

North Carolina breaks record for turnout on first day of early voting

October 18, 2024 | StarNews (Wilmington, NC) Author: Sarah Gleason, Wilmington StarNews| Section: News| 326 Words OpenURL Link

North Carolinians came out in record numbers on the first day of early voting Thursday for the 2024 general election, according to the North Carolina State Board of Elections.

A total of 353,166 ballots were accepted at sites statewide, according to data from the state board, which set a record for the first day of early voting. That is an increase of almost 5,000 from 2020 early voting figures.

In the Wilmington area, there were long lines at early voting sites and reports of up to two-hour wait times. Karen Brinson Bell, executive director of the state board, said that was true for many spots around the state.

Meanwhile, at a Henderson County site, a Western North Carolina area affected by Hurricane Helene, voters steadily showed up to vote despite the devastating effects of the storm on voters and the community, according to the Hendersonville Times-News.

Popularity among early voting has increased in recent years, jumping from about 55% in the 2008 general election to 65% in 2020 during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Learn more: How to vote early in North Carolina's 2024 general election

Election 2024: Your guide to statewide races in North Carolina

Brinson Bell said the numbers show voters are eager to make their voice heard this election.

"Yesterday's turnout is a clear sign that voters are energized about this election, that they trust the elections process, and that a hurricane will not stop North Carolinians from exercising their right to vote," Brinson Bell said in a press release Friday.

You can see how many people voted in each county on the first day of early voting by visiting the Absentee and Provisional Data section at NCSBE.gov.

Early voting is open until Saturday, Nov. 2. Then, Election Day polling sites will open on Tuesday, Nov. 5. Voters can also vote by mail. The last day to request an absentee mail-in ballot is on Tuesday, Oct. 29 and they must be received by 7:30 p.m. on Election Day to be counted.

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Three weeks after Hurricane Helene, work is still plentiful in Old Fort. So are volunteers.

October 18, 2024 | Statesville Record & Landmark (NC) Author: Eric Millsaps | Section: News | 522 Words OpenURL Link

The burgers were sizzling on Wednesday at The Davis Country Store & Café on East Main Street in Old Fort. For the past three weeks, the store has provided breakfast, lunch and dinner to anyone hungry and in need.

The family-owned business has dispensed about 600 meals a day since Hurricane Helene rolled through and swamped the town, according to 21-year-old Anderson Davis, who works with his parents, Amy and Robert Davis.

Anderson Davis said the store will serve free meals "as long as the need is there."

Across Old Fort on Wednesday, helping hands were plentiful. So was the work.

At the home of Pearl Shelton on Catawba Avenue, a volunteer crew was stripping down the residence.

A restoration team from BELFOR Property Restoration was masked up and cleaning out Old Fort Elementary School.

And Old Fort Mayor Pam Snypes was singing the praises of the city's nine full-time employees over at town hall.

Davis Country Store & Café

After the storm left Old Fort residents without electricity or water, the grills were fired up and food served at the café, Anderson Davis said.

He said the café cleared out its freezers. Since then, people have donated food and volunteers have helped with the cooking.

In addition to providing a meal, Davis said the café became an information center in the storm's aftermath.

"People came here to find others," he said. "People didn't know how their neighbors were doing. It's been tough on a lot of people."

The house on Catawba Avenue

Members of God's Pit Crew assembled at the home of Pearl Shelton on Catawba Avenue to muck out the home, said Jeff Rexrode, a member of the volunteer group.

Rexrode said people came from places such as Texas, New York and Ohio to help out in western North Carolina, including the people working at Shelton's home.

Winter coats, a damaged dresser and pieces of ceiling were among the items the crew removed from the Shelton home.

And mud. Lots of mud. Six inches of mud, according to one of the workers.

Rexrode said God's Pit Crew is a Christ-centered volunteer organization that began in 1999. He said he came from Danville, Virginia, to take part in the cleanup.

He said there is no charge for the services of God's Pit Crew. The organization operates on donations.

No tags were visible on the Shelton home, but Matt Zapp, the town manager of Emerald Isle, said 47 homes in Old Fort have been red tagged. Another 36 have been yellow tagged.

Zapp, who was working with town officials, said red tag homes are considered condemned. He said yellow tag homes are dwellings that may have power restored but have significant concerns.

Old Fort Elementary School

A cleanup crew from BELFOR Property Restoration was hard at work at the school. One worker said the initial cleanup phase was nearly complete. The next step is repair, the worker said. About 50 people were working at the school on Wednesday.

Town of Old Fort

Old Fort Mayor Pam Snypes took a moment Wednesday to praise the employees of the town.

She said employees have worked up to 16 hours per day, seven days a week without complaint.

"I am so proud of the town of Old Fort," she said.

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Appalachian State hosting Georgia State as scheduled Oct. 26

October 18, 2024 | Statesville Record & Landmark (NC) Author: Brian Meadows | Section: Football | 426 Words OpenURL Link

BOONE — Appalachian State will host Georgia State for its Oct. 26 football game, as scheduled, with a 1 p.m. kickoff at Kidd Brewer Stadium.

The game, which sold out of tickets in August, will be streamed live on ESPN+.

This will be the Mountaineers' first home football game since the High Country community and western North Carolina region were impacted by the effects of Hurricane Helene nearly three weeks ago.

The university reopened after Hurricane Helene on Oct. 11 and resumed classes Wednesday. During that time, the App State Disaster Relief Fund was created, and more than \$2 million has been distributed to members of the university community who are facing hardships because of Helene.

"We're working to thoughtfully, responsibly and respectfully bring university events back to Boone that are supported by students, faculty and staff, as well as a passionate base of alumni and others who love Appalachian State University and Western North Carolina," Interim Chancellor Heather Norris said. "We're committed to ensuring that the university continues to support and sustain our community in meaningful and lasting ways.

"We worked together with the Town and County to respond to the immediate needs of our community during and after Hurricane Helene, and we are committed to sustaining this partnership as we continue to move forward with recovery efforts and build a sense of hope for the future to our broader community."

"App State Football is an important part of the culture and economy of our university community, the High Country, and the western North Carolina region," Director of Athletics Doug Gillin said. "We are thankful to university, town and county leadership, and are committed to provide a safe and responsible return to home competition. We hope this event will further rally our community and help support all those who are recovering."

Important information below regarding the Oct. 26 game against Georgia State:

Yosef Club parking lots open at 8 a.m. and close one hour after the game ends.

Gates open at 11 a.m. Student Yosef Club early entry is at 10:45 a.m.

Kickoff at 1 p.m., televised by ESPN+

App State Homecoming events have been postponed to Nov. 23. Look for more information about Homecoming events coming soon.

Ways to support the High Country community:

Support local businesses by visiting their High Country locations or purchasing gift cards and gift certificates.

Fans who do not plan to use their tickets for the Oct. 26 game can return them back to the App State Ticket Office. The ticket office will reissue tickets to those who have assisted with recovery efforts in the community. Per policy, tickets cannot be refunded.

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EARLY VOTING STARTS IN STORM-BATTERED NORTH CAROLINA

October 18, 2024 | Statesville Record & Landmark (NC) Author: Staff Writer | Section: Mapping | 76 Words OpenURL Link

People stand in line at a polling place Thursday in black Mountain, N.C. early in-person voting began state wide Thursday in the presidential battleground state, including in mountainous areas where thousands of potential voters still lack power and clean running water after Hurricane Helene's epic flooding in late September. election officials said all but four of 80 sites in the 25 western counties hardest hit by the storm were open for the 17-day early voting period.

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What's next for Old Fort? One estimate is \$10 million in repairs needed

October 18, 2024 | Statesville Record & Landmark (NC) Author: Eric Millsaps | Section: News | 356 Words OpenURL Link

When will Old Fort's sewer system be repaired?

Old Fort Mayor Pam Snypes said Wednesday the answer lies in three more questions:

How will the system be repaired?

When can it be repaired?

What will it cost to repair the system?

Snypes said the sewer system was badly damaged by the floodwaters brought on by the rains of Hurricane Helene.

Snypes was in her Old Fort office on Wednesday working with officials from across the state, including Matt Zapp, the town manager of Emerald Isle, a North Carolina coastal town that has recovered from several hurricanes.

Zapp said the storm flooded the Old Fort sewer plant, with as much as 15 feet of water inside the plant. The plant is currently operating on a standby generator, and many sewer lines were damaged in the storm, Zapp said.

He added that Old Fort does not yet have a count on the number of water and sewer lines damaged by flooding.

Snypes noted 95% of water customers have service restored and the boil advisory for the town should end soon.

What will it cost to repair water and sewer issues in Old Fort? Zapp said the town's total annual budget is less than \$2 million. He said repairs could end up being \$10 million or more.

What about the debris?

Jeff Parker owns a number of buildings in Old Fort. His frustration was showing Wednesday as workers repaired the building that houses the Purrfectly Pampered Pet Spa.

"It makes no sense that so much debris is still sitting around," he said when asked about what needs to happen next in Old Fort. He said crews had hauled off 60 loads of debris but there was still much to be done.

He called the current situation a nightmare.

Mayor Snypes said Old Fort is working with McDowell County and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers officials on the cleanup. Zapp said help is here and the next step is to decide where the material will go.

He said that having the Corps of Engineers on hand to help is "unprecedented."

Snypes said no timeline has been finalized for the removal of debris. Zapp said the town lost a trash truck and other vehicles in the flooding.

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Eric Millsaps, 'What's next for Old Fort? One estimate is \$10 million in repairs needed', <i>Statesville Record & Landmark</i> (online), 18 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C4B188B8A93408



CarolinaEast adjusts operations amid IV fluid shortage

October 18, 2024 | Sun Journal (New Bern, NC) Author: Caramia Valentin The Sun Journal | Section: News | 727 Words OpenURL Link

CarolinaEast Health System is currently facing the effects of storm damage to a Baxter International plant in western North Carolina, which produces critical hospital supplies.

As Baxter begins recovery efforts from Hurricane Helene, the company can only provide about 40% of CarolinaEast's usual allocation of IV fluid, according to Michael Davis, CarolinaEast chief medical officer and vice president of medical affairs.

The health system announced that beginning Oct. 11, select elective procedures will be postponed to conserve fluids.

"This is not the way we'd like to practice at this time," Davis said. "We'd like to be able to provide those services to patients as we have in the past, but it's a situation that we find ourselves in. We have to take some steps to make sure that we can continue to provide care to those truly in need and we regret that we're going to have to postpone surgery for those who have been waiting."

Davis said fluids are used at the hospital for various reasons and certain non-emergent procedures that use high volumes of fluids will be rescheduled once their fluid shipments rise.

Fluids can support a patient's vascular system, help administer medicine, assist in blood transfusions and bladder procedures, and more, all which can typically require high volumes of fluid.

"Procedures that we're looking at postponing are procedures that consume large volumes of fluids, some of the urologic procedures, some of the elective orthopedic procedures," Davis said. "Other procedures, say, eye procedures, require little if any fluid, so those are elective procedures we are trying to provide.

"Any procedure that could potentially negatively affect the patient, we're trying to perform those."

Davis said medical staff are being selective in which surgeries to postpone so critical patient care isn't delayed. They are also working to ensure they have enough fluid on hand to continue providing life-saving care in the emergency department.

Patients who arrive at the ED with life-threatening injuries often need a high volume of fluid to support their vascular system, Davis said.

"A patient who may have a perforated organ, a ruptured organ, they're quite ill when they come in," Davis said.
"They may need fluid to wash out that area because of infection or other problems. That procedure can consume a very large volume of fluid and if we don't have some stocks available, then we aren't going to be able to provide that emergency care."

CarolinaEast is also conserving fluid by being more conscious about its daily use.

Medical staff is advised to use only the required amount of fluid to flush blood or antibiotics into patients, as opposed to the larger volumes that may have been used in the past.

The hospital has also placed stops on some fluids typically used as continuous infusions to remind physicians to monitor fluid usage with patients.

"It's a reminder to the physicians to see if their patient still needs fluids, or if they can switch over to fluids by mouth," Davis said. "If they do need the fluids they are free to continue those based on those clinical judgments."

Davis said the hospital will continue to monitor news from the Baxter plant and reassess the situation weekly.

Baxter came out with an update that said they hope to produce about 70% of its usual supply by the end of October, 90% by the end of November, and 100% by the end of December, Davis said.

"Even if they do get back to 100%, it will take a little while for us to get caught back up again," Davis said. "The time that was lost where we had to postpone these surgeries is difficult to make up, but again, we'll do that to the best of our ability to make sure these patients are taken care of the way they're supposed to be."

Baxter's North Cove manufacturing site was impacted by rain and storm surge from Hurricane Helene. The company has 2,000 contractors and employees on-site to aid in recovery, according to a Baxter press release.

Bridges into the site were also damaged in the storm, but the company has installed one temporary bridge and is working on a second.

Earlier this month, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration temporarily authorized importation for five Baxter facilities in Canada, China, Ireland and the U.K.

Davis said that even though Baxter increased production at the plants, it will take time for the increased production to reach CarolinaEast and allow them to catch up from the loss.

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JD Vance campaigns at Wilmington rally

October 18, 2024 | Sun Journal (New Bern, NC) Author: Morgan Starling The Daily News| Section: Local | 948 Words OpenURL Link

WILMINGTON — Ohio senator and Republican vice presidential nominee JD Vance campaigned in Wilmington Wednesday evening just one day before the start of early voting, beginning his remarks by telling the crowd that he actually has a fun tie to the Port City.

Vance said he acted as an extra on the beloved Wilmington-filmed 2000's TV show "One Tree Hill," which got a lot of cheers and applause from the crowd of attendees.

Vance spoke just before 6 p.m. at Wilmington's Aero Center, arriving on a Trump/Vance-emblazoned plane right beside the event space. Former president Donald Trump, the Republican presidential nominee, campaigned at the same location less than one month ago.

Many rally attendees began lining up for the event early on Wednesday morning. One person said this was her sixth rally.

Couple Jennifer Talbott and Chris Cassels wore matching campaign T-shirts.

"I believe that we are strong, I believe that we are right, I believe that Trump is doing everything that needs to be done, and I think that's why he needs to be in office," Talbott said. "I think he'll save our country."

Cassels said he doesn't really know much about Vance, so he was looking forward to getting a chance to hear from him in-person, specifically, on topics like abortion.

"I was always one of those teetotalers with abortion, under no circumstance whatsoever," Cassels said. "And then, because of Trump and JD now talking about it, they've made me understand that you know what, that's not fair for me to have that opinion without understanding that there are places where it has to be."

Prior to Vance making his grand entrance Wednesday, Republican Lt. Gov. nominee Hal Weatherman and U.S. Congressman and Republican attorney general nominee Dan Bishop took the stage.

Both candidates urged those in attendance to vote for every Republican on the ballot, Bishop adding that he'd be the first Republican attorney general in the state of North Carolina in 128 years.

Vance's remarks were kept fairly short, around 35 minutes in total, which included questions from reporters. He began by bringing up Democratic presidential nominee Vice President Kamala Harris' Fox News interview, which was set to begin around the same time as Vance's rally, saying she was about to do her first "non-softball" interview.

"The problem with a softball interview is you've still got to be able to hit a softball," Vance said.

He cited her interview and the cold weather as the reason for his shorter remarks. Much of his time centered around topics such as the border, immigration, and the economy.

Vance said Harris' policies have flooded not only the state of North Carolina, but the country, with millions of illegal aliens.

"Our message to illegal aliens is, if you came to this country illegally, pack your bags, because in four months,

you're going home," Vance said to much applause.

According to Vance, North Carolina families pay around 25% more in gas and groceries than they did when Trump was in office, and 53% more on housing.

Trump and Vance's plan, should they be elected, includes cutting taxes for American workers, cutting down regulations that make it harder to hire or create a business, unleashing American energy and lowering the cost of fuel and electricity, and making it harder for companies to ship American jobs overseas, Vance said.

The topic of Hurricane Helene also came up Wednesday, Vance saying the "bureaucratic incompetence that delayed resources getting to people" was "an act of Kamala Harris and failed leadership, and we can't let people forget about it."

In response to a reporter's question about how the Trump administration would handle things differently, Vance said it's important to have a leader who can delegate.

"You've got so many bureaucratic agencies, one of the things that you've got to do is just have a leader who's saying, all of you are empowered to save lives, to rescue people, go get to work and cut out worrying about the red tape," Vance said.

A reporter also asked about whether or not the Trump campaign still supported Republican nominee for governor Lt. Gov. Mark Robinson, who has been the subject of much controversy after a CNN report in September alleged he made explicit racial and sexual posts several years ago on a pornography website's message board.

"I think Mark Robinson did a hell of a job with those hurricanes, getting out there and helping people. I thought that was very admirable," Vance said. "I really appreciate that, but look, my view on this issue is that who the North Carolina voters make their next governor is up to the people of North Carolina."

Vance responded to a couple of other questions from reporters, one regarding the recent dockworkers' strike, saying the Trump administration plans to get back to common-sense economic policies so that they won't need to go on strike.

He also answered a question about whether or not the 2020 election was rigged, one that the crowd didn't like was asked, erupting in boos.

"I answered this question a million times when I ran for the Senate, the 2022 Republican primary. I answered this question in the 2022 general election. I've answered this question 10 times recently," Vance said. "I think that Big Tech rigged the election in 2020, and if you disagree with me, that's fine."

Vance closed by saying he thinks they're going to win the state of North Carolina.

"When we make Donald Trump the next president, we are going to usher in a golden age of American prosperity for the state of North Carolina and the people all across this incredible land," he said, before walking off the stage.

The election is less than three weeks away, and early voting is now open. Trump will be campaigning in Greenville on Monday, where Harris was just last weekend.

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Blood supply dwindles in wake of Hurricane Helene

October 18, 2024 | Thomasville Times, The (NC) Author: JIMMY TOMLIN PAXTON MEDIA GROUP | Section: Thomasville Times | 400 Words OpenURL Link

Want to help?

To find a blood drive near you, visit redcross.org, hover your cursor over "Give Blood" and then click "Find A Blood Drive." Type in your ZIP Code for a list of upcoming blood drives in your area. Anyone who donates blood, platelets or plasma between now and Oct. 31 will receive a \$10 Amazon gift card by email, and will be automatically entered for a chance to win one of three \$5,000 gift cards. For full details, visit redcrossblood.org/treat.

TRIAD — As donations of water, food, baby formula, generators and so many more items continue to arrive in hurricane-ravaged western North Carolina, here's a donation item you may not have considered — blood.

The American Red Cross is working to restock much-needed blood products that went uncollected in the wake of Hurricane Helene, which forced the cancellation of more than a hundred blood drives across the region.

"We are in critical need of donors," said Kaitlyn Connolly, regional communications manager for the American Red Cross. "When we don't have electricity or we don't have running water, we can't collect blood, so we had to cancel a lot of those blood drives."

According to Connolly, the organization has missed out on collecting approximately 2,500 blood products because of the hurricane.

"So the need is critical right now," she said. "We're trying to restock the blood on the shelves, because that blood on the shelves is what saves people's lives."

Donors outside of the affected areas, in particular, are encouraged to make an appointment to donate blood now and help keep the blood supply stable in the weeks to come, Connolly said.

As the news has spread about the shortage of blood, citizens have been stepping up to help meet the need, Connolly said.

"We've seen a lot of people coming out and donating, and we're very thankful for them, but we can always use more blood donations, especially now," she said. "We'll take any blood product — whole blood, platelets or plasma."

As an added incentive, anyone who donates blood between now and Oct. 31 will receive a \$10 Amazon gift card by email and will be automatically entered for a chance to win one of three \$5,000 gift cards.

Six blood drives are scheduled in High Point alone before the end of the month, and many more are scheduled throughout Guilford County and in neighboring Davidson and Randolph counties. For a full list, visit redcross.org.

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Ukraine refugees fall victim to Helene

October 18, 2024 | Times-News, The (Hendersonville, NC) Author: Christopher Cann; USA TODAY | Section: News | 1001 Words Page: A9 OpenURL Link

For two weeks, Lysa Gindinova clung to hope by thinking about her family's harrowing journey out of Ukraine. She tried to believe family members escaped Hurricane Helene's floodwaters before being swept away, just as they had escaped the bombarded city of Kherson in the first months of Russia's invasion.

But that hope fell apart when a North Carolina sheriff presented her family with a gold earring a search team found on the body of a dead woman. Gindinova immediately recognized it as a prized possession of her aunt, Anastasiia Novitnia Segen.

"Everyone stood quiet," Gindinova told USA TODAY. "That was the moment when there was nothing else we could come up with, no crazy scenario. There was proof they didn't make it."

A search party recovered Segen's body about 10 miles from the family's home in the mountains outside Asheville. About a mile away, authorities found the body of her husband, Dmytro, who was identified through a fingerprint. Search operations are still underway for the Segens' 13-year-old son, Yevhenii, and Anastasiia's mother, Tatiana Novitnia.

In North Carolina, at least 81 people were unaccounted for as of Tuesday, Gov. Roy Cooper said, adding he expected the number to fluctuate.

Until the Russian invasion, the Segen family enjoyed a tranquil life in Kherson, an industrial port city near the Black Sea. Dmytro worked in construction and earned a reputation as an expert handyman. Anastasiia occupied herself with her son, Yevhenii, who from a young age showed great talent in engineering, often reviving relatives' computers and gaming consoles that were thought to be unsalvageable.

Novitnia tended to her large acreage of farmland and often spent her evenings knitting socks or crafting complex cross-stitch patterns of landscapes, animals and ballerinas.

But when Kherson became the first major Ukrainian city seized by Russian forces in February 2022, the Segens packed their car with their most cherished belongings and fled.

They first drove across western Russia, a dangerous trip during wartime in which they constantly feared a stop by Russian authorities. They managed to get through the border into Latvia, then crossed Lithuania to Poland, where they stayed at the home of a family friend. For months they navigated bureaucracy.

"It was a stressful time," said Gindinova, who lived near the Segens in Ukraine before moving to New York in 2016.

"We didn't know for a long time if they would be able to come here to the U.S."

In the summer of 2022, the Segens were accepted into a U.S. humanitarian program offering temporary stays for Ukrainian refugees, Gindinova said. They moved into a manufactured home a quarter-mile from Anastasiia's sister in the small Blue Ridge Mountain community of Micaville. Outside, they hung two flags: one American, one Ukrainian.

The house, raised several feet off the ground, sat just meters from the South Toe River, where the family took up the local customs of swimming and trout fishing.

Dmytro worked for a local heating, ventilation and air conditioning company, and Yevhenii enrolled in public school. Anastasiia cared for her son and mother but also took up jobs cleaning nearby homes and Airbnbs. Novitnia made a small garden, nothing compared to her garden in Ukraine but still large enough to grow a variety of crops including parsley, onions, garlic and bell peppers.

The river, which the Segens could hear from their bedrooms, reminded Novitnia of the Dnipro River near Kherson.

"She never wanted to leave Ukraine, but when she came down to North Carolina, she was shocked," Gindinova said.
"She loved the river and the views."

By the time Helene made landfall Sept. 26, days of heavy rain had already soaked much of the southern Appalachian mountains. Outside the Segens' home, the South Toe River had begun to rise.

The last time Gindinova spoke to her aunt was around 6 p.m. that day.

"She said, 'The water in the river is rising,'" Gindinova recalled. "She made a joke that she hopes their Titanic – referring to their house – is going to hold."

Early the next morning, the river surged nearly 6 feet in seven hours before the gauge was damaged.

Nearby, Anastasiia's sister and brother-in-law heard what sounded like a train. The couple grabbed their two children and fled out the back door to a house higher on the mountain.

There, they watched as water inundated their two-story home. Within hours it reached the top of the first floor and hurled all their furniture and appliances downstream. The river pulverized a nearby bridge and swallowed entire homes, sheds and vehicles.

For several days, Gindinova didn't hear from the Segens or her other relatives in Micaville.

She called out of work. At first she spent hours at her computer, listening to newscasts, connecting with people who were scouring neighborhoods for survivors and posting their names on Facebook, and calling rescue teams as well as local, state and federal authorities.

Hearing nothing, she flew to North Carolina with her mother, determined to search for the Segens herself. The luscious green mountain landscapes she'd seen during family trips looked more like war zones, she said: washing machines dangling from trees limbs, streets in which all the houses were blown out or completely flattened.

No trace of the Segen family home survived save for the concrete blocks it sat on. The garden, the flags, everything was gone. Gindinova tried to search, but it wasn't safe. And then, the earning and the fingerprint.

Gindinova still believes there's a chance Yevhenii will be discovered alive. "It's hard to let go of hope when the body isn't found yet," she said.

She has tried to maintain resolve by focusing on the logistics of the continuing search for Yevhenii and Novitnia and potential end-of-life ceremonies – instead of thinking directly about the Segens and sinking into despair.

"I don't think it's settled in all the way, what has happened," she said. "But what can we do? We just need to cherish their memory as a great, happy family."

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WNC residents face health risks post-Helene - Infections and illness incoming, experts warn

October 18, 2024 | Times-News, The (Hendersonville, NC) Author: Mary Boyte; USA TODAY NETWORK| Section: News | 607 Words Page: A2 OpenURL Link

More than two weeks after the initial health impacts from Hurricane Helene, experts are now warning of a second wave, this time characterized by infections and illnesses.

Beyond injuries caused by Helene, there are several health threats western North Carolina residents face as the area begins to recover. Contaminated flood water in particular can lead to waterborne infections and respiratory illnesses.

Increases in waterborne and respiratory infections can add further strain to hospitals already overwhelmed with those injured during the hurricane.

Contaminated drinking, recreational water risks infection

Following flooding from a hurricane, recreational and drinking water can become contaminated with hazardous waste, animal and human waste and harmful chemicals. Drinking or even just coming into contact with this contaminated water can lead to infections.

A study conducted in 2023 found increased cases of waterborne diseases including E-coli infections, Legionnaires' disease and Cryptosporidiosis in the weeks following storm-related flooding.

Those helping to clean up destruction left in the wake of Helene may be exposed to these diseases. If someone has a cut or other injury and comes in contact with contaminated flood water, they may be at risk of tetanus. This risk increases if the person is not up to date on vaccinations.

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services recommends several safety measures to keep in mind when coming in contact with flood water:

Practice good hygiene after contact with flood waters. Make sure to clean your hands with soap and water before preparing food or eating.

Do not allow children to play in flood water. Wash children's hands with soap and water frequently (always before meals).

Wash toys or food preparation surfaces that have been in contact with flood water with a bleach solution and allow to air dry.

More than 300,000 residents in western North Carolina get their water supply from private wells, according to the NCDHHS. People who have wells within flood-impacted areas should have their systems inspected and disinfected. These rules apply to septic systems as well.

Until private wells are assessed for damage, use alternative water sources such as bottled water or boil water for at least one minute before use.

COVID-19, influenza and RSV among respiratory illnesses that could spread easily

When people gather in shelters, conditions become ideal for the spread respiratory illnesses.

COVID-19, influenza and RSV are all easily spread when a shelter has dozens of people packed into a closed space for an extended period of time.

Furthermore, mold and bacteria can grow in areas impacted by floods exposing people aiding in clean up to respiratory illnesses. Mold exposure can lead to a number of symptoms including wheezing and asthma attacks.

The American Lung Association provided the following guidelines for those helping with clean up following Helene:

Wear protective gear. During cleanup, you risk inhaling and coming into contact with dust, building materials, contaminants and microorganisms. Wear disposable gloves, goggles and an N95 mask.

Turn off the electricity and gas at the cleanup site. Do not use portable gasoline— or diesel— powered generators, power washers, grills, camp stoves or other gasoline, propane or charcoal-burning equipment and other devices inside or close to open windows. These produce carbon monoxide that can kill occupants if it builds up indoors.

Use soap and water for cleaning, especially to scrub mold off hard, nonporous surfaces. Do not use bleach, which can make it hard to breathe.

When in doubt, toss it out. Remove everything that has been soaked by water, including clothing, papers, furnishings, carpet, ceiling tiles and wallboard. Anything that cannot be cleaned and dried and anything porous (like drywall and carpet) that had been in floodwaters for 24-48 hours must be discarded. Simply drying out water will not remove the bacteria or toxins that can make people sick.

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Reunited - Emergency shelter brings together Asheville residents post-Helene

October 18, 2024 | Times-News, The (Hendersonville, NC) Author: Isabel Hughes; USA TODAY NETWORK | Section: News | 1007 Words Page: A1 OpenURL Link

ASHEVILLE - Michael Goode stood outside Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College on a clear, bright afternoon in mid-October, sunglasses shading his eyes.

As he took a drag of his cigarette, the 51-year-old thought back to the early morning hours of Friday, Sept. 27, the day Tropical Storm Helene wreaked havoc on Western North Carolina.

At the time, no one could have foreseen that A-B Tech would become an emergency shelter. And Goode certainly couldn't have known how important the facility would become to him and his girlfriend, 34-year-old Angel Stockton.

Goode, who is homeless, should have been down by the French Broad River in Asheville's River Arts District when the storm rolled through. That's where his usual encampment is located.

Instead, he was asleep in Stockton's tent, located in a small, wooded camp off Hill Street, where unhoused residents pitch their tents beneath trees and tie tarps to branches to give themselves a little more privacy.

Sometime early that Friday morning – Goode isn't exactly sure when – his dog, Oak Tree, began barking. When he awoke, residents of the camp were screaming. Then, trees "started landing all around me," Goode said.

Goode was able to escape without much difficulty. Dazed and unsure of exactly what was occurring, he made his way to the path that leads out of the encampment.

Stockton wasn't with him, and he didn't know when she'd be back, but he needed to get to the river.

The rain was pummeling Asheville harder than he'd experienced before and there might be flooding.

He had to ensure his friends were OK.

'There was trees falling down'

The night of Sept. 26 into Sept. 27, Stockton was waiting for a friend at Compass Point Village.

Hours earlier, she'd told Goode to head to her encampment. He could crash in her tent until she returned from the development, a former Days Inn off Tunnel Road that was transformed last year into permanent housing for chronically homeless residents.

Stockton, who was still waiting for the friend when Helene rolled in, dozed off. By the time the friend arrived, the rain was coming down in sheets.

As the storm picked up, an employee with Haywood Street Church's respite program, which aids local unhoused residents, called Stockton. She inquired if the 34-year-old was OK.

"What do you mean, 'Am I OK?'" Stockton remembers asking. She had no idea of the damage the storm was causing to her encampment.

"She said there was trees falling down at my camp, and she wanted to make sure I was OK," Stockton told the USA

Today Network on Oct. 11.

Stockton knew she needed to get to her camp quickly. By the time she arrived with a friend and the friend's boyfriend, the devastation was evident – and the wind hadn't stopped howling yet.

Stockton and her friends jumped into action.

A large tree had fallen on a friend's encampment but narrowly missed a man they call "Old School." The trio was able to help him out of the woods.

Another tree had fallen on the tent of a man named "Fresh," who was asleep at the time. The trunk pinned his lower legs, he told the USA Today Network from the encampment on Oct. 11.

He was able to escape by tearing apart his tent and wiggling out. If he had been perpendicular to where he'd been lying, the tree would have crushed him, he said.

Two weeks post-Helene, he was all smiles as he recounted his close call.

"I woke up screaming 'Help!' and praying for God," said Fresh, who did not provide his legal name. "I was crawling through the mud and I almost got out of the camp when another branch hit me in the head, and I got a little dizzy."

He said the "whole forest was spinning." But Stockton and others helped him out, and his injuries were minor.

Despite rescuing these residents, others were not as lucky, Stockton said. Several acquaintances died that night at the camp, she said.

The destruction remains evident in the felled trees that cut through former residents' tents.

Two reunifications, yet others' whereabouts unknown

Neither Stockton nor Goode remember exactly when they reunited, but they were relieved to find each other safe. In the days that followed the storm, they made their way to A-B Tech's emergency shelter, Oak Tree in tow.

While their reunion was a happy one, but also twinged with sadness, as Goode said several acquaintances who lived in his French Broad River encampment were swept away in floodwaters.

Goode noted that Stockton's offer for him to stay at her camp that night likely saved him.

"I'd otherwise have been by the river and probably (be) dead," he said, beginning to cry.

Despite Goode's tears, the emotions at A-B Tech haven't all been sorrowful.

The emergency shelter has allowed the couple to reunite with others they hadn't yet heard from.

On Oct. 11, the duo sat with one of those friends, 61-year-old Phillip Harielson.

A veteran, Harielson has been on the streets for years. He said he's thankful for A-B Tech's shelter, food, showers and social services.

He's also hopeful that the social services offered in the emergency shelter will help get him into an apartment or some other permanent housing. He was working toward getting a place before Helene hit.

Yet he, too, grew emotional as he spoke about fellow unhoused residents.

He knows how perilous life is for the chronically homeless. He fears that some residents who were swept away in the storm may never be identified. He also worries that some may never be found, and won't have family looking for them because they're transient.

"I tread water pretty good, but not when it's coming down like that," he said. "It could have been me – it could easily have been me."

Isabel Hughes is a Delaware-based public safety reporter aiding the Asheville Citizen Times with post-Helene coverage. She can be reached at ihughes@delawareonline.com. For all things breaking news, follow her on X at @izzihughes_

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City opens debris sites in West Asheville - Residents concerned about waste, chemicals

October 18, 2024 | Times-News, The (Hendersonville, NC) Author: Sarah Honosky; Asheville Citizen Times | Section: News | 1248 Words Page: A4 OpenURL Link

ASHEVILLE - The city opened two debris processing sites in West Asheville where large volumes of detritus will be brought for sorting and processing for up to a year.

For residents in Deaverview Apartments, news of the nearby sites further exacerbated recovery concerns in the wake of Tropical Storm Helene.

In an Oct. 14 briefing, City Manager Debra Campbell said the sites would serve temporarily as staging for organic waste, like trees and vegetation; construction and demolition materials; appliances and electronics; and household hazardous waste, like batteries, pesticides, paint and cleaning supplies. Processing the materials might produce "noise, dust and smells," she said.

Vivian Pagan has been a resident of eight years at Deaverview, a public housing complex next to one of the debris locations and less than a half-mile from the other. She said she had concerns and questions about chemicals or possibly hazardous materials so close to the residential areas, including Westmore Apartments, Deaverview and other neighborhoods. The West Asheville sites are at 65 Ford Street, where the city owns a 21-acre grassy expanse, and Roger Farmer Park at 71 Deaverview Road.

"We're trying to get a committee together to get them out of here. Because we've got children, babies. This is our health," she said.

"They're setting up two fields. Not one, but two ... That's too much. We don't want them here, they can find somewhere else to put that place."

How will the city monitor the site?

Asheville Fire Department spokesperson Kelley Klope said the safety of community and workers are the city's "highest priority."

"The contractor will have dust control measures at the site and on the surrounding roads. There will be diligent monitoring of air quality and water quality where applicable. Once storm debris is sorted and processed, it will be moved to a permanent site for disposal," she said in an Oct. 15 email. "Working with a contractor experienced in disaster recovery will allow our community to recover faster, maximize public health and maximize our community's access to FEMA disaster recovery funds."

On Oct. 16, the city announced a third site would be stood up at the front nine of the Asheville Municipal Golf Course in East Asheville.

All three are city-owned properties and were able to become operational quickly due to topography and accessibility, Campbell said. Only contractors and city staff are permitted to access them. Four to seven sites are planned.

A sign at the entryway to the debris site closest to Deaverview states the site is closed to public access and all personnel must wear proper PPE.

Campbell said door-to-door outreach is being conducted to alert residents to the processing sites. Pagan said she

got a letter on her door. Another resident, Trevor Jones, said he hadn't been notified at all.

He shared similar questions around health, having watched the floodwater rise and wash out water pipes, with reports of sewage mixing with storm water and propane tanks spotted floating down rivers. Officials cautioned in the days following the storm to treat the rivers "as basically a hazmat site."

As Campbell said during her briefing, the city would "comply with all environmental requirements"

But even if she received further assurances of safety, Pagan said, her concerns remain.

Given the extent of damage done by Helene, the city said it is possible the sites will be in operation for as long as a year. As part of the contract, each site will be returned to its original state once debris processing efforts are complete.

How much debris?

The amount of debris generated by Helene left Campbell "astounded," she said, with an initial assessment of over 3 million cubic yards in the city alone. That's roughly 140 football fields stacked 10 feet high.

The city has brought in a private contractor for debris removal following the storm, which slammed Western North Carolina Sept. 27. Helene left entire areas of the city decimated, populated by rubble and downed trees, buildings reduced to splintered wood and twisted metal.

Removing these materials quickly prevents health hazards and disruptions to recovery efforts, according to an information sheet provided by the city. Processing may include grinding trees to wood chips, large rubble to aggregate and compacting metals.

At the site, contractors may also incinerate organic materials using an air curtain burner, the sheet said, an alternative to open burning intended to produce less smoke and particulate matter. The intention is for that process to be "used minimally, if at all."

Giving the community a voice

Deaverview residents, like thousands of others in Western North Carolina, were left scrambling for drinkable water, food and water for flushing in the days after the storm. Some in public housing felt left behind or overlooked as they awaited aid and answers. For others, the storm has meant lost jobs or flooding damage to homes or vehicles.

Now facing a debris processing site next door, the community is "in outrage," said Michael Hayes, executive director of the nonprofit Umoja Health, Wellness and Justice Collective, and a leading Asheville social justice activist.

He too feared environmental and health impacts, including mold growing in waterlogged debris.

"It's only fair that the community has a voice in this decision-making process," Hayes said. He understands it is city owned land, "But who does it directly effect? The low-wealth neighborhood. The economically impoverished neighborhoods."

He was frustrated, too, by the timing. The community is only now beginning to regain a sense of normalcy, he said, "and now this part comes."

Residents, like Jones, said they "lost everything" after Helene. Following the loss of his house in Hendersonville, he's staying with his mom in Deaverview. Like others in his family, he is out of work after the storm.

Now, his family is thinking about leaving Asheville for good.

"A different place to start over," he said. "Because we lost a lot and it's hard."

Who is the city contracting with for debris removal?

The city's open data portal lists a \$500,000 contract with Southern Disaster Recovery, or SDR, a disaster debris removal company based in South Carolina.

Klope said Oct. 15 the city has two different contracts in the debris category: one for debris monitoring, with Debris Tech, also for \$500,000, and the other with SDR for removal. It activated the North Carolina state contract for these services, she said.

The \$500,000 amounts are an estimate and the price may increase based on the amount of debris collected. It is a FEMA reimbursable expense.

What to know about storm debris collection

City staff and contractors are actively working to remove storm debris, starting with critical infrastructure areas, the city said. Due to the volume of debris, it cannot provide exact times and locations for collection. Collection will be ongoing.

Tips from the city:

The community can begin to place storm debris to the curb in the right of way. It does need to be bagged.

Debris should be separated at the curb by category: construction, appliances, electronics, vegetative andhazardous materials.

The contractor cannot collect directly from private property. However, if your pile starts at the curb in the right-of-way and stretches into your yard in a continuous manner, their equipment can reach about 18', as long as there are no overhead lines or obstructions.

Do not block the roadway.

There will be multiple passes at collection - you do not have to have it all out at once.

Do not attempt the cleanup process without proper protective equipment: long pants, safety glasses, gloves and sturdy shoes are recommended.

Sarah Honosky is the city government reporter for the Asheville Citizen Times, part of the USA TODAY Network. News Tips? Email shonosky@citizentimes.com or message on Twitter at @slhonosky. Please support local, daily journalism with a subscription to the Citizen Times.

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County school year is extended

October 18, 2024 | Times-News, The (Hendersonville, NC) Author: Deirdra Funcheon; Hendersonville Times-News | Section: News | 333 Words Page: A1 OpenURL Link

Henderson County Public Schools will extend its school year to make up for days that schools were closed due to Tropical Storm Helene.

"We are extending the school year just a little bit to make sure we've got ample time to get those instructional hours in," Superintendent Mark R. Garrett said during a county commission meeting Wednesday morning.

The Board of Public Education made the decision unanimously at its Tuesday evening meeting. In video from that meeting, Chief Administrative Officer Carl Taylor explained that seven missed days of instruction will be considered forgiven, but the school district's traditional/early college calendar will have four days shuffled to the end of the school year so the last day of school will be shifted from Friday, May 23 to Friday, May 30. Monday, May 26 remains a holiday for Memorial Day. (The school district's flex calendar already had May 30 as its end date.)

The current school semester will not change; it will end in December as planned, with exams still taking place before the winter break. If there are snow days this winter, school could potentially be extended as late as June 6. Teachers will receive full paychecks despite the days schools were closed.

Schools reopened smoothly Tuesday, Garrett reported. School personnel were able to account for all of the district's roughly 12,700 students.

"We know that some were displaced and are no longer in the community, or temporarily displaced," Garrett said.

Thanks to funds made available by state legislators, pay for bus driver and cafeteria workers would not be impacted by missed work days due to the storm.

Glenn C. Marlow Elementary School in Mills River uses the Asheville city water system, which was severely damaged during the storm and has left thousands of customers without running water, Garrett reported. The school is open but using bottled water for drinking.

Atkinson Elementary in Hendersonville experienced flooding that damaged its floors. The school will be using a Boys and Girls Clubs facility for classes for about eight weeks while flooring is replaced.

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High School Football - Returning to action - Predictions for Week 9 games

October 18, 2024 | Times-News, The (Hendersonville, NC)
Author: Zachary Huber and Evan Gerike; Asheville Citizen Times | Section: Sports | 756 Words Page: B1
OpenURL Link

By the end of this weekend, every NCHSAA conference in Western North Carolina will have resumed the 2024 season.

The Mountain Athletic Conference and Western Highlands Conference announced this past weekend that their teams will return to the field in Week 9. The only teams that haven't resumed their seasons are the WNC private schools of Asheville Christian Academy, Asheville School and Christ School.

With 13 games scheduled for Friday and Saturday this week, staff writers Evan Gerike (29-10) of the Citizen Times and Zachary Huber (31-8) of the Times-News make predictions for the top eight games.

Game of the Week

Erwin (4-1, 1-0) at Roberson (3-1, 1-0)

When: 7:30 p.m., Friday

Roberson hasn't faced a team with a dominant passing game anywhere near Erwin's level, which gives the Warriors quite an advantage. Erwin sophomore quarterback Caden Ingle has completed 61% of his passes for 1,436 yards, 17 touchdowns and four interceptions. The 6-2, 215-pound signal caller also has two of the best wide receivers in the area, Lawson Reynolds and Michael Petty.

Huber's prediction: Erwin 38, Roberson 28

Gerike's prediction: Erwin 28, Roberson 12

Watch on NFHS: Erwin at Roberson

Tuscola (4-1, 1-0) at West Henderson (4-2, 2-0)

When: 8 p.m., Friday

West Henderson upset Pisgah 27-24, mainly thanks to several explosive plays from quarterback Cade Young and running backs Zane McCraw and Da'Zion Murray. McCraw and Murray combined for 214 yards and two touchdowns on 25 carries. Falcons coach Paul Whitaker can use a similar formula to defeat Tuscola this week.

Gerike's prediction: West Henderson 31, Tuscola 21

Huber's prediction: West Henderson 31, Tuscola 28

Watch on NFHS: Tuscola at West Henderson

Asheville High (2-1) at McDowell (1-4, 0-1)

When: 7 p.m., Friday

Asheville High has one of the best rushing attacks in WNC, with its two stars, Kyheem Plummer and Josh Ellis. On 54 carries, they have rushed for 582 yards and six touchdowns. Meanwhile, McDowell is giving up 37 points per game.

Gerike's prediction: Asheville High 45, McDowell 26

Huber's prediction: Asheville High 42, McDowell 17

East Henderson (3-3, 0-2) at Smoky Mountain (2-3, 0-1)

When: 7:30 p.m., Friday

This is one of East Henderson's best chances to snap a 38-game losing streak to conference opponents.

Unfortunately for the Eagles, Smoky Mountain running back Ayden Johnson and wide receiver Malachi McNeely are a handful and a threat to take a play for a touchdown at any given moment.

Gerike's prediction: East Henderson 20, Smoky Mountain 18

Huber's prediction: Smoky Mountain 28, East Henderson 21

Robbinsville (2-5, 1-1) at Andrews (4-2, 1-1)

When: 7:30 p.m., Friday

Robbinsville has slowly started to turn its 2024 season around after starting 0-3. The Black Knights have won two of their last four, losing by a touchdown in each loss. Coach Dee Walsh has three running backs who have at least 200 yards. Running back Roman Jones leads the way with 465 yards and nine touchdowns on 64 carries.

Gerike's prediction: Robbinsville 25, Andrews 13

Huber's prediction: Robbinsville 35, Andrews 14

Hayesville (2-5, 1-1) at Cherokee (4-3, 1-1)

When: 7:30 p.m., Friday

Hayesville has struggled to score consistently against quality competition, while Cherokee has averaged 31 points per game. Running back Brandon Santiago leads the Braves offensively, recording 559 rushing yards and six touchdowns.

Gerike's prediction: Cherokee 36, Hayesville 9

Huber's prediction: Cherokee 21, Hayesville 10

Avery County (1-4, 1-0) at Mountain Heritage (4-0)

When: 1 p.m., Saturday

Mountain Heritage returns to the field on Saturday after its season, which has state-championship potential, was paused by Tropical Storm Helene for over a month. Quarterback Brandon Quinn, who has 629 rushing yards, 262 passing yards and 14 touchdowns, will lead the Cougars against Avery County in a neutral site game at Madison. Vikings quarterback Kaden Liner and wide receiver Oak Markland will look to snap a losing streak to the Cougars dating back to 2011.

Gerike's prediction: Mountain Heritage 55, Avery County 14

Huber's prediction: Mountain Heritage 42, Avery County 14

Madison (0-4, 0-1) at Rosman (0-5, 0-1)

When: 6 p.m., Friday

Madison and Rosman enter this game with a seven-game losing streak, so something has to give this week. Behind quarterback Chance Penland, the Patriots offense has found some life in their last two games, averaging 21 points per contest.

Gerike's prediction: Madison 45, Rosman 6

Huber's prediction: Madison 28, Rosman 20

Evan Gerike is the high school sports reporter for the Asheville Citizen Times. Email him at egerike@citizentimes.com or follow him on X, formerly Twitter, @EvanGerike. Zachary Huber is a high school sports reporter for the Asheville Citizen Times and Hendersonville Times-News. Email him at zhuber@gannett.com or follow him on X @zacharyahuber.

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North Carolina attractions offer discounted admission to Polk citizens affected by Helene

October 18, 2024 | Tryon Daily Bulletin, The (NC) Author: Jamie Lewis | Section: Business | 150 Words OpenURL Link

POLK COUNTY—Several North Carolina attractions are offering discounted admission prices for certain counties affected by Hurricane Helene.

The North Carolina Zoo in Asheboro is offering \$5 admission through November 15, which is extendable to five additional guests in the same party. Attendees must present a valid form of North Carolina identification indicating proof of residency. Qualifying residences include Polk, Rutherford, and Henderson counties, among others.

Additionally, Discovery Place has announced that through the end of October, it's offering \$3 admission prices to those who were affected by Hurricane Helene in qualifying counties. Discovery Place is offering its discounted prices in its locations in Charlotte, Huntersville, and Rockingham.

Also, the Carolina Raptor Center in Huntersville is offering free admission through the end of 2024 for those affected by Hurricane Helene in qualifying counties.

The post North Carolina attractions offer discounted admission to Polk citizens affected by Helene appeared first on The Tryon Daily Bulletin.

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Wolverines adapt to quick turnaround ahead of trip to Chase

October 18, 2024 | Tryon Daily Bulletin, The (NC) Author: Jamie Lewis | Section: News | 502 Words OpenURL Link

Dustin Fry wants nothing more than a win right now for Polk County's football program.

But he'd also settle for a bit of normalcy.

The Wolverines travel Friday to Chase for a 7:30 p.m. kickoff in a matchup of Mountain Foothills 7 Conference teams. It will be the second game this week for both teams, each having played a conference foe on Monday as teams scurry to catch up from dates postponed in the wake of Hurricane Helene.

Polk County's last three games have been played on a Thursday, Monday and now a Friday with three days since the last game. The Wolverines have not had a normal week of game preparation since facing Blue Ridge in early September.

A three-day turnaround, though, is especially new for all involved.

"You try to pull back a little bit," Fry said during a break Wednesday morning from preparations. "On (Tuesday), I didn't go with pads. Today, we're going with pads, and it will be like a combined Tuesday/Wednesday practice.

"Typically, we would be in full pads (on Wednesdays) and go probably two hours and 15 minutes. And we'll probably end up going an hour and 30 minutes, something like that, and not be on our feet as long."

Perhaps the biggest impact of the short week will be on Polk County's game plan. While the Wolverines had done some preparation last week, when Polk initially thought Chase would be its first post-Helene opponent, the small interval between games means there won't be a lot of new things on Fry's play sheet on Friday evening.

"You can't do a bunch of new stuff, just have to keep trying to do the things they know how to do and know what to do," Fry said. "There's a couple of wrinkles just to get some guys the ball, but other than that, it's really just trying to get your work in and keeping as fresh as possible."

Polk County coaches regularly meet on Sundays to begin preparing for the next game. When the staff gathered this week, they not only honed their game plan for R-S Central, but also started working on schemes for Chase. Fry had some experience from his college coaching career with a quick turnaround, but admits it has been an unusual time.

"I was used to it a little bit from college, playing Saturday-Thursday games and that type of thing," he said. "You always try to get a head start, and we had already started on Chase before they moved the R-S game to Monday. So we had a little bit done on them.

"But it just condenses everything. Sometimes, that's a good thing in that you don't have time to chase a bunch of rabbits. It is nice not to have to wait five weeks to play after a loss. That was just like a festering sore that never closed and still hasn't. It will be nice to go ahead and play a game."

The post Wolverines adapt to quick turnaround ahead of trip to Chase appeared first on The Tryon Daily Bulletin.

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UNSUNG HEROES: Texas pet salon owner leads effort to aid storm-affected animals

October 18, 2024 | Tryon Daily Bulletin, The (NC) Author: Storme Smith | Section: Community | 384 Words OpenURL Link

FOOTHILLS—In the wake of Helene's destruction in the region, Brandi Reese of Temple, Texas, spearheaded an initiative to collect essential supplies for pets impacted by the disaster.

Reese, whose family lives in the area, owns Mobidog Pet Salon and Spa. Her parents, Tommy and Cynthia Foster, and other family members weathered the storm safely, but Reese felt a strong urge to help after witnessing the devastation unfold on social media. Over the past week and a half, donations have flooded into Reese's shop and other collection points in Texas. These supplies would eventually make their way to a local shelter.

"My heart is always with the animals," she expressed in an interview with Texas news outlet KCEN. "They're like our children; they're important, and it breaks my heart knowing that the pets out there are lost, confused, scared, and hungry. We can come together, and even our little donations can make a significant difference—that's my goal."

Reese assessed the needs of local animal shelters in North Carolina. The response was clear: anything would help. She accepted donations until Monday, October 14, at several locations, including her salon. Items such as food, water, and toys were welcomed.

Local resident Steven Ortiz joined forces with Reese, offering to drive a truck loaded with donations to North Carolina after being moved by her call for help on social media.

"You've gotta find it in your heart. God has to put it on everyone like he did for me, and we've gotta come together to help anyone that needs it," Ortiz stated.

Reese's parents shared insight into her motivation.

"Our daughter saw the devastating news from the hurricane and took it upon herself to help in any small way she could," they said.

The Fosters helped connect Brandi with the Foothills Humane Society. Early Monday morning, a small Penske truck filled with supplies set off for North Carolina, and its arrival was anticipated with open arms.

On October 15, the truck arrived and was met by an appreciative team at the Foothills Humane Society, marking a successful effort to aid the vulnerable pets affected by the hurricane.

Community members are encouraged to continue their support by donating necessary items.

For more information on how to help, visit www.ncgov/donate.

The post UNSUNG HEROES: Texas pet salon owner leads effort to aid storm-affected animals appeared first on The Tryon Daily Bulletin.

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Water runs downhill

October 18, 2024 | Tryon Daily Bulletin, The (NC) Author: Betsy Burdett | Section: Conservation Corner - Betsy Burdett | 253 Words OpenURL Link

This will be the shortest Conservation Corner I've ever written. It concerns the fact that we hear lots of statements, rules, and principles, but most of them we do not remember because they really do not matter all that much. But some things that we hear are true, and they do matter, and those we need to put in our brain reservoir.

Twenty years ago, I read a study published by the University of Connecticut about their rivers and waterways. One statement in that book I'll never forget because of its huge importance for us all: When 10% of an area's surface is covered with impermeable surfaces, the soil hydrology is changed forever.

Now, look around. Look at a map and see where the devastation from Helene was so awful. Look at the developments at the tops of the mountains and the roads. For us, I-26 from the state line to the Saluda exits is 200 acres of impermeable surface.

Why was there very little damage on Holbert Cove Rd., but the lower end of Green River Cove Rd. simply slid off and took the homes at the bottom with it?

One of the first nature lessons that I taught my granddaughter Lucy when she was 5 years old was that water flows downhill and takes whatever is in its way with it.

Now, keep these two very simple truths in your mind as you look around and hopefully we can rebuild our neighborhoods more wisely.

The post Water runs downhill appeared first on The Tryon Daily Bulletin.

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NCDA&CS extends deadline for private pesticide applicators seeking recertification

October 18, 2024 | Warren Record, The (NC) Author: Staff Writer | Section: News | 115 Words OpenURL Link

Due to the impact of Hurricane Helene on pesticide training and recertification, private pesticide applicators statewide will have until Dec. 20 to meet their recertification requirements.

"We made the decision to extend the deadline to give private pesticide applicators more time to obtain their recertification because we knew those in the impacted counties would likely need more time as many are focused on recovery efforts," said Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler. "In addition, county Cooperative Extension offices, where many pesticide recertification programs are held, are being used for emergency management operations."

Pesticide applicators can call 919-733-3556 with questions about the extension, or they can review their credit status at the newly created private applicator portal at https://www.ncagr.gov/divisions/structural-pest-control-and-pesticide/private-pesticide-applicator

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Watauga residents can apply for help buying food through D-SNAP

October 18, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Staff Report news@wataugademocrat.com| Section: Local | 1600 Words OpenURL Link

WATAUGA — Residents in 25 western counties — including Watauga — and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians impacted by Hurricane Helene can apply for help buying food through the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP) which will begin on Oct. 18, according to the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services.

D-SNAP is open to individuals and households not currently receiving Food and Nutrition Services benefits who were impacted by Hurricane Helene. NCDHHS estimates more than 150,000 people will apply for up to \$120 million in D-SNAP benefits.

"We are making up to \$120 million available to more than 150,000 individuals to buy food for their families — an essential step on the road to recovery from the devastation of Hurricane Helene," said N.C. Health and Human Services Secretary Kody H. Kinsley. "We are committed to using every tool to support the recovery of our friends, families, and fellow North Carolinians in western NC — now and for the long haul."

NCDHHS received federal approval to begin phase one of the program from the U.S. Department of Agriculture beginning on Oct. 18, 2024. People can start applying for assistance three days before the program starts during online pre-registration beginning Oct. 15 and will have seven days from the start of the program to apply. The application period will close on Oct. 24, 2024.

Eligible households will be notified within three days of completing the application and receive a one-time benefit on a special debit card (called an Electronic Benefits Transfer, or EBT card) to help buy food. The exact amount will depend on household size, income and disaster losses. While there are income eligibility standards, a number of considerations are taken into account. Individuals above these limits may still be eligible dependent on disaster expenses, so we encourage everyone who needs support to purchase food to begin their application by calling the DSNAP Virtual Call Center at 1-844-453-1117.

The benefits are good for up to nine months. Benefit cards will be available for pick up at the D-SNAP locations in each county or you can get the EBT card mailed to you overnight at the address you specify on your application.

To be eligible, a person must:

Live in Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Clay, Cleveland, Gaston, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Lincoln, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Transylvania, Watauga, Wilkes and Yancey Counties.Be a member of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians living in zip code 28719Have suffered losses/damages related to Hurricane Helene, such as damage to property or loss of income. Have proof of identity and proof of residency (if available). Have income and resources below certain levels. Not currently be receiving benefits through the Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) program. People receiving FNS can also get extra help buying food, but do not need to fill out a D-SNAP application. They can get more information about how to get the extra help on the FNS webpage.

Residents are encouraged to apply for D-SNAP by phone, when possible, by calling the D-SNAP call center at 1-844-453-1117. The D-SNAP call center will be open at the following hours:

Weekdays (Friday, Oct. 18; Monday, Oct. 21; Tuesday, Oct. 22; Wednesday, Oct. 23; and Thursday, Oct. 24) from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.Saturday, Oct. 19, and Sunday, Oct. 20, from 9 a.m. to noon.

Residents are encouraged to apply for D-SNAP by phone on their assigned day by last name but will not be turned away if they apply any time during the application period.

Oct. 18 — A-GOct. 19 — H-MOct. 20 — N-SOct. 21 — T-ZOct. 22 — Open to allOct. 23 — Open to allOct. 24 — Open to all

Residents can also use the online ePASS Pre-Registration Tool, which will open on Tuesday, Oct. 15 and close on Tuesday, Oct. 22. Once the pre-registration is completed, applicants will be issued a confirmation number and will need to call 1-844-453-1117 between Oct. 18 and Oct. 24 to complete the interview part of the application.

Residents can also apply for D-SNAP in-person at any of the following locations listed below. The D-SNAP sites listed below will be open at the following hours:

Weekdays (Friday, Oct. 18; Monday, Oct. 21; Tuesday, Oct. 22; Wednesday, Oct. 23; and Thursday, Oct. 24) from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.Saturday, Oct. 19, and Sunday, Oct. 20 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Los habitantes del oeste de Carolina del Norte pueden solicitar ayuda para comprar alimentos tras el huracán Helene

Los habitantes de 25 condados del oeste y la Banda Oriental de Indios Cherokee afectados por el huracán Helene pueden solicitar ayuda para comprar alimentos a través del Programa de Asistencia Nutricional Suplementaria para Desastres (D-SNAP, por sus siglas en inglés) que comenzará el 18 de octubre de 2024, anunció hoy el Departamento de Salud y Servicios Humanos de Carolina del Norte (NCDHHS, por sus siglas en inglés). D-SNAP está abierto a personas y hogares que actualmente no reciben beneficios de Servicios de Alimentación y Nutrición y que se vieron afectados por el huracán Helene. El NCDHHS estima que más de 150,000 personas solicitarán hasta \$120 millones de dólares en beneficios de D-SNAP.

"Haremos \$120 millones de dólares disponibles a más de 150,000 individuos para comprar comida para sus familias — un paso esencial en el camino a la recuperación de la devastación del huracán Helene", dijo el secretario de Salud y Servicios Humanos de Carolina del Norte, Kody H. Kinsley. "Estamos comprometidos a apoyar la salud y el bienestar de las personas afectadas en todos los rincones del oeste de Carolina del Norte, ahora y a largo plazo".

El NCDHHS recibió la aprobación federal para comenzar la fase uno del programa del Departamento de Agricultura de los Estados Unidos a partir del 18 de octubre de 2024. Las personas pueden comenzar a solicitar asistencia tres días antes del inicio del programa durante la preinscripción en línea a partir del 15 de octubre y tendrán siete días desde el inicio del programa para aplicar. El plazo de la aplicación se cerrará el 24 de octubre de 2024.

Los hogares elegibles serán notificados dentro de los tres días posteriores a completar la solicitud y recibirán un beneficio único en una tarjeta de débito especial (llamada transferencia electrónica de beneficios, o tarjeta EBT, por sus siglas en inglés) para ayudar a comprar alimentos. La cantidad exacta dependerá del tamaño del hogar, los ingresos y las pérdidas por desastres. Aunque existen requisitos de ingresos, se tomarán en cuenta varias consideraciones. Los individuos con límites de ingreso superiores podrían calificar dependiendo de sus gastos debido al desastre, así que animamos a todos los que necesiten ayuda para comprar alimentos a comenzar la aplicación por medio de llamar al centro de llamadas virtuales de D-SNAP al 1-844-453-1117.

Los beneficios son válidos hasta por nueve meses. Las tarjetas de beneficios estarán disponibles para recogerse en las ubicaciones de D-SNAP en cada condado o puede recibir la tarjeta EBT por correo durante la noche en la dirección que especifique en su aplicación.

Para ser elegible, una persona debe:

Vivir en los condados de Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Clay, Cleveland, Gaston, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Lincoln, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Transilvania, Watauga, Wilkes y Yancey.

Ser miembro de la Banda del Este de los indios Cherokee que viven en el código postal 28719.

Haber sufrido pérdidas o daños relacionados con el huracán Helene, como daños a la propiedad o pérdida de ingresos.

Tener prueba de identidad y prueba de domicilio (si está disponible).

Tener ingresos y recursos por debajo de ciertos niveles.

Actualmente no está recibiendo beneficios a través del programa de Servicios de Alimentos y Nutrición (FNS, por sus siglas en inglés). Las personas que reciben FNS también pueden obtener ayuda adicional para comprar alimentos, pero no necesitan completar una aplicación para D-SNAP. Puede obtener más información sobre cómo obtener ayuda adicional en la página web de FNS.

Se alienta a los habitantes a solicitar D-SNAP por teléfono, cuando sea posible, llamando al centro de llamadas de D-SNAP al 1-844-453-1117. El centro de llamadas de D-SNAP estará abierto las siguientes horas:

Días laborables (viernes 18 de octubre , lunes 21 de octubre, , martes 22 de octubre, miércoles 23 de octubre y jueves 24 de octubre), a partir de las 8 de la mañana hasta las 4 de la tarde.

Sábado 19 de octubre y domingo 20 de octubre, a partir de las 9 de la mañana hasta el mediodía.

Se alienta a los habitantes a solicitar D-SNAP por teléfono en su día asignado según la primera letra de su apellido, pero no serán rechazados si solicitan en cualquier momento durante el período de solicitud.

Octubre 18: A-G

Octubre 19: H-M

Octubre 20: N-S

Octubre 21: T-Z

Octubre 22: Abierto para todos

Octubre 23: Abierto para todos

Octubre 24: Abierto para todos

Los habitantes también pueden utilizar la herramienta de preinscripción en línea ePASS, que se abrirá el martes 15 de octubre cerrará el martes 22 de octubre . Una vez que se complete la preinscripción, a los aplicantes se les emitirá un número de confirmación y deberán llamar entre el 18 y el 24 de octubre al 1-844-453-1117 para completar la entrevista que es parte de la solicitud.

Los habitantes también pueden aplicar para D-SNAP en persona en cualquiera de los siguientes lugares que se enumeran a continuación. Los sitios D-SNAP que se enumeran a continuación estarán abiertos a las siguientes horas:

Días laborables (viernes 18 de octubre , lunes 21 de octubre, , martes 22 de octubre , miércoles 23 de octubre y jueves 24 de octubre), a partir de las 8 de la mañana hasta las 4 de la tarde.

Sábado 19 de octubre y domingo 20 de octubre, a partir de las 9 de la mañana a las 2 p. m.

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