

Damage from Helene could affect playoff football schedule

October 3, 2024 | Hickory Daily Record (NC) Author: LANGSTON WERTZ JR. The Charlotte Observer | Section: News | 537 Words OpenURL Link

Eight years ago, the N.C. High School Athletic Association pushed back the start of its football playoffs due to Hurricane Matthew.

NCHSAA commissioner Que Tucker said that could be a possibility again this year after the devastation brought to the western part of the state by Hurricane Helene.

Tucker said any decisions about the playoffs would come from the NCHSAA board of directors, which she expects will meet via Zoom sometime later this week.

"With the devastation they have had," Tucker said Monday. "I'm not sure one week would do it. But that's a decision that has to be made by our board members. As a staff we want to huddle up and look at what we have found and see what we can come up with to present to the board, but we want to make sure our board members (from the regions most affected) can be on the Zoom with us because they have boots-on-the-ground knowledge, and we need to get their perspective." Tucker said in her talks with coaches and athletic officials in the mountains that the damage is excessive and that schools in all four of the NCHSAA's classes have been affected.

So the association will not be able to delay one or two classifications in the playoffs, she said.

Tucker also doesn't expect that many football games, or any sports, will be played in that region this week. She noted she saw a photograph of the football field at Morganton's Freedom High School showing it almost completely submerged.

"Even if we thought one school could play, well, who would they be playing?" Tucker asked. "How can they get there? That's the crazy part. We talked to a coach at Mountain Heritage and he had been out with a chainsaw trying to help. He stopped long enough and found a spot with cell service and said it may be two months before they can get back to school; that they are using the school building to house the workers and everybody."

The NCHSAA playoffs are scheduled to begin in about two weeks, with girls' tennis (Oct. 14), volleyball (Oct. 19), girls' golf (Oct. 21) and cross-country (Oct. 26) up first.

Football playoffs are scheduled to begin Nov. 8.

"Until we can get a true assessment to when schools can return to play, and just be able to open up school, we can't make decisions at this point," Tucker said. "But I do know our board will be as far as equitable as when they were dealing with situations (brought on by past weather< events) in eastern North Carolina."

Tucker said she is worried about how to get the playoffs going, knowing they are important so many schools and athletes and families. But seeing the images of the damage done, she said, is heartbreaking.

"It's a lot to think about," Tucker said. "Some people don't have drinking water. But you have to have hope, and hope brings about renewed excitement to push through. We know when we get to the other side, we'll play again, and we don't want to act like we don't have hope. But we have to be patient and try to keep it all in perspective as we try to do things that are in the best interest of everyone."

• Citation (aglc Style)

LANGSTON WERTZ JR. The Charlotte Observer, 'Damage from Helene could affect playoff football schedule', *Hickory Daily Record* (online), 3 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view? p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BFA42DDD896AA8>



Hurricane Helene flooding left Marion restaurant caked in mud. "We're just at a loss."

October 3, 2024 | Hickory Daily Record (NC) Author: Chrissy Murphy cmurphy@morganton.com | Section: News | 794 Words OpenURL Link

J. Hartman's restaurant on U.S. Highway 70 in Marion closed up shop Thursday, Sept. 26, after emergency management officials came by the restaurant urging people to evacuate.

With Hurricane Helene headed toward western North Carolina, heavy wind, rain and flooding were in store. Owners Jennifer and Jon Hartman were at home on the lake trying to tie off their dock to keep it from floating away if flood waters rose too high.

"We had no idea," Jennifer said. "Just like anybody else, we didn't know the water was going to come up that high, and I felt like we were pretty safe."

The couple didn't see the restaurant again until photos started popping up on social media of flood damage.

"Someone sent me a picture of the aerial view of the restaurant. ... I was just like, 'Oh my gosh,'" Jennifer said. "I came in here the next morning. At that point, one of my daughters and my in-laws were here, and they were standing on the porch and I could just see the mud. ... My mother-in-law said, she said, 'Prepare yourself ... because it's bad.' I walked in and it was just a disaster ... I was absolutely devastated."

She said mud was covering the floor, booth seats and chairs were strewn around the restaurant.

"This restaurant's ran by myself, my husband, my two daughters, and we've got 60 staff members here," Jennifer said. "It's our livelihood, but it's the 60 staff members' livelihoods. That's been one of my biggest concerns, is how quickly can we reopen to get them back to work."

She said they've hit roadblocks ever since the storm hit.

"We just keep getting hit with more and more bad news," Jennifer said. "Insurance isn't going to cover any of the property damage. The building owner, their insurance isn't going to cover any of the parking lot cleanup. They're not going to cover any of the property damage inside. We're just at a loss."

The restaurant's next steps are unclear. She said they had to throw away about \$30,000 worth of food, filling up two dumpsters, and she doesn't know where to begin with the cleaning process for everything in the building after the water came in and contaminated everything.

"People are worried about their livelihoods," Jennifer said. "We've got an amazing staff and I don't want them to feel lost or worried. Everybody's got so much loss and worry as it is. Them coming back to work is one of our biggest priorities, and I don't know how to do it."

Her mom, Toni Hodge, came up from Albermarle to help with storm cleanup. Hodge said she was worried about small businesses like J. Hartman's after the storm. She said she felt like big corporations would be able to recover, but small businesses may struggle with little help from insurance and limited resources.

"You have to weigh so many options," Hodge said. "I think it can be done. I just think it's gonna be a long time."

While things seem bleak, employees and other community volunteers have been coming in to help clean up since Hurricane Helene hit on Friday, Sept. 27. By the next Tuesday afternoon, the floors were clear of any mud and most of the store's furnishings had been moved outside to be rinsed off.

"It's incredibly humbling," Jennifer said. "I don't know how else to describe it."

Pepper Strode, a manager at J. Hartman's, and Angeles Amable, a cook, were two of the employees who were helping with the cleanup at the restaurant Tuesday.

"It's how I pay my bills and I love this family," Strode said. "They're some of the best people I've ever worked for and I want to see this restaurant get back up and running."

Both cried when they saw the restaurant.

"My second home is here," Amable said.

Jennifer's sister, Laura Stotts, posted ways to donate on her Instagram account @diaryof_abandonment. By Oct. 1, Stotts said about \$1,000 had been donated to the restaurant and another \$1,000 had been pledged. Some of the donations came from people who have never met the Hartmans or visited the restaurant.

"There's a whole lot of good people out there," Jennifer said.

She said in the first few days after the storm she felt numb, but seeing all the volunteers coming to help clean up changed that.

"I've been very emotional today. ... The first couple days I was completely numb, no emotion whatsoever, just like a zombie," Jennifer said. "And then the last few days, I can't stop crying."

Brandy Pittman originally headed to Grace Community Church to volunteer, but when the church had enough volunteers for the day, she pivoted to J. Hartman's. She made a call to Nebo Crossing Academy Administrator Dave Likins to get more volunteers on the way for cleanup.

"They're our people," Pittman said. "You don't leave your people hanging."

© Copyright 2024, Hickory Daily Record, Hickory, NC

• Citation (aglc Style)

Chrissy Murphy cmurphy@morganton.com, 'Hurricane Helene flooding left Marion restaurant caked in mud. "We're just at a loss."', *Hickory Daily Record* (online), 3 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view? p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BFBC6D5BA92958>



Riverwalk overwater bridge closed for now

October 3, 2024 | Hickory Daily Record (NC) Author: BILLY CHAPMAN wchapman@hickoryrecord.com | Section: News | 128 Words OpenURL Link

The railing of Hickory's Riverwalk bridge was hit by debris as the remnants of Hurricane Helene moved through the area Friday. The trail's overwater bridge is closed until further notice, Hickory Communications Specialist Sarah Killian said in an email.

The boardwalk at Glenn Hilton Park, tennis courts at Civitan Park and the small dog area at Fairbrook Optimist Dog Park are also closed.

Killian said all Hickory parks, except Henry Fork River Park, were open Monday.

All Hickory recreation centers and libraries were also open Monday.

A hangar at Hickory Regional Airport was destroyed as the remnants of Hurricane Helene came through the area.

Killian said the hangar was under construction and the contractor building it is responsible for removing and rebuilding.

Billy Chapman is a reporter with the Hickory Daily Record. wchapman@hickoryrecord.com

© Copyright 2024, Hickory Daily Record, Hickory, NC

• Citation (aglc Style)

BILLY CHAPMAN wchapman@hickoryrecord.com, 'Riverwalk overwater bridge closed for now', *Hickory Daily Record* (online), 3 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BFA42E3167D3C0



High school sports in Catawba County start back after hectic week for athletic directors

October 3, 2024 | Hickory Daily Record (NC) Author: Jason Koon | Section: High School | 843 Words OpenURL Link

Newton-Conover High School athletic director Todd Davis said, other than a few periods when his cell service went out, his phone has been lit up all week since the remnants of Hurricane Helene hit.

"All the ADs in the Catawba Valley Athletic Conference have been on a group text," he said. "When you get cell service, your phone starts blowing up because you have a backlog of texts."

High school athletics in the Hickory area had a nearly weeklong break because of Hurricane Helene. However, Davis and other area athletic directors have been as busy as ever. Davis said the area ADs have been in almost constant contact over the last week, working to get as much of the fall season caught up as possible.

Last Friday's football games were originally rescheduled to Saturday. Then it was Monday. Then Tuesday. Hickory, Maiden and Newton-Conover finally got the games in on Wednesday evening while other schools promised the games would be made up, just not this week. Davis said it's right that during times like this, athletics take a back burner.

"Right now, sports is not necessarily at the forefront as much as, 'Is everybody OK,'" he said. "I have to remind myself, it's bigger than just Newton-Conover sports, it's a community, a county and a state thing. ... At the end of the day, it's just a game."

Davis and his coaches have also taken some of that load on themselves. He said the group has been busy reaching out to student athletes and families to check on their well-being.

"Our coaches have done a great job touching base with our kids, making sure they're OK," he said.

A protracted break

At Newton-Conover, the last game to be played was the JV football game on Wednesday, Sept. 25. It was almost a full week until athletes hit the field again. Football players put pads on for the first time on Tuesday, and soccer and tennis played Tuesday night matches. Davis said he has been telling his coaches to treat these first games and practices more like it is the beginning of a season due to the inactive period.

"These kids have been out for awhile and you haven't seen them," Davis said. "Proper stretching, proper conditioning. Do not come back thinking they're 100%, a lot of these kids haven't been doing anything."

The same story has been repeated all around Catawba County. Practice fields, gyms and weight rooms were empty for nearly a week until most athletics resumed on Tuesday and Wednesday.

At Fred T. Foard High School, sports were back up Wednesday evening after power was finally restored. Volleyball and soccer hosted North Iredell on Wednesday, and tennis, volleyball, soccer and JV football are expected to be in action Thursday evening.

Hickory soccer got back to its winning ways on Tuesday with a 3-1 win over Statesville. Volleyball and tennis got back to action on Wednesday and cross country participated in the county championship meet at Murray's Mill. All seven public high schools in the county, along with University Christian High School and Hickory Christian Academy, were at that meet.

To the north, at South Caldwell and Alexander Central, fields will remain dark at least until Sunday, Oct. 6. The Northwestern 3A/4A Conference, which includes schools like Freedom and Watauga in harder hit areas, canceled all athletic activities for this week. A determination has not been made yet about next week's schedules.

The ripple effect

CVAC schools are also dealing with longer-term scheduling challenges. Davis said that while the Newton-Conover area got off comparatively easy, its going to take some extra planning to work around longer shutdowns at places like East Burke High School and West Caldwell.

"We're just trying to be proactive when we can, knowing that some schools, like West Caldwell and East Burke, can't," Davis said. "We're trying to get these other games played so we can free up some space to work with them."

As of Wednesday afternoon, all athletic games and practices at West Caldwell and East Burke are canceled for at least the rest of this week.

The ripple effect is also impacting this Friday's football matchups. Hickory, St. Stephens, Bandys and Bunker Hill have all moved this week's games to Saturday to give the players an extra day between games. Fred T. Foard is still scheduled to play on Friday while the Newton-Conover-East Burke and Maiden- West Caldwell games have been postponed.

To help mitigate some of the longer-term impacts, Bunker Hill athletic director John Sullivan said on Monday that he and other ADs are hoping the North Carolina High School Athletic Association will consider adding an extra week to the fall season. The Charlotte Observer reported Monday that the NCHSAA board will not make a determination until at least the end of this week.

Asheville High School football coach Cort Radford took to X (formerly known as Twitter) with a simple request for the NCHSAA.

"Please don't forget about us in Western NC," he wrote. "As we are handing out food and water for survival, kids are asking me when we are playing again. It matters to them. We just need a little time."

© Copyright 2024, Hickory Daily Record, Hickory, NC

• Citation (aglc Style)

Jason Koon, 'High school sports in Catawba County start back after hectic week for athletic directors', *Hickory Daily Record* (online), 3 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BFBC6D4CE85628>



Appalachian State's Hickory, Boone campuses not holding classes until after Oct.15

October 3, 2024 | Hickory Daily Record (NC) Author: Billy Chapman| Section: Education| 274 Words OpenURL Link

Students attending Appalachian State's Hickory campus will not meet for classes until at least Oct. 16, according to a release from the university.

The university's campus in Boone was heavily impacted by Hurricane Helene, which was a tropical storm when it hit North Carolina on Sept. 27. Flooding, mudslides and downed trees damaged infrastructure and buildings throughout Boone and Watauga County.

A fall break for the university is also scheduled for Oct. 14 and 15.

Classes in Boone are also canceled until at least Oct. 16, the release said.

Appalachian State Interim Chancellor Heather Norris said during a press conference Tuesday the university's Boone campus briefly lost power and internet service.

She said many campus buildings sustained water damage, but residence halls remained structurally sound.

Norris said widespread flooding and transportation issues were affecting faculty and staff.

"We've been focused on mitigating the effects of Hurricane Helene and keeping our community safe," Norris said during the press conference.

During the press conference, Watauga County Director of Emergency Management Will Holt said the county's 911 system received 2,000 calls for assistance the first day of the storm. He said the county normally receives 3,000 calls in a month.

Holt said dozens were sheltered at Appalachian State's Holmes Convocation Center.

"Everyone, please stay out of Watauga County unless you are called upon," Holt said at the press conference.

Community colleges

Catawba Valley Community College also canceled classes and closed the campus this week. The college said it would provide information about classes during the week of Oct. 7 by late afternoon Oct. 4.

Western Piedmont Community College in Morganton was also closed this week. The college said hundreds of utility trucks are using the campus as a base.

© Copyright 2024, Hickory Daily Record, Hickory, NC

• Citation (aglc Style)

Billy Chapman, 'Appalachian State's Hickory, Boone campuses not holding classes until after Oct.15', *Hickory Daily Record* (online), 3 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BFBC6D40B23518>



County donating food and supplies to western North Carolina

October 3, 2024 | Hickory Daily Record (NC)

Author: SARAH C. JOHNSON AND BILLY CHAPMAN sjohnson@hickoryrecord.comwchapman@hickoryrecord.com | Section: News | 561 Words OpenURL Link

Several agencies around Catawba County are collecting donations to offer aid to western North Carolina following the destruction left in the wake of Hurricane Helene, which was a tropical storm by the time it hit North Carolina.

The N.C. State Highway Patrol is collecting nonperishable food items, water, personal items and toiletries to distribute in communities around western North Carolina, including Caldwell and Burke counties, Master Trooper Christopher Casey said.

Donations to the N.C. State Highway Patrol can be dropped off at the station located at 3265 U.S. Hwy. 70 SE in Conover, Casey said.

The Catawba County United Way is also collecting items. There are four drop-off locations for donations to the Catawba County United Way. The Catawba County United Way is asking for water, hygiene products, diapers, first aid supplies and individually wrapped snack foods.

Catawba County United Way Executive Director Mark Bumgarner said people could also make monetary donations. If individuals want those donations to go to a specific county, they can request that.

Bumgarner said North Carolina United Way, the Red Cross and Samaritan's Purse were other options for monetary donations.

Klingspor Abrasives is collecting donations and supplies to send to Asheville. Items can be dropped off at 2566 Third Ave. NW in Hickory.

"We are collecting everything at our office here in Hickory," Klingspor Abrasives Vice President Anton Klingspor said in an email. "And then will truck everything over to Concord where Operation Airdrop (volunteer pilot organization) will get everything flown up to the disaster areas."

Klingspor Abrasives is asking for powdered sports drink packets, baby wipes, diapers for adults and children, baby formula, bug spray, sunscreen, plastic utensils, manual can openers, large trash bags, nonperishable food, cleaning supplies, plastic tarps, toothbrushes, toothpaste, toiletries, pet food, hand sanitizer, feminine hygiene products, heavy duty work gloves and unopened packs of socks in all sizes.

Klingspor Abrasives will pick up donations for free if donors text 828806-9155.

The Brookford Police Department is accepting donations of water, food, chainsaws and supplies to take to first responders and communities in western North Carolina. Items can be dropped off in the lobby of the Brookford Police Department at 1700 S Center St. in Hickory.

YMCA locations in Catawba, Burke and Lincoln counties are accepting donations. The YMCAs are asking for toiletries, pet food, hand sanitizer, feminine hygiene products, heavy duty work gloves, socks of all sizes, plastic utensils, manual can openers, trash bags, toothbrushes and toothpaste, powered sports drink packets, baby wipes, diapers for children and adults, bug spray, sunscreen, nonperishable foods, cleaning supplies and tarps.

Drop off YMCA donations during normal business hours at the Adrian L. Shuford Jr. YMCA at 1104 Conover Blvd. E. in Conover. Other locations are the Hickory Foundation YMCA, the Lincoln County Family YMCA in Lincolnton, the Sally's YMCA in Denver and the Phifer Family YMCA in Burke County.

The town of Long View is collecting items to take to Burke County for distribution. Donations can be dropped off at the town hall, 2404 First Ave. SW, during normal business hours until Oct. 7.

Long View is asking for bottled water, powdered sports drink packets, cleaning supplies, baby items, pet food, cat litter, toiletries, heavy duty trash bags, toilet paper, plastic utensils, paper plates, paper cups, toothbrushes and toothpaste, socks of all sizes, blankets, sunscreen, bug spray, batteries, flashlights, manual can openers and nonperishable food.

Sarah Johnson is the courts and breaking news reporter for the Hickory Daily Record.

© Copyright 2024, Hickory Daily Record, Hickory, NC

• Citation (aglc Style)

SARAH C. JOHNSON AND BILLY CHAPMAN sjohnson@hickoryrecord.comwchapman@hickoryrecord.com, 'County donating food and supplies to western North Carolina', *Hickory Daily Record* (online), 3 Oct 2024
https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BFA42E1D22A610



Lookout Shoals flooding leaves muddy mess

October 3, 2024 | Hickory Daily Record (NC) Author: SARAH C. JOHNSON sjohnson@hickoryrecord.com| Section: News | 681 Words OpenURL Link

Yards and homes along the shoreline of Lookout Shoals Lake in northeastern Catawba County were left littered with mud and debris in the wake of Hurricane Helene, which was a tropical storm by the time it hit the area on Friday.

Terry Fox, 77, and his brother-in-law Mark Lindsey, 63, were removing trash and tree branches from around their boat docks on Monday. A washed-away pontoon boat floated next to Fox's yard.

Lindsey said multiple pontoon boats and docks got washed down the river and over the dam. "(The dam) looked like Niagara Falls," Lindsey said.

Lookout Shoals Lake began flooding on Thursday. Over the weekend, the water levels crested at 109.5 feet. The maximum level for the lake is 100 feet. The waters receded to 102.6 feet as of 2 p.m. on Monday, according to Duke Energy's website.

"The Catawba River Basin is experiencing increased inflows and higher lake levels from recent rainfall," the website said. "Duke Energy continues to move water through the river system. High water conditions can create navigational hazards. Please pay close attention to changing weather conditions and take any necessary precautions."

Lake Hickory peaked at around 99.8 feet. The maximum level for Lake Hickory is 100 feet. The Oxford Dam has multiple gates open, according to Duke Energy. Due to the rapidly flowing water, the N.C. Highway 16 bridge is estimated to be closed until Oct. 10, according to DriveNC.gov.

Lindsey said the water had a whirlpool effect. The water rushed toward the houses then changed direction and headed back toward the dam. When the water was rushing toward the shore, a dock came loose and crashed into Lindsey's dock. "That was about 2 a.m. I think," Lindsey said. "I got my pontoon and pulled it (the loose dock) away so that it wouldn't damage anything else. We pulled it out into the lake far enough that the current would take it down and it went over the dam."

Fox, of Statesville, owns a house on Lookout Shoals Lake next to Lindsey's lake house. Fox uses his house as a weekend getaway. Lindsey lives on the lake year-round, he said. Fox and Lindsey were some of the lucky few whose houses did not flood.

Lindsey said one of his neighbors had about 8 inches of water enter his home.

"Most of the docks, during the night, floated up. Normally the posts would hold them in position, but they floated off their posts," Lindsey said. "We had to be out here in our kayaks and try to guide them (the docks) back down as the water receded to get them back in place."

Fox, Lindsey and Scott Tomlin, 61, are all familiar with the flooding that can happen at Lookout Shoals Lake. Tomlin has lived on the lake for 20 years. Lindsey's parents bought his house in 1988. Lindsey got the house in 2013. Fox spent most of his life around Lookout Shoals Lake.

"Whenever they turn it (the water) loose at Oxford (Dam), it fills up here fast," Fox said.

Tomlin owns two houses on Lookout Shoals Lake. Tomlin was remodeling his secondary property to be a guest house. His primary residence did not flood, but the guest house did.

Tomlin was nearly done with the remodel project of his guest house. Following a flood in 2019, the interior of the guest house was ruined. Tomlin gutted the inside and replaced the doors, floors, walls and insulation. He said he will have to start over.

Once the water receded out of the guest house, Tomlin put dehumidifiers inside, he said.

"We went and stayed in a camper up at my shop (in Statesville) Friday night," Tomlin said. "We came back the next morning. (The water) was going down, so we knew we were good then."

On Monday, the water receded away from the houses, but Tomlin's yards were still flooded. A muddy line traced around the exterior of his guest house marking the previous depth of the water. The water marks were about a foot above the crawl space. The walkway to Tomlin's pier was still submerged.

Sarah Johnson is the courts and breaking news reporter for the Hickory Daily Record.

© Copyright 2024, Hickory Daily Record, Hickory, NC

• Citation (aglc Style)

SARAH C. JOHNSON sjohnson@hickoryrecord.com, 'Lookout Shoals flooding leaves muddy mess', *Hickory Daily Record* (online), 3 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BFA42E51597F70>



VOLUNTEERS, MILITARY SET UP STAGING AREA

October 3, 2024 | Hickory Daily Record (NC) Author: BILLY CHAPMAN wchapman@hickoryrecord.com| Section: News| 760 Words OpenURL Link

HICKORY REGIONAL AIRPORT

Hickory Regional Airport is seeing increased traffic as state and federal governments, nonprofits and local residents come together for western North Carolina relief.

Matt McSwain with Acme Aero in Maiden said he was coordinating with Operation Airdrop to take supplies to areas affected by the remnants of Hurricane Helene, which was a tropical storm by the time it hit western North Carolina on Friday.

"With us being local, they knew we were boots on the ground, so they contacted us to get this thing up and running until they get here," McSwain said. "We've got volunteer helicopters from all over the East Coast."

In addition to delivering supplies, McSwain said the organization is working on extracting people. On Sunday, McSwain said the organization took about 60 trips to the mountains and extracted about 50 people in need of medical attention.

Hickory Deputy City Manager Rodney Miller said injured survivors were being triaged at the Hickory airport before being released or sent to area hospitals.

On Sunday, evacuees from Lees-McRae College were brought to Hickory in military helicopters.

Helene dropped as much as 30 inches of rain on some communities in the western part of the state Thursday night and Friday, causing flooding and mudslides that have left some communities inaccessible by ground.

"Here's the truth: We're doing something that hasn't been done before, especially in this area," McSwain told volunteers at a meeting Monday morning. "We're basically taking a civilian rotorcraft operation and making it basically a military operation until the military get here for us to stand down."

Before releasing pilots, McSwain mentioned the difficulty of their mission due to the rugged terrain. He also warned those in the air about the dangers of drones trying to get pictures and videos of the devastation in the mountains.

Other organizations were at the airport to assist with search-and-rescue missions and extraction.

Members of the U.S. Army 82nd Airborne Division from Fort Liberty, North Carolina, were also on hand to assist pilots.

Chad Walton with Carolina Emergency Response Team, a North Carolina nonprofit, said his organization would assist in medical evacuations and providing wellness checks.

Gideon Rescue, an Oklahoma-based organization, brought four dogs and three team members to the Hickory airport. The team members were going to Newland for search and rescue.

Donations pour in

Catawba County United Way Executive Director Mark Bumgarner said the agency is collecting bottled water, diapers for all ages infant through adult, baby formula and wipes.

Donations were being dropped off at the Hickory airport over the weekend. Monday morning, the city of Hickory said donations were no longer being accepted at the Hickory airport.

As of Monday, United Way had several drop-off locations and was working on securing other locations for donations.

Bumgarner said people should bring supplies to one of the designated sites because the airport was getting too busy.

Bumgarner said he understood people wanted to help, but it was imperative people only bring needed items.

"People are bringing stuff that's not helpful, and it's slowing down the process," Bumgarner said.

Bumgarner added first aid supplies, personal hygiene supplies and bar soap were critical needs. He said people should not bring heavier items, such as clothes, shoes and mattress covers.

"If you're going to bring food, the only food you should bring are individually wrapped snacks," Bumgarner said.

"The boxes of Lance crackers ... things you can unwrap, things that are single serving. Again, keep weight in mind.

The lighter the better."

Bumgarner said weight was a factor because supplies have to be airlifted into remote areas only accessible by air.

Billy Chapman is a reporter for the Hickory Daily Record. wchapman@hickoryrecord.com

Where to donate supplies

The United Way currently has drop-off locations for supplies:

Catawba county united Way office - 2760 Tate Blvd se in hickory, 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. Monday through Thursday

WHKY office—526 Main avenue se, hickory, 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. Monday through Friday

Conover Fire department, Fire station #3—1776 Village square NW, Conover, 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. Monday through Friday

Hickory Motor speedway, 3130 U.S. highway 70 se, Newton, 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. Monday through Friday

The agency is requesting these items:

Water

Hygiene products

Diapers, adult and child

First aid supplies

Snack foods - Individually wrapped items.

Baby formula and baby food

Wet wipes

Volunteers are being sought to assist at donation sites. If you are interested in volunteering, contact

volunteers@conovernc.gov.

Catawba county united Way executive director Mark Bumgarner said people could also make monetary donations to the united Way. If individuals want those donations to go to a specific county, they can request that.

Bumgarner said North Carolina united Way, the red cross and Samaritan's Purse were other options for monetary donations.

For more information, contact the united Way at 828-327-6851.

© Copyright 2024, Hickory Daily Record, Hickory, NC

• Citation (aglc Style)

BILLY CHAPMAN wchapman@hickoryrecord.com, 'VOLUNTEERS, MILITARY SET UP STAGING AREA', *Hickory Daily Record* (online), 3 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BFA42DE79DF7C0



Youth soccer group collects Helene relief donations

October 3, 2024 | High Point Enterprise (NC) Author: NEWS STAFF| Section: Local | 293 Words OpenURL Link

Carolina Core Footbal Club Youth is joining with the North Carolina Youth Soccer Association and the Triad Referee Association to support relief efforts for those affected by Tropical Storm Helene in western North Carolina.

Carolina Core FC Youth is collecting donations of essential items at Ivey Redmon Sports Complex in Kernersville. On game days, it also is collecting at Phillips Soccer Complex and High Point Athletic Complex in High Point.

Donations of towels, tarps, non-perishable food items, feminine hygiene products, toiletries, water, cleaning supplies, baby formula, wipes, and diapers are urgently needed. Additionally, the club is accepting donated cleats, soccer balls, and miscellaneous soccer gear in new or good condition.

For those who prefer to make a monetary donation, checks can be delivered to the black mailbox by the door at Ivey Redmon or Phillips Park, with the memo "HELPWNC." Donations aldo can be made through the Carolina Core FC Youth Venmo account @CarolinaCoreFCYouth with the memo "HELPWNC."

Carolina Core FC Youth also plans to donate used or extraneous club-owned materials, such as soccer goals, to the soccer organizations in Western North Carolina that lost their facilities and equipment in the storm, and it encourages other local soccer organizations to consider the same, said Jay Williford, president of the Carolina Core FC Youth Board of Directors.

"By working together with the North Carolina Youth Soccer Association and the Triad Referee Association, we can partner with even more soccer families and organizations to make a significant difference in the lives of those affected by Hurricane Helene," he said. "Not only do we hope this positively affects the victims of this storm but also models and embeds in our youth the importance of being more than a player, as our coaches often challenge our young athletes to think about."

Copyright (c) 2024 High Point Enterprise

• Citation (aglc Style)

NEWS STAFF, 'Youth soccer group collects Helene relief donations', *High Point Enterprise* (online), 3 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C010D12948D518



Travel to NC mountains sharply restricted

October 3, 2024 | High Point Enterprise (NC)

Author: SHARON MYERS PAXTON MEDIA GROUP | Section: Local | 264 Words

OpenURL Link

Anyone who wants to bring relief supplies to the flood-ravaged communities of western North Carolina may not be allowed into the region if they don't check in with state officials before they leave, the N.C. Department of Emergency Management said.

Officials with the department's Business Operations Emergency Center say that most roads west of Hickory remain closed except to emergency vehicles and registered volunteer organizations, and people will not be allowed into the area if they haven't notified officials in advance about what they are bringing and where it is going.

"We must secure these routes for responders and critical partner assets needed for response and recovery efforts," a notice from the center said. "There is a high likelihood that your teams will be turned away at various checkpoints."

Anyone wishing to travel to the area to drop off donations can email requests to BEOC@ncdps.gov with the subject line "Logistics support." The emails should include what is being moved and why special access is needed. It should also include where you are traveling to and from, as well as the expected arrival time.

The N.C. Department of Public Safety said the most-needed donation at this time is money, which can be sent to the North Carolina Disaster Relief Fund at www.nc.gov/disaster-relief-fund-fags.

There are also many churches, businesses and other organizations that are registered Volunteer Organization Active in a Disaster that are collecting donations to be delivered. A list can be found at www.ncvoad.org/members/

Those wishing to volunteer in person can sign up with a Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster at https://www.ncvoad.org/volunteer/.

NCDPS also has a list of resources at www.ncdps.gov/our-organization/emergency-management/hurricane-helene.

Copyright (c) 2024 High Point Enterprise

• Citation (aglc Style)

SHARON MYERS PAXTON MEDIA GROUP, 'Travel to NC mountains sharply restricted', *High Point Enterprise* (online), 3 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BFF954A79679C8



Health risks rising in mountain areas flooded by Helene

October 3, 2024 | McDowell News, The (Marion, NC) Author: JENNIFER HORNEY University of Delaware | Section: News | 682 Words OpenURL Link

Hurricane Helene's flooding has subsided, but health risks are growing in hard-hit regions of the North Carolina mountains, where many people lost access to power and clean water.

More than 160 deaths across the Southeast had been attributed to Hurricane Helene within days of the late September storm, according to The Associated Press, and hundreds of people remained unaccounted for. In many areas hit by flooding, homes were left isolated by damaged roads and bridges. Phone service is down. And electricity is likely to be out for weeks.

As a disaster epidemiologist and a native North Carolinian, I have been hearing stories from the region that are devastating. Contaminated water is one of the leading health risks, but residents also face harm to mental health, stress that exacerbates chronic diseases and several other threats.

Water risks: What you can't see can hurt you

Access to clean water is one of the most urgent health concerns after a flood. People need water for drinking, preparing food, cleaning, bathing, even flushing toilets. Contact with contaminated water can cause serious illnesses.

Floodwater with sewage or other harmful contaminants in it can lead to infectious diseases, particularly among people who are already ill, immunocompromised or have open wounds. Even after the water recedes, residents may underestimate the potential for contamination by unseen bacteria such as fecal coliform, heavy metals such as lead and organic and inorganic contaminants such as pesticides.

In Asheville, the flooding caused so much damage to water treatment facilities and pipes that officials warned the city could be without running water for potentially weeks. Most private wells also require electricity to pump and filter the water, and many people in surrounding areas could be without power for weeks.

State and federal agencies began delivering extra bottled water to the region shortly after the storm, but supplies are limited, and it's likely that a number of people won't be able to reach the distribution sites soon. Access to fresh food is another concern for many areas with roads and bridges washed out.

Inside homes, floodwater can create more health risks, particularly if mold grows on wet fabrics and wallboard. Standing water outside also increases the risk of exposure to mosquitoes carrying diseases such as West Nile virus. Mosquitoes are still active in much of the region in the fall.

Inundation, isolation and access to health care

Many of the images in the news after the hurricane hit showed roads, hospitals and entire towns inundated by floodwaters. In North Carolina, more than 400 roads were closed, blocking access to the major regional health care hub of Asheville, as well as many smaller communities.

While supplies can be airlifted to clinics, residents needing urgent access to treatments such as dialysis or daily medications for substance use disorders may have been cut off. Health care workers may be unable to access their clinics as well.

Cuts and other injuries are common in the aftermath of storms, as people clean up debris, and even small wounds

can become infected. The stress, exertion and exposure to heat can also exacerbate chronic conditions such as cardiovascular and respiratory diseases.

Mental health and long-term effects

Beyond the risks to physical health, the fear, stress and losses can affect mental health.

Research has consistently shown that emergency responders' mental health can suffer in widespread disasters, particularly when they know disaster victims, deal with severe injuries or feel helpless. All of those conditions were present as Hurricane Helene's floodwaters swept away dozens of people, with many more still listed as missing.

Stigma, cost and a lack of mental health care providers all add to the ongoing challenges to mental health after disasters. Research shows that a large percentage of people face mental health challenges after disasters.

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, two federal grant programs provide mental health services support to individuals and communities after disasters. However, one of those sources of funding ends after 60 days, the other after one year. Given the decades of recovery facing western North Carolina after Hurricane Helene, I believe these programs are woefully inadequate to meet the mental health needs of the populations affected by the storm.

© Copyright 2024, The McDowell News, Marion, NC

• Citation (aglc Style)

JENNIFER HORNEY University of Delaware, 'Health risks rising in mountain areas flooded by Helene', *McDowell News, The* (online), 3 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BFA5021BCF4340



Hurricane Helene flooding left Marion restaurant caked in mud. "We're just at a loss."

October 3, 2024 | McDowell News, The (Marion, NC) Author: Chrissy Murphy| Section: Food Drink | 788 Words OpenURL Link

J. Hartman's restaurant on U.S. Highway 70 in Marion closed up shop Thursday, Sept. 26, after emergency management officials came by the restaurant urging people to evacuate.

With Hurricane Helene headed toward western North Carolina, heavy wind, rain and flooding were in store. Owners Jennifer and Jon Hartman were at home on the lake trying to tie off their dock to keep it from floating away if floodwaters rose too high.

"We had no idea," Jennifer said. "Just like anybody else, we didn't know the water was going to come up that high, and I felt like we were pretty safe."

The couple didn't see the restaurant again until photos started popping up on social media of flood damage.

"Someone sent me a picture of the aerial view of the restaurant. ... I was just like, 'Oh my gosh,'" Jennifer said. "I came in here the next morning. At that point, one of my daughters and my in-laws were here, and they were standing on the porch and I could just see the mud. ... My mother-in-law said, she said, 'Prepare yourself ... because it's bad.' I walked in and it was just a disaster ... I was absolutely devastated."

She said mud was covering the floor, booth seats and chairs were strewn around the restaurant.

"This restaurant's ran by myself, my husband, my two daughters, and we've got 60 staff members here," Jennifer said. "It's our livelihood, but it's the 60 staff members' livelihoods. That's been one of my biggest concerns, is how quickly can we reopen to get them back to work."

She said they've hit roadblocks ever since the storm hit.

"We just keep getting hit with more and more bad news," Jennifer said. "Insurance isn't going to cover any of the property damage. The building owner, their insurance isn't going to cover any of the parking lot cleanup. They're not going to cover any of the property damage inside. We're just at a loss."

The restaurant's next steps are unclear. She said they had to throw away about \$30,000 worth of food, filling up two dumpsters, and she doesn't know where to begin with the cleaning process for everything in the building after the water came in and contaminated everything.

"People are worried about their livelihoods," Jennifer said. "We've got an amazing staff and I don't want them to feel lost or worried. Everybody's got so much loss and worry as it is. Them coming back to work is one of our biggest priorities, and I don't know how to do it."

Her mom, Toni Hodge, came from Albermarle to help with storm cleanup. Hodge said she was worried about small businesses like J. Hartman's after the storm. She said she felt like big corporations would be able to recover, but small businesses may struggle with little help from insurance and limited resources.

"You have to weigh so many options," Hodge said. "I think it can be done. I just think it's gonna be a long time."

While things seem bleak, employees and other community volunteers have been coming in to help clean up since Hurricane Helene hit last Friday. By Tuesday afternoon, the floors were clear of any mud and most of the store's furnishings had been moved outside to be rinsed off.

"It's incredibly humbling," Jennifer said. "I don't know how else to describe it."

Pepper Strode, a manager at J. Hartman's, and Angeles Amable, a cook, were two of the employees who were helping with the cleanup at the restaurant Tuesday.

"It's how I pay my bills and I love this family," Strode said. "They're some of the best people I've ever worked for and I want to see this restaurant get back up and running."

Both cried when they saw the restaurant.

"My second home is here," Amable said.

Jennifer's sister, Laura Stotts, posted ways to donate on her Instagram account @diaryof_abandonment. By Tuesday afternoon, Stotts said about \$1,000 had been donated to the restaurant and another \$1,000 had been pledged. Some of the donations came from people who have never met the Hartmans or visited the restaurant.

"There's a whole lot of good people out there," Jennifer said.

She said in the first few days after the storm she felt numb, but seeing all the volunteers coming to help clean up changed that.

"I've been very emotional today. ... The first couple days I was completely numb, no emotion whatsoever, just like a zombie," Jennifer said. "And then the last few days, I can't stop crying."

Brandy Pittman originally headed to Grace Community Church to volunteer, but when the church had enough volunteers for the day, she pivoted to J. Hartman's. She made a call to Nebo Crossing Academy Administrator Dave Likins to get more volunteers on the way for cleanup.

"They're our people," Pittman said. "You don't leave your people hanging."

© Copyright 2024, The McDowell News, Marion, NC

• Citation (aglc Style)

Chrissy Murphy, 'Hurricane Helene flooding left Marion restaurant caked in mud. "We're just at a loss."', *McDowell News, The* (online), 3 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BFA501C5B4B568



245 RESCUED

October 3, 2024 | McDowell News, The (Marion, NC) Author: BILLY CHAPMAN wchapman@hickoryrecord.com| Section: News| 661 Words OpenURL Link

Emergency teams have rescued 245 people in McDowell County since Friday, according to a release from McDowell County Emergency Management.

The remnants of Hurricane Helene hit the area early Friday as a tropical storm, ringing historic flooding, wind and rain. The entire county lost power in the days after.

Twenty-nine individuals were evacuated from an assisted living facility and relocated after a collapsed bridge blocked access to the facility, the release said.

The emergency management agency said helicopters have extracted more than 100 people and 19 pets from areas that may have been unreachable for weeks.

The release said the county is using drones to drop food and water to individuals in dire need.

"We will continue deploying rescue teams, food and water supplies, medical support and volunteers for as long as it takes," McDowell County Emergency Services Director Will Kehler said in the release. "McDowell County is a resilient community. We stand united during this challenging time and are tirelessly working to take care of every one of our neighbors."

6-25 inches of rain

McDowell County continued to have flood advisories early in the week, according to the National Weather Service.

In a statement about a flood advisory Monday, the weather service said 6 to 25 inches of rain fell Wednesday evening to early Friday afternoon from Lake Hickory to the Catawba River headwaters. The weather service said this resulted in "catastrophic and historic inflows" into Catawba River reservoirs, which led to flooding in Marion and areas downstream.

After Helene, Lake James crested at 110.95 feet, which was a new record.

The weather service said it expected nuisance flooding along lake shorelines and adjacent low-lying areas along the Catawba River. Some outbuildings, campgrounds and roads may be impacted by shallow flooding even after flooding receded.

Donations

Donations are being accepted at Universal Advanced Manufacturing Center, located at 634 College Drive in Marion.

Bottled water, baby supplies such as diapers, wipes and baby food, and nonperishable food items can be dropped off between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. daily.

Anyone wishing to volunteer can contact the citizen volunteer coordinator at 828-559-9731.

Help finding people in McDowell

A hotline has been established to report missing or stranded persons, request transportation to a shelter, report

urgent medical equipment needs and for other questions and concerns.

The number for the hotline is 828-652-3241. The county said volunteers are available 24 hours per day, Sunday through Saturday.

Message from mayor

The city of Marion's Facebook page posted a message from Mayor Steve Little on Tuesday.

In the post, Little expressed concern for those affected by Hurricane Helene.

Little also said most residents in Marion had electricity, but the town was keeping in contact with Duke Energy.

"Duke is cooperating with us as much as they can," Little said. "They have many contractors working, but the needs of many other nearby towns and counties are just as great as ours."

At 2:30 p.m. Tuesday, Duke Energy's online power outage map showed nearly 13,000 customers in the county were still without power.

The mayor also thanked residents for conserving water so that the town's reservoir did not run out of water.

"We took a large generator out to provide power to the pumps that bring water from Buck Creek into our water system," Little said. "Our reservoir was very low when we got the generator connected, but it is filling up now."

Distribution points

Five distribution points for supplies are located in McDowell County. Distribution points are open 10 a.m. until noon and 4-6 p.m., depending on availability of supplies.

Woodlawn: Hicks Chapel Church, 6008 U.S. 221 N, Marion

Former TJ's Discount: 8153 U.S. 221 N, Marion

Old Fort: Old Fort Town Hall, 38 Catawba Ave., Old Fort

Marion: New Manna Baptist Church, 225 E. Court St., Marion

Dysartsville: Solid Rock Free Will Baptist Church, 7860 N.C. 226 S, Nebo

Shelters

The following shelters are available in McDowell County:

Glenwood Baptist Church, 155 Glenwood Church Road, Marion

Senior Center in Marion, 100 Spaulding Road, Marion

YMCA of Marion, 348 Grace Corpening Drive, Marion

Grace Community Church will provide meals at their location, 5182 U.S. 70 West, Marion.

Lunch: 11 a.m. until 12:30 p.m.

Dinner: 4-5:30 p.m.

• Citation (aglc Style)

BILLY CHAPMAN wchapman@hickoryrecord.com, '245 RESCUED', *McDowell News, The* (online), 3 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BFA50223978E98



Roads, bridges in McDowell County affected by Hurricane Helene

October 3, 2024 | McDowell News, The (Marion, NC) Author: Sharon McBrayer Morganton News Herald | Section: Government Politics | 403 Words OpenURL Link

The North Carolina Department of Transportation continues to say that travel to western North Carolina is limited to local and hurricane response traffic.

NCDOT said motorists cannot get from North Carolina to Tennessee via Interstate 40 or Interstate 26.

And there are some roads in McDowell and Burke counties that have been damaged or impacted by the storm.

McDowell County roads closed

In McDowell County, bridges that have been affected are:

Interstate 40 near Parker Padgett Road east of Old Fort at mile marker 75 heading east, the right lane is closed.

Interstate 40 east and westbound, near Catawba Avenue in Old Fort at mile marker 73 to 66 at Dunsmore Avenue, is down to one lane due to a mudslide and downed trees. The issue should be resolved by Oct. 10.

U.S. Highway 221, near U.S. Highway 221 North in Woodlawn, is closed in both directions due to a mudslide and downed trees. The impact to traffic is considered high and the estimated date the issue should be resolved is Oct. 10.

Tatertown Loop in Marion is closed in both directions due to a pipe repair. It is expected to be resolved by Oct. 10.

Deepcove Spring Drive in Marion closed in both directions due to pipe failure going to water plant on Clear Creek Road. Issue expected to be resolved by Oct. 10.

Burke County roads closed

David Uchiyama, a spokesperson for NCDOT, said bridges on U.S. and N.C. routes in Burke County have been inspected and officials are currently examining bridges on secondary routes.

The roads in Burke County that have been affected:

Clark Loop is impassable in both directions due to pipe failure.

Rose Carswell Road is closed due to bridge failure.

Oakland Avenue near Enon Drive is closed due to trees in the road.

N.C. Highway 126 at the county line, the bridge over Old Catawba Creek is closed, on the south side of Lake James, around the corner from Lake James Community Church.

N.C. Highway 126, near Benfield Landing Bridge is closed due to structural damage. The road is expected to reopen once repairs are made. That could be anytime through Nov. 30, according to NCDOT.

N.C. Highway 126 near Parks Drive the westbound lane is closed due to shoulder failure. Work on it was expected to be done between Tuesday and Nov. 30, according to NCDOT.

Enola, Near JP Hawkins Circle in Connelly Springs is closed due to power line utility work. Work started early Wednesday and was expected to be completed Thursday evening.

© Copyright 2024, The McDowell News, Marion, NC

• Citation (aglc Style)

Sharon McBrayer Morganton News Herald, 'Roads, bridges in McDowell County affected by Hurricane Helene', *McDowell News, The* (online), 3 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?
p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BFBE836BDD04E8>



McDowell County volunteers help assemble items to be distributed to those in need

October 3, 2024 | McDowell News, The (Marion, NC) Author: DAN CRAWLEY dcrawley@mcdowellnews.com | Section: News | 165 Words OpenURL Link

Volunteers across McDowell County are coming together to help with the area's recovery from the remnants of Hurricane Helene, which was a tropical storm when it hit North Carolina on Friday.

Citizens are working at a collection warehouse managed by the McDowell Chamber of Commerce, located at 632 College Drive in Marion.

Items being stored at the warehouse are being prepared by volunteers and then shipped by McDowell Emergency Services to points of distribution throughout the county.

Five distribution points for supplies are located in McDowell County. Distribution points are open from 10 a.m. until noon and 4-6 p.m., depending on availability of supplies. "

- Woodlawn: Hicks Chapel Church, 6008 U.S. 221 North, Marion
- "• Former TJ's Discount: 8153 U.S. 221 North, Marion "
- Old Fort: Old Fort Town Hall, 38 Catawba Ave., Old Fort "
- Marion: New Manna Baptist Church, 225 E. Court St., Marion "
- Dysartsville: Solid Rock Free Will Baptist Church, 7860 N.C. 226 South, Nebo

Photos of the collection effort were submitted by Mandie Pennell.

@ Copyright 2024, The McDowell News, Marion, NC

• Citation (aglc Style)

DAN CRAWLEY dcrawley@mcdowellnews.com, 'McDowell County volunteers help assemble items to be distributed to those in need', *McDowell News, The* (online), 3 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view? p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BFA50226592768>



Digging out downtown Canton: flood precautions paid off

October 3, 2024 | Mountaineer, The (Waynesville, NC) Author: Vicki Hyatt | Section: News | 721 Words OpenURL Link

CANTON — Hurricane Helene exited Haywood by mid-afternoon Friday and by Saturday, the entire downtown Canton area was cordoned off as town workers cleared nearly 10 inches of mud off the lower end of Park Street and around Sorrells Street Park.

Even though traffic was restricted, it didn't stop area residents from surveying the damage.

On Main Street where flood damage was less evident, businesses remained closed, some without power.

At JROs Burgers and Subs, Randy O'Quinn had power, but said the problems with the retaining wall in the rear of the building had led to portions of the building taking in water.

Down the street at Main Street Dental, new owners Dr. Amy Perlow and her husband Dan Corey were shoveling mud off the sidewalk.

The retaining wall behind their building had collapsed, sending piles of mud down the building's side and into the sidewalk.

"I had been working back there yesterday," Perlow said. "It could have collapsed when I was working back there."

Despite relocating to Canton just five months ago, the couple isn't having any second thoughts about the move from Charlotte.

"Everyone is so friendly. We love it here," Perlow said.

Surveying the damage

The town board and administrators met at town hall Saturday and spent most of the afternoon surveying damage around town. Toward the end of the tour, all were doing double duty, warning those on the streets about the dangers of walking through river debris laced with waste water and the downed power lines.

"I was with the police all night," said Alderwoman Kristina Proctor. "We watched what seeped up through the manholes."

At Riverview Farm and Garden, about a dozen volunteers were helping muck out the single remaining building, the 1916 original brick structure. Five outbuildings were swept away, including the greenhouse, the feed shed, the hay shed and the fertilizer shed.

"It's heartbreaking," said Ronnie Mills, who turned the business over to his daughter and son-in -law six years ago after starting it in 1987. "I'm thinking this is the oldest retail operation in Canton. They'll have some decisions to make." While the extra time to prepare for flooding allowed most of the inventory to be stored safely, there's now the matter of storage location with the buildings gone.

Long term effects

Helene may force Canton to develop a new vision for its future and look again at the role properties play along the Pigeon River, said Mayor Zeb Smathers.

As he walked through town, Smathers was fuming at the inability for anyone to communicate with both cell phone and internet service down across the region.

"This is absolutely inexcusable," he said, vowing to take the case to politicians across the state and region.

The team visited Pisgah Memorial Stadium with its mangled fencing and debris-filled perimeters. The field's turf, replaced in time for play this season, seemed to be mostly intact, a stark contrast to the crumpled and folded turf in 2021. Still, it remains to be seen how repairs will unfold. At the nearby Haywood Recreation Park, the new playground equipment, specifically chosen to withstand the force of flooding, appeared mostly intact. Other than debris that floated in, the elevated area fared far better than the total destruction and mangled mess town leaders found in August 2021 after flooding.

The Canton pool was filled with muddy river water, but all movable equipment, chemicals and machinery had been relocated prior to the expected flooding, leaving town leaders optimistic the damage was minimal.

Isolation

Allison Richmond, the public information officer for Haywood County Emergency Services, had traveled to Canton earlier in the morning to relay information and check on needs in the town. Even the county 911 system was down.

"Everyone is isolated," she said. "We have limited satellite communication, but that's it. Communication is like it was in the 1950s. If someone needs the fire department or police, they have to drive to the station."

Richmond said gas supplies in the county were dwindling, explaining the long gas lines at most service stations in the county. Water is being air lifted in, with the former Haywood County fairgrounds serving as the central supply location.

"People need to stay put," she said. "We need to get the word out that if anyone needs oxygen, the place to get it is at the shelter." County officials have also instructed that anyone on oxygen who goes to the shelter will need to bring his or her concentrator.

Copyright, 2024, Mountaineer, The, All Rights Reserved.

• Citation (aglc Style)

Vicki Hyatt, 'Digging out downtown Canton: flood precautions paid off', *Mountaineer, The* (online), 3 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BFF5E6413D1BB0



Mega list of Haywood flood assistance resources: supplies, food, aid, donations and more

October 3, 2024 | Mountaineer, The (Waynesville, NC) Author: Staff Writer | Section: News | 1331 Words OpenURL Link

The following is a running list of food and supply distribution sites, resources for storm victims, as well as volunteer and donation opportunities. If you have something to add to this list, email bjohnson@themountaineer.com.

Central hotline

Haywood County has set up a hotline for all things Helene. The Emergency Call Center can answer questions, direct people to the right place for the information they're looking for and provide information on resources. Open 8 a.m.–5 p.m. Call 828-356-2020.

Supply distribution for flood victims

Essential supplies will be distributed at the following locations. There will be food, water, baby supplies, pet food, clothing, and limited cleaning supplies. Donations are also accepted at all sites.

Woodland Baptist Church from 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Friday; 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Saturday; and 2-6 p.m. Sunday. Located at 545 Crabtree Rd (on N.C. 209 across from the Smoky Mountain Event Center).

Bethel Elementary School from 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Saturday. Located at 4700 Old River Rd, Canton .

Jonathan Valley Elementary School from 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Saturday. Located at 410 Hall Dr, Waynesville.

Maggie Valley Pavilion from 8 a.m.-8 p.m. Monday-Friday. Located at 3987 Soco Rd.

IP Sports Complex in Canton from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily (seven days a week). This site is being run by the town of Canton, with food, water, household supplies and more. Located at 305 Silkwood Dr, Canton. Shower trailer, and hot meals by Eight Days of Hope from noon-5 p.m. daily.

New Covenant Church from 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Saturday. Located at 767 Lee Rd, Clyde.

Dellwood Baptist Church on Jonathan Creek from 9 a.m.-7:30 p.m. Located at 115 Hall Dr. (beside Jonathan Valley Elementary.)

First United Methodist Church from 9 a.m.-12 p.m. weekdays. Located at 566 S Haywood St.

Donations

For those looking to help, Woodland Baptist Church is accepting donations of supplies to support families in need. All the supply distribution points listed above also accept donations.

"Let's come together as a community to ensure everyone has the resources they need to recover," said Dillon Huffman, Haywood County public information officer.

They are accepting non-perishable food items, bottled water, and other essential supplies. For a complete list of needed items and information on volunteer opportunities, visit theorehardne.com/relief.

Mountain Projects in Waynesville is also accepting donations for flood victims, including household supplies.

Mountain Projects is located on the Old Asheville Highway in Waynesville across from Junaluska Elementary School.

The United Way of Haywood County is being established as a centralized flood donation clearinghouse for monetary donations. Donate at www.uwhaywood.org or mail a check to PO Box 1139, Waynesville, NC 28786. Please note "Tropical Storm Helene Relief" in the memo line.

Community center resources

The following sites are offering community assistance, from a place to shower to charge cell phones.

Pigeon Community Center in Waynesville is serving as a welcome center from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. daily. Food will be served daily at 2 p.m. The center has water, power, charging stations, shovels, trash bags and pet food available. Located at 450 Pigeon St.

First United Methodist Church in Waynesville is serving as a welcome center to assist community members in need Monday to Friday from 9 a.m.-12 p.m. offering food, clothing and shower access. Located at 566 S Haywood St.

Fines Creek Community Center is available to assist community members in need as a welcome center. Located at 190 Fines Creek Rd.

Free meals and food

IP Sports Complex in Canton has free hot meals served from noon-5 p.m. daily seven days a week by Eight Days of Hope. Located at 305 Silkwood Dr, Canton. Shower trailer also available.

Bethel Elementary School has free hot meals (for any child age 0-18, not just flood victims) from 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Friday. Located at 4700 Old River Rd, Canton .

Jonathan Valley Elementary School has free hot meals (for any child age 0-18, not just flood victims) from 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Friday. Located at 410 Hall Dr, Waynesville.

Springdale Golf and Country Club in Cruso is offering free lunch from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Located at 190 Golfwatch Rd.

Clyde Central United Methodist Church on Charles Street is offering meals from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Pigeon Community Center in Waynesville is serving food at 2 p.m. daily.

Haywood Christian Ministry is providing free food assistance Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. in downtown Waynesville at 150 Branner Ave.

First United Methodist Church in Waynesville has food to give away Monday to Friday from 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

Dellwood Baptist Church on Jonathan Creek is serving free food from Appalachian Smoke BBQ food truck, with lunch and dinner on alternating days, along with supply distribution. Located at 115 Hall Dr. (beside Jonathan Valley Elementary.)

Volunteering

A centralize clearinghouse for volunteers is being organized by Orchard Church. To find out how to help and sign up for a volunteer shift, visit theorchardnc.com/relief.

Haywood Christian Ministries is also in need of volunteers to help with food sorting and distribution due to overwhelming need.

First aid station

A First Aid Bus is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Jukebox Junction in Bethel at the intersection of N.C. 110 and U.S. 276. Services include first aid for cuts, scrapes, and burns, as well as blood pressure checks, blood sugar monitoring, and basic medical assistance.

Water supply

Many in Haywood County are without water — from those on well water without power to run their pump to those on disrupted public water systems. Some stores have been running out water.

A water tanker for folks to fill up their own containers (limited to 1 gallon per person per day) are at the following locations between the hours of 8 a.m. and 6 p.m:

Jukebox Junction at 6306 Pigeon Rd (near the crossroads of N.C. 110 and U.S. 276 in Bethel)Crabtree/Ironduff Fire Department at 99 Susie Noland Rd.

Bottled water is also being distributed at at Woodland Baptist Church on N.C. 209 near the fairgrounds and at Jonathan Valley and Bethel Elementary schools.

Listening Circles

Big events can hit us hard and affect us in many ways. Listening Circles help us name what is most difficult about them and practice tools that can help with the stress, right now.

If you are feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or upset; if you saw or responded to something hard; or if you are looking to connect with others in the community, join an online listening circle as we lean on one another and highlight what is getting us through this difficult time.

Held over Zoom from noon-1 p.m. every day through Oct. 18. Free, no sign-up needed. Go to bit.ly/WNCListens or call 646-876-9923 (meeting ID 847 0135 3002).

Learn more about Resources for Resilience Listening Circles by watching a short video at bit.ly/AboutListeningCircles.

Flood clean-up assistance

If you or someone you know needs help cleaning up damage from Hurricane Helene at your home/residence or house of worship, call Crisis Cleanup at 844-965-1386 to ask for help.

Crisis Cleanup is 100% free service that connects volunteers from local and national relief organizations, community groups, and faith communities who may be able to assist with mucking out after floods, moving debris to curbs, tarping roofs, and chain-sawing downed trees.

Free legal assistance

Free legal assistance is available to victims of Tropical Storm Helene. Through a partnership among Legal Aid of North Carolina, the North Carolina Bar Association, the American Bar Association, and FEMA, low-income storm survivors can access free legal help via a toll-free hotline: 866-219-5262.

This service connects eligible callers with volunteer lawyers to assist with FEMA appeals, insurance claims, contractor disputes, and more. It's a critical resource for those navigating the aftermath of the storm.

Well testing and ag assistance

For well water testing, call 828-452-6638.

For agriculture assistance, call 828-452-2741 ext 3.

Shelter

The shelter at the old armory in Clyde beside Haywood Community College is still open. Located at 235 Armory Drive, Clyde. If you need oxygen, you can go to the emergency shelter. Just bring your concentrator.

FEMA

People in North Carolina affected by Helene can apply for disaster assistance on DisasterAssistance.gov, on the FEMA App or by calling 1-800-621-3362.

Copyright, 2024, Mountaineer, The, All Rights Reserved.

• Citation (aglc Style)

Staff Writer, 'Mega list of Haywood flood assistance resources: supplies, food, aid, donations and more', *Mountaineer, The* (online), 3 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BFF5E635D63618>



Locals step up to feed stranded truckers

October 3, 2024 | Mountaineer, The (Waynesville, NC) Author: Kathy N Ross| Section: Life | 321 Words OpenURL Link

The chaos of Helene did not distract Haywood County residents enough for them to bypass group of hungry and stranded travelers Saturday.

A number of truck drivers found themselves stranded at the Pilot fuel station off exit 24 in the Crabtree community. Low on fuel, with Interstate 40 west shut down and power out to most of the region, they couldn't afford to drive back east in search of another travel center that had power. So they waited.

Some waited for 24 hours – and they were hungry. Though the Pilot was well stocked with food, the staff said they could not sell to the drivers without their electrical system in place, not even on a cash and carry basis.

Several truck drivers started trying to spot motorists who looked like they were locals, offering to pay if they would bring back food.

"We've got plenty of cash, we just need to eat," one driver said.

Enter Mark Sullivan. Sullivan, who lives in Crabtree near Presnell's Produce, headed to the house for his propane stove, a portable table and some food. He also returned with the bacon donated by a neighbor. Growers donated produce, others donated bread, one motorist provided a stack of paper plates. Others brought chips and sandwich meat for later. Sullivan left his grill and a significant portion of hamburger meat and Ramen noodles for supper.

Sullivan was joined by Perry Karaha, a truck driver, who made pancakes, and Nick Stockton, a student at Western Carolina University as well as two Canadians, Anubhav and Manjet. The improv kitchen crew fed all who needed a meal, from drivers to stranded travelers.

Amber Outlaw, who has been general manager at Pilot for only two weeks, said the volunteers made a difficult situation much easier – as did many of those waiting for the power and a turn at the fuel pumps.

"It's been a wonderful thing, to see the neighbors who have come to help," she said.

Copyright, 2024, Mountaineer, The, All Rights Reserved.

• Citation (aglc Style)

Kathy N Ross, 'Locals step up to feed stranded truckers', *Mountaineer, The* (online), 3 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BFB71B238D49B0



Post-flood status report: daily updates and useful things to know

October 3, 2024 | Mountaineer, The (Waynesville, NC) Author: Staff Writer | Section: News | 1566 Words OpenURL Link

The following is a running list of important updates on flood recovery in Haywood County — from groceries, I-40, water status, mail routes, power, school, travel advisories and more. This list is updated with need-to-know information daily online, as well as print editions of The Mountaineer.

If you have something to share in this community bulletin board, email bjohnson@themountaineer.com.

For a list of assistance and resources, as well as volunteer and donation opportunities, visit the link below.

Ingles supply chain

Ingles Markets central distribution center in Swannanoa was severely impacted by the flood, which in turn has affected stocking of Ingles grocery stores across the region. Ingles issued the following public statement on Oct. 4:

"Our hearts are heavy for those in our communities who lost lives, loved ones, homes and access to basic necessities. Hurricane Helene brought with it unprecedented flooding and property damage, together with continuing power and water outages, which have impacted our footprint of operations.

Currently, of our 198 stores, 186 stores are open for business, but a lack of internet access and other connectivity has limited transactions in many locations. Of the locations that remain closed, we expect all will reopen upon restoration of power to their respective areas, but we do not have a timeline for power restoration."

School status

Haywood County Schools are closed through at least Friday, Oct. 11, for students and teachers. This amounts to 12 lost days of school. A determination of whether to resume school the following week has not been made. Advanced notice of 48 hours will be given before school resumes again.

The following report was as of Tuesday:

Two schools were still without power — Clyde and Bethel Elementary. Riverbend has no sewer pending a line repair within the next week or so. Busses are unable to traverse their normal routes due to washed out roads, but the school system is planning modified bus routes with community pick-up points where roads aren't navigable by busses.

The biggest obstacle in returning to school is the disruption of communications — along with the server that functions as the central nervous system for the school system being down. This poses a safety concern as schools have no way to notify parents in the event of an emergency.

Water contamination

Canton remains under a boil water advisory due to a 6" inch water line break. This does not affect Clyde, as Clyde is now getting its water from Waynesville's reservoir instead of from Canton.

The boil water advisory for the town of Maggie Valley has been lifted. Waynesville's boil water advisory was lifted within a couple of days of the storm, which also applies to those on Lake Junaluska's system and Junaluska Sanitary, both of which get water from Waynesville.

Power

As of Monday, 13,000 homes in Haywood County were still without power. As of early Thursday morning, that number was 6,438 — around 16% of the county. As of Friday evening, only 2,356 homes remained without power.

Duke Energy had 1,261 customers without power in Haywood.

Haywood Electric Membership Corporation had 1,095 customers without power.

Internet and cell service

Internet service with Spectrum appears to have been restored for at least part of Haywood County as of Wednesday evening. Most of the fiber network in Haywood County has been restored.

For those with Skyrunner, the internet service is now shifting its focus to bringing the wireless infrastructure back online and will begin assessing and addressing drop repairs in the coming days. For those with Zito, Zito is aware of multiple utility poles down, specifically in the Cruso and Canton areas. Zito is working on a temporary solution to get service back to residents until the poles can be replaced.

Haywood County officials are unsure when cell service will be fully functional. Cell customers with Verizon are facing the most trouble with service. Those with AT&T and T-Mobile have service for the most part.

An AT&T mobile tower has been set up in Waynesville, which has helped with service for those on AT&T. A Verizon mobile tower has been requested but due to high demand, none have been procurred yet. Verizon mobile tours from across the country are being brought to flood areas in WNC, and Haywood hopefully in line to get one at some point.

Interstate travel

A landslide in the Pigeon River Gorge on Interstate 40 has prompted an I-40 closure west of Fines Creek exit 15. While there is varying degrees of damage along a more than two-mile stretch of I-40, the east bound lanes are completely gone in one spot. The road bed sheered off on the downhill side, collapsing out from under the asphalt and taking the interstate with it.

The damage is so extensive it could 3-4 years to rebuild, according to early projections.

To the east, a landslide has blocked I-40 around Old Fort, with only emergency vehicles granted passage. I-40 remains open between Haywood and Asheville.

Meanwhile, I-26 heading north is closed at the Tennessee line due to a washed out a bridge near Unicoi, Tenn.

Mail

The USPS is delivering mail wherever possible. If they are unable to reach you due to washed out roads or debris, your mail will be held for pickup at your local post office.

Amazon deliveries are suspended, but an update is expected next week.

Court Schedule

All Haywood County courts were canceled this week. On Monday, Oct. 7, Haywood County courts will be open to handle emergency hearings and statutorily required hearings.

Fatalities

As of Friday afternoon, Haywood County officials have reported five known fatalities in the county during the flood.

An effort has been underway across the county since Saturday to visit homes in the path of the flood or landslides, or rendered inaccessible by washed out roads and bridges. The wellness checks have been a joint effort of law enforcement, firefighters, public works crews, first responders and outside agencies that have come in to aid with response and recovery.

Tourism discouraged

Haywood County officials have issued the following notice discouraging tourism.

"It is too dangerous to travel to Haywood County right now. While many of you are excited about the upcoming leaf season, the aftermath of Helene has created unsafe conditions across the region. Flooding, landslides, downed trees, power outages, and poor cell service are making travel unsafe at this time. Additionally, there is no food, water, or fuel in the area, and many places are only accepting cash. We know this is not ideal, and we would love to have visitors in our beautiful region, but now is not the time. State and local officials are urging everyone to postpone any plans to visit."

Curfew

A curfew was imposed across all of Haywood County from 9 p.m. until 7 a.m. while recovery efforts continue. By 9 p.m., no one should be out or on the roads.

Debris and trash sites

The White Oak Landfill is open again, following a closure due to no power.

The Materials Recovery Facility and Convenience Centers at Jonathan Creek, Beaverdam, Bethel, Hazelwood, Mauney Cove, Jones Cove, and N.C. 110 are also open.

At this time, the county sites can only accept household waste. Storm debris and demolition materials must be taken to the landfill or placed beside public roads for pick up.

"Please ensure that debris is placed beside, not on, the road," Haywood County Information Office Dillon Huffman said. "Debris should be placed next to state maintained roads, not private roads."

Whenever possible, separate tree debris from construction materials. Debris should be photographed for documentation purposes.

Gas, groceries and cash

Gas is now easier to find, with more stations having gas and lines being shorter. In fact, by Thursday morning, lines had almost dissipated.

Many stores were only taking cash as of Wednesday, leading to a run on ATM machines. But restoration of internet overnight Wednesday means most businesses are now able to process credit card transactions.

Grocery store shelves are still empty in some aisles. In the days after the storm, some grocery stores implemented lines outside to limit the number of people inside at any one time, in part due to skeleton crews coupled with high demands.

Landslides and washed out roads

Landslides have washed out roads and bridges countywide — from Cruso to Maggie Valley. Landslides have left many residents stranded and isolated — without power or communications.

"It's different this time because it's not just Cruso. We've seen damage across the entire county," Huffman said.
"Dozens of landslides and probably more than that."

Waynesville Firefighter Luke Palmer was among a team of Waynesville firefighters who hiked through Camp Branch, going door to door to homes cut off by landslides and collapsed roads.

"You have catastrophic mudslides, and the only access to their homes are destroyed," Palmer said.

In Appalachian fashion, neighbors have been pitching in to dig each other out.

"The community came together with their equipment — their dump trucks, dozers, excavators, you name it — and managed to get roads built back to the point people can at least get out."

Dams didn't fail

An alarming but false rumor circulated through Haywood County Friday that the Lake Junaluska dam had failed. Dispelling the rumor in a county with spotty cell, phone and internet service was a challenge.

The following public alert was sent out by the Haywood County Sheriff's Office: "Lake Junaluska dam has NOT collapsed. It is functioning as designed — serving as a spillway to manage excess water. The dam is being closely monitored by officials to monitor safety and proper operation."

Meanwhile, a rumor began circulating in Cocke County, Tennessee, that the Waterville Dam on the Pigeon River in Haywood County at the state line had collapsed. Also not true.

Copyright, 2024, Mountaineer, The, All Rights Reserved.

• Citation (aglc Style)

Staff Writer, 'Post-flood status report: daily updates and useful things to know', *Mountaineer, The* (online), 3 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C048A32FA0C3A8



State parks in Western disaster zones closed indefinitely

October 3, 2024 | Mt. Airy News, The (NC) Author: Ryan Kelly | Section: News | 387 Words OpenURL Link

Following the devastation felt in the Western reaches of the state following Hurricane Helene, the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources announced the closure of all state parks in the affected areas.

"All North Carolina state parks West of Interstate 77 and closed through at least Oct. 31," the Division of Parks and Recreation announced in a statement.

These parks include Chimney Rock, Crowders Mountain, Elk Knob, Gorges, Grandfather Mountain, Lake James, Lake Norman, Mount Mitchell, New River, South Mountains, and Stone Mountains state parks, as well as Mount Jefferson State Natural Area and Rendezvous Mountain.

In addition to the closure of the parks, all events and programs at all state parks have been canceled through Oct. 31, which exceptions made for events near month's end at Carolina Beach, Fort Macon State Park, and the Dismal Swamp State Park.

"The division is assisting with the statewide emergency and rescue efforts in western North Carolina, in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene. About 30 staff have been deployed on law enforcement assignments requested through the North Carolina Emergency Operations Center," the state wrote.

They said scaling back operations across the state will allow their staff to, "Continue to assist with critical deployments. In addition, the closure of western parks can help limit travel in the area while roads and other infrastructure are repaired and replaced."

"The devastation brought by Helene in many communities across western North Carolina has been profound," said State Parks Director Brian Strong. "The entire division wants to provide whatever assistance we can to our neighbors and to these areas that were hit hardest. We want to prioritize our resources, both staff and equipment, towards immediate and lifesaving needs."

He added that once the vital needs of post-storm recovery efforts have been met, staff will focus then on recreational facilities at parks such as visitors centers, trails, and campsites.

"In the last few days alone, we have seen the entire state come together to support each other during this difficult time," Strong said. "We know our parks are beloved by North Carolinians, but we also know our visitors are eager to help those who are grieving and those who have lost so much because of this storm."

All reservations for campsites and other facilities such as picnic shelters at western state parks through Oct. 31 have been canceled and refunded in full.

@ 2024 The Mt. Airy News. All Rights Reserved.

• Citation (aglc Style)

Ryan Kelly, 'State parks in Western disaster zones closed indefinitely', *Mt. Airy News, The* (online), 3 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BFF5E8DDECOCA8