

Residents assess damage - Residents assess damage

October 12, 2024 | Winston-Salem Journal (NC) Author: CHRIS O'MEARA, TY O'NEIL and BRENDAN FARRINGTON Associated Press | Section: A | 371 Words Page: 6 OpenURL Link

SEVERE WEATHER | HURRICANE MILTON

LITHIA, Fla. - Florida residents slogged through flooded streets, gathered up scattered debris and assessed damage to their homes Friday after Hurricane Milton smashed through coastal communities and spawned a barrage of deadly tornadoes.

At least nine people were dead, but many expressed relief that Milton wasn't worse. The hurricane spared densely populated Tampa a direct hit, and the lethal storm surge that scientists feared never materialized.

Gov. Ron DeSantis warned people to not let down their guard, however, citing ongoing safety threats from downed power lines and standing water that could hide dangerous objects.

"We're now in the period where you have fatalities that are preventable," DeSantis said Friday. "You have to make the proper decisions and know that there are hazards out there."

Arriving just two weeks after the devastating Hurricane Helene, Milton flooded barrier islands, tore the roof off the Tampa Bay Rays' baseball stadium and toppled a construction crane.

As homeowners assessed damage to their property, about 2.2 million customers in Florida remained without power Friday morning, poweroutage.us reported. The 260,000 people in St. Petersburg were told to boil water before drinking, cooking or brushing their teeth, until at least Monday.

The state's vital tourism industry started to return to normal, meanwhile, with several theme parks preparing to reopen. The state's busiest airport was also scheduled to fully reopen Friday.

When 8 feet of seawater flooded Punta Gorda during Hurricane Helene last month, 121 people had to be rescued, Mayor Lynne Matthews said. Milton brought at least 5 feet of flooding, but rescuers had to save only three people.

"So people listened to the evacuation order," Matthews said.

The flooding from Milton's heavy rains continued to cause problems in other areas, however.

Crews from the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office assisted with rescues of people stranded in rising waters along the Alafia River on Friday morning.

Before noon Friday, cars with residents returning to evacuated homes in southwest Florida crept along in a slow-moving line of traffic across Interstate 75. Many had evacuated to the state's Atlantic Coast near Fort Lauderdale and Miami.

Finding gas was still a challenge. Fuel stations were still closed as far away as Ocala, more than a two and a half hour drive north of where the storm made landfall.

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Digest

October 12, 2024 | Winston-Salem Journal (NC) Section: A | 488 Words Page: 6 OpenURL Link

Survey: Consumers sour in economic outlook

WASHINGTON - Americans' outlook on the economy soured a bit this month after two months of small gains, according to the University of Michigan's consumer sentiment index released Friday.

The index slipped to 68.9 in October from 70.1 in September, which was its highest reading since May. "Consumers continue to express frustration over high prices," said Joanne Hsu, director of consumer surveys at University of Michigan. Many consumers appear to be reserving judgment about the economy while they wait for the presidential campaign to finish, Hsu added.

Economists noted the decline occurred after the Federal Reserve cut its benchmark interest rate in September, gas prices fell and overall inflation cooled, trends that should boost sentiment. Hurricane Helene and Middle East turmoil could have pushed sentiment lower, noted Bradley Saunders, an economist at Capital Economics.

N. Korea says South flew drones near capital

SEOUL, South Korea - North Korea accused rival South Korea of flying drones to its capital to drop anti-North Korean propaganda leaflets and threatened to respond with force if such flights occur again. South Korea issued a vague denial.

North Korea's Foreign Ministry said Friday that South Korean drones were detected in the night skies of Pyongyang on Oct. 3 and Wednesday and Thursday this week. The ministry accused the South of violating North Korea's sovereignty and threatening its security, describing the alleged flights as a "dangerous provocation" that could escalate to an armed conflict and even war.

It said North Korean forces will prepare "all means of attack" capable of destroying the southern side of the border and the South Korean military, and respond without warning if South Korean drones are detected in its territory again.

BRIEFLY

CAPITOL RIOT: Henry Phillip "Hank" Muntzer, 55, a Montana business owner and supporter of former President Donald Trump, was sentenced this week to two years in federal prison for his role in the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection at the U.S. Capitol. He also must pay \$2,000 in restitution.

SETTLEMENT: Lawyers for Georgia election workers Ruby Freeman and Wandrea "Shaye" Moss said Friday they reached a settlement in their defamation lawsuit against The Gateway Pundit, a Missouri-based conservative website that falsely accused them of fraud in the 2020 presidential election.

ELECTRIC CAR: Snubbed by Tesla, Mexico's new president pledged Friday to create a Mexican-made small, affordable electric car to compete with vehicles imported from China.

PAKISTAN: Gunmen killed 21 miners and wounded six others in Pakistan's southwest, a police official said Friday.

MINE ACCIDENT: Investigators tried to figure out Friday what led an elevator to malfunction the prior day at a

former Colorado gold mine, killing one person, injuring four others and leaving 12 people trapped for hours 1,000 feet below ground at the tourist attraction.

ORGANIZATIONS: Withdrawing the U.S. from the IMF and World Bank would be "a step backward," a top U.S. Treasury official said Friday, defending the organizations before a presidential election that could cast uncertainty about America's future in them.

- Associated Press

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Volume 128, Issue 193

WEATHER

WSJ weather and index - WSJ weather and index

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Mostly sunny. Forecast, A10
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BOTTOM BILLBOARD
Wake Forest, NC State marching bands pay tribute to Helene victims. News, A3 © Copyright 2024, Winston-Salem Journal, Winston-Salem, NC

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Local hospitals conserving IV fluids

October 12, 2024 | Yadkin Ripple, The (Yadkinville, NC) Author: John Peters jpeters@mtairynews.com| Section: Mtairy | 529 Words OpenURL Link

Officials with both Northern Regional Hospital in Mount Airy and Hugh Chatham Memorial Hospital in Elkin said they are keeping a close eye on intravenous fluid supplies that are critical for surgical procedures, dialysis, and other treatments.

That is because of a nationwide shortage largely caused by Hurricane Helene's damage to a facility in the mountains of western North Carolina which produces more than half the nation's supply.

While federal officials are looking for ways to alleviate the shortage, local medical practitioners are taking it upon themselves to be ready for a worst-case scenario.

"Northern is expecting a prolonged and severe shortage of this resource and has begun efforts to secure additional supply and thoughtful conservation of our current supply," Northern Chief Medical Officer Jason W. Edsall said Thursday. "Currently there is no planned disruption of services but continued care of all our patients is our utmost priority. We will provide updates to our community as we know more information in the coming weeks."

"Hugh Chatham Health took immediate action to protect and conserve their supply of IV fluids and has had no disruption in service to our patients and the community," Chief Operation Officer Mary F. Blackburn said on Friday. "The current and predicted ongoing supply chain concern is being addressed through widely adopted conservation methods which include appropriately selecting the type and amount of IV fluid for each unique patient care situation... We will continue to evaluate and monitor our supply of IV fluids until the national shortage is alleviated."

While both local hospitals are able to continue offering surgical procedures, many hospitals nationwide have stopped offering any elective surgeries until the shortage is alleviated.

According to multiple media outlets, there was already a shortage of the fluids in some segments of the nation, largely as a result of supply chain and shipping issues. When Hurricane Helene ravaged the mountains of Western North Carolina, a production facility in Marion, owned by Baxter International, was heavily damaged. Various reports indicate that plant produces between 50% and 60% of the IV fluids used across America.

"We will spare no resource — human or financial — to restart operations and help ensure patients and providers have the products they need," Baxter CEO José Almeida said in a company update posted on its website this week.

Already the firm has been cleaning and repairing the plant, with plans to reopen the facility in phases with the hope of being fully operational before year's end.

Another company, B. Braun, had planned to increase its production of IV fluids to help fill in the need, but its facility in Daytona Beach, Florida, was shut down because of Hurricane Milton. That facility sustained significantly less damage and officials hope to have that plant up and running, at least in a limited capacity, soon, this weekend, according to a report by NPR.

Other manufacturers are trying to ramp up production of the product, and this week the Food and Drug Administration announced it has authorized 19 IV products for temporary importation from Canada, China, Ireland and the U.K.

Still, that leaves local hospitals and other medical facilities scrambling for new sources and implementing ways to conserve the use of the fluids until national supplies increase.

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