

Statesville Record & Landmark (NC): Page 6

October 11, 2024 | Statesville Record & Landmark (NC) Statesville, North Carolina Page: 6 OpenURL Link

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Blue Ridge Parkway not opening anytime soon

October 10, 2024 | Biltmore Beacon, The (Asheville, NC) Author: Staff Writer | Section: Outdoor | 376 Words OpenURL Link

The Blue Ridge Parkway is under a total closure, with tens of thousands of downed trees and extensive damage to the road from Helene. The Great Smoky Mountains National Park was largely spared from the storm and remains open to visitors everywhere except Haywood sections of the park. The storm skirted along Haywood's border, leaving areas to the west and south unscathed.

Blue Ridge Parkway

The entire length of the Blue Ridge Parkway remains closed in North Carolina and Virginia while crews assess damage from the hurricane. Severe damage, particularly the section from Boone to Cherokee, has been reported. Assessment teams are currently evaluating the timeline and cost of repairs.

Considerable work remains, especially in North Carolina, where crews have so far encountered tens of thousands of trees across the roadway and nearly three dozen rock and mud slides. The slides have occurred above and below the road and have also severely damaged or swept away the roadbed in numerous places.

The full closure of the Blue Ridge Parkway includes bicycles and pedestrians. Hazards both seen and unseen endanger unauthorized users and some threats may not be obvious, such as weakened road structures or hanging limbs, which are subject to falling in changing weather conditions. The parkway is also an active work area, with vehicles and heavy equipment moving through the area.

Great Smoky Mountains National Park

While most sections of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park remain open, the Haywood County areas of Balsam Mountain, Cataloochee and Big Creek are closed due to storm damage. The rest of the Smokies to the west and south of Haywood County were spared impacts from Helene.

U.S. 441 over Newfound Gap between Cherokee and Gatlinburg, is now open 24 hours a day. The park is lifting the overnight road closure with the help of Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and Sevier County.

However, illegal commercial vehicles continue to be a concern, with park authorities turning away 173 commercial vehicles over five days. Although I-40 going to Tennessee is closed due to a landslide from the storm, Newfound Gap Road is a two-lane road with steep, continuous grades and tight curves not suitable for trucks. There are no truck lanes, runaway truck ramps or places for a large commercial vehicle to slow down and pull over.

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NCDOT and Partners capturing Helene Impacts from the Sky

October 10, 2024 | BladenOnline.com (Elizabethtown, NC) Author: staff report| Section: Local News| 431 Words OpenURL Link

Contributed

RALEIGH – The N.C. Department of Transportation's Division of Aviation is using aircraft to capture imagery, assess infrastructure, and assist with disaster relief efforts in the wake of Hurricane Helene. A range of aviation resources have been deployed in Western North Carolina, including N.C. National Guard aircraft, NCDOT's aerial imagery planes and drones, and private organizations making air drops of food, water and other emergency supplies.

NCDOT's drone teams and Photogrammetry unit, the Civil Air Patrol and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration have flown over 240 missions to capture images that are being used to inform the massive disaster response effort. This real-time data enables NCDOT teams to gather information about difficult to reach areas and prioritize safe response and recovery operations.

"NCDOT's aerial imagery has played a vital role in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene, providing critical data that may not be safely visible from the ground," said Becca Gallas, Director of NCDOT Division of Aviation. "The imagery is essential for designing effective solutions to repair and restore damaged infrastructure like roads and bridges, ensuring the safety and efficiency of our transportation networks during recovery efforts."

NCDOT employs three primary types of imagery: rapid situational awareness images, site-specific drone images, and photogrammetry images.

Rapid Situational Awareness

Within 24-hours of Helene impacting North Carolina, NCDOT, in partnership with the Civil Air Patrol, conducted several fixed-wing airplane missions across Western North Carolina to get rapid images of potentially impacted dams and major highway corridors. This helped identify necessary road closures and the deployment of crews and resources.

Site-Specific Drone Missions

NCDOT drone teams were deployed throughout the region to assess specific sites along road and rail routes. These high-resolution images and videos provide critical insights into the extent of the damage without risking staff safety. The images are then used to assess bridge and road conditions that can be communicated to the public.

Photogrammetry

Photogrammetry missions involve capturing detailed aerial images, using fixed-wing airplanes equipped with specialized cameras. Photogrammetry staff use the two-dimensional images and flight data to create three-dimensional maps. These models are used by planners and engineers to design solutions for repairing and restoring damaged infrastructure, such as roads and bridges. NCDOT has conducted a number of photogrammetry missions already and is prioritizing additional corridors for further analysis.

NCDOT will continue to prioritize and fly aerial missions, customizing imaging efforts based on the size, geography and specific data needs of damaged locations. These images will guide NCDOT and its partners in ensuring safe and efficient responses throughout the next phases of Hurricane Helene's recovery.

The post NCDOT and Partners capturing Helene Impacts from the Sky appeared first on .

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Annual Bluegrass on the Blackwater Concert: Caroline Owens & New Company

October 10, 2024 | BladenOnline.com (Elizabethtown, NC) Author: staff report | Section: Entertainment | 533 Words OpenURL Link

7:00pm Thursday October 17 is Now a Fundraiser for Hurricane Relief

Contributed

IMPORTANT UPDATE: This special annual event has been converted into a fundraiser for relief efforts in Western North Carolina following Hurricane Helene.

All proceeds from the evening will be donated to the North Carolina Disaster Relief Fund to help communities recover from Helene. United Way of North Carolina is the fiscal agent for the Fund. The Fund, with assistance from the United Way of North Carolina, will help provide for immediate unmet needs through reimbursements to nonprofits working with disaster survivors.

The Carolina Civic Center Historic Theater in downtown Lumberton continues its yearly "Bluegrass on the Blackwater" series with up-and-coming artist Carolina Owens and her band.

Caroline Owens is a two-time IBMA & SPBGMA nominated Bluegrass Vocalist, recording artist for Skyline Records, and publisher for Billy Blue Records, of Nashville, TN. She has performed alongside many of the music industry's most accomplished artists such as: Alison Krauss, Ricky Skaggs, Rhonda Vincent, Suzanne Cox, The Isaacs, Larry Gatlin, Larry Cordle, Carl Jackson, The Malpass Brothers, Darin & Brooke Aldridge and many others.

In addition to her undeniable vocal talent, Caroline made her mark in the songwriting industry when her debut single, Heartbreak Train, claimed the #1 Bluegrass song of 2023, on the Bluegrass Borderline Charts.

Caroline's vocal abilities, paired with her down-home southern charm, have received critical acclaim from some of the music industry's most accomplished performers, and have enabled her to become one of the most successful, young vocalists in the Bluegrass genre.

The band features musicians on mandolin, fiddle, bass, banjo and guitar.

Tickets are \$20 adults and \$15 students. This performance is partially underwritten by a grant from the Robeson County Arts Council.

Tickets for the Mainstage Series can be purchased on-line by going to our web site at www.carolinaciviccenter.com. Tickets also can be purchased in-person or with credit card or cash 1 to 5:30 pm Monday through Friday through our administrative offices in the theater's second floor (enter on Fourth Street side), or by calling the Civic Center at (910) 738-4339. When available, tickets can also be purchased at the door. Theater lobby box office opens for ticket sales one hour prior to performance.

The theater does not guarantee the authenticity of tickets purchased from any third-party reseller and recommends that tickets be purchased directly through its box office, etix.com or its website to ensure ticket authenticity and pricing.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Carolina Civic Center Historic Theater is a beautifully restored 1928 treasure listed on the National Register of Historic Places that offers visitors a unique and visually stunning experience. The theater is located at 315 North

Chestnut Street in the heart of downtown Lumberton. First opened as a vaudeville and silent film house, the theater offers a wide array of programming including live touring performances, original productions, art exhibits, films, special events and rentals. For more information visit www.carolinaciviccenter.com

The Carolina Civic Center Historic Theater is located in historic downtown Lumberton at Fourth and Chestnut streets, just one block north of the downtown plaza. There is plenty of parking around the theater.

For a full schedule and to sign up for its e-newsletter visit: www.carolinaciviccenter.com

The post Annual Bluegrass on the Blackwater Concert: Caroline Owens & New Company appeared first on . Copyright (c) 2024, BladenOnline.com.

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History of Watauga County tornados

October 10, 2024 | Blowing Rocket, The (Blowing Rock, NC) Author: Nick Fogleman | Section: Blowingrocket | 385 Words OpenURL Link

BLOWING ROCK — Just days before Hurricane Helene struck Watauga County, a tornado blew through Blowing Rock

According to the NWS, the tornado touched down at 6:38 p.m. and traveled 0.6 miles northeast before lifting near the Chetola Resort.

This is the fourth confirmed tornado in Watauga County since tracking began in 1950 and the second in Blowing Rock since 1996.

In April 1996, a tornado briefly touched down at the Tweetsie Railroad Attraction. The tornado damaged 16 vehicles and injured two people.

The tornado struck a powwow organized to raise money for the Indians of Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota.

According to Watauga Democrat archives, a funnel cloud lifted a man 10 feet into the air and slammed him down on the asphalt of Tweetsie Railroad.

Scott Richards, who was 25 at the time, broke a rib after being dropped in the parking lot. Another man broke his wrist when equipment fell on top of him due to the wind.

Richards was a drummer in the rain dance performed just before the funnel cloud arrived.

The tornado ripped off a car door, broke multiple windows, and broke a man's ribs after he was lifted into the air and dropped. The tornado was rated as an F1 with gusts of 86-110 mph. The tornado destroyed is believed to have caused \$50,000 worth of damage.

"I didn't hear the freight train noise that everyone talks about, but you could feel the air pressure drop and suck the air right out of your lungs," a witness said at the time.

While the event wasn't as lucrative as it could have been, organizers said at the time that didn't mean it lost money.

According to the Blue Ridge Now tornado tracker, in June 1998, a thunderstorm produced a tornado and hail up to three inches in diameter in Reese, near the Tennessee border.

Numerous trees and power lines were brought down, leaving approximately 3,300 without power. The tornado, which was rated as an F0, destroyed a few barns and caused approximately \$20,000 worth of damage.

The last tornado to hit Watauga County was in August, 2023, when an F1 tornado formed in Avery County and briefly crossed into western Watauga County and uprooted trees in the area. The tornado traveled roughly .3 miles and caused roughly \$5,000 damage. This is one of the two recorded tornadoes in Avery County.

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Local support continues for Helene victims

October 10, 2024 | Brunswick Beacon, The (Shallotte, NC) Author: Dylan Phillips Brunswick Beacon Editor | Section: News | 860 Words OpenURL Link

After Hurricane Helene devastated much of western North Carolina on Sept. 27, Brunswick County continues to respond in a major way as residents assist local first responders, businesses, churches, nonprofits and other residents by donating essential food, water and items for those affected.

Throughout the week of Sept. 30, donation drop-off points were set up across Brunswick County. Dozens of trucks and trailers were loaded with necessary supplies for our western neighbors affected by Helene then transported to many affected counties during the week.

The remnants of Hurricane Helene slammed western North Carolina on Friday, Sept. 27, resulting in catastrophic and deadly flooding and mudslides that decimated much of the region.

As of Sunday, Oct. 6, 77 storm-related deaths have been confirmed in North Carolina by the Office of Chief Medical Examiner, according to the office of North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper, with that number expected to rise. Across western North Carolina, approximately 142,000 customers remained without power as of 12:30 p.m. on Oct. 6, down from a peak of more than one million.

"More than \$30.2 million in FEMA Individual Assistance funds have been paid so far to western NC disaster survivors and more than 96,747 people have registered for Individual Assistance," the governor's office notes. "Nearly 1,700 people are now housed in hotels through FEMA's Transitional Sheltering Assistance. Federal partners have delivered more than 6.1 million liters of water and more than 4.1 million individual meals in North Carolina to support both responders and people living in the affected communities."

Back in Brunswick County, residents still have ways to support those affected by last month's storm as recovery efforts are expected to last months. And with autumn upon us, it is expected to get colder in the mountains this week.

Batteries, lights, candles, propane heaters, small propane cylinders, bed pads, sheets, socks, gloves and blankets are now some of the primary needed in western North Carolina.

The North Carolina State Highway Patrol, in partnership with the Shallotte Police Department and local fire departments, set up a collection site at Lowe's off N.C. Highway 130 in Shallotte from Monday, Sept. 30 to Thursday, Oct. 3.

Carolina Creations has also partnered with the two law enforcement agencies, providing trailers to store and haul the collected supplies to the mountains. "We have a lot of people that are from Western North Carolina that work with us and everybody always helps out when we have hurricanes and stuff, so it's just the right thing to do," Carolina Creations Business Development Specialist John Thrift said.

The site was scheduled to continue collecting until Friday, Oct. 4 at 5 p.m., but closed a day early due to the outpouring of support that filled nearly a dozen trailers, including a couple tractor trailers, Shallotte Police Chief Adam Stanley said.

However, the site has reopened at the Lowe's from Monday, Oct. 7 to Thursday, Oct. 10 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Chief Stanley's family friends, the Brittains, were down visiting from Henderson County, one of the 27 counties impacted by Hurricane Helene, when the storm hit western North Carolina. The family was stuck in Shallotte from

Wednesday, Sept. 25 till Saturday, Oct. 5, when Heather Brittain said they planned to return home.

She said Henderson County was not hit as hard as some other areas in western North Carolina, but noted they were waiting for water service to return before heading west.

Brittain, who is the assistant district attorney for Henderson County, said witnessing the outpouring of support by Brunswick County residents for western North Carolina was "amazing to see."

The Brunswick County Sheriff's Office (BCSO) set up a few collection sites throughout the county last week, as well. These sites were also closed earlier than originally expected thanks to the strong support from the community.

The collection sites were set to stay open until Friday, Oct. 4 at 5 p.m., but closed on Wednesday, Oct. 2 around 4 p.m. because the office's three trailers were already filled with donated items.

BCSO, along with other area law enforcement agencies, have deployed personnel to western North Carolina to aid with ongoing recovery and assistance efforts.

The Sunset Beach Fishing Pier, which is owned and operated by western North Carolina natives Gary and Teresa Massey, last week collected and distributed multiple truckloads of supplies to Avery, Buncombe, Mitchell and McDowell counties, as well as to locations in eastern Tennessee.

"It has been given to locations that are distributing where people are coming to pick up or they are delivering by side-by-sides (ATVs and UTVs) or vehicles if they cannot get out to the locations," Teresa Massey told The Brunswick Beacon.

The Masseys on Monday, Oct. 7 continued to collect food and essential items for those affected by Helene, but the collection was halted before noon on Monday as the tractor trailer was already full.

The couple told The Brunswick Beacon they are no longer collecting donations at this time, but assured local residents that the people of Western North Carolina will have more needs in the near future.

This is not an exhaustive list of local collection sites. The Brunswick Beacon encourages any organizations, churches and individuals who have set up collection sites to let us know so we can add the location to our online list.

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Helene brings out the best ... and worst in us

October 10, 2024 | Brunswick Beacon, The (Shallotte, NC) Author: Tom Campbell | Section: Opinion | 792 Words OpenURL Link

You can learn a lot about people when they are under stress. We see them at their best ... or worst. Hurricane Helene is revealing both.

My family has experienced what it is like to be without power, water and refrigeration, with mud and debris in your home. You feel alone, overwhelmed, and sad. We have also rejoiced when strangers we never met come to help muck out the house, haul out furniture and belongings that must be discarded, do carpentry work and saw tree limbs. Their biggest contribution is to provide comfort.

We can't thank these heroes enough. But they aren't looking for thanks. They see this as their responsibility, a calling to help another in times of distress. These are the people the musical group Alabama sang about in their wonderful song, "Angels Among Us:"

"I believe there are Angels among us,

sent down to us from somewhere up above.

They come to you and me in our darkest hours

To show us how to live, to teach us how to give.

To guide us with the light of love."

We are blessed by many angels. But times of distress also show the worst side of some.

We all remember when President Trump went to Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria. His response to the devastation was tossing paper towels into the crowd. It took him weeks to release federal funding for the territory.

His response to Helene wasn't much better. Trump instructed his staff to find a place where the storm had ransacked a business and it was surrounded by rubble. With cameras rolling he declared his visit wasn't political, then started criticizing Governor Roy Cooper for doing a terrible job and "going out of their way to not help people in Republican areas."

The claim was totally fabricated. It was disgusting political pandering. This is no time for politics.

As has always been the case, there will be scammers preying on the elderly or those desperate for help, charging them outrageous prices. It is sometimes hard to distinguish between genuine helpers and those trying to make a quick buck. True volunteers won't ask for money. Much as you might need help, be cautious!

Those devastated by Helene are wondering why it is taking so long for help to arrive. Our federal and state government could perhaps have been better prepared to respond. They knew by Wednesday that Helene was going to impact Western Carolina and forecasters predicted it was going to be bad.

But no one could ever have imagined just how devastating this storm was going to be. Not since 1916 has the western section of our state had an event so destructive. By Friday afternoon and evening, when it was obvious how bad the damage was going to be, it was too late to put resources in place without potentially endangering their lives. Surging waters and sheets of rain destroyed roads, landslides demolished buildings and houses were swept

away, some with people inside. The death count is far greater than is being reported.

Media coverage has been uneven. Reporters, photographers and news crews were not allowed into many rural areas because of potential danger. Even so, most of the news coverage has focused on Asheville. It had great damage, but the media has largely neglected a great deal of suffering in smaller communities like Linville, Spruce Pine, Banner Elk, Swannanoa and less populous counties.

Folks are desperate for basic needs. They urgently need water — to drink, to wash themselves, and flush toilets. Wipes, toilet paper, paper towels and even diapers are needed, along with non-perishable food like pop-top tins of chicken, tuna, beans, applesauce fruit and peanut butter. Granola and protein bars and crackers are very welcome. Candles and flashlights with batteries are essential.

Our western neighbors need the right here, right now kind of help. Saying help is on the way when you are thirsty, alone and in darkness being doesn't help with immediate basic needs.

There are many ways you can help. Please don't just hop in the car and head west. DOT says heavy traffic on damaged roads is overwhelming efforts to repair roads. But groups of people can band together, accumulate supplies and transport them to coordinated safe staging areas, where they can be transferred to areas of most need. Have a plan for where you take supplies. Recognized charitable organizations will also welcome help.

Money is also badly needed. Fortunately, our state has several billion dollars in "rainy day funds" and the federal government will also provide large amounts of funding. But it is going to take more than money to help restore life for those affected. Regardless of your beliefs, praying for their safety and wellbeing will help.

We are North Carolina, the "goodliest land," with the goodliest people. Let us all do our best to help our neighbors. Copyright © 2024 The Brunswick Beacon, Landmark Community Newspapers LLC (LCNI). All rights reserved.

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Planetarium to present Elton John Laser Show for Helene Relief

October 10, 2024 | Brunswick Beacon, The (Shallotte, NC) Author: Staff Writer | Section: News | 170 Words OpenURL Link

Ingram Planetarium will present Elton John's Laser Show, "Rocket Man," three times to benefit those in western North Carolina who have been so hard hit by Hurricane Helene. Shows will be presented on Sunday, Oct. 6, at 4 and 5 p.m. and again on Thursday, Oct. 10, at 5 p.m.

All proceeds will be donated to World Central Kitchen, a not-for-profit, non-governmental organization that provides fresh meals in response to humanitarian, climate and community crises. WCK hit the ground in Asheville to provide relief earlier this week.

The show is presented through the generosity of its producer Audio Visual Imagineering, based in Orlando, Fla. Ingram Planetarium's former manager and current volunteer Katherine Hunt will be the guest laserist for the presentations.

AVI's Rocket Man includes some of the rock icon's biggest hits from Crocodile Rock and Candle in the Wind to Philadelphia Freedom and Pinball Wizard, all set to stunning laser lights.

The suggested donation for tickets is \$10 and they can be purchased at museumplanetarium.org at this link, Hurricane Helene Relief Tickets.

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BCS amends calendar following storm closures

October 10, 2024 | Brunswick Beacon, The (Shallotte, NC) Author: Dylan Phillips Brunswick Beacon Editor | Section: News | 960 Words OpenURL Link

Following significant impacts to instructional time from the unnamed Sept. 16 storm that dumped as many as 22 inches of rain on parts of Brunswick County and led to Brunswick County Schools having to cancel school for a whole school week, the board of education has approved a calendar amendment to make up for the lost instructional days.

The Brunswick County Schools (BCS) Board of Education during its Tuesday, Oct. 1 meeting approved changes to the BCS 2024-2025 school year calendar that will ensure the first semester ends prior to winter break and the state requirements for instructional days per year are met.

The Monday, Sept. 16 storm, coined Potential Tropical Cyclone #8, somewhat unexpectedly dropped between 14 and 22 inches of rain in parts of the county, with the most rain falling in and around Bolivia, Boiling Spring Lakes, Supply, Southport and Winnabow. The storm led to catastrophic flooding and road damage, forcing BCS to cancel school for the remainder of that week.

BCS is allotted five days, built into the school calendar that can be missed for emergencies like the Sept. 16 storm, said Assistant Superintendent Jonathan Paschal during the Oct. 1 meeting. With the system-wide closure from Sept. 16 to Sept. 20, BCS used all those days, he added.

With road damage from flooding making many roads impassable, BCS went to asynchronous remote learning to start the week of Sept. 23 before transitioning most schools back to face-to-face learning on Wednesday, Sept. 25. Bolivia Elementary students returned to the classroom on Thursday, Sept. 26, and Virginia Williamson Elementary and Cedar Grove Middle students got back into the classroom on Monday, Sept. 30.

However, the threat of Hurricane Helene led to the school system to cancel school for all BCS schools on Friday, Sept. 27, as well. This was BCS's sixth lost instructional day of the year, meaning an additional instructional day had to be added to the calendar.

At the beginning of the week of Sept. 30, only students at Southport Elementary, South Brunswick Middle School and South Brunswick High School had not returned to in-person learning. South Brunswick Middle School and High School students returned to the classroom on Wednesday, Oct. 3, and Southport Elementary students were set to return to in-person learning on Monday, Oct. 7 on a modified schedule, per BCS.

Similar to emergency days, only five remote learning days are allotted to North Carolina school systems, Paschal noted, and BCS needs approval for additional remote learning days at schools that had not returned to the inperson learning as of the beginning of last week.

"We needed to make sure that we get approval for that," he said, "and we're working through that now and we're hearing a lot of good options coming to us that we'll be able to finalize."

During the BCS Board of Education's committees meeting on Sept. 20, the board requested the North Carolina General Assembly forgive the BCS's lost instructional time on Sept. 16 and 17. BCS during the Oct. 1 did not provide any updates on this request.

After surveying BCS parents and staff regarding proposed calendar changes, the board during last Tuesday's meeting formally approved the calendar changes to turn the scheduled Oct. 21 required teacher workday into an instructional day to make up for the lost day on Sept. 27.

Additionally, the changes designated additional days for emergency instructional make-up. Those days, according to the approved amended calendar, are Jan. 2, Jan. 3, Jan. 21 and Feb. 21. If any more instructional days must be missed, those missed days will be made up on the make-up dates.

The board also approved keeping Dec. 20 as the end of the first semester, which will end it prior to winter break, as feedback from BCS teachers indicated they can stay on the proper pace despite the lost instructional days.

"I am happy to say that our teachers strongly felt they could indeed keep up with the current pace. In fact, a lot of their pacing guides have already been changed and adjusted to meet the December deadline," Paschal said. "All of which is done because they are keeping in mind ... our Career and College Promise (CCP) students that are going to Brunswick Community College and keeping in mind some of our AP students."

Superintendent discusses recent closures

BCS Superintendent Dale Cole discussed the school system's recent weather-related closures, emphasizing that BCS will always prioritize having students in the classroom, learning face-to-face, if it is safe to do.

Following the week-long closure after Potential Tropical Cyclone #8 on Sept. 16, all BCS students were slated to learn remotely during from Monday, Sept. 23 to Friday, Sept. 27. However, as roads began to reopen, many BCS schools transitioned students back into classrooms throughout the week.

The school system faced some backlash after reopening Bolivia Elementary School to in-person learning on Thursday, Sept. 26, only to cancel school again on Sept. 27 ahead of Hurricane Helene.

"I saw that there was a lot of angst about the fact that we decided to have face-to-face school at Bolivia Elementary on Thursday, even though we were going to be closed for everybody on Friday," Cole said. "My answer to that is always going to be if we can have face-to-face instruction for kids, that is what we are going to do. That is what I'm going to push for, because one day of face-to-face instruction is better than three days of remote."

Cole also noted this would not be an issue if there was not a state of North Carolina school calendar, encouraging the board to continue advocating for a law change to allow individual school systems to make calendar decisions.

BCS Board of Education Chair Steven Barger said the board will continue to advocate for the state to change that law.

The updated schedule can be viewed here on page 29.

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Dylan Phillips Brunswick Beacon Editor, 'BCS amends calendar following storm closures', *Brunswick Beacon, The*(online), 10 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C2089D5DB23FC8



Letters to the Editor

October 10, 2024 | Brunswick Beacon, The (Shallotte, NC) Author: Staff Writer | Section: Opinion | 1542 Words OpenURL Link

About closing Brunswick County schools

To the editor:

On Monday, Sept. 16, about 60-70 employees of Brunswick County Schools had to stand in place in their car or at the work place. I understand the decision to close school is a weighty one. It affects a lot of people. Parents have to scurry to provide safety for their children while fulfilling work obligations. School officials and employees have to make alternative plans also. The safety of all is and should be the motive behind such a weighty decision.

In this day of instant news and weather reports, updates are constant and readily available. The teachers, school staff, and employees should not be burdened with the task. The persons or persons who make the initial decision should be responsible to keep updated with developing conditions.

The superintendent should be given the authority by the school board to say to all, "Stay Home." Even telling the teachers and staff to stay home would be preferable to people being stranded in their cars (some cars totally lost) and/or their places of employment overnight.

All should be included in a process that brings about a more equitable treatment of the heroes who staff our schools.

Paul Lombardi

Shallotte

Boot them all out of office

To the editor:

With the Biden/Harris Administration suddenly realizing the problems they created with 10 million illegals and open borders, County Commissioner chairman Williams and his cronies appear to have suddenly realized the problems they created approving 40,000+ units of development in Brunswick County that we have insufficient infrastructure to support.

Neither administration realized they can't undo the mess, and both can't claim they have a rational plan to fix it going forward. As taxpayers and residents, we have been harpooned by this indefensible ineptitude.

The only solution is to "boot them all out of office." To return them to their positions would be like giving a bonus to a fireman who sets your house on fire and then wants kudos for coming and watching it burn down.

Larry Hershoff

Sunset Beach

Policies have real world consequences

To the editor:

There's a lot of criticism going around about hurricane relief. Maybe if we inserted "Ukraine" on the NC map, relief would come so much faster. Funny!

Fact check. Thousands of National Guard were dispatched with rescue equipment and airlifts full of food and water. World Kitchen is serving up thousands of meals, mule teams are trekking up treacherous slopes loaded with supplies. Millions in relief funds are flowing into websites ready to take applications.

As a country, we are always in cleanup mode. How long must we bicker about climate change instead of doing everything we can to prepare? No one expected the impact of Hurricane Helene to be this bad. Why not? Scientists have been screaming from the rooftops, warning us for decades. We refused to listen.

Extreme weather is here to stay. The least we can do is pay attention to policies officials push for. Don't buy into bluster, empty rhetoric and finger pointing. The "other guy" pushed to shut down the government right before this multi-state disaster. I wonder how fast relief efforts would have been then? The other guy wants to cut funding for FEMA and shut down NOAA, the agency that tracks monster storms and warns us ahead of time. Remember the 2017 paper towel "relief effort" for Puerto Rico? That was not leadership. Policies have real world consequences. The leaders we choose can make the difference between life and death when disaster strikes. Someday, it could be your life. Choose wisely.

Debora Mawji

Sunset Beach

'JD' stands for Jarring Dishonesty

To the editor:

JD Vance is historically unpopular. He said kids are better off if mothers stay with husbands who beat them. He called women without babies "childless cat ladies" and suggested that their votes should count less. That was so offensive that Fox News' Trey Gowdy felt compelled to leap to the defense of nuns.

But Vance's unapologetic lying truly sets him apart. When neo-Nazis lied about Haitian immigrants in Springfield, Ohio eating their neighbors' pets, Vance repeated the lie. When Springfield's Republican Mayor and Ohio's Republican governor debunked it and begged Vance to stop, he refused. "If I have to create stories, then that's what I'm going to do," Vance confessed. "You just said this is a story you created," said a shocked interviewer. "Yes," Vance replied. Vance will literally say anything to get what he wants.

In 2016, Vance said, "I'm a 'Never Trump' guy." He called Trump "cultural heroin" and "an idiot" who is "unfit for our nation's highest office," adding, "I can't stomach Trump." Vance said Trump was "leading the white working class to a very dark place," and accused Trump of being "America's Hitler."

In 2024, when Vance saw the chance to become Trump's VP, he flip-flopped. "I was wrong," declared Vance, claiming he was duped by the media until he realized that Trump "delivered for the American people."

But that was just another lie. Vance told an acquaintance in 2020 that Biden would beat Trump because "Trump has just so thoroughly failed to deliver."

CNN's fact-checker found that Vance lied throughout the debate. "I never supported a national ban" on abortion, Vance lied, despite the fact that there's audio of him in 2022 saying, "I certainly would like abortion to be illegal nationally."

And, when Walz asked him "Did Trump lose the 2020 election?" Vance wouldn't answer. "That's a damning non-answer," said Walz.

Trump thought so, too. Two days later, valice laisely claimed that Trump won.
L. McGann
Leland
Trump retaliates, Rouzer refuses, Biden and Harris rush relief
To the editor:
In March 2020, Trump shut down the economy due to COVID, triggering America's worst economic contraction. Unemployment hit 14.8%. Gross Domestic Product, (GDP), the amount of goods and services the economy produces, plummeted 32.9%, the worst drop ever. Biden and Harris took office with Americans hurting.
They immediately brought relief, delivering 300 million vaccine shots in their first 150 days. They added more jobs and more GDP growth during their administration's first year than in the first year of any other administration in 50 years, thanks to the American Rescue Plan, an economic relief package enacted just seven weeks after they took office. Unemployment fell to 3.9%!
ARP brought NC over \$8 billion, benefitting 1.3 million families with 2.1 million children. David Rouzer, and every Republican representative and senator voted "NO."
I thought of that in September when I read that our commissioners accepted the latest installment of relief that ARP brought Brunswick County: \$1.42 million to expand broadband to 319 unserved rural families, even though 62% of Brunswick County voted 'Trump' in 2020.
After the recent storms, Biden and Harris are again bringing relief, with 500 FEMA staff and 1,000 soldiers helping deliver food, water and medicine to NC's ravaged rural areas.
Trump falsely accused them of "going out of their way to not help people in Republican areas." In fact, Georgia's Republican governor praised their responsiveness, saying "FEMA has been embedded with us since before the storm hit."
Trump is a liar who projects his own faults onto others. Former Trump aides Mark Harvey and Olivia Troye said Trump was flagrantly partisan, stalling urgent federal disaster aid for Democratic-voting regions like California and Puerto Rico.
Trump rewarded supporters in Florida with aid but withheld it from non-supporters. Rouzer refused to help his own supporters to keep Democrats from succeeding. Biden and Harris are rushing relief because they believe a president should help all Americans.
Rich Cooper
Leland
Storm damage worse because of Republican legislators
To the editor:
Brunswick County is represented in NC's Senate by Bill Rabon (District 8) and in NC's House by Frank Iler (District 17) and Charles Miller (District 19). All are Republicans with much to answer for, according to explosive revelations

in "How the North Carolina Legislature Left Homes Vulnerable to Helene," New York Times, 10/3/24.

Area residents were already upset because Republican officials consistently favor developers who fund their campaigns, allowing overdevelopment to threaten what makes Brunswick County special. The destruction of homes and loss of life from "three thousand-year storms" in nine years demonstrates that the actions of these Republican legislators made the damage worse.

Efforts to weaken NC building standards accelerated in 2010, when Republicans took control of both houses of the NC General Assembly. They rejected limits on steep slope construction, which could have reduced the number of homes lost to landslides; blocked a requirement that homes be built above the height of expected flooding; weakened wetland protections, increasing the risk of dangerous storm water runoff; and slowed adoption of updated building codes, making it harder for NC to qualify for federal climate-resilience grants.

The NC home building industry has systematically opposed rules requiring that homes be built to higher standards, according to Kim Wooten, an engineer who serves on the North Carolina Building Code Council, the group that sets home building requirements for NC.

"The home builders association has fought every bill that has come before the General Assembly to try to improve life safety," said Wooten, whose company, Facilities Strategies Group, specializes in building engineering. Wooten says many Republican lawmakers are themselves home builders or have received campaign contributions from the industry, and "vote for bills that line their pocketbooks and make home building cheaper."

We can protect ourselves and Brunswick County from developers' and their Republican enablers by electing Democrats Katherine Randall (Senate, District 8), Charles Jones (House, District 17) and Jill Brown (House, District 19).

Michael P. Rush

Leland

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The great floods of 1916 and 2024

October 10, 2024 | Brunswick Beacon, The (Shallotte, NC) Author: D.G. Martin One on One| Section: Opinion| 750 Words OpenURL Link

One of Miss Letitia Currie's favorite topics in her history class in the 1950s at Davidson Junior High School was the Great Flood of 1916. Miss Currie was the daughter of a Davidson College professor.

Many of her students also knew what she was talking about because their parents had experienced that 1916 flood and talked about it whenever rain poured down hard.

Today, many of Miss Currie's students, their parents and grandparents, great grandparents, and their children and grandchildren are having a similar experience dealing with the flooding that followed Hurricane Helene.

And they will be talking about it for the rest of their lives, calling it "The great flood of 2024."

"News of Davidson," the news outlet in my hometown, published the following account by Gatewood Payne Campbell, granddaughter of Davidson professor Gatey Workman and niece of the late, great opera singer William Workman. Gatewood and her husband Johnny live near Black Mountain.

"Life has stopped. We don't know dates or times. Sirens are 24 hours a day. It's relentless. Helicopters invade our sky. Chainsaws sound nonstop and we run outside in hopes it's in our neighborhood.

"Let me back up. We awoke around 6 a.m. Friday morning without power. The storm was loud and pounding but we didn't know where we were in the storm. We could not get updates. Around 8:30 a.m., we lost internet across cell lines. I called a friend and got her to look at radar and let me know an ETA on rain ending. That was the last call I was able to make. By 9:30 a.m. ALL cell signal was completely lost. The rain was increasing. We could see the creek rising. Johnny stepped outside under the porch and was soaked from head to toe after 30 seconds.

"Around 11 a.m., we felt like we could go out and survey the neighborhood. We began to feel the weight of the destruction, yet we had NO clue. The creek had turned into a river greater than 50 yards wide. The noise of water heaters, propane tanks, bikes, grills, construction supplies and yard equipment banging on the rails of our bridge to Black Mountain was deafening. We saw two neighbors with trees on their homes and knew they were taking on water."

Meanwhile in Asheville, Bryan King and his wife Angela Koh are assessing the damage to their 12 Bones Smokehouse on Foundry Street in the River Arts District. As I wrote in my book, North Carolina's Eateries, "Even if 12 Bones had not been made famous by Barack Obama's visits there, it would be a 'must-do' in Asheville." When I first visited 12 Bones several years ago, it was located closer to the French Broad River. Had Bryan and Angela not moved the restaurant a few blocks up the hill it, would have been completely washed away. At its current location, they may be able to repair and survive.

Angela's sister writes, "As the floodwaters recede, we see catastrophic damage to homes and businesses, including the River Arts District, where 12 Bones was founded. Entire livelihoods have been lost. In nearly every direction you look, everything is caked in mud and scattered debris. Broken wood and mangled wiring now stand where intersections once existed."

Coincidentally, on Oct. 15, the publisher Blair is releasing "River Road," a book of poems by mountain author Wayne Caldwell. His fine poetry describes the power of the flooding waters on the French Broad as shown in the following excerpt:

Selection from "River Road" By Wayne Caldwell

The French Broad, being a river, floods. How many times over the millennia has it left its banks and moved whatever was swept up in it. To some far away (and sometimes ridiculous) place? Perhaps thousands. And each time it returned to its placid face.

The worst (in the last century) was in July 1916. Asheville's Riverside Park was washed away. Parts of which one could have seen rushing by my house, had it been there then. (Even this relatively high ground would have been inundated for several days.)

Only a half dozen people died in Asheville, which I'd consider a small miracle. Thanks to the telephone, warning came to Marshall, and only two or three drowned, even though the courthouse was about the only thing left on Main Street. Fifty-Three houses disappeared.

From high ground one could have seen rushing by, bales of cotton, houses, mules, gas tanks, vehicles, sheds, chickens, roosting on pieces of roof, tires, fences, trees, pigs, dogs, cats ... anything thing not tied down ... and many things that were.

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Gov. Cooper signs bill that provides Hurricane Helene assistance; relief efforts continue for Western Carolina

October 10, 2024 | Carteret County News-Times, The (Morehead City, NC) Author: CHERYL BURKE NEWS-TIMES | Section: News Times | 1283 Words OpenURL Link

RALEIGH — NC Gov. Roy Cooper signed House Bill 149, Disaster Recovery Act of 2024, Thursday morning that allocates \$273 million to Hurricane Helene and Potential Tropical Cyclone #8 relief for western North Carolina.

The bill also extends the State of Emergency, and establishes election modifications and public school flexibility. The NC General Assembly passed the bill Wednesday.

In a press release Thursday morning, Gov. Cooper said, "Recovery for Western North Carolina will require unprecedented help from state and federal sources and this legislation is a strong first step. Hurricane Helene caused catastrophic damage but also showed the resiliency of North Carolina's people and its communities and we must continue the bipartisan work to help them build back strong."

A portion of the bill states, "Western North Carolina endured record-breaking rainfall that created several 1,000year flood events in several counties, devastating the people, infrastructure, businesses, and schools of entire communities."

It continues, "North Carolinians have lost their lives, loved ones, homes, communities, houses of worship, businesses, jobs, and way of life. Countless homes, buildings, and properties have been destroyed. Entire communities have lost power, water, sewer, communication, and other essential services due to the devastation. Over 400 roads and bridges were damaged and closed for traffic, including Interstate 40."

The funds will come from the transfer from the Savings Reserve established in G.S. 143C-4-2. Of the amount, \$250 million will go to the Department of Public Safety, Division of Emergency Management, to provide the state match for federal disaster assistance programs for state agencies and units of local governments.

Sixteen million dollars will go to the Department of Public Instruction to supplement or replace lost compensation of school nutrition employees due to school closures resulting from Hurricane Helene.

Two million dollars will go to the Office of State Budget and Management to provide grants to the North Carolina League of Municipalities, the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners, and the North Carolina Association of Regional Councils of Governments to provide technical assistance with local recovery funds. Five million dollars to the State Board of Elections.

While the state funds will help, there are multiple other ways to assist those in western Carolina devastated by Hurricane Helene. Here is a list of some of the efforts underway in Carteret County and the state:

NC Disaster Relief Fund

Gov. Roy Cooper is encouraging donations to the North Carolina Disaster Relief Fund to help communities. To donate to the North Carolina Disaster Relief Fund, visit nc.gov/donate. Donations can be mailed to: NC Disaster Relief Fund, 20312 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-0312 or NC Disaster Relief Fund, c/o United Way of NC, 1130 Kildaire Farm Road, Suite 100, Cary NC 27511.

Camp Happy Kids of Carteret County Inc.

Camp Happy Kids of Carteret County Inc., a nonprofit that helps send kids to camp and other positive experiences,

is collecting coats, hats, boots, socks, blankets and gloves for children in Western North Carolina. People can drop off items from 3:30 to 6 p.m. each Tuesday beginning Oct. 15 and continuing through Nov. 26. For more information, text 252-342-4392.

Pet supply relief efforts

The Beaufort Community Cat Project, a county nonprofit, is partnering with three animal and veterinary groups to gather relief supplies for the animal shelters and rescue groups in western North Carolina.

Pet supplies are being collected at PetDocks Veterinary Hospital in Morehead City, Beaufort Pet Provisions and Beaufort Animal Hospital. The Beaufort Community Cat Project is organizing the effort.

Items being collected include towels, blankets, cages, potty pads, pet food, cat litter, bowls, litter boxes and more.

The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army in Morehead City sent a team Sept. 30 to Hendersonville with a rapid response vehicle filled with supplies and food. According to the organization, they have served in Hendersonville and western Asheville. To donate toward Hurricane Helene relief efforts, donate to HelpSalvationArmy.org or call 1-800-725-2769.

Core Sound Waterfowl Museum partnership

The Core Sound Waterfowl Museum on Harkers Island is partnering with others to collect supplies to deliver to the Asheville area. Specific items needed include: food, bottled water, contractor-size trash bags, blankets, first aid supplies, feminine hygiene products, diapers and baby clothes, hand sanitizer, toilet paper, paper towels, shovels, brooms, gloves, coolers, propane, cook stoves, flashlights, batteries, fans, dehumidifiers and generators. Drop-off sites are: Miss Gina's Shrimp Stand (Highway 70 outside of Beaufort; Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on Harkers Island; Core Sound Waterfowl Museum on Harkers Island; and Core Sound Waterfowl Museum and Heritage Center, 806 Arendell St., Morehead City.

Samaritan's Purse

The nonprofit Samaritan's Purse, based in Boone, is responding with multiple relief efforts in multiple locations in western North Carolina and other states impacted by Helene. They also have response teams preparing to assist Florida from the impacts of Hurricane Milton.

Southwest of Boone, rivers raged outside their banks causing widespread destruction in and around Asheville. The organization's relief response there extends around Buncombe County, which includes Asheville, Black Mountain, Montreat and Swannanoa. More recently, they have opened a third base in the hard-hit town of Burnsville, to include Mitchell and Yancey Counties.

Volunteer teams are doing tree work, mudding out homes, removing debris and tarping roofs. Heavy equipment is being used to clear private driveways and private roads. In some areas, the group is offering water and potable water to the community. Samaritan's Purse is also being used as an airstrip for government agencies and volunteer organizations.

Numerous communities in the rugged mountains of North Carolina and far eastern Tennessee are cut off by Helene's devastation. Samaritan's Purse is coordinating airlifts to some of these locations—delivering basic necessities to those in dire straits using their helicopter and aircraft of other organizations. Through dozens of flights so far they have been able to deliver food, water, medical kits and other relief to those in isolated areas.

To give, go samaritanspurse.org/disaster/hurricane-helene or checks can be mailed to Samaritan's Purse, PO Box 3000, Boone, NC 28607.

NC Community Foundation Disaster Relief Fund

Community foundations and other organizations across North Carolina are collaborating to support western North Carolina. To support ongoing recovery needs, give to The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina's Emergency and Disaster Response Fund. To support long-term recovery, donate to the NC Community Foundation Disaster Relief Fund. For more information, visit nccommunityfoundation.org/Helene. Other organizations the foundation recommends for helping western North Carolina are American Red Cross, Diaper Bank of NC, Operation Airdrop, Second Harvest Food Banks of Northwestern North Carolina and Wine to Water.

NC Community College System Response and Recovery Fund

To help with relief efforts, the North Carolina Community College System has launched the Hurricane Helene Community College Response and Recovery Fund. This statewide fund aims to support both the affected colleges and their surrounding communities as they face widespread damage and disruptions. Donations to the fund will provide critical assistance for recovery efforts in the storm's aftermath, including restoring services and resources essential to students, faculty and staff.

Donations can be made online by visiting www.NCCCF.org or www.nccommunitycolleges.edu/foundation and clicking on the "Give Today" button. The Hurricane Helene Community College Response and Recovery Fund is prominently featured as the top option in the dropdown menu on the donation page.

While the primary focus is on this statewide relief effort, individual donations can also be directed to specific community college foundations in the affected areas. A full list of these colleges and their foundation donation pages is available on the North Carolina Community Colleges Foundation website.

Carteret County Chamber of Commerce

Many individuals, organizations, businesses, and public agencies are working to collect supplies for our neighbors in Western North Carolina. The chamber staff is keeping a live Google Document of known donation drop-off locations, local fundraisers, and volunteer opportunities. If you need to add something to the list, either create a comment it in the Google Document itself or email taylor@carteretchamber.org.

Here is the link to the Google: carteretchamber.org/helenehelp/.

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