

Polk County officials: 'We know there are people still trapped, needing assistance'

September 29, 2024 | Tryon Daily Bulletin, The (NC) Author: Staff Reports | Section: Community | 331 Words OpenURL Link

Emergency crews said Sunday afternoon that they know people in Polk County remain trapped and in need of help after the remnants of Hurricane Helene dumped enormous amounts of rain across the region causing catastrophic flooding.

"We know there are people still trapped and needing assistance," officials with the Polk County Emergency Management and Fire Marshal office wrote in a social media post. "We are working as hard as we can to get to these people. Some areas are only going to be accessible by air. We have requested helicopters to assist us with evacuating people out of dangerous areas."

Officials said the entire county remains without electrical power and that Duke Energy workers are working to begin restoring service.

"Cell phone service in the county has been very spotty at best," officials siad. "We have requested a mobile cell on wheels "COW" from the state to be brought in to assist with coverage.

"There are still numerous roads impassable by vehicle. We have requested large machinery from the state to assist local DOT in clearing some roads. We know some roads are completely washed away. We are working on a complete road closure report that we can will send out later today."

A phone line is being set up for anyone to call if they need assistance to call. The number is 828-722-5025 or 828-722-5026

We have also requested bottled water and meals from the state. We will send a follow-up message when it arrives and is available.

This will be available at our shelter site at Polk County High School located at 1681 Hwy 108 East in Columbus.

"We know people have questions about the Lake Adger Dam," officials said. "We have had engineers access the dam and have been made aware everything is stable at this time."

"Our thoughts and prayers are with you and be assured that we are doing everything possible to provide assistance."

The post Polk County officials: 'We know there are people still trapped, needing assistance' appeared first on The Tryon Daily Bulletin.

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Officials say Lake Lure dam no longer in danger of failing as water recedes

September 29, 2024 | Tryon Daily Bulletin, The (NC) Author: Staff Reports | Section: News | 157 Words OpenURL Link

After a mandatory evacuation of areas below the Lake Lure dam Friday morning, officials Saturday said the water was receding and engineers had determined the dam was not in eminent danger of failing.

Officials with the Town of Lake Lure said Saturday, "the Lake Lure Dam has been evaluated by engineers from Schnabel Engineering. They have advised that the dam is not at risk of eminent failure and is stable."

Town officials said roads in and out of town are still covered by fallen trees and power lines. Crews continue to work to remove debris and clear roads.

The evacuation was ordered as remnants of Hurricane Helene dumped enormous amounts of water in the area, causing widespread flooding across the area.

The Lake Lure dam was built in the 1920s to create a lake for real estate development.

The post Officials say Lake Lure dam no longer in danger of failing as water recedes appeared first on The Tryon Daily Bulletin.

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BRE to continue 24/7 power restoration efforts into next week, 44K still without power

September 29, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Staff Report news@wataugademocrat.com | Section: Local | 523 Words OpenURL Link

The aftermath of Hurricane Helene has decimated much of western North Carolina and line crews working to repair and replace much of Blue Ridge Energy's 8,000 miles of power line across seven counties is ongoing to restore power to over 44,000 members are without power as of noon Sunday.

The cooperative serving Watauga, Ashe, Alleghany, Caldwell counties as well as parts of Wilkes, Avery and Alexander counties has all if its line technicians and crews from sister cooperatives, tree and construction workers in the field, totaling 150 line workers. Blue Ridge Energy is awaiting arrival of crews from other states to double that number today in the hopes of expediting efforts to cut their way through downed trees, cut new roads where possible to reach damaged system locations and repair or replace power lines and poles that have been destroyed or severely damaged.

"Crews are actively sawing their way in to reach areas of the electric system that must be repaired, or the lines or broken power poles replaced in order to get power flowing," said Renee Walker, director of public relations. "Many locations are inaccessible: paved roads are collapsed, mudslides continue to occur, and flooding remains an issue," she added.

"Hurricane Helene is one of the worst events that I've seen in my career—worse than Hurricane Hugo in 1989," said Doug Johnson, Chief Executive Officer of Blue Ridge Energy. "We're working as hard as we can around the clock to restore electricity to everyone, and we won't stop until every meter is turned back on," Johnson said.

Blue Ridge Energy advises members that power restoration will be a multi-day effort, lasting into next week, due to extensive damage from the storm that the entire western part of the state is battling. Damage assessment continues by helicopter and drones—the only way to view some inaccessible areas.

At the height of outages on Friday, 63,000 Blue Ridge Energy members were without power. Line crews have made progress although the extent of damage continued to increase over the weekend as flooding and mudslides continued and trees continued falling due to oversaturated ground.

Blue Ridge Energy issues a strong warning to the public that downed power lines can still be energized, and therefore dangerous or even deadly! The cooperative warns the public to stay far away from downed lines, which can be hidden underneath downed trees, water and other affected structures. Only a trained line technician should ever go near a downed power line. Blue Ridge Energy is assessing damage and members can also report downed lines by calling 1-800-451-5474.

While Blue Ridge Energy is aware of outages and system operators are monitoring conditions, members should only report outages by calling PowerLine at 1-800-448-2383, by using the Blue Ridge Energy mobile app, or, by texting OUT to 70216. Outage reports cannot be accepted over social media. Outage status is available 24/7 on the cooperative's live outage map at www.BlueRidgeEnergy.com and on the mobile app.

Blue Ridge Energy serves some 80,000 members in Caldwell, Watauga, Ashe, and Alleghany counties as well as parts of Avery, Alexander and Wilkes counties. Learn more at www.BlueRidgeEnergy.com or on the cooperative's social media on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

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Staff Report news@wataugademocrat.com, 'BRE to continue 24/7 power restoration efforts into next week, 44K still without power', *Watauga Democrat, The*(online), 29 Sep 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view? p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BEA520315230B0>



Emergency personnel continue recovery efforts as Watauga sees catastrophic damage

September 29, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Moss Brennan moss.brennan@wataugademocrat.com| Section: Local | 528 Words OpenURL Link

WATAUGA — Emergency services personnel are confirming the catastrophic damage in Watauga County as recovery efforts remain underway.

"Immediate swift water rescues have tapered off," Watauga County Emergency Services Director Holt said. "We are operating to get roads open and get access to folks that have been cut off."

On the second day since the remnants of Hurricane Helene decimated the area, Holt said they are validating how bad the destruction is.

"We are validating the information we have received of catastrophic damage," Holt said.

WCES will start working on damage assessments on Sunday, but their main concern is life safety and reaching isolated parts of the community.

"There are a lot of people that are isolated," Holt said.

Holt said they are creating lists of missions to prioritize for air assets when available.

"The National Guard is committed all over Western North Carolina," Holt said. "They are focusing right now on pulling people out of places that are still in flood waters. We do have missions, and we are working to get communications to people in isolated areas."

WCES is also working with commercial telecom providers to determine what they need to get their infrastructure back online.

"We are talking by radio to fire departments and are relaying a lot of information back to us, but they are having trouble getting to places as well," Holt said.

Holt said requests have been made across the region to get water and other supplies, which are on the way. It is just slow because of road conditions all across the region. Multiple tractor-trailer loads of water are on the way.

WCES will push out information on distribution sites throughout the county as soon as possible.

"We are working 24-hour operations," Holt said. "Just know we are coming. We know that it's taking time to get there. The meteorology community has said this is western North Carolina's Hugo or Katrina. That's the level of destruction we have. We are getting resources there as fast as we can."

The National Guard has two large trucks in Watauga County to transport water to areas that only those types of vehicles can reach. Two more trucks are on the way.

"The biggest limitation right now is getting the stuff up here," Holt said.

Individuals who want to donate their time to help in the recovery should get on the roster with an organization like Samaritan's Purse or other organizations that are helping that way they have accountability.

Baptist on Mission and Samaritan's Purse will open recovery centers where people can sign up for a list and have

crews come help them get access, clean up their area, and start removing debris.

Appalachian Medical Reserve Corps has launched a Non-Emergency Information Call Center, which can be reached at (828) 263-4178. This initiative aims to divert all non-emergency calls from the 911 system, ensuring that lifethreatening emergencies receive prompt attention.

The Boone Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation is accepting donations to help with community and business relief in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene's impact on the High Country. Gifts can be made at this link, and the Chamber will distribute funds locally to businesses and community efforts as needs are further assessed throughout Watauga County over the days and weeks ahead: www.boonechamber.com/foundation.

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WCES provides update on available resources

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WATAUGA — Watauga County, the Town of Boone, Appalachian State University and partners are collaborating to keep the community informed about Hurricane Helene's impacts and have provided a list of available resources.

To keep the 911 call center open for emergency calls, please use the following numbers for non-emergencies:

(828) 268-6200 Boone Town Hall: 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., with hours subject to change.(828) 263-4178 Appalachian Medical Reserve Corps Non-Emergency Call Center (for non-urgent inquiries and reports related to storm impacts): 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., and if the line is busy or it's after hours, leave a message.(828) 262-2000 Appalachian State University's Main Line: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Shelter options:

In coordination with the Red Cross, an Emergency Shelter for students and community members is located at the Holmes Convocation Center, located at 111 Rivers Street. This shelter has food, water and dry beds available now.Off-campus students, faculty and staff in need of shelter should call 1-800-RED-CROSS (733-2767).

Water:

The Town of Boone is currently under a Boil Water Advisory. All Town of Boone water customers are asked to boil water for 1 minute. Please continue to check this page for information about water distribution in the town and county.

Road conditions:

Watauga County Emergency Services have created an updated map that documents road closures in the county. Please avoid unnecessary travel. To access the map, please view the following link: https://www.arcgis.com/.../bd822739d8294fefb5069513378ad6b5

Volunteer opportunities:

Samaritan's Purse is coordinating day and night volunteer opportunities for tree work, debris cleanup, roof tarping and mud outs. Sign up at spvolunteer.org.Appalachian Medical Reserve Corps is coordinating volunteers with state and national emergency response teams. Sign up by filling out this interest form: https://forms.gle/AaKy78d2pL7V2sNk7

Emergency supplies:

The Boone Area of Chamber Commerce is coordinating donations of certain items. The most pressing need is cleaning supply kits (5 gallon buckets, mops, cleaning supplies, paper towels). -The Summit Pickleball facility at 278 Industrial Park Drive is available for drop-off of supplies until 6 p.m. Sunday and starting again at 8 a.m. Monday.Please contact the Boone Area Chamber of Commerce at info@boonechamber.com or (828) 264-2225 for more information about after-hours drop-off options.

This list of resources is subject to change.

"We, as a community, want to thank everyone for their patience and their willingness to help their neighbors and

friends," WCES posted.

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Biden approves Major Disaster Declaration for North Carolina, including Watauga County

September 29, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Staff Report news@wataugademocrat.com | Section: Local | 273 Words OpenURL Link

WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA — FEMA has announced that federal disaster assistance is available to the state of North Carolina to supplement recovery efforts in the areas affected by Tropical Storm Helene from Sept. 25, and continuing.

The President's action makes federal funding available to affected individuals in Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Clay, Cleveland, Gaston, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Lincoln, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Transylvania, Watauga, Wilkes and Yancey counties and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. Assistance can include grants for temporary housing and home repairs, low-cost loans to cover uninsured property losses and other programs to help individuals and business owners recover from the effects of the disaster.

Federal funding is also available to state, tribal and eligible local governments and certain private nonprofit organizations on a cost-sharing basis for emergency work in Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Clay, Cleveland, Gaston, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Lincoln, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Transylvania, Watauga, Wilkes and Yancey counties and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

Federal funding is also available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures statewide.

Thomas J. McCool has been named the Federal Coordinating Officer for federal recovery operations in the affected areas. Additional designations may be made at a later date if warranted by the results of damage assessments.

Individuals and business owners who sustained losses in the designated areas can begin applying for assistance by registering online at www.DisasterAssistance.gov, by calling 1-800-621- 3362 or by using the FEMA App. If you use a relay service, such as video relay service (VRS), captioned telephone service or others, give FEMA the number for that service.

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North Carolina's price gouging phone line is open

September 29, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Staff Report news@wataugademocrat.com | Section: Local | 169 Words OpenURL Link

RALEIGH — Attorney General Josh Stein announced that the North Carolina Department of Justice's Consumer Protection Division phone line is open for people to report price gouging or other Helene-related concerns.

You can report violations at 1-877-5-NO-SCAM or www.ncdoj.gov/pricegouging.

North Carolina's law against price gouging, or charging too much in times of a crisis, goes into effect when the governor or the legislature declares a state of emergency.

In some cases, businesses and industries that are heavily impacted by the incident causing the state of emergency have a reasonable need to increase prices in order to resupply, but they should disclose these increases so people can make informed purchasing decisions.

Businesses cannot, however, unreasonably raise the price of goods or services to profit from a state of emergency.

Since 2018, Attorney General Stein has brought 12 lawsuits against 29 defendants under North Carolina's price gouging statute. He has obtained 14 judgments or settlements totaling \$1,080,000 against 25 defendants, including a \$274,000 settlement that was the largest price gouging settlement in the department's history.

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BRE reports 13,605 still without power in Watauga County

September 29, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Staff Report news@wataugademocrat.com | Section: Local | 437 Words OpenURL Link

WATAUGA — Blue Ridge Energy and assisting crews and contractors are working around the clock to safely restore power as quickly as possible in the wake of hundreds of downed trees, washed out roads and decimated power lines and poles.

As of 5:30 p.m. Sunday, outages stand at more than 37,000 members without power: 13,605 in Watauga County, 11,616 in Ashe County; 7,802 in Caldwell County; 2,814 in Alleghany County; 1,682 in Wilkes County; 318 in Avery County and 144 in Alexander County. Damage is widespread across the cooperative's service area.

"Much of our 8,000 miles of power lines and poles, often in very remote areas, are needing to be rebuilt," said Renee Walker, director of public relations. "Crews are actively sawing their way into extremely damaged areas, rebuilding roads and doing everything possible to reach every possible damaged area," she said. "Many areas still flooded or totally inaccessible due to collapsed or washed away roads," Walker added.

Blue Ridge Energy advises members that power restoration will last through next week. At the height of outages on Friday, 63,000 Blue Ridge Energy members were without power.

Many states were impacted by Hurricane Helene and Blue Ridge Energy thanks the following assisting line crews, tree workers and construction crews who have been able to join us in restoration efforts: Halifax EMC, Tri-County EMC, Wake EMC, South River EMC, Roanoke Cooperative, Four County EMC, Caper Hatteras EMC, Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative, Central Virginia Electric Cooperative, Lee Electric, as well as Treeline Helicopter and tree contractors with Foothills Tree, Lucas Tree Experts, Xylem Tree, and Kendall Vegetation.

"Much of our system is on the ground," Walker said. "Downed power lines can still be energized and therefore dangerous or even deadly so the public should stay far away." The cooperative warns that downed lines can be hidden underneath fallen trees, water and other affected structures. Only a trained line technician should ever go near a downed power line. Blue Ridge Energy is assessing damage and members can also report downed lines by calling 1-800-451-5474.

While Blue Ridge Energy is aware of outages and system operators are monitoring conditions, members should only report outages by calling PowerLine at 1-800-448-2383, by using the Blue Ridge Energy mobile app, or, by texting OUT to 70216. Outage reports cannot be accepted over social media. Outage status is available 24/7 on the cooperative's live outage map at www.BlueRidgeEnergy.com and on the mobile app.

Blue Ridge Energy serves some 80,000 members in Caldwell, Watauga, Ashe, and Alleghany counties as well as parts of Avery, Alexander and Wilkes counties. Learn more at www.BlueRidgeEnergy.com or on the cooperative's social media on Facebook, X and Instagram.

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p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BEA5201F7ED208>



'Like a bomb' - 'Like a bomb': Hurricane Helene hammers western NC with historic flooding, untold damage and lives lost

September 29, 2024 | Winston-Salem Journal (NC) Author: JOHN HINTON Staff Reporter | Section: A | 1160 Words Page: 1 OpenURL Link

Gov. Roy Cooper has requested a major disaster declaration from President Joe Biden for 38 counties in North Carolina to help residents recover from the massive flooding and countless damage caused by Hurricane Helene.

The extreme weather event has been blamed for at least 52 deaths in states ranging from Florida to North Carolina, where two perished from storm-related incidents.

In his letter Friday night to Biden, Cooper included Forsyth, Yadkin, Surry, Wilkes, Watauga, Alleghany and Ashe counties as part of his request.

"I have determined that this incident is such unusual severity and magnitude that effective recovery is beyond the capabilities of state and affected local governments and that supplementary federal assistance is necessary," Cooper wrote.

All across the Southeast, the massive deluge has left many stranded and millions without power.

Helene blew ashore in Florida's Big Bend region as a Category 4 hurricane late Thursday packing winds of 140 mph and then quickly moved through Georgia, the Carolinas and Tennessee, uprooting trees, splintering homes and sending creeks and rivers over their banks, churning up tornadoes and straining dams.

"It looks like a bomb went off," said Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp after surveying the damage from the air.

More than 700,000 customers were without power across North Carolina, including 160,000 in Buncombe County. Interstate 40 was impassible in multiple locations, and a state transportation department map showed that most routes into Asheville and across much of the mountains were snarled.

All told, western North Carolina was essentially cut off because of landslides and flooding.

State officials say roughly 30 swift water teams have conducted more than 100 rescues so far in flooding that hasn't been this bad in a century.

In fact, there have been hundreds of water rescues, none more dramatic than in rural Unicoi County in East Tennessee, where dozens of patients and staff were plucked by helicopter from a hospital rooftop Friday.

And the rescues continued into Saturday in Buncombe County, where part of Asheville is literally under water.

"To say this caught us off-guard would be an understatement," said Quentin Miller, the county sheriff.

Among the desperate family members waiting for news was Francine Cavanaugh, whose sister told her she was going to check on guests at a vacation cabin as the storm began hitting Asheville. Cavanaugh, who lives in Atlanta, said she hasn't been able to reach her since then.

"I think that people are just completely stuck, wherever they are, with no cell service, no electricity," she said.

The storm, now a post-tropical cyclone, was expected to hover over the Tennessee Valley on Saturday and Sunday,

according to the National Hurricane Center.

Meanwhile, the western part of the state is trying to gather itself after the historic flooding. Power. Communication. Lives. It's all been lost.

That much, at least, is known. What isn't - yet - is how bad things really are. And that may take days, maybe even weeks, before officials fully have a grasp.

The storm produced widespread flooding Friday in Boone and at Appalachian State University, prompting Watauga County officials to declare a countywide state of emergency.

Appalachian State suspended its operations until 5 p.m. Sunday. The floodwater began to recede on Friday in Boone as the rain slackened, the university said in a statement.

Officials with Rutherford County Emergency Management said Friday night that engineers evaluated the Lake Lure dam and determined that it was no longer at imminent risk of failure. Still, as a precaution, residents who live below the dam were ordered to evacuate to higher ground.

In Asheville, floodwaters pushed by the remnants of Hurricane Helene left North Carolina's largest mountain city largely cut off Saturday by damaged roads and a lack of power and cellphone service, part of a swath of destruction across southern Appalachia that left an unknown number dead and countless worried relatives unable to reach loved ones.

More than 400 roads remained closed as floodwaters began to recede and reveal the extent of damage. Cooper said that supplies were being airlifted to that part of the state.

Among those rescued from rising waters was nurse Janetta Barfield, whose car was swamped on Friday morning as she left an overnight shift at Asheville's Mission Hospital. She said she watched a car in front of her drive through standing water and thought it was safe to proceed. But her car stalled, and within minutes water had filled her front seat up to her chest. A nearby police officer helped her to safety.

"It was unbelievable how fast that creek got just in like five minutes," Barfield said.

Early on Saturday morning, many Ashevillle gas stations were closed because they didn't have electricity, and the few that were open had hourlong lines wrapped around the block.

The hub of tourism and arts, home to about 94,000 people, was unusually still after floodwaters swamped neighborhoods known for drawing visitors including Biltmore Village and the River Arts District, which is home to numerous galleries, shops and breweries.

There was no cellular service and no timeline for when it would be restored. Residents were also directed to boil their water.

While there have been deaths in the county, Emergency Services Director Van Taylor Jones said Saturday that he wasn't ready to report specifics, partially because the communication outages hindered efforts to contact next of kin.

"We have had some loss of life," he said.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

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TV reporter rescues woman from flood - TV reporter rescues woman from submerged car during live hurricane report

September 29, 2024 | Winston-Salem Journal (NC) Author: JENNIFER SINCO KELLEHER Associated Press | Section: A | 353 Words Page: 7 OpenURL Link

A TV weather reporter in Atlanta interrupted his live shot about Hurricane Helene on Friday to rescue a woman from a vehicle stranded by rising floodwaters.

In video of the rescue, standing in the rain with the submerged vehicle behind him, FOX Weather meteorologist Bob Van Dillen describes how the woman drove into a flooded area.

He says he called 911, and she can be heard screaming as he tries to assure her that help is on the way. Then he says to the camera: "It's a situation. We'll get back to you in a little bit. I'm going to see if I can help this lady out a little bit more, you guys."

Van Dillen then is seen wading through the water with the woman on his back, carrying her to safety.

Later, in an interview, he said he dropped everything to help.

"I took my wallet out of my pants, and I went in there, waded in, got chest deep," Van Dillen said. "She was in there, she was still strapped into her car and the water was actually rising and getting up into the car itself, so she was about, almost neck deep submerged in her own car."

Subramaniam Vincent, director of journalism and media ethics at the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics at Santa Clara University, said this was an example of a reporter's role intersecting with human responsibility.

It's clear that while he had a professional obligation to report the news, "there's also someone whose potential life is at risk," Vincent said. "So I think the call he made is a human call."

Considering the rising waters and the woman's cries for help, along with not knowing when help would arrive, "it's a straightforward case of jumping in - a fellow citizen actually helping another," Vincent said.

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JENNIFER SINCO KELLEHER; Associated Press, 'TV reporter rescues woman from flood TV reporter rescues woman from submerged car during live hurricane report', *Winston-Salem Journal* (online), 29 Sep 2024 7 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BE4A3F2B15F3F8



Bakery's election cookie 'poll' is no joke - A Pennsylvania bakery known for its election cookie poll is swamped with orders

September 29, 2024 | Winston-Salem Journal (NC) Author: ASSOCIATED PRESS | Section: B | 669 Words Page: 3 OpenURL Link

HATBORO, Pa. - A suburban Philadelphia bakery's cookie "poll" that started during the 2008 presidential campaign as a joke between the owners and their customers has grown into much more.

Lochel's Bakery in Hatboro is swamped with orders. People are driving from a couple hours away to buy the cookies in person and shipment orders are coming from as far away as Alaska.

The bakery sells 4-inch round sugar cookies, one with blue and white sprinkles and a Harris 2024 label on it and the other with red and white sprinkles and a Trump 2024 label on it.

The cookie poll started in 2008 and accurately predicted the winner the first three times, but not in 2020, when Republican Donald Trump lost the election for the White House to Democrat Joe Biden.

Kathy Lochel, whose husband is Lochel's third-generation baker, said sales exploded that year, as customers bought thousands of cookies.

"It's just a fun, non-stressful tally that we're taking," Lochel said. "It's definitely not scientific. It's just a delicious way I say to take the pressure off with what is going on with the election, all the ads, all the campaign stuff, just a cookie.

"I can't emphasize that more. It's just a cookie."

Helene Moran bought Trump cookies on her 82nd birthday with her daughter and son-in-law who live in North Carolina.

"Which we do whenever Trump is up for election," said Moran, who lives near the bakery. "He's my sweetheart, I love him so much."

This year, election cookie sales are outpacing 2020's sales.

"These cookies are being shipped all over the United States right now, so much so that they're on back order, so we're about three to four weeks back," Lochel said.

For now, the bakery guarantees shipments will arrive by Election Day on Nov. 5, Lochel said. Customers are driving from a couple hours away can get them faster, she said.

It may not hurt business that Lochel's is in the battleground state of Pennsylvania. It also may not hurt that Lochel's is in the heavily populated and moderate suburbs of Philadelphia, where Trump and Kamala Harris are fighting for support.

Trump's numbers may have gotten a boost after he shared a story about the cookie poll on his social media platform. As of Tuesday, Trump was leading Harris, 12,558 to 889 - a far bigger lead than pollsters have found.

The election aside - with its attack ads, name-calling and social media barbs - the cookie-buying public has been perfectly pleasant and positive.

"The people that are coming into our store, whether they're buying red or blue cookies, they're friendly, they joke, they laugh, they buy other things," Lochel said.

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ASSOCIATED PRESS, 'Bakery's election cookie 'poll' is no joke A Pennsylvania bakery known for its election cookie poll is swamped with orders', *Winston-Salem Journal* (online), 29 Sep 2024 3 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BE4A3E763C9908»



Many schools cancelled; some will offer food, showers to residents

September 29, 2024 | Yadkin Ripple, The (Yadkinville, NC) Author: Ryan Kelly ryan.kelly@mtairynews.com| Section: Mtairy| 462 Words OpenURL Link

Hundreds of homes in Surry County remain in the dark Sunday evening following Hurricane Helene's visit last week. According to ReadyNC.gov there were 2,546 residents of Surry County still in the dark as of 7:30 p.m. Sunday evening.

In response to some residents being without power or having difficulty getting around, most local schools are closed Monday, Sept. 30 with the exception of Elkin City Schools.

Surry County Schools will be closed to students for classes on Monday according to a statement from the district, "Out of an abundance of caution, all Surry County Schools will remain closed for students, Monday, September 30. Tomorrow will be an optional teacher workday."

"In addition, Surry County Schools will be opening East Surry, North Surry, and Surry Central High Schools for our families who are without power from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Monday, September 30. Child nutrition staff will be onsite to serve meals. You are welcome to come by for a meal, take a shower, and use the restrooms. Our locker rooms will also be available for your convenience."

Mount Airy City Schools will be closed Monday, and the district announced there will be meal service for children and adults available.

"Due to power and internet outages across our schools and area, we will be canceling school on September 30. There will also be no after-school activities. We want nothing more than to bring students back into our buildings but there are many factors preventing that from being the safest option at this time.

"Sit-down lunch meals will be available for children 18 and under for free. Adults can buy a lunch for \$4.50. Lunches will be served in BH Tharrington Primary cafeteria and Mount Airy High School's Commons Area from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and those meals will need to be eaten in the cafeteria of the school based on regulation.

Elkin City Schools will resume a normal schedule Monday. They released a statement that read, "We want to extend our deepest gratitude to the power companies and the cleanup crews for their incredible efforts during Hurricane Helene."

"The hard work and dedication ensured that our community was safe and that we are able to return to a regular scheduled school day."

Wilkes County Schools will be closed on Monday. The district said, "First and foremost, we hope that you and your family are safe following this dangerous storm. Wilkes County Schools will be closed for students September 30. This will allow us to assess conditions at our schools and in the community and determine when students can safely return."

"Tomorrow will be an optional teacher workday. Employees who do not feel comfortable traveling should not do so. We will work closely with those who cannot safely return to work tomorrow."

Yadkin County Schools will be open on regular schedule.

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September 29, 2024 | Charlotte Observer, The (NC) Charlotte, North Carolina Page: 11 OpenURL Link

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September 29, 2024 | Charlotte Observer, The (NC) Charlotte, North Carolina Page: 2 OpenURL Link

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September 29, 2024 | Charlotte Observer, The (NC) Charlotte, North Carolina

Page: 18 OpenURL Link

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September 29, 2024 | Charlotte Observer, The (NC) Charlotte, North Carolina Page: 32 OpenURL Link

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September 29, 2024 | Charlotte Observer, The (NC) Charlotte, North Carolina Page: 35 OpenURL Link

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Fayetteville Observer, The (NC): Page 35

September 29, 2024 | Fayetteville Observer, The (NC) Fayetteville, North Carolina Page: 35 OpenURL Link

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Fayetteville Observer, The (online), 29 Sep 2024 35 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?
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Fayetteville Observer, The (NC): Page 32

September 29, 2024 | Fayetteville Observer, The (NC) Fayetteville, North Carolina Page: 32 OpenURL Link

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