

The long game of recovery: county points donors to United Way for needs down the road

October 8, 2024 | Mountaineer, The (Waynesville, NC) Author: Vicki Hyatt vhyatt@themountaineer.com| Section: On Premise| 34 Words OpenURL Link

Donations and volunteers are flooding into Western North Carolina following the wreckage of Hurricane Helene, but for those who want to give cash, the recommendation is to contribute to United Way of Haywood County.

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Haywood County Schools to resume next week

October 8, 2024 | Mountaineer, The (Waynesville, NC) Author: Aarik Long | Section: News | 716 Words OpenURL Link

A back-to-school date has been announced by Haywood County Schools.

Haywood County Schools have announced Tuesday, Oct. 15, as the back-to-school date — amounting to a 2.5-week break due to storm recovery.

"We will be extremely excited to see students back in the buildings and return to some level of normalcy — and be able to provide for them hot meals and anything they may need," Haywood County Superintendent Dr. Trevor Putnam said.

School will be on a two-hour delay the first day back Tuesday.

"We want to be able to have good light with many of the road conditions and bridge conditions that have changed for our first attempt to have school," Putnam said.

Many hurdles have been cleared in the last week to get students back into the classroom.

"We are extremely grateful for the efforts of our emergency services, fire departments, EMS, county government, municipalities, power crews and everyone that has contributed to allowing us to get back to school," Putnam said.

Power has been restored to every school in the county. Riverbend Elementary will also have sewer back following repairs to a broken sewer line. Clyde Elementary was cleaned after some water got into the building.

The biggest hurdle was getting in the school system's server operational. The server is the nerve center for daily operations at the county's 15 schools, but was stored at the former Central Haywood in Clyde, which had lost power and been flooded on the first floor.

The server was relocated, bringing the system back online.

"Our IT people have worked tirelessly on that over the weekend. We are close to fully operational," said Assistant Superintendent Graham Haynes. "We have copiers, phone, internet. Our servers are up. Our website works. You can get into Infinite Campus (grading system)."

Some phone lines at a handful of schools are accidentally setting off a fire alarm, and some camera servers are still down. But those should be fixed in another week.

In the days following Helene, the school's transportation team was diverted into relief work and spent a lot of time refueling emergency vehicles. That stopped on Saturday, and since then, they have been running bus routes to see which ones can still be driven.

Some roads have washed away, while others have too much debris on both sides of the road to be driven on safely by a bus. In either case, a community stop will be set up — where parents get their kids to a central stop location. Notifications of any potential community stops would go out at least 48 hours in advance.

At Meadowbrook Elementary, some food was lost due to the loss of power at the school. However, food at other schools that lost power was relocated in time so most was saved.

"Whenever we do return back to school, we should be up and running as far as food goes, as well," Haynes said.

One thing was made clear during the school board meeting on Monday — remote learning is off the table.

"If we learned anything from Covid, kids are better served with us. We're going to make every effort to get them here with us. We don't want to begin remote learning at all," Putnam said. "They need to be in school socializing with their peers. We're going to hold pretty firm with that."

He added that if there are extenuating circumstances that prevent a student from making it to school, he would do what it takes to ensure the student doesn't miss out on any education.

"If I have to, I'll hop in my car and take them whatever instructional materials they need and make sure someone supports them where they are," Putnam said. "We're going to take every opportunity to help kids where they are. Just not remote learning."

Monday was already a planned optional workday for Columbus Day, thus the delay until Tuesday. said the schools wanted to honor that planned day off in case anyone already had plans.

"It also gives our staff an opportunity to prepare to welcome their students back into the classroom," Putnam said.

Meanwhile, Shining Rock Classical Academy had already scheduled a fall break or this week. It has announced that classes will resume there on Monday, Oct. 14.

Among private schools, Haywood Christian Academy resumed classes on Tuesday. Bethel Christian Academy, whose facilities were flooded, has posted plans for remote learning on its Facebook page.

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Friday night lights are back in Haywood County this week

October 8, 2024 | Mountaineer, The (Waynesville, NC) Author: Aarik Long | Section: Sports | 192 Words OpenURL Link

Sports are back this week in Haywood County — including home football games by both Tuscola and Pisgah Friday night.

Pisgah will play host to West Henderson, but the game will be played at the Bethel Middle School field since Pisgah memorial Stadium was damaged. Tuscola plays host to East Henderson.

Pisgah soccer will host Smoky Mountain on Wednesday, played at Bethel Middle.

Pisgah and Tuscola girls golf teams will be at Laurel Ridge County Club for the second round of the Mountain 7 Conference Championship tournament on Friday. That round was originally scheduled for Cummings Cove, but had to be moved due to Helene's impact.

Both Pisgah and Tuscola tennis return to action on Wednesday, as well. They will compete in the Mountain 7 Conference Championship at Western Carolina University, continuing into Thursday.

On Thursday, Tuscola volleyball will play host to West Henderson, while Pisgah volleyball will travel to face North Henderson.

Both JV football teams will be in action Thursday, as well. Pisgah's squad will travel to play West Henderson, while Tuscola will play East Henderson. Tuscola's game does not yet have a site decided.

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Sports are back in Haywood County

October 8, 2024 | Mountaineer, The (Waynesville, NC) Author: Aarik Long | Section: Sports | 197 Words OpenURL Link

Sports are back this week in Haywood County starting on Wednesday.

Things get started with Pisgah soccer hosting Smoky Mountain on Wednesday. With Pisgah Memorial Stadium not being usable at the moment, the game will be played at Bethel Middle School.

Tuscola golf will head to Pinehurst for an invitational tournament on Wednesday, as well.

Both Pisgah and Tuscola tennis return to action on Wednesday, as well. They will compete in the Mountain 7 Conference Championship at Western Carolina University. That tournament will continue into Thursday.

On Thursday, things really get rolling. Tuscola volleyball will play host to West Henderson, while Pisgah volleyball will travel to face North Henderson.

Both JV football teams will be in action, as well. Pisgah's squad will travel to play West Henderson, while Tuscola will play East Henderson. Tuscola's game does not yet have a site decided.

On Friday, varsity football returns. Tuscola plays host to East Henderson, while Pisgah will play host to West Henderson.

Both girls golf teams will also be at Laurel Ridge County Club for the second round of the Mountain 7 Conference Championship tournament on Friday. That round was originally scheduled for Cummings Cove, but had to be moved due to Helene's impact.

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Helene was a warning. NC must get ready for climate change

October 8, 2024 | News & Observer, The (Raleigh, NC) Author: Ned Barnett | Section: Editorial/Opinion | 658 Words

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Hurricane Helene's flooding of western North Carolina left vast destruction, but it should also bring new urgency to construction - how and where to build, not only in the mountains but across the state.

After the deluge that left more than 100 dead in North Carolina, the state must increase its commitment to making communities more resilient as climate change causes more flooding, higher winds, rising seas, longer droughts and more frequent wildfires.

Improving the state's resiliency is a well-established goal, if not a well-established action. In the wake of Hurricane Florence in 2018, Gov. Roy Cooper created a state Office of Recovery and Resiliency. Meanwhile, researchers at the state's universities are focused on how to improve building codes and channel development away from flood risks.

But improving the state's ability to withstand stronger and wetter storms has been slowed by development interests and political resistance to new regulations. Under pressure from the state's home-building industry, the Republican-controlled legislature recently opened isolated wetlands to development and blocked efforts to strengthen the state's building code.

The disaster in western North Carolina should make it clear that such impediments need to give way to a broad and robust commitment to improving the state's resiliency.

Erin Seekamp, a professor who directs the Coastal Resilience and Sustainability Initiative at N.C. State University, said it's time for a strong consensus about how to respond to the natural forces being fueled by a warming planet.

"Climate change. Even those words in North Carolina have been politically charged," she said. "We need to realize it's not a conversation about whether climate change is occurring - it is - but how we are approaching our planning."

Amanda Martin, the state's chief resilience officer, said local governments need to consider the siting of new homes and businesses in light of how climate change has expanded flood risks beyond what outdated flood zone maps show

Martin said, "We're going to need to remap parts of the state because the hydrology has changed." Local governments, she said, "need to be careful about where new development goes. There's a place for people and there's a place for water."

Homes and public infrastructure need to reflect the rising pressure from natural forces, she said: "If you want a bridge to last 100 years, you have to build it to survive the climate of the next 100 years."

North Carolina has made progress on resiliency. The state has a resilience plan. Homes have been moved from chronic flooding areas. A state grant program encourages coastal homeowners to have fortified roofs that withstand powerful winds.

But, as the legislature's action on wetlands and its inaction on building code improvements show, the growing hazards of long-term climate change are too often ignored in favor of short-term profits. The legislature will return this week to allocate money for relief from Hurricane Helene. Lawmakers should also be investing in reducing the cost of the next natural disaster.

It's not a question of political ideology. Alabama, a deep red state, has a "Strengthen Alabama Homes" program to make homes more storm resistant.

At UNC-Chapel Hill, Antonia Sebastian, an assistant professor in the Department of Earth, Marine and Environmental Sciences, studies how climate and land-use changes affect flood hazards. She said flooding in North Carolina's mountains shows that the impact of climate change goes beyond coastal areas.

"This is a wakeup call. The whole state can flood," she said. "If we don't think about where the next structures are going, we may be unwittingly putting people in harm's way."

The state must "design for the future rather than putting things back exactly the way they were before," she said.

Hurricane Helene's deluge wasn't a freak event. It is a warning: Don't simply restore, prepare..

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In Helene's aftermath, FEMA search-and-rescue teams know they now are seeking victims

October 8, 2024 | News & Observer, The (Raleigh, NC) Author: Adam Wagner; Staff Writer | Section: News | 1072 Words Page: 3A OpenURL Link

SWANNANOA When the excavator's claws clenched and lifted the white Dodge Charger out of the Swannanoa River on Sunday, brown water and mud poured from its undercarriage.

Once the car had landed on the ground with a loud thunk, four men dressed in blue swarmed it with crowbars and shovels. These were members of Maryland Task Force One, a federally funded Montgomery County, Maryland-based urban search-and-rescue team that has been part of FEMA's response to Helene.

FEMA has sent more than 1,200 urban search-and-rescue personnel to North Carolina as part of the Helene response.

On Sunday, part of that task force was scrambling across a hillside on the southern bank of the Swannanoa River, just east of the Whitson Avenue Bridge. They were looking for people who died during Helene, as search team dogs had indicated there could be human remains in the Dodge Charger partially sunk into the bank and in the debris of a structure that had been smashed against the U.S. 70 embankment by the floodwaters.

Moving brush and debris

Largely using chainsaws, team members dismantled what was left of the building. They pulled off a piece of sheet metal here, lifted a two-by-four wood plank away there, quickly but methodically taking the ruins apart to try to find whatever the dog had smelled.

Before Helene, the area where the team worked had been a forested bank of the Swannanoa, tucked between the river and U.S. 70.

Now, many of the trees had fallen and cars were littered throughout the area, some of them tossed onto their sides by a river that had risen to historic levels. It was impossible to tell what building the long ribbons of sheet metal high up in the trees had started on, or whether they'd started nearby at all.

Many of those cars were marked with a spray-painted X. That's a sign that the car or structure has been searched.

When members of the search team enter the structure, they spray paint a slash mark to indicate that they're in it. They also spray paint the date and time. When they leave, they put another slash, along with the number of people found there and symbols for any known hazards, Robert Lipp, a FEMA spokesman, explained as he walked past several buildings and cars marked with different colors of paint.

That's partially for safety, in case something happens while the searcher is inside the building, and partially to keep rescue teams from duplicating efforts.

Teams have helped more than 6,500 people

As of Sunday afternoon, nearly 50 search-and-rescue teams working in Western North Carolina had rescued, evacuated or helped 6,586 people, according to a release from Gov. Roy Cooper's office.

While the unofficial death toll from Helene is well over 100 in North Carolina, Cooper's office said 77 deaths have been confirmed by the state medical examiner's office. That number will rise as the Maryland team and others like

it locate victims.

"It's one of those things where somebody's got to do it and we hate to see a disaster happen, but the majority of us are firemen, and if there's a disaster and somebody needs to help, we want it to be us," Josh Kurland, the leader of Maryland Task Force One, told The News & Observer.

Kurland's team was originally deployed to Georgia on Sept. 25, arriving by noon the next day. Helene hit in the early hours of the 27th, and Maryland Task Force One was woken up at 4 a.m. to respond to a two-story brick building that had collapsed in Valdosta, Georgia.

After working there for two days, the team was sent to Cherokee, North Carolina. Operating from, they worked in Haywood County for two days before being sent to Swannanoa.

A typical day right now in Helene's response lasts from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., with a lengthy drive on each end.

"They're long days," Kurland said, also acknowledging that at this point there are fewer rescues and more recoveries of those who died in the storm.

A car full of mud

On the banks of the Swannanoa, the search team knew that it needed to reach the Charger. First, though, a member of a construction crew who was operating an excavator needed to move a silver Toyota SUV and several trees that had either fallen or were leaning precariously where the floodwaters had rushed past.

Claw-full by claw-full, the excavator worked through the brush and debris until he reached the Charger itself. Then, after some discussion with rescue team members about where it should go, he lowered the claw, closed it around the car's hood and dragged it out of the mud.

When the car came down with a thud, the search-and-rescue team members surrounded it.

They smashed out its remaining windows using shovels and a baton handed over by a U.S. Border Patrol Agent who was watching.

When the front doors opened, the car's interior was filled nearly to the windows with mud. A foul odor hit some onlookers.

The search and rescue team pulled the silt out gently, shaking it out on the ground to make sure they weren't missing anything important.

Then they moved to the backseat, asking the construction crew to bring in a smaller excavator that could pull the rear door of the car off entirely. With the crunching of glass and mangling of twisted metal, the excavator did just that.

As the mud was lifted out of the car, it became clear that no one was inside. In fact, the owner arrived, searching for the wallet he thought he'd left in the center console. He had to settle for the pair of prescription sunglasses that were in the car, still sealed inside their case.

Lipp, the FEMA spokesman, recalled seeing similar small pieces of people's lives recovered after other disasters.

"It seems really tiny," Lipp said, "but for him I'll bet it's a little bit of a bright spot in his day."

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Helene creates piles of debris in Western NC that foretell long cleanup ahead

October 8, 2024 | News & Observer, The (Raleigh, NC) Author: Richard Stradling; Staff Writer | Section: News | 634 Words

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People in Western North Carolina still lack potable water, power and other basics after Tropical Storm Helene, and the search for the missing continues.

But some of the longer-term challenges of recovering from the storm are starting to come into focus, including how to deal with the mountains of fallen trees, shattered buildings and other debris.

Jonathan Kanipe, town manager of Biltmore Forest in Buncombe County, said Helene felled an "uncountable number" of trees in his heavily wooded community of 1,500. A debris removal company estimates it will collect 100,000 cubic yards of trees and limbs from the 3-square-mile town, Kanipe said.

"To visualize that, imagine a football field covered with material to a depth of 56 feet," he said at a press conference Thursday. "It's highly likely the final number will be greater than this."

The floodwaters that scoured Western North Carolina carried shattered pieces of farms, homes, country stores and campgrounds down the hills and valleys. Mangled cars and washing machines, propane tanks and the possessions of thousands of people are now snagged in tangled piles of trees felled by the wind and water.

The huge number of downed trees makes the task of cleaning up after Helene more daunting than after most hurricanes, said Joe Hack, a senior project manager for Mecklenburg County's solid waste department and president of the state chapter of the Solid Waste Association of North America, a trade group.

"It's probably going to take months, maybe years, to get some of the debris up from some of the back areas," Hack said in an interview.

For most communities, clearing that debris is not yet a priority. Buncombe County is still in the "cut-and-clear" phase, moving trees and debris off to the side of blocked streets and roads, said county manager Avril Pinder.

But Pinder said the county has begun talking with municipalities about where that material will go. They have designated storage areas for storm debris, she said, but with the sheer volume created by Tropical Storm Helene, "we have to expand that tremendously."

Pinder said Buncombe County has also begun talking to state regulators about possibly burning some vegetative debris. State law prohibits most outdoor burning, but trees and other plants can be burned under certain conditions, according to the state Division of Air Quality.

As for building materials, furniture and other non-vegetative waste, the county is talking with companies that take construction and demolition debris, Pinder said.

"We know of a couple of places close by that we can haul that to," she said. "We're working with them now on contracts and what that will look like."

Landfill shortage could become worse

The state Division of Solid Waste Management regulates and helps coordinate debris cleanup after a storm, Hack said. The Federal Emergency Management Agency will likely provide money to help pay for it. In Raleigh on

Wednesday, President Joe Biden said he'd approved a request from Gov. Roy Cooper to pay the entire cost of debris removal for at least the next six months.

But it will primarily be up to each county and town to determine how to clean up, in concert with private hauling and disposal companies, Hack said.

"Each community will evaluate the best way to handle it as they go," he said. "There's a lot we don't know yet."

Hack said much of the material will be hauled to emergency debris sites, where some effort is made to separate trees, cars and refrigerators, household trash and hazardous materials, so each can be shipped to the right disposal facility.

Some counties have landfills that can take the material; others usually ship their waste out anyway and will need to find some place to take storm debris.

"Long-term, there is ultimately a landfill shortage or disposal capacity shortage in North Carolina," Hack said. "And this is just going to accelerate filling up some of the facilities."

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Areas hardest hit by Helene least likely to have insurance

October 8, 2024 | News & Observer, The (Raleigh, NC) Author: Chantal Allam; Staff Writer | Section: News | 408 Words

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In addition to losing their homes and belongings, thousands of residents in Helene-ravaged Western North Carolina are facing another hard reality: They may not be covered by their insurance policies.

Less than 1% of households in the state's hardest-hit inland counties are protected by the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), according to an N&O analysis of Census Bureau and NFIP data.

In Buncombe County, home of Asheville, only 0.7% of the county's 137,000 housing units have flood insurance, data shows.

By contrast, some 44.3% of Dare County households on the Outer Banks have coverage.

The result: Many of the million-plus people living in the declared disaster area likely don't have protection for the damage they've suffered. Standard homeowners' policies do not cover flooding, landslides or anything caused by moving water.

The lack of flood insurance is "a huge problem," State Insurance Commissioner Mike Causey told the N&O. "We had flood education classes around the state in 2019. That education effort increased the number of flood policies by 25% but we're still just scratching the surface."

The lack of coverage will make recovery complicated. And the threat isn't going away.

Citing climate change, "more devastating weather events are coming," state Sen. Natasha Marcus, the Democratic nominee for state insurance commissioner, said this week. "Many will face hurdles due to gaps in their insurance coverage."

The NFIP, managed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, accounts for more than 95% of the nation's flood insurance policies.

Some lenders require it for homes in high-risk zones. Outside those areas, it's optional but often wise. Still, many remain unprotected. In North Carolina, less than 3% of households are protected with flood insurance, NFIP data shows.

Part of the problem, say experts, is that many homeowners underestimate the risk.

Georgina Sanchez, a research associate at NC State's Center for Geospatial Analytics, faults FEMA's existing flood maps that show where people are required to buy flood insurance.

She said these maps often fail to account for intense rain events and sea level rise. They're also not quickly updated.

"FEMA's designation of high-risk flood zones can mislead communities and encourage development that borders the floodplain, resulting in greater damages when flood events exceed design levels," Sanchez said in an NC State news publication.

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The great floods of 1916 and 2024

October 8, 2024 | Bertie Ledger-Advance (NC) Author: D.G. Martin Columnist| Section: News| 727 Words OpenURL Link

One of Miss Letitia Currie's favorite topics in her history class in the 1950s at Davidson Junior High School was the Great Flood of 1916.

Miss Currie was the daughter of a Davidson College professor.

Many of her students also knew what she was talking about because their parents had experienced that 1916 flood and talked about it whenever rain poured down hard.

Today, many of Miss Currie's students, their parents and grandparents, great grandparents, and their children and grandchildren are having a similar experience dealing with the flooding that followed Hurricane Helene.

And they will be talking about it for the rest of their lives, calling it "The great flood of 2024."

"News of Davidson," the news outlet in my hometown, published the following account by Gatewood Payne Campbell, granddaughter of Davidson professor Gatey Workman and niece of the late, great opera singer William Workman. Gatewood and her husband Johnny live near Black Mountain.

"Life has stopped. We don't know dates or times. Sirens are 24 hours a day. It's relentless. Helicopters invade our sky. Chainsaws sound nonstop and we run outside in hopes it's in our neighborhood. ...

"Let me back up. We awoke around 6 Friday morning without power. The storm was loud and pounding but we didn't know where we were in the storm. We could not get updates. Around 8:30 we lost internet across cell lines. I called a friend and got her to look at radar and let me know an ETA on rain ending. That was the last call I was able to make. By 9:30 ALL cell signal was completely lost. The rain was increasing. We could see the creek rising. Johnny stepped outside under the porch and was soaked from head to toe after 30 seconds.

"Around 11 we felt like we could go out and survey the neighborhood. We began to feel the weight of the destruction, yet we had NO clue. The creek had turned into a river greater than 50 yards wide. The noise of water heaters, propane tanks, bikes, grills, construction supplies and yard equipment banging on the rails of our bridge to Black Mountain was deafening. We saw two neighbors with trees on their homes and knew they were taking on water."

Meanwhile in Asheville, Bryan King and his wife Angela Koh are assessing the damage to their 12 Bones Smokehouse on Foundry Street in the River Arts District. As I wrote in my book, "North Carolina's Eateries," "Even if 12 Bones had not been made famous by Barack Obama's visits there, it would be a 'must-do' in Asheville."

When I first visited 12 Bones several years ago, it was located closer to the French Broad River. Had Bryan and Angela not moved the restaurant a few blocks up the hill it would have been completely washed away. At its current location they may be able to repair and survive.

Angela's sister writes, "As the floodwaters recede, we see catastrophic damage to homes and businesses, including the River Arts District, where 12 Bones was founded. Entire livelihoods have been lost. In nearly every direction you look, everything is caked in mud and scattered debris. Broken wood and mangled wiring now stand where intersections once existed."

Coincidentally, on October 15, the publisher Blair is releasing "River Road," a book of poems by mountain author

Wayne Caldwell. His fine poetry describes the power of the flooding waters on the French Broad as shown in the following excerpt:

SELECTION FROM "RIVER ROAD" BY WAYNE CALDWELL

The French Broad, being a river, floods.

How many times over the millennia has it left its banks

and moved whatever was swept up in it

To some far away (and sometimes ridiculous) place?

Perhaps thousands. And each time it returned to its placid face.

The worst (in the last century) was in July 1916.

Asheville's Riverside Park was washed away.

Parts of which one could have seen rushing by my house

Had it been there then. (Even this relatively high ground

Would have been inundated for several days.)

Only a half dozen people died in Asheville,

Which I'd consider a small miracle. Thanks to the telephone,

Warning came to Marshall, and only two or three drowned,

Even though the courthouse was about the only thing left

On Main Street. Fifty-Three houses disappeared.

From high ground one could have seen rushing by

Bales of cotton, houses, mules, gas tanks,

Vehicles, sheds, chickens, roosting on pieces of roof,

Tires, fences, trees, pigs, dogs, cats,

Anything not tied down -- and many things that were.

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In Bethel, one church has a new family after Hurricane Helene

October 8, 2024 | Bertie Ledger-Advance (NC) Author: Moss Brennan The Watauga Democrat | Section: Across Carolina | 980 Words OpenURL Link

BETHEL — At Bethel Baptist Church, one of the rooms downstairs has become a mini convenience store. The lower parking lot has become a landing zone for helicopters and a place to take a hot shower. An area on the top floor became a FEMA office to help people apply for disaster relief. Above all, it has become a place for the community after the devastation Hurricane Helene left in the High Country.

On Sunday morning, the church held its first service after the storm.

"I've been to this church now, I would guess, for almost almost 30 years. (It was) probably the best service I've ever attended," said worship leader Carter Dishman. "The spirit was strong. Part of it was a relief from the day-to-day of what we're in the middle of right now. The only way I knew how to put it this morning was, 'Today we didn't come to church. Today, we were the church."

With many in the community in need in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene, Bethel Baptist Church has become a place where they can get food and hygiene items, as well as hot meals, showers, and ADA bathrooms.

In the first few days, the church and Beaver Dam Volunteer Fire Department worked together to create a community plan. At the time, both the fire department and church were collecting donations. However, with the outpouring of volunteer support, they decided to take donations at the church so the fire department could focus on emergencies.

There wasn't a free space in the room where donations were gathered, as supplies — from snacks to diapers — were piled high for those in need.

The showers have especially been good for community members. While it can't fix a house or driveway, Dishman said just taking a hot shower can help with a little bit of "mental stability."

"At least if nothing else, they smell better, and they feel better," Dishman said.

The church hasn't just been a place for those in need to pick up much-needed supplies. It's also been a place where volunteers can gather to help other community members recover from the storm.

Dishman has coordinated the volunteers as they go into the community and help those who need some repairs or access to their homes or out of their homes. For the last four days or so, their focus has been getting everybody out.

"We've gotten now to the point where most people are out, and they're trying to repair driveways and that kind of stuff," Dishman said.

As volunteer and church member Matt Marton said, once the sun started to come out from behind the clouds, it sounded "like a hornet's nest" up and down the road.

"The fact that we were able to open up roads ourselves before anybody could even get out here. Made a huge difference," Marton said. "I mean, by Saturday morning, we were able to take any supplies that we had and what was coming in and drive it to people. Even if they couldn't get out of their house or across their bridge, we could walk them into them because the main road was opened up. It's just awesome to see how fast people out here came together, worked together, and cared for one another."

Dishman said there have been countless people who have helped in the community and that there's "not enough time" in the day to list them all. He did mention

Dishman made a point to mention Ground Effects Landscaping — among many — who have been absolute heroes in helping people start the recovery process.

He said National Guard soldiers stationed at the church helping with supply drops and manning the showers and bathrooms have become close with everyone. When not needing to help at the bathrooms or showers, the soldiers — six in total — could be seen playing catch with children in the field outside the church or singing during the worship service.

With the community coming together like it has in the aftermath of Helene, Dishman knows they have a new family.

"We've got a new family through this. I think the church family and the community family has definitely grown in numbers and in spirit this week," Dishman said. "I've got names and numbers of people that I want to be, I think, long life friends with after this."

Dishman and Marton know there will be a new normal in their community and across Watauga County and western North Carolina. They know that roads that were completely destroyed won't be repaired overnight. They know that — as Dishman put it — "a lesson in patience has been learned throughout all this."

"I've seen more good than I've seen bad," Dishman said. "That's a testament to the community."

Marton said he doesn't have any expectations on the community getting fixed. He just wants people to be able to get out and that services be able to get to them in an emergency. He also does not want it to go completely back to normal.

"I don't know if I want to go completely back to normal right away because watching this community get so close together, whether you're part of the church or not, this community has grown so close together that I don't want to see it go back," Marton said.

He said he knows that, as a community, they are better than big cities in terms of closeness, but even then, he met people he hadn't met before. He doesn't want to go back to where the community was splintered in some ways.

"The mountain people are sticking together," said Charlene Capps, a community member utilizing the showers. "Everybody's pulling together. Everybody's helping everybody."

Bethel Baptist Church is located at 125 Mountaindale Rd. They have hot food available for lunch and dinner as well as ADA showers and toilets daily from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

"Our community took care of each other before, but now it's like on steroids," Dishman said.

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• Citation (aglc Style)

Moss Brennan The Watauga Democrat, 'In Bethel, one church has a new family after Hurricane Helene', *Bertie Ledger-Advance* (online), 8 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C19E8091BD2728>



Haywood County's student-athletes a reminder of our own

October 8, 2024 | Carteret County News-Times, The (Morehead City, NC) Author: J.J. SMITH "In This Corner" column | Section: Sports | 455 Words OpenURL Link

There was a time when nearly every Student-Athlete of the Week feature noted two major events in the profile's life: Hurricane Florence and the coronavirus pandemic.

Separated by just a year and a half, those life storms impacted the lives of teenagers in this county in ways we'll never truly appreciate.

Kids in the western part of the state are having a similar experience.

Take Haywood County for example.

Though it is on the other side of the state, it has a lot in common with Carteret County.

They are about the same size – Carteret has a population of 69,615 and Haywood has a population of 62,969 – both rely heavily on tourism, natural beauty (mountains and ocean) and well-known festivals and competitions like Folkmoot USA, the Big Rock Blue Marlin Tournament and the N.C. Seafood Festival.

Both counties also know what it's like to recover after dramatic, and traumatic, weather events.

Consider the student-athletes and coaches at Pisgah High School.

Well known for its rivalry with Tuscola, which goes back more than 100 years and often draws more than 10,000 fans, the Bears are looking to start over all over again after feeling the effects of Hurricane Helene.

The story is covered by Evan Gerike at The Citizen Times of Asheville.

Nearly a year and a half after the onset of the pandemic, flooding from Tropical Storm Fred in August of 2021 wiped out the football field at Pisgah, causing the Bears to play on the road for two straight seasons.

This time it's even worse.

When the river crested at 25.86 feet at 1:10 p.m. on Sept. 27, according to the National Weather Service – 6 feet higher than Fred's crest of 19.6 feet – it covered the field goals and left just three rows of the visitors' bleachers uncovered.

The home season is now over. For current Pisgah seniors, they'll finish their career with just eight home games in four years.

They also won't get to play at home versus Tuscola in a game that was scheduled for Friday, Oct. 18.

In another example of, "it's a small world/small state," Ricky Brindley coaches the Bears.

He worked under Donnie Kiefer at East Carteret more than 15 years ago. Kiefer also participated in the rivalry as the Tuscola coach,

There's no sense of when the season will resume, but Brindley said the Bears will play again this year.

Instead of suiting up in helmets and pads, the players have headed into the community, armed with shovels and chain saws, to aid in the recovery effort. Some of them have become volunteer firemen.

They just want to return to a sense of normalcy.

It doesn't matter what side of the state they live on, that applies to all student-athletes their age.

(Send comments or questions to jj@thenewstimes.com or follow him on Twitter @jjsmithccnt.)

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J.J. SMITH "In This Corner" column, 'Haywood County's student-athletes a reminder of our own', *Carteret County News-Times, The* (online), 8 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C161BED482E678>



Hurricane Helene relief efforts continue for Western Carolina

October 8, 2024 | Carteret County News-Times, The (Morehead City, NC) Author: NEWS-TIMES | Section: News Times | 707 Words
OpenURL Link

For those wanting to help Western North Carolina, still devastated from Hurricane Helene, here is a list of some of the efforts underway in Carteret County and the state:

NC Disaster Relief Fund

Gov. Roy Cooper is encouraging donations to the North Carolina Disaster Relief Fund to help communities. To donate to the North Carolina Disaster Relief Fund, visit nc.gov/donate. Donations can be mailed to: NC Disaster Relief Fund, 20312 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-0312 or NC Disaster Relief Fund, c/o United Way of NC, 1130 Kildaire Farm Road, Suite 100, Cary NC 27511.

Camp Happy Kids of Carteret County Inc.

Camp Happy Kids of Carteret County Inc., a nonprofit that helps send kids to camp and other positive experiences, is collecting coats, hats, boots, socks, blankets and gloves for children in Western North Carolina. People can drop off items from 3:30 to 6 p.m. each Tuesday beginning Oct. 15 and continuing through Nov. 26. For more information, text 252-342-4392.

Pet supply relief efforts

The Beaufort Community Cat Project, a county nonprofit, is partnering with three animal and veterinary groups to gather relief supplies for the animal shelters and rescue groups in western North Carolina.

Pet supplies are being collected at PetDocks Veterinary Hospital in Morehead City, Beaufort Pet Provisions and Beaufort Animal Hospital. The Beaufort Community Cat Project is organizing the effort.

Items being collected include towels, blankets, cages, potty pads, pet food, cat litter, bowls, litter boxes and more.

The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army in Morehead City sent a team Sept. 30 to Hendersonville with a rapid response vehicle filled with supplies and food. According to the organization, they have served in Hendersonville and western Asheville. To donate toward Hurricane Helene relief efforts, donate to HelpSalvationArmy.org or call 1-800-725-2769.

Core Sound Waterfowl Museum partnership

The Core Sound Waterfowl Museum on Harkers Island is partnering with others to collect supplies to deliver to the Asheville area. Specific items needed include: food, bottled water, contractor-size trash bags, blankets, first aid supplies, feminine hygiene products, diapers and baby clothes, hand sanitizer, toilet paper, paper towels, shovels, brooms, gloves, coolers, propane, cook stoves, flashlights, batteries, fans, dehumidifiers and generators. Drop-off sites are: Miss Gina's Shrimp Stand (Highway 70 outside of Beaufort; Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on Harkers Island; Core Sound Waterfowl Museum on Harkers Island; and Core Sound Waterfowl Museum and Heritage Center, 806 Arendell St., Morehead City.

NC Community Foundation Disaster Relief Fund

Community foundations and other organizations across North Carolina are collaborating to support western North

Carolina. To support ongoing recovery needs, give to The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina's Emergency and Disaster Response Fund. To support long-term recovery, donate to the NC Community Foundation Disaster Relief Fund. For more information, visit nccommunityfoundation.org/Helene. Other organizations the foundation recommends for helping western North Carolina are American Red Cross, Diaper Bank of NC, Operation Airdrop, Second Harvest Food Banks of Northwestern North Carolina and Wine to Water.

NC Community College System Response and Recovery Fund

To help with relief efforts, the North Carolina Community College System has launched the Hurricane Helene Community College Response and Recovery Fund. This statewide fund aims to support both the affected colleges and their surrounding communities as they face widespread damage and disruptions. Donations to the fund will provide critical assistance for recovery efforts in the storm's aftermath, including restoring services and resources essential to students, faculty and staff.

Donations can be made online by visiting www.NCCCF.org or www.nccommunitycolleges.edu/foundation and clicking on the "Give Today" button. The Hurricane Helene Community College Response and Recovery Fund is prominently featured as the top option in the dropdown menu on the donation page.

While the primary focus is on this statewide relief effort, individual donations can also be directed to specific community college foundations in the affected areas. A full list of these colleges and their foundation donation pages is available on the North Carolina Community Colleges Foundation website.

Carteret County Chamber of Commerce

Many individuals, organizations, businesses, and public agencies are working to collect supplies for our neighbors in Western North Carolina. The chamber staffis keeping a live Google Document of known donation drop-off locations, local fundraisers, and volunteer opportunities. If you need to add something to the list, either create a comment it in the Google Document itself or email taylor@carteretchamber.org.

Here is the link to the Google: carteretchamber.org/helenehelp/.

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Western North Carolina shops and restaurants could use our help from afar — here's how

October 8, 2024 | Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles (NC) Author: Melissa Oyler, The Charlotte Observer | Section: c5_development | 2789 Words OpenURL Link

When it comes to birthday, holiday or "just because" gifts (one of my best friends calls them "happy presents"), we often want to support local shops, restaurants and other businesses.

And after Hurricane Helene hit and devastated so many of our mountain towns who rely on tourism, especially right near the peak of leaf-changing season, supporting these businesses feels more critical than ever.

Officials have asked us not to travel to Western North Carolina for fun right now, and many of these shops were absolutely devastated, so there would be no place for us to visit even if we could get there.

So, how can we help support from afar?

Local shops and restaurants that were affected by Hurricane Helene in North Carolina and are beginning to offer ways to support them online, including making purchases and supporting fundraising efforts. One business suggested including a note stating "Ship when the time is right" with your purchases, and that's probably a great idea for all of these places. In addition to ordering material items from retailers, another idea is to book a rental or a session with a place that you don't plan on using, so the business is able to pocket the money. This may help hospitality folks who can't work during this time.

If your favorite mountain spot isn't on this list and you think our readers would like to know about it, please send us an email to charlottefive@charlottefive.com and we'll get it added. And keep checking in with your favorite spots — many of them are still trying to get their bearings after so much devastation. And so many of them need our help.

Here are a few to get you started — and if this isn't enough, refer to this list of Western North Carolina businesses started by an Asheville local and added to by the businesses themselves:

Ashe County Cheese

Location: 106 E Main St., West Jefferson, NC 28694

Ashe County Cheese is back open after Hurricane Helene: "We are okay, but our community has been devastated," the West Jefferson cheese shop posted on Facebook. Ashe County was hit especially hard by Helene and needs all the support it can get. "Please let people know about the Ashe County Cheese factory as an alternative," a reader emailed me on Tuesday, "when it comes to shipping cheese, wine and other regional treats such as jams, jellys, apple butter and more." I think that is a wonderful idea: With the holidays coming up, cheese is always a great gift.

The Bier Garden

Location: 46 Haywood St, Asheville, NC 28801

The Bier Garden in Asheville has put out a call to action to help its staff, who experienced lost wages on top of personal loss as a result of Hurricane Helene. A Go Fund Me page has been set up by operating partner Nathan Wardell. "This is the most dedicated and determined staff that have been out in the community during this disaster to help out their neighbors, friends, and families ... now between this and COVID times, they (and I) need your help," he wrote. All donations will be given to the staff, the beer garden posted on Facebook.

Black Mountain Cider & Mead

Location: 104 Eastside Drive, #307, Black Mountain, NC 28711

Black Mountain Cider & Mead's building was flooded and damaged, and the cidery lost equipment, supplies and product. "The timing couldn't be worse. October is usually our busiest month, when tourists flock to the area for leaf-peeping season," the meadery posted on Instagram. Additionally, local apple and bee suppliers were also damaged. As it tries to figure out how to stay afloat, you can donate to this business via Venmo or its Go Fund Me. "Without running water anywhere in Black Mountain/Asheville, our hands are tied," Black Mountain Cider stated. "Running a fermentation business depends on clean, reliable water, and we've been told it could be months before it's restored."

Burnsville Candle Company

Location: 132 W Main St., Burnsville, NC 28714

Burnsville was devastated by Hurricane Helene, with many roads and businesses completely gone. Burnsville Candle Company's physical location is closed, but you can still order candles online. "In a time when, at least for those of us in WNC, things have gotten pretty dark, we all need a little love and light in our lives," wrote owner Kem Muller on Facebook.

Cedar Mountain small businesses

Location: Greenville Hwy, Cedar Mountain, NC 28718

Cedar Mountain is personal to me (family has a house near Caesar's Head State Park), so to see the businesses suffering that I've visited over the past couple of decades has been difficult. Many of the businesses here along Little River were flooded, some with up to four feet of water. In the meantime, residents were trapped for days on the mountain, as the roads were damaged leading into both Brevard and Greenville, S.C. The restaurants and stores pulled together resources and have been feeding hundreds of people a day, even with all the damage. A GoFundMe has been set up to help these businesses recover and the funds will be split among all of Cedar Mountain's businesses.

Chimney Rock Brewing Company

Location: 461 Main St., Chimney Rock, NC 28720

Mars Hill-based Mars Theatre Brew Co.'s sister brewery, Chimney Rock Brewing Company, is gone after Hurricane Helene. There is nothing left where the brewery once stood. Owner Scott Spruill has posted a Go Fund Me, with hopes of setting up a new model that could help save the company. Mars Theatre has reopened, but "without them (Chimney Rock Brewing) it will be difficult to continue without your help," he wrote.

Chimney Rock Gemstone Mine

Location: 397 Main St., Chimney Rock, NC 28720

Chimney Rock Gemstone Mine has been a fixture in Chimney Rock for the past 21 years. The damage from Hurricane Helene was catastrophic to the gemstone mining attraction and jewelry store. Owners Matt and Michelle Banz also own RiverWatch Grill, which was also damaged by the storm (details below). Contributions to a Go Fund Me set up by the family will go toward the extensive repairs and restoration needed, as well as helping the Mine's team members.

Photos: Damage at Chimney Rock in Western North Carolina after Hurricane HeleneRiverWatch Grill, Riverwatch

Coffeehouse and Gift Shop and Chimney Rock Gemstone Mine were all extensively damaged during Hurricane Helene.

DT's Blue Ridge Java

Location: 169 Locust St., Spruce Pine, NC 28777

DT's Blue Ridge Java was completely ruined when Hurricane Helene made its way to Spruce Pine. The coffee shop was faced with 10 feet of rushing water, and the space for community gathering was destroyed in an instant. The coffee shop owner's daughter has launched a Go Fund Me to help rebuild the space. Any additional funds will be given to the local community, others on Lower Street and in downtown Spruce Pine.

Euda Wine

Location: 164 Commerce St., Suite 10, Old Fort, NC 28762

Euda Wine's winery and inventory suffered major damage when the hurricane came through Old Fort. A home washed up to the winery from across the street. Euda asks that your donations first go to help the town, region or wider area. "And after that if you still want to support Euda then you can buy wine online or join our wine club," the winery posted on Instagram. "We have been able to salvage some bottles and are continuing to examine the rest of our inventory. We don't know exactly when it will be shipped, but if you buy it, we will ship it to you once we are able." You can also purchase a gift card.

30ED85A3-BA2A-4E66-8864-D9CBE6B89F02.JPGAt Euda Wine in Old Fort, the winery was damaged and much of its inventory destroyed during Hurricane Helene. "For those who have never been to the winery, that house washed up from across the street," the owner wrote on Instagram alongside this photo.

French Broad Chocolate Factory & Cafe

Location: 821 Riverside Drive, #199, Asheville, NC 28801

You can still purchase chocolate online at French Broad Chocolate Factory & Cafe. Inventory is constantly being updated, but the Asheville chocolatier has items like hot chocolate, bars, merch and more that were housed in its warehouse. The storm caused flooding outside of the shop during the storm and it was left without water and power. It could take weeks before the team can start making chocolate again. The store also has an online fund.

[WHAT'S NEXT? After Helene, can NC businesses and tourist sites restore 'the magic of Asheville'?]

French Broad Chocolate Factory - after picture.jpegAt French Broad Chocolate Factory & Cafe, Hurricane Helene caused flooding outside of the shop, and it was left without water and power.

Folkwear Patterns

Location: 1185 Charlotte Hwy, Fairview, NC 28730

Folkwear Patterns has a studio in Asheville's River Arts District that managed to stay dry and with power during Hurricane Helene. The staff is all safe, but many at home are without water, power or internet. The team is unable to get back to the studio to fulfill orders, but in the meantime, you can purchase digital pdf patterns from Folkwear's online store.

Headwaters Outfitters

Location: 25 Parkway Road, Rosman, NC 28772

Headwater Outfitters kept people in the Rosman area informed leading up to the storm, including regular monitoring of the Upper French Broad's water levels. Then the shop and Forks of the River Taproom were affected by flooding and damage to the retailer's compound. The store is closed, paddling trips have been canceled and its campground is closed for the rest of the year. Team members have pivoted to helping those in the community, including with free hot meals. In the meantime, you can shop the outdoor shop's online store (send a note saying "Ship when the time is right", Headwater recommends) or purchase a gift card for a future trip.

Helen's Restaurant

Location: 99 NC-226, Bakersville, NC 28705

Helen's Restaurant, the oldest restaurant in Bakersville, was completely destroyed in Hurricane Helene. Co-owner Donna Stafford's nephew started a Go Fund Me campaign for the owners, asking for a modest \$5,000 to help them recoup just a tiny bit of their life savings, which they had poured into a restaurant renovation just a little over a year ago. "Hopefully in the future, they will be able to rebuild but unfortunately it will not be in this same building," her nephew wrote.

Helen's Restaurant collage. JPEGHelen's Restaurant in Bakersville, North Carolina, was destroyed during Hurricane Helene. A wall on the lower level is gone, and the support beams for the building are also gone. Shown at top and left are Google Street View images from before the storm.

Live Oak Gastropub

Location: 69 Locust St., Spruce Pine, NC 28777

Live Oak Gastropub was flooded in the hurricane along with much of the rest of Spruce Pine. "We are trying to save any equipment we have so we can maybe someday get back to doing what we love providing a great place for fellowship, good times and amazing great and good looking food," co owner Deanna Buchanan, who is a native of the Western North Carolina mountains, wrote on Facebook. "Still in shock at what this area and surrounding counties are experiencing." A Go Fund Me has been started to help the restaurant recover.

Old Marshall Jail Hotel + Zadie's Restaurant

Location: 33 Baileys Branch Road, Marshall, NC 28753

Downtown Marshall was devastated during Hurricane Helene, and the Old Marshall Jail Hotel and Zadie's Restaurant were both affected. Zadie's was completely destroyed, owner Josh Copus wrote in a Go Fund Me for both places. "Both businesses will be closed for the months ahead while we rebuild. It will be a long and expensive road to recovery, but we feel it is worth doing and will be possible with your help," he wrote.

Papertown Coffee

Location: 119 Main St., Canton, NC 28716

Papertown Coffee's building was unharmed during the storm, and it was closed for a few days after the storm as it did not have power. Closing was tough on the business that was already having a tough year, so it has launched a Go Fund Me to help pay staff and order supplies. In the meantime, the shop has reopened with limited hours and is inviting community members in to "charge their phones, get a change of scenery or to just connect with another human for a while."

Pisgah Coffee Roasters

Location: 6283 Asheville Hwy, Pisgah Forest, NC 28768

Pisgah Coffee Roasters was undamaged from Hurricane Helene, but it closed as it was unable to process transactions. It did have limited cell service in the parking lot, so it has invited community members to use it for any calls and texts they need to make. There may be some shipping delays, but you can purchase its coffee online.

The Purple Onion

Location: 16 E Main St., Saluda, NC 28773

The Purple Onion in Saluda is "closed until further notice" after Hurricane Helene. "Here in Saluda, we have many places that were hit hard by unforgiving water and we are still reeling from the disaster going on around us," the restaurant posted on Instagram. "In downtown, mudslides, flooding, and trees taking out our infrastructures have effected many of our businesses and by extension their employees and our community." The Saluda Downtown Foundation has launched a Saluda Disaster Recovery Grant for downtown Saluda businesses. Your donation will help the recovery of The Purple Onion and other places.

The Orange Peel + Rabbit Rabbit

Location: The Orange Peel: 101 Biltmore Ave., Asheville, NC 28801

Location: Rabbit Rabbit: 75 Coxe Ave., Asheville, NC 28801

Asheville's live music scene took a hit during the storm, and The Orange Peel and Rabbit Rabbit have needed to cancel shows as they will be closed for awhile. The Orange Peel, in the meantime, has set up portable toilets and rinse stations, including an ADA unit, for the community in its parking lot. The Orange Peel manager Lauren Davis is hosting a Go Fund Me for the two venues to help take care of the 100-person staff that is unable to work for the foreseeable future. Many of the team members have suffered personal losses. "These are the people who make the magic of live music and unforgettable nights possible, and now they need your help," Davis wrote.

RiverWatch Grill + Riverwatch Coffeehouse and Gift Shop

Location: 379 Main St., Chimney Rock, NC 28720 and 375 Main St., Chimney Rock, NC 28720

RiverWatch Grill has been a staple in downtown Chimney Rock since 1998. After Helene, the building is still standing as well as the next door coffee and gift shop, unlike so many others in the town, but it needs a lot of work. "Hurricane Helene caused the Rocky Broad River to rise with a force we never imagined possible. Many buildings were swept away, and the flood waters surged through Main Street, leaving devastation in their wake. Though our beloved RiverWatch is still standing, it is deeply wounded and in desperate need of help to recover," wrote Shelly Banz of RiverWatch on its Go Fund Me. Donations will go to building repairs, equipment replacement and support of the RiverWatch family.

462546155_482571928113656_4838139529498454661_n.jpgDamage shown at RiverWatch Grill after Hurricane Helene.

Star Diner

Location: 115 N Main St., Marshall, NC 28753

Star Diner in Marshall was completely submerged in floodwaters during Hurricane Helene, and its damage is extensive. Owner Kate Sonoskus doesn't know what's next for the restaurant. "In the meantime, I'm worried about our staff and how they're going to make their next rent & mortgage & car payments & buy groceries," she wrote in her Go Fund Me for the diner. "I cannot call this a 'rebuild' fund — I just don't know what's next," she wrote.

Switzerland Cafe and General Store

Location: 9440 NC-226A, Marion, NC 28752

Switzerland Cafe and General Store has been feeding its neighbors with any of its remaining inventory that was left after the hurricane. Any donations made to the restaurant's chef's personal venmo (@Lora-Lanier-1) will go toward rebuilding the business and town. "We have this sinkhole that backs right up to the edge of our building. Building floor has small amounts of water & mud but is ok for now," owner Ann Kernahan told CharlotteFive in the first week of October. "We fed people from Chafing dishes until our walk-in was empty," she said. The smokehouse will need to be torn down, the restaurant said in mid-October, and repairs will be more than \$100,000.

20240930_130522.jpgSwitzerland Cafe and General Store fed its neighbors with its remaining inventory after Hurricane Helene. The cafe is ok, but there is a sinkhole nearby and the smokehouse will need to be torn down. Repairs needed will more than \$100,000.

Willow Hill Soap Company

Location: 429 N Main St., Hendersonville, NC 28792

Location: 80 Park St., Canton, NC 28716

Both of Willow Hill Soap Company locations (in Hendersonville and Canton) are closed after Hurricane Helene. "We will be able to check on orders whenever our internet is restored," the store wrote on Instagram. In the meantime, you can make online purchases of candles, soaps, bath bombs, beard care and more. Its products are made without harmful ingredients, so you can feel good about gifting them!

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Concert review: NC fans saw a different side of Post Malone — and a whole lot of his legs

October 8, 2024 | Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles (NC) Author: Théoden Janes, The Charlotte Observer | Section: music_news_reviews | 1309 Words OpenURL Link

Well, that's not something you see every day.

That being: A bushy-bearded, profanity-spewing, tattooed-from-head-to-toe dude, slinking around a stage in front of 20,000 screaming fans. Wearing a Dallas Cowboys jersey and tight leopard-print shorts with a five-inch inseam. In Crocs. Then barefoot. Singing respectable and catchy country-music songs.

Country-music songs! In tight leopard-print shorts with a five-inch inseam!

Gotta be honest, I've never seen a male country-music artist perform a headlining set at PNC Music Pavilion while showing off that much leg.

I wonder what Jimmie Rodgers (the so-called "Father of Country Music") would have thought if he had risen from the dead Monday afternoon in time to catch Post Malone's concert at PNC on Monday night.

Or what, say, "Queen of Country" Dolly Parton would think if she had walked into his sh —

Oh, wait. Dolly is on a song that appears on Post's "F-1 Trillion," the country crossover album serving as the inspiration for the tour that brought him to Charlotte for the second time in just over five months.

So is NC native Luke Combs. And Brad Paisley. And Chris Stapleton.

This is pretty serious. It's also pretty new.

His last visit here, in fact, was for a top-of-the-bill gig at uptown's Lovin' Life Music Fest, where he did what was by and large a hip-hop show.

Monday night's was something ... different. Monday night's was a two-hour extravaganza that dedicated more than half of its run time to Nashvillian selections from "F-1 Trillion" and featured a nine-piece backing band populated by a fiddler, a flat-picking guitarist, and a steel guitarist, among others.

Still, despite leading off his set by performing the album's first and second tracks in order — "Wrong Ones" (his collab with Tim McGraw) and "Finer Things" (his collab with Hank Williams Jr.) — this was never going to be a traditional country show.

Not just because Post would keep his core fans happy with a steady dose of only-very-mildly-countrified rearrangements of rap, trap and pop songs like "White Iverson," "Better Now" and "Chemical."

Post Malone - Benjamin Robson - IMG 0929.jpgPost Malone performs at PNC Music Pavilion on Monday night.

But, more generally speaking, this was never going to be a traditional country show because Post Malone is Post Malone.

It doesn't matter whether he's rapping or singing bluegrass — Post is still Post.

He still spits in the air, still pounds Bud Light from a cup, still sings with a cigarette in his hand; still struts like Mick Jagger, twirls like a toddler, wriggles his butt like a duck, has this just general rubbery-ness about him that reminds me of '90s-era Jim Carrey.

He still has this tendency to let loose with a ferocious death growl, whether he's trying to make "Candy Paint" sound terrifying (imagine Sam Kinison screaming "You don't f----- know me, homie, you don't want war!!!!") or simply introducing "CHAAAAAAAAAAAD!!!!," the superfan who was invited up to the stage to play acoustic guitar for Post on "Stay."

And Post still does all kinds of things that, frankly, most other major-label artists with his level of mainstream appeal would not.

Like sing the last line of the dreamy ballad "I Fall Apart" while lying on his stomach with his head propped up by a microphone pressed hard against his lips and teeth. Or crawl around the stage like a baby — wild-eyed, mouth open, tongue lolling, as plumes of flame and sparkling fireworks signal the climax of "rockstar."

Or even introduce his white-bearded bass guitarist Craig Young by, essentially, roasting him.

"Some might even say he's the best bass player they've ever heard," Post said, gesturing to the veteran Nashville session musician. "I've never heard anyone say that, but someone could say that. Some say he vetoed Krampus on f------ Christmas. Ladies and gentlemen, every young kid's nightmare on December 24th."

I'm sure, by the way, that those comments were meant to be playful and not mean-spirited. If they came off that way, it's probably only because the rest of the night felt like such a lovefest.

Post Malone - Benjamin Robson - IMG 7113.jpgPost Malone performs at PNC Music Pavilion on Monday night.

In addition to his catchphrase — "Thank you so very f----- much, ladies and gentlemen," which as usual he uttered over and over and over and over and over — he launched into several of his famously obscenity-laden motivational self-help speeches.

While teeing up breakup song "Two Hearts": "I would just like to dedicate it to anyone out there who's havin' a rough go, and I just wanted to say: It gets f----- better. Just keep f----- kickin' ass. ... No matter what the f--- you're goin' through. You are loved more than you know, and you're not f----- alone."

Before "Losers," his and Jelly Roll's ode to underdogs: "If you're going through anything right now in your life ... if any times you may feel that you're all by your f----- self and you have no love in your life ... know that I f----- love you, and you are loved by your family and your f----- friends. ... If you feel like a f----- loser, well, I'm a f----- loser, too, and I f----- love you so very f----- much, ladies and gentlemen."

Near the end of the show: "It's so easy to get caught up in the mindset that no matter what the f--- happens, no matter what I do, nothing seems to be getting better day by day. And I just wanted to say to anyone who's going through something: Keep f----- believing in yourself because you are the most bad-ass motherf---- on the f----- planet."

In a similar vein, but slightly more specifically, Post did also nod to the devastation caused by Hurricane Helene in North Carolina at one point, saying that he "wanted to send my love to anyone whose family may be going through a situation with the storm. ... We love you so very f----- much, and we're gonna do our part to help out in any way that we can." (He didn't indicate when or how, although opener Muscadine Bloodline announced during its set that the band was donating all profits from merchandise sales for the Charlotte show to disaster relief efforts.)

Thunderous cheers followed each of these proclamations, and sometimes even drowned out the ends of them.

As they have at the previous Posty shows I've been to, his fans seemed to hang on every one of his slaps at his air

guitar, every goofy contortion of his body, every encouraging word, every song — no matter the genre. It was a long, loud, celebratory night.

Post Malone - Benjamin Robson - IMG 1434.jpgPost Malone performs at PNC Music Pavilion on Monday night.

There was only one time he seemed to lose them.

12. "Stay"

13. "I Fall Apart"

14. "Better Now"

16. "Dead At The Honky Tonk"

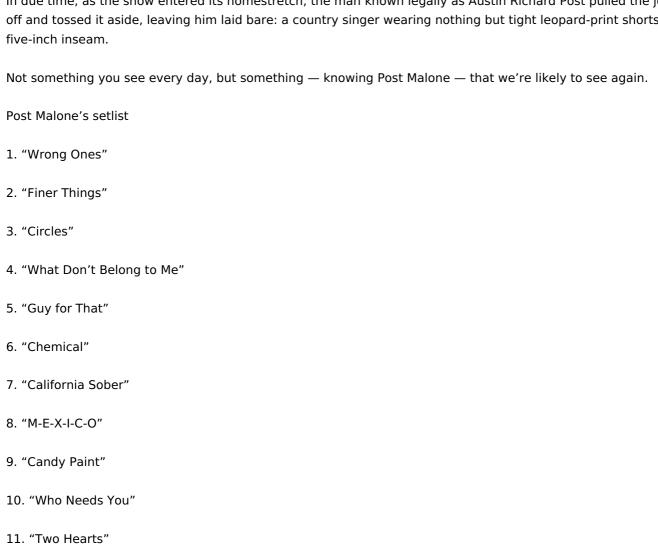
15. "Psycho"

17. "Losers"

The Carolina crowd had let it slide that the singer was wearing a Dallas jersey (No. 17, for its placekicker Brandon Aubrey) ... until partway through his set he asked: "Hey, we got any Cowboys fans in here tonight?" Three seconds of smattered cheering were quickly drowned out by seven seconds of full-throated boos.

"Don't put the Cowboys thing against me," Post said, hands up. "We can all be f----- friends tonight, right?"

In due time, as the show entered its homestretch, the man known legally as Austin Richard Post pulled the jersey off and tossed it aside, leaving him laid bare: a country singer wearing nothing but tight leopard-print shorts a the



19. "White Iverson"	
20. "Ain't How It Ends"	
21. "Go to Hell"	
22. "I Had Some Help"	
23. "rockstar"	
24. "Congratulations"	
Encore:	
25. "Sunflower"	

Post Malone - Benjamin Robson - IMG_1002.jpgPost Malone performs at PNC Music Pavilion on Monday night.

• Citation (aglc Style)

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18. "Yours"

Théoden Janes, The Charlotte Observer, 'Concert review: NC fans saw a different side of Post Malone — and a whole lot of his legs', *Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles* (online), 8 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view? p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C15ECF646ADC58>



Western NC Latino community forms makeshift delivery service after Helene

October 8, 2024 | Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles (NC) Author: Ryan Oehrli, The Charlotte Observer Section: north_carolina 568 Words OpenURL Link

At El Porvenir Cultural Center, volunteers who live nearby used walkie-talkies as cars came and went on missions to quickly deliver supplies to flood victims.

Usually, El Porvenir is a community center for Buncombe County's Emma, a largely Hispanic area. The center is home to quinceañeras and weddings. But since Sept. 30, it's been a lot of things.

The back — where people dropped off donations — had become a sort of volunteer-run, free Amazon-esque warehouse. Crews delivered those donations to neighbors. Others cut down trees and repaired homes. There was a daycare, too.

Deydis Macario Deydis Macario gets off the back of a pickup truck, ready to hand out supplies to the people in his community. Not long after Helene hit, neighbors like Macario took matters into their own hands in Emma, N.C.

They have been going through Emma, but also to communities like Swannanoa and Fletcher, said Andrea Golden, the director and founder of the community group Poder Emma.

Her group and several others made up La Milpa, an existing coalition of community groups now helping guide the operation out of El Porvenir.

'Love shining through'

Carol Alcantar made one of the day's first deliveries. She lives in East Asheville, and wanted to help Emma in particular because of her Mexican heritage.

The trip was quick and light, only a five-minute drive to drop off some meat, tortillas and produce to a woman who lives near El Porvenir.

It proved fruitful in more ways than one. The woman who got the food explained that someone in Biltmore Village — about 15 minutes from Emma — had two trailers of supplies available for distribution.

Alcantar spoke with her in Spanish, thanked her for the information and relayed the message to others working at the distribution center.

"I think the love is shining through for the community more than anything," Alcantar said.

Carol AlcantarCarol Alcantar helped deliver supplies to people in Emma on Saturday, Oct. 5, 2024.

'We're all neighbors'

"Comida? Agua?" Diego Romero asked later in the day as he went door to door on Deaverview Road.

He and the other volunteers who filled several trucks had much more than food and water, though. There was toilet paper, Dayquil, soap, shampoo, nonpotable water to fill buckets and bathe with, diapers and toys for kids.

Power, cell service and food have been returning to the area. Water is the biggest concern. Asheville Mayor Esther Manheimer has said it will take a while for the city's water system to work again.

"And I'm not talking about days," the mayor told the Asheville Citizen Times. "We want them to plan for longer than that."

Diego RomeroDiego Romero walks through a neighborhood in Emma and checks on community members, asking what supplies they need. He lives there, and he says his neighbors would do the same for him.

Families stepped outside their homes on Saturday to grab what they needed as the volunteer convoys arrived, and thank their neighbors.

Soon, the convoy would go to a new neighborhood near Johnston Elementary School, and then others until truck beds ran out of water.

In an interview as he rode from house to house, Romero explained that he hasn't heard much about a government response in Emma. But people are looking out for each other.

"We're all neighbors, just looking out for people, you know?" he said.

And if he needed help, he knew they'd be there for him.

El Porvenir El Porvenir on Saturday, Oct. 5, 2024.

Signs El PorvenirSigns at El Porvenir on Saturday, Oct. 5, 2024.

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Ryan Oehrli, The Charlotte Observer, 'Western NC Latino community forms makeshift delivery service after Helene', *Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles* (online), 8 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view? p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C1413FE4BFAF30>



Combs, Church on Helene benefit: 'We wish we didn't have to be having this conversation'

October 8, 2024 | Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles (NC) Author: Théoden Janes, The Charlotte Observer | Section: music_news_reviews | 701 Words OpenURL Link

In the grand scheme of things, fellow North Carolina natives and country-music stars Luke Combs and Eric Church are happy to be co-headlining a concert at Bank of America Stadium later this month.

And, at the same time, they're unhappy about it — about why it's necessary to begin with, that is.

"I wish it had never happened," said Church, the 47-year-old Granite Falls native and 10-time-Grammy-nominated singer, speaking to The Charlotte Observer by Zoom Tuesday.

"I'm glad we can help, but ... I wish we were never here," Church said. "So now it's a matter of trying to figure out the best way that we can rebuild where we're both from ... the place that made us who we are as artists."

Monday, Church and Combs were announced as two of the headliners of a special benefit show on Oct. 26 that will help victims of Hurricane Helene in the Carolina region.

"I would love to be there right now chainsawing trees down, or whatever that may be. Just trying to figure out, in what way can we have the most impact, right?," added Combs, 34, who was born in Huntersville and raised in Asheville.

"Like Eric said, obviously, we wish that we didn't have to be even having this conversation. But we are. So I think that's where this concert comes in. This is something that we can do to make to make an impact."

Tickets for the "Concert for Carolina" will go on sale at 10 a.m. Thursday, with pricing to be announced. Church and Combs will be joined for the event by folk legend James Taylor, who has ties to Chapel Hill; bluegrass star Billy Strings, who has performed regularly in North Carolina; along with Keith Urban, Sheryl Crow, and Bailey Zimmerman.

20230714_Luke_Combs_Charlotte_0690.jpgLuke Combs performs at Bank of America Stadium in Charlotte on July 15, 2023.

All proceeds from the event will be split evenly between Combs and Church's Chief Cares Foundation, to be distributed to organizations of their choosing in support of relief efforts across "the Carolina region."

The event is the brainchild of Combs, himself a Grammy nominee responsible for hits like "Forever After All" and "Fast Car."

"I was just sitting at home and watching everything, and waiting to hear back from my friends and family, and I called this guy," he said, gesturing to Church. "He was my first call. I was like, I know he's gonna want to do something and step up. And I had the crazy idea of seeing if the Panthers would be willing to give us the stadium."

The David and Nicole Tepper Foundation — which owns the team and already had pledged more than \$3 million to those impacted by the deadly storm that swept through the Carolinas on Sept. 26 and 27 — was all-in.

"Then," Church added, "we both got on our phones and started texting people, calling people, trying to put what this thing was together. ... Normally, things like this — when you're talking about that kind of concert — take

months to plan. We're literally trying to do it in days."

Combs said finding a "day that we're both available, and that the stadium's also open, and all those other artists are available, that's kind of a miracle in and of itself."

Meanwhile, Church last week released a new song, "Darkest Hour," that he said in a statement Friday was dedicated to "the unsung heroes, the people who show up when the world's falling apart." He pledged to donate all of his publishing royalties for the new song to hurricane relief efforts.

Eric Church - Darkest Hour

On Tuesday, he called the reaction to it "great."

"The biggest thing for me," Church said, "is keeping focus and giving awareness to what's happening in the area. 'Cause a lot of times when these disasters happen — and this is just historically — everybody pays attention for a month or however long. And then there's another thing."

But he said, "the rebuild in western North Carolina is not in months. It's in years. And we need to make sure we're keeping attention on that so that we can help and plan for that long-term, so that we can get that community back to where it was."

For more information on the show: concertforcarolina.com.

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Théoden Janes, The Charlotte Observer, 'Combs, Church on Helene benefit: 'We wish we didn't have to be having this conversation", *Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles* (online), 8 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C16401D1F78C60



'Evacuate now, now, now': Florida braces for next hurricane

October 8, 2024 | Courier-Times, The (Roxboro, NC) Author: Gerard Martinez and Gianrigo Marletta | Section: National | 614 Words OpenURL Link

Storm-battered Florida girded Tuesday for a direct hit from Hurricane Milton, a monster weather system threatening catastrophic damage and forcing President Joe Biden to postpone an overseas trip.

As the second huge hurricane in as many weeks rumbled toward the US state's west coast, a sense of looming catastrophe spread as people raced to board up homes and flee.

"It's a matter of life and death, and that's not hyperbole," President Joe Biden said, urging those under orders to vacate to "evacuate now, now, now."

Biden's warning came amid a bitter pre-election quarrel, with his Democratic vice president Kamala Harris castigating her rival Donald Trump for peddling false claims that recovery efforts after the first storm, Hurricane Helene, were diverted away from Republicans.

As of Tuesday morning, Milton was generating maximum sustained winds of 150 mph (240 kph) and threatening up to 15 feet of storm surge, the National Hurricane Center said, as it tracked just north of Mexico's Yucatan peninsula.

After weakening from a maximum Category 5 overnight, it is forecast to make landfall Wednesday night in Florida as a Category 3 storm and remain powerful as it churns across the state.

Governor Ron Santis, at a press conference, ticked off town after town and county after county that are in danger.

"Basically the entire peninsula portion of Florida is under some type of either a watch or a warning," he said.

The National Weather Service said Milton could be the worst storm to hit the Tampa area, home to some three million people, in more than 100 years.

"Helene was a wake-up call. This is literally catastrophic," Mayor Jane Castor said on CNN.

Hurricane expert Michael Lowry warned that "Milton's storm surge "could double the storm surge levels observed two weeks ago during Helene, which brought some of the most consequential flooding the area has seen in recent memory."

- A campaign issue -

Biden postponed a major trip to Germany and Angola -- he had been due to leave Thursday -- to oversee the federal response, as storm relief efforts have emerged as a political battleground ahead of the presidential election on November 5.

Trump has tapped into frustration about the emergency response after Hurricane Helene and fueled it with disinformation, falsely claiming that disaster money had been spent instead on migrants.

Biden slammed Trump's comments as "un-American," and Harris called the claims the "height of irresponsibility and frankly callousness."

"I fear that he really lacks empathy on a very basic level," she said.

In a scene of frantic preparation repeated all over Florida, dozens of cars lined up at a sports facility in Tampa to pick up sandbags to protect their homes from flooding.

John Gomez, 75, ignored official advice and traveled all the way from Chicago to try to save a second house he has in Florida.

"I think it's better to be here in case something happens," Gomez said as he waited in line.

Scientists say global warming has a role in these intense storms as warmer ocean surfaces release more water vapor, providing additional energy for storms, which intensifies their winds.

Communities hit by the deadly Hurricane Helene, which slammed Florida late last month, have rushed to remove debris that could become dangerous projectiles as Milton approaches.

In Mexico's Yucatan, workers boarded up glass doors and windows, fishermen hauled boats ashore and schools were suspended.

In the southeastern United States, emergency workers are still struggling to provide relief after Helene, which killed at least 230 people across several states.

It hit the Florida coastline on September 26 as a major Category 4 hurricane, causing massive flooding in remote inland towns in states further north, including North Carolina and Tennessee.

Helene was the deadliest natural disaster to hit the US mainland since 2005's Hurricane Katrina, with the death toll still rising.

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Aid pours into North Carolina; dozens still missing

October 8, 2024 | Courier-Times, The (Roxboro, NC) Author: Alan Wooten | The Center Square | Section: State | 581 Words OpenURL Link

(The Center Square) – Tragic stories continue to flow from western North Carolina in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene slamming the Appalachian Mountains nearly two weeks ago.

So, too, is the assistance. The General Assembly convenes Wednesday, with disaster assistance legislation expected to swiftly be passed.

Gov. Roy Cooper toured the area on Monday with Deanne Criswell, administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Personnel are in the area from neighboring states, sent by other governors and the federal government.

The death toll is at least 230, according to published reports. The Asheville Citizen Times on Tuesday afternoon reported 62 missing persons cases are active in the Lake Lure and Chimney Rock communities.

Eight hurricanes since 1950 have killed 100 or more people. Helene is only eclipsed – so far – by Katrina (2005, deaths 1,392), Audrey (1957, deaths 416) and Camille (1969, deaths 256).

Cooper and Criswell, along with U.S. Northern Command Gen. Gregory Guillot and Dual Status Commander Brig. Gen. Wes Morrison, went through Lake Lure and Chimney Rock.

In a release, the state Department of Public Safety said 2,500 soldiers and airmen are in the area with about 500 more coming. The Joint Task Force-North Carolina, led by the state's National Guard, is paired with armed forces from 12 states, two units from the 82nd Airborne out of Fort Liberty near Fayetteville; the 101st from Fort Campbell in Kentucky; and a number of civilian entities.

More than 6,100 National Guardsman are present, a release from White House said. The Biden administration said it has already supplied more than \$137 million in assistance, and more is expected.

Cooper's administration said more than \$33 million in FEMA assistances to individuals had already been paid to more than 109,000 people. More than 2,100 are housed in hotels through FEMA transitional sheltering. Nineteen shelters are open, with an estimated 780 people and 95 pets.

The Department of Public Safety said more than 1,300 responders from 35 state and local agencies have executed 107 missions of response and recovery. Cooper said North Carolina has used 417 specialized vehicles and 26 aircraft to help in search, rescue and supply delivery.

"These communities are home to family-owned businesses and neighbors who are helping one another," Cooper said. "We will continue to work with western North Carolina to respond and recover from this catastrophic storm."

In addition to the government aid, scores of churches and other organizations have sent tractor-trailer loads of supplies.

Tuesday midday, there were 622 road closures because of Helene across the state. This includes three interstates, 50 federal highways, 51 state roads and 518 secondary roads.

Published reports say the grim findings have included corpses discovered as landslides are cleared. Swannanoa and Hot Springs are two communities reportedly "obliterated." Chimney Rock, a popular tourist attraction, was also hard

hit with rushing water through the main thoroughfare.

"It has been a long 11 days for the people of our mountains, and it's reaching the point where folks are just tired," U.S. Rep. Chuck Edwards, R-N.C., said in a release. "We will get through this."

Many in the region remain without running water, electricity and even the ability to travel. Eighty-six water systems, Edwards said, are on a boil advisory; 15 treatment plants have no power; and 27 systems are out of water.

Helene made landfall in the Big Bend region of Florida the night of Sept. 26. Its remnants sped through Georgia and soaked the higher altitudes of North Carolina's Blue Ridge Mountains. Helene had tropical storm force wins stretching 420 miles, larger than the state of Georgia.

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Red Cross ups incentives for blood donations between hurricanes

October 8, 2024 | Courier-Times, The (Roxboro, NC) Author: Kai Williams NonStop Local Digital Producer | Section: National | 257 Words OpenURL Link

MONTANA - The impact of Hurricane Helene hit the American Red Cross's blood donation supply. Ahead of the pending Hurricane Milton, the Red Cross is upping the incentives for people outside of the affected areas to give blood.

"Since making landfall, the storm and its aftermath have led to the cancellation of more than 100 blood drives, causing thousands of blood and platelet donations to go uncollected," the Red Cross said in a release.

While donors used to receive a T-shirt as a token for their donation, the organization added extra encouragement for people outside of the hurricanes' paths to give. Now, people who give blood in the month of October will receive a \$10 Amazon gift card via email, the Red Cross said. On top of that, donors will be entered for a chance to win one of three \$5,000 gift cards.

Donors have plenty of opportunity to give as Montana is hosting several blood drives in the coming weeks:

Great Falls

October 16 at 10:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., Great Falls Clinic, 1400 29th St. S.

October 16 at 1:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m., Riverview Elementary, 100 Smelter Ave.

Lewistown

October 8 at 9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., First Christian Church of Lewistown, 103 12th Ave. S.

October 9 at 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., Central Montana Medical Center, 408 Wendell Ave.

Fort Benton

October 31 at 12:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m., The Montana Agricultural Center, 1205 20th St.

Sunburst

October 15 at 12:30 p.m. - 5 p.m., Methodist Church, 17 2nd Ave. W.

A full list of drives can be found online at the American Red Cross.

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Biden praises DeSantis' preparation for Hurricane Milton

October 8, 2024 | Courier-Times, The (Roxboro, NC) Author: Steve Wilson | The Center Square | Section: National | 553 Words OpenURL Link

(The Center Square) – President Joe Biden on Tuesday praised Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis for his efforts to get the state ready for a strike in the Tampa Bay area by Hurricane Milton.

"The governor of Florida says he's gotten all that he needs," Biden said. "I talked again to him yesterday and I said no, you're doing a great job, we thank you for it and I literally gave my personal phone number to call.

"There was a rough start in some places, but every governor from Florida to North Carolina has been fully cooperative and supportive and acknowledged what this team is doing and they're doing an incredible job, but we've got a lot more to do."

The praise from Biden comes as DeSantis and Vice President Kamala Harris, the Democratic nominee, continue to be at odds. Harris called him "selfish" for not taking her calls and DeSantis shot back, saying she was trying to "parachute" her way into storm recovery and relief efforts.

Biden also said in a briefing at the White House that his administration would help "communities before, during and after these extreme weather events."

The federal government's response to Helene has been under fire from former President Donald Trump, the 2024 Republican nominee.

"They're offering \$750 to people whose homes have been washed away, and yet we send tens of billions of dollars to foreign countries that most people have never heard of," Trump said at his Butler, Pa. rally Saturday.

His comment was without context. The Biden administration has confirmed more than \$137 million in assistance with more expected, and North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper said more than \$33 million in FEMA assistances to individuals had already been paid to more than 109,000 people. More than 2,100 are housed in hotels through FEMA transitional sheltering.

Hurricane Milton, likely one of the worst storms in 100 years in Tampa, is predicted to make landfall late Wednesday or early Thursday morning as a Category 3 storm packing winds of 120 mph.

It'll be the second storm in as many weeks to hit the state and DeSantis urged Floridians in a news conference in Ocala on Tuesday to not lose faith in the state's ability to bounce back.

"It's not easy," he said. "I know people have been working around the clock, not just with state government, but our local counties and cities and then all the other partners that participate in this. But people are pushing forward. They're stepping up. I know some of our residents that just experienced hurricane damage from Helene are also fatigued. Just hang in there and do the right thing. Just let's get through this. We can do it together.

"And then on the other side of it, make sure everybody's safe and and we'll put the pieces back together. The state is strong, we're going to be able to weather it. Not going to be easy. We're going to suffer damage."

The storm surge in Tampa Bay, which hasn't been hit directly by a hurricane since 1921, could be as high as 15 feet. That's triple what the area experienced with Hurricane Helene, which passed offshore on Sept. 23 before making landfall in the Big Bend region of Florida.

Helene's biggest impact has been in western North Carolina and eastern Tennessee, where flash flooding destroyed communities and killed 230, including 84 in North Carolina.

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