

What's it really like when the Army arrives to help Western NC post-Helene? We tagged along

October 15, 2024 | Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles (NC) Author: Catherine Muccigrosso, The Charlotte Observer | Section: north_carolina | 1561 Words OpenURL Link

The welcoming mountains of Western North Carolina was where Robert Arndt grew up. And after the deadly Hurricane Helene pummeled the area, he knew he had to do something, anything, to help.

"Nanny's house is completely destroyed," Arndt said last week. His great-grandmother's house was in Clyde, halfway between his hometown of Sylva and Asheville. She's safe and staying with family in Sylva nearly an hour west of Asheville. "A house is replaceable. A life isn't," Arndt said.

He's among 1,300 soldiers with the 20th Engineer Brigade mobilized to the mountains for recovery relief. The brigade includes soldiers from Fort Liberty (formerly Bragg), where Ardnt is based, as well as Fort Meade in Maryland and Fort Campbell in Kentucky.

The job is personal to the 22-year-old, whose family also lives in towns like Canton and Waynesville, all hammered by the storm and within the 27 counties designated as major disaster areas.

"They need more hands, more workers, more engineers to help clear the roads or build them, or help get supplies to people who can't get out of their houses," Arndt said.

Helene's deadly path of destruction tore through 300 miles inland from the coast. "It hurts me," Arndt said. "It's something you can't really prepare for up in the mountains."

To get a first-hand look at what the soldiers were doing to assist hurricane victims in the mountains, a Charlotte Observer reporter and visuals journalist spent a 12-hour day embedded with the Army last Wednesday. Here's what we saw and heard.

ArmyhelpsWNC8.jpgActive-duty soldiers from Fort Liberty place ice and cleaning supplies into the car of a resident affected by Hurricane Helene at Mitchell Elementary/Middle School in Bakersville on Wednesday, Oct. 9, 2024.

'Thank you for coming!'

It's just after 8 a.m. Dozens of small camouflage-colored tents line the front of a large pavilion turned logistics center at Camping World RV Sales in Marion, about 100 miles northwest of Charlotte.

It's muddy and it's loud, with an army of vehicles revved to go.

After being handed three-pound Kevlar helmets, we climbed up a four-step metal ladder into the open-air 5-ton Light Medium Tactical Vehicle alongside seven soldiers on metal benches. We were followed by a medic truck.

Our destination: school distribution centers in Spruce Pine.

Along the route, many businesses are closed. Parking lots like Wendy's and Dollar General are caked in mud, while shopping centers are now staging areas for utility crews. A gem mining sign says "rain or shine," but it's closed.

A passing pickup driver gives a thumbs up. A woman rolls down her truck window, shouting, "Thank you for coming!" It's a sentiment shared throughout the day.

Turning onto NC 226 E., a manned barricade allows only relief crews and local traffic through.

Too many uprooted trees to count mar the landscape. About halfway up the mountain, a portion of the road is gone, as washed-away trees give way to a cliff drop with a view of the majestic mountains.

Army Sgt. Jared Marshall warned us it was coming. Road crews work to rebuild the outside lane as our military vehicle rumbles over the rock and gravel path.

During the hour-long ride, Marshall shared how Hurricane Helene affected his own family.

His in-laws fled their Fairview home, about 11 miles southeast of Asheville, and are staying at his house in Fayetteville.

"We're here trying to do everything we can to help out," Marshall said. "To see them happy that we're here, it brings happiness to me and all of the soldiers."

ArmyhelpsWNC14.jpgSoldiers wave back to one of many people who waved at them Oct. 9, 2024, on the drive back to Marion after a day helping at distribution sites in Spruce Pine and Bakersville as part of Hurricane Helene recovery relief.

'The worst I've seen'

Arriving at Harris Middle School in Spruce Pine, mountains of bottled water sit stacked on pallets out front. Inside the closed school's gym are boxes, bags and bins filled with donations.

The soldiers answer a call for help from a line crew over an excavator stuck in mud. Dylan Myers of Oklahoma, working alongside about 200 lineworkers from Ohio, New York and Connecticut, has been on several storm damage recoveries before in Florida and Louisiana.

"This is probably the worst I've seen," the general foreman said. "I've never seen so many in distress."

ArmyhelpsWNC4.jpgThe gym of Harris Elementary Middle School in Spruce Pine is overflowing with donations and supplies for families affected by Hurricane Helene in Mitchell County on Wednesday, Oct. 9, 2024.

'When they lose everything it's a disaster'

At 10:44 a.m., at Deyton Elementary School, about a tenth of a mile away from the middle school, pallets of livestock and animal feed, along with firewood, sit outside near more bottled water mounds. Inside, classrooms are filled with donations. Paper signs by the doors read pet food, baby supplies, cleaning supplies, hygiene and home goods.

In the library, soldiers unpack and stock bookshelves with food.

By the next week, people will be able to come in and choose what they need, said Melissa Martin, a special education teacher at Mitchell High who was sorting boxes of canned food in a classroom.

"My students have hardly anything to begin with," Martin said, her voice cracking. "and when they lose everything it's a disaster."

Residents still struggle without power, water service and cell service.

"Some still can't get out," Martin said. She and Sarah Margaret Smith of Watauga Opportunities logged 55 miles checking on students the day before. Most of the students have been accounted for, but they're still looking for

some, she said. "We know they're safe but where did they go?"

Wearing a purple T-shirt with block white letters reading "We are still one," Lori Jones is coordinator at the Deyton site. The soldiers help by unloading trailers, breaking down boxes, sweeping rooms, whatever they're asked to do, the seventh-grade social studies teacher said.

Seeing the soldiers brings her a feeling of safety and security.

"It gets better every day," she said. It's a statement echoed throughout the day by other volunteers and residents.

'We couldn't make it without all the help'

At 1:23 p.m., we headed about five miles away to the new Mitchell Elementary/Middle School in Bakersville.

The stream of cars coming through the drive-thru distribution site is sometimes 10 or more deep. Wanda Duncan came for electrolytes. Soldiers and volunteers race to cars with arms full of water cases, Band-aids and wipes. Some people arrive not knowing what they need, while others have lists.

"It's a blessing to all of us here because the simple things we take for granted have been taken away," teary-eyed Duncan said. "We couldn't make it without all the help."

A sweet, familiar scent wafts through the area. Auntie Ruth's family-owned doughnut and pretzel business from East Tennessee gives out freshly made glazed doughnuts and coffee from a borrowed food truck. "We're happy to do something," said Jolene Kauffman, the owner's daughter. "It's something to brighten their days."

Lyle Hendrix of Hendersonville arrives in a pickup truck with donations collected by DSSOLVR brewery in downtown Asheville. His right wrist is covered in poison ivy blisters from cutting downed trees in his neighborhood to get himself and others out. But he's fine.

"This has showed me that people really are good," he said. "Everyone is a hero."

Dale Blevins, 66, has been overseeing supplies and donations since the distribution center opened Oct. 1. "You could see the distress on their faces," he said.

But people are beginning to smile and joke more.

Small groups of volunteers have popped in from the Charlotte area too. Then the Army showed up Oct. 4. "It was a breath of fresh air. Hands is what we need," Blevins said.

ArmyhelpsWNC5.jpgSoldiers work Wednesday, Oct. 9, 2024, at the Mitchell Elementary/Middle School donation supply distribution center in Bakersville. About 1,300 soldiers from Fort Liberty in Fayetteville, Fort Campbell in Kentucky and Fort Meade in Maryland have been mobilized to help with Hurricane Helene relief.

'Help and hope'

By 2:26 p.m., the last of a thousand doughnuts were handed out, including to Rachael Hollifield and her 15-year-old daughter, Taylar.

Once power was restored Tuesday, they learned of the distribution site. They came to get bottled water, food and paper towels. Like others, they don't have running water. Like so many others, their basement is flooded, too.

With prompting from a volunteer, Hollifield agrees to take a large can of potatoes and three jugs of water. "I don't want to take too much from other people who may need it," she said.

The Hollifields moved into their Spruce Pine home just two days before the storm hit. "We were totally unprepared," Hollifield said. "We didn't have power. We didn't have water. We didn't have cell service. We were stuck."

Wearing a shirt that says "God has perfect timing," Hollifield looks around and says, "Help and hope is what I see here."

Day's end

At 4:53 p.m., we head back to Harris Middle School where soldiers offloaded stacks of bottled water they moved from the distribution site.

By 6 p.m. our convoy made its way back down the mountain, as passersby wave to the soldiers and they wave back in unison.

The destruction hasn't deterred Sgt. Marshall's plans to move to the mountains near his wife's family after he's discharged next year.

"We want to move up here regardless of the storm," the 26-year-old said. "It's such a pretty area."

PXL_20241009_134409367 (1).jpgSgt. Jared Marshall, from New Jersey and stationed in Fort Liberty in Fayetteville, talks Wednesday, Oct. 9, 2024, while riding in the back of a nLMTV. He's headed to donation distribution centers following Hurricane Helene in Spruce Pine and Bakersville.

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• Citation (aglc Style)

Catherine Muccigrosso, The Charlotte Observer, 'What's it really like when the Army arrives to help Western NC post-Helene? We tagged along', *Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles* (online), 15 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C3A33859496B50



Living in the dark: 13+ days without power in Western North Carolina after Hurricane Helene

October 15, 2024 | Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles (NC) Author: Sara Murphy, The Charlotte Observer | Section: c5_people | 1550 Words OpenURL Link

Editor's note: After Sara filed this story but before it was published, her power came back on after being off for 13 days. The last section has been added to reflect that.

I've lived in Leicester, an unincorporated township northwest of Asheville, with my elderly mother and stepfather since 2014. It's a lovely area with lovely people, and our mountain home has the most beautiful view I've ever seen.

Compared to most areas, Leicester made it through the storm pretty well. (In my first story for CharlotteFive, I reported on a local diner, the Salty Goat Grill, keeping folks fed since the storm hit.) Lots of downed trees, and some damage to roads. But as far as I know, we escaped the worst. We are truly lucky.

But we also have been without power, water and internet for 13 days in our neighborhood of about 15 homes, and managing everyday tasks with two elderly parents and two cats gets a bit harder each day.

Down By the Creek.jpegAt the creek near our home, we would fill a 5-gallon bucket and then pour the water into the detergent bottles with a funnel.

After Helene: Hand washing and toilet flushing with no water

It's amazing how much longer it takes to accomplish the most basic of tasks. Each day, we drive five minutes down our winding mountain road to the creek to fill multiple laundry detergent bottles with water for hand washing and toilet flushing. Our semi-rural neighborhood did not experience any flooding, so while I wouldn't drink that water without boiling it, it works just fine for those other needs.

The flushing is particularly challenging if you're elderly and have less upper body strength. Whether you're pouring the water straight into the bowl to create a vacuum or pouring it into the tank so you can flush, it's impossible for my elderly mother. This has been a serious issue in senior living facilities around the region, as reported by volunteers of multiple "flush brigades."

Our Water Jugs.jpegGathering water from the creek for washing and toilet flushing means reusing plastic jugs.

Coffee and cooking with no water or power

Even making coffee feels more complicated. Or perhaps it's just the realization that you're boiling water on the stove for a drab cup of instant rather than a cup of nicely percolated grounds that makes the task feel both more necessary and less fulfilling.

We're lucky to have a gas stove, but cooking has its limits when you know you don't have the ability to wash the dishes as well as you'd like. We're paper plating and plastic forking everything that we can, but hot meals require pots and pans, and the dirty ones are piling up.

Selfie with our water jugs.jpegSara Murphy takes a selfie with the water jugs her family hauled to a nearby creek to fill for washing and toilet flushing.

Unlike many areas, we haven't had too much of a challenge getting food or — most importantly — drinking water.

But the selection has narrowed significantly, given that our freezer is "powered" by four bags of steadily liquefying ice. (Ice has been in short supply at our local grocery store, even when rationed to two bags per family.)

The freezer mostly holds frozen butter and some egg whites now, while we have a smaller styrofoam cooler to hold more quasi-perishable items like smoked salmon, long defrosted peas, and some feta and provolone. Bread with peanut butter features heavily on the menu, though tonight we're having some broccoli and carrots steamed on the stove to go along with potatoes baked on the grill.

Dinner.jpegDinner on paper plates makes things easier when water for washing is scarce.

No electricity: Awake with the sun, asleep with the sun

Your world shrinks in times like these. Not only because you stop using the rooms in your house that rely on electricity to fully light up, but also because your days run on the natural clock of the sun.

It's completely dark by around 8 p.m. most nights, and our camping lantern, small flashlights and candles don't provide enough light to do even the lightest of chores or indulge in some bedtime reading. And, of course, even with cell service, we can't waste batteries on our devices.

Sunset view from the deck.jpegA sunset view from the deck at Sara Murphy's Liecester home.

How to work in the dark

One benefit is that I worked more efficiently this fortnight. Whether conducting interviews or writing articles, I don't get distracted going down internet rabbit holes or get precious over each word.

That said, however, when I interviewed two people in Morganton about their volunteer efforts, those conversations stretched for a long time. I could tell they needed to share, and I could think of no better use of my phone battery than to listen.

We each of us have a book's worth of tales to tell about surviving this experience, whether we barely lost power or had our homes washed away.

Driveway View.jpegWalking to the creek for water means navigating a steep roadway.

Neighbors helping neighbors in Helene's wake

Without our neighbors and their generators, we'd be up the creek. We've charged devices daily, used their Starlink satellite on that first weekend when cell service failed and even taken a hot shower. We'll be forever grateful. A generator will be our first major purchase once we have some normalcy restored.

After a few days where gas was in short supply and people waited for hours in line, we've been able to fill up easily. It's nice to know that, in a pinch, we could drive off somewhere. But where would we go? No place is like home, and I live in semi-hope that the power is coming soon.

I'm not holding my breath, though; earlier this week a chainsaw crew finally came to remove fallen tree branches that have rested almost jauntily against our power lines, and someone tightened the lines.

Reporter_s Road.jpegTrees lean on power lines in Leicester. While the area mostly escaped flooding, downed trees have hindered access and cut off power.

But that was a few days ago. A crew came again out Wednesday morning, but it was simply another tree trimming crew. Multiple calls to Duke Energy insist that a power restoration crew was dispatched, but it's clear a communication breakdown is happening.

Duke Trucks.jpegDuke Energy lineman gather, working to restore power after Hurricane Helene.

And while I can hang on despite the cooler weather up here on the mountaintop, I can increasingly see the strain on my mother. In the starkest terms, this experience will likely shorten her life. Perhaps by only days or weeks, but it's still heartbreaking.

In your worst moments it's easy to feel forgotten by the rest of the world as they bake and scroll on Instagram, while you spread yet another slice of bread with peanut butter or lug the flush bottle toward the bathroom. (Also as my mom just puts her noodles in the microwave and forgets it's not working.)

All the same, despite some shortened tempers and real fatigue, I think we've hung in there pretty well. My heart goes out to those people who don't even have a home to navigate, much less the anticipation of power or water anytime this month.

I'm currently needed here at home, but once our oxygen mask is back on in the form of the magical innovation of electricity, I'll be doing what I can to help others get out of the dark and back on their feet next.

Update: Back online after 13 days

When the power returned early on the evening of Oct. 9, it did so not with a bang but with gentle hums and beeps. For the first 10 minutes or so, I wandered the house, not quite trusting in our good fortune.

It took my stepfather turning on the taps and flushing the toilets to drive home just what it meant. "Is anyone else in a bit of disbelief, almost like a caged animal set free and too afraid to trust the grass?" I wrote in our neighborhood group chat.

Front Yard View.jpeqA mountain view from the front yard of Sara Murphy's Leicester home.

About half an hour later, though, we began to roar back to life ourselves. I turned on our Wi-Fi router and got a signal. In our excitement to clean dishes, we forgot to switch on the right valve and had a water supply error message.

In the two days following, we've done about 10 loads of laundry, five dishwasher cycles and cleaned every shelf in the fridge, which currently has a skeleton crew of food: a giant vat of vegetable soup, butter and condiments, a bit of cheese and about a case of bottled water. Having not just power but clean, reliable well water is a true gift; most municipal water systems in the region will be under boil advisories for a while. The irony that it was an overabundance of water that has deprived us of this most precious resource has not escaped me.

Now that we're not in rapid response mode, the exhaustion has hit; I've taken more naps in the past two days than I did in the 13 before them.

It will take a while for a normal routine to return, even in our relatively unscathed household.

But once I recharge my batteries (and buy a major battery pack that can charge multiple devices for days at a time), I'll be ready to help recover and rebuild.

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• Citation (aglc Style)

Sara Murphy, The Charlotte Observer, 'Living in the dark: 13+ days without power in Western North Carolina after Hurricane Helene', *Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles* (online), 15 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C390349DD953B0



'Sweetheart' cat and her shy brother have spent 4 years in shelter. They need homes

October 15, 2024 | Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles (NC) Author: Simone Jasper, The Charlotte Observer | Section: north_carolina | 317 Words OpenURL Link

A "sweetheart" cat and her shy brother have spent four years in an animal shelter — and they still need homes.

A North Carolina humane society hopes timid cats Katrina and Ivan will be matched with patient new owners.

"Katrina is looking for a human who will love her unconditionally and give her the time and space she needs to come out of her shell," the Cashiers-Highlands Humane Society wrote on Facebook in August.

More recently, the shelter in an Oct. 14 post said Ivan was "on the shy side so he tends to get overlooked in our cageless playrooms in favor of the more extroverted kitties who run to greet visitors the moment they walk in the door."

The cats are waiting for homes after arriving at the humane society as kittens in 2020. Four years later, the two are now considered long-term shelter residents, according to social media posts and online adoption profiles.

Like her brother, Katrina also has been passed up as shelter visitors consider more outgoing cats. She's described as a "an introvert, yes, but a sweetheart nonetheless."

Meanwhile, the shelter said her brother "needs the companionship of a patient and gentle human who will give Ivan time, space and plenty of love and affection."

Katrina and Ivan don't have to be adopted together, the shelter wrote in June.

As of Oct. 15, the shelter's website still listed the brother and sister as available for adoption in the Sapphire area, a roughly 55-mile drive southwest from the mountain town of Asheville. The shelter in recent social media posts didn't say what happened to their sibling Frances, who also had a hurricane-related name.

The humane society didn't immediately share additional information with McClatchy News on Oct. 15. More details about its adoption process can be found at chhumanesociety.org.

'Resilient' kitten rescued from devastation of Helene. 'Little survivor' needs a home

Mama cat helped 'abandoned' kittens 'without hesitation.' But who will step in for her?

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• Citation (aglc Style)

Simone Jasper, The Charlotte Observer, "Sweetheart' cat and her shy brother have spent 4 years in shelter. They need homes', *Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles* (online), 15 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view? p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C3A3385470C1F0>



My house is covered in sludge. Don't tell me we can't build better in western NC - Opinion

October 15, 2024 | Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles (NC) Author: Jonathan Phillips, The Charlotte Observer | Section: opinion | 688 Words OpenURL Link

As soon as roads allowed last week, I arrived at my property in Bat Cave, North Carolina with a car full of water, food and supplies for neighbors. There was only one thing I had that was of interest to people — gasoline and diesel fuel. For days, military helicopters and good Samaritans had been airdropping supplies up and down Highway 9 near my house. Pallets of pre-made military meals, water and other supplies were already piling up in garages. What people wanted was energy to drive the machinery needed to dig out, power the wells that pump water and generate electrons that keep the lights and communications devices operating.

This is also what I find every day in my work in Africa and South Asia on energy poverty. People are willing to spend enormous shares of their income on energy. It is the essential backbone to modern life. Billions of dollars are siphoned off annually to pay for expensive fuel. Badly needed investment flows elsewhere because businesses don't set-up operations where power supplies are unreliable. People remain stuck in poverty.

Western North Carolina already had a major power reliability problem. People who can, including my family, own generators to compensate for an extremely weak grid in the region. But everyone should be able to access reliable power. Building back smarter right now means building to new specifications. Bury power lines where necessary. Build redundancies into the grid. Update flood maps to reflect a world that is changing because of climate change. These are exactly the types of policies that recent legislation — the bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act in particular — are helping enable.

These measures represent hard work that will take time, but people in the region are hurting now. Unfortunately, the Trump campaign is driving an exploitative misinformation campaign that pins suffering on immigration policy, preying on people's vulnerability and anger while providing no relief.

These lies are spreading across North Carolina mountain country like wildfire right now. They are part of a new climate change denial messaging playbook that we do not have time for.

Leaders should be focusing on how the southeast must prepare for storm devastation it's never seen before and what that means — building more resilient power grids, avoiding building in vulnerable locations, providing better risk information to people so they can buy insurance. Virtually nobody in western North Carolina owns flood insurance so they will not get benefits from the policies they've paid into for decades. Instead, the misinformation specialists blame, dodge, and stoke anger. All of this is to avoid talking about the fact that the Gulf of Mexico was an abnormally warm 85 degrees as Helene gathered strength, and those waters are fueling bigger and more devastating storms, according to scientists.

Where is the call (eh-hum, North Carolina Senate delegation) for Congress to pass emergency response funding, which will certainly be needed once members return to Washington in November?

My property is buried two feet deep in toxic sludge, and I have a new creek running through my yard. I'll have no grid power or water for months. Don't tell me that I live in an area that doesn't flood. Don't tell me we can't build homes to higher resilience standards. Don't tell me we can't climate-proof power systems. Don't tell me cowardly lies like recovery money is going to illegal immigrants. We live in a new, harsher environment here in the Southeast. Tell me how we as Americans are going to rise to the challenge of surviving and thriving in it.

It is disappointing that someone running for the highest office in the land has chosen to exploit this natural disaster

for political purposes. Efforts such as the bipartisan infrastructure act and new regulations that will help FEMA develop better flood maps backed by the current White House are only the beginning of the real work needed to harden our infrastructure and ready our communities for what is to come.

Jonathan Phillips, writing in a personal capacity, is Director of Energy Access at Duke University's Nicholas energy institute. He was an advisor to Congress and Obama's administration on climate and foreign policy.

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• Citation (aglc Style)

Jonathan Phillips, The Charlotte Observer, 'My house is covered in sludge. Don't tell me we can't build better in western NC Opinion', *Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles* (online), 15 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C39034A617F018>



County to donate older fire truck to VFD in western NC after Helene

October 15, 2024 | Chowan Herald, The (NC) Author: Vernon Fueston | Section: Local | 453 Words OpenURL Link

Chowan commissioners agreed last week to declare a nearly 40-year-old fire truck surplus property and donate it to another fire department in western North Carolina that might need one in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Helene's destruction.

The 36-year-old tanker truck, still in use by the Center Hill-Crossroads Volunteer Fire Department in Tyner, originally had been slated for sale. But Center Hill Fire Captain Alan Monds requested that the truck instead be transferred to another fire department in the storm zone in need of one.

"It's a tanker truck, an old one that still works fine," County Manager Kevin Howard said.

Commissioner Larry McLaughlin asked if the truck was still usable, why couldn't it be stationed in either the northern or southern end of Chowan County.

"It's just literally a tanker — it has no pump, no nothing," Monds responded. "It's pretty much outdated — it's done us good for many years but it won't do us any more good. ... It's not worth a whole lot because it doesn't have a pump."

Monds said there also are issues with continuing to house the 1,000-gallon truck at the Center Hill-Crossroads VFD. He suggested it might be better if the truck was transferred to another department, particularly one that might need one following Helene's destructive flooding.

"It would be a good truck for somebody out west that needs something right now," he said.

Commissioners approved declaring the truck surplus property and transferring its ownership to another department once Howard finds one in need of the truck. If no one wants the fire truck, then the county will put it up for sale on govdeals.com and sell it as surplus.

In an unrelated public safety matter, Howard said Chowan, Gates and Washington counties are studying whether to build a regional tri-county jail, one that would be located in the northern end of Chowan. Commissioners have said a jail would reduce costs associated with transporting and housing prisoners.

The site for the proposed new jail has yet to be determined. If Gates and Washington agree to a joint facility, Chowan has two sites that could be considered for the jail. One is on Haughton Road. The other is behind the Valhalla Water Plant on N.C. Highway 32. When that plant is shut down, there are 15 acres behind the tower that could be used for the new jail facility.

Commissioners also approved the appointment of Chasity Pailin to a regular seat on the Chowan Board of Adjustments and Trevor Miles to an alternate seat. That action still leaves one alternate seat vacant on the board.

Commissioners also approved adopting a new meal reimbursement rate from the state of North Carolina for staff travel. The move would bring the county in line with state policy, officials said.

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• Citation (aglc Style)

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Helene: In frigid temperatures, thousands remain without power

October 15, 2024 | Courier-Times, The (Roxboro, NC) Author: Alan Wooten | The Center Square | Section: State | 446 Words OpenURL Link

(The Center Square) – More than 12,000 customers remained without power on a Tuesday morning with temperatures barely above freezing in the North Carolina mountains on the third week since Hurricane Helene's remnants crushed the region.

The nation's fourth deadliest storm in the last three-quarters of a century killed 42 in Buncombe County, where overnight temperatures at Asheville Regional Airport dipped to the mid-30s. The state Health Department on Monday said 95 have died related to the storm.

According to poweroutage.us at 8:30 a.m., the county had 3,331 without power. There were 4,136 in neighboring Yancey County; 3,530 in Mitchell; 242 in Madison; and 114 in Avery.

Helene came ashore in the Big Bend of Florida on Sept. 26 as a Category 4 hurricane. It moved swiftly through Georgia and dissipated over the Appalachian Mountains and Tennessee, dumping more than 30 inches of rain into multiple locations.

The terrain created violent rushes of water and mud through a number of communities. The Swannanoa River crested at Biltmore Village at 26.1 feet, breaking the record of 20.7 feet set in the Great Flood of 1916. Flood stage is 10 feet. At the French Broad River in Asheville, flood stage is 9.5 feet, the Great Flood set the record of 23 feet, and Helene topped it at 24.67 feet.

Tuesday morning, the state's road closure report included 579 – three on interstates, 38 federal highways, 58 state roads, and 480 secondary roads. Early estimates are for about 100 mountain bridges to need replacement.

Estimated damage, pending on metrics for calculation, has ranged as high as \$250 billion.

An exact number killed has varied. When hurricanes hit, there are different numbers used pending on the agency and metrics it considers. For example, the state Department of Health and Human Services number includes a death in Wake County of a displaced Buncombe County resident who fell and died because of those injuries in her temporary housing.

The more than seven dozen fatalities include 20 categorized as drowning; 11 by landslide; 10 by blunt force; and 34 unknown circumstances. In addition to 42 in Buncombe, other counties with the most deaths from the storm were Yancey (11), Henderson (seven) and Haywood (five). There were four each in Avery and Madison.

An exact number of deaths across multiple states is unclear, though it is believed between 206 and 251. There are two different numbers, respectively, for North Carolina (95 and 124), Tennessee (six and 17) and Florida (20 and 25); published reports put the figure at 49 for South Carolina, 33 for Georgia, two in Virginia, and one in Indiana.

Only Katrina (2005, deaths 1,392), Audrey (1957, deaths 416) and Camille (1969, deaths 256) killed more people by hurricane since 1950.

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• Citation (aglc Style)

Alan Wooten | The Center Square, 'Helene: In frigid temperatures, thousands remain without power', *Courier-Times, The* (online), 15 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C3F0A721F1E548>



Helene: Number of people missing believed to be 92

October 15, 2024 | Courier-Times, The (Roxboro, NC) Author: Alan Wooten | The Center Square | Section: State | 517 Words OpenURL Link

(The Center Square) – In the third week since Hurricane Helene struck the North Carolina mountains, as many as 92 people may still be missing.

In media availability on Tuesday, Gov. Roy Cooper said the number "is not a definitive count, because the task for is continuing its work."

"The number," the second-term Democrat said, "will continue to fluctuate as more reports come in and others are resolved."

It also seemed to back up U.S. Rep. Virginia Foxx, R-N.C., saying in a Thursday interview with Fox News Radio, "I keep hearing the number over 100 that are unaccounted for. I don't know whether that's in my area or down west from me, but in my area, I think there are still many people that we haven't been able to get to because of the washout of the roads."

Recovery efforts have been challenged by arguably the state's worst natural disaster, comparable to Hurricanes Hazel in 1954 – the only Category 4 to make landfall in the state – and Floyd in 1999, producer in eastern North Carolina of what was deemed a once in 500 years flood.

Tuesday morning, the state's road closure report included 579 - three on interstates, 38 federal highways, 58 state roads, and 480 secondary roads. Early estimates are for about 100 mountain bridges to need replacement.

Add in layers of both failed infrastructure like 12,000 without power on a Tuesday morning with temperatures in the 30s, water systems still failed, and circulating misinformation, and the task has grown past enormous.

"I have directed the Department of Public Safety to coordinate law enforcement assistance for FEMA and other responders who need it to help ensure their safety and security so people can keep getting the help that they desperately need," Cooper said.

Deanne Criswell, administrator of FEMA and a leader among more than 2,000 from the federal government responding, said operational changes have been made.

"It's heartbreaking to see words or active acts of hatred toward anyone, let alone federal responders who are here to help people in this critical time," she said.

Helene came ashore in the Big Bend of Florida on Sept. 26 as a Category 4 hurricane. It moved swiftly through Georgia and dissipated over the Appalachian Mountains and Tennessee, dumping more than 30 inches of rain into multiple locations.

An exact number of deaths across multiple states is unclear, though it is believed between 206 and 251. There are two different numbers, respectively, for North Carolina (95 and 124), Tennessee (six and 17) and Florida (20 and 25); published reports put the figure at 49 for South Carolina, 33 for Georgia, two in Virginia, and one in Indiana.

For context, different agencies such as public safety or medical examiner's offices may have differing metrics for linking fatalities to storms. For example, a death that happened in Wake County – about 250 miles east of Asheville – has been counted by the Department of Health and Human Services because it was a Buncombe County resident in temporary housing displaced by Helene.

Only Katrina (2005, deaths 1,392), Audrey (1957, deaths 416) and Camille (1969, deaths 256) killed more people by hurricane since 1950.

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• Citation (aglc Style)

Alan Wooten | The Center Square, 'Helene: Number of people missing believed to be 92', *Courier-Times, The* (online), 15 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C3F0A7311F35E8



Community Calendar

October 15, 2024 | Courier-Tribune, The (Asheboro, NC) Author: Staff Writer | Section: Entertainment | 841 Words OpenURL Link

The information listed is what was provided to the Courier-Tribune. If details, including dates and times, change please contact the newspaper to update the listing.

Thursday, Oct. 176:30 p.m.: "'Jack the Ripper' and late-Victorian crime" talk by history professor Jill C. Bender at Asheboro library, 201 Worth St. Info: 336-318-6803.

8 p.m.: "Carrie" (R) screening outside at Sunrise Theater, 250 NW Broad St., Southern Pines. Tickets, \$5: www.SunriseTheater.com, Sunrise office or at the doors.

Friday, Oct. 18

7 p.m.: "The Importance of Being Earnest" play at Sunrise Theater, 250 NW Broad St., Southern Pines. Cost: Regular, \$27.50; students, \$16.50. Tickets: www.SunriseTheater.com; Sunrise office, 910-692-3611; or at the doors.

Saturday, Oct. 19

11 a.m. until sold out: Hospice of Randolph drive-thru barbecue dinner at Sunset Avenue Church of God, 900 Sunset Ave., Asheboro. \$12 a plate. Info: www.hospiceofrandolph.org/event/2024abbq.

1 p.m.: Metropolitan Opera live stream of Jeanine Tesori's "Grounded" at Sunrise Theater, 250 NW Broad St., Southern Pines. Tickets: \$29.50; sunrisetheater.com, 910-692-3611 or at box office starting at 12:30 p.m.

2-9:30 p.m.: Sunset Scares Mighty Mini Film Festival at Sunset Theatre, 234 Sunset Ave., Asheboro. Admission: \$5 (includes drink and popcorn). Family-friendly atmosphere from 2-5 p.m.: 4-5 p.m. meet-and-greet with special guest artist Riley Till, who will be available to draw for attendees on the back of lobby cards. Till merchandise booth from 2-9 p.m. PG-13 and R material from 5-9:30 p.m.

7 p.m.: "The Importance of Being Earnest" play at Sunrise Theater, 250 NW Broad St., Southern Pines. Cost: Regular, \$27.50; students, \$16.50. Tickets: www.SunriseTheater.com; Sunrise office, 910-692-3611; or at the doors.

7:30 p.m.: J.J. Brown Productions' "The Vampyre's Ball" at Carolina Tap House, 141 Sunset Ave., Asheboro. Profits and cash donations to go to BeLoved Asheville to help Hurricane Helene victims. Doors open at 6:30 p.m.; guests may get their Vampyre portrait made. Attendees encouraged to dress to impress; one to be chosen as Vampyres' leader in show. Guests to choose a Vampyre name and which coven to join. Limited seating. Tickets, \$30: www.jjbrownproductions.com.

Sunday, Oct. 20

3 p.m.: "The Importance of Being Earnest" play at Sunrise Theater, 250 NW Broad St., Southern Pines. Cost: Regular, \$27.50; students, \$16.50. Tickets: www.SunriseTheater.com; Sunrise office, 910-692-3611; or at the doors.

Monday, Oct. 21

4:30 p.m.: Randolph County Board of Education work session in Central Services board room, 2222-C S. Fayetteville St., Asheboro, followed by 6:30 p.m. meeting. Work session agenda: docs.google.com/document/d/10sYRhdEcqpV895dxjJpDDR9hj2zzTrRaToDoulXPOic/edit?tab=t.0. Meeting agenda:

docs.google.com/document/d/1SuFygadYivtXKlIz67agcqvRKUUpFpAhPgCNhSFwF48/edit?tab=t.0. Public access to meetings: www.randolph.k12.nc.us.

Tuesday, Oct. 22

4-5 p.m., 5-6 p.m. or 6-7 p.m.: Online information sessions (choose one) on Randolph Community College's industrial maintenance technician apprenticeship program: rccurl.com/imt_info_session. Info: RandolphIMT.com, apprenticeships@randolph.edu or 336-318-4958.

7 p.m.: Ruth Pauley lecture on college athletics with speakers Debbie Antonelli, James J. "Jim" Phillips and Lawrence R. "Bubba" Cunningham, in Owens Auditorium at Bradshaw Performing Arts Center at Sandhills Community College, 3395 Airport Road, Pinehurst. Free and open to the public. Audience may ask questions at the end. Informal gathering with panelists to follow. Concessions in the lobby. Registration required: ruthpauley.org.

7 p.m.: "Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror" screening, set to Radiohead music, at Sunrise Theater, 250 NW Broad St., Southern Pines. Admission: \$8. Tickets: sunrisetheater.com, 910-692-3611 or at the door.

Wednesday, Oct. 23

7 p.m.: "Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror" screening, set to Radiohead music, at Sunrise Theater, 250 NW Broad St., Southern Pines. Admission: \$8. Tickets: sunrisetheater.com, 910-692-3611 or at the door.

Thursday, Oct. 24

7 p.m.: "Scream" (R) screening in Sunrise Theater, 250 NW Broad St., Southern Pines. Tickets, \$5: www.SunriseTheater.com, Sunrise office or at the doors.

12:55 p.m.: Metropolitan Opera live stream of Jeanine Tesori's "Grounded" at Sunrise Theater, 250 NW Broad St., Southern Pines. Tickets: \$29.50; sunrisetheater.com, 910-692-3611 or at box office starting at 12:30 p.m.

Friday, Oct. 25

8 p.m.: "Rocky Horror" (R) outdoor screening at Sunrise Theater, 250 NW Broad St., Southern Pines. Guest with best costume will win a Sunrise bundle. Tickets, \$10: www.sunrisetheater.com/movies.

Saturday, Oct. 26

11 a.m.-3 p.m.: "Spectacle: Experience the extraordinary" benefit at Starworks, 100 Russell Drive, Star. "Raise the paddle" to support artists affected by Hurricane Helene, theatrics, special guest artists, luncheon, live jazz and silent and live auctions. Tickets: General, \$150; couples, \$250; and Starworks alumni, \$50. Live-auction absentee bidding: support@starworksnc.org. Info and tickets: StarworksNC.org/spectacle or Starworks' School House Gallery.

8 p.m.: "Rocky Horror" (R) outdoor screening at Sunrise Theater, 250 NW Broad St., Southern Pines. Guest with best costume will win a Sunrise bundle. Tickets, \$10: www.sunrisetheater.com/movies.

Sunday, Oct. 27

2-4 p.m.: "Come Sunday" jazz with the Onyx Club Boys at Weymouth Center, 555 E. Connecticut Ave., Southern Pines. Bring a blanket, chairs and a picnic. Cash bar. Tickets start at \$27.50; free for kids under 12. Register: weymouthcenter.org/event-calendar.

Thursday, Oct. 31

6 p.m.: Malloween at Asheboro Mall, 1437 E. Dixie Drive. Trick-or-treating at participating stores while supplies last.

Costumes encouraged. QR codes in mall can be scanned for a chance at a \$100 gift card giveaway. Info: Asheboro Mall Facebook page.

7 p.m.: "Halloween" (R) screening in Sunrise Theater, 250 NW Broad St., Southern Pines. Tickets, \$5: www.SunriseTheater.com, Sunrise office or at the doors.

Saturday, Nov. 2

5 p.m.: Trunk or Treat by Randolph County Sheriff's Office and friends, in courthouse parking lot, 176 E. Salisbury St., Asheboro. Info: 336-318-6698.

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• Citation (aglc Style)

Staff Writer, 'Community Calendar', *Courier-Tribune, The* (online), 15 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C44C2CA12682E0



Hurricane Helene creates 'severe environmental disaster'

October 15, 2024 | Daily Advance, The (Elizabeth City, NC) Author: Nick Fogleman The Watauga Democrat | Section: Across Carolina | 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 The Watauga Democrat, 'Hurricane Helene creates 'severe environmental disaster", *Daily Advance, The* (online), 15 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C3F087D635EDA8



John Hood: Helene brought out the best in Carolinians

October 15, 2024 | Daily Advance, The (Elizabeth City, NC) Author: Staff Writer | Section: News | 652 Words OpenURL Link

As we mourn the deaths and grapple with the destruction inflicted on our state by Hurricane Helene, I submit that the storm has brought out much that is good about North Carolina — and much that is vile about social media.

I'll start with the positive. Residents of the mountain counties most affected by Helene have fought heroically for their lives, their families and their neighbors, often against long odds and terrifying threats. They haven't fought alone. Others from across North Carolina and beyond flocked in to help.

We've only just begun to collect their stories of prudent planning, daring rescues and dogged determination. These tales feature the likes of Hendersonville's James White, who led more than a dozen neighbors sheltering in his home to safety with ropes and lifejackets, as well as Eddie Hunnell, recently moved to North Carolina from Colorado, who leapt into the swollen New River to save a stranger, Lesley Worth, separated from her husband by the raging stream.

At larger scale, hundreds of churches, charities, companies and volunteer networks sprang to the assistance of their fellow Carolinians. So did law enforcement, fire and rescue teams and emergency response personnel from counties, municipalities, state agencies and other public authorities.

On the ground, we've seen a great deal of cooperation across jurisdictional and political boundaries. Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler, for example, sent North Carolina Forest Service staffers familiar with the rugged terrain to guide National Guard units into position. On Oct. 7, Democratic and Republican appointees on the State Board of Elections voted unanimously to empower local boards in 13 hard-hit counties to modify the locations and hours of early-voting sites and other election procedures — but only by bipartisan votes of those boards, a prudent constraint to reassure a jittery public.

Democratic mayors have worked closely with Republican county commissioners to coordinate relief. Gov. Roy Cooper, U.S. Sens. Thom Tillis and Ted Budd, lawmakers from both parties — all have pitched in to comfort victims, survey damage, coordinate responses and convey timely, accurate information to the public.

That's not to say there haven't been miscues and disagreements. Tillis and Budd questioned the pace at which military personnel from Fort Liberty and other bases were deployed into the devastated counties after the storm. Others have criticized the adequacy of the response by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

While it will take some time to sort out all the claims and counterclaims, it's not too early to label these issues as legitimate topics for debate.

Unfortunately, much of the "debate" unfolding on social media over the past week has been anything but legitimate. Whether spreading wacky conspiracy theories about lithium mines and weather control or uttering grotesque slanders about Kamala Harris and Joe Biden intentionally "letting" Republican voters "drown," a host of very-online, supposedly conservative provocateurs and hacks have made a bad situation immeasurably worse.

Here's what a real conservative leader, state Sen. Kevin Corbin, had to say.

"PLEASE help stop this junk," wrote Corbin, who represents North Carolina's eight westernmost counties. "It is just a distraction to people trying to do their job.

"Folks, this is a catastrophic event of which this country has never known. It is the largest crisis event in the history

of N.C. The state is working non-stop. DOT has deployed workers from all over the state. Duke [Energy] has 10,000 workers on this. FEMA is here. The National Guard is here in large numbers."

Some incendiary memes are likely the product of misunderstandings, such as emergency officials redirecting volunteers away from dangerous roadways or relief agencies refusing certain donated items they aren't equipped to store or distribute. Others may well be the result of bad calls made in good faith, in stressful conditions, by officials with incomplete information or inadequate training.

Can policymakers properly second-guess such decisions after the fact? Of course! That time will come. Right now, our immediate challenges remain rescue and relief — challenges our fellow North Carolinians have met with magnificent resilience.

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• Citation (aglc Style)

Staff Writer, 'John Hood: Helene brought out the best in Carolinians', *Daily Advance, The* (online), 15 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C39AE09D3A1610



County to donate older fire truck to VFD in western NC after Helene

October 15, 2024 | Daily Advance, The (Elizabeth City, NC) Author: Vernon Fueston | Section: Local | 453 Words OpenURL Link

Chowan commissioners agreed last week to declare a nearly 40-year-old fire truck surplus property and donate it to another fire department in western North Carolina that might need one in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Helene's destruction.

The 36-year-old tanker truck, still in use by the Center Hill-Crossroads Volunteer Fire Department in Tyner, originally had been slated for sale. But Center Hill Fire Captain Alan Monds requested that the truck instead be transferred to another fire department in the storm zone in need of one.

"It's a tanker truck, an old one that still works fine," County Manager Kevin Howard said.

Commissioner Larry McLaughlin asked if the truck was still usable, why couldn't it be stationed in either the northern or southern end of Chowan County.

"It's just literally a tanker — it has no pump, no nothing," Monds responded. "It's pretty much outdated — it's done us good for many years but it won't do us any more good. ... It's not worth a whole lot because it doesn't have a pump."

Monds said there also are issues with continuing to house the 1,000-gallon truck at the Center Hill-Crossroads VFD. He suggested it might be better if the truck was transferred to another department, particularly one that might need one following Helene's destructive flooding.

"It would be a good truck for somebody out west that needs something right now," he said.

Commissioners approved declaring the truck surplus property and transferring its ownership to another department once Howard finds one in need of the truck. If no one wants the fire truck, then the county will put it up for sale on govdeals.com and sell it as surplus.

In an unrelated public safety matter, Howard said Chowan, Gates and Washington counties are studying whether to build a regional tri-county jail, one that would be located in the northern end of Chowan. Commissioners have said a jail would reduce costs associated with transporting and housing prisoners.

The site for the proposed new jail has yet to be determined. If Gates and Washington agree to a joint facility, Chowan has two sites that could be considered for the jail. One is on Haughton Road. The other is behind the Valhalla Water Plant on N.C. Highway 32. When that plant is shut down, there are 15 acres behind the tower that could be used for the new jail facility.

Commissioners also approved the appointment of Chasity Pailin to a regular seat on the Chowan Board of Adjustments and Trevor Miles to an alternate seat. That action still leaves one alternate seat vacant on the board.

Commissioners also approved adopting a new meal reimbursement rate from the state of North Carolina for staff travel. The move would bring the county in line with state policy, officials said.

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• Citation (aglc Style)



10 Tips for NC voters as Early Voting begins this week

October 15, 2024 | Daily Advance, The (Elizabeth City, NC) Author: From N.C. Board of Elections | Section: Across Carolina | 743 Words OpenURL Link

In-person early voting for the 2024 general election begins Thursday and ends at 3 p.m. on Nov. 2 in all 100 counties.

Statewide, 419 early voting sites will open on Thursday across North Carolina.

"In-person early voting has been the most popular method of voting in recent general elections, and we expect that will continue in 2024," said Karen Brinson Bell, executive director of the State Board of Elections.

In 2020, 65 percent of North Carolina voters chose in-person early voting as their voting method. And in the presidential election of 2016, 62 percent of NC voters cast their ballot early.

The following are 10 tips for voters as early voting begins:

1. Early voting locations. Eligible voters may cast a ballot at any early voting site in their county. For sites and hours in all 100 counties, use the Early Voting Sites Search tool.

Also see Early Voting Sites for the Nov. 5, 2024 General Election (PDF). The busiest days for early voting are often the first day and the last couple of days.

2. Candidate info. Sample ballots are available through the Voter Search tool. For information on candidates for the state Supreme Court and Court of Appeals, see the State Board's Judicial Voter Guide: 2024 General Election.

The Guide is also being mailed to all North Carolina households. Election officials do not provide information about candidates for other contests, but some media outlets and advocacy groups do. Many candidates also have websites and social media accounts. Being familiar with your ballot choices will help your voting experience go more smoothly.

3. Bring A Photo ID. Voters will be asked to show photo ID when they check in to vote. Most voters will show their driver's license, but many other forms of photo ID will be accepted.

Voters who do not have photo ID can meet the photo ID requirement by either (1) filling out a form explaining why they are unable to show ID, or (2) showing their ID at the county board of elections office by 5 p.m. on Nov. 14. More information about the photo ID requirement is available at BringltNC.gov.

- 4. Free Photo IDs. Any registered voter who needs a photo ID can get one for free from their county board of elections office during the early voting period, which ends on Nov. 2. For details, go to Get a Free Voter Photo ID.
- 5. Register to Vote. The regular voter registration deadline was Oct. 11. But any North Carolinian who is eligible to vote may still register and vote during the early voting period.

Registrants must provide proof of their residence address, which can be a driver's license or other government document, paycheck, utility bill, or bank statement.

For more information, visit Register in Person During Early Voting.

6. Updating Registration. During early voting, registered voters may update their name or address within the same

county, if necessary.

7. Absentee Ballot Drop-off. Voters who vote by absentee ballot can return it by mail or hand it to an election official at an early voting site in their county. They can also drop it off in person to their county board of elections office.

Voters registered in the 25 counties in the Helene disaster area in Western North Carolina may return their absentee ballot to any early voting site in the state during early voting hours. Ballots will be kept secure and delivered to the voter's county board of elections for processing.

For more information on returning absentee-by-mail ballots, see Detailed Instructions to Vote By Mail.

8. Voting in Person Instead of Absentee. Voters who requested an absentee ballot but have not yet returned it may choose instead to vote in person during the early voting period or on Election Day, Nov. 5.

Voters may discard the absentee ballot and do not need to bring it to a voting site.

- 9. Peace at the Polls. All voters should respect the rights of others to participate in the election. Election officials are trained to quickly address incidents that might interfere with a voter's ability to cast their ballot. Intimidating any voter is a crime. Voters who feel harassed or intimidated should notify an election official immediately.
- 10. Voters in Need of Assistance. Voters in need of assistance may bring an eligible person to help them enter and exit the polling place or to help them complete their ballot according to the voter's instructions.

Election officials are also available to help voters. Curbside voting is also available for voters unable to enter the voting site. For more information, visit Curbside Voting.

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• Citation (aglc Style)

From N.C. Board of Elections, '10 Tips for NC voters as Early Voting begins this week', *Daily Advance, The* (online), 15 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C3F087DD11D560



Letter: When it comes to Trump, it always will get worse

October 15, 2024 | Daily Advance, The (Elizabeth City, NC) Author: Staff Writer | Section: Letters | 404 Words OpenURL Link

Never in the history of the United States has a convicted felon been a serious contender for president of the United States. Until now.

Former President Donald Trump has never admitted he lost the 2020 election, constantly lying that the election was rigged.

But it gets worse.

The former president orchestrated an attack on the U.S. Capitol to overturn the results of the 2020 election and overthrow the legal government of the United States. The attempted coup on Jan. 6, 2021 resulted in the death of at least one Capitol police officer and the serious injury of more than 140 others. At least four Capitol police officers committed suicide after the attack.

But it gets worse.

U.S. Sen. J.D. Vance, R-Ohio, Trump's vice presidential candidate, refuses to acknowledge that Trump lost the election and falsely claims that the former president presided in the peaceful transfer of power on Jan. 20, 2021. (The former president refused to attend the inauguration and has continued to claim he won and that the election was rigged).

But it gets worse.

In North Carolina, a retired Army colonel is running for congress in the 1st Congressional District. She supports the twice impeached former president, the person who tried to overthrow the U.S. government with an attempted coup. Apparently the colonel has forgotten the oath to the U.S. Constitution that every military person takes.

But it gets worse.

During the current disasters caused by hurricanes Helene and Milton, the former president and Vance have spewed lies and disinformation about the actions of the federal government to provide help to people in dire need. The lies of the former president are dangerous to everyone involved, those in need of help and those providing that help.

But it gets worse.

Not one elected Republican or any Republican running for office has the courage to call the former president out by name for his outrageous lies and disinformation. They are either complicit, cowards or both.

The former president learned nothing about democracy or the purpose of government while in office or since his defeat in 2020. He only talks of hate and retribution if he returns to office. He has said he wants to be a dictator on day one. He proudly boasts of denying health care for women. He has promised to punish his political enemies. The list goes on and on.

We have a choice on Nov. 5: Save our democracy or fall to the hate and lies of a former president.

AL DELGARBINO

Shiloh

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• Citation (aglc Style)

Staff Writer, 'Letter: When it comes to Trump, it always will get worse', *Daily Advance, The* (online), 15 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C39AE085D8E708



What's Up

October 15, 2024 | Daily Advance, The (Elizabeth City, NC) Author: Julian Eure| Section: Whats Up| 1122 Words OpenURL Link

TODAY

Little Rascals book

Betsy Hester, author of "Twenty-One Boxes: Robyn's Story and the Tragedy of the Edenton Seven," will give two talks about the book at the Pasquotank County Library, one today at 5:50 p.m., the second on Friday at noon. The book is an analysis of the evidence in the Little Rascals day care case. Copies of the book are available at the Recycled Reader.

Computer help

The Pasquotank County Library will host computer assistance program on Word 1 at 4 p.m. Pre-register by calling Mike at 335-7536.

Donations for western NC

Food Bank of the Albemarle is accepting donations of non-perishable food, personal hygiene items and cleaning supplies for delivery to western counties in North Carolina hard hit by Tropical Storm Helene. Items will be accepted Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Contact: 252-335-4035.

Splash Week

Arts of the Albemarle's annual Splash Week continues in Elizabeth City's downtown through Saturday. Events for the artists' retreat will include the first-ever Splash Art Fair on North Poindexter Street on Saturday from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Artists and artisans are invited to sell their work at the fair. The event will also feature free music, family activities and crafts.

Library storytime

The Pasquotank County Library will host a storytime program on the theme "Cats" for kids 1 and younger at 10 a.m.

One-stop voting begins

One-stop voting for the 2024 election begins in area counties. In Pasquotank County, voting will be at the K.E. White Center weekdays from 8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.; on Saturday, Oct. 19, Oct. 26 and Nov. 2, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.; and on Sunday, Oct. 20, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.

FRIDAYMedicare outreach

The North Carolina State Health Plan will host a 2025 open enrollment Medicare outreach event at Museum of the Albemarle from 10 a.m. to noon.

Hertford Ghost Walk

Masonic Lodge 106 and Church of the Holy Trinity will host the Historic Ghost Walk in Hertford Friday and Saturday from 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. each night. Tickets are \$10 and available at the Perquimans Chamber of Commerce Office

at 118 W Market St., Hertford; Tommy's Pizza at 309 Ocean S. Hertford; and Church of the Holy Trinity both nights of tour.

SAturday

Wings Over Edenton

The Wings over Edenton air show and pilot fly-in will be held at Northeastern Regional Airport in Edenton. The free event will feature static displays of historic and current aircraft, an aerobatic demonstration, Young Eagle flights for youngsters, helicopter rides, a car and tractor show, vendor displays, and food trucks. To participate in the fly-in, contact tyler.newman@edenton.nc.gov or call (252) 482-2155, ext. 535.

MONDAY

Red Cross blood drive

The American Red Cross will host a blood drive in the main room at Albemarle Area Association of Realtors in Elizabeth City, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Computer help

The Pasquotank County Library will host computer assistance program on PowerPoint; PowerPoint on Tuesday; Google Docs 2 on Wednesday, Oct. 23; and Word 2 on Thursday, Oct. 24. All programs at 4 p.m. and require preregistration by calling Mike at 335-7536.

TUESDAY

Library storytime

The Pasquotank County Library will host a storytime program on the theme "Cake" for kids ages 3-5 with an adult on Tuesday; kids ages 1-2 on Wednesday; and kids 1 and younger on Thursday, Oct. 24. All classes at 10 a.m.

WEDNESDAY

Programming Room

The East Carolina Digital Literacy Program will host a program on how to search for trusted online sites at the Pasquotank County Library Wednesday, Oct. 23 from 10 a.m. to noon. To register, call the library at 252-335-7536 or visit https://bit.ly/47CNVIw. Each participant who completes the pre-test and post-test will be entered in a drawing to win an iPad. Light refreshments will be served.

Red Cross blood drives

The American Red Cross will host blood drives in the Sentara Albemarle Medical Center education rooms Wednesday, Oct. 23 from noon to 5 p.m.; JP Knapp Early College High School gym in Currituck Monday, Oct. 28 from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.; the B&M Contractors, Inc. training room in Elizabeth City on Tuesday, Oct. 29, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.; and the City Road United Methodist Church fellowship hall in Elizabeth City Thursday, Oct. 31, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Programming Room

The East Carolina Digital Literacy Program will host a program on how to use healthcare online at the Pasquotank County Library Wednesday, Oct. 23 from 10 a.m. to noon. Students will learn how to use telehealth. To register, call the library at 252-335-7536 or visit https://bit.ly/47CNVIw. Each participant who completes the pre-test and post-

test will be entered in a drawing to win an iPad. Light refreshments will be served.

Community Olympics

The Boys & Girls Club will host its Community Olympic Games at 108 East Ward St., Elizabeth City, Thursday, Oct. 24. Contact: ejmitchell@bgc-albemarle.org or call 252-216-5966.

YMCA Golf Classic

The 18th annual YMCA Golf Classic to benefit the Y's All Kids Swim Program will be held at the Pines of Elizabeth City, Friday, Oct. 25. Donations raised by the tournament will allow Albemarle Family YMCA to offer free swim lessons to area children. Check-in is 11 a.m. and shotgun start tee-off is at noon. Team of four costs \$450, individuals are \$113, and mulligans are \$10 each with a limit of two per player. Send payment to Jane Snyder, Albemarle Family YMCA, 1240 N. Road St., Elizabeth City, 27909 or email jsnyder@ymcashr. org.

Fall Litter Sweep

Green Saves Green will host the 2024 Fall Litter Sweep on Northside Road Saturday, Oct. 26, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. Participants should meet at Dixieland Speedway at 1520 Northside Road, Elizabeth City. Cleanup supplies will be provided.

Computer help

The Pasquotank County Library will host computer assistance program on Google Docs Monday, Oct. 28; mouse and keyboarding on Tuesday, Oct. 29; Google Drive on Wednesday, Oct. 30; and PowerPoint on Thursday, Oct. 31. All programs at 4 p.m. and require pre-registration by calling Mike at 335-7536.

Soil and water programs

The Northeast Ag Expo will sponsor a workshop for farmers on Tuesday, Oct. 29 at 8 a.m. at the Pasquotank Extension Office in Elizabeth City. Attendees will learn from FSA, Soil and Water and NRCS about various available programs and deadlines as well as the resources these agencies offer area farmers. To register, contact the Perquimans Center of NC Extension at 252-426-5428.

Library storytime

The Pasquotank County Library will host a storytime program on the theme "Halloween" for kids ages 3-5 with an adult on Tuesday, Oct. 29; kids ages 1-2 on Wednesday, Oct. 30; and kids 1 and younger on Thursday, Oct. 31. All classes at 10 a.m.

Landslide to perform

The Elizabeth City Area Chamber of Commerce will host its Appreciation & Celebration Extravaganza featuring Landslide, a Fleetwood Mac tribute band, at Sagos on the River Nov. 9 from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. Drew Gregory and Chris Betts will be guest performers. Tickets are \$100, corporate tables are \$900.

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• Citation (aglc Style)

Julian Eure, 'What's Up', *Daily Advance, The* (online), 15 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view? p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C44BDCC8D830D0>



414 mail-in ballots already returned in area for Nov. 5th election

October 15, 2024 | Daily Advance, The (Elizabeth City, NC) Author: Julian Eure | Section: Local | 876 Words OpenURL Link

As hundreds of area voters prepare to head to the polls Thursday for the start of one-stop voting for the Nov. 5th election, more than 400 voters in the five-county region have already cast their ballots.

Four-hundred and fourteen to be exact.

That's the number of absentee mail-in ballots that had already been returned and approved by election officials in Pasquotank, Currituck, Chowan, Perquimans and Camden counties as of Tuesday morning, according to the N.C. State Board of Elections' website. Statewide, the number of absentee ballots returned as of Tuesday morning was 60.832.

In area counties, Currituck had the most absentee mail-in ballots returned so far: 167. Of those, 68 had been returned by voters who are registered unaffiliated, 62 by Republican voters and 37 by Democrats.

Pasquotank was next with 132 mail-in ballots returned so far. Of that number, 49 had been returned by Democrats, 48 by unaffiliated voters, 34 by Republicans and one by a voter registered with the Libertarian party.

Chowan had 48 mail-in ballots returned as of Tuesday morning: 24 by Democrats, 14 by unaffiliated voters, and 10 by Republicans. Of Perquimans' 35 returned ballots thus far, 16 were from GOP voters, 14 by unaffiliated voters, four by Democrats and one from a voter registered with the No Labels Party. In Camden, 13 of the 32 returned ballots were cast by unaffiliated voters, 12 by Republican voters, six by Democrats, and one by a No Labels party member.

Voters have until Oct. 29 at 5 p.m. to request a mail-in ballot. The deadline for returning a mail-in ballot is 7:30 p.m. on Election Day.

Because of Tropical Storm Helene, the absentee mail-in ballot deadlines are different for 25 counties in western North Carolina affected by the storm. Under new rules approved in emergency legislation adopted last week, voters registered in the 25 counties can request an absentee ballot in person at their county election office up until the day before Election Day. The new law also says absentee ballots received by voters in the 25 counties can be turned in to any early voting site or county election office in the state, as well as to the State Board of Elections office in Raleigh.

For voters choosing to cast their ballot during the state's 17-day one-stop voting period, county boards of election will offer voting Thursday through Nov. 2 on the following dates and times:

Camden: Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday, Nov. 2, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Voting will take place at the Camden Board of Elections Office, 117 N.C. Highway 343 North.

Chowan: Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, Oct. 19, Oct. 26 and Nov. 2, 8 a.m. to 3 pm.; Sunday, Oct. 20 and 27, 1 p.m. to 5 pm. Voting will take place at the Chowan County Agricultural Center at 730 N. Granville St., Edenton.

Currituck: Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and Saturday, Nov. 2, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Voting will take place in Courtroom C of the Currituck County Judicial Center, 2801 Caratoke Highway, Currituck.

Pasquotank: Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, Oct. 19, Oct. 26 and Nov. 2, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.;

and Sunday, Oct. 20, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. Early voting will take place at the K.E. White Center, 1704 Weeksville Road, Elizabeth City.

Perquimans: Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and Saturday, Nov. 2, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Voting will take place at the Perquimans Board of Elections Office, 333 Winfall Blvd., Hertford.

Eligible residents who have not yet registered to vote may do so during the one-stop voting period. Voters are reminded that this is the first statewide election where they'll be required to show a photo ID before casting their ballot.

The most recent voter registration figures show unaffiliated voters outnumber registered Republicans and Democrats in all area counties.

Of Camden's 8,744 total registered voters, 3,931 are unaffiliated, 3,354 are registered Republican, 1,355 are registered Democrat, 72 are registered Libertarian, 26 are registered with the No Labels party, three with the Green party, two with the We the People party, and one with the Constitution party.

Chowan has 10,580 registered voters. Of that number, 3,677 are unaffiliated, 3,555 are Democratic voters, 3,275 are GOP voters, 46 are registered Libertarians, 20 are registered with the No Labels party, three are registered with the Green party, two with the We the People party, and one each with the Justice for All and Constitution parties.

In Currituck, where there are 25,052 registered voters, 10,789 are registered unaffiliated, 10,597 are registered with the GOP, 3,357 are Democrats, 217 are registered Libertarians, 81 are registered No Labels, seven are with the Green party and four are We the People members.

Of Pasquotank's 31,450 registered voters, 12,320 are registered unaffiliated, 10,761 are Democrats, 8,038 are registered with the GOP, 213 are registered Libertarians, 104 are No Labels party members, 11 are Green party members, two are registered with the Constitution party and one with the We the People party.

In Perquimans, where there are 10,777 registered voters, 4,032 are unaffiliated, 3,795 are Republicans, 2,850 are Democrats, 64 are Libertarians, 29 are registered with No Labels, three are Green party members, three are We the People members and one is registered with the Constitution party.

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• Citation (aglc Style)

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Helene shows value of fiscal restraint

October 15, 2024 | Daily Courier, The (Forest City, NC) Author: John Hood Columnist | Section: Archives | 649 Words OpenURL Link

RALEIGH

The devastation wreaked on North Carolina by Hurricane Helene will take weeks to assess, months to clear out, and years to repair or rebuild. Second only to the value of the lives lost will be the exorbitant fiscal and economic costs of our recovery.

Our state government is reasonably well-prepared to shoulder its share. Our federal government is not.

Last week, the General Assembly authorized an initial \$273 million withdrawal from North Carolina's rainy-day fund to cover initial recovery expenses and changes in elections administration. Gov. Roy Cooper signed the bill.

That's only the first tranche of state expenditure. Lawmakers will return to the capital more than once before year's end, then commence regular session in early 2025. They'll appropriate much more money for various reconstruction efforts, from academic campuses and government offices to highways, bridges, water systems, and other infrastructure.

North Carolina has lots of money set aside. The rainy-day fund itself still contains about \$4.5 billion. Other accounts and our unreserved credit balance contain billions more. I don't mean to minimize the storm's staggering costs. I'm just pointing out that the General Assembly won't have to cut other programs, raise taxes, or borrow money to fulfill its responsibilities.

Congress is another story. Over the past couple of decades, presidents and lawmakers of both parties have run massive federal deficits and made exorbitant spending promises that far exceed any reasonable expectation of revenues at economically sustainable tax rates.

In a recent Reason magazine piece, Veronique de Rugy of the Mercatus Center pointed out that the federal debt now exceeds \$28 trillion — \$2 trillion more than last year and \$6 trillion more than when the Biden-Harris team entered the White House.

"This debt stands at 100% of America's gross domestic product, which, other than a one-year exception at the end of World War II, is the highest ratio we've ever had," she wrote. "Unlike in 1946, today's debt is only going to grow. Indeed, debt-to-GDP took a nearly 30-year dive to reach 23% in 1974. Today, federal debt is projected — under the rosiest scenarios — to rise to 166% in 30 years."

In other words, every dollar Congress authorizes and the executive branch distributes for hurricane relief in North Carolina is, in effect, a borrowed dollar. It represents a debt to be paid in the future, not a gift.

Of course, North Carolinians aren't the only ones who must pay each dollar back (with interest). Decades ago, our politicians essentially nationalized the provision of relief and reconstruction after natural disasters. I don't think that was wise. States and localities ought to make their own preparations and save their own money to handle future emergencies.

But at this point, I'm not sure how to extricate ourselves from this process. If Congress passed a law next year to slash federal disaster relief and then Kansas gets clobbered by tornados, their taxpayers could reasonably complain that they helped clean up after North Carolina's disaster and then didn't get their "turn" at withdrawing funds for their own.

The next best thing, then, is for future Congresses and presidents to take their budgeting responsibilities more seriously. As I've pointed out many times, the opportunity to bring federal revenues and expenditures closer to alignment without painful adjustment has long since passed. The gap is too large.

It can't be substantially closed by eliminating "waste, fraud, and abuse." Nor can it be substantially closed by "tax hikes on the wealthy." Contrary to popular misconception, the United States already has one of the most steeply progressive tax codes in the developed world. According to the left-wing Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, the bottom quintile of American taxpayers pay an average of 17% of their income in federal, state, and local taxes. The middle quintile pays 26%. The wealthiest 1% pay 35%.

Washington's fiscal recklessness should be one of the top voting issues this year. Alas, it isn't. But ignoring the problem won't make it go away.

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John Hood Columnist, 'Helene shows value of fiscal restraint', *Daily Courier, The* (online), 15 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C393D48FD1FCE0



Residents can apply for help buying food

October 15, 2024 | Daily Courier, The (Forest City, NC) Author: STAFF REPORTS | Section: Archives | 476 Words OpenURL Link

Caldwell County residents impacted by Hurricane Helene can apply for help buying food through the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP). Residents can apply in person at the Old Walgreens located at 621 Harper Avenue, Lenoir, according to a press release from the county.

The Center will be open Oct. 18–24 from 8 a.m.–4 pm. Monday through Friday and from 9 a.m.–2 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, according to the press release.

To be eligible for DSNAP, a person must:

Live in 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 Counties.Be a member of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians living in zip code 28719Have suffered losses/damages related to Hurricane Helene, such as damage to property or loss of income. Have proof of identity and proof of residency (if available). Have income and resources below certain levels. Not currently be receiving benefits through the Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) program. People receiving FNS can also get extra help buying food, but do not need to fill out a D-SNAP application. They can get more information about how to get the extra help on the FNS webpage.

Eligible households will be notified within three days of completing the application and receive a one-time benefit on a special debit card (called an Electronic Benefits Transfer, or EBT card) to help buy food. The exact amount will depend on household size, income and disaster losses. While there are income eligibility standards, a number of considerations are taken into account. Individuals above these limits may still be eligible dependent on disaster expenses, so everyone who needs support to purchase food to begin their application by calling the DSNAP Virtual Call Center at 1-844-453-1117, according to the press release.

The benefits are good for up to nine months. Benefit cards will be available for pick up in Caldwell County at the former Walgreens location in downtown Lenoir or residents can get the EBT card mailed to them overnight at the address on the application.

Residents can also apply by calling 1-844-453-1117, Friday, Oct. 18, through Thursday, Oct. 24. Phone lines will be answered weekdays from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. and on Saturday and Sunday from 9 a.m.-noon. To help with call volume, residents should call on the day assigned by the first letter of their last name, according to the press release.

Oct. 18 - A-G

Oct. 19 - H-M

Oct. 20 - N-S

Oct. 21 - T-Z

Oct. 22 - Open to all

Oct. 23 - Open to all

Oct. 24 - Open to all

Residents can also use the online ePASS Pre-Registration Tool, which opens on Tuesday, Oct. 15 and close on Thursday, Oct. 24. Once the pre-registration is completed, applicants will be issued a confirmation number and will need to call 1-844-453-1117 between Oct. 18 and Oct. 24 to complete the interview part of the application.

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Community Calendar

October 15, 2024 | Daily Courier, The (Forest City, NC) Author: Staff Writer | Section: Archives | 524 Words OpenURL Link

Ongoing events

Distinguished Young Women of Rutherford County scholarship

The Distinguished Young Women of Rutherford County scholarship program is accepting applications for the Class of 2026. Interested young ladies must be current juniors in high school and residents of Rutherford County.

Please register at www.distinguishedyw.org by Oct. 31. Additional details will be emailed to those who register.

We Care Wednesdays

The Chick-fil-A in Forest City is holding We Care Wednesdays from 6-10 a.m. for seniors ages 55 and up.

Seniors can get a free coffee with a purchase of any menu item.

The General Store at Cherry Mountain updated information

The cost of our tours has increased! It is now \$10 for 4 people or less, and \$8 for 5-12. Please contact us for information on larger groups, 954-410-2892.

Fly Fishing outfitter is no longer available.

Ellenboro Train Depot Museum

The Ellenboro Train Depot Museum is open each Saturday 10 a.m. until 12 p.m. and Sundays from 2-4 p.m. Admission is free.

Free Tutoring

Team NC Tutoring, will offer free tutoring in reading, for Rutherford County students in grades 1-7. The location is McBrayer Office Building, 132 E. Main Street, Forest City. Slots available Sept. 9-Dec. 20, one hour sessions, twice per week.

For more information call 828 202 5593, or visit online, teamnctutoring.org.

Serene Haven Relief Program

Serene Haven Apartments is waiving half of the rent deposit due to Hurricane Helene. For people 55 and up that lost their home due to the hurricane, Serene Haven is waiving half of the rent deposit for people looking to live at Serene Haven Apartments. For more information, call 828-380-4766.

Friday, Oct. 18

Trinity Christian School will gave a Fall Festival Oct. 18 at 5:30 p.m. with games, hayride, food, bonfire, face painting and a bounce house. This is a free event at the school.

Thursday, Oct. 24

East Rutherford High School Class of '64 will hold its 60-year reunion on Oct. 24 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Spindale House in Spindale, N.C. \$22 per person Make checks payable to The Class of '64. Send to Richard Champion 361 Lincoln Rd. Forest City, NC 28043 Call Richard at 828-429-6752.

If you have a community or charity event you would like to put in the Daily Courier's events calendar, email the event information to vyoung@thedigitalcourier.com

Monday, Oct. 28

The descendants of Bryant Homer Womack — a native of Rutherford County's Green Hill Community — will be reunited with his original Medal of Honor certificate and some related memorabilia at an October ceremony. The event will be held at Isothermal's Performing Arts and Conference Center on Monday, Oct. 28, at 1 p.m. The free event is open to the public.

Thursday, Oct. 31

Hurricane Helene Disaster Relief

When: Thursday, Oct. 31 at 6:30 p.m.

Where: Crestview Baptist Church, 630 S Church St, Forest City, NC

What: Benefit Concert for Hurricane Helene Relief

Who: Jackson Smith, Charlie Griffin, Pine Ridge Boys, Perry's

More Information: 704-374-5910

A Love Offering will be received. All proceeds will go toward the relief efforts.

Thursday, Nov. 14

The Rutherford County Democratic Party will have its monthly meeting on Thursday, Nov. 14 at 6:30 p.m. at party headquarters, 142 W Main St, Forest City.

If you have an update on a community event in the calendar or a new event, email it to vyoung@thedigitalcourier.com.

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• Citation (aglc Style)

Staff Writer, 'Community Calendar', *Daily Courier, The* (online), 15 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C393D49515CFD8



Helene shows value of fiscal restraint

October 15, 2024 | Daily Herald (Roanoke Rapids, NC) Author: John Hood| Section: Columns | 651 Words OpenURL Link

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Our state government is reasonably well-prepared to shoulder its share. Our federal government is not.

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Congress is another story. Over the past couple of decades, presidents and lawmakers of both parties have run massive federal deficits and made exorbitant spending promises that far exceed any reasonable expectation of revenues at economically sustainable tax rates.

In a recent Reason magazine piece, Veronique de Rugy of the Mercatus Center pointed out that the federal debt now exceeds \$28 trillion — \$2 trillion more than last year and \$6 trillion more than when the Biden-Harris team entered the White House.

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It can't be substantially closed by eliminating "waste, fraud, and abuse." Nor can it be substantially closed by "tax hikes on the wealthy." Contrary to popular misconception, the United States already has one of the most steeply progressive tax codes in the developed world. According to the left-wing Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, the bottom quintile of American taxpayers pay an average of 17% of their income in federal, state, and local taxes. The middle quintile pays 26%. The wealthiest 1% pay 35%.

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