

# Commmissioners take action on storm recovery; Support economic development project

October 9, 2024 | Daily Courier, The (Forest City, NC) Author: SCOTT CARPENTER scarpenter@thedigitalcourier.com| Section: Archives | 432 Words OpenURL Link

RUTHERFORDTON — Rutherford County Commissioners, and the Spindale Town Council, held a joint public hearing Monday night, during the regular meeting of County Commissioners, regarding a new economic development project.

Code named "Project Cedar," the project is expected to bring a new business into an existing facility within the town of Spindale. Officials say the new project will create new jobs, and increase the tax base in Spindale and Rutherford County.

A total of 20 new jobs are expected and an investment of at least \$925,000 over three years.

In order to receive a One N.C. Fund Program Grant of \$50,000, to support the project, the county and Spindale will provide a cash match each, of \$8,335. Both boards approved the match, after the public hearing.

More details about the project are expected in the next week.

In other business at the county commission meeting, the commissioners approved the required documents, allowing the county to submit requests to FEMA, for reimbursement for disaster-related expenses. This could include clean-up expenses incurred by the county, and overtime pay for county employees including officers with the sheriff's department.

Board members took action on several items that could directly benefit citizens during Hurricane Helene recovery.

The brush tipping fee, (\$45 per ton), charged by the Solid Waste Department, will be waived for all citizens and businesses for a period of 30 days, (through November 6, 2024).

The resolution authorizing this, noted many residents and businesses, "...are facing unexpected financial burdens due to the costs associated with clean-up of such vegetation debris, as well as repairs from damage to their homes and personal possessions caused by such debris."

In addition, commissioners took action to waive fees for electrical permits for Rutherford County residents, also for a period of 30 days.

The resolution authorizing this action, states in part "...Rutherford County recognizes the need to assist affected property owners by easing the financial burden associated with the repair and rebuilding process as much as possible...the waiver of electrical permit fees for storm-related repairs will expedite the recovery process and encourage timely repair work to restore the safety, functionality, and aesthetics of damaged properties."

The fee waiver applies only to electrical permit applications, for the purpose of repair and replacement from casualty events due to the storm on Sept. 27, 2024. It does not apply to any permits for new construction, repairs or improvements unrelated to damage from the storm.

Also at the meeting, Commissioners approved the awarding of Corp. Roy Todd Laughter's service weapon to him, upon his retirement from the Rutherford County Sheriff's Office on Nov. 1. He served more than 20 years.

Sheriff Aaron Ellenburg made the request.

# • Citation (aglc Style)

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# Helene brought out the best in Carolinians

October 9, 2024 | Daily Dispatch, The (Henderson, NC) Author: Staff Writer | Section: Archives | 650 Words OpenURL Link

#### **RALEIGH**

As we mourn the deaths and grapple with the destruction inflicted on our state by Hurricane Helene, I submit that the storm has brought out much that is good about North Carolina — and much that is vile about social media.

I'll start with the positive. Residents of the mountain counties most affected by Helene have fought heroically for their lives, their families, and their neighbors, often against long odds and terrifying threats. They haven't fought alone. Others from across North Carolina and beyond flocked in to help.

We've only just begun to collect their stories of prudent planning, daring rescues, and dogged determination. These tales feature the likes of Hendersonville's James White, who led more than a dozen neighbors sheltering in his home to safety with ropes and lifejackets, as well as Eddie Hunnell, recently moved to North Carolina from Colorado, who leapt into the swollen New River to save a stranger, Lesley Worth, separated from her husband by the raging stream.

At larger scale, hundreds of churches, charities, companies, and volunteer networks sprang to the assistance of their fellow Carolinians. So did law enforcement, fire and rescue teams, and emergency-response personnel from counties, municipalities, state agencies, and other public authorities.

On the ground, we've seen a great deal of cooperation across jurisdictional and political boundaries. Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler, for example, sent North Carolina Forest Service staffers familiar with the rugged terrain to guide National Guard units into position.

On October 7, Democratic and Republican appointees on the State Board of Elections voted unanimously to empower local boards in 13 hard-hit counties to modify the locations and hours of early-voting sites and other election procedures — but only by bipartisan votes of those boards, a prudent constraint to reassure a jittery public.

Democratic mayors have worked closely with Republican county commissioners to coordinate relief. Gov. Roy Cooper, U.S. Sens. Thom Tillis and Ted Budd, lawmakers from both parties — all have pitched in to comfort victims, survey damage, coordinate responses, and convey timely, accurate information to the public.

That's not to say there haven't been miscues and disagreements. Tillis and Budd questioned the pace at which military personnel from Fort Liberty and other bases were deployed into the devastated counties after the storm. Others have criticized the adequacy of response by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

While it will take some time to sort out all the claims and counterclaims, it's not too early to label these issues as legitimate topics for debate.

Unfortunately, much of the "debate" unfolding on social media over the past week has been anything but legitimate. Whether spreading wacky conspiracy theories about lithium mines and weather control or uttering grotesque slanders about Kamala Harris and Joe Biden intentionally "letting" Republican voters "drown," a host of very-online, supposedly conservative provocateurs and hacks have made a bad situation immeasurably worse.

Here's what a real conservative leader, state Sen. Kevin Corbin, had to say. "PLEASE help stop this junk," wrote Corbin, who represents North Carolina's eight westernmost counties. "It is just a distraction to people trying to do their job."

"Folks, this is a catastrophic event of which this country has never known. It is the largest crisis event in the history of N.C. The state is working non-stop. DOT has deployed workers from all over the state. Duke [Energy] has 10,000 workers on this. FEMA is here. The National Guard is here in large numbers."

Some incendiary memes are likely the product of misunderstandings, such as emergency officials redirecting volunteers away from dangerous roadways or relief agencies refusing certain donated items they aren't equipped to store or distribute. Others may well be the result of bad calls made in good faith, in stressful conditions, by officials with incomplete information or inadequate training.

Can policymakers properly second-guess such decisions after the fact? Of course! That time will come. Right now, our immediate challenges remain rescue and relief — challenges our fellow North Carolinians have met with magnificent resilience.

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## IRS announces tax relief for victims of Hurricane Helene

October 9, 2024 | Daily Dispatch, The (Henderson, NC) Author: Dispatch Staff| Section: Archives | 771 Words OpenURL Link

CHARLOTTE — The Internal Revenue Service announced tax relief for individuals and businesses in the entire state of North Carolina that were affected by Hurricane Helene.

These taxpayers now have until May 1, 2025, to file various federal individual and business tax returns and make tax payments.

Following the disaster declaration issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, individuals and households that reside or have a business in the entire state qualify for tax relief.

The IRS automatically identifies taxpayers located in the covered disaster area and applies filing and payment relief. But affected taxpayers who reside or have a business located outside the covered disaster area should call the IRS disaster hotline at 866-562-5227 to request this tax relief. Tax preparers located in the disaster area with clients located outside the disaster area can choose to use the bulk requests from practitioners for disaster relief option, described on IRS.gov.

Affected taxpayers with returns and payments with due dates postponed until Feb. 3, 2025, due to Tropical Storm Debby in North Carolina will also now have until May 1, 2025, to file or pay.

The declaration permits the IRS to postpone certain tax-filing and tax-payment deadlines for taxpayers who reside or have a business in the disaster area.

For instance, certain deadlines falling on or after Sept. 25, 2024, and before May 1, 2025, are granted additional time to file through May 1, 2025. As a result, affected individuals and businesses will have until then to file returns and pay any taxes that were originally due during this period.

The May 1 filing deadline applies to:

Individuals who had a valid extension to file their 2023 return due to run out on Oct. 15, 2024. The IRS noted, however, that because tax payments related to these 2023 returns were due on April 15, 2024, those payments are not eligible for this relief.

Calendar-year corporations whose 2023 extensions run out on Oct. 15, 2024.

The new deadline also applies to any payment normally due during this period, including the quarterly estimated tax payments due on Jan. 15 and April 15, 2025. The new deadline also applies to the quarterly payroll and excise tax returns normally due on Oct. 31, 2024, and Jan. 31, and April 30, 2025. In addition, penalties on payroll and excise tax deposits due on or after Sept. 25, 2024, and before Oct. 10, 2024, will be abated as long as the tax deposits are made by Oct. 10, 2024.

If an affected taxpayer receives a late filing or late payment penalty notice from the IRS that has an original filing, payment or deposit due date that falls within the postponement period, the taxpayer should call the telephone number on the notice to have the IRS abate the penalty.

Taxpayers not in the covered disaster area, but whose records necessary to meet a deadline listed in Treas. Reg. § 301.7508A-1(c) are in the covered disaster area, are also entitled to relief. In addition, all relief workers affiliated with a recognized government or philanthropic organization assisting in the relief activities in the covered disaster

area and any individual visiting the covered disaster area who was killed or injured as a result of the disaster are entitled to relief.

The IRS gives affected taxpayers until May 1 to file most tax returns that have either an original or extended due date occurring on or after Sept. 26, 2024, and before May 1, 2025, are granted additional time to file through May. 1, 2025.

Affected taxpayers that have an estimated income tax payment originally due on or after Sept. 26, 2024, are postponed through May 1, 2025, will not be subject to penalties for failure to pay estimated tax installments as long as such payments are paid on or before May 1, 2025.

This relief also includes the filing of Form 5500 series returns that were required to be filed on or after Sept. 26, 2024, and before May. 1, 2025, are postponed through May 1, 2025. The relief described in section 17 of Rev. Proc. 2018-58, pertaining to like-kind exchanges of property, also applies to certain taxpayers who are not otherwise affected taxpayers and may include acts required to be performed before or after the period above.

Unless an act is specifically listed in Rev. Proc. 2018-58, the postponement of time to file and pay does not apply to information returns in the W-2, 1094, 1095, 1097, 1098 or 1099 series; to Forms 1042-S, 3921, 3922 or 8027; or to employment and excise tax deposits. However, penalties on deposits due on or after Sept. 26, 2024, and before Oct. 10, 2024, will be abated as long as the tax deposits were made by Oct. 10, 2024.

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# **Angier American Legion Post meeting Thursday**

October 9, 2024 | Daily Record, The (Dunn, NC) Author: Staff Writer | Section: News | 68 Words OpenURL Link

The regular meeting of American Legion Post 436 is Thursday, Oct. 10, in the fellowship hall of the Church of the Resurrection, located at 173 W. Depot St., Angier. Dinner and fellowship is at 6 p.m. and the meeting is at 7.

A Girls State candidate will speak this month and share her experience while attending the event. The post also is collecting supplies for Hurricane Helene relief.

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Staff Writer, 'Angier American Legion Post meeting Thursday', *Daily Record, The* (online), 9 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C1B8179029C970">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C1B8179029C970</a>



# Lesser Than Ministries leads efforts to provide aid to victims of Hurricane Helene

October 9, 2024 | Daily Reflector, The (Greenville, NC) Author: Emily Smith Correspondent| Section: Local | 724 Words OpenURL Link

David and Dawn Smith founded Lesser Ministries on Jan. 1, 2023. However, their ministry began years before being recognized as a registered nonprofit organization.

The Smiths, natives of Duplin County, pastored at Sandy Plain Baptist Church in Pink Hill for 23 years. During this time, both have been a part of a variety of different mission trips both in the United States and abroad.

"Ministry through missions began long ago in our hearts by introducing people to short-term mission trips and being a part of a local prayer group of pastors in our area," Dawn said.

"We attended our second mission trip to Africa, and when we came home, we knew without a doubt what God had called us to. We knew we needed to accept the call to full-time missions and step out on faith," said Dawn.

At this time, Dawn and David made the hard decision to step away from their jobs and be fully committed to the mission God had in store for them.

What ministry looks like for the Smiths changes from day to day. In Africa, the Smiths may serve the poor, speak at local churches in the area, visit various villages, and educate the residents. In Brazil, the Smiths lead teams to see missions in multiple contexts. In the United States, Dawn said, "We just do whatever God calls us to do."

It is in daily obedience to this calling that Lesser Ministries became a leading force of support for relief efforts provided to victims of Hurricane Helene.

"David and I were talking about how we could help when a local pastor called us with instructions concerning how we could help."

The pastor shared with the Smiths what they needed, and Dawn describes things as "beginning to fall into place." The Smiths connected with already established ministries in the affected areas and rallied with churches in Duplin County to collect items to send to the mountains.

"People just stepped up and started to work!" Dawn shared. "This is not a Lesser Ministries thing, it is a community thing." So many organizations and churches from Duplin County are involved in the efforts to raise support that the count has not even been released.

Dawn's experience working for Duplin County Social Services and Duplin County Board of Education and David's pastoring experience have both seen the hopelessness that physical devastation can bring to an area.

"I can remember serving in shelters when I worked in previous jobs. People would come in after experiencing so much devastation, and just a simple smile or a hug would bring the light back to their eyes. People need to know that someone cares," shared Dawn.

Dawn teared up as she said, "As far as this hurricane's damage goes, it hurts my heart. You know we see a lot in our work. In Duplin County alone, we have seen the havoc flooding can cause, but I cannot imagine being stuck on a mountain without service, and no one knows I am even there."

Despite the destruction this hurricane has caused, Dawn is filled with hope for the future. "The hope is that we can help people who are in need and cannot manage their needs independently. These people will see that people all

over the country care. There is a hopelessness that comes from devastation. We get to step into that and hopefully show them the love of Jesus through it."

For those who cannot physically visit the affected areas, the Smiths explain there is still a way to be a valuable part of the relief efforts.

"First of all, everyone can pray. I would also suggest financially supporting the organizations already stationed in the affected areas," stated Dawn.

A great way to learn more about what organizations and mission groups are already on the move is to search county names online, seek out local organizations, and read about what they specifically need to serve their area. Dawn encourages us to see what churches and government organizations are already doing and support those specific efforts. She explained that people in the affected regions are experts on the needs of those in that area.

In a situation of death and destruction, there are a variety of ministries and organizations in Duplin County and beyond that work together to meet the needs of fellow North Carolinians. Despite the hopelessness on the surface, opportunity is brewing and Duplin County is rising to the occasion!

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# Harris set to visit Greenville on Sunday

October 9, 2024 | Daily Reflector, The (Greenville, NC) Author: Bobby Burns The Daily Reflector | Section: Local | 607 Words OpenURL Link

Vice President Kamala Harris will visit Greenville on Sunday, a campaign official confirmed, although details have not been released.

The visit was first reported Wednesday night by the News & Observer of Raleigh, saying the Harris-Walz campaign told McClatchy newspapers of the visit exclusively. The official confirmed to The Daily Reflector that the report was accurate but provided no further information.

It comes less than a week before the start of early voting in North Carolina and as the Democratic campaign is in a tight battle for the state in its bid for the U.S. presidency against former Republican president Donald Trump.

Most recent polling shows that Harris is less than 2 percentage points behind Trump among likely voters. The difference in the RealClear average of polls reported Sept. 29 is within the margin of error.

A poll conducted by the ECU Center for Survey Research from Sept. 23-26 showed Trump with a 2 percentage point lead over Harris, 49% to 47%. The poll's margin of error is 3%.

Harris' campaign reported Wednesday the margin was 1 percent in Trump's favor.

Early voting begins across the state at 8 a.m. on Thursday, with seven sites opening in Pitt County. It continues through Nov. 2. Election Day is Nov. 5.

It will be Harris' first visit to Greenville. Her husband, Doug Emhoff, campaigned for Harris' then-running mate, President Joe Biden, in Greenville in 2020 when Biden defeated the incumbent Trump to win the presidency.

Biden earned 306 electoral votes to Trump's 232 in 2020. Biden received more than 81 million votes nationally to Trump's over 74 million.

Biden carried Pitt County in 2020 with 54 percent of the vote to Trump's 45 percent, according to the N.C. State Board of Elections. Trump defeated Biden statewide with 50 percent of the vote to Biden's 49 percent.

Trump defeated Hillary Clinton in 2016 in North Carolina with 50 percent of the vote to Clinton's 46 percent. Clinton carried Pitt County 52 percent to 44 percent.

Trump has stopped in Greenville four times, including during his 2016 campaign and in 2019 as president, when his visit to ECU's Minges Coliseum elicited chants of "send her back" in response to Trump's criticism of U.S. Rep. Ilhan Omar of Minnesota, who came to the United States as a child after fleeing Somalia with her family.

He visited again during his 2020 campaign and in 2021, during the N.C. GOP convention at the Greenville Convention Center, when he called Lt. Gov. Mark Robinson "one of the strongest and bravest new Republicans" in the nation.

The campaigns are battling while recovery efforts from Hurricane Helene are ongoing in western North Carolina and as Hurricane Milton is pummeling Florida.

The storm scrambled Trump's schedule, according to the Associated Press. He put off a virtual event Tuesday night focused on health care and postponed a Univision town hall in Miami. He was in Pennsylvania on Wednesday.

President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris are denouncing misinformation and disinformation surrounding the federal response to Hurricane Helene, which hit last week and killed more than 220 people. Both singled out Trump as driving much of the falsehoods.

Harris plans to head to Nevada and Arizona on Thursday, the Associated Press said.

Early in-person voting has started in Arizona, making it the first of this year's presidential battleground states where all residents can cast a ballot at a traditional polling place ahead of Election Day. The Trump campaign also is planning visits to Arizona.

Each of Arizona's 15 counties is required to open at least one site for in-person voting, which runs until the Friday before the Nov. 5 general election.

In-person voting begins next week in three more presidential swing states — Georgia, Michigan and Nevada.

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

October 9, 2024 | Daily Reflector, The (Greenville, NC) Author: Pat Gruner | Section: Local | 728 Words OpenURL Link

A Pitt County 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 Oct. 1 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 230people have been killed across six states, including at least 77 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, whom 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 members 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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# NCHSAA extends fall sports

October 9, 2024 | Enquirer-Journal, The (Monroe, NC) Author: NCHSAA Communications | Section: Enquirer Journal | 417 Words OpenURL Link

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. – The North Carolina High School Athletic Association's Board of Directors met to discuss options for extending the fall sports season including the postseason calendar.

These discussions were necessitated by the devastation caused by Tropical Storm Helene in western North Carolina.

"Changes to the fall calendar are difficult as well as complex but necessary," said NCHSAA President Dr. Stephen Gainey and NCHSAA Commissioner Que Tucker in a joint statement. "Keeping our student-athletes safe as we try to minimize risk of injury was central to any decisions made. We commend the work of the NCHSAA staff in its research, the Board of Directors in making time to consider these changes and the willingness of our host partners to accommodate any changes and make their venues available."

The board approved changes and modifications to the schedule. The calendar below encompasses the changes made by the board. Playoff dates in bold reflect a change.

Football

Effective immediately, a minimum of three calendar days (72 hours) must occur in between contests.

Seeding: Nov. 10 (Sunday, after 1 p.m.)

First round: Nov. 15

Second round: Nov. 22

Third round: Nov. 29

Fourth round: Dec. 6

Regionals: Dec. 13

State Championships: Dec. 20-21

Volleyball

Effective immediately, the weekly limitation is modified to allow affected schools to make up multiple postponed matches, not to exceed eight in a week. No change was made to the daily limitation.

Seeding: Oct. 20 (Sunday, after 1 p.m.)

First Round: Oct. 22

Second Round: Oct. 24

Third Round: Oct. 26

Fourth Round: Oct. 29

Regionals: Oct. 31

State Championships: Nov. 2

Women's Tennis

Individual

Regionals: Oct. 18-19

State Championships: Oct. 25-26

**Dual Team** 

Seeding: Oct. 18

First Round: Oct. 21

Second Round: Oct. 23

Third Round: Oct. 28

Fourth Round: Oct. 30

Regionals: Nov. 5

State Championships: Nov. 9

Men's Soccer

Effective immediately, the weekly limitation is modified to allow affected schools to make up multiple postponed matches, not to exceed four in a week. No change was made to the daily limitation.

Seeding: Nov. 7

First round: Nov. 9

Second Round: Nov. 12

Third Round: Nov. 14

Fourth Round: Nov. 16

Regionals: Nov. 19

State Championships: Nov. 22-23

**Cross Country** 

Regionals: Oct. 26

State Championships: Nov. 2

## Women's Golf

The minimum number of nine-hole scores required to qualify for the Regional Championships was revised from five to three.

No calendar changes

Cheerleading

# No calendar changes

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# • Citation (aglc Style)

NCHSAA Communications, 'NCHSAA extends fall sports', *Enquirer-Journal, The* (online), 9 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C2441E40B44858">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C2441E40B44858</a>



# Shelters help animals affected by Helene - Dogs, cats evacuated to number of other states

October 9, 2024 | Fayetteville Observer, The (NC) Author: Saman Shafiq; USA TODAY | Section: News | 889 Words Page: A6

OpenURL Link

Hundreds of dogs and other animals were evacuated from Hurricane Helene-ravaged areas in Florida, Tennessee and North Carolina and relocated to animal shelters across the country.

Helene's devastating path across the Southeast moved the animals to facilities in Maryland, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Wisconsin and D.C., where they are up for adoption and a second chance.

The Humane Society of the United States said in a news release on Monday that 45 adoptable animals from shelters struggling with the loss of power and water in Tennessee were evacuated to its care and rehabilitation center in Maryland.

About 100 animals were evacuated from another shelter in Tennessee's Unicoi County and are being placed with different groups as the shelter undergoes cleanup and construction, the Humane Society said.

"By transporting animals who were available for adoption pre-storm out of the region, local animal services will be better positioned to take in and care for displaced animals in their community, increasing the likelihood of reunifications," the Humane Society said in the news release.

Kirsten Peek, a spokesperson for the organization, said in an email to USA TODAY on Thursday that efforts to relocate the animals are still ongoing and the society does not have an estimated update on the total number of animals that have been evacuated.

#### Wisconsin

Meanwhile, multiple shelters in Wisconsin including the Humane Animal Welfare Society in Waukesha, Elmbrook Humane Society, Wisconsin Humane Society and Washington County Humane Society are taking in dozens of cats and dogs affected by Hurricane Helene.

About 88 dogs and 44 cats were in flown from Florence, South Carolina, to Waukesha, outside Milwaukee, last week with the Wisconsin shelters helping them get adopted, according to the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, part of the USA TODAY Network.

"It was a challenging decision to help as there is a high population of local animals recently," Angela Speed, vice president of marketing and communication for the Wisconsin Humane Society, told the Journal Sentinel, but people in the community have always "stepped up and helped" in these situations, she said.

CEO of Greater Good Charities Liz Baker, who oversaw the relocation, told the Journal Sentinel that "the best thing is to move out adoptable pets and to move them into the community where there are adoptable homes."

"Most are adopted, and this clears out space for other animals in need," Baker said, explaining that the "animals in need" are the pets who are homeless and are waiting to be reunited with their owners.

## North Carolina

The Humane Society of Charlotte assisted the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals with the emergency transport of 44 homeless dogs and cats from the Brother Wolf Animal Rescue in Asheville, which was

devastated by the hurricane.

The animals were placed in emergency foster homes ahead of the hurricane's making landfall, before being moved to temporary shelter, after which they were transported to Charlotte, ASPCA said in a news release.

"The 14 dogs and 30 cats – all of whom are unowned – are receiving medical and behavioral care until they are made available for adoption in the coming weeks," the ASPCA said.

#### Massachusetts

In Massachusetts, the Dakin Humane Society, based in Springfield, is waiving 50% off all adoption fees through Oct. 12 to encourage people to adopt quickly and help make space in the shelter for animals being transported from Southern partner shelters impacted by Hurricane Helene. The shelter did not specify how many animals were transported to Springfield, but pictures shared by the organization showed that cats, dogs and even a sparrow were up for adoption.

The Dakin Humane Society is also collecting relief goods such as dog food, cat food and toys to be sent to its partners in hurricane-ravaged areas.

The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals said it welcomed 34 dogs from eastern Tennessee and 15 cats from Florida with 75 more animals expected to come sometime later this week from Asheville, which is one of the most affected areas. The dogs that arrived from Tennessee are now up for adoption, the shelter said on Friday.

#### Rhode Island

Potter League for Animals, an animal shelter in Middleton, took in 14 dogs from the Aiken County Animal Shelter in South Carolina. Kara Montalbano, a spokesperson for the shelter, clarified in an email to USA TODAY that the dogs "were already in the shelter prior to the hurricane and are not owned pets displaced by the storm," adding they were relocated to Rhode Island to create space at the Aiken County Animal Shelter for animals impacted by the hurricane.

The Aiken County Animal Shelter in Aiken, about 132 miles from Charleston, has been dealing with an influx of animals before and during Hurricane Helene while struggling with no power and limited resources in the aftermath of the hurricane.

In a post on Facebook Friday, the shelter said it received 93 animals in the three days before the hurricane hit and "desperately (needs) fosters who live in Aiken County" to take in a homeless dog for a short time.

Montalbano shared that of the 14 dogs, five have already found homes and that the shelter is planning to coordinate another transport with the Aiken County Animal Shelter in the coming weeks.

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# Officials look to long-term Helene impacts - Macon Recovery

October 9, 2024 | Franklin Press, The (NC)

Author: Thomas Sherrill reporter@thefranklinpress.com | Section: News | 1225 Words

Page: A1 OpenURL Link

With more than a week passed since Hurricane Helene hammered Western North Carolina, local officials are stressing that while there are a lot of people and supplies right now, there will be a continued need for support in the coming weeks, months and even years.

"We want people to kind of pace themselves because we think there's gonna be needs out there in these impacted areas and in our county for a while, so we want to make sure people don't 'donate, donate, donate' for the first week or so and then they drop off after that and people still have needs that are unmet after that," Macon County Emergency Services Director Warren Cabe said.

He encouraged people to think of it as "a marathon instead of a sprint" and mentioned that following Hurricane Ivan in 2004 it took a year or two before everything returned to "normal."

"We were using some of that [Hurricane Ivan] money as late as a couple of years ago," Cabe said. We still had a little money sitting there and stuff would still pop up, particularly when we did some repair and relocation programs."

Overall, Cabe said Macon County could have been way worse. The county has one confirmed death from the storm: Macon County Sheriff's Deputy Jim Lau, whose truck ended up in the Cullasaja River during the storm.

Cabe said one family was put in a hotel, while unhoused families got accommodations through friends or family. That family was still in a hotel as of early this week.

There are roughly 300 outages left for Haywood EMC, mostly in the N.C. 106 vicinity and in Otto, and virtually none for Duke Energy. Cabe said most of the Highlands outages were restored on Friday, Oct. 4. As far as damage numbers, Cabe stated Tuesday that two residential structures are now uninhabitable, 24 will require extensive repairs, 28 will require some repair and three others need some minor repairs. Those numbers could increase as vacation/second homeowners check on their properties in the coming weeks, specifically in Highlands.

Cabe said there will be FEMA representatives in the area this week setting up locations where locals can get help in applying for disaster assistance. Dates and time of the FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers will be announced when available. Macon County Sheriff Brent Holbrooks said FEMA staff will have identifiable information and insignia on their shirts and vehicles.

Hurricane Helene brought record-breaking rainfall to Western North Carolina on Sept. 26-28. Coming in right after heavy rains in the days beforehand, Helene's rains caused catastrophic damage to areas east and northeast of Macon County as rivers and creeks swelled to neverbefore-seen levels, destroying countless homes, causing massive road washouts and untold landslides.

So far, across multiple states, over 200 people are dead. That number is expected to rise as crews make their way house by house over a disaster area spanning more than 10, 000 square miles of mostly mountain terrain.

Donation and distribution center opens On Monday, Oct. 7, Macon County opened a Hurricane Helene donation and distribution center at the vacant Ingles building in Holly Springs Shopping Center. The center will be open 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. through Friday, Oct. 11, subject to change.

The Macon County Sheriff's Office said their donation efforts are now at the vacant Ingles, as well as all other county government agencies.

Some of the new items needed for donation include toilet paper, paper towels, diapers, toothbrushes, toothpaste, grab-and-go non-perishable food items, infant food, pet food, towels, cleaning wipes, work gloves, flashlights, batteries, first aid kits, garbage bags, unopened socks, unopened underwear, personal hygiene products, gas cans and can openers.

Cabe asked that people bringing supplies into Macon County make sure they have a destination for their stuff before getting here, so it doesn't go to waste.

"We want to connect the best possible help to those who need it," Cabe said. "We don't want to take help here that could provide better to folks who need it more than we do."

An email has been established for residents to submit unmet needs and other requests. Send information to Heleneneeds@maconnc.org and the request or information will be routed to the most appropriate agency, department or individual.

Schools resume in Macon County Buses rumbled down Macon County's roads the morning of Oct. 3, signaling a return to the classroom after a week away. Sports resumed on Thursday with Franklin High's women's tennis team hosting Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School.

Southwestern Community College reopened all its locations Monday, Oct. 7, including its Franklin campus. Western Carolina University partially reopened Oct. 4, with classes set to resume on Monday, Oct. 21. WCU hosted a home football game on Saturday, Oct. 5, but with no fans or tailgating allowed.

Grocery stores, gas stations returning to normal In the days after Helene, there was concern about the availability of gasoline in Macon County. Lines formed at the few stations that had gasoline. Local grocery store management wondered about getting new trucks coming in.

After a week, gas supply has mostly returned to normal, Cabe said. And despite the Ingles distribution center in Asheville being flooded, most stores are well stocked this week, despite shortages of some items.

Tipping fees waived On Oct. 3, Macon County Commissioners' Board Chair Gary Shields signed an amendment to the state of emergency to waive all tipping and transfer fees at the landfill and transfer station in Highlands "for disaster related vegetative and other debris."

Angel Medical Center spared Angel Medical Center CEO Clint Kendall said that the hospital fared well during the storm, with all staff accounted for. The hospital never lost internet service and at times the parking lot was full of people using the hospital's WiFi.

HCA Healthcare set up mini marts inside its hospitals to help its employees with free groceries, including food, water and toiletries, as well as laundry, sleep and shower facilities when needed.

The company has pledged to donate \$1 million through community organizations to aid in relief efforts in North Carolina.

Lack of a shelter Macon County chose not to open a shelter during the storm, which some have criticized.

When asked about the county not opening any shelters, Cabe pointed to the Downtown Door, which is operated by the nonprofit No Wrong Door from a building the Town of Franklin owns. Downtown Door was open Thursday and Friday nights, Sept. 26-27. "We thought we were covered with that as it looked like the impacts weren't going to be as severe," Cabe said of that decision.

Cabe said the county had a block of hotel rooms available, saying it was more economical and easier to put displaced families there than in a shelter.

"Usually, shelters are at the schools and it would require pulling county staff away from normal jobs," Cabe said. "And it displaces the school system."

Cabe said private organizations offered to set up shelters but he felt like they weren't needed in Macon County.

Another question was the lack of evacuation orders. Cabe said at the coast, there are evacuation plans as there's typically one way the hurricanes come in.

"It's not effective here because we don't know what direction the hurricane is coming from, Cabe said of potential evacuation routes. Looking back, Cabe said he's sure there were things emergency management could improve but said it's hard to be 100% prepared for a hurricane in the mountains. "We feel we met the needs of our citizens to the best of our abilities," Cabe said.

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# Nonprofit offers respite from storm

October 9, 2024 | Franklin Press, The (NC) Author: Will Woolever sports@thefranklinpress.com| Section: News| 664 Words Page: A3 OpenURL Link

Smoky Mountain Harm Reduction was inundated with clients throughout the weekend following Hurricane Helene. Located just north of town on Georgia Road, the charity has provided food, water and other supplies to those affected by the storm both locally and region-wide.

"We have been [working] nonstop since the storm," said the group's founder, Stephanie Almeida, when reached for comment Oct. 1. "We've been running like four to five crockpots at the same time - that's how much food we're serving out. We've got a list on the wall of all of the food that we've prepared, and it's just astronomical."

In everything from providing basic needs to battling substance abuse, SMHR provides a wide range of resources for Macon County's neediest residents. When Helene swept through the area leaving destruction in its wake, Almeida and her small team of volunteers did everything they could.

"We haven't taken anybody in. We're not a shelter; we don't have any way for people to sleep there," she said. "It's mostly basic daily needs, food and water. Our produce came two days ago, and it was gone in a matter of hours. That's not normal for us - we usually keep at least some of the produce for a couple of days."Many of SMHR's clients were devastated by the storm, left with little access to even the most basic necessities. Because some have only cars, tents or other improvised dwellings for shelter, they had little warning of Helene's severity.

"You've got to realize, our folks don't have internet unless they get someplace where there's a wireless signal," said Almeida. "We stayed open for 24 hours because of our folks in the woods. I still haven't seen a lot of our clients that we typically see every day. I don't know what their needs are, and the couple of folks that have made it to us have lost everything."

Because most stores could not accept debit or EBT cards following the storm, many were left without food until the stores' systems came back online, leaving SMHR as their only place to find a meal. While Almeida was too busy to count the number of people they helped, she said they've been unable to take in enough supplies to meet demand.

"We're trying to get donations for the basic needs," she said. "Even though our land wasn't hurt here in the same way as it was in the counties north and south of us, our folks are hurting in the same way that those folks are. No electricity for many people . how about this - my mom is on oxygen. We had no power - she had one oxygen tank, and then was out of oxygen."

Now nearly two weeks removed from Helene, Almeida says SMHR is still in need of donations, of everything from warm winter clothes and survival gear to protein-rich and non-perishable foods. In spite of this, the group has been active in helping the places hardest-hit by the storm.

"We got a huge mutual aid order from Virginia Harm Reduction yesterday, and they drove down and brought us all kinds of stuff - medical supplies, feminine products, harm reduction supplies, and that was amazing," she said. "They're coming back at the end of the week so we can put a mutual aid order together and take it out to Marshall, which has been decimated. It's unimaginable - they're describing it as 'post-apocalyptic.'" Given the scale of destruction wrought by Helene, it would be easy for providers like Almeida to feel overwhelmed. Even the face of such hardship however, she says the human spirit is a powerful force.

Almeida said on the Saturday after the storm (Sept. 28) a woman came to the office with a car full of cooked food. "It must have been 25 pounds of pork - it was just amazing. Some I added to some pinto beans, some I added to

# some rice, and so we were able to use that for a whole bunch of meals."

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# Delivering help and hope

October 9, 2024 | Franklin Press, The (NC) Author: Mia Overton editor@thefranklinpress.com| Section: News| 1415 Words Page: A1 OpenURL Link

Even as Macon County was recovering from Tropical Storm Helene, people began rallying to help those in the hardhit areas to the east.

Churches, organizations and businesses have organized collections while individuals have given of their time to volunteer and their resources to donate supplies and money. The Franklin Police Department and Macon County Sheriff's Office collected supplies. Community fire departments sent members to other towns to help clear debris and shovel away the muck left behind from floodwaters. The athletic teams and clubs from Franklin High School, Boy Scouts and Bartram Academy students have been volunteering at collection sites.

Outdoor 76 owners Cory McCall and Rob Gasbarro were among the first businesses to step up to collect and deliver supplies. They started with a goal of filling a 12-foot enclosed trailer with whatever supplies they could collect, but with community donations they far surpassed that. In five days, they collected 14 trailers filled with more than 70, 000 pounds of supplies. This past Saturday they received 20, 000 pounds of supplies and redirected 17, 000 pounds to other distribution locations in Franklin because they could not handle the volume of donations.

More than 100 volunteers helped sort, pack and load trailers. The supplies were delivered to Asheville, Old Fort, Cruso and Marion.

"People's lives will be forever changed after what happened during Hurricane Helene, but things are better because you stepped up and filled the gap in a time of need," the store posted on Saturday.

On Monday, Outdoor 76 said they were putting a pause on donations as they were beyond capacity and cannot receive any more items. They encouraged people to drop off donations at one of the other local collection sites. "We greatly appreciate your support, but we are turning our focus to 'boots on the ground' efforts in communities that need it most. Thanks to all for your overwhelming support and donations."

Based on the contacts they have made in communities some of the specific items needed are cleaning supplies, paper towels, first aid supplies, kids winter jackets, generators, shovels, wheelbarrows, new 5-gallon buckets for kids care kits. The kids care kits will include coloring books, crayons/colored pencils, small stuffed animals, drawing paper notebooks, small kids games.

GR828 Over this past weekend, the GR828 intake and redistribution center was set up in the old Kmart in Westgate Shopping Center. Hundreds of volunteers showed up to help sort, package and load supplies for deliveries to other areas.

"We decided we needed to help," said Amy Vanhook Anders, one of the organizers along with Benjamin Vanhook, Paige Johns, and VanDrake Land Clearing & Development.

Anders said they put the word out and donations started coming in "from all over the place" even as far away as Pennsylvania.

More than 200 flights were logged into the Macon County Airport with private pilots delivering supplies. Jimmy Goodman said they loaded 8 to 10 box trucks at the airport and at least half of those were taken to the GR828 distribution center. Anders expressed her appreciation for the airport staff. "They've been great."

Anders said they have been networking with people from around the region to make sure the supplies go where they needed to go. She said some areas are getting more donations than others.

"We want to get to those less served areas," Anders said. She said the volunteers have been using their own trucks and trailers, cars and vans, and paying for their own gas to make the deliveries. "It's all people wanting to help other people."

She has been impressed with all the people who came out to help and commended the Franklin High School sports teams and the Interact Club for all their efforts. "They have been amazing, and the community has been amazing," she said. Anders said they have partnered with local organizations to help with the collection and distribution.

Anders said they understand there will be a long recovery period for some communities and as the attention shifts or donations slow down, they will not be forgotten.

"We are planning to make this a long-term thing," she said. "We are here for the long haul." She said they have space to store the donations, and if in the coming weeks a community needs more supplies, they will be prepared to load up a trailer and make the deliveries.

On Monday the center moved from the Kmart building to Discover Church.

Town appreciation During the Oct. 7 Franklin Town Council meeting, Vice Mayor Stacy Guffey and Council member Robbie Tompa expressed their appreciation for the people who have given of their time and donated supplies to help those in other counties.

"There are a lot of unsung heroes out there who've been, like some of my friends, all over the region in some really hard-to-get places, raising supplies and donations and taking them there," Guffey said. "In every tragedy, there's always some sort of brightness. And I guess the brightness is the sense of community throughout Western North Carolina. So, I'm just grateful for that."

Tompa said he too wanted to thank all those who have reached out to help those here in Macon County and beyond. He had driven through Sylva on Monday and saw a dropoff site there filled with supplies.

"It's just one of those moments of just the civility and the humanity, that we can disagree in super-political times and still come together for the greater good," Tompa said. "It was just heartening to see that in such a terrible time and just continue to pray for the community, for the people that are still dealing with this."

Town Planner Justin Setser reported that the town's free WiFi system sees an average of 80-90 users per day, but on the Monday following the flood when cell and internet service remained out for much of the county, more than 3, 000 people logged into the downtown WiFi.

During Monday's meeting Mayor Jack Horton announced he was terminating the state of emergency put in place for the town on Sept. 26.

Horton said Gov. Roy Cooper called him the day before the storm to check on preparations. Horton said he told the governor, "We're hoping for the best, but our staff and emergency services are preparing for the worst."

"I do appreciate the governor's call to check on us all the way out here in the west. And hopefully we won't have to go through that again any time soon," Horton said. "Hats off to everybody who responded, people still responding, and volunteers going over and working in areas."

The mayor said he had talked to people in Transylvania, Buncombe, Haywood and Jackson counties and they appreciate the outpouring of help from their neighbors. "We put out the word that if there's anything we can do from Franklin to help you through this crisis, don't hesitate to let us know," Horton said. "We hope that they'll be able to go through this. But as we all know, the rescue part is about to complete, but the recovery part is just

beginning. And that will take a long time."

With the many roads and bridges to be replaced due to storm damage, the mayor said that might put a strain on the Department of Transportation budget and slow down some local projects. "But, we'll hope for the best on that."

Town attorney John Henning said the UNC School of Government several years ago put out information about how inland places can prepare for storms they might not normally get, adding that it seems there seems to be a lot more of the 100-year events than there used to be.

"There's a lot of preparedness we can do to be ready if the next time it comes here and somehow Franklin isn't spared. So, I think it's going to become incumbent to start thinking of the next time," Henning said. "That next big one can be right around the corner."

Henning said he plans to start working with his clients on ways to be ready. "There's a lot of legwork you can do to be eligible for FEMA grants and things that get you back on your feet a lot faster."

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# 18-1 volleyball eyes postseason

October 9, 2024 | Franklin Press, The (NC) Author: Will Woolever sports@thefranklinpress.com| Section: Sports | 552 Words Page: B4 OpenURL Link

It's been a strange end to a near-perfect regular season for Panther volleyball. Following a nine-day hiatus due to Tropical Storm Helene, Franklin's JV and varsity teams finally returned to action Oct. 4. In Mountain Seven Conference wins over Smoky Mountain on Senior Night, they improved to 18-0 and 18-1 respectively.

After a busy week of Helene relief efforts, assembling 200 firstaid kits and joining other Panther athletes unloading large shipments of aid, both Panther teams took the court in front of a packed house. In a rematch of a hard-fought Panther in Sylva Sept. 5, both JV teams looked evenly matched again early, with Franklin leading 8-7 following two aces from Olivia Anthony. Emma Hatch and Addie Powell heated up in the next few minutes, posting two kills apiece to go up 16-11 and force a Smoky timeout. Lass Ward, Shelby Adams and Lily Brison added aces down the stretch to win the first set 25-19.

Franklin stayed hot in the second, going up 12-5 behind three kills from Anthony and two aces from Anna Stiles. From there Finley Moffitt continued a strong match at the net, capping a 25-17 win with a match-point kill. Cindy Harrell's unbeaten team has now won 36 of their 39 sets, including 22 of 22 in the Mountain Seven.

Following their JV counterparts' win and a ceremony honoring their eight seniors, Bekah Brooks' varsity squad took the floor for the evening's marquee matchup. Having been blown out by the Panthers in Sylva Sept. 5, Smoky looked much better to start the rematch, sitting tied at 13 despite four kills from Kyrah Bowles.

From there Franklin began to pull away, winning 25-17 behind three straight aces from McKenna Plemmons and airtight defense from Emma Ledford.

Both teams started the second set in much the same way as the first, looking evenly matched early until Franklin pulled ahead to make it 23-12. The Panthers then made several substitutions, and Smoky roared back to knot the set at 24. Upon retaking the court however, Franklin's starters stayed cool under pressure, getting kills from Danni Ledford and Bowles to win 26-24.

Once again both teams looked evenly matched to start the third, sitting tied at 8 despite two points from Aubrey Haley. Once again Franklin was the better team down the stretch, getting three points apiece from Bowles and Ryan Green to win 25-18.

After their wins over Smoky, the Panthers turned their attention to their last two matches of the regular season, planning trips to Rabun Gap Oct. 9 and West Henderson Oct. 16. The trip to West, which was rescheduled from Oct. 3 due to damage from Helene, will act as a de facto Mountain Seven title match, as coaches have agreed to forgo this year's conference tournament.

The varsity Panthers ended the week at 18-1 overall and 10-1 in the conference, sitting in second place behind the 10-0 Falcons. As of Oct. 7, West and Franklin were the 4th and 5th-ranked teams in the 3A West Region, respectively, ahead of the state playoffs' planned first round Oct. 17. The Falcons dealt the Panthers their only loss of the season to date, a 3-0 defeat on Tom Raby Court Sept. 10.

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# 11-1 tennis routs Eagles, readies for playoffs

October 9, 2024 | Franklin Press, The (NC) Author: Will Woolever sports@thefranklinpress.com| Section: Sports | 648 Words Page: B4 OpenURL Link

Panther women's tennis is eying their third straight Mountain Seven title. After a nine-day hiatus due to Tropical Storm Helene, the team returned to action Oct. 3 with a home match versus Rabun Gap-Nacoochee. In a 9-0 win they improved to 11-1 overall, with one more conference match remaining on the schedule.

Having suffered their first loss in more than two full regular seasons in Georgia Aug. 30, the Panthers hosted the Eagles in Franklin to attempt to exact revenge. After beating the Panthers 5-4 in the teams' first meeting, Rabun Gap looked much different in the rematch, traveling without their top singles player.

With the Eagles' remaining players each forced to play above their usual slots, Franklin's top three took care of business on their home court, with seniors Kate Phillips (#1), Abigal Angel (#2) and Maci Stork (#3) earning convincing singles wins.

The #4 match featured multiple wild swings of momentum, with senior Caroline Deal winning a hard-fought first set 7-5. After dropping the second set in a 6-0 shutout, Deal gained a second wind in the match tiebreak, cruising to a 10-3 win roughly two hours after the match's first serve.

At #5 junior Clara Stork also played a hotly-contested match, winning the first set 6-3 but dropping the second set 6-4. Stork claimed the match tiebreak 10-6, while junior Marlee Barnes (#6) won 7-5, 6-2 to give Franklin a clean singles sweep.

With the contest's outcome already decided, both teams elected to play doubles to give players more time on the court, where Phillips and Angel cruised to an 8-3 victory at #1. At #2 Deal was forced into her second match tiebreak of the night, joining Maci Stork to play their opponents to an 8-8 deadlock. The seniors won the tiebreak 7-3, while Stork and Barnes also won narrowly 8-6 at #3. After routing the Eagles 9-0, Franklin's schedule remained uncertain for the final week of the regular season. As the region dealt with the fallout from Hurricane Helene, the Panthers were forced to postpone two Mountain Seven Conference matches, a Sept. 30 clash with Smoky Mountain and a trip to West Henderson Oct. 2. While coach Heather Bell was able to reschedule the match with Smoky to Oct. 7 (after press time), West still had not returned to school as of that day, as Henderson County continued to deal with the storm's aftermath. The Falcons ended the week in second place in the conference at 7-1 behind the 10-0 Panthers. As of Oct. 7, Franklin and West were the 9th and 10th-ranked teams, respectively, in the 3A West Region. "I thought it'd be kind of hard, but it was very refreshing to have everybody back together again," said Maci Stork of playing Franklin's first official contest following the storm. "Obviously a lot is still up in the air, but hopefully everything's gonna get worked out."With others in the conference still without power, water and basic necessities, Stork said it felt a bit strange to be back on the court so soon. As Macon County largely avoided the worst of the storm's destruction, the FHS Athlete of the Month said her team wanted to help some of their less fortunate conference rivals. "Me and Caroline were playing yesterday just rallying back and forth at practice, and we were talking about how we feel guilty that we're just going back to school," she said. "Pisgah is probably the closest to us that was affected, and we know how bad it was there. We're really close with the girls there, and so we wanted to get together and host a meal for them and their families and friends. Hopefully we can do that some time next week."

Following their match with Rabun Gap, on Oct. 5 the Panthers turned their attention to other recovery efforts, packing donated food and supplies into bags for delivery to those affected by the storm.

# • Citation (aglc Style)

Will Woolever sports@thefranklinpress.com, '11-1 tennis routs Eagles, readies for playoffs', *Franklin Press, The* (online), 9 Oct 2024 B4 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C1997435F6BE38">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C1997435F6BE38</a>



# Support local recovery - Our View

October 9, 2024 | Franklin Press, The (NC) Section: Opinions | 491 Words

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In today's paper you'll find the fall edition of Destination magazine - our annual look at all things fall in Macon County. When we were putting the magazine together in mid-September, little did we know that by the end of the month Western North Carolina would be recovering from one of the worst floods in the region's history.

In the days following Hurricane Helene electronic signs warned "WNC Closed." This was a safety precaution due to the many roads and bridges that were swept away and to leave roads passable for the hundreds of emergency and work vehicles needed to respond to the disaster.

More than a week later, portions of WNC remain close and will remain closed for weeks, maybe months to come. In looking at the heart-breaking pictures from around the region it is hard to imagine where to even begin. Some towns were basically washed away in the flood waters. Mud and debris cover everything in sight. People lost family members, their homes, their businesses.

Despite the devastation from the storm, the leaves will turn. And, parts of Western North Carolina, including Macon County, are open. The fall leaf season is vital to our local and regional economy. Locally owned businesses are the backbones on our communities. They are the people who not only provide the goods and services we need, they are our neighbors. They are the people who support our kids' sports teams. They donate items for fundraisers. They too are the people who call this place home.

Owning a small business and competing against large corporate chains is a struggle in good times, but on the heels of a natural disaster such as we are seeing now, it becomes even more difficult. It's sad to know that some businesses may never recover from Hurricane Helene's fury.

We should always support our local businesses, but in this time of rebuilding and recovery, shopping local is even more important. Encourage your out-of-town family and friends to visit Macon County and the other areas of WNC that are open for business and able to welcome tourists. We do not operate in a bubble. Keeping our dollars local and in the region helps all of us and will contribute to rebuilding our economy and people's lives.

In the days following Helene, Macon County became a destination of a different kind. People from all over arrived, by land and by air, to contribute to the storm recovery and help those in need. Since we were spared the worst of the storm, Macon County became one of the hubs to coordinate relief efforts and distribute supplies and aid. In times of crisis, we are told to "look for the helpers." The people of Macon County became the helpers. It really should come as no surprise as we've seen it happen time and time again, but it was reassuring to see so much generosity as people stepped up to help make life better for those around us.

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# Macon County elections not impacted by storm - Early voting on schedule

October 9, 2024 | Franklin Press, The (NC)

Author: Thomas Sherrill reporter@thefranklinpress.com | Section: News | 351 Words

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Ahead of the Oct. 11 voter registration deadline and Oct. 17 start of one-stop early voting, Macon County Elections Director Melanie Thibault says despite Hurricane Helene, everything for the 2024 Election in Macon County survived the storm.

"Right now, we're fortunate it's not affecting us in any way," Thibault said of the storm and after-effects. While several Western North Carolina counties face a complete rebuild and issues more pressing than election planning, Macon County's election sites and workers are all good to go.

Thibault said all the precinct sites, including the Highlands Civic Center, which is used for early voting and as an Election Day precinct, weren't impacted by the storm.

"All the precincts are up and running, the chief judges are all good and we're running along," Thibault said. "We started training this week. We're getting our mail on time. Absentee ballots are going out on time. It's not having an effect on us. Early voting will begin on time."

Thibault said besides the system being down on Friday, Sept. 27, everything was operational the following Monday.

As of Tuesday, Oct. 2, when the Board of Education met, 41 absentee ballots had been received, with more coming in afterward. Around 700 absentee ballots have been mailed out so far, and Thibault expects that number to reach 1, 000.

Thibault believes there will be 12, 000 to 14, 000 early votes cast in Macon County.

In 2020, over 13, 000 people voted early, more than 3, 600 voted absentee by mail and close to 4, 000 voted on Election Day.

"I think this is a very important election. If people want their voice heard, get out and vote," Thibault said.

People who didn't register to vote by Oct. 11 can do so at one-stop early voting starting Oct. 17 through Nov. 2. Hours are 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday and 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturdays. Early voting locations are at the Carpenter Community Building at 1288 Georgia Rd., Franklin, or the Highlands Civic Center at 600 N. 4th St., Highlands.

The last day to request an absentee-bymail ballot is Tuesday, Oct. 29, by 5 p.m.

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# Panthers aid in recovery efforts

October 9, 2024  $\mid$  Franklin Press, The (NC) Section: Sports  $\mid$  88 Words

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Panther athletes have been heavily involved in disaster relief in recent weeks. After Tropical Storm Helene slammed WNC Sept 27, several FHS teams have taken part in recovery efforts, from assembling first-aid kits for workers to collecting and distributing aid from across the region. On Oct. 5 Panther cheer and dance gathered food and supplies at Discover Church for delivery to hard-hit Henderson County Oct. 7. During Homecoming Week Oct. 7-11, students will raise funds for other Mountain Seven Conference schools affected by the storm.

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# Restoring my faith in humanity

October 9, 2024 | Franklin Press, The (NC) Section: Opinions | 749 Words Page: A5 OpenURL Link

I had my faith in humanity restored last week in an empty Kmart building in Franklin. There was no blue light special. Dozens of friends, high school students, churchgoers and children were working feverishly to pack and send emergency supplies to the folks slammed by Hurricane Helene. All the people I talked with shared a common theme. "We were lucky."

They were working out of the empty Kmart building turned relief center. All day volunteers took in supplies and sent them on to help others. Most supplies were headed north of Asheville.

The day before these same people had been at the Macon County Airport where dozens of airplanes were ferrying supplies in by air. There were airplanes from puddle jumpers to high-dollar corporate jets. And a sky diving jump plane. Helicopters were in an out as well.

A word to our Chamber of Commerce: Every year you have a Citizen of the Year. This year there are dozens of them who pitched in to see that people in the devastated areas were taken care of. Every one of them deserve thanks. We have a herd of Citizens of the Year!

I spent time with these helpers following days of photographing and reporting on the damage along our rivers in Macon County. On Sunday, I talked with some of the volunteers at the redistribution center. Asked about their impressions. They said they wanted to help and found a way to support the effort to get needed food, tarps, pet food and a heap of other things to where they were required at the airport and the Kmart. Macon County people were gathering in churches and community centers to help.

Andrea Terrell is a sophomore at Appalachian State University. "I feel blessed that our community has come together to just help people." She said she was heartbroken at the damage around the campus. "Students love it up there," she said. "Nothing like this has happened and it (the damage) is getting bigger." Sandy McCleod is from Florida. She was amazed how "our community came together so fast to make this work." She looked out over the dozens of people laboring among head high stacks of supplies. She added another thing is "seeing the children here who are learning from us."

Brady Norman is a FHS Football player and a member of the FHS Interact Club. He echoed the impressions of others who were astonished at how the relief efforts came together in such a short time. He was one of the many FHS students working.

Lexy McLennan a junior at Macon Early College said, "It is so cool watching everybody come together to help the other places."

I received a message from Angela Grant, who lives in Archdale, but has relatives in Nantahala. She went into some of the worst hit areas with the Cajun Navy. "The stories are sickening. The things our group has seen this week is gut wrenching. Horses being put to sleep because they're starving. People screaming for help across the mountains. Anybody who knows North Carolina and these mountains knows that nothing is ever going to be the same. The biggest thing I'm taking away from this weekend is the community camaraderie. There are literally people on every street corner handing out water and food and clothes. Be thankful for what you have and that your family is around you. Not everyone has that luxury right now."

Aid was sent from our Nantahala Community. A place not unlike the isolated small communities north of Asheville

where so many lost everything. Including friends and family members.

As I wandered around stacks of bottled water, cleaning supplies, medicines, meals ready to eat, tools and a wide assortment of the items being boxed, labeled, sorted and shipped out, everyone I stopped and talked with expressed the same thought. "We were lucky." And we were.

Pickup trucks, SUVs, soccer mom vans, trailers and box trucks were being loaded all day. Then they were off to where they were needed. Who would have ever thought back to the days when Kmart was a fixture here, that it would one day be empty and filled with volunteers helping their neighbors, in the biggest disaster ever to hit Western North Carolina in modern times.

We never thought such a thing would happen in Western North Carolina. Perhaps Pakistan, India or somewhere in South America. Nonetheless it did.

The people of Macon County rallied.

(The distribution center has since moved to Discover Church.)

Bob Scott is a Franklin writer and photographer. He can be reached at scoopscott79@gmail.com.

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## Rants & Raves

October 9, 2024 | Franklin Press, The (NC) Section: News | 845 Words

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If we should thank God for being treated mildly by the storm, what about those who were treated harshly? Are we somehow better than they are? It wasn't God; it was sheer luck.

- ··· Just a quick rant to all the drivers who like to tailgate me or seem annoyed that I do the speed limit or less on Green Street. I am sure the folks living there are probably not thrilled that they live on a popular cut thru. It is narrow street, lots of vegetation, pets, families. The speed limit is 20 mph for a rea- son. Respect their neighborhood, drive slowly if you want to use the short cut.
- ··· The Republicancontrolled general assembly put the constitutional amendment referendum on the ballot to make voters believe that voting by non-citizens is a problem. It's not. Look at the facts. Besides, those same requirements in the referendum are already enshrined in the constitutions of the United States and North Carolina.
- ··· Governor Cooper needed approval from nine members of his executive branch to activate additional state resources and issue an emergency declaration. By doing this, Gov. Cooper would have been able to more easily dispatch rescue vehicles, order evacuations and assist with rescue and recovery efforts following Hurricane Helene's destruction. Within hours of the request, all of the executive branch members responded, giving Gov. Cooper their blessing to declare an emergency relief effort. Only one member withheld his vote: Lieutenant Governor Mark Robinson.
- ··· My heart and prayers go out to the folks in Western North Carolina who lost everything due to flooding by rivers. However, this does not detract from the point that what the county commissioners did to vote to expand the floodplains and do all that down there was wrong and a bad decision for Franklin.
- ··· Why are politicians afraid of being fact-checked when they debate? If you're telling the truth, then the facts will show that you are telling the truth. Only those that are lying are afraid of being fact-checked.
- ··· To the issue of the upcoming referendum on the sales tax increase for Macon County, it's undoubtedly a fact that revenue is gonna have to increase for the county to fund the much-needed improvements that are going to be coming up for schools and other infrastructure issues. If sales tax is not voted in, then the only other revenue generator would be a property tax increase ··· Helene didn't teach you a thing if you are still trying to build in the floodplain. Please don't risk the lives of our first responders by building in flood-prone areas. Your property rights are not worth it. Both our property rights are worthless without clean water.
- ··· We live on Jacobs Branch Road, and shame on the person who dumped off a baby kitten about eight weeks old. We thought we'd rescued it; unfortunately it passed away due to neglect. People, take responsibility for your pets, please.
- ··· Climate alert: Raves to those of you who are believers in climate change. Get ready; winter is on the way.
- ··· When is anybody in town going to paint some lines over at Walmart and Captain D's? All you need is one line. Why is there such a problem with that?
- ··· A recent Rant used the phrase, "political mindgaming." The ultimate in political mind-gaming is the phrase "gun violence." This phrase would have you believe that an inanimate object is capable of human actions and intent. If that is not a mind game, I don't know what is.

- ··· With all due respect to the author of the Letter to the Editor titled 'Soul-Searching Questions,' Genesis is in fact probably incorrect in multiple verses. All my professors, in stating their writing requirements, emphasized the need to make sure your sources were correct and valid. Failure to do so simply makes your writing looks amateurish and foolish.
- ··· I just wanted to say that I am so proud of the people of Franklin who have gathered together and gotten donations and helped get the stuff together for people of Asheville and surrounding areas that were hit worse than us. The Franklin people showed that they do care about others, and volunteered to help load trucks and things like that. We have a great community here.
- ··· I'd like to thank RadioShack for when we were down with no internet, no WiFi, they allowed us to go to their place and use WiFi to get out to let our families know that we were Ok. Thank you so much to RadioShack, the hospital, Ingles, anybody that let people come and park and get in touch with their families.
- ··· I was born in Macon County, but I do all my business in Sylva. That's my town for everything.
- ··· I was in Central Florida when Hurricanes Charlie Jeanne and Frances came through, as my dad was very ill. A FEMA worker came and helped us with everything. They even sent a crew to remove all the downed trees. Please be sure to expect the wonderful help from FEMA, and get it like they gave my parents.

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