufacturing, a key issue for state residents.

- Georgia (16) -

This southeastern state was an election flashpoint at the end of Trump's first term, and the controversy simmers.

Prosecutors in Georgia indicted Trump in an election interference case after he called state officials urging them to "find" enough votes to overturn Biden's narrow 2020 victory.

But in a boost for Trump, the case is paused until after the election.

Biden was the first Democrat to win the Peach State since 1992. Demographic changes are likely to benefit Harris, who has courted minority voters across Georgia.

- North Carolina (16) -

The southeastern state has voted Democratic only once since 1980, but Harris believes it's back in play.

The population, now over 10 million, is expanding and growing more diverse, benefiting Democrats.

Complicating matters for Trump, a scandal involving the state's Republican gubernatorial candidate has infuriated party officials who worry it could sink Trump in a close race.

As in neighboring Georgia, one wild card is how the devastation from storm Helene, which recently laid waste to towns in western North Carolina, might impact the vote.

- Michigan (15) -

Trump flipped Michigan, a former Democratic stronghold, on his way to defeating Hillary Clinton in 2016.

Biden returned it to the blue column in 2020, buoyed by unionized workers and a large Black community.

But this time, Harris risks losing the support of a 200,000-strong Arab-American community that has denounced Biden's -- and by extension her -- handling of the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza.

- Arizona (11) -

The Grand Canyon state was among 2020's tightest races, with Biden triumphing by just 10,457 votes.

Trump hopes frustrations over the Biden-Harris administration's immigration policy will swing Arizona, which shares a border with Mexico, back in his favor.

Harris visited Arizona's border last week vowing to crack down on migration and work on reviving last year's bipartisan border bill, which she said Trump "tanked" for political purposes.

Of the battlegrounds, Arizona is showing the largest poll advantage: Trump up by two percentage points.

- Wisconsin (10) -

Clinton lost Wisconsin after giving the state a wide berth during the 2016 campaign.

As with Midwestern neighbor Michigan, it was a different story when Trump's opponent was Biden, who turned a 23,000-vote deficit into a winning margin of 21,000 for Democrats.

Trump considers it winnable, and his party held its summer national convention there.

While Trump led early against Biden, Harris has a tiny polling edge.

- Nevada (6) -

The Silver State, with a population of 3.1 million, hasn't voted Republican since 2004. Conservatives, buoyed by Trump's headway with Hispanic voters, are convinced they can flip the script.

Trump held a significant lead here against Biden.

But within weeks of becoming the Democratic nominee, Harris -- promoting her economic plans to help small businesses and combat inflation -- has erased that advantage in the western state, whose largest city Las Vegas is dominated by the hospitality industry.

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Vance, Walz debate economy, immigration, abortion in tight presidential race

October 1, 2024 | Courier-Times, The (Roxboro, NC) Author: Casey Harper | The Center Square | Section: National | 1129 Words OpenURL Link

(The Center Square) – U.S. Sen. J.D. Vance, R-Ohio, and Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz exchanged barbs on the debate stage Tuesday night in what may be the final debate before Election Day just five weeks away.

CBS News anchors Norah O'Donnell and Margaret Brennan hosted the 100+ minute debate of the vice presidential nominees, where the candidates grappled over the economy, immigration, abortion and the records of their respective running mates. Former President Donald Trump and Vice President Kamala Harris remain in a tight race according to polling nationally and in the swing states.

Throughout the debate, Walz repeatedly attacked Trump for many of his controversial comments and Vance emphasized that if Harris could solve the nation's many problems, she would have done it already since she is currently in the White House.

The debate began with a question about the Middle East. Iran launched a major missile attack on Israel earlier Tuesday, potentially leading to a full-scale war in the region.

Iran is the largest state sponsor of terrorism and has been backing proxy groups in the region that have been attacking Israel for months. Israel has been systematically destroying Iran-backed Hezbollah, one such group that has displaced tens of thousands of Israelis by firing on northern Israel.

Israel is also continuing its ongoing war against Hamas, the terrorist group that killed over a thousand Israelis in a brutal Oct. 7 attack on civilians.

"Israel's ability to defend itself is absolutely fundamental," Walz said before quickly pivoting to attacking Trump.

Vance answered the same question by introducing himself, pointing to his poor upbringing in the Midwest, his military service and his gratitude to the U.S. for helping someone from his humble beginnings.

Vance then pivoted to attacking the Biden-Harris administration for releasing billions of taxpayer dollars to Iran earlier in their term and pointing out the Oct. 7 attack happened on Harris' watch.

"Who has been the vice president for the past three and a half years?" Vance asked. "The answer is your running mate, not mine."

Vance continued by pointing out that Trump is the only president in the last 40 years to not have a major conflict break out during his term.

The candidates then turned to the deadly Hurricane Helene and climate change, where Vance called for building clean American energy and blasting Harris for pushing energy production overseas.

The Biden-Harris administration has hampered U.S. energy development, citing climate concerns while encouraging production overseas, Vance noted.

"If we actually care about clean air and clean water, the best thing to do is to double down on American workers and American energy," Vance said.

"We have a historic immigration crisis..." Vance said, pointing to 94 executive actions that have "opened the

floodgates" for fentanyl and illegal immigrants.

Vance said 25 million illegal immigrants competing for homes in America is one of the biggest drivers of rising housing costs. citing a Federal Reserve Bank study linking immigration to housing affordability.

Immigration consistently appears in polls as a top concern among voters. A CBS poll from last month showed the majority of Americans support mass deportations.

When asked specifically about deportation, Vance said the country should start by deporting criminal migrants and blasted Harris for the hundreds of thousands of child separations from the broken border where families have been separated.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) reported last week that more than 660,000 criminal foreign nationals are living in the U.S., including those those convicted or charged with violent crimes such as homicide, sexual assault and kidnapping, The Center Square reported.

ICE's own inspector general issued issued a management alert In August that the agency can't account for hundreds of thousands of unaccompanied minors who crossed into the U.S. and whether they are "safe from trafficking, exploitation, or forced labor," The Center Square reported.

Walz repeated Harris' point from the previous presidential debate, saying Democrats supported a border bill earlier this year that Republicans would not pass. The measure failed in the Democrat-controlled Senate. Republicans expressed concerns that the bill would not actually close the border and that it expanded the powers of U.S. Department of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas, whom the U.S. House impeached over the border crisis earlier this year.

At one point in the debate, one moderator contradicted Vance's point on Haitian migrants before trying to move on to another topic. Vance pushed back, saying they had agreed to no fact-checking in the debate and then explaining the new CBP One app enacted by the Biden-Harris administration that fast tracked Haitian migrants into the U.S. and which Republicans say is illegal.

On the economy, Walz attacked the Trump-era tax cuts, and Vance blasted Harris for 40-year high inflation, which led to prices rising more than 20% since she took the White House.

Walz pushed back, attacking Trump's "failure on COVID" and saying Trump doesn't trust economists or climate experts.

"Teachers, nurses, truck drivers or whatever, how is it fair that you are paying your taxes and year when Donald Trump hasn't in 15 years?" Walz asked.

Walz emphasized he is a "union guy" and agreed about the problems with the loss of U.S. manufacturing jobs.

Vance said many "experts" were wrong for years when they advocated for shipping jobs overseas, saying it has hurt the middle class and that Trump popularized bringing manufacturing back to the U.S.

"I was raised by a woman who would sometimes go into medical debt to put food on the table in our household," Vance said, making the point that he understands the financial struggles of Americans.

Walz was pressed on his previous lie about being in Hong Kong during the famous Tiananmen Square protests, something that has been fact-checked as false by previous media reports.

After first avoiding the question by spoking warmly of his upbringing in a small Nebraska town, when pressed, Walz called himself a "knucklehead" and admitted he "misspoke."

Vance was pressed about his previous hard criticisms about Trump. He said he was wrong in those criticisms and pointed to Trump's economic record.

Abortion remains a key issue in this election as well, something Democrats have tried to make a defining issue of this election since the U.S. Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade, sending the abortion issue to the states.

Walz touted helping restore Roe v. Wade protections in Minnesota before attacking the abortion policies promoted in Project 2025, a conservative playbook that Trump has repeatedly disavowed.

"We trust women," Walz said. "We trust doctors."

Vance plainly said he would not endorse the Project 2025 pregnancy monitoring database.

"I want us as a Republican party to be pro-family in the fullest sense of the word," pointing specifically to supporting families in buying homes, childcare, and fertility treatments.

The debate continued with discussions about gun violence, healthcare, and paid family leave as well as Jan. 6, where Walz went after Trump's contesting of the 2020 election.

As of now, no more presidential or vice presidential debates are scheduled before Election Day.

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Sunrise announces updates on First Friday concert

October 1, 2024 | Courier-Tribune, The (Asheboro, NC) Author: COURIER-TRIBUNE STAFF | Section: Entertainment | 206 Words OpenURL Link

SOUTHERN PINES — Ashes and Arrows, which was originally scheduled as the headliner for Sunrise Theater's First Friday concert this month, will be unable to play for this event because of the destruction in Western North Carolina caused by Tropical Storm Helene.

The band claims Asheville as its home and band members feel they are needed with family and friends during these difficult times, the band said.

Jeff Little Trio will be stepping in for this free concert on Friday, Oct. 4, from 5-9 p.m. on the Sunrise lawn, 250 NW Broad St., Southern Pines. This concert will also help raise money for disaster relief.

Jeff Little is an award-winning musician from the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina. Little has not only been recognized as a critically acclaimed musician but also a true music innovator. He and his trio stay busy traveling the country performing concerts with an energy and dedication to their music that is evident at every show.

Sunrise Theater will donate 15% of proceeds from sales at the event for disaster relief in Western North Carolina. This portion of proceeds, plus all donations made, will go directly to Samaritan's Purse for disaster relief. The theater will also collect essential items to send to those affected.

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Helene leaves mountain community like no-man's land, firefighter says

October 1, 2024 | Daily Advance, The (Elizabeth City, NC) Author: Bobby Burns | Section: Across Carolina | 531 Words OpenURL Link

A former photographer for The Daily Reflector who is now a volunteer firefighter in western North Carolina said people need to know about the isolation and devastation brought by Hurricane Helene to rural mountain communities like his.

Will Stricklin moved to Bakersville in Mitchell County in northwest North Carolina in 2022 and joined the Mitchell County Volunteer Fire Department along with his wife about six months later. He has been on duty since the hurricane began pelting the region on Friday and was able to make his first calls out on Monday after an emergency cellular connection was established.

"Our 9-1-1 dispatch went down at 6 p.m. on Friday. The cells went out, too. We had no communications from Friday until today," said Stricklin, who also was able to send a few photos and video he shot during his department's early response in hopes of publicizing the damage. (He hopes to share more in the coming days.)

The small contingent of local first responders based in Bakersville — the Mitchell County seat and a town of 500 between Asheville and Boone — was cut off and worked to reach stranded neighbors with personal vehicles and chainsaws. Stricklin said microbursts from the storm snapped acres of pine trees and nearly 30 inches of rain swelled creeks into raging rivers.

The Iraq War combat veteran who covered news and sports and shot Scene Around party pics for the Reflector from 2011-17 compared the damage to scenes captured in images from World War I.

"It's like no-man's land where all the trees are snapped off at 10 to 15 feet high, where artillery burst above them. It's like that," he said. "It's like the craziest thing I've ever seen. I've done hurricane duty with the National Guard, I've been to war, and this is the craziest thing I've ever seen."

A dozen or so firefighters worked with sheriff's deputies and a handful of other first responders to check on the welfare of neighbors they knew were at risk since nobody could call for assistance. The firefighters cleared trees from roads so emergency crews could travel from one mountain community to another.

Many homes still remained inaccessible, however, and Monday was too early to guess about the extent of property damage and loss of life, Stricklin said.

State-coordinated search and rescue teams began the work of accounting for lives and damage on Monday when the first heavy vehicles arrived and a large helicopter dropped supplies in the middle of town, Stricklin said. People are missing but no deaths have been confirmed, he said.

Isolation caused tension and worry between Friday and Monday, he said.

"We didn't know what was coming, we had no idea," he said about the help they needed to rescue friends and neighbors, wishing it had been there sooner. When it came on Monday, "it just showed up."

He said he hopes sharing details and images from the disaster will focus state and federal authorities on the dire situation of a community that already struggles with poverty.

"There is help rolling in now, but this help's going to be needed for a long time," he said. "If there is any attention that can be brought, then let's get these people some long-term aid."

• Citation (aglc Style)

Bobby Burns, 'Helene leaves mountain community like no-man's land, firefighter says', *Daily Advance, The* (online), 1 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BF11B6F1D20358>



Helene leaves mountain community like no-man's land, firefighter says

October 1, 2024 | Daily Advance, The (Elizabeth City, NC) Author: Bobby Burns| Section: News| 536 Words OpenURL Link

A former photographer for The Daily Reflector who is now a volunteer firefighter in western North Carolina said people need to know about the isolation and devastation brought by Hurricane Helene to rural mountain communities like his.

Will Stricklin moved to Bakersville in Mitchell County in northwest North Carolina in 2022 and joined the Mitchell County Volunteer Fire Department along with his wife about six months later. He has been on duty since the hurricane began pelting the region on Friday and was able to make his first calls out on Monday after an emergency cellular connection was established.

"Our 9-1-1 dispatch went down at 6 p.m. on Friday. The cells went out, too. We had no communications from Friday until today," said Stricklin, who also was able to send a few photos and video he shot during his department's early response in hopes of publicizing the damage. (He hopes to share more in the coming days.)

The small contingent of local first responders based in Bakersville — the Mitchell County seat and a town of 500 between Asheville and Boone — was cut off and worked to reach stranded neighbors with personal vehicles and chainsaws. Stricklin said microbursts from the storm snapped acres of pine trees and nearly 30 inches of rain swelled creeks into raging rivers.

The Iraq War combat veteran who covered news and sports and shot Scene Around party pics for the Reflector from 2011-17 compared the damage to scenes captured in images from World War I.

"It's like no-man's land where all the trees are snapped off at 10 to 15 feet high, where artillery burst above them. It's like that," said Stricklin, who turns 39 on Thursday. "It's like the craziest thing I've ever seen. I've done hurricane duty with the National Guard, I've been to war, and this is the craziest thing I've ever seen."

A dozen or so firefighters worked with sheriff's deputies and a handful of other first responders to check on the welfare of neighbors they knew were at risk since nobody could call for assistance. The firefighters cleared trees from roads so emergency crews could travel from one mountain community to another.

Many homes still remained inaccessible, however, and Monday was too early to guess about the extent of property damage and loss of life, Stricklin said.

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Active rescue efforts continue as EMS make way into hardest hit areas

October 1, 2024 | Daily Advance, The (Elizabeth City, NC) Author: Moss Brennan The Watauga Democrat| Section: Across Carolina | 301 Words OpenURL Link

Emergency services personnel are still focused on active rescue missions as they continue to push into some of Watauga County's hardest-hit areas.

As of Monday evening, Helene's devastating path through Watauga County has killed two people and left countless others without homes, power, and cell service.

Emergency services personnel are still actively working on rescue missions in the western part of the county. Multiple families were rescued in Zionville and Cove Creek Monday after being cut off due to flood damage, according to Watauga County Emergency Services Emergency Planner Kristi Pukansky.

"We definitely are still in an active rescue situation," Pukansky said. "We aren't even to damage assessment yet."

There is no timeline for how long rescues will take as some places have not been reached yet during house-to-house checks.

"There are still areas that we are cutting and pushing through (to get) to inaccessible areas," Pukansky said. "We really don't know until we get to the last one how long that's going to take."

Pukansky said some areas in Beaver Dam are not passable as crews continue to work to push in and create access points.

"Check on your neighbors, check on the elderly," Watauga County Fire Marshal Shane Garland said. "We're attempting to get through, but the road infrastructure is lost, and that's going to take some time, but just check on each other."

As of Monday early afternoon, 48 community members were being housed at the Holmes Convocation Center, the official Red Cross shelter during this incident. Pukansky said other places have opened up as shelters, but since the Holmes Convocation Center is the official Red Cross one, they only have numbers for that one.

WCES is continually working to push more resources into the county as agreements are implemented.

A curfew remains in place for Watauga County from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. until further notice.

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How to apply for FEMA assistance after Hurricane Helene

October 1, 2024 | Daily Courier, The (Forest City, NC) Author: STAFF REPORTS | Section: Archives | 360 Words OpenURL Link

North Carolina homeowners and renters in 25 counties and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians who had uninsured damage or losses caused by Hurricane Helene may be eligible for FEMA disaster assistance, according to a press release from the North Carolina Department of Public Safety.

FEMA may be able to help with serious needs, displacement, temporary lodging, basic home repair costs, personal property loss or other disaster-caused needs. Homeowners and renters in Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Clay, Cleveland, Gaston, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Lincoln, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Transylvania, Watauga, Wilkes and Yancey counties and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians can apply, according to the press release.

There are several ways to apply: Go online to DisasterAssistance.gov, use the FEMA App or call 800-621-3362 from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. ET daily. The telephone line is open every day and help is available in most languages. If you use a relay service, such as Video Relay Service (VRS), captioned telephone or other service, give FEMA your number for that service, according to the press release.

To view an accessible video on how to apply, visit Three Ways to Apply for FEMA Disaster Assistance — YouTube.

FEMA's disaster assistance offers new benefits that provide flexible funding directly to survivors. In addition, a simplified process and expanded eligibility allows North Carolinians access to a wider range of assistance and funds for serious needs, according to the press release.

What You'll Need When You Apply:

A current phone number where you can be contacted.

Your address at the time of the disaster and the address where you are now staying. Your Social Security number. A general list of damage and losses. Banking information if you choose direct deposit. If insured, the policy number or the agent and/or the company name.

If you have homeowners, renters or flood insurance, you should file a claim as soon as possible. FEMA cannot duplicate benefits for losses covered by insurance. If your policy does not cover all your disaster expenses, you may be eligible for federal assistance, according to the press release.

For the latest information about North Carolina's recovery, visit fema.gov/disaster/4827. Follow FEMA on X at x.com/femaregion4 or on Facebook at facebook.com/fema.

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Looking for loved ones after Hurricane Helene? Here are resources to help locate them

October 1, 2024 | Daily Courier, The (Forest City, NC) Author: Victoria McGuinn Young vyoung@thedigitalcourier.com| Section: Archives | 201 Words OpenURL Link

RUTHERFORD COUNTY — Since the storm from Hurricane Helene has hit Rutherford County, people from across the county and beyond have been searching for missing loved ones. A few avenues have been created for people to be able to check in or try and located missing people.

According to the Rutherford County Facebook page, county and town departments are working together to complete welfare checks for those in Lake Lure and Chimney Rock, as well as in the county.

To have a welfare check made, call the non-emergency line at Rutherford County Communications at 828-286-2911.

Emergency management is also still compiling a list of individuals at the temporary shelter located at the R-S Central High School, as people come in.

For anyone with a missing person, email EOC@rutherfordcountync.gov. This email is being monitored by Rutherford County Communications, but officials have asked people to be patient for a response.

The American Red Cross also has reunification teams working to help families reconnect.

For anyone searching for a family member affected by the storm, complete the form at this link for the state where they live: https://rdcrss.org/3TQPblL

The Red Cross asked that people provide as much detail as possible — the more detail given, the better teams can assist.

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Here's where you can donate or get supplies in Rutherford County after Hurricane Helene

October 1, 2024 | Daily Courier, The (Forest City, NC) Author: STAFF REPORTS | Section: Archives | 167 Words OpenURL Link

Several organizations and Rutherford County have worked to set up donation opportunities for those that want to help, and distribution places for people who need supplies.

Monetary donations: You can now make monetary donations to the United Way of Rutherford County at www.unitedwayofrutherford.org. Please ensure your donation is designated for Rutherford County, N.C.

Mailing address for deliveries: Smaller packages, such as those from Amazon or other carriers, can be sent to — 193 Callahan Koon Road, Spindale

Volunteers: If you wish to volunteer for cleanup efforts, please visit Baptist on Mission and select Rutherford County as your preferred location. They are organizing deployment teams for the region. https://baptistsonmission.org/hurricane-helene-volunteer

Clothing donations: Drop offs at FlorenceBaptist Church, 201 S. Broadway St. Forest City

EOC food/supplies distribution centers: Open daily from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. For questions on donating items, call 828-278-8920.

Florence Baptist Church: 201 S. Broadway St. Forest CityRutherford County Health Department: 221 Callahan Koon Rd. SpindaleThomas Jefferson High School: 2527 US-221A Hwy. MoorseboroGilkey Church of God: 255 Oak Springs Rd. Rutherfordton

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In Helene's wake, leadership is crucial

October 1, 2024 | Daily Courier, The (Forest City, NC) Author: John Hood Columnist| Section: Archives | 645 Words OpenURL Link

RALEIGH

I got it wrong. Deeply wrong. Embarrassingly wrong.

It was a few days after Hurricane Floyd struck the coast on Sept. 16, 1999. I'd been covering North Carolina politics for more than a dozen years by then, penning my syndicated column and appearing regularly on radio and television. Our discussion program "N.C. Spin" had debuted the previous fall on the Triangle's Fox affiliate and was in the process of expanding to some two dozen TV and radio stations across the state.

During a segment of the show devoted to the destruction wrought by Floyd, I said something to the effect that North Carolina's emergency personnel, government agencies, utilities, private contractors, and relief organizations knew what to do and how to do it. They didn't need politicians holding press conferences and yapping incessantly about matters beyond their ken.

I thought I was praising the skill and determination of those at the forefront of the response to Hurricane Floyd, which devastated much of eastern North Carolina and killed an estimated 85 people, including 51 North Carolinians. I thought I was championing policy expertise over political exploitation.

What I was really doing was exhibiting my ignorance.

One "N.C. Spin" viewer was particularly incensed: then-Gov. Jim Hunt. One of the targets of my criticism, he let it be known through a mutual acquaintance that he considered my argument poorly reasoned. I don't remember the specifics of what got passed on to me, but it was something to the effect that in times of crisis, political leadership is crucial.

Emergency responders aren't necessarily sure what to do when. Agencies butt heads. Harried public and private actors misinterpret, miscommunicate, and inadvertently misinform. Sometimes they move too slowly, making people wait too long for rescue and relief. At other times they react recklessly, misspending scarce resources on lower priorities rather than waiting to make wiser decisions with a firmer grasp of the facts on the ground.

It is the task of leaders, elected and appointed, to make such judgment calls, to focus minds and referee disputes, to comfort the suffering, and to offer hope and reassurance to a panicky public.

Now, as North Carolinians grapple with the tragic aftermath of another monstrous storm, Gov. Roy Cooper and other political and civic leaders must rise to the challenge Hunt helped me grasp a quarter of a century ago.

Helene has ravaged western North Carolina. Her path of destruction is broad, deep, and jaw-dropping. Homes, businesses, entire towns crushed or swept away. At this writing, hundreds of thousands of people remain without power, some trapped in place by gaping holes or raging rivers. The death count, already heart-rending, will grow as more of the missing are found.

North Carolina will recover. We will rebuild. We've done it before. But there's nothing automatic about the process. And we all have parts to play in it, whatever our roles, wherever we live.

If you have family or friends in the affected areas, keep trying to reach them. Once you do, offer help and comfort. If you'd like to contribute money, supplies, or volunteer time to relief and recovery efforts, there are many

organizations well-situated to deploy your gifts effectively, including Samaritan's Purse, Baptists on Mission, Catholic Charities USA, and Operation Airdrop.

At the state level, lawmakers have prudently accumulated \$4.75 billion in our rainy-day fund plus billions more in unreserved credit balance. That rainy day is here. Localities will spend additional dollars from their own reserves, as will utility companies, cooperatives, and municipal agencies.

There are many tough decisions to be made, some now, some weeks or months from now as the full extent of the needs and priorities come more clearly into view. That's something else I learned from past disasters. Some funds originally earmarked for reconstruction after Hurricane Matthew in 2016 have still not been expended.

Through it all, North Carolinians will look to our leaders for guidance and reassurance. Pray for them, and for us all. Copyright 2024, The Daily Courier, All Rights Reserved.

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Rutherford Regional Health System remains operational, some procedures postponed

October 1, 2024 | Daily Courier, The (Forest City, NC) Author: STAFF REPORTS | Section: Archives | 231 Words OpenURL Link

RUTHERFORDTON — Rutherford Regional Health System remains in critical response mode as the situation evolves across Rutherford County and the surrounding region following Hurricane Helene, according to a press release from the hospital.

The hospital remains operational, the emergency department is open and it is well-supplied to continue caring for patients and supporting staff as recovery efforts continue, according to the press release.

Due to the continuing impact of Hurricane Helene, some elective, outpatient procedures have been postponed and some outpatient practices are currently closed. The hospital is in the process of notifying patients about the scheduling changes.

Please visit the website, or follow the Facebook page for the most current information about closings, according to the press release.

"Our top priority remains on caring for our people. We are proud of our dedicated team members who are going above and beyond to provide the best care and support for our community during this difficult time, while also navigating their own personal challenges associated with this storm," the hospital released in a statement.

"We are incredibly thankful for our courageous first responders and EMS personnel for their ongoing partnership and everything they are doing to respond to this devastating event. Thank you to our patients and community for your support, and we ask for your continued patience and understanding as we continue to work hard to provide the best possible care to all those involved."

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More than 120 people seek shelter at R-S Central High School in wake of Helene

October 1, 2024 | Daily Courier, The (Forest City, NC) Author: Victoria McGuinn Young vyoung@thedigitalcourier.com| Section: Archives | 416 Words OpenURL Link

RUTHERFORDTON — The Rutherford County Emergency Shelter was mostly quiet Tuesday morning as volunteers and Rutherford County staff members hauled boxes of baby diapers and bags of donated clothes off of a trailer.

Any conversation was low as donations were organized in sections around the R-S Central High School's cafeteria.

Kayla Fox, disaster coordinator with Rutherford County Social Services, was solemn as she reflected on her role.

"It is a part of my job I never wanted to have to learn," said Fox.

As of 10 a.m. Oct. 1, 126 people have arrived at the high school looking for shelter. But volunteers and staff aren't able to count the numerous residents that have come to the shelter looking for essential supplies.

Boxes of clothes organized by gender and size line one wall. Toiletries are clustered across folding tables. And boxes of apples, drinks, sweets and chips are laid out ready for people to grab.

While the shelter put out information on donations it needs, Fox said they later learned of other items in scarce supply.

"There are some things we didn't know we would need at first — like distilled water for CPAP machines," she explained.

So far, more than 40 people and organizations have dropped off donations at the shelter. Some people have even brought food to help feed staff and volunteers.

The health department is also taking donations to help distribute items to the shelter.

But while the flood of donations has been heartwarming, volunteers and staff have seen heartbreak.

People come into the shelter having lost everything, Fox said. And people are trying to connect with family members. One man, she said, has been to the shelter every day looking for his wife and child.

But with the bitter has come some sweet.

The reunifications of families, when they do happen, Fox said, make every onlooker emotional.

"Reunifications are just — I can't describe it. The hugs they give show so much. They didn't know where their family member was but now they have them," Fox recounted with emotion. "It gives me chills and I'm only an observer."

As of Tuesday morning, the shelter still didn't have power, but Fox was hopeful it would be back on soon.

She had also spoken with a representative from the Red Cross Monday evening who said the Red Cross may be there by Tuesday afternoon.

Donations can be dropped off at the Rutherford County Health Department. The Health Department is located at 221 Callahan Koon Road, Spindale.

Donations needed are:

paper towelstoilet paperpeanut butter (small jars, to-go size)gallon ziplock bagswaterGatoradeDog foodTrash bagsDish soapShampooDeodorantClorox wipes

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• Citation (aglc Style)

Victoria McGuinn Young vyoung@thedigitalcourier.com, 'More than 120 people seek shelter at R-S Central High School in wake of Helene', *Daily Courier, The* (online), 1 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view? p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BF12342FE571B0>



Newport restaurant owner travels across state to help with hurricane relief in Western NC

October 1, 2024 | Daily Courier, The (Forest City, NC) Author: ETHAN BENFIELD EBENFIELD@THEDIGITAKCOURIER.COM| Section: Archives | 363 Words OpenURL Link

Jeremy Cannon, owner of Fat Fellas BBQ and Grille in Newport, North Carolina, has made two trips to the Western part of the state to help out with relief efforts in areas devastated by Hurricane Helene.

On Sunday he traveled over 350 miles from Newport to Polk County to give out food at Green Creek Farm Supply, and on Tuesday he traveled over 350 miles again to Spruce Pine to help with efforts at Big Lynn Lodge in the Little Switzerland area.

Cannon said he is in contact with a truck that is leaving Lake Lure on Tuesday to return to Newport and gather supplies for a third trip.

"As soon as we get back tonight, we are going to load up that truck with fresh water and make another trip," Cannon said. "That one will be going back to Lake Lure to the Green Creek area."

Cannon said he wanted to help because his home and business were affected by Hurricane Florence in 2018, so he knows what it's like to have to overcome the aftermath of such a bad storm.

"After Florence we didn't have power at my house for 15 days, and we didn't have power at the restaurant for 13 days, and I remember some of the line crew from different organizations and surrounding counties came to help us," Cannon said. "It's just one of those things you have to pay it forward, we have worked in a lot of hurricanes and have seen a lot of traumatic stuff with these storms being on the coast. Folks Inland have always stepped up to the plate and helped us, so we want to help them."

On each trip Cannon has helped supply over 1,000 hot meals and over 7,000 ready-to-eat meals that Carteret County helped to provide, along with pallets of water and Gatorade. Cannon said a lot of people have helped to allow him to make these trips and aid in the help he is providing.

"None of this would be possible without the good Lord's help and without the help of my wife and my staff," Cannon said. "It goes from one person to another, and I couldn't do any of this without them."

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ETHAN BENFIELD EBENFIELD@THEDIGITAKCOURIER.COM, 'Newport restaurant owner travels across state to help with hurricane relief in Western NC', *Daily Courier, The* (online), 1 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view? p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BF4E1EDBB5F6B0>



The heartbreaking story unfolding

October 1, 2024 | Daily Courier, The (Forest City, NC) Author: ARLENE NEAL Columnist| Section: Archives | 671 Words OpenURL Link

This morning, the day after The Storm, I write this to the buzz and whine of chain saws and the roar of generator engines across this area. Most of us are still without power. Folks are out cleaning yards and roadways, moving downed trees, clearing rooftops of debris and beginning to repair damage from wind. Those close to water have much more to deal with after the flood recedes.

Area waterways have the sad evidence of damage: docks, fences, pieces of structures, and other objects washed away from homes and into lakes turned back to rivers that swept the shorelines, taking structures and anything else unable to remain standing. Boats, broken away from moorings, drifted downstream. What a mighty force unrestrained water can be!

We lost power, internet and phone service, but suffered no damage. This is such small stuff compared to what our neighbors west of us are experiencing where life and death situations occurred and are still ongoing. Initially, we received bits of news the old way — word of mouth — then cell towers must have been repaired since we started to get a few calls in and some text messages in and out.

The catastrophic news was hard to absorb, like the devastation in Chimney Rock where we spent a wonderful weekend a few years ago. The laid-back friendly atmosphere and gorgeous scenery made the stay perfect. I doubt that our old hotel near a creek where we stayed is still there. Flood waters swept away most of Chimney Rock Village on Friday. The beautiful Hickory Nut Gorge funneled water, record-setting inches of it, down into communities nestled at the foot of the mountains to disastrous results.

While Jim Cantore of the Weather Channel stood in the rain in Florida waiting for Hurricane Helene, thinking of things to say, the big story was building by the moment in the set-up of a perfect storm flooding event, called historic, unprecedented, multi-state, and quite unbelievable. A stalled front to the west kept channeling storms into the Appalachians and foothills saturating the ground prior to the hurricane effects. When the tropical storm rain fell, the water had nowhere to go, so it ran into creeks, streams, rivers, lakes, and low-lying areas. And it showed no mercy, hour after hour.

Our daughter who has lived in the Asheville/Black Mountain area for 20 years, came down to ride out the storm with us. Now, she is wondering how her neighborhood fared. Her street was evacuated on Friday, and the news from Montreat, Swannanoa, and Black Mountain is horrific. Perhaps by the time this goes to print, the news will reflect the magnitude of the disaster, the loss of life in cars washing away with people inside them, mudslides, neighborhoods washed away, roads and bridges gone, structure fires without folks having any means to call for help.

As we received messages from different sources, we tried to separate the factual from the sensational as we would in other newsworthy happenings. As it is, the truth about conditions all over the mountains and foothills ARE sensational without any hype.

Any disaster will make most people evaluate what's really important in life. After emergency situations, some tragedy we may experience, the world is never the same for us. This Flood of

2024 will change the way we look at life, one that is temporary, changeable, even fickle it seems. We can't put much stock in the part of life that can be swept away in a day.

This morning, I watched hummingbirds working the zinnas spared by the storm. Somewhere those tiny birds had

huddled in the gale force winds and survived and will keep on their journey to the tropics. Like them, we will recover, the communities will rebuild, the families who lost all, even loved ones, will survive — changed, but alive and facing the future. For now, they grieve.

A faith that cannot be swept away will sustain us, even in dire conditions. Please pray for our mountain communities, the heartbroken and hurting. And any way you are able, please help.

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