

# News Herald, The (Morganton, NC): Page 2

October 13, 2024 | News Herald, The (Morganton, NC) Morganton, North Carolina Page: 2 OpenURL Link

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# News Herald, The (Morganton, NC): Page 3

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# StarNews (Wilmington, NC): Page 52

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# Statesville Record & Landmark (NC): Page 3

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# Winston-Salem Journal (NC): Page 20

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## Western Carolina welcomes back spectators with 30-16 win over The Citadel

October 12, 2024 | Associated Press State Wire: North Carolina (NC)

Section: Sports | 195 Words

OpenURL Link

CULLOWHEE, N.C. (AP) — Cole Gonzales threw for 294 yards and a score, Jalynn Williams rushed for three touchdowns and Western Carolina welcomed their fans back to E.J. Whitmire Stadium in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene with a 30-16 win on Saturday.

The Catamounts (3-3, 2-0 Southern Conference) beat Wofford at home last Saturday without spectators in the stands because of rescue and recovery efforts taking place around western North Carolina.

The Catamounts debuted a "Prayers for Western Carolina" helmet sticker while also promoting a "Fill the Truck" effort to load the team equipment truck with fan donations of goods.

Gonzales' 18-yard touchdown pass went to Zion Booker to open the scoring. Booker finished with 102 yards receiving. Williams capped two long drives with second-quarter touchdowns and the Catamounts led 21-7 at halftime.

Gonzales was 28-of-38 passing.

Johnathan Bennett rushed for 155 yards on 22 carries with a score for the Bulldogs (2-5, 0-4). He also had 155 yards passing but was intercepted twice, including Samaurie Dukes' pick at Western Carolina's 1-yard line late in the game.

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'Western Carolina welcomes back spectators with 30-16 win over The Citadel', *Associated Press State Wire: North Carolina*(online), 12 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C2BFE42760EAD8">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C2BFE42760EAD8</a>



# NASCAR playoffs roll into reconfigured Roval, tight turns may create 'chaos' in elimination race

October 12, 2024 | Associated Press State Wire: North Carolina (NC) Author: By JENNA FRYER, AP Auto Racing Writer | Section: Sports | 1047 Words OpenURL Link

CONCORD, N.C. (AP) — It's elimination time in NASCAR's playoffs at the reconfigured Charlotte Motor Speedway, where changes to the hybrid road course/oval called The Roval have created an uneasiness for the drivers racing for a championship.

The field of 12 will be cut by four drivers after Sunday's race and Joey Logano, Daniel Suarez, Austin Cindric and Chase Briscoe are all below the cutline. William Byron is the only driver already locked into the round of eight, but Christopher Bell basically only needs to start the race to advance.

It means anything could happen on the reconfigured The Roval, the final race in what's already been an unusual second round of the playoffs. A championship-eligible driver did not win at Kansas Speedway or Talladega Superspeedway, which took a chaotic turn last week at Talladega when 28 cars wrecked with five laps remaining in regulation to mark the biggest crash in NASCAR history.

Now comes The Roval, which Speedway Motorsports created in 2018 as an update to the traditional 1.5-mile speedway fans had grown weary of because of the lack of diverse courses on the NASCAR schedule. The original layout produced its own share of chaos, but drivers didn't feel as if the course had enough passing zones.

Well, be careful what you ask for: The Roval now has a pair of "passing zones" that look a whole lot more like "crashing zones."

The changes begin at Turn 5 where a high-speed downhill corkscrew has shown cars launching off all four wheels during simulator sessions. Instead of taking a right, the straightaway has been extended towards a new Turn 6 in a section that includes an elevation change that will alter driver visibility until they reach the crest of the hill.

The drivers will have to slow going into Turn 6, then make a sharp entrance into a tight left-handed Turn 7 in what is essentially a 180-degree turn onto the banked oval. The final chicane also has a sharper apex for the drivers to navigate at Turn 16.

"The reconfigure was designed to create more chaos. You're going to have to convince me otherwise of that," said Denny Hamlin. "They made corners sharper and tighter. They want you to drive straight in the corner, I believe, and wipe out whoever is in front of you, and then it's going to be a parking lot in Turn 7. Then it's just going to be who can navigate and get through there.

"There's a blind spot when you go through 5 to 6, you go over a rise and your car gets really high. In the (simulator) it gets airborne. It probably won't in real life, but we get to experience this new Roval config and I don't know what else to say about it other than try to qualify and try to avoid the wrecks. That's about it."

Said title contender Alex Bowman: "Turn 6 is like 100% blind. You can't see it until you're there, which is pretty interesting. And Turn 7 is like making a U-turn on a one-way street, so it's going to be chaos, for sure."

Is that fair for the drivers, who must quickly learn a new layout while their title chances are on the line?

"It's the same for everybody," said reigning Cup champion Ryan Blaney. "It's going to be different for everyone and it will just be who can adapt to it the quickest. I've done some (simulator) work. We'll see where it goes." Damaged vehicle policy addressed

NASCAR this week was forced to meet with Cup Series crew chiefs to clarify how the damaged vehicle policy will be enforced the remainder of the playoffs following its disastrous implication last week at Talladega.

There's confusion about the DVP rule since drivers Ryan Blaney and Josh Berry were in first-lap incidents in playoff races. Although the damage appeared minimal to both cars, the way the DVP rule had been previously officiated, both were deemed out of the race and ineligible to be towed to the pit stall because they were unable to continue after contact.

And then last Sunday at Talladega when a 28-car crash brought out the red flag, NASCAR struggled to control the cleanup. Numerous damaged cars were stranded with flat tires at the entrance of Turn 3, and playoff contenders Chase Elliott and Briscoe were towed back to their stalls to allow for repairs.

Under previous implementation of the rule, the cars should have been ruled out of the race because they had four flat tires and were not able to drive back to pit road.

Even worse, the cars towed back to pit road were allowed to work on repairs when NASCAR lifted the red. Only problem? The cars that didn't crash were being held on the backstretch by the pace car, which took a long delay to get the cars moving again.

Drivers were incensed that those who needed to pit for repairs were still stranded while others — many of whom would have been ruled out of the race — were already at work to rejoin the race.

NASCAR officials told teams they'll operate the DVP policy the rest of the playoffs the way they did at Talladega. That means if a vehicle has flattened tires and appears able to continue but cannot be driven back, the car will be towed back to its pit stall and the team can change tires and assess and repair its damage under the allotted seven-minute time frame. News and notes

Retired NASCAR driver Greg Biffle, who as a helicopter pilot has led a massive rescue and recovery effort in Hurricane Helene-damaged areas of Western North Carolina, was named the honorary start for Sunday's race. ... Recent Hall of Fame inductees Carl Edwards and Ricky Rudd, who were elected in May but have mostly been absent from NASCAR since their respective retirements, are the grand marshalls. ... Briscoe and his wife, Marissa, welcomed a set of twins this week. He was stressed Saturday to finish work at the speedway and get home to his new family of five. He said his wife were at the emergency room Saturday for follow-up care. Briscoe said the stress won't effect him Sunday as he faces playoff elimination.

AP auto racing: https://apnews.com/hub/auto-racing

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#### Parts of Western NC remain closed after Helene — but some towns welcome fall leaf visitors

October 12, 2024 | Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles (NC) Author: Mae Lackey, The Charlotte Observer | Section: c5\_things\_to\_do | 1122 Words OpenURL Link

For Western North Carolina, October is typically prime "leaf season," when visitors flock to see the vibrant transformation of fall foliage into warm, striking hues.

Two weeks ago, however, Hurricane Helene devastated the region — destroying homes, closing schools and roads, and leaving thousands without power or cell service.

Many spots that would normally see a surge of tourists this time of year are not only recovering from the storm's aftermath but are also struggling due to the drop in visitors.

North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper told the Asheville Citizen-Times on Oct. 3 that tourists are not welcome in Western North Carolina, and he only wants dedicated response efforts coming into the region. A Visit North Carolina advisory warns against coming to the area, citing continued risks of "landslides, slope failures, downed trees and road closures." And on Wednesday, Oct. 9, NC Department of Transportation Secretary Joey Hopkins said 600 roads remain closed in the area, The News & Observer reported. "Non-essential traffic is hindering our efforts to get roads opened back up. Crews are having to stop work to allow traffic to pass through damaged areas. To help us get roads open, cleared and open as fast as possible, we again ask that traffic use alternative routes," he said.

To safely reach the towns that are unaffected and cautiously welcoming visitors, it might mean driving a long way around in some cases.

[13 state parks closed in Western NC after Hurricane Helene. Estimated reopening timeline.]

How to get there: Traditionally, people traveling from the eastern part of the state could take Interstate 40 to many of these places. But with I-40 closed after Helene, that's not an option. It's also best to avoid taking local roads that are too close to the damaged towns — save those roads for local traffic, people bringing in aid and emergency care.

NCDOT has posted a detour map you can consult when planning your route. Drivenc.gov has road closures listed as well, but be mindful that some of the impacted areas may not have been able to report.

The bottom line: Be smart, and respectful of work crews. But if you've found a way to travel there safely, here are a few places that have indicated they're ready for visitors.

Blowing Rock, NC

Just this week, Blowing Rock invited visitors to return, although on Friday, Oct. 11, a curfew remained from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. Tweetsie Railroad remains closed. For those looking for a quaint tourist destination, Blowing Rock offers farms, wineries, a resort, spas, museums and more. Although the majority of the Blue Ridge Parkway will remain closed for the foreseeable future (check updates with the National Park Service), the town's positioning on the crown of the mountains still leaves visitors surrounded by the gorgeous, colorful foliage.

1j23ey.So.74.jpegFall leaves are shown around Boone and Blowing Rock in this file photo. After Hurricane Helene, is it possible to see the fall leaves in the mountains safely?FALL LEAVES

Far Western NC in the Smoky Mountains, including Bryson City, was primarily spared by Hurricane Helene. Within Bryson City is the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, which is the most visited national park in the nation and is also a great option for seeing a spectacular display of colorful fall leaves. The town touts that its "shops, lodging, restaurants and attractions showcase the best of the Smokies." The fall color display usually reaches peak at mid and lower elevations between mid-October and early November, so there's plenty of time to plan your leaf-peeping adventure. Aside from leaves, Bryson City offers a variety of outdoor and indoor attractions such as train excursions, mountain biking, museums and more.

#### Cashiers, NC

Lauding itself as a "vacation paradise," Cashiers is another great destination to consider for those seeking a beautiful display of this fall's leaf colors. The town is open and eager to serve visitors. While some nearby attractions remain closed, plenty of beloved natural areas are open for visitors. The town is lush with fall foliage, so no need to worry whether you'll catch a glimpse of the leaves. If you visit, be sure to check out the community's farmers market, antique shops and boutiques. Cashiers also offers a 13-acre park called The Village Green that holds a variety of events. This weekend, from Oct. 11-13, the park will hold the Cashiers Valley Leaf festival.

#### Cherokee, NC

Cherokee is another great destination for enjoying the beauty of the Great Smoky Mountains, and the area is welcoming visitors. This town is home to the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, who make their home on the 56,600-acre Qualla Boundary in five Western North Carolina counties. Rich with culture, Cherokee has plenty to offer for those who enjoy art and history. The array of colors will be visible throughout the town as it's surrounded by natural beauty — Visit Cherokee has even put together a list of the best spots for viewing the fall foliage. Whether you're looking to enjoy the Oconaluftee Indian Village, hiking, elk viewing, fishing or golf, Cherokee's list of fun things to do is certainly expansive.

#### Highlands, NC

The quaint mountain town of Highlands, known for its upscale charm and breathtaking mountain views, is a prime spot for leaf-peeping this fall. The town is back open for business after the storm, according to a message from the mayor on the town's website. Highlands is a great home base for exploring the nearby Nantahala National Forest's beauty while also enjoying the town's relaxed, mountain vibe, complete with plenty of outdoor activities and a killer downtown shopping area. Nantahala Forest reopened for visitors on Friday, Oct. 11, offering access to some of the best views in the region. The forest bursts into shades of red, orange, and yellow during peak season, and its trails and overlooks make it perfect for a day of hiking or simply taking in the scenery.

#### Sylva, NC

Sylva located within Jackson County, is open for visitors. The town is located in the heart of the Blue Ridge Mountains, and the town is surrounded by plenty of trees and foliage for all of your leaf-viewing needs. Its proximity to both the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the Nantahala National forest make it a great home base for leaf-peeping visitors. Sylva also offers the Pinnacle Park Trail and the Jackson County Greenway, so plenty of outdoor activities are still possible. As for indoor activities, shopping, dining, museums and events are all plentiful in charming Sylva.

#### Other Western North Carolina areas are open

Other towns that are open and welcoming visitors include Boone (which advises sticking to the main roads and is still under a curfew of 11 p.m. to 7 a.m.), Murphy, West Jefferson and more. Check out highcountryhost.com for updates.

lede\_0014Trees along the ridges and valleys south of Blowing Rock, N.C. on Hwy 321 in this file photo.

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## Helene: Farmers encouraged to assess soil damage

October 12, 2024 | Courier-Times, The (Roxboro, NC) Author: David Beasley | The Center Square contributor | Section: State | 353 Words OpenURL Link

(The Center Square) – Soil assessments for damage to fields inflicted by Hurricane Helene is being encouraged by North Carolina agriculture leaders.

"Hurricane Helene caused great devastation throughout much of western North Carolina and farm fields were not spared," the state's Agriculture Department said Friday. "This situation calls for a vigilant approach to soil and crop managements that includes assessment on a field-by-field basis."

In addition to clearing fallen trees and limbs and washed out bridges, farmers should examine fields for soil washed away by the hurricane, the state said.

"For areas where erosion has occurred significant topsoil is lost," the department said. "If so, phosphorus, potassium and significant microinutrients such as manganese, zince and copper may have been removed."

In addition to the problem of lost soil is dirt that has been carried by flowing storm water onto a farmer's fields, the state said. That soil may be better or worse that the soil that was in the field before the hurricane hit.

"Sediment or soil eroding from other locations may be deposited over native soil in fields," the state said. "This can potentially impact fertility. Since this deposition is often topsoil from other locations to floodplain areas, it may have high nutritive value. If predominantly sand has been deposited, it may have relatively low nutrient levels."

While 2 inches or less of new soil might cause only minimal changes to the fields, the state advised to perform testing on any levels higher than 4 inches.

Soil washed in from another location by flood waters could also be contaminated, the state advised.

"Given the widespread origin of floodwaters, it is difficult to assess contamination of soils since various unknown chemicals can be associated with these events," the state said. "If there are known chemicals of concern at a given location, use of a commercial environmental lab that offers analysis for contaminants is an option but can be expensive."

Even replacing lost soil can be challenging.

North Carolina does not have regulations on the quality of top soil.

"Any fill for reconstruction purposes (grading, filling gullies) should be tested for general soil fertility prior to use," the state said. "It is buyer beware."

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David Beasley | The Center Square contributor, 'Helene: Farmers encouraged to assess soil damage', *Courier-Times, The*(online), 12 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C2B6D9AD9E5C28">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C2B6D9AD9E5C28</a>



## Buried Nazi past haunts Athens on liberation anniversary

October 12, 2024 | Courier-Times, The (Roxboro, NC) Author: Hélène COLLIOPOULOU| Section: National | 610 Words OpenURL Link

A brass sculpture of a naked man being garrotted, a monument evoking prison bars and a sign are the only hints this sleepy central Athens street once housed the Gestapo's headquarters.

As Athens marks 80 years since its liberation from Nazi Germany in World War II this weekend, historians lament that this modest memorial is typical of the lack of attention paid to one of the most horrific periods in Greece's history.

In the basement below where a cosmetics store stands today, Adolf Hitler's secret police would beat, maim and torment their opponents, with thousands of resistance members arrested, tortured and killed during the Nazi occupation of 1941-44.

"In another European country this place would be a museum," Menelaos Charalampidis, a historian of the time told AFP by telephone.

Across Greece, 250,000 people died as a result of famine during the Nazi occupation, including some 45,000 in Athens and Piraeus, the capital's major port nearby.

More than 86 percent of Greece's Jews were deported to be exterminated in the Holocaust.

To bring this dark chapter of the capital's history to light, Charalampidis launched Athens History Walks, an initiative preserving locations where the Nazi occupation left its mark.

"Places of remembrance of this difficult period in Athens are not highlighted enough, and for some major events there are not even any monuments," he said.

For example, there is no monument to the famine's many victims, the historian noted -- an omission which may have to do with what happened after Greece was freed.

- A 'traumatised society' -

Greece annually commemorates October 28, 1940, when its strongman leader loannis Metaxas refused Italian fascist leader Benito Mussolini's ultimatum to surrender or face invasion.

Yet scant attention is paid to October 12, 1944, when Greece's foremost resistance group ELAS marched through Syntagma Square in central Athens to the applause of hundreds of thousands of people.

That historic moment marking Greece's freedom from the Nazi yoke was soon overshadowed by violence and clashes between the communist ELAS and British-backed royalist government for control of the country.

The ensuing 1946-1949 civil war saw the communists defeated and led to decades of political turmoil.

"The civil war in Greece, as in Spain, deeply traumatised society, making it impossible to deal with certain events of the past and move forward as a society," said historian Tasoula Vervenioti.

"If we don't deal with our past, we run the risk of losing our places of remembrance," she warned.

This year, the Athens city council urged the public to take part in a series of conferences and exhibitions to "honour those who fought for democracy and freedom".

"We are keeping memories alive so that younger people can learn and determine their future with strength and vigour," the city's socialist Mayor Haris Doukas said in a statement.

- 'Loss of memory' -

Charalampidis argued that because the Greek resistance effort was mainly by the left, successive conservative governments that followed the civil war had little interest in celebrating it.

It was not until 1982, after the country's first socialist government came to power following decades of conservative rule, that the main left-wing portion of Greece's 'national resistance' was officially recognised by parliament.

Taboos over the authorities' actions during the civil war have also stifled historical research into the era.

In 2017, the left-wing government of Alexis Tsipras created a special Directorate for the History of the Greek Police to investigate, among other issues, collaboration with the Nazis.

But some files have still not been integrated into the Greek national archives, meaning that regular access is not guaranteed, experts say.

"We have a major problem in Greece concerning the upkeep of archives and our historical culture," Charalampidis said.

"Governments are not interested in it and so there is a loss of memory despite our important history."

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## Editorial: Misinformation muddies political response to Helene

October 12, 2024 | Daily Advance, The (Elizabeth City, NC) Author: Staff Writer | Section: Editorials | 718 Words OpenURL Link

An underwater arts district. Health care workers and patients stranded on hospital rooftops. Isolated residents pointing mirrors at the sky to catch rescue helicopters' attention. The tragic scenes from Hurricane Helene's path of destruction are nothing short of heartbreaking. In the week and a half since it made landfall, subjecting coastlines across the Southeast to storm surges and downpours, the tempest struck forcefully where few expect such events: inland, high in the Blue Ridge mountains. Consequently, even "climate haven" cities such as Asheville felt the impact.

Dubbed the deadliest hurricane to hit the United States since Maria in 2017, Helene has already claimed 232 lives, with many more still unaccounted for. Making matters worse, only a small fraction of households in the hardest-hit counties had flood insurance. Policies are not cheap, and many living on high ground might have thought the risks were too minor to warrant the expense. As Helene makes clear, tropical storms are no longer an exclusively coastal threat. Heavy rains can rapidly flood hill-country streams and ravines, and there is only so much federal aid can do to compensate for homeowners' and businesses' losses. This disaster should spur long-overdue reforms in the federal government's troubled flood insurance programs.

According to some early analyses, the storm could have caused \$15 billion to \$26 billion in property damage across the Southeast, along with \$5 billion to \$8 billion in lost economic output. The storm's impact on human life could be magnified by the supply chain disruptions it is causing: Hospitals across the country are already experiencing a shortage of intravenous solutions after flooding from Helene caused a Marion plant to shut down.

Affected communities remain in the early stages of recuperation, in many cases still lacking access to water, power, food and other necessities. Even as search and recovery efforts continue, officials in the coming weeks need to treat this humanitarian crisis with the urgency that phrase implies. We have no doubt they intend to do so, but as the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the National Guard and other aid organizations navigate downed trees and mud-choked roads to reach affected residents, they face yet another challenge: rampant misinformation.

Because it plowed through two swing states just over a month before Election Day, politicians were bound to pay extra attention to this disaster. Both presidential candidates rerouted their campaign trails to visit Georgia and North Carolina. This is par for the course in a democracy. What is neither normal nor acceptable is for former president Donald Trump to exploit the situation with inflammatory falsehoods. He claimed that his Democratic opponent, Vice President Kamala Harris, diverted FEMA funding to house illegal immigrants; and he accused North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper, also a Democrat, of withholding aid from Republican-leaning counties. Misinformation about FEMA's actions has become so widespread that the agency created a webpage dedicated to "rumor response." The agency should not have to spend scarce resources dispelling misinformation spread in part by someone running for our highest office.

No doubt, FEMA has its limitations. The Post spent a year chronicling how the agency is struggling to keep up with the demands of disasters intensified, in part, by a changing climate. Destructive storms always spotlight both the strengths and weaknesses of government's disaster-response capabilities. Even as Helene provides lessons for policymakers, though, it highlights the country's profound capacity for spontaneous, empathetic, often heroic actions by individuals and communities. Tying political accusations to disaster response is doubly unseemly in light of so much selflessness by ordinary people.

For now, affected communities from the Gulf Coast to the Carolinas deserve swift and generous support from government and the private sector alike. Indeed, new research shows that the lingering effects can indirectly lead to excess deaths in the months and years after storms occur. A consistent flow of resources even after immediate

relief efforts could help stem those impacts.

Experts might not be able to predict which storms become the next Katrina or Helene. But one thing we do know is that they will happen, possibly with greater intensity because of climate change. Indeed, the current Atlantic hurricane season, which had been relatively mild until recent weeks, is not yet over — and indeed coincides with the stretch run of the presidential campaign. Effective government will help everyone in the storms' paths get through them. Demagoguery will not.

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## Jim Buchanan: Mountain folks' stubbornness on display after Helene

October 12, 2024 | Daily Advance, The (Elizabeth City, NC) Author: Staff Writer | Section: News | 835 Words OpenURL Link

There's a lot of cliches about mountain folk: resilience, determination, resourcefulness and, yes, stubbornness.

These were all on display when Helene visited horror and devastation on our beloved slice of the world, and they were all welcome. People here tend toward self-dependence, and as such a lot of folks had the tools needed to ride through the storm — foodstocks, fuel supplies, chainsaws, generators, etc. — and had access to heavier equipment to help clear impassable roads.

There's no overstating how terrifying and devastating Helene was in terms of death and sheer destruction. Some WNC towns have literally been wiped off the map and all of us were knocked back to the Stone Age to some degree, with communications knocked out. A lot of us had to sit in the dark, conjuring up the worst fears of the fate of our neighbors.

But a lot of us also took it upon ourselves to venture out to see what we could do to help. A lot of those efforts helped save lives or provide whatever aid could be given to those in need. In fact, so many people were out checking on neighbors, trying to round up water and supplies, attempting to clear roads, etc. that it was a bit of a problem in that people were stepping all over each other.

That was alleviated in large part by a competent response on the ground from volunteer organizations, first responders and local and state government. That the response was as quick and effective as it was was nothing short of astounding, especially given the fact that everyone was pretty much in a communications blackout thanks to the loss of internet and phone services.

Sadly, part of the effectiveness of the response is that a great many local officials, from here to Canton to Asheville, have been through versions of this before. In a very real sense, Hurricane Alley now runs through Western North Carolina.

As to the communications collapse, therein lies two of the immediate pressing questions of this event: How did we get so blind and deaf so fast across such a wide area?

And what needs to be done so it doesn't happen again? Previously effective 911 systems became useless when no one could get on either end of the line.

When communications did begin working in stops and starts, a sad chapter of this saga began when charlatans, clowns, pot-stirrers and, yes, foreign actors flooded the zone with stories meant to outrage and confuse. This secondary deluge got so bad that local, state and federal officials had to devote resources to debunking misinformation. Those folks pulled away to flush the junk, with their hands already full, certainly had better things they could have done with their time.

But the happy problem we faced in this region was something of an overload of people wanting to help. In the short run it appears to be that a lot of folks stepped up, both in official and volunteer capacities, and a lot of good calls were made

Some of those calls were tough. Western Carolina University was forced to cancel Mountain Heritage Day due to Helene, and in an unprecedented move a week later held a home football game with no fans. We feel both were the right call, the first due to the obvious dangers to life and limb and the second due to the fact that road traffic to ravaged areas remained the top priority (and also due to the fact a large part of the WCU community itself was in

the middle of relief efforts). Considering the fact a home football game generates a million bucks in economic activity ... well, it was the right call.

We won, by the way.

Also on the economic front, leaf season is gone. And that means the season when local businesses build up enough fodder to last through the winter is gone with it. Keep your dollars local to help keep them keeping on.

Beyond the loss of life and income, we all need to be cognizant of Helene's damage to the spirit. This storm came as some areas were still rebuilding from Tropical Storm Fred and other localized disasters, laid atop the economic, physical and mental trauma of a pandemic that put the whole country on its back. With Milton bearing down on Florida, the hits from the Age of Chaos just keep a-comin'.

With Milton and the upcoming election, the focus on WNC will soon be cast to other places and issues, and that's when we need to keep our focus. As so many have said, this recovery will not be a sprint but a marathon lasting months and years. Helene didn't just knock down trees; it has changed the geography of much of the area.

So, it's important to keep checking back to see what folks need when the national focus has shifted. Mountain natives and the new mountain folk who have sown their own roots here will still be at the rebuilding.

They, and we, will keep swinging. There's a lot to be said for stubbornness.

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#### • Citation (aglc Style)

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## Froma Harrop: Climate change is coming for Florida's economy

October 12, 2024 | Daily Advance, The (Elizabeth City, NC) Author: Staff Writer | Section: News | 601 Words OpenURL Link

Florida was the future. The weather's balmy in winter, the beaches are divine and there's no personal income tax. All that and a lower cost of living had set off a sizable migration of companies from New York, Chicago and California. Between 2021 and 2023, Florida was the fastest-growing state.

Now as a second monster hurricane in two weeks smashes the western coast, many Floridians have been turned into serial refugees. Florida is no stranger to the occasional big "blow," but climate change may have completely rewritten the meteorological future, and it's not sunny.

We can't say no one expected this. Nor is the western coast the only area under threat. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration projects that by 2100, more than 30% of Southeast Florida could be underwater, including much of Miami and Fort Lauderdale. Other more extreme scenarios put that figure closer to 70%.

Yet the extent of the threat has been kept under wraps by politicians unwilling to do the hard work.

Former Florida Gov. Rick Scott was said to have banned the use of "climate change" by the state's government agencies. He denies doing that, but employees report being pressured not to use the term, especially in documents related to environmental and coastal policies.

Donald Trump issued a tweet in 2016 that called climate change a "hoax" created by China.

Project 2025, the blueprint for another Trump term, criticizes Joe Biden's climate initiatives as "radical" and "extreme." (Trump called it "the Green New Scam.") The Project says, "The Biden Administration's climate fanaticism will need a whole-of-government unwinding."

The document totally lost it over the Biden administration's promotion of "international partnerships" to address the crisis. The transition to a low-carbon economy must be worldwide.

Project 2025 went so histrionic over Biden's climate law that even Big Oil has been urging Trump not to gut it. The likes of Exxon Mobil, Occidental Petroleum and Phillips 66 oppose the Project's call "to fully repeal recently passed subsidies in the tax code, including the dozens of credits and tax breaks for green energy companies."

Major oil companies have themselves become part green-energy enterprises. They're using the Inflation Reduction Act tax credits to invest in renewable fuel, carbon capture and hydrogen. These are expensive ventures that need government support to get off the ground.

Back in Florida, fierce weather has raised insurance premiums by as much as 400% over five years. As a result, Floridians are having an extra-hard time selling their properties. And those rebuilding homes smashed up by storms are finding that the policies have become a lot tougher, with higher deductibles and stricter limits on what's covered. Few cover flood damage. (Few homeowners have separate flood insurance issued by FEMA.)

Personal wealth goes only so far in protecting people from dislocation. Dynasty Financial Partners was one of the companies that left New York City in 2019 for St. Petersburg, Florida. Its chief executive lost his home in Hurricane Helene. The family moved into a cramped condo downtown. As Hurricane Milton barreled their way, they had to evacuate again.

First Street foundation reports that 3 million Americans became climate migrants between 2000 and 2020 — many

of whom lived far from coastlines. Texas Hill Country, for one, is known as Flash Flood Alley. Entire blocks have been hollowed out of residents. Meanwhile, Progressive says it will join others no longer writing home insurance policies in Texas.

And the world saw how Hurricane Helene visited devastation on lovely Asheville, North Carolina, up there in the mountains, far from landfall in Florida's Big Bend area.

Climate change is coming for Florida and elsewhere. Americans can confront the crisis or not. The weather doesn't care.

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## Local gov't has far more impacts on our lives

October 12, 2024 | Daily Advance, The (Elizabeth City, NC) Author: Michael R. Worthington Columnist | Section: News | 601 Words OpenURL Link

Recent hurricanes offer many lessons for local residents. Many who lost their homes to flood damage didn't have flood insurance, and homeowners' insurance doesn't cover flood damage. The Federal Emergency Management Agency offers some funding for home repair, but it doesn't come close to covering the total cost of repairing a flood-damaged house.

Rain from Tropical Storm Helene created historic flooding in Western North Carolina and caused damage in Tennessee, Georgia and South Carolina. Helene also hit Florida, which also was battered by Milton on Wednesday. Both hurricanes caused tremendous damage in Florida mostly due to storm surges.

One lesson is that many local residents should consider buying flood insurance. Most towns in this area lie along rivers, and they have experienced flooding due to hurricanes in the past. Even those who live outside city limits may be at risk for flooding due to their proximity to bodies of water.

Flood insurance may seem expensive, but the rates reflect the probability of flood damage. And the cost is actually low in comparison to the risk because flood insurance is a FEMA program. First, check your home's risk level on flood zone maps at fris.nc.gov.

Another lesson is to prepare for extended power outages. Remember how long it took for electricity to be fully restored after Hurricane Isabel? And ice storms can be even worse.

Residents should consider buying a backup power supply sufficient to at least run their refrigerator, freezer and perhaps a countertop oven during prolonged power outages. And some people have electrical medical devices like heart monitors, oxygen generators or CPAP machines. The elderly and chronically ill could benefit from a backup generator large enough to power the whole house. And power banks for cellphones are a near necessity.

Many people are angry about the slow federal response to the hurricanes, but local and state governments are mostly responsible for fixing storm damage to public property. Road repairs are the most pressing need so that help can get to where it's needed. FEMA reimburses state and local governments for storm damage repairs; the reimbursement rate is normally 75% but for 90 days it will be 100%.

Utility companies are responsible for restoring electrical power, and power outages are also the primary reason for the lack of cellphone service. Corporate and cooperative power companies serve much of this area, but some municipalities provide electrical power. The state government is primarily responsible for roads and bridges. But local governments are responsible for repairs to water and sewer systems.

The lesson is that state and local governments have more impact on our daily lives than does the federal government. During emergencies, the actions of local officials are much more crucial for residents than those of state or federal ones.

So voters should carefully assess the judgment of candidates for local offices because they will have to rise to the occasion during emergencies. Because TV news tends to focus on national political races, the best place to find information about local candidates is in community newspapers like this one.

A vote cast for local officeholders has more impact than one for federal candidates. Your vote for president may be one out of 155 million, but your vote for county officials could range from one out of 73,000 in Pitt County to one out of 6,000 in Camden County (based on 2020 turnout).

Early voting runs from Thursday, Oct. 17, to Saturday, Nov. 2. And if you aren't registered to vote, you can register and vote on the same day during the early voting period with a photo ID showing your current address.

Instead of just complaining about government, do something about it by voting.

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## D.G. Martin: Great floods of 1916 and 2024 won't be forgotten

October 12, 2024 | Daily Advance, The (Elizabeth City, NC) Author: Staff Writer | Section: News | 722 Words OpenURL Link

One of Miss Letitia Currie's favorite topics from 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 wrote, "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 Oct. 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:

"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,

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"Anything not tied down — and many things that were."

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## We've shifted gears to help western N.C. with recovery efforts

October 12, 2024 | Daily Courier, The (Forest City, NC) Author: Mike Causey Insurance Commissioner | Section: Archives | 426 Words OpenURL Link

I continue to be shocked and heartbroken by the destruction I've seen from Hurricane Helene in the western part of our state. I hope we will all do what we can to help our fellow North Carolinians who have lost their homes, their possessions and, in some cases, their loved ones to this tragedy.

We at the Department of Insurance are doing what we can to assist those in need. Two of the more visible things we're doing are setting up victim assistance centers and insurance camps. Both are aimed at helping residents who've been impacted by Hurricane Helene. But the two have distinct missions.

Victim assistance centers provide in-person and on-the-ground recovery assistance and insurance-related support to those directly impacted by Hurricane Helene. If a victim does not have insurance, we will provide information about other organizations that may be able to assist residents.

We are setting up victim assistance centers in various communities in western North Carolina. So far, we've established them in North Wilkesboro, Gastonia and Boone. We have others scheduled in Spindale and Arden. We're working on setting up other victim assistance centers.

At insurance camps, the Department of Insurance staff coordinates with insurance companies to set up camps where victims of Hurricane Helene can come in and speak with their insurance company representatives. The insurance company representatives can even help their clients file their claims.

So far, we've established an insurance camp in Banner Elk. Insurance camps are planned for Oct. 23-24 in Arden in Buncombe County. We'll continue to work with insurance companies to set up more insurance camps and find ways of helping victims file their claims.

You can go to our special Hurricane Helene web page, www.ncdoi.gov/helene, to check the schedule for future victim assistance centers and insurance camps. You can find other useful resources on the web page, such as bulletins, press releases and ways you can donate and help those in need.

This special web page includes a link to insurance company phone numbers, information on how to be on the lookout for scammers and fraudsters who may want to rip you off and information on a Special Enrollment Period for Medicare beneficiaries who've been affected by Helene.

We also have consumer specialists ready to assist you. You may reach them by calling 855-408-1212 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

My heart and prayers continue to go out to everyone in western North Carolina impacted by Hurricane Helene. We will continue to work with hurricane victims during this recovery period.

Mike Causey has been the North Carolina commissioner of insurance since 2017.

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## Fall will be back — just not this year

October 12, 2024 | Daily Courier, The (Forest City, NC) Author: DEANNA CHESTER Spunk & Spice | Section: Archives | 608 Words OpenURL Link

For the last 22 years, I have made the near daily trek to the mountains for work. In miles, Boone is not that far from my Lenoir home. In other ways, it's a whole other world.

Once you pass Saint Mark's Lutheran Church and head into the serious switchbacks that wind you around to Blowing Rock, the air changes. It is quieter. It is crisper. It is what I like to call deep-breath territory. It is the spot on my commute where I clear my mind and free my thoughts before starting my workday. On my way down in the evening, I have the same sort of ritual once I pass Green Park Inn. That is where I begin to leave work in my mind, begin planning supper, begin a big exhale.

Working on the mountain has given me a deeper understanding of the power of place, an appreciation for nature's beauty that surrounds us here in the Blue Ridge foothills. It is easy to take these vistas for granted as commonplace, to almost not see them. But, in the fall, oh, in the fall, you cannot miss the majesty of the mountains. They are alive in color, made all the more captivating by the sounds the leaves make when a strong breeze catches them. And, as the leaves wither, drop and blow away, they emit a familiar, comforting smell that we have all come to know as fall.

Except this year. This October is different, and it is hard to imagine things will ever be same again in these mountains so many of us love. Those in small towns and villages we natives know simply as "the mountains" will mark time as before Helene and after Helene.

My husband and I are day-trippers and weekenders. The mountains are our spot. We often take off to spend the day in Black Mountain, to peruse the downtown, enjoy eclectic coffee shops and experience the old and new together at spots like Blue Ridge Biscuit Company, which thankfully, survived the storm. We like the farmer's market in Asheville and breakfast at the Moose Café.

Just this summer, we spent a day at Chimney Rock State Park, picnicked after a hike from the top, looked the gift shops along the strip and took in the tranquility of Lake Lure. So glad we have a recent memory of what was, and to be sure, we will be back for what will be when the time comes.

And, then, there is our dear sweet Flat Rock, a little town where we spent our first wedding anniversary, rang in the new millennia and just two weeks ago visited a pick-your-own orchard for some Jonagold apples and spent an hour in my favorite roadside store (Bloomfield's) that seems to have every kitchen gadget that has ever been invented.

On my first trip back to Boone since the storm, I wanted to cry. Life was getting "back to normal" somewhat, but just like with the pandemic, nobody seems sure what "normal" is right now, and once again, re-entry is going to be a harder adjustment than we may have thought.

This week after I had watched as much of the storm coverage as my heart could handle, I peeled a whole peck of those apples we got in Flat Rock, and I canned apple butter. It just seemed like the thing to do, my own little nod to normal.

The storm will change the landmarks, the people, the way of life for many, but the mountains in their grand majesty will stand, and fall with all the meaning that can only be felt, but not spoken, will come again — just not this year.

## • Citation (aglc Style)

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## One on One: The great floods of 1916 and 2024

October 12, 2024 | Daily Herald (Roanoke Rapids, NC) Author: D.G. Martin| Section: Columns | 727 Words OpenURL Link

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## Editorial: Misinformation muddies political response to Helene

October 12, 2024 | Daily Reflector, The (Greenville, NC) Author: Staff Writer | Section: Editorials | 718 Words OpenURL Link

An underwater arts district. Health care workers and patients stranded on hospital rooftops. Isolated residents pointing mirrors at the sky to catch rescue helicopters' attention. The tragic scenes from Hurricane Helene's path of destruction are nothing short of heartbreaking. In the week and a half since it made landfall, subjecting coastlines across the Southeast to storm surges and downpours, the tempest struck forcefully where few expect such events: inland, high in the Blue Ridge mountains. Consequently, even "climate haven" cities such as Asheville felt the impact.

Dubbed the deadliest hurricane to hit the United States since Maria in 2017, Helene has already claimed 232 lives, with many more still unaccounted for. Making matters worse, only a small fraction of households in the hardest-hit counties had flood insurance. Policies are not cheap, and many living on high ground might have thought the risks were too minor to warrant the expense. As Helene makes clear, tropical storms are no longer an exclusively coastal threat. Heavy rains can rapidly flood hill-country streams and ravines, and there is only so much federal aid can do to compensate for homeowners' and businesses' losses. This disaster should spur long-overdue reforms in the federal government's troubled flood insurance programs.

According to some early analyses, the storm could have caused \$15 billion to \$26 billion in property damage across the Southeast, along with \$5 billion to \$8 billion in lost economic output. The storm's impact on human life could be magnified by the supply chain disruptions it is causing: Hospitals across the country are already experiencing a shortage of intravenous solutions after flooding from Helene caused a Marion plant to shut down.

Affected communities remain in the early stages of recuperation, in many cases still lacking access to water, power, food and other necessities. Even as search and recovery efforts continue, officials in the coming weeks need to treat this humanitarian crisis with the urgency that phrase implies. We have no doubt they intend to do so, but as the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the National Guard and other aid organizations navigate downed trees and mud-choked roads to reach affected residents, they face yet another challenge: rampant misinformation.

Because it plowed through two swing states just over a month before Election Day, politicians were bound to pay extra attention to this disaster. Both presidential candidates rerouted their campaign trails to visit Georgia and North Carolina. This is par for the course in a democracy. What is neither normal nor acceptable is for former president Donald Trump to exploit the situation with inflammatory falsehoods. He claimed that his Democratic opponent, Vice President Kamala Harris, diverted FEMA funding to house illegal immigrants; and he accused North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper, also a Democrat, of withholding aid from Republican-leaning counties. Misinformation about FEMA's actions has become so widespread that the agency created a webpage dedicated to "rumor response." The agency should not have to spend scarce resources dispelling misinformation spread in part by someone running for our highest office.

No doubt, FEMA has its limitations. The Post spent a year chronicling how the agency is struggling to keep up with the demands of disasters intensified, in part, by a changing climate. Destructive storms always spotlight both the strengths and weaknesses of government's disaster-response capabilities. Even as Helene provides lessons for policymakers, though, it highlights the country's profound capacity for spontaneous, empathetic, often heroic actions by individuals and communities. Tying political accusations to disaster response is doubly unseemly in light of so much selflessness by ordinary people.

For now, affected communities from the Gulf Coast to the Carolinas deserve swift and generous support from government and the private sector alike. Indeed, new research shows that the lingering effects can indirectly lead to excess deaths in the months and years after storms occur. A consistent flow of resources even after immediate

relief efforts could help stem those impacts.

Experts might not be able to predict which storms become the next Katrina or Helene. But one thing we do know is that they will happen, possibly with greater intensity because of climate change. Indeed, the current Atlantic hurricane season, which had been relatively mild until recent weeks, is not yet over — and indeed coincides with the stretch run of the presidential campaign. Effective government will help everyone in the storms' paths get through them. Demagoguery will not.

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