

SHEER TERROR

October 10, 2024 | News Herald, The (Morganton, NC) Author: CHRISSY MURPHY cmurphy@morganton.com| Section: Sheer Terror | 1277 Words OpenURL Link

It's not unusual for Wilson Creek to flood, with water rising several feet during periods of heavy rain.

But at Brown Mountain Beach Resort, nestled on the creek's banks between the northern mountains of Burke and Caldwell counties, floodwaters had never reached the yurts and cabins guests use at the resort.

As Hurricane Helene approached Jeremy and Kelsey Wallace, who help run the resort and wedding venue, expected flooding but nothing dangerous.

The Wallaces were wrong. The couple lost a home and nearly their lives as the creek rose from 2 feet to 28 feet deep. Kelsey, who helps plan weddings at the resort owned by her family, had a couple there that expected to get married that weekend.

Sheer terror

When the water started rising at the resort, Jeremy's mother-in-law, Wendy McDaniel, was trapped inside her house at the end of the property with her dog, Max.

Jeremy Wallace tried to walk to the house to carry her out, but the water was too strong. He and a neighbor, Mike, grabbed a canoe and made their way to the home.

"By the time I got there, the water was already up over the front door," Wallace said.

Wallace pried the door open, fighting against the current, and water started to pour into the home. Once McDaniel and Max were out of the house, they all piled into the canoe and tried to make it across the water to higher ground.

The canoe capsized. "I'll never forget Wendy's face," Wallace said. "She's 70 years old, maybe 71 now, and sheer terror because it was a rushing, raging river."

They fought against the water for a while, seeking refuge behind a building that ended up getting washed away.

The three adults and one dog needed another plan.

"In the back of that building, we stopped and I called out to Jesus," Wallace said. "I said, 'Please help M us.'" W

A tree fell, landing against another tree, and they climbed it. For hours, they prayed the tree would hold, watching as McDaniel's home was washed off its foundation. Mike swam to higher ground.

Moments later, another neighbor, Jessica, floated by them on top of a round bale of hay. Wallace yelled for her to get in a tree.

"I hear her scream and yell and holler, and then just nothing," Wallace said. "I thought for sure Jessica was dead. It was that serious of a scenario."

Eventually, though, the water started to come down. Jeremy strobed a flashlight at a neighbor who was driving down the road, the first contact he made with another person since seeing Mike and Jessica. A little while later, he saw Kelsey walking by.

"I couldn't shake my arms enough to express how happy I was to see her," Jeremy said.

Groom rescues wedding planner

While Jeremy and Wendy held strong in their tree, Kelsey was on higher ground, rounding up their children — Lexi, 13, Ruthie, 4, and Caleb, 2 — to take them to higher ground. When she realized what was happening, she and her friend, Jessica, tried to help.

"There was no plan, it was just to help, because that's what we do. We help people, right?" Kelsey said. "That's what we're supposed to do."

It was a rescue mission that went awry within moments. Kelsey had to shed her sweatshirt and rain boots to keep from getting dragged down into the water. Jessica was about 20 feet in front of Kelsey when she disappeared, only to reappear climbing a hay bale.

Kelsey realized she needed to find higher ground quickly, climbing atop a dump truck on the property.

Kelsey said she heard shrill screams. "I had no clue what's going on because I can't see anything," she said.

Sitting on top of the truck, she heard someone yell for her to come grab on to a gas tank that was tied to a rope. Another neighbor, Eric, and a groom who was set to get married that weekend, Trevor, had thrown the gas can into the water and were going to use the rope to pull her to safety.

The rope came up about 20 feet short, so she jumped to a horse trailer and crawled across it to get closer to the rope. Once she got into the water and grabbed ahold of the gas can and rope, she was getting hit in the stomach with logs as the rapids tumbled trees down the river.

Trevor and Eric helped pull her to shore. The mother of the bride opened her suitcase and gave Kelsey new clothes to wear.

"That was really the beginning of people just loving simply because we're human," Kelsey said.

Family filled with hope despite losses

With the property damage and the loss of revenue, Kelsey estimated the business would lose more than \$1 million. She and Jeremy are without a home after it was flooded, and the McDaniel home was destroyed by the flooding.

Now, they are focusing their efforts on getting their business up and running. "We have a responsibility to these employees," Kelsey said. "That's what we signed up for. We gotta get food on tables, not just ours. There's several people relying on this business to put food on their table, too."

Everyone is safe besides bumps, bruises, scratches and bug bites. Even Max, Wendy's golden doodle, wandered back home a few hours after the ordeal. The family's alpacas, goats and donkeys survived. About 25 chickens did not.

The real story, Kelsey said, is how the community pulled together to help during the storm, and the show of support since the storm. "People are good," Kelsey said. "There's so many good people, and that's how we survive. We don't survive with the government's help, it's just help from our neighbors. That's what makes America, America."

She said she thinks people need to take a step back from the daily vitriol politics can cause and see how good their neighbors can be.

"Look around you," Kelsey said. "How wonderful. People just love to love."

She said a few days after the storm, her friends Amy and John Moore texted that they were coming up with their employees from Brushy Mountain Builders to get started on cleanup.

"I said, 'Amy, I don't know where to start. We don't have a home,'" Kelsey said. "She said, 'Well, let's just start. Let's just start together.'"

The group started small, just picking up insulation.

"We call it moving rocks ... that's what we do with our family, we just move rocks and get over trauma and talk about it and heal together, and now here we are moving rocks again," Kelsey said.

Brushy Mountain Builders paid their staff for two days to come out and help at Brown Mountain Beach Resort. On the third day, many came back to help as volunteers.

"It's who we are," Amy said. "There's a lot of people helping (everywhere). It's overwhelming to see how many people."

Kelsey said it made her speechless to see folks coming together to help after Helene.

"Look around," Kelsey said. "There's so much love and hope."

She added, "Our job is to help, and now, to see people coming out, it's world-moving. ... That's how the change starts."

Chrissy Murphy is a staff writer and can be reached at cmurphy@morganton.com or at 828-432-8941.

Who's who?

Kelsey Wallace: Manager of brown Mountain beach resort, helps plan weddings. Married to Jeremy Wallace. Lives on property.

Jeremy Wallace: Manager of brown Mountain beach resort. Married to Kelsey Wallace. Lives on property.

Wendy McDaniel: Owns brown Mountain beach resort. Lives on property.

Mike: A neighbor and kayaker who helped Jeremy and Wendy.

Jessica: A neighbor who helped Kelsey.

Trevor: The groom who was set to get married the weekend Helene hit western North Carolina.

Eric: A neighbor who helped rescue Kelsey.

Max: McDaniel's dog, a golden doodle.

Amy and John Moore: Owners of brushy Mountain builders and friends of Kelsey and Jeremy.

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Medicaid, food stamp adjustments for hurricane relief efforts

October 10, 2024 | News Herald, The (Morganton, NC) Author: RICHARD CRAVER WinstonSalem Journal | Section: News | 386 Words OpenURL Link

The state Department of Health and Human Services has issued several logistical updates on serving western North Carolina residents with food and Medicaid/ Medicare benefits as they attempt to recover from Hurricane Helene.

The state Medicaid program has been granted additional temporary changes to help with continued care during recovery efforts. The changes will remain in effect until the end of the Hurricane Public Health Emergency declaration for North Carolina

The temporary changes are intended to support hospitals, psychiatric hospitals, critical access hospitals, cancer centers and long-term care facilities.

The changes allow hospitals, including psychiatric hospitals, to treat patients who need emergency care at locations other than the hospital where needed. It allows hospitals to use additional spaces in their building to provide patient care.

For critical access hospitals, they can temporarily exceed their maximum of 25 beds, as well as keep patients for more than 96 hours and establish surge locations outside of rural areas. Inpatient rehabilitation facilities can serve people who need care as a result of the emergency.

Hospitals can allow new doctors to practice before the credentialing and privileging process is completed.

In addition, out-of-state practitioners who are licensed in another state can provide care as long as they are enrolled in Medicare, have a valid license and are not excluded from practice in North Carolina.

Hospitals in affected counties that participate in Medicare and are approved to provide post-hospital skilled nursing facility care can do so for patients who no longer need acute care. They can provide this care for patients who are unable to find placement in a skilled nursing facility.

Nursing homes can admit new residents who have not completed typical preadmission screenings and instead can complete those screenings postadmission so that people can get the care they need more quickly.

Long-term care acute hospitals do not need to follow the 25-day average length of stay requirement for patients who need longer stays due to the emergency. This will help people who may no longer have a safe place to transition to due to the emergency.

Intermediate care facilities for individuals with intellectual disabilities can use additional spaces like activity rooms as resident rooms.

To replace damaged medical equipment, prosthetics, orthotics and supplies more easily, people will not need a face-to-face appointment or a new physician's order. Lost or damaged drugs covered by Medicare Part B can be refilled.

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Local sports restart with Freedom-Patton volleyball, 2 others

October 10, 2024 | News Herald, The (Morganton, NC) Author: FROM STAFF REPORTS | Section: News | 322 Words OpenURL Link

The Patton volleyball team returned to nonconference action following a two week break due to Hurricane Helene, getting back into rhythm with a Senior Night sweep of visiting crosstown rival Freedom on Monday in Morganton, 25-23, 25-21, 25-19.

The Lady Panthers' seniors include Abigail Carpenter, Reece Edwards, Kate Clark and Anna Lynn Ripley.

Offensively, PHS (14-4) was led by Hannah Huggins (10 kills, six aces), Ripley (eight kills, four aces), Soraya Hartman (seven kills), Edwards (six kills, four aces), Clark (four kills, ace), Kynzlee Worley (two kills), Carpenter (kill, 24 assists), Carly Setterlind (kill, ace, four assists) and Emma Griffin (seven assists). The Patton defense was paced by Setterlind (21 digs, 35 receptions), Carpenter (six digs), Clark (five digs, seven receptions), Ripley (five digs, 15 receptions), Edwards (five digs), Huggins (two digs, block), Griffin (dig, reception) and Hartman (reception).

The Lady Patriots (3-14) were led offensively by Kaitlyn Hagmann (five kills, two aces), Ava Whitaker (three kills, two aces), Madelyn LeMaster (kill, two aces), Kennedy Denton (kill, ace, six assists), Kaitlyn Taylor (kill), Mia Furches (kill) and Cassidy Taylor (ace). FHS' defensive leaders were Hagmann (five digs, block), Whitaker (two digs, block), Katie Settle (two digs), Denton (dig), Cassidy Taylor (dig) and Kaitlyn Taylor (dig).

GIRLS GOLF

East Burke in CVAC match at Glen Oaks

The Lady Cavaliers (184) placed fifth in Monday's Catawba Valley 2A Conference match at Glen Oaks Golf Club in Maiden, finishing behind West Lincoln (137), Maiden (165), Bandys (177) and Newton-Conover (182) and ahead of Lincolnton (185).

EBHS was led by Sophia Vaughn (59), Reagan Austin (62), Sara Evans (63), Jolina Moua (63) and Alexis Russell (63).

BOYS SOCCER

West Caldwell 6, East Burke 0

The Cavaliers (1-9-1, 0-4 CVAC) were shut out in their return to action at home in Icard on Monday, giving up four first-half goals and two more after the intermission.

Jaydon Fair (five saves) and Slate Walsh (two) manned the goal for EBHS.

The News Herald sports department can be reached at sports@morganton.com.

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Biffle 'should get Medal of Freedom'

October 10, 2024 | News Herald, The (Morganton, NC) Author: BRIAN LINDER pennlive.com | Section: News | 433 Words OpenURL Link

The heroic efforts of NASCAR driver Greg Biffle in the wake of Hurricane Helene are not going unnoticed.

In fact, ESPN's Marty Smith, seems to have a pretty good idea about what should await Biffle when this is all over.

"Former NASCAR driver Greg Biffle should receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom for his ongoing and ceaseless heroic efforts in western North Carolina, using his helicopter and coordinating w/ others to save lives," Smith wrote on X. "Go to @gbiffle to see his amazing effort. Thank you Greg."

For those that missed it, Biffle, who is also a pilot, has been using his personal helicopter to fly emergency relief missions to deliver supplies to victims of the storm in western North Carolina.

Biffle has shared some of his runs on X, and the guy has flown into some tight spaces to help save people.

"Trees. Canyons. Power Lines," he wrote in a post on X along with a video of him landing in a narrow strip of open grass in an otherwise heavily wooded area. "Glad this little beast of a helicopter can make it to the areas unreachable by larger aircraft."

Biffle shared a second video explaining the landing in the tight space that shows folks on the ground using a mirror to signal to the helicopter.

"The mirror that caught our attention well over a mile away," he wrote. "Only way we were able to find someone stranded in the mountain at bottom of steep canyon. 6 attempts to land due to difficulty but we got there – got him a chainsaw, Epipens, insulin, chicken food, formula, gas, 2 stroke oil, and sandwiches premade from Harris Teeter before we left." Biffle is also reportedly dropping off Starlinks to the victims so they can access the internet.

Many in NASCAR have pitched in to help, but Biffle's effort has been amazing.

The 54-year-old was named one of NASCAR's 75 Greatest Drivers in 2023 and is up for induction into the NACAR Hall of Fame.

Not alone

Hendrick Motorsports and Joe Gibbs Racing also flew their helicopters to areas in western North Carolina.

JGR collected water and non-perishable food items at its race shop in Huntersville to be delivered by one of the team's haulers. JGR posted on social media that it is continuing to accept financial donations online, which should be titled as "Hurricane Relief."

Hendrick's aviation team also had been flying out to western North Carolina to support hurricane relief efforts since Sept. 29 and planned to continue as long as the critical needs exist. HMS has been working with organizations like Samaritan's Purse and Atrium Health to distribute resources to the people.

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Chapel Hill writer: The great floods of 1916 and 2024

October 10, 2024 | News Herald, The (Morganton, NC) Author: D.G. Martin | Section: Column | 720 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.

"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 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 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 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 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 restaurant 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:

A selection from 'River Road

.

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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BACK ON THE FIELD

October 10, 2024 | News Herald, The (Morganton, NC) Author: JUSTIN EPLEY Sports editor | Section: Back On The Field | 531 Words OpenURL Link

H.S. FOOTBALL | WEEK 8 PREVIEW

It'll be in a different venue and with a scrambled schedule, but high school football will return to Burke County when Freedom hosts Northwestern 3A/4A Conference opponent Alexander Central this Friday at Patton High School in Morganton.

The Patriots were supposed to start NWC play at Hibriten on Oct. 4 and host the Cougars for Senior Night at FHS on Nov. 1, but the impact of Hurricane Helene has changed all of that. Instead, with Freedom's stadium on the mend after significant flooding and all conference games for Week 7 postponed, the Patriots will entertain Alexander Central on the other side of town on Friday. The Patriots lead Alexander Central 29-8 all-time, but fell 35-7 to end the season in Taylorsville last fall.

The last time Freedom (3-2) was on the field, it played arguably its best game of the season with a 63-13 nonconference thrashing of visiting Chase on Sept. 20. Junior quarterback Kaden Davis accounted for six touchdowns against the Trojans, finishing 7 of 9 for 234 yards and three TDs to Kobe Johnson (53 yards), Tiras Walker (66) and Justice Dominguez (61) while also cashing in on three short rushing touchdowns of 1, 6 and 1 yards as part of a 72-yard night on the ground. Cam Brown (15 and 5 yards) and Ian Clark (26) also had rushing TDs for FHS. Alexander Central finished the nonconference portion of its schedule with a 2-3 record, winning versus Wilkes Central 54-14 and at North Iredell 28-19 while losing versus Statesville 36-21, at Burns 28-7 and versus Sun Valley 42-10.

ACHS is led by junior rushers Jeremiah Whitaker (51-479-4) and Sawyer Chapman-Mays (59-2325). Senior quarterback Wade Queen has completed 20 of 42 passes for 230 yards, one touchdown and three interceptions while running 28 times for 154 yards and two scores. His favorite target is senior Garison Millsaps (6-115-1).

Prediction: Freedom.

East Burke (1-3, 0-1) at Bunker Hill (4-1, 2-0)

The Cavaliers will travel to Claremont for a Catawba Valley 2A Conference game following the two-week, hurricaneimposed break while the Bears were able to play last week, winning 35-21 at league foe West Lincoln.

Bunker Hill leads the series 9-2, including a 28-6 victory in Icard one season ago.

EBHS was last on the field for its CVAC-opener at Maiden on Sept. 20, a 43-6 loss. The Cavs are led by running backs Zayne Newman (63-161-1) and Darren Hammons (20-137-1), quarterback Carter Bennett (29 of 65, 243 yards, TD) and receiver Cannon Morrison (6-60-1).

The Bears' offense is more robust, led by senior running back Jason Willis Jr. (92-934-13). Junior quarterback Eli Davis-Helms has completed 29 of 50 passes for 438 yards and three touchdowns to a receiving corps led by senior Jaylan Willis (17-267-2), who also has rushed for 142 yards and two touchdowns on 13 carries.

Prediction: Bunker Hill.

Draughn's plan uncertain

As of press time, the Wildcats (3-2, 1-0 Western Highlands 1A/2A Conf.) were uncertain to resume play in a conference whose communities were hit very hard by the storm. Coach Chris Powell said his team might play Madison on Friday, but nothing was confirmed.

DHS' original schedule called for a trip to Marshall this week.

Justin Epley can be reached at jepley@morganton.com or sports@morganton.com.

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Valdese councilman steps down and is immediately replaced

October 10, 2024 | News Herald, The (Morganton, NC) Author: SHARON MCBRAYER smcbrayer@morganton.com| Section: News| 563 Words OpenURL Link

A Valdese Town Council member resigned from his seat and was immediately replaced during the council meeting Monday night.

Valdese Mayor Charlie Watts read a letter of resignation from Council Member Paul Mears, who said he was leaving the board because he has moved out of town.

The letter from Mears said because of the recent devastation caused by Hurricane Helene, his family decided to rent their Valdese residence to a family that became homeless due to a large tree damaging their property in downtown Morganton. Mears said his family has moved to a home they recently remodeled at Silver Creek in Morganton.

"Due to this change in residence, I regret that I am no longer eligible to remain on council," Mears said in the letter.
"I thoroughly enjoyed my time on council these past 34 months and on the Valdese planning board for nearly seven years, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to serve and give back to the Valdese community that has given so much to my family."

Mears said he will continue to remain connected and committed to Valdese with his business, which is Mears Insurance Group.

Council Member Glenn Harvey said he shares the disappointment of all the council members in losing Mears, saying he's been a solid member and contributor to the council.

Harvey then said there is no prescribed process for filling a vacant seat and he nominated Roger Heavner to fill Mears' term. Most councils in Burke County and the school board go through an application process when they have vacant seats. The boards gather applications from interested residents and then select the replacement.

Before Harvey nominated Heavner, Council Member Rexanna Lowman took issue with immediately filling the position. Lowman said the council has used an application process to fill previous vacant positions. She said she believes that is the process they should use to fill Mears' seat.

Harvey said the way the council filled the previous two vacant positions caused backlash in the town. He did not go into detail about those issues.

Harvey read out Heavner's qualifications to fill the seat. He said Heavner was born and raised in the town. He served in the military in the Vietnam War and spent 30 years in project management for CenturyLink. He also has a personal business doing construction, renovations, roof replacements, HVAC and generators, his application says.

Heavner has a bachelor's degree in industrial management and a master's certificate in project management.

Mears' term ends in November 2025.

Lowman made it clear that she has no problem with Heavner but did have a problem with the process of filling the vacancy.

She told Harvey that he chose Heavner as the replacement without any input from town residents and without giving anyone else a chance to apply for the seat.

"And this is not being very transparent, and this is not involving citizens in the procedure," Lowman told Harvey. Lowman voted with the other three members of the board for Heavner to fill the seat.

Planning director to retire

Valdese Interim Town Manager Bo Weichel announced that Planning Director Larry Johnson will leave his position as of Nov. 8. Johnson has been with the town for 45 years, Weichel said.

"He's ready for his next chapter in his life," Weichel said. "So we're going to miss Larry. We'll wish him well. I've been grateful for the opportunity to work with him over the last couple years and learned a lot from him."

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'We're not giving up'

October 10, 2024 | News Herald, The (Morganton, NC) Author: CONNOR MCNEELY WinstonSalem Journal | Section: Were Not Giving Up | 1214 Words OpenURL Link

A brown fog of dust and dirt billowed through Old Fort as Amy Davis served chicken and dumplings to every person who wearily climbed the steps of her country store.

By her rough estimation, it seemed as if half the town of about 820 had become homeless by the end of Hurricane Helene's devastation. The wind and water had tossed mobile homes hundreds of yards and washed away cars into the Catawba River, leaving the town's residents to wait for the restoration of cell service and the arrival of help from across North Carolina.

In the days after the flooding, the sun beat down on Old Fort and froze a thick layer of mud and muck around the houses, stores and churches that residents and visitors from surrounding counties now worked to break up and clear.

Power and running water had become an afterthought. Everyone who remained either walked the streets of the town in a daze, worked feverishly to clear debris, or a bit of both.

Davis positioned a "check-in" list on a poster board near the stairs of her store, which collected names of individuals and families from the edges of the town to then post on the Old Fort Facebook page as "safe."

There were still many families and elderly couples unaccounted for in the outer edges of the town. Feeding the rescue workers and wandering Old Fort residents was how Davis figured she could make the biggest difference.

With her family and fellow neighbors, Davis spent the weekend following the storm clearing the streets and cutting down trees until they reached the country store. When they realized the building was still intact, Davis and her family started putting together plans for free meals.

"It's not just that they're getting hot food and a hot meal, but that they know the family that's making it, and they know that we're from here," Davis said. Her husband's family traced their lineage to the mid1700s, when English and Scottish settlers had arrived in the area, before it became a fort in the Revolutionary War.

As the lunch hour arrived Wednesday morning, construction workers climbed the stairs in grime-soaked T-shirts and pants. With about a dozen others, they cleaned a number of properties that lined the town's main street, Catawba Avenue, including the Hillman Beer brewery, which opened in 2020.

The brewpub is one of two breweries in Old Fort, which is a dry town situated in the dry McDowell County. It was only relatively recent state laws that allowed breweries across North Carolina to serve beer, wine and cider in dry counties, but only what they made themselves.

Residents felt a deep sense of connection to the brewery as a new kind of meeting place that attracted tourists traveling from Charlotte to Asheville.

Jeff Parker, the landlord that owned the property in addition to many others in the downtown area, said the brewery had become the social hub of the Old Fort community.

But now the building's upcoming Oktoberfest decorations were caked in mud. A twisted smell of yeast rose from sludge of the taproom, where dozens of kegs were stacked on top of one another.

"It's all concrete masonry and stainless steel," Parker said of the building. "It's going to be a lot of work, but we're not giving up."

In the streets of the town, employees from the N.C. Department of Transportation, Old Fort residents, members of the Coast Guard and others cleared away trees and debris. Caravans of military jeeps, semitrucks, and police vehicles filled the faded parking lots. Helicopters thundered overhead about every hour, a strange sight for Old Fort.

Chuck Aldridge, a local bed and breakfast owner, pointed to the surrounding buildings with a warning: the sewer system needed to be replaced, and it wasn't something the town could do without help from the state.

What they could do was take care of their own. On Monday, days after the storm had passed, Old Fort's police chief called Bo Cooper, who managed a Columbia Forest Products warehouse, and asked if the town could use it as a distribution center for supplies.

By the next day, Cooper was driving a forklift in the warehouse, surrounded by dozens of others who carried food and supplies to trucks and waiting families.

Residents drove pickup trucks with stacks of water bottles and toilet paper loaded into their beds and drove them down the streets and avenues of Old Fort.

At the edge of the mud-covered parking lot of the Old Fort Elementary School, which is a mere 3 years old, two sister teachers reunited with three students who brought flowers and cards with well wishes.

"We love you, we'll be praying for you," one of the cards read. "We have Old Fort pride deep inside."

"That's the truth! We'll come back," Lindsay Rowland Latham said. "That hurricane will spit out the Rowland girls."

Her sister, Anna Rowland, stared ahead at the old white house she had grown up in.

She had been staying in the house with their mother, Emily, and her sister Lindsay, as the floodwaters rose around it.

When they left the house and reached higher ground near the school, their family watched a couple with a 10-month-baby clinging to its mother's chest wade in knee-deep water to break into the school windows. The man had grabbed a tree-limb and broke the glass to get his family in after the waters swept away their car, Rowland said.

Rumors abounded about what would happen to their classes. Both Rowland and Latham worried about many of their students who lived further out from town and mulled over potential meeting places at nearby churches.

"They don't want to split the kids up but what are you going to do?" Latham said.

Inside the elementary school, there was already a strong stench of sewage that choked the hallways. Filth streaked across the terrazzo floors and masked construction crews sawed open the floor of the basketball gym, where the water had buckled and ruined the seams of the hardwood. Outside, the recess yard was an endless field of dried mud.

The surrounding rows of houses and mobile homes was worse. The structures stood on low-lying land now filled with mounds of silt and packed dirt that cracked and sunk around feet, exposing tree roots, fractured fences, tarps and plastic bottles.

Glass scattered across the rooftop of a house, where its owner had punched out a window to escape the rising flood. Back in front of the elementary school, Emily Rowland stood with Belinda Wright, a neighbor from down the street.

Wright said she was asleep Friday morning when she heard a knock on the door. She grabbed pictures, the ashes of her mother and granddaughter, and left. The next thing she knew, the floodwaters were slapping up on the porch and her daughter was pushing her out of the house.

"We got out about as far as the Old Fort exit, and we watched our life float away," Wright said. "Every last bit of it."

Rowland turned her gaze over to the house her family had built and lived in for the last 20 years.

"That's all they knew," Rowland said of her daughters. "They walked across the street every day for work, and now it's all gone."

After a pause in conversation, the two glanced at each other with small smiles hinting on their faces.

"I'm just glad you're OK, honey," Rowland said, pulling Wright into an embrace.

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

October 10, 2024 | News Herald, The (Morganton, NC) Author: Billy Chapman wchapman@hickoryrecord.com| Section: Government Politics| 1256 Words OpenURL Link

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is FEMA doing in western North Carolina?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

How can people apply for assistance?

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

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

Custer said FEMA will soon open disaster recovery centers.

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

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

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

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

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

What do you need to apply for assistance?

Proof of ownership of a residence

A list of people permanently living at a location

Social Security number

Estimated annual income

Insurance information, if available

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

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

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

Who can apply for FEMA assistance?

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

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

What happens after applying for assistance?

Custer said the time to process an application varies.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Does FEMA help with unemployment?

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

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

What does FEMA pay for?

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

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

FEMA also pays for temporary housing.

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

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

Does FEMA assistance have to be paid back?

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

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

People can apply for FEMA grants and SBA loans.

Are conspiracy theories hurting FEMA?

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

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

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

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

Can people apply to work for FEMA?

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

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Insurance commissioner urges Medicare beneficiaries to check their options for 2025

October 10, 2024 | News-Topic, The (Lenoir, NC) Author: STAFF REPORTS | Section: Archives | 680 Words OpenURL Link

RALEIGH — Insurance Commissioner Mike Causey reminds Medicare beneficiaries that it's time to compare and evaluate their current plans and make necessary changes during the annual open enrollment period, according to a press release from the N.C. Department of Insurance.

"What worked for you this year may not be the best plan for you in 2025," Commissioner Causey said. "It is important to take advantage of the Open Enrollment Period by contacting local Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP) counselors to save money, improve your coverage or both."

The Open Enrollment Period begins on Oct. 15 and runs for eight weeks to give you enough time to review and make changes to your Medicare coverage. Changes must be made by Dec. 7 to guarantee your coverage will begin without interruption on Jan. 1, 2025, according to the press release.

It is important to contact your local SHIIP counselor before deciding about coverage for 2025. This may help you receive a more affordable and better Medicare health and/or drug plan in your area. For example, even if you are satisfied with your current Medicare Advantage or Part D plan, there may be another plan in your area that covers your health care and/or drugs at a better price, according to the press release.

The commissioner also announced that Medicare beneficiaries impacted by Hurricane Helene have been granted an extended Special Enrollment Period (SEP) to sign up for Medicare health and prescription drug coverage.

This extended period gives beneficiaries extra time to make changes to their Medicare coverage due to the unforeseen circumstances that accompany a natural disaster.

"Medicare beneficiaries devastated by Helene may be unable to complete their enrollment process by the Dec. 7 deadline," Commissioner Causey said. "This Special Enrollment Period allows people in affected areas the additional time they need to make sure they have the proper Medicare coverage in 2025."

The regular 2025 Medicare Open Enrollment period runs Oct. 15 – Dec.7 with coverage to take effect Jan. 1, 2025. This SEP allows anyone who missed an election period to make changes for the duration of the disaster plus an additional two months following the declared end date of the disaster. Coverage will begin a month after an enrollment is completed.

The SEP is in effect for the 25 North Carolina counties declared disaster areas as a result of Tropical Storm Helene: Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Clay, Cleveland, Gaston, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Lincoln, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Transylvania, Watauga, Wilkes and Yancey.

The extension applies to two sets of residents: Those who live in the disaster zones as well as others outside the 25 counties who assist or are assisted by the storm victims.

SHIIP is a division of the North Carolina Department of Insurance and offers free, unbiased information about Medicare, Medicare prescription drug coverage, Medicare Advantage, long-term care insurance and other health insurance issues. SHIIP counselors can also help people find out if they are eligible for Medicare cost savings programs, according to the press release.

Here are some of the ways to review and compare plans available for 2025:

Get one-on-one help from a local SHIIP office by calling Caldwell Senior Center at 828-758-2883.

Get one-on-one help from SHIIP by calling 1-855-408-1212, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Visit www.medicare.gov/find-a-plan to compare your current coverage with all of the options available in your area, and enroll in a new plan if you decide to make a change.

Review the Medicare & You handbook. It was mailed to people with Medicare in September.

Call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) 24-hours a day, seven days a week, to find out more about your coverage options. TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.

Contact your trusted licensed insurance agent.

SHIIP counselors are not licensed insurance agents and they do not sell, endorse or oppose any product, plan or company. If you have questions about your specific plan, we encourage you to contact your insurance agent or the insurance company, according to the press release.

For more information about SHIIP and the Medicare Open Enrollment Period, call 1-855-408-1212 or visit www.ncshiip.com.

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CHURCH EVENTS

October 10, 2024 | News-Topic, The (Lenoir, NC) Author: Staff Writer | Section: Archives | 126 Words OpenURL Link

College Avenue Baptist Church will host a free community breakfast on Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024, at 9 a.m. in the church fellowship hall. We especially want to invite those affected by Hurricane Helene. If you are still without power or water or need a meal, please come and have breakfast with us. The Worship Service will follow the breakfast and will include a puppet show for children. There will be an adult bible study time after the worship service. The church is located at 1201 College Avenue, SW, Lenoir, NC. For more information call the church office Monday through Thursday 9 a.m. — 12 p.m. at 828-754-6482 or go to the church website at cabclenoir.org Reaching out to the Community sharing the Love of Jesus Christ!

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Recovery efforts and precious moments continue

October 10, 2024 | News-Topic, The (Lenoir, NC) Author: BO WAGNER Columnist| Section: Archives | 903 Words OpenURL Link

It has been a very long week. What began as a one-day effort to clean up and recover in our area quickly morphed into an every day effort to get supplies and relief to all the affected areas of Western North Carolina. Hurricane Helene ravaged the area in unfathomable ways, but God's people all over have risen to the occasion to bring rescue, relief, and restoration.

I did not know that our church was going to become a local hub, receiving and transporting food, water, and other needed supplies to the mountains. God knew, and he has made it work. Our family life building, The Hope Center, has seen mountains of supplies pass back and forth through its doors, and both our church trailer and many of the personal trailers of our people have headed to Hendersonville, Asheville, Swannanoa, Fair View, and many other places.

It has been pretty eye-opening. In a disaster this large, I would have expected to see large amounts of people and help from state and federal sources, and that has simply not been the case as I write this. It has pretty well exclusively been a huge number of local churches, citizens, and also Samaritan's Purse that have been getting the job done.

Pastor Mike Rogers and Gashes Creek Baptist Church in Asheville particularly stand out to me. We have carried probably eighty% of our supplies up to them and then joined to help them carry them into every community. Pastor Doug Raynes and his sweet people at Progress Baptist in Hendersonville have also done yeoman's work.

Going into some of the affected areas has been breathtaking. We pulled a trailer of supplies down a barely-there mud path that just a week earlier was a paved, two-lane state road. Had my truck not been four-wheel drive, there is no way we could have made it. And what we saw when we got there was amazing. An entire community of mostly older folks, basically cut off since none of them seemed to have four-wheel drives, had banded together to survive. They were using a flat top griddle in the center of the neighborhood to cook for everyone, and then had rigged up a pipe to carry water from a natural spring to provide cleaning and flushing water for everyone.

They had a posted list of everyone who has carried supplies in to them; they called it their angel list. We dropped off supplies and carried their trash away for them.

From there, we went into decidedly poorer sections, mostly trailer parks. The biggest of them had been completely flooded, and the residents were gutting everything by hand and piling the innards of the trailers outside onto the ground. Here is what really got me in that one: while we were unloading supplies for them, a young man came out of one of those gutted trailers carrying a box of canned goods, handed them to us, and said, "I have enough of these to last a good while; take these to some others who can use them."

We have gotten calls from as far away as Canada and Hawaii asking how to help. People from 4,500 miles away are touching the lives of people they have never met.

An elderly Hispanic lady smiled from ear to ear when we gave her a pack of paper plates. I never imagined I would ever see anyone show such joy at so small a thing. It kind of puts things in perspective, doesn't it? We often complain about the most trivial things; imagine how much of what you have you would need to lose before you could smile over paper plates.

On Sunday, October 6, our entire church stayed around after the morning service and loaded up a twenty-foot, double axle, enclosed trailer with supplies, mostly water. And then several of our folks hauled them up to Gashes

Creek. Water weighs eight pounds per gallon; it is heavy. And yet, it was not until everything was delivered, unloaded, and our folks with the trailer were all the way back that one of the tires blew and shredded. Please bear with me as I imagine the angel that had his hands around the tire the whole way, keeping it together until he could safely let go.

We have ordered a mountain of sleeping bags to distribute; the post office is going to hate us. Yes, I know all of this is really random; I have a lot of things on my heart and no good way to give them a poetic flow.

We passed a house by the side of the road that did not used to be by the side of the road; the flood water simply picked it up off of its foundation and carried it more than a quarter of a mile away. An old, beat-up vehicle was nearly completely buried on one side of the road, while an expensive BMW was mostly buried on the other. A jeep was on its side in a hole, the door nearly flush with the ground. A tractor-trailer with "Never Forget" on the side was partially inside a home.

No one was complaining. No one was giving up. Every person we talked to was determined to recover and rebuild. As one of my men so aptly put it, "This is Appalachia, Preacher; these people are used to surviving."

I am just glad God has moved on the heart of so many to help them do so.

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MATTHEWS: Hope shines through after NC Helene devastation

October 10, 2024 | North State Journal (NC) Author: Stacey Matthews | Section: Article | 596 Words OpenURL Link

As things go with any hurricane, you pray the paths that are projected aren't accurate, that they'll fizzle out at sea with no harm done to life and land, and that at the end of the day, they'll be relegated to a mere footnote in meteorological history.

But more often than not, that's not the case, and it certainly wasn't for Hurricane Helene, which made landfall on Sept. 26 in Perry, Florida, as a Category 4 storm and left a path of destruction from there throughout many southeastern states even after being downgraded to a tropical storm.

Western North Carolina was particularly hard hit, with more than 100 lives lost as of this writing and dozens more still unaccounted for. Entire towns were wiped out, homes, businesses and bridges were lost, and the topography was dramatically changed in some areas in what some have called a "biblical devastation" of the North Carolina mountains.

The images and videos on social media are heartbreaking, particularly the ones pleading for information on loved ones and pets that are still missing.

As the assessments of the scale of the damage continue, the picking up of the pieces and attempts to get back to as normal as one can have commenced, with the outpouring of support being a sight to behold.

Though there have been some questions about the timeline of the state and federal responses, the responses from private citizens both in the state and beyond our borders have been encouraging and uplifting at a time when so many are wondering, "What happens next?" and "Where do we go from here?"

There have been the helicopter rescues and the air drops of supplies. There have been the convoys rolling through. There has also been the coordination of relief efforts, with churches in western North Carolina playing a central role in storing the things needed and getting them to where they need to go.

There has also been the ingenuity of members of some of the harder-hit communities. In Elk Park, for instance, neighbors banded together to build a temporary bridge made out of flatbed trailers and wood in order to make supply runs to and from nearby neighborhoods after a connecting bridge was wiped out by the storm.

One neighbor told WCNC, "You can't get a truck across the bridge we built, but you can get side by sides, so a bunch of side by sides, we've been getting together and running supplies back and forth."

The Mountain Mule Packers have also gotten a lot of attention, with videos of mules transporting supplies to devastated communities going viral.

"Locals rented heavy equipment themselves, and helped Mountain Mule Packer Ranch get a path started to get the mule string through to Laurel Ridge with water and supplies for families," they noted in one Facebook post.

The restoration and rebuilding are going to take years. But North Carolina is a tough, resilient state, and she will see this through thanks in large part to neighbors banding together to help neighbors and community members stepping up to the plate to do what is needed to make things happen and get the job done.

As the social media hashtag goes, we are #NCstrong and proud of it. And as devastating as this was for western North Carolina to go through, she will emerge even stronger once all is said and done. Count on it.

North Carolina native Stacey Matthews has also written under the pseudonym Sister Toldjah and is a media analyst and regular contributor to RedState and Legal Insurrection.

 $\label{thm:continuous} The \ post\ MATTHEWS: \ Hope\ shines\ through\ after\ NC\ Helene\ devastation\ first\ appeared\ on\ The\ North\ State\ Journal.$

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High school football predictions for Week 8

October 10, 2024 | Robesonian, The (Lumberton, NC) Author: Chris Stiles The Robesonian | Section: sports | 1011 Words OpenURL Link

I'll admit that this may not be the universal reaction, but when I checked my weather app this week and saw that temperatures will dip into the 50s during Friday night's high school football games, I got excited.

Finally, I said. Football weather.

After a summer that wouldn't end and a couple of "false falls" in the Border Belt, it'll finally be a little nip out when the sun goes down on Friday and our local teams take to the gridiron. While I consider something around 70 to be optimal golf weather, football is better when it's watched in blue jeans and sweaters, not in shorts and a sweaty t-shirt.

Now, once it gets colder games won't be in the sweet spot anymore, and with the season being extended one week by the NCHSAA due to the effects of Hurricane Helene we'll get local high school football until at least the middle of November, and longer if anyone advances in the state playoff. And considering last year's first-round playoff games were played on a frigid night, suffice it to say, enjoy this perfect football weather over the next couple of weeks, with only the slight chill of a fall night, before bundling up for the biggest games of the year.

As Friday night's games play out on what it seems will be a beautiful North Carolina night, here's a guess at which teams will look at the scoreboard and find it equally beautiful:

Last week: 4-0

Season: 20-3

St. Pauls at Red Springs

St. Pauls (4-2, 1-0 Southeastern Athletic Conference) has been deliberate about downplaying this game, a 7 p.m. start Friday, as just another game, but we all know better: this is definitely a rivalry game — though some may say to truly be a rivalry it needs to not be one-sided, and this one has been, with the Bulldogs winning six straight meetings, mostly in blowouts, and Mike Setzer combining to his last eight games against the Red Devils in his two tenures as St. Pauls head coach.

Red Springs (1-5, 1-0 Southeastern) carries momentum it hasn't had for much of the season, winning its first game last week at Fairmont. But the Red Devils felt they should have played better against the Golden Tornadoes — and they'll have to play better to have a chance against the Bulldogs.

St. Pauls' defense has shut out two of its last three opponents, and will have to contain Red Springs running back Jakelsin Mack and receiver T.J. Ellerbe. Those guys are too good to be completely shut down, and the Red Devils will put some points on the board, but the Bulldogs' balanced offense could see success against either a Red Devils defensive front that's been hit-and-miss or a younger secondary. Either way, they'll score enough points to make it hard for Red Springs to keep up.

St. Pauls 42, Red Springs 16

Gray's Creek at Lumberton

The alumni that return to Lumberton (3-3, 0-3 United-8 Conference) for Friday's 7:30 p.m. homecoming game will

see the first Pirates team with three wins or more since the 2016 season, but also one that's lost its last three outings and has been shut out in the last two weeks.

The Pirates should be able to have more offensive success against a Gray's Creek (4-2, 2-1 United-8) team that has played some high-scoring games this season. The bigger challenge for Lumberton will be containing Gray's Creek's running game — something that every Bears opponent has struggled to do, with the unit rushing for over 300 yards per game with three very capable backs. The result has been 41.3 points per game for the Bears.

I expect Lumberton to be more competitive than it's been in the Pirates' last three games. But ultimately, I expect it to be difficult to match Gray's Creek score for score.

Gray's Creek 42, Lumberton 20

Purnell Swett at South View

Purnell Swett (2-4, 0-3 United-8) hasn't been great offensively throughout the season, and that has shown in the results in the last three weeks as they've played strong United-8 competition, being shut out the last two weeks; they've scored seven points or less in four of their six games this season, and even a 21-point output against Red Springs was aided by two early turnovers that put them in good field position.

South View (4-2, 2-1 United-8) held Lumberton off the scoreboard last week. The Tigers also got their offense going in the win against the Pirates, with Rashad Dockery rushing for 270 yards and Tyriq Clarida throwing for 131. While I consider still consider Purnell Swett's defense to be the strength of the team, things haven't been going all that great on that side of the ball either, and they'll face another challenge as they take on this Tigers team at 7:30 p.m. Friday.

Rams coach Josh Deese said last week that the fact the Rams have been playing really good teams is part of the reason for the recent struggles. The bad news is that the Tigers are also a good team — and the Rams are eventually going to have to score some points if they want to remain competitive this season.

South View 34, Purnell Swett 14

Midway at Fairmont

While Fairmont (0-6, 0-1 Southeastern) enters this contest having lost its last seven games, Midway (5-1, 1-0 Southeastern) is having a good season under first-year head coach Barrett Sloan as the Raiders come to Hal S. Floyd Stadium for a 7 p.m. tilt Friday.

Behind running back Gehemiah Blue, quarterback Tanner Williams and wideout Kemari McNeill, the Raiders have scored 33.2 points per game this season; Fairmont has allowed that many or more each time it's taken the field.

Fairmont has been able to move the ball moderately well at times since turning to a more frequent passing approach in the last few weeks, and I do think that will continue, allowing for the Golden Tornades to put together a couple of scoring drives. But against a Midway team that is potentially the biggest threat to St. Pauls' conference championship hopes, the Golden Tornadoes will face a big challenge on the defensive end against the Raiders.

Midway 40, Fairmont 14

 $\hbox{@ 2024 Champion Media Carolinas.}$

Citation (aglc Style)

Chris Stiles The Robesonian, 'High school football predictions for Week 8', *Robesonian, The* (online), 10 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C20DDA57B21210



Hurricane Helene creates 'severe environmental disaster'

October 10, 2024 | Rocky Mount Telegram: Web Edition Articles (NC) Author: Nick Fogleman nick.fogleman@wataugademocrat.com| Section: State | 889 Words OpenURL Link

BOONE — Rivers swelled, trees fell and landslides engulfed mountainsides as the landscape of Watauga County radically changed when Hurricane Helene brought historic rain and wind to the area.

As support and recovery efforts continue across the region, assessments of the environmental damage have yet to account for the devastating effects Helene has had on the ecosystem.

"It is my personal perspective that this is going to be the most severe environmental disaster in the recorded history of this area. We've experienced nothing like this before," said New River Conservancy Executive Director Andrew Downs.

The rivers and streams that run through the mountains are vital to the economy, recreation and identity of Watauga County. Throughout the storm, unprecedented water and debris swept through these areas, leaving a trail of environmental destruction.

Environmental organizations are just beginning to inspect the damage to the ecosystem.

"We're just getting our minds around the human toll of this hurricane and the flooding, but the environmental toll is also staggering. We've seen drowned wildlife and habitat destruction along the rivers and watersheds, and widespread erosion and sedimentation," Blue Ridge Conservancy's Director of Communications Leila Jackson said.

Days before Helene, Boone and surrounding communities were struck with storms that filled up the natural sponges that typically absorb water before the full brunt of the storm made its way to the Appalachian Mountains.

"That set the stage for when the real part of the storm arrived," said Dr. Bill Anderson, an App State hydrogeology professor. "There's no storage or anywhere for that water to go but rush down our mountain valleys and get into the major streams and try to get out of here as quickly as possible."

With nowhere to go, rainwater made its way into Watauga County's rivers and streams, along with the houses, trees, asphalt, cars, and sediments that were destroyed and swept into the river.

"There's all the materials, from tires to construction debris, that are in the river that are going to have a long-term impact," Downs said.

On Sept. 27, the USGS sensor on the Watauga River measured a discharge rate of 32,300 ft3/s, about 1000x more than what was recorded just days before, and a height of 25 ft. Both readings were still climbing upward when the sensor broke during the storm.

As flood waters and materials made their way through river beds, they caused significant damage to the river banks, or riparian zones.

"Those natural filters that protected the river were wiped out, eradicated in many places, and those are going to need to be rebuilt," Downs said.

These natural protection systems have been crippled by physical damage, and this has left the environment more susceptible to chemical and biological damage.

Along with the wreckage of buildings and roads, water likely picked up the toxic materials, pesticides and sewage it came in contact with.

"Who knows what kind of contaminants that we all have in our households for cleaning and so forth. Those are all in the streams now," Anderson said. "When you're out in the non-municipal areas, people have septic tanks, and I would guess that a number of those have been compromised or maybe completely inundated."

Large amounts of pollution, toxicants and waste can cause a variety of problems for mountain ecosystems.

They can influence water and habitat quality, food availability, wildlife behavior, and aquatic oxygen levels and disrupt natural cycles within an ecosystem. This can reduce wildlife's overall rates of survival and affect systems that rely on healthy waterways.

"All other systems rely on water, you don't have to overthink it," Downs said. "Water isn't a building block, it's the building block."

Contaminants can also cause dangerous algae blooms making it even more difficult for ecosystems to recover.

Over time, the rivers and streams will move some of these contaminants downstream and out of the region, but Helene's timing means the scars left behind will take more time to heal and make natural and human communities more vulnerable as the ecosystem repairs.

With winter around the corner, areas where trees fell and landslides ripped apart soil and vegetation have little time for secondary succession, when new plants and grass recolonize disrupted ecosystems.

"We're going to have a lot of barren areas throughout the winter," Anderson said. "So when we do get rain, and we get quite a bit of rain throughout the winter, I think we're going to be more prone to landslides and see more sediment in our streams."

As the wreckage and debris from our communities begins to be cleared, unnatural levels of sediment in the water ways remain an issue.

Studies show that while sediment is a vital component of ecological functions when it exceeds natural limits, it can have a range of negative effects on aquatic ecosystems and act as a sink for contaminants.

"That's going to compromise the environment and anything trying to live in those streams," Anderson said. "Our mountain streams are cool and clear environments. That is what the animals that live in those environments have adapted to."

In some areas, the rushing water created new pathways for runoff and altered the natural floodplain. Depending on the severity, this could cause increased erosion and flooding in areas where it was not typical.

"This is what streams do; that's how they wear down our mountains, and they've been doing this for a very long time," Anderson said.

The assessment of the environmental destruction caused by Hurricane Helene will only add to the total account of devastation.

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Citation (aglc Style)

Nick Fogleman nick.fogleman@wataugademocrat.com, 'Hurricane Helene creates 'severe environmental disaster'', *Rocky Mount Telegram: Web Edition Articles* (online), 10 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view? p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C3B41FD609CCC8>



NCHSAA extends Fall sports season

October 10, 2024 | Rocky Mount Telegram: Web Edition Articles (NC) Author: Jim Green | Section: High Schools | 595 Words

OpenURL Link

CHAPEL HILL — The North Carolina High School Athletic Association is extending the Fall Sports Season and has changed policies to allow teams to make up games in response to Hurricane Helene's impacts on Western North Carolina.

The NCHSAA's Board of Directors met earlier this week to discuss options for concluding the Fall Sports Season, including the postseason calendar. These discussions were necessitated by the devastation caused by Hurricane Helene in western North Carolina.

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

The football season is being extended by one week, meaning the regular season will end on Nov. 9 and the playoff brackets will be released on Nov. 10. The first round of the playoffs will begin on Nov. 15.

The Board approved changes and modifications to the schedule. Sunday practices and competitions are still prohibited. Here are the changes made:

Women's Tennis (Individual)

Reporting deadline: Oct. 14, 11:59 p.m. (revised from 3 p.m. to allow for an extra day of competition)Regionals: Oct.18-19State Championships: Oct. 25-26

(Dual Team)

Reporting deadline: Oct.17, 11:59 p.m. (revised from Oct. 10)Seeding: Oct. 18First Round: Oct. 21Second Round: Oct. 23Third Round: Oct. 28Fourth Round: Oct. 30Regionals: Nov. 5State Championships: Nov. 9

VolleyballEffective immediately, the weekly limitation is modified to allow affected schools to make up multiple postponed matches, not to exceed eight in a week. No change was made to the daily limitation.

Reporting deadline: Oct. 19, 11:59 p.m. (revised from Oct. 16)

Seeding: Oct. 20 (Sunday, after 1 p.m.)

First Round: Oct. 22

Second Round: Oct. 24

Third Round: Oct. 26

Fourth Round: Oct. 29

Regionals: Oct. 31

State Championships: Nov. 2

Cross Country

Reporting deadline: Oct. 22, 11:59 p.m. (revised from Oct. 19)

Regionals: October 26

State Championships: Nov. 2

Boys' Soccer

Effective immediately, the weekly limitation is modified to allow affected schools to make up multiple postponed matches, not to exceed four in a week. No change was made to the daily limitation.

Reporting deadline: Nov. 6, 11:59 p.m. (revised from Oct. 31)

Seeding: Nov. 7

First round: Nov. 9

Second Round: Nov. 12

Third Round: Nov. 14

Fourth Round: Nov. 16

Regionals: Nov. 19

State Championships: Nov. 22-23

Girls' Golf

The minimum number of nine-hole scores required to qualify for the Regional Championships was revised from five to three.

No calendar changes

Cheerleading

No calendar changes

Football

Effective immediately, a minimum of three calendar days (72 hours) must occur in between contests.

Reporting deadline: Nov. 9, 11:59 p.m. (revised from Nov. 1)

Seeding: Nov. 10 (Sunday, after 1 p.m.)

First round: Nov. 15

Second round: Nov. 22

Third round: Nov. 29

Fourth round: Dec. 6

Regionals: Dec. 13

State Championships: Dec. 20-21

Special Provision

The Board approved one (1) additional contest for all sports with a season limit. To exceed the season limit of contests, the following conditions must be met:

Prior approval from NCHSAA

The contest cannot exceed the daily or weekly limitations

The contest must exceed the season limit for both schools

The contest MUST NOT be entered into MaxPreps

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• Citation (aglc Style)

Jim Green, 'NCHSAA extends Fall sports season', *Rocky Mount Telegram: Web Edition Articles* (online), 10 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C2084746DC06F8



Fact check: Debunking misinformation surrounding Helene

October 10, 2024 | Salisbury Post (NC) Author: Staff Report | Section: News | 744 Words OpenURL Link

Fact check: Debunking misinformation surrounding Helene

Published 12:00 am Thursday, October 10, 2024

By Staff Report

By Christine Zhu

NC Newsline

With a massive natural disaster devastating portions of North Carolina in recent days, numerous political figures have weighed in.

But not all of the information they're sharing is accurate.

NC Newsline fact checked some recent statements from four individuals in the North Carolina political sphere.

Former President Donald Trump spreads "barrage of lies"

Donald Trump has shared numerous pieces of misinformation in the past week.

He said Georgia Republican Gov. Brian Kemp wasn't able to get a hold of President Joe Biden, a claim which both leaders swiftly corrected.

Trump accused the Biden-Harris administration of giving FEMA funds to migrant communities and undocumented immigrants. Several political figures have repeated these allegations.

FEMA issued a statement categorically denying the allegation in which it stated that money in the Disaster Relief Fund cannot be diverted to any other efforts.

On Monday, Trump penned an all-uppercase sentence on Truth Social attacking his opponent in the presidential race: "NORTH CAROLINA HAS BEEN VIRTUALLY ABANDONED BY KAMALA!!!" In fact, Vice President Kamala Harris visited impacted areas in western North Carolina over the weekend and pledged ongoing federal support. She has also visited the Helene-impacted states of South Carolina and Georgia.

The editorial board of Raleigh's News & Observer and the Charlotte Observer criticized Trump for wrongfully politicizing the disaster.

Lt. Gov. Mark Robinson issues several false or misleading statements

While Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper has actively coordinated recovery efforts with federal and state leaders from even prior to Helene's arrival, Lt. Gov. Mark Robinson has repeatedly derided the governor's efforts and called himself a "hero" for having participated in some private recovery work along with the sheriff of central North Carolina's Franklin County.

Robinson also slammed Cooper for "hob-knobing [sic] with rich folks in New York" instead of preparing for the

storm. In fact, the governor was in New York the day before Helene made landfall in Florida, but not at a fundraiser. Cooper was a speaker at a climate change conference hosted by The New York Times and was in touch with relevant state emergency preparedness personnel during the trip.

In keeping with this pattern, Robinson has also shared several photos of himself with aircraft and supplies on social media, even as he was the only Council of State member to miss a vote declaring a state emergency — an action which he called "inconsequential."

Robinson also attacked Biden by claiming that he had said the federal government "had no more supplies" for North Carolina. In fact, the president approved more federal aid for the state.

The lieutenant governor also misleadingly attempted to call out the media as well, claiming there was a lack of reporting in the western part of the state. In fact, state news media outlets — including several in impacted sections of the state — have produced hundreds of news articles throughout the disaster.

Congressional candidate inaccurately portrays Trump's involvement

Addison McDowell, the GOP nominee for Congress in the state's sixth congressional district, posted on social media that Trump "personally delivered" Starlink devices to western North Carolina.

Trump has not visited the affected areas in North Carolina since before the hurricane. He held a town hall in Fayetteville on Friday, and his last trip to western North Carolina was for a rally in Asheville on Aug. 14.

His daughter Ivanka flew out to Hickory last week to distribute 300 Starlinks, devices using satellites to provide high-speed internet access.

The former president said he'll visit western North Carolina this week, but doesn't want to do anything "that's going to interrupt" rescue efforts.

GOP congressional challenger inaccurately denounces federal involvement

Army veteran Laurie Buckhout is challenging incumbent Democratic Rep. Don Davis in North Carolina's first congressional district, widely considered the state's only competitive U.S. House race.

She posted on social media claiming the "Harris-Biden administration is sitting on their heels" while private citizens step up to fill in and provide support.

It's true that private individuals and organizations have been involved with relief efforts by donating supplies and volunteering. But the federal government hasn't abandoned the state.

Biden took an aerial tour over the Asheville area to survey damage and attended an emergency operations briefing in Raleigh last week. He accepted Cooper's request for the federal government to cover costs for debris removal and emergency protective measures for six months.

FEMA administrator Deanne Criswell is remaining on the ground in North Carolina until the situation stabilizes, as directed by the president.

Christine Zhu covers state politics and government for NC Newsline. She is based in Raleigh.

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Jeff Moore: The uplifting human response to the hell of Helene

October 10, 2024 | Salisbury Post (NC) Author: Post Opinion | Section: Opinion | 723 Words OpenURL Link

Jeff Moore: The uplifting human response to the hell of Helene

Published 12:00 am Thursday, October 10, 2024

By Post Opinion

By Jeff Moore

If you're reading this from within North Carolina, you already know that western North Carolina is in a world of hurt; you know that Hurricane Helene, after having made landfall in Florida as a major hurricane, traveled north to Appalachia and devastated these communities with flash floods; and, you know that, as more footage emerges from some of the worst hit areas, the "biblical" adjective is perfectly appropriate.

What you don't know is how these communities, these people, will ever recover. But then, in glimmers, you'll started to notice something that feels miraculous and familiar all at once — the uplifting human response to overcome.

To be sure, while the rain is no longer falling, this event is hardly over. Many corners of the mountainous region are still yet to be accessed and fully assessed. Without cell access, or road access, the flooding fallout in very many small towns and hamlets, in places like the Swannanoa Valley, has yet to be fully understood. Rumors of secondand third-hand accounts of what conditions are like in these places verge on being too tragic to truly believe. We must gird ourselves for the worst in the coming days and weeks.

But nothing steadies our stance quite like the men and women who, upon hearing the call for help, respond without hesitation.

There are the official government agencies, of course, filled with men and women of this very constitution; yet, the scale and might of their capabilities is almost always matched by the burden and blunder of the bureaucracy they're nestled in. Those first responders, swift water rescue crews, police, medical professionals, road workers, guardsmen, et al., are to be roundly commended. Those are not easy jobs, especially under these unprecedented circumstances. God bless them.

The people I'm really referring to, though, are those that aren't responding to an official chain of command on their org chart, but acting on personal compulsion to answer calls for help. In their own community, in neighboring communities, or in communities far, far away.

While much of western North Carolina remains cut off from the outside world of instant communications, the rest of us are bearing witness to an outpouring of human response that stands to overcome the deluge from Helene. Whether it be donation-drive locations hosted on your small-business owner friend's Facebook page, or your neighborhood church group filling trailers with supplies headed westbound, or hobbyists with helicopters or handymen with heavy machinery wasting no time in aiming directly for the danger zone in order to get people out.

Private organizations like Samaritan's Purse, world renowned for their grace and daring in accessing the worst possible disaster zones and offering life-saving assistance to those in need, are now called to serve a dire need for the people in their own back yard.

Military veterans activating on a personal sense of duty to rescue those in danger; YouTube adventurers surveying inaccessible areas and training their audiences attention to GoFundMe pages; or, celebrities and athletes leveraging their fame to drive charity.

It's the "regular people" that reveal the purest form of this response, though, demonstrating man's capacity as a heroic being in story after story of neighbors helping neighbors.

We see it in full relief, mere weeks from one of the most contentious and consequential presidential elections of our lifetimes. Political divisions in America are at an apex. Political violence has gone mainstream. But in western North Carolina, the only things MAGA Republicans, woke Democrats, and squishy Independents are saying to each other is: "Do you need help?"..."Take my hand!" ... "I've got you!"

As we wait to learn the full extent of the devastation, this uplifting human response from locals is already buoying the spirit of these traumatized communities. They'll be there to greet and help the government trucks when they show up; and they'll be there long after the government trucks leave town, too.

Even though we're online while they're internet access is cut off, they're showing us all how much more important it is to have those stronger connections in your community.

It often happens this way: a storm has unleashed hell upon us, but, in overcoming, it reveals that natural human response which comes from somewhere else.

Jeff Moore is the deputy editor of Carolina Journal where this first appeared

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Letters to the editor — Oct. 10

October 10, 2024 | Salisbury Post (NC) Author: Post Opinion | Section: Opinion | 541 Words OpenURL Link

Letters to the editor — Oct. 10

Published 12:00 am Thursday, October 10, 2024

By Post Opinion

Use tax code to help fix immigration

Immigration is in dire need of repair. Let's come together and fix it for a better future for the world.

The "fix" would be for the U.S. to have an "out." One should not believe that the "current" crises "solved with more money" will be the last. The "current" crises are Mexico, Ukraine, Palestine and possibly more.

- 1. The Mexican border with the U.S. is 1,954 miles long, 1,250 of which are in Texas alone.
- 2. The federal government presently collects 18.7 cents per gallon of gasoline in every state of the U.S.
- 3. Fewer than 50 percent of people in the U.S. pay federal income tax, a situation that calls for reevaluating our tax system.
- 4. The federal government should consider a significant change: replacing the "earned income" tax with a "crowd sourcing" tax (CST). This new tax system would collect federal taxes when a person spends their money, not when they earn it. It could begin with 1/2 cent and be adjusted annually.
- 5. As soon as someone steps foot in the U.S., they begin paying taxes the same amount as everyone else.
- 6. As soon as a child has a dollar to spend, they begin paying for their own "healthcare for all, "Social Security, education K-14 and lowering the national debt. A formula is applied to each individual's case, and a maximum can be recovered at tax time each year.
- 7. Texas can now spend \$10 billion on a state border wall without U.S. approval.
- 8. The U.S. should invite immigrants into the U.S. to "grow food for the world" and give food when other countries in need ask for help, not money, arms for war or ammunition for furthering war, which only benefits the NRA.

This is a solution with an out, which is desperately needed by everyone, and the political party that enacts this fix will be in power for a long time.

- Steven Arey,

Salisbury

Trauma care for Helene victims

As a therapist specializing in trauma for over 20 years, I am extremely concerned about the emotional trauma that is likely to be a result of Hurricane Helene. Individuals desperately need to receive EMDR (Eye Movement

Desensitization and Reprocessing), which is an evidence-based treatment for both the treatment of and the prevention of PTSD. EMDR is endorsed by the World Health Organization, the American Psychiatric Association, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense, the American Psychological Association, and the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies.

After working with many individuals who have experienced trauma, including the mass shooting in Las Vegas and 9/11, I am a firm believer that the sooner individuals can be assisted in processing the trauma, the sooner they can recover.

When individuals are not assisted in processing a disaster situation quickly, there is a risk for Acute Stress Reaction, including nightmares and flashbacks to begin, which can be devastating. Only by assisting individuals in processing the event through EMDR can individuals begin to rebuild their lives. Thus, it is critical that groups be conducted to assist these individuals in obtaining necessary skills for self-care; and those who are at most risk for PTSD, be provided EMDR to process this trauma.

- Patti Lyerly,

Salisbury

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\$368M awarded in needs-based school construction grants

October 10, 2024 | Salisbury Post (NC) Author: Staff Report | Section: Education | 702 Words OpenURL Link

\$368M awarded in needs-based school construction grants

Published 12:00 am Thursday, October 10, 2024

By Staff Report

Seven school districts will share more than \$360 million in new state lottery-funded grant awards for school construction, renovation projects and other capital improvements. Among the projects funded by the grants are plans to consolidate schools into one campus, increasing access to career and technical education and modernizing facilities for students, faculty and the surrounding community.

The grants, awarded under the Needs-Based Public School Capital Fund (NBPSCF), represent the largest annual allocation under the program, created by the General Assembly in 2017 from state lottery revenues. The grants are in addition to the state's lottery-supported Public School Building Capital Fund and the Public School Building Repair and Renovation Fund, from which all 115 districts receive an allocation each year.

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Catherine Truitt said the needs-based grants continue to help districts across North Carolina ensure that students have access to high quality learning environments that are clean, modern and inviting to better serve student learning.

"Hurricane Helene has reiterated the necessity of our students having access to safe, modern and structurally sound learning environments," said Truitt. "Each year, this funding does so much to support districts in modernizing infrastructure to improve safety and to enhance access for students to specialized learning facilities where they gain hands-on experience in new facilities like STEM labs, media centers and in career and technical education fields. I'm so thrilled to see these grants get into the hands of some incredibly deserving districts as we seek to help every student in the state reach their full potential."

Awards Include:

- * Edgecombe County Public Schools \$62 million
- * Will consolidate three schools in northern Edgecombe County, will renovate North Edgecombe High School, builds a new career and technical education facility, creates a new PK-8 facility and refurbishes grounds and athletic fields.
- * Graham County Schools \$42 million
- * Will construct a new elementary school designed to be a multi-level building that will centralize essential spaces like cafeteria, gymnasium, auditorium and more while aligning academic planning and other student services.
- * Hyde County Schools \$36,574,482
- * Will construct a new high school to replace older facilities and consolidate the elementary, middle and high school into one facility while reconfiguring the school's campus and athletic amenities.
- * Jackson County Public Schools \$52 million

- * Will construct a middle school that will consolidate five middle school programs into one location to better support student access to advanced coursework, career and technical education programs, visual arts, and to support teachers' planning, training, and more.
- * Martin County Schools \$62 million
- * Will construct a new high school to replace the existing 50-year-old Riverside High School, increasing student access to career and technical education classes, improving classroom and cafeteria size and addressing accessibility issues.
- * Sampson County Schools \$62 million
- * Will construct a new high school that will be a career and technical magnet school that will include a state-of-theart, two-story facility, an auditorium and a football/soccer field while improving parking, bus and carpool drop-off loops.
- * Swain County Schools \$52 million
- * Will construct a new middle school that will integrate buildings to reduce transition time, enhance classroom size and cafeteria capacity while creating new athletic fields to support student involvement.

Mark Michalko, executive director of the N.C. Education Lottery, said a substantial portion of the money raised by the lottery will support schools and communities as they renovate, repair and construct buildings.

"More than half of the \$1 billion raised by the lottery last year went to build new schools and renovate and repair older ones," said Mark Michalko, chief executive officer of the N.C. Education Lottery. "You can see ground-breaking and ribbon-cuttings events for new schools occurring all across our state. It's a wonderful use of lottery funds and these new schools and classrooms will help move our students forward."

In total, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) received 122 applications totaling \$1.78 billion in requested funding. The NBPSCF grant program is funded annually through budget appropriations of NC Education Lottery revenue. The next grant cycle for FY 25-26 is anticipated to be open in the fall of 2025, following completion of the next biennial budget.

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