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Arrowood Mobile Home Park in Steele Creek flooded Friday morning, Sept. 27, 2024, as Helene moved across North Carolina.

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HELENE

director, told Charlotte Observer news partner WSOC. By Thursday afternoon, heavy Helene rains had closed 97 roads in western North Carolina, according to the N.C. Department of Transportation. More than 50 traffic crashes were reported on Thursday in Mecklenburg and crashes continued Friday, according to MED-IC.

FLOODING IN MECKLENBURG

Some areas of western Mecklenburg County received up to 4 inches of rain as of 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, officials said. Rainfall totals were less on the eastern side of the county. By Friday morning, some areas of west Mecklenburg had received over 6 inches of rain in the previous 48 hours. Mecklenburg issued a voluntary evacuation order Thursday for areas around Riverside Drive, Lake Drive, Riverhaven

Drive and parts of Beagle Club Road and Hart Road, north of the airport, because of the risk of flooding. Charlotte firefighters were in the area to monitor rising water. The county opened a shelter at 10 p.m. Thursday for people in those areas at Tuckaseegee Recreation Center. "This is an unusually dangerous storm that threatens to bring heavy rain and potentially catastrophic flooding tonight and tomorrow for central and particularly Western North Carolina," Gov. Roy Cooper said at an 11 a.m. news conference Thursday. "It can be deadly. Beware and prepare." Thursday, President Joe Biden approved an emergency declaration for North Carolina. That allows the Federal Emergency Management Agency to help fund emergency protective measures in much of Western North Carolina, including evacuations and emergency shelters.

200,000 WITHOUT POWER IN NC MOUNTAINS

Nearly 200,000 Duke Energy customers were without power in the North Carolina mountains at 9 a.m. Friday, according to the company outage map. Statewide, at least 483,000 had no power, including at least 31,600 in Cleveland County, 28,400 in Gaston County and 10,500 in Cabarrus County. In South Carolina, at least 220,600 customers had no power at 9 a.m. in Greenville County and 30,100 in York County. Shelters opened Thursday in Avery, Buncombe and McDowell counties, emergency officials said.



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Cars and boats line along Riverside Drive Friday morning Sept. 27, 2024 as Hurricane Helene moved across NC

Thursday morning, Helene became a category 2 hurricane, "with significant additional strengthening expected before landfall in Florida," and by evening it had become a category 4 hurricane according to National Hurricane Center bulletins. At 8 a.m. Friday, the center of Helene was about 35 miles southwest of Clemson, South Carolina, with 60 mph winds. Earlier Friday morning, the storm surged along the Florida coast and west Florida and penetrated Georgia and the Carolinas, according to the National Hurricane Center. As of Friday morning, 475 flights were delayed and 349 were canceled at Charlotte Douglas International Airport, according to FlightAware, an online website providing real-time information. More than 2,000 flights have been disrupted in

Charlotte this week. "We recommend passengers check their airline's flight status before heading to the airport, including those picking up arriving passengers," a CLT spokesman told the Observer. Gov. Cooper declared a state of emergency on Wednesday, activating the National Guard and deploying swift-water teams in advance of Helene. "Helene threatens

heavy rain, flash flooding, landslides, and damaging winds to the mountains and Piedmont areas of our state," Cooper said in a statement. "Now is the time for North Carolinians to prepare, make sure emergency kits are up-to-date and pay attention to the weather alerts in your area." On Thursday, Cooper said Helene's "path is wide, and its impacts will be felt far from the center of the storm." Duke Energy called in power line and tree crews from other states. Wind damage and flooding could delay restoring power, but its crews will do so "as quickly and safely as possible," according to a company statement Thursday morning.

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