

In Helene's aftermath, FEMA teams now search for victims

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Author: Adam Wagner; The Charlotte Observer Section: News 1010 Words

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

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

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

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

Moving brush and debris

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

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

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

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

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

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

Teams have helped more than 6,500 people

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

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

it locate victims.

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

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

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

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

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

A car full of mud

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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The story behind how NC - gets ready for disasters

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North Carolina is reeling from its worst natural disaster since 1900. While forecasts were increasingly urgent as Helene raced northward, for North Carolina's resourceful mountainfolk it proved far more destructive than anyone dared imagine.

For a back story. I vividly remember my early introduction to emergency preparations as governor from 1985 through 1992. I still find it inspiring that thousands of state workers and volunteers from here and across America come dig us out, repair roads and utilities, and restore power, communications and commerce, as we do for them.

Effective response to a natural disaster is more complex than anyone could fully anticipate. Fortunately for us, North Carolina puts major emphasis on preparation. Early in my first year, I attended a special NC innovation: practicing for storms, forest fires and tornadoes.

The scene was a high school gym, with tables set up for coordinators of each type of responder in the region. There was a separate table for highway patrol, national guard, prison sheriffs, Red Cross, Salvation Army, ham radio operators (cellphones weren't invented!), school superintendents, clergy, electric utilities, NC Forest Service and many more. One table hosted NC's own home improvement retailer Lowe's, side-by-side with Home Depot, Ace Hardware and other competitors. They practiced as a team estimating special tools, like generators and chain saws, each would deliver.

They worked through a realistic rehearsal for a forest fire, for that season would soon begin. Similar maneuvers would rehearse appropriate steps months later to prepare for hurricane season. Each table would practice exactly what their duties would be and when and where to deploy, responding to various scenarios. They also would understand the tasks to be handled by every other table, all orchestrated in advance. Tactics might be improvised as real disasters unfolded, but the strategic assignment of responsibilities was settled.

During my eight-year watch, there were two major fires, three monster tornadoes, 13 hurricanes - and one freak red tide at Beaufort Inlet. My rookie year, there were 12 Atlantic hurricanes, and North Carolina caught eight of them. The next seven years, we had only five of 35. We believed practice sessions helped speed our response to a storm.

Hugo in 1989 was the worst hurricane for my administration. It went through North Carolina east of the mountains with heavy rainfall and 60 mph gale-force winds, occasionally gusting to 100. Hugo blew down trees and flooded low-lying spots - but showed little to guide our response to Helene.

Eastern North Carolina took a horrible loss from the vast flooding of coastal plains by Floyd in 1999. Across relatively flat terrain, many homes were flooded to the ceiling or higher. With little lateral flow, it took days for the high water to recede. Helene was more comparable to the infamous 1889 Johnstown Pennsylvania flood. An upstream dam collapsed, sending a torrent of water 30 feet deep crashing through the unsuspecting town at up to 40 mph. Caught entirely off guard, 2,209 lives were lost.

Few understood "flooding" would mean river tsunamis, sweeping everything downstream. Few expected that one or two feet of rain over 2-3 days on mountains would create cascading torrents of water scouring the flood plains where thousands of homesteads had stood for decades.

Looking ahead, some observers have considered Helene's likely disruption of the general election. While Asheville

and Boone vote Democratic, the other 21 counties west of Hickory vote heavily Republican, normally with a net 120,000-vote advantage for Republicans. This far exceeds Trump's 74,483 margin carrying the state in 2020. While every effort will be made to assure the polls are ready for them, we cannot imagine the daily burdens they face just meeting their families' vital needs. These are hardy citizens, famous for their enduring spirit. I'm confident they will do what they can.

Jim Martin, a Republican, was N.C. governor from 1985-93. He is a regular contributor to our pages.

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NC counties hit - hard by Helene can change voting plans

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Author: Kyle Ingram; Staff Writer | Section: News | 634 Words

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RALEIGH The North Carolina State Board of Elections voted on Monday to give the counties hit hardest by Tropical Storm Helene broad authority to change their election plans to respond to the storm's disruption.

The resolution, approved in a unanimous vote by the bipartisan board, allows counties to change their early voting and Election Day polling sites, gives them greater flexibility in appointing poll workers and gives voters in the affected counties more options to receive and deliver absentee ballots.

"We will continue to make voting accessible to voters," said Stacy "Four" Eggers, a Republican board member.
"Whether we need four-wheelers, horses or helicopters, this disaster highlights the need for consistency in our work and making sure that we get to the locations that the voters expect us to be."

All county board of election offices are now open for business, after 14 closed last week in Helene's wake. However, many election officials in Western North Carolina are still without power or water in their homes and several previously designated polling sites will now be unusable due to damage, inaccessibility and staffing issues.

"Our struggles are not over," Karen Brinson Bell, executive director of the board, said. "That is why we need the board to take action to give the flexibility necessary to carry out these elections and to be of the best service to the voters that we can be."

Brinson Bell emphasized that disruptions from Helene's aftermath will not affect the state's election schedule, and early voting will begin on Oct. 17 in all 100 counties, as planned.

The counties included in Monday's resolution are Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Transylvania, Watauga and Yancey.

Election officials in those areas will now be able to change voting sites to account for any sites that were destroyed or otherwise rendered unusable. Any changes will have to be approved by a bipartisan majority vote of the county's board of elections.

County election boards are currently structured to have three Democrats and two Republicans, but any change to polling sites would need approval from members of both parties.

"This requires that a change is not going to be a Republican change or a Democrat change and that it's required to meet the needs of the voters and the administration of our elections," Eggers said.

There are 40 early voting sites among the 13 counties included in the resolution. State officials are uncertain how many of those will need to be replaced, though Brinson Bell noted that even if some buildings are unusable, officials may be able to erect temporary voting facilities in the parking lots of those sites.

To address potential issues with staffing, Monday's resolution will allow affected counties to bring in poll workers from other areas across the state and reassign existing workers to new locations.

The resolution also allows for more flexibility with absentee voting. Voters within the affected counties will be able to request an absentee ballot in person at their county board of elections office, including voters who already requested a ballot, but may have lost it in the storm.

Since many voters may have been displaced by Helene, the board also voted to allow affected voters to turn in their absentee ballots to any county board of elections office - not just the one in their home county. Voters will be able to deliver those by mail or in person up until 7:30 p.m. on Election Day, Nov. 5.

The resolution also expands the use of Multipartisan Assistance Teams. These groups traditionally assist voters in nursing homes or assisted living facilities with requesting and completing absentee ballots. Now, counties will be allowed to send those teams to disaster shelters where they can help displaced residents vote absentee.

Brinson Bell said the board may need to approve future changes to election administration in Western North Carolina as recovery efforts continue.

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

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After the deadly destruction of Hurricane Helene, over a dozen of North Carolina's state parks will be shut down for several weeks.

As cleanup continues across the southeast, The North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation announced that all state parks west of I-77 are closed through at least Oct. 31, 2024, along with most programs at all state parks.

The Division of Parks and Recreation is assisting with statewide emergency and rescue efforts in Western North Carolina in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene," the division announced on Oct. 2. "As a result, we are scaling back operations across the state to allow staff to continue to assist with critical deployments."

According to the division, 13 of North Carolina's 39 state parks and recreation areas will be closed until at least the end of the month, including:

Chimney Rock State Park

Crowders Mountain State Park

Elk Knob State Park

Gorges State Park

Grandfather Mountain State Park

Lake James State Park

Lake Norman State Park

Mount Jefferson State Natural Area

Mount Mitchell State Park

New River State Park

Rendezvous Mountain

South Mountains State Park

Stone Mountain State Park

Along with one third of North Carolina's state parks being closed, so are several other roads around the area, including the famous Blue Ridge Parkway.

"We continue to discourage unnecessary travel in and to Western North Carolina. Limiting travel helps prioritize sending lifesaving resources and repairing vital infrastructure repairs in the communities hit hardest by Helene. Many roads continue to be closed due to unsafe conditions," NCDPR's website says.

If you have any reservations made for any of the state parks west of I-77, including cabins, campsites and picnic shelters, full refunds will be distributed, according to the division.

You can find more information and updates on park closures online at ncparks.gov/closures.

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'It threw us back': People living in public housing in Asheville cope in post-Helene life

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Author: Ryan Oehrli; Staff Writer | Section: News | 686 Words

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Asheville Since Helene struck, Kyesha Nelson and TJ Wilson have been making long walks across Asheville because her baby needs special milk.

To avoid the worst of Helene, they had left their home in the Fairview area to stay with Wilson's mother in Hillcrest, one of the city's public housing communities.

"I just have to get my baby somewhere I can walk around," Nelson remembered thinking. Her six-month-old, Tykwon, was born prematurely.

But Hillcrest has no power or running water, a common struggle for people in Asheville and Western North Carolina since the historic storm.

They don't have a car. Without the city's bus system running, people without transportation - including those living in low-income housing like Hillcrest - are on foot in Asheville's winding, hilly roads.

"When you have smaller children, walking is not always the best thing you can do," Nelson said. "Or the safest."

A common issue

In a Sept. 28 notice, the city said buses had been redirected to relief efforts. ART - or Asheville Rides Transit - brought 578 people to shelters, that notice said.

"The service also continues to face power outages, road conditions, and staffing shortages," it said. All services are suspended "until further notice."

The city later announced that on Monday the bus system will "begin operating a modified schedule on select routes where road conditions have improved."

In West Asheville's Pisgah View Apartments, Cicely Rogers is dealing with "more stress" without a way to get around town, she said.

She has family in the area, but not nearby. Amboy Road flooded early, making it a challenge for them to get to her, she said. And she's not even sure what the roads are like where her sister lives in Buncombe County.

Water is the chief concern for many because many in the city are without fresh water. Asheville Mayor Esther Manheimer has warned that it will take some time, at least weeks, for it to return.

Pisgah View had power Thursday, drawing in family members, said Tykerria Robinson-Williams. Her focus was stocking up as much water as she could, unsure how long necessities would be hard to come by.

She worried how far back the storm would set the people living in Pisgah View.

"We really can't afford to leave our homes behind. We weren't doing too good before, so now... it threw us back 10 more steps when we're trying to get 10 steps ahead," she said.

Friends, family and neighbors have been helping each other across the region.

"Really, I'm just counting on my friends to look out for me," said Reggie Moore, who lives in Deaverview, another public housing community that's close to Aston Park. He's worried about older people there, who can't get out.

"I think they need a bit more help than what they're getting," he said.

One such woman, who asked not to be named, said she relies on the bus system. Even if she walked downtown, she might not find an ATM with cash or a store that's stocked, she said.

'We all need to pull our part'

Buncombe County Manager Avril Pinder said the county has been working with community partners to distribute food to public housing communities.

"Community paramedics have been on the ground since this began, taking water to our housing authority areas," Pinder said.

Some residents told The Charlotte Observer about food and water being dropped off, and even a food truck cooking hot meals.

Lolita Ray also rides the bus. She's lived in Hillcrest for about five years. Without it, she's relying on her daughter for rides to and from Sam's Club, where her daughter works.

Water cases rested at a neighbor's front door Friday. Ray put them there. And she spent her morning cleaning up trash on the streets in Hillcrest. The trash irked her.

"Right now, we all need to pull our part and come together," she said.

By the afternoon, there was some new and much-needed relief at Hillcrest. The community center filled with donations, and water stacked high outside. Residents carried out diapers, snacks, water and more.

Observer staff writer Jeff A. Chamer contributed.

Ryan Oehrli: @oehrli

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JD Vance to host town hall in Greensboro, criticizing Harris on immigration and Helene

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Author: Luciana Perez Uribe Guinassi; Staff Writer | Section: News | 431 Words

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Republican vice presidential candidate JD Vance is coming back to North Carolina this week, this time to host a town hall in Greensboro.

Doors for the town hall at the Koury Convention Center will open at 4 p.m. on Thursday, with Vance slated to speak at 6 p.m. Topics will likely include the economy, illegal immigration and Hurricane Helene.

The remnants of Hurricane Helene, which began to be felt in North Carolina on the last Thursday of September, devastated the western part of the state, bringing historic flooding, destruction and death.

The Trump campaign has heavily politicized the ongoing recovery efforts. Most recently, former President Donald Trump, during a town hall meeting in Fayetteville on Friday night, said that the federal government's response to the devastating storm had been "terrible." The news release announcing Vance's town hall said Vice President Kamala Harris "completely left North Carolinians behind in the wake of devastation post-Hurricane Helene."

The Harris campaign responded to Vance by pointing to Harris's comments about Trump being "extraordinarily irresponsible" in pushing "disinformation" about Helene relief aid.

Many on social media platforms like X have also taken to criticizing the response despite federal responders working in the area alongside their local and state counterparts. Conspiracy theories have also spread on social media.

President Joe Biden surveyed the damage in North Carolina by air on Wednesday and pledged more resources. Harris visited Charlotte on Saturday, announcing Mecklenburg County would also be eligible for federal disaster aid.

The Trump campaign's news release hones in on the fiscal impact of immigrants living in the United States without legal authorization, citing research by the Federation for American Immigration Reform, a nonprofit, anti-immigration organization.

"While Kamala Harris continues to ignore these critical issues," says the release, Trump "has a proven track record of putting North Carolinians first."

"President Trump understands the importance of lowering taxes, securing the border and stopping the unchecked flow of illegal immigration that drains resources from American citizens. President Trump has always fought for the people, and he will continue to fight to restore economic stability, security, and prosperity in North Carolina," says the release.

Vance's visit to Greensboro is his fifth trip to North Carolina since becoming Trump's running mate.

In mid-September, he held a rally in Raleigh. Before that, he was with Trump in Asheboro. He has also visited Greenville twice.

Trump, Harris and Democratic vice presidential candidate Tim Walz have also visited the battleground state often this year.

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Volunteers in Emma offer outreach services post-Helene

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

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

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

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

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

'Love shining through'

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

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

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

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

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

'We're all neighbors'

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ryan Oehrli: @oehrli

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NC homeowners' insurance rate hearing opens, likely to continue through election

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Author: Chantal Allam; Staff Writer | Section: Business | 936 Words

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As many in Helene- ravaged Western North Carolina pick through the remnants of their lives, the state's department of insurance (DOI) kicked off a hearing into insurance companies' request to raise homeowners' premiums statewide by an average 42.2%.

On Monday, attorneys on both sides met for the quasi-judicial proceeding in the department's second-floor hearing room in Highwood Towers at 3200 Beechleaf Court in northeast Raleigh.

The hearing is expected to take weeks. One person close to the case, however, was noticeably absent.

Unlike his predecessors, Insurance Commissioner Mike Causey wasn't there to preside over the hearing. State law allows him to designate someone else. So Amy Funderburk, the department's general counsel, is the hearing officer.

"Both of my predecessors were attorneys. I'm not an attorney," Causey told a gaggle of reporters in the building's foyer outside, just before the hearing began. However, he assured those gathered that the final decision rests with him. "I've always made those decisions and will continue to do so."

The hearing is the first under the two-term commissioner's watch. In eight years as the commissioner, Causey has raised property insurance rates 16 times - all without a public hearing.

On Monday, he defended his record. "In past years, we've been successful in negotiating settlements. In this case, we were not able to come anywhere close. So that's why we're here today."

Shortly after making his comments, Causey left the floor. He did not attend the morning session and was not present for opening statements.

What insurers want

After a moratorium on rates lifted in January, the Rate Bureau, which represents some 110 companies operating in the state, submitted a rate filing asking for a statewide 42.2% average increase.

The proposed increases are based on past payouts and future claims projections and vary greatly by county.

In Durham and Wake counties, it's asking for a 39.8% increase. In Chatham and Orange counties, it's requesting 25.1%.

Meanwhile, coastal regions - like Brunswick, Carteret, New Hanover, Onslow and Pender counties - could face the steepest increases. The Rate Bureau wants to nearly double premiums in those counties - a 99.4% jump.

In places hit hardest by Helene like Buncombe County, home to Asheville, it's around 20.5%.

On Feb. 6, Causey rejected the request, calling it "excessive and discriminatory."

It's been almost four years since the last homeowners' rate increase - in November 2020 when the Rate Bureau asked for an overall rise of 24.5% and ultimately received 7.9%.

Inside the hearing room on Monday, the Rate Bureau's attorneys presented 2,000 pages of data in two five-inch white binders to justify its latest proposal.

Rising construction and labor costs, billion-dollar-loss events like Helene and the state of the reinsurance market - the insurance that covers insurance companies - are driving up costs, argued the Rate Bureau attorney Marvin "Mickey" Spivey, an attorney with Raleigh-based Young Moore Attorneys.

"Whether you want to call it climate change or not, there's no denying that we are having bigger, stronger and more costly catastrophic storms than we've seen in any of our lifetimes," he said in his opening statement.

The department's witnesses would seek to either reduce current rates or limit increases by less than 3%, he added. "To put it bluntly, that just does not make sense," he said.

As underwriters tighten guidelines, more residents are being subject to "consent-to-rate" notices, which allow insurance companies to charge rates higher - up to 250% more - than the state-approved rate. They're also turning to the "insurer of last result," the North Carolina Insurance Underwriting Association (NCIUA), or the "beach plan," he said.

These realities signal that the current rates are "not adequate," he said. Without a "fair rate," many companies may "choose not to write at all."

The insurance department's attorney, Terence Friedman, countered by calling the bureau's requested rates inflated. He also argued its filing relied on outdated data and practices. "They're continuing on using the same methods, regardless of the commissioner's admonitions," he said.

He also criticized the Rate Bureau's mention of Helene in its opening statement.

"The tragedy shouldn't be used as grounds to raise homeowners' rates," Friedman said, pointing to the growing reality that much of Helene's damage was caused by flooding. (Standard homeowners' policies do not cover flooding, landslides or anything caused by moving water.)

This case is going to be "long and very dense," he warned. But ultimately, the department's actuaries would prove that alternative rates would allow the bureau's members to earn "what they're constitutionally entitled to," but which are also "fair and reasonable."

Looking ahead

State law gives the commissioner 45 days to issue an order once the hearing concludes.

Causey, a Republican, is up for reelection Nov. 5, casting an even greater spotlight on proceedings.

Earlier in the morning, his challenger, state Sen. Natasha Marcus, a Democrat, held a news conference outside on the steps of DOI's headquarters. She criticized Causey's decision not to officiate, calling it "a ridiculous dereliction of one of the most important duties of his office."

She also took a swipe at the hearing's timing. With only 28 days until the election, a ruling is not expected until after voters hit the ballot box. "Voters won't get a chance to weigh in," she said.

North Carolina is one of very few states where a Rate Bureau still exists. In almost every other state, each carrier files its own homeowners' rates independently. But here, the Rate Bureau, created in 1977 by the General Assembly, has the responsibility to file and negotiate rates on behalf of the entire industry.

The hearing is open to the public. Attendees will be seated on a first-come, first-served basis.

Transcripts of each day's hearing are expected to be posted online the following day.

For additional information, see the homeowners' rate hearing webpage.

Chantal Allam: 919-829-4522, @chantalallam

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Chantal Allam, Staff Writer, 'NC homeowners' insurance rate hearing opens, likely to continue through election', *Herald-Sun, The* (online), 9 Oct 2024 11A https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view? p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C1C9CAA89DEB30>



4 music stars to band together for NC hurricane relief show at BofA Stadium this month

October 9, 2024 | Herald-Sun, The (Durham, NC) Author: Théoden Janes; Staff Writer | Section: News | 723 Words Page: 6A OpenURL Link

Three of the biggest music stars North Carolina has ever produced - Luke Combs, Eric Church and James Taylor - will headline a special benefit show for victims of Hurricane Helene on Saturday, Oct. 26 at Bank of America Stadium in Charlotte.

"Concert for Carolina," announced Monday morning, also will feature bluegrass musician Billy Strings, a Michigan native.

In a news release, Live Nation said: "The Tar Heel State is a profoundly special place for all four artists, as it is where Combs, Church and Taylor grew up and first discovered their musical interests, and where Strings has performed many, many times over his career and holds an extra special place in his heart."

Tickets will go on sale at 10 a.m. Thursday; details are at www.concertforcarolina.com. Prices were not immediately available. Ticketmaster lists 5 p.m. as the start time for the Oct. 26 show.

The release said additional featured artists will be announced in the coming days.

Where will Concert for Carolina funds go?

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

The 34-year-old Combs - born in Huntersville and raised in Asheville - announced that his dedicated charities will be Samaritan's Purse, Manna Food Bank, Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest NC, and one more organization to be revealed soon.

Church's Chief Cares will help "established charities and organizations that are well managed, organized and can expedite aid directly to the families affected by Hurricane Helene."

Of the four men atop the bill, only Combs has headlined BofA stadium before. In July 2023, he sold it out on back-to-back nights.

Church, 47, just last week released a new song, "Darkest Hour," that the Granite Falls native said was dedicated to "the unsung heroes, the people who show up when the world's falling apart." He plans to donate all of his publishing royalties for the track to hurricane relief efforts.

In a separate statement on Monday morning, Church called North Carolina "my home."

"It's in every fiber of who I am," he said. "Our family members, friends, neighbors and communities are in dire need. I'm honored to share the stage with an incredible lineup in order to help meet those needs. Through the dark, light will shine."

Taylor, a 76-year-old Rock and Roll Hall of Famer, has a long association with Chapel Hill and has written many songs influenced by his childhood experiences in North Carolina - most famously, "Carolina in My Mind."

Meanwhile, Strings is the baby of the group at 32, but has built an impressive resume over the past decade. His

album "Home" won the Grammy Award for Best Bluegrass Album in 2021. Although he's not from the area, Monday's news release stated that "Strings' life and career has been deeply impacted by the state of North Carolina both personally and professionally, as it is home to some of his most passionate and supportive fans."

How Concert for Carolina came together

"Concert for Carolina" - presented by Explore Asheville and the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority - will be hosted by ESPN's Marty Smith and Barstool Sports' Caleb Pressley.

"This concert took so much planning, work, and coordination from so many people," Combs posted on X alongside the announcement. "I'm so thankful to everyone who helped make this a possibility on such short notice."

David Tepper (owner of the Carolina Panthers, Charlotte FC and Bank of America Stadium) and his wife, Nicole Tepper, said in a statement that it was Combs who first approached them about the idea for the event, adding, "We felt compelled to open the doors of Bank of America Stadium for this special moment."

"Every day," they said, "we are more inspired by the strength and resolve of our Carolina community, and we are grateful to join Luke, Eric and our fellow Carolinians as we embark on the road to recovery together."

The David and Nicole Tepper Foundation - along with the Teppers' two local sports organizations - already have distributed \$3.85 million to provide immediate assistance to those impacted by the deadly storm that swept through the Carolinas on Sept. 26 and 27.

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Giant cinnamon roll warms hearts at Chapel Hill Family House

October 9, 2024 | Herald-Sun, The (Durham, NC)

Author: Tammy Grubb; Staff Writer | Section: Living | 1066 Words

Page: 1C OpenURL Link

At 3 feet across and roughly 35 pounds, it's not the world's biggest cinnamon roll ever made, but it might be the biggest in North Carolina, baker Donna Fehrenbach said.

If she's proven wrong, she said at the SECU Family House in Chapel Hill, "I'd cross off 'biggest,' and I'd put 'second biggest.'

"And if another person did that, I'd cross that off and put 'third biggest,' and then I'd put 'a really big bun,' which I think would even be funnier."

That was her goal: to bring a little fun and laughter into the lives of the UNC patients and their families staying at Family House on Old Mason Farm Road. National Cinnamon Roll Day - Oct. 4 - seemed like the best time to try something new.

About half of the pastry was gone when Cheryl Laughter and her husband, Don McNair, stopped by to see it. McNair, who just had a muscle transplant at UNC Hospitals following prostate cancer and a hernia, briefly chatted with the volunteers but declined a treat.

"I'm afraid I'll get diabetes just from looking at it," he joked.

"I would love to eat it, but you'd be picking me off the floor," his wife said.

The couple is staying at Family House a little longer after leaving their Asheville home Sept. 26 to avoid driving in Helene's tropical storm winds. Laughter said she's concerned about taking her husband home before there's clean water and food available.

Water was already pooling Thursday in the basement utility room of their home, which sits on a hill and gets enough runoff when it rains that they installed a drainage system some years ago.

The storm knocked out the power, but a neighbor who checked on their house found the sump pump still working on its 24-hour battery backup, Laughter said. They're not sure what they'll find when they get back, she said.

"It's heartbreaking to think about people that you don't know" who are dead or are suffering after Helene, Laughter said. "You just can't believe it. You couldn't even make it up."

Made with love, and butter and sugar

Fehrenbach, 79, has been a volunteer at Family House for 10 years, showing up every Tuesday with her sidekick Colette File and other volunteers to bake homemade bread and sweet treats.

Friday's creation started with a week of figuring, measuring and sampling to get the recipe just right, Fehrenbach said.

On Tuesday, she perfected the cream-cheese frosting, and on Thursday, they made about 30 pounds of dough in their home mixers, chilling it in the refrigerator overnight to develop the flavor.

Around 7 a.m. Friday, Fehrenbach and four other women gathered in the kitchen at nearby St. Thomas More Catholic Church to roll out the dough, top it with butter, sugar and cinnamon, and form the four quarters of the giant roll on large sheet pans.

Pulling each pan from the church's industrial-size ovens, Fehrenbach expertly checked for doneness with a thermometer. The finished pastry, still warm, was hurried across the street to Family House and assembled on a wooden platter crafted by the maintenance staff.

As the last slathering of gooey, cream-cheese icing melted into the crevices, people gathered, smiling as they got a piece. Some came back for seconds, or to get slices for a friend.

While not the world's largest - that honor goes to a bakery in Medford, Oregon, for a roll weighing 1,149 pounds - the Family House cinnamon roll had more love between the layers.

A 'safe place' for families in medical crisis

Since 2008, the nonprofit SECU Family House has sheltered over 35,000 families and UNC Hospitals patients. The average stay is just over five days, and families have full run of the house, which has 75 guest rooms and is supported primarily by donations.

About 1,300 volunteers provide labor, working the front desk, doing laundry and other chores, and cooking dinner for 60 to 70 people each night. The activities, entertainment, and arts and crafts are a distraction from their worries.

They are grateful for the encouragement, the smiles, the hugs, and the laughter, Laughter said. Family House has been their "home away from home" more than once.

"Particularly when you feel like you're walking that terrible path of health care by yourself, and we know we're not alone. We see people here every day that my heart goes out to them," she said.

Like many other guests, Laughter said she enjoys joining the volunteers in the kitchen. Fehrenbach, whose cookbook, "Rolling in the Dough," helps buy chocolate chips, pecans and other special ingredients, said the pecan sticky buns are very popular, but she prefers a fresh loaf of sourdough bread.

"There's something about a kitchen, baking, smells," she said. "They come down here. They roll out dough, and then they talk about what they're going through."

Family House was her "safe place" when her husband died in 2022, Fehrenbach said. She used to teach baking at Chapel Hill's specialty food store, A Southern Season, and still holds classes in people's homes.

"It's my test kitchen," she said. "We probably do something new just about every week - just a different filling, the holidays are coming, we make bread that looks like a pumpkin, a Christmas tree. I love to bake, and I live alone. Who am I going to bake for?"

"It gives me a sense of purpose and community, and I love that."

How to get involved

- * Donate: One-time or monthly donations support SECU Family House in Chapel Hill, Winston-Salem and Wilmington. Donations can be made online at secufamilyhouse.org/donate.
- * Fill the wish list: Family House relies on pantry donations from corporate and community partners, and individuals. Find a wish list at Amazon.com and secufamilyhouse.org/support/wish-list

- * Volunteer: Visit secufamilyhouse.org/get-involved for a list of individual and group opportunities.
- * Meals from the Heart: Help make weeknight dinners for Family House guests. Learn more: secufamilyhouse.org/get-involved/prepare-a-meal.

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STORM KILLS 2 IN HICKORY REGION

October 9, 2024 | Hickory Daily Record (NC)

Author: SARAH JOHNSON AND BILLY CHAPMAN sjohnson@hickoryrecord.com wchapman@hickoryrecord.com | Section: News | 887 Words OpenURL Link

HURRICANE HELENE UPDATE

One death attributed to Hurricane Helene was reported in Catawba County and one was reported in Burke County.

Alexander, Caldwell and Iredell counties have reported no deaths attributed to the storm.

Ten days after the storm, thousands remain without power. Hundreds of thousands of customers were without power in the immediate aftermath of the remnants of Hurricane Helene.

Catawba County

Approximately 100 homes in the Lookout Shoals Lake area were flooded during Hurricane Helene.

The Lookout Shoals Lake area was the most heavily impacted area in Catawba County, Catawba County Communications and Marketing Director Amy McCauley said.

Approximately 50 other homes across Catawba County have major structural damage due to the storm.

McCauley said the county received 2,152 emergency calls Sept. 26 and 27 as Helene came through the area.

One death in Catawba County was attributed to the storm. A 4-year-old was killed in a car crash on Sept. 26 during heavy rains prior to Hurricane Helene officially reaching Catawba County, McCauley said.

One road in Catawba County remains closed.

According to DriveNC.gov, a bridge along Finger Bridge Road sustained significant damage during the storm and will have to either be replaced or repaired before the road is reopened.

The rest area on Interstate 40 in Claremont was closed Monday due to lack of power and water, according to DriveNC. gov.

More than 27,000 were left without power in Catawba County during the storm, McCauley said. As of Monday, there were 15 customers without power in Catawba County, according to PowerOutage.us.

Burke County

One fatality in Burke County was reported after a driver hit a tree on Summers Road, according to Burke County Emergency Communications Assistant Director Chris White.

Burke County emergency crews also conducted 31 water rescues, responded to 37 structure collapses and conducted 322 welfare checks.

"None of those turned up to be missing people or anything like that," White said. "So to our knowledge, we don't have anybody missing."

White said areas along the Catawba River, Johns River, Linville River, Lake James and Lake Rhodhiss were most

heavily impacted by Helene.

White said the Catawba River spread 100 to 150 yards in some places from its banks.

The county received 4,722 emergency calls for service Thursday and Friday. An additional 315 calls were routed to Catawba County while emergency service lines were down in Burke County.

Thirty swift water rescues have been conducted in Burke County.

Last week, Burke County water systems reported power outages and boil water advisories. This week, White said no public water systems are under a boil water advisory. White said test kits for private wells have been ordered but not received yet.

Over 1,800 customers were without power Monday afternoon in Burke County, the majority of which receive service from Rutherford EMC.

Seven roads were closed on Monday in Burke County due to Helene damage, according to DriveNC.gov.

Alexander County

Alexander County reported 13 homes with structural damage following Hurricane Helene, Alexander County Public Information Officer Gary Herman said on Monday.

One of the homes was a total loss. The most heavily impacted areas of Alexander County were in the western and northern sections, Herman said.

As of Monday, two roads remain closed in Alexander County. Black Oak Ridge Road is closed due to a damaged culvert. Friendly Church Road is closed due to downed trees and powerlines, Herman said.

Roughly 60% of Alexander County residents were without power at one point. Herman said 11,300 people was the peak number of residents without power due to the storm. As of 11:30 a.m. on Monday, only one person remained without power in the county, according to PowerOutage.us.

No deaths or injuries were reported relating to the storm. Alexander County 911 Communications dispatched 580 calls for assistance. The county received 190 emergency calls and 1,559 other calls throughout Sept. 2627, Herman said.

Caldwell County

Caldwell County is still assessing damage to homes, according to Caldwell County Public Information Officer Paige Counts.

As of Monday morning, county inspectors had not visited some of the hardest-hit areas in Wilson Creek, Mortimer, Edgemont, Globe and Collettsville.

Counts said the county received 3,539 calls for service from the time a state of emergency was declared on Wednesday at noon through Friday. More than 1,800 of those were 911 calls.

Counts said the county communications center typically answers 90 to 100 calls per day.

The donations center at 2145 Norwood St. in Lenoir is no longer accepting donations as of Monday afternoon, Counts said, because the center is full.

No fatalities have been reported in Caldwell County.

Over 600 customers were still without power in the county Monday afternoon, according to PowerOutage.us.

Six roads in Caldwell County are closed due to Hurricane Helene, according to DriveNC.gov.

Brown Mountain Beach Road and Waterfalls Road are not expected to reopen until January 2025, according to DriveNC.gov.

Iredell County

Two families were displaced in Iredell County due to Hurricane Helene, Iredell County Manager Beth Milton said.

A total of seven homes were damaged due to the storm. None of the homes were a total loss, Milton said.

Milton said the Central Fire region was the most impacted in the county due to flooded roads and bridges. The Central Fire region is southeast of Love Valley.

No deaths or injuries were reported. The Iredell County Emergency Communications Center received a total of 2,511 calls. That number includes non-emergency calls and routine transfers, Milton said.

Approximately 3,500 homes in Iredell County were left without power, Milton said. As of Monday, there were only six Iredell County customers without power, according to PowerOutage.us.

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NCHSAA changes fall sports schedule due to Hurricane Helene

October 9, 2024 | Hickory Daily Record (NC)

Author: BRYANT ROCHE Staff Reporter | Section: News | 792 Words

OpenURL Link

The North Carolina High School Athletic Association has changed its fall sports calendar in response to the damage caused by Hurricane Helene in western North Carolina.

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

The football schedule has been pushed back a week for each round. State championships will occur on Dec. 20 and 21. The reporting deadline has been moved from Nov. 1 to Nov. 9, with seeding occurring on Nov. 10. The first round is scheduled for Nov. 15 and subsequent round following each week.

The new state championship football schedule conflicts with the annual HAECO Invitational basketball tournament, currently scheduled for Dec. 19-21. Of the participating schools, Greensboro Day, an NCISAA member, is the only one of the eight participants that doesn't have football.

Dudley is likely to be affected the most. While basketball hasn't begun, based on last year's rosters, four projected key players—Jerron Blackwell, CJ Neely, Nasir Newkirk and Andrew Rogers—are also key starters for the Dudley football team which is 6-0.

The Shrine Bowl of the Carolinas is also scheduled for Dec. 21, with Blackwell and Newkirk having been selected to play.

The North Carolina Coaches Association said its East-West All-Star Game in Greensboro is still scheduled for Dec. 22. The NCCA said that players chosen for that game and are involved in the NCHSAA state championships will be replaced, and that head coaches for the all-star game will be replaced by an assistant and reassigned for the 2026 game.

Dudley coach Steven Davis was selected to coach the West team, and Southeast Guilford coach Earl Bates is an assistant. Player rosters for this game have not been announced.

The Frank Spencer Holiday Classic, a traditional Winston-Salem boys basketball tournament, is scheduled for Dec. 18-21. Mount Tabor's Virginia Tech recruit Shamarius Peterkin has excelled in both football and basketball for the Spartans.

The NCHSAA is allowing teams to participate in one additional contest for all sports with a season limit. In this case, the contest must receive prior approval from the NCHSAA. It can't exceed daily or weekly limitations and the contest can't exceed the season limit for both schools. Statistics from the added game cannot be entered into MaxPreps.

The volleyball reporting deadline has been moved back three days to Oct. 19 with seeding to be announced on the next day. The new schedule puts the first round on Oct. 22, the second round on Oct. 24, the third round Oct. 26 and the fourth round on Oct. 29. Regionals will be on Oct. 31 and state championships on Nov. 2.

The weekly limitation on volleyball has been modified to allow for eight matches to make up for postponements, but

the weekly limitation remains the same.

The boys soccer reporting deadline has been moved from Nov. 31 to Nov. 6, with seeding on Nov. 7. The first round of the playoffs is set for Nov. 9, the second round Nov. 12, the third on Nov. 14 and the fourth on Nov. 16. Regionals are set for Nov. 19 and state championships are to take place on Nov. 22 and 23. The weekly limitation is modified to make up games but can't exceed four in a week, with the daily limitation being the same.

The girls tennis individual tournament reporting deadline is the only one that remains on the same day, Oct. 14, but the time has been shifted from 3 p.m. to 11:59 p.m. Regionals are on Oct. 18 and 19 and the state championships are on Oct. 25 and 26. However, the dual team reporting deadline has been modified from Oct. 10 to Oct. 17, with seeding on Oct. 18. The first round is on Oct. 21 with the second round two days later. The third round is set for the 28 and the fourth on Oct. 30. Regionals are to be held on Nov. 5 and state championships on Nov. 9.

The cross country reporting deadline has been pushed back three days from Oct. 22. Regionals are to be held on Oct. 26 and state championships on Nov. 2.

Cheerleading and girls golf are the only sports not to undergo a calendar change, but for girls golf, the minimum number of nine-hole rounds to qualify for regionals is revised from five to three.

The association didn't announce any changes for winter or spring sports. For state playoffs, there have been no venue changes.

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FEMA workers going door-to-door in NC hurricane-damaged spots

October 9, 2024 | Hickory Daily Record (NC) Author: Billy Chapman | Section: Government Politics | 1256 Words OpenURL Link

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) teams are providing resources to western North Carolina.

FEMA teams are going door-to-door to make sure people and structures are safe and to sign people up for federal assistance after the remnants of Hurricane Helene devastated the area.

FEMA Media Relations Specialist Nate Custer said the teams are marked with official FEMA identification badges and carrying tablets to sign people up on the spot.

FEMA spokesperson Jann Tracey added that agents are accompanied by local officials.

Custer said the agency is currently in response mode. During this stage, the agency is conducting search-and-rescue operations, getting utilities up and running and getting roads passable.

Custer is assigned to provide information for Catawba, Burke, McDowell and other western North Carolina counties.

Tracey is providing information about Alexander, Caldwell and northwestern North Carolina counties.

"We work closely with faith-based organizations, community partners," Custer said. "FEMA administers and is in charge of the various federal agencies, but we're only part of the equation. We don't come in and, so to speak, run the show. We're invited in and requested in by the governor.

"We work closely with state emergency management and local emergency management. We have an element that works with voluntary organizations. Often there are partnerships and task forces created to solve some of these long-range housing problems.

"There's going to be an awful volume of these this time around," Custer said.

What is FEMA doing in western North Carolina?

Tracey said FEMA comes in when local and state officials need assistance.

If a need cannot be met by local and state officials, FEMA jumps in to meet the need, using resources from all over the country.

"FEMA and the state work hand in glove," Tracey said. "Even before a disaster hits, we're trying to anticipate needs and get resources where they are needed."

Custer said FEMA is in all of the 27 federally declared disaster counties and in lands of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians in North Carolina in some capacity.

Custer said the teams going door-to-door are essential for making people aware of resources available to them.

"In a typical disaster, communications are an issue, and it's worse in this one," Custer said. "Usually there are some cell phone outages, but nothing like this in how we're (having difficulty) getting the word out to people."

Custer continued, "A lot of people are in a state of shock. They don't know what's going to happen the next day.

They might not be aware they need to register with FEMA. If they register with their local emergency management or Red Cross, that does not get them into the FEMA system."

A release from Oct. 6 from the White House said there are more than 1,000 FEMA staff in North Carolina with more arriving daily. The release said there are 1,500 military personnel in the state assisting with disaster response.

Over 1,200 search and rescue personnel are in the area. Teams have rescued more than 3,200 people as of Oct. 6.

Tracey said FEMA has contributed over 5 million liters of water and 7 million meals since the disaster began.

"When people don't see someone in a FEMA shirt distributing, that doesn't mean it wasn't contributed by FEMA," Tracey said.

How can people apply for assistance?

Custer said people can apply for assistance by calling 800-621-3362. Those able to access the internet can also apply for assistance by going to disasterassistance.gov.

FEMA also has an app that can be downloaded and used to apply for assistance.

Custer said FEMA will soon open disaster recovery centers.

Tracey said recovery centers would likely be in every county included in the federal disaster declaration.

Custer said individuals do not have to live in a county where a disaster center is located to use a center.

Staff members at disaster recovery centers will be able to help people who have previously applied for assistance and sign people up for aid.

One disaster center is currently open in North Carolina. The center is located at A.C. Reynolds High School in Asheville.

FEMA's website said the deadline to apply for assistance in North Carolina is Nov. 27.

What do you need to apply for assistance?

Proof of ownership of a residence

A list of people permanently living at a location

Social Security number

Estimated annual income

Insurance information, if available

Custer said it takes about 10 minutes to provide this information over the phone.

More information is coming for people who have lost a driver's license and other documents, Custer said.

"That happens in virtually all these situations. Key documents get swept away," Custer said. "There's avenues people can use to recover documents."

Who can apply for FEMA assistance?

U.S. citizens, non-citizen nationals and qualified non-citizens are eligible to receive assistance according to FEMA's website.

Applicants will also need to provide a Social Security number to prove their identity.

What happens after applying for assistance?

Custer said the time to process an application varies.

"We have already approved more than \$37 million in housing and other types of assistance for over 28,000 North Carolina households," Custer said on Oct. 8.

On Oct. 9, FEMA's website said nearly \$60 million in housing and other assistance had been approved for almost 52,000 North Carolinians.

After applying for FEMA assistance, applicants will receive a letter explaining what type of grant they have been awarded or advising them their application is incomplete and more information is needed.

If someone is not satisfied with the grant they received, an appeals process exists. Custer said specialists at disaster recovery centers can assist applicants with the appeals process.

FEMA's website also says appeals can be made online through accounts registered with disasterassistance.gov.

Custer said FEMA may call applicants from any number, so if someone has applied for assistance they need to answer their phone even if it is from an unknown number.

Does FEMA help with unemployment?

Custer said those out of work due to the disaster may apply for disaster unemployment.

"There is disaster unemployment," Custer said. "It is mostly funded by FEMA. but it is run by the state unemployment office."

What does FEMA pay for?

Custer said the \$750 many applicants have received is for food, medicine, diapers and other essential needs.

FEMA can also pay for emergency home repair if a home is repairable.

FEMA also pays for temporary housing.

We've got about 1,400 people in 125 hotels in North Carolina, Custer said.

FEMA may also assist with providing funds for equipment used for work or school, such as tools or computers, on a case-by-case basis.

Does FEMA assistance have to be paid back?

Custer said FEMA assistance does not have to be paid back because they are grants.

Custer said FEMA aids individuals. The Small Business Administration (SBA) provides loans to businesses, homeowners and renters to deal with home and personal property losses.

People can apply for FEMA grants and SBA loans.

Are conspiracy theories hurting FEMA?

"There's things out there like FEMA is confiscating items or supplies, there's no truth at all to that," Custer said, referring to a rumor that FEMA is taking donated items and not disbursing them to affected communities. "We always say, particularly for people outside the affected area, a cash contribution is the most effective way (to help)."

Custer said people should give to the Red Cross or other established organizations.

Custer also said well-intentioned deeds may not be helpful.

"People get a pick-up, get a few neighbors, get a few supplies in a truck and head on down to western North Carolina," Custer said. "That's difficult with the roads, they're not sure where to go, there's a problem in not knowing exactly where to drop those (donations off)."

Can people apply to work for FEMA?

Custer said people can apply, but FEMA is not at the point where they have requested additional aid workers...

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"There's going to be an awful volume of these this time around," Custer said.

What is FEMA doing in western North Carolina?

Tracey said FEMA comes in when local and state officials need assistance.

If a need cannot be met by local and state officials, FEMA jumps in to meet the need, using resources from all over the country.

"FEMA and the state work hand in glove," Tracey said. "Even before a disaster hits, we're trying to anticipate needs and get resources where they are needed."

Custer said FEMA is in all of the 27 federally declared disaster counties and in lands of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians in North Carolina in some capacity.

Custer said the teams going door to door are essential for making people aware of resources available to them.

"In a typical disaster, communications are an issue, and it's worse in this one," Custer said. "Usually there are some cell phone outages, but nothing like this in how we're (having difficulty) getting the word out to people."

Custer continued, "A lot of people are in a state of shock. They don't know what's going to happen the next day.

They might not be aware they need to register with FEMA. If they register with their local emergency management or Red Cross, that does not get them into the FEMA system."

A release from Oct. 6 from the White House said there are more than 1,000 FEMA staff in North Carolina with more arriving daily. The release said there are 1,500 military personnel in the state assisting with disaster response.

Over 1,200 search and rescue personnel are in the area. Teams have rescued more than 3,200 people as of Oct. 6.

Tracey said FEMA has contributed over 5 million liters of water and 7 million meals since the disaster began.

"When people don't see someone in a FEMA shirt distributing, that doesn't mean it wasn't contributed by FEMA," Tracey said.

How can people apply for assistance?

Custer said people can apply for assistance by calling 800-621-3362. Those able to access the internet can also apply for assistance by going to disasterassistance.gov.

FEMA also has an app that can be downloaded and used to apply for assistance.

Custer said FEMA will soon open disaster recovery centers.

Tracey said recovery centers would likely be in every county included in the federal disaster declaration.

Custer said individuals do not have to live in a county where a disaster center is located to use a center.

Staff members at disaster recovery centers will be able to help people who have previously applied for assistance and sign people up for aid.

One disaster center is currently open in North Carolina. The center is located at A.C. Reynolds High School in Asheville.

FEMA's website said the deadline to apply for assistance in North Carolina is Nov. 27.

What do you need to apply for assistance?

Proof of ownership of a residence

A list of people permanently living at a location

Social Security number

Estimated annual income

Insurance information, if available

Custer said it takes about 10 minutes to provide this information over the phone.

More information is coming for people who have lost a driver's license and other documents, Custer said.

"That happens in virtually all these situations. Key documents get swept away," Custer said. "There's avenues people can use to recover documents."

Who can apply for FEMA assistance?

U.S. citizens, non-citizen nationals and qualified non-citizens are eligible to receive assistance according to FEMA's website.

Applicants will also need to provide a Social Security number to prove their identity.

What happens after applying for assistance?

Custer said the time to process an application varies.

"We have already approved more than \$37 million in housing and other types of assistance for over 28,000 North Carolina households," Custer said on Oct. 8.

On Oct. 9, FEMA's website said nearly \$60 million in housing and other assistance had been approved for almost 52,000 North Carolinians.

After applying for FEMA assistance, applicants will receive a letter explaining what type of grant they have been awarded or advising them their application is incomplete and more information is needed.

If someone is not satisfied with the grant they received, an appeals process exists. Custer said specialists at disaster recovery centers can assist applicants with the appeals process.

FEMA's website also says appeals can be made online through accounts registered with disasterassistance.gov.

Custer said FEMA may call applicants from any number, so if someone has applied for assistance they need to answer their phone even if it is from an unknown number.

Does FEMA help with unemployment?

Custer said those out of work due to the disaster may apply for disaster unemployment.

"There is disaster unemployment," Custer said. "It is mostly funded by FEMA. but it is run by the state unemployment office."

What does FEMA pay for?

Custer said the \$750 many applicants have received is for food, medicine, diapers and other essential needs.

FEMA can also pay for emergency home repair if a home is repairable.

FEMA also pays for temporary housing.

We've got about 1,400 people in 125 hotels in North Carolina, Custer said.

FEMA may also assist with providing funds for equipment used for work or school, such as tools or computers, on a case-by-case basis.

Does FEMA assistance have to be paid back?

Custer said FEMA assistance does not have to be paid back because they are grants.

Custer said FEMA aids individuals. The Small Business Administration (SBA) provides loans to businesses, homeowners and renters to deal with home and personal property losses.

People can apply for FEMA grants and SBA loans.

Are conspiracy theories hurting FEMA?

"There's things out there like FEMA is confiscating items or supplies, there's no truth at all to that," Custer said, referring to a rumor that FEMA is taking donated items and not disbursing them to affected communities. "We always say, particularly for people outside the affected area, a cash contribution is the most effective way (to help)."

Custer said people should give to the Red Cross or other established organizations.

Custer also said well-intentioned deeds may not be helpful.

"People get a pick-up, get a few neighbors, get a few supplies in a truck and head on down to western North Carolina," Custer said. "That's difficult with the roads, they're not sure where to go, there's a problem in not knowing exactly where to drop those (donations off)."

Can people apply to work for FEMA?

Custer said people can apply, but FEMA is not at the point where they have requested additional aid workers..

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• Citation (aglc Style)

Billy Chapman, 'FEMA workers going door to door in NC hurricane-damaged spots', *Hickory Daily Record* (online), 9 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C25F6F52628718



Loflin Concrete aids western NC

October 9, 2024 | High Point Enterprise (NC) Author: Duncan McInnes Staff Reporter | Section: Local | 530 Words OpenURL Link

Loflin Concrete in Kernersville has been providing some much-needed relief to areas in Western North Carolina and also doing some things that other individuals and businesses cannot — clearing crucial roads and driveways for people who had been trapped and isolated by Hurricane Helene.

Loflin Concrete President Chad Loflin described a packed week of work.

"We started last Thursday and worked Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday and worked some on Monday and then packed up. We took two (Bobcat) skid steers, a mini excavator and a medium-size excavator," he said. "We went to Bakersville and worked with the Fork Mountain Fire Department. We helped them with the road or driveways for people who could not get out of their driveway or their road. Some people are cut off because of a short road or bridge is out. There is not much to be done there unless a creek or a river allows for a shallow water crossing. There was one lady where her road was not passable, so we got it to where a car or truck could get up there. We had another one where a lady's driveway was almost a mile away to what they referred to as a statemaintained road. You had to go between trees, under trees or over trees for 10 minutes to go 30 yards. There is some intense flooding and some intense wind damage, and in some areas there is actually both."

Some connections between people who work for Loflin was one reason the company decided to lend a hand, and some individuals who don't work for the company have also been of assistance.

"Mike Martin wanted to help those folks, and we just happen to have a skill set where we can help these people. He had a sister with friends and family in the area, and we wanted to get connected. Another guy had connections in the area, and somebody put us in connection with the local fire department. We wanted to help people in immediate need with the skill set we have," Loflin said. "We had five employees that wanted to go. We had a friend that wanted to go and one guy that worked with us that was a player I coached in baseball (for the Post 36 American Legion team). It was cool to be able to help the people in the remote areas. We kind of adopted the Fork Mountain area."

Loflin Concrete is ready to continue to add more assistance to areas that were severely damaged by Hurricane Helene, he said.

"People kept asking us if we would stay, and I said as long as we can do what we needed to do to help. We have a bunch of feelers out there with the fire chief and people active in the community. For immediate needs we would be willing to come back as long as it keeps going to be available for different levels of assistance. We are telling people this is our number and if we can't figure it out how to make it happen we will find someone who can," Loflin said.

More Information See more stories about local residents helping western North Carolina inside today's Kernersville News. {related content uuid}c720bf29-b0a8-4db3-aaa8-de29243aa393{/related content uuid}

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Donations to help animals in Western NC

October 9, 2024 | High Point Enterprise (NC) Author: Tessa Bradshaw Staff Reporter | Section: Archives | 586 Words OpenURL Link

Individuals and businesses have been rallying to help the people left devastated by Tropical Storm Helene, but some also are helping the animals.

Kimberly Dunckel, owner of Fairytale Farm in Kernersville, has partnered with Allison Bowling, executive director of Red Feather Equine Sanctuary and Farmer's Feed & Seed, to help donate feed for animals in western North Carolina.

"Taking care of animals is what we do, and it was a small way we know how to help with the catastrophic events neighbors in western NC are facing," Dunckel said. "Many people provide much-needed support to cats and dogs, but not as many think of horses, farm animals and other small animals. We heard during the initial aftermath that people were considering euthanizing their animals because there was no way to feed them, and they didn't want to watch them starve. We wanted to jump into action to do anything in our power to stop that from being a necessity."

To help donate, go to Farmer's Feed & Seed in Kernersville and purchase any type of food for animals and leave it at the store for volunteers to pick up and take to western North Carolina.

"Any type of animal feed as well as basic farm and cleanup supplies — things like hoof picks, brushes, fly masks, treats or chainsaws, pitchforks, shovels, work gloves," she said. "Basically, if they sell it at FF&S, someone with a farm in western NC can desperately use it. Right now, the hay banks ... are full, so hay is not a priority but may be needed again in the winter months. The whole area lost their fields and entire winter hay supply."

They will accept donations through October, but this will be a long effort. Needs may change over time, so the aid that they are providing may change.

"We knew the area has so many animals, but that would not be something most people thought about at first," Dunckel said. "We started posting on social media, and people jumped in to help, calling and placing online orders to larger chain stores from all over the country to be picked up here locally. When we saw how many people wanted to help, we reached out to Farmer's Feed & Seed to see if they would be interested in helping locally. We loved the idea of helping a local business while also helping our western NC neighbors. Joe and Mike at Farmer's Feed & Seed said yes immediately and were glad to help."

Supplies will be delivered to sites set up by the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and N.C. State Cooperative Extension Service.

"They in turn are open for pick-up and are dispatching volunteers to remote areas by any means necessary — truck, ATV, helicopter, mule, etc., to make sure everyone that needs it is receiving supplies," she said. "We have also worked with some farms and rescue organizations directly that have reached out to us for help."

Both Fairytale Farm and Red Feather Equine Sanctuary are all-volunteer-based and work constantly for animals locally.

"Disaster response is not something we expected to be a part of, but we are honored to be able to fill this need and help how we can," Dunckel said. "If the community continues to donate and support this the way they have so far, we hope to also be able to help areas in need after Milton. Both organizations do welcome volunteers, and you can find links and info on our respective websites."

For more information about donation efforts and opportunities, go to FairytaleFarm.org and RedFeatherFarmNC.org. Copyright (c) 2024 High Point Enterprise

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Bishop and Catholic churches aid western NC

October 9, 2024 | High Point Enterprise (NC) Author: Duncan McInnes Staff Reporter | Section: Local | 281 Words OpenURL Link

Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School, in conjunction with Holy Cross Catholic Church in Kernersville, the Charlotte Dioceses and other Catholic schools in the area, is helping to bring aid to those affected by Tropical Storm Helene in Western North Carolina.

School President Jared M. Rashford said the school started collecting materials Sept. 30.

"It has been great, and we sent over one full truck (16 feet by 20 feet) and will be sending another one in the next couple of days. The Catholic church identifies the schools and churches to give them one central location to drop things off," he said. "We had one big truck from Greenville drop off canned goods, perishable foods, feminine hygiene items, clothing and water. Right now the plan is to take donations thorough the rest of the week and then the diocese will figure out what is needed then. One of our employees has daughters in Asheville and said they did not have power until Friday."

Holy Cross Catholic Church in Kernersville started its relief efforts two days after the storm was over, the Rev. Noah Carter said.

"I think the greatest challenge is the people that need it the most are still out of contact. The roads have been destroyed so they can't get to the parishes. I talked to a priest in Waynesville and they have directly received three different trucks. I can't speak for the other denominations, but there is a close bond between the churches in the diocese. We speak to each other and know each other. There is already a network," he said. "At the end of a week we will have a better idea of what the people in western NC need."

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Duncan McInnes Staff Reporter, 'Bishop and Catholic churches aid western NC', *High Point Enterprise* (online), 9 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C1B89D951C53D0



Local restaurant serving meals in isolated towns

October 9, 2024 | High Point Enterprise (NC) Author: Paul B. Johnson ENTERPRISE STAFF WRITER | Section: News | 371 Words OpenURL Link

JAMESTOWN — People in some of the most isolated parts of western North Carolina whose lives have been disrupted by Tropical Storm Helene received hot meals this week courtesy of volunteers with a restaurant in Jamestown.

Southern Roots Restaurant and Catering has been serving 1,600 meals a day in towns and communities in the High Country outside of Boone. Restaurant owner Lisa Hawley has received donations of food from supporters in the Triad, and customers have given their own time to serve meals on-site.

"It's unbelievable," she said. "There are about 50 people a day volunteering here, and it takes every one of them."

The volunteers collected enough supplies for meals to fill a 26-foot-long truck.

The Southern Roots volunteers have operated since Monday out of a meal preparation base camp at Brushy Fork Baptist Church in Vilas, which is west of Boone. The meals are cooked outdoors at a farm, then distributed through the church.

Brushy Fork Baptist Church is seeking donations of storage pods and propane heaters as well as financial contributions to repair storm damage. Donations can be made to Brushy Fork Baptist Church at 3915 U.S. 421 North, Vilas, NC 28692 or the website brushyforkbaptistchurch.org.

Hawley made a connection with the church through a relative who lives in Vilas.

Volunteers have gone into communities to serve meals or provide them to people using all-terrain vehicles to reach isolated communities. Hawley told The High Point Enterprise that she wanted to spearhead a meal campaign to serve the hardest-to-reach areas of western North Carolina.

"We went to a place Tuesday and they could only get food to people by taking four-wheelers," Hawley said.

Among the communities provided meals are Lansing and Creston in Ashe County and Newland in Avery County.

The meals include items such as pulled pork, rice, sweet potatoes, beef, green beans, turnip greens, hamburger, and macaroni and cheese.

"We're whipping it up," she said.

Hawley said she intends to serve meals through this weekend. She's no stranger to causes helping people who face food hardship locally, through her nonprofit Feeding Lisa's Kids, or in other communities.

"It's so in my heart to serve," Hawley said. "When something is heavy on my heart, I know that's God speaking to me. And the community has come together to support this."

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Old Fort gets help from eastern NC county manager as town begins to rebuild after hurricane

October 9, 2024 | McDowell News, The (Marion, NC) Author: Mike Conley | Section: Government Politics | 711 Words OpenURL Link

More than a week after it was devastated by the remnants of Hurricane Helene, the town of Old Fort is slowly beginning to build itself back.

As a part of this process, the Old Fort Board of Aldermen held an emergency meeting Monday to take action on several financial and budgetary items. The meeting was held at the Old Fort Town Hall amid the aftereffects of the flooding brought on by the tropical storm.

Mayor Pam Snypes introduced Tommy Burns, who is the county manager of Carteret County in eastern North Carolina. Burns, who is originally from Shelby, and other team members were assigned through the Emergency Operations Center to work with the town in its rebuilding process. He introduced Melissa Joyce, who is the liaison officer, and several team members from Louisiana who are assisting.

"We are Task Force Old Fort," he said. "I am here to help you through this. We are here to help you and assist you. ... We want to get Old Fort back to the Old Fort I remember growing up."

Burns said the town will soon face bills associated with the effects of Helene, which can be overwhelming to a small town of less than 1,000 people.

The board of aldermen considered budget amendments Monday night to move money from the town's general fund and the water and sewer fund to create a fund for hurricane recovery. Burns recommended moving \$200,000 from each fund to create a new expense line item for Hurricane Helene expenses. He also recommended establishing a new revenue line item in each fund for FEMA revenue.

The aldermen unanimously agreed to enact those budget amendments.

Another recommended item was taking action so the town can issue requests for proposals for firms to work on the rebuilding process. The aldermen unanimously agreed to adopt this.

Burns suggested the town hire a part-time public works director.

He also recommended allowing the mayor and Finance Officer Renee Taylor to OK contracts up to \$89,999. Any amounts greater than that would require board of aldermen approval.

The aldermen voted unanimously to approve both recommendations.

"Everyone of y'all has a very difficult job right now," Burns told the town officials. "Our role here is to help you."

A new mayor with a large task

After the meeting, Snypes said her town is building back to where it used to be.

Snypes became the new mayor of Old Fort in August and now she is confronted with rebuilding her town.

"As of today, Oct. 7, the water system has been replenished to about 90% of the customers which is amazing considering the sewer system was completely underwater," she said. "The infrastructure in the town of Old Fort, the water system, and the sewer system are serving about 90% of the customers."

The town is still under a boil water advisory, which will remain in effect until further notice. A curfew is in effect from 9 p.m. to 7 a.m., but that doesn't apply to people on their way to work.

"The EOC out of McDowell County came up and did an assessment of the damage shortly after the storm calmed down," Snypes said. "(The EOC) determined that Old Fort had been hit with devastating damage and based on the damage, they supplied us with the agencies from all over the country. Those agencies are here for our service and what the town needs."

Comfort stations were set up at the First Baptist Church of Old Fort with portable showers, portable toilets and laundry facilities.

"It's devastating what has happened to the town," Snypes said. "One week ago, there was no infrastructure. We had no electricity, no internet, no cell service and then one week later we have gotten all of that back. Not 100%, but almost.

"We still have some things to work on but the team that we have in here now, and the teams that we have had working with our employees will help us to move forward and will help us to move forward at an amazing speed. We're back to starting over."

Snypes said she couldn't thank the town employees, citizens and the board of aldermen enough for everything they have contributed.

"The whole community has pulled together," Snypes said. "Neighbor has helped neighbor. Neighbor has hugged neighbor. Neighbor has cried with neighbor and neighbor has high-fived each other when something was good."

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Mike Conley, 'Old Fort gets help from eastern NC county manager as town begins to rebuild after hurricane', *McDowell News, The* (online), 9 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view? p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C1A14D6A653DB0>



Some McDowell school bus routes have changed in the wake of Helene. See a list here.

October 9, 2024 | McDowell News, The (Marion, NC) Author: Mike Conley | Section: Education | 1495 Words OpenURL Link

McDowell County Schools start back up on Wednesday for the first time since the remnants of Hurricane Helene hit the area. Schools are on a two-hour delay through Friday. Some school bus routes have changed due to the storm.

"Due to the effects of Hurricane Helene, our transportation department has implemented temporary changes to our usual bus routes," the school system said.

The school system said the transportation department and emergency personnel have assessed the routes to makes sure the routes are safe.

"We understand these changes may create challenges for some families. If you have concerns about transportation or need assistance, please contact your child's school," the school system said. "We are committed to supporting

our students and families during this transition and will return to normal routes as soon as safely possible."

Eastfield Elementary

- Bus 186 Normal route

Schedules

- Bus 182 Normal route

East McDowell Middle School

- Bus 181 normal route
- Bus 184 normal route
- Bus 192 Normal route
- Bus 196 Normal route
- Bus 197 Normal route
- Bus 200 Normal route
- Bus 204 Normal route
- Bus 223 Normal route
- Bus 225 Normal route
- Bus 228 Normal route with the exception of White Pine Drive and Lawing Road. The stop for White Pine will be at Mud Cut Road and White Pine Drive intersection. The stop for Lawing Road will be at Bethel Church Road and Lawing Road intersection.
- Bus 229 Normal route with the exception of Walker Road and Landis Lane. The stop will be at NC 226 S and

Walker Road.
- Bus 238 Normal route
Glenwood Elementary
- Bus 207 Normal route with the exception of White Pine Drive. That stop will be at Mud Cut Road and White Pine Drive intersection. Lawing Road has low hanging lines and the bus will not travel. The stop for Lawing Road will be at Bethel Church Road and Lawing Road.
- Bus 212 Normal route
- Bus 216 Normal route with the exception of Burma Road W. stop will be at Shady Lane and Burma Road W. intersection.
- Bus 217 Normal route
- Bus 230 Normal route with the exception of US 64. Stop will be at Fortune Road and US 64 intersection. The bus will not travel Walker Road and Landis Lane. The stop will be at NC 226 S and Walker Road.
Marion Elementary
- Bus 185 Normal route
- Bus 178 Normal route with the exception of Mountain Street. This stop will be at the intersection of Holly Street and Mountain Street McDowell High School/MAI/MEC/Summit Academy
- Bus 171 There will be a community stop at TJ's Discount at 8136 US 221 N. at approx. 8:40 a.m. pick up and approx. 3:45 p.m. drop off.
- Bus 179 Normal route
- Bus 181 Normal route
- Bus 184 Normal route
- Bus 192 Normal route
- Bus 193 Normal route
- Bus 196 Normal route
- Bus 197 Normal route
- Bus 198 Normal route with the exception of Clear Creek Road past Refuge Baptist Church. The stop will be at Refuge Baptist Church.
- Bus 200 Normal route
- Bus 201 There will be a community bus stop at Living Waters Tabernacle Church at 344 Moffitt Hill Church Road at approximately 8:20 a.m. pick up and approximately 3:45 p.m. drop off.

- Bus 202 Normal route with the exception of Westwood Drive. The stop will be at Nix Creek Road and Westwood

Drive.

- Bus 204 Normal route
- Bus 209 There will be a community bus stop at the store (West Court Food Center) beside of North Cove Church of God at 14698 US 221 N at approximately 8:30 a.m. pick up and 4 p.m. drop off. The bus will still run Tom's Creek Road and US 70 W and Riverside.
- Bus 214 There will be a community bus stop at Crooked Creek VFD at 4503 Bat Cave Road at approximately 8:20 a.m. pick up and 4 p.m. drop off.
- Bus 219 Normal route with the exception of Henry McCall Road, Lytle Mountain Road, Greenlee Road. There is a community bus stop at Greenlee Baptist Church at 5967 US 70 W. at approximately 8:30 a.m. pick up and 3:50 p.m. drop off.
- Bus 221 Normal route with the exception of Maple Drive, Golf Course Road, Wildlife Lake Road, Silvers Welch Road and Bethlehem Road. There will be a community bus stop at Salem FWB Church at 407 Salem Church Road for these students at approximately 8:20 a.m. pick up and approximately 4:30 p.m. drop off. Also, the bus will not travel Burma Road W. This stop will be at Ashworth Road and Burma Road W. intersection.
- Bus 222 Normal route
- Bus 223 Normal route
- Bus 224 There will be a community bus stop at Bethlehem Baptist Church at 2839 Old Fort Sugar Hill Road at approximately 8:25 a.m. pick up and approximately 3:50 p.m. drop off.
- Bus 225 Normal route
- Bus 226 Normal route
- Bus 227 There will be a community bus stop at Old Fort Elementary School at approximately 8:25 a.m. pick up and approximately 3:45 p.m. drop off.
- Bus 228 Normal route with the exception of White Pine Drive and Lawing Road. The stop for White Pine will be at Mud Cut Road and White Pine Drive intersection. The stop for Lawing Road will be at Bethel Church Road and Lawing Road intersection.
- Bus 229 Normal route with the exception of Walker Road and Landis Lane. The stop will be at NC 226 S and Walker Road.
- Bus 238 Normal route

MHS/EMMS Exceptional Children's Routes

- Bus 210 Normal route
- Bus 231 Normal route
- Bus 233 Normal route
- Bus 234 Normal route with the exception of US 221 N. There will be a community bus stop at the store (West Court Store) beside of North Cove Church of God at 14698 US 221 N. The driver will be in contact concerning times.

Nebo Elementary

-Bus 174 Normal route
-Bus 206 Normal route
-Bus 208 Normal route
-Bus 215 Normal route
North Cove Elementary
- Bus 173 Normal route
- Bus 235 Normal route
- Bus 203 There will be a community bus stop at the store (West Court Food Center) beside of North Cove Church of God at 14698 US 221 N. at approximately 9:05 a.m. pick up and 3:09 p.m. drop off.
- Bus 175 will not run.
Pleasant Gardens Elementary
- Bus 189 Normal route with the exception of Clear Creek Road past Refuge Baptist Church. The stop will be at the church.
- Bus 191 Normal route with the exception of Henry McCall Road. The stop will be at Greenlee Baptist Church.
- Bus 205 Normal route
West Marion Elementary
- Bus 188 Normal route
- Bus 220 Normal route with the exception of Westwood Drive. The stop will be at Nix Creek Road and Westwood Drive intersection.
- Bus 218 Normal route with the exception of Tight Run Road. The stop will be at Montford Cove Road and Tight Run Road West Marion Elementary Exceptional Children's Routes
- Bus 211 Normal route
- Bus 232 Normal route
- Bus 236 Normal route with the exception of Lackeytown Road. That one stop will be at Dollar General at 792 Bat Cave Road.
- Bus 237 Normal route
West McDowell Middle School
- Bus 171 There will be a community stop at TJ's Discount at 8136 US 221 N. at approximately 8:40 a.m. pick up and 3:45 p.m. drop off.

- Bus 179 Normal route

- Bus 193 Normal route
- Bus 198 Normal route
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- Bus 227 There will be a community bus stop at Old Fort Elementary School at approximately 8:25 a.m. pick up and 3:45 p.m. drop off.

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