

# Here's how to apply for federal aid with recovery

October 4, 2024 | Times-News, The (Hendersonville, NC) Author: Jacob Wilt; USA TODAY NETWORK | Section: News | 600 Words Page: A3 OpenURL Link

As Hurricane Helene ripped through Asheville, the floodwaters created in its wake were swift in their destruction.

In addition to the many homes completely destroyed during Helene, dozens of local small businesses were devastated by floodwaters — some will take weeks or months to recover, while others may never open their doors again.

In this time of dire need, federal aid is available, though it can sometimes be difficult to locate and apply for the exact type of aid that you need.

Whether you've lost your business or your home to Helene, here's how to apply for federal aid.

Where can hurricane victims apply for aid?

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is currently offering federal assistance to victims of Helene. To apply online, visit disasterassistance.gov and click Get Started. Simply enter your ZIP code, city and state, and the site will guide you through the application process.

If you're unable to connect to the internet, apply over the phone by calling 800-621-3362 to reach the FEMA helpline.

If you have insurance, remember to file a claim as soon as possible — FEMA can only provide money after you receive your insurance settlement. If you do not have insurance, FEMA can still either inspect the property or ask for verification of expenses. Always take photos of the damage before you clean up your property.

Where can small business owners apply for aid?

Small business owners have a few avenues to apply for federal aid.

The primary avenue for relief is through a U.S. Small Business Administration loan. This requires a MySBA account which you can register for at lending.sba.gov. Once logged in, the application will give business owners two options.

The Business Physical Disaster Loan is "to repair or replace disaster-damaged property owned by the business, including real estate, inventories, supplies, machinery and equipment."

The Economic Injury Disaster Loan is a capital loan that helps small businesses, small agricultural cooperatives and private, non-profit organizations "meet their ordinary and necessary financial obligations that cannot be met as a direct result of the disaster."

The deadline for a physical damage application is Nov. 27, 2024, and June 30, 2025 for an economic injury filing. If you do not have internet access, call 800-659-2955 for help with applying.

Additionally, many more loans specific to certain business types are available at disasterassistance.gov. Choose Get Assistance at the top left, then Forms of Assistance. Under category types, check Disaster Relief to look through 29 additional types of loans and find what best applies to your situation.

What happens next?

FEMA will determine if an inspection is needed and send a decision soon after. If FEMA denies your application, a guide on submitting an appeal can be found here.

For a guide on what to expect post-application, visit FEMA's website.

Where can I apply for unemployment benefits?

If you lost your job as a result of Helene and are not eligible for regular unemployment insurance benefits, you may qualify for Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) through FEMA.

As of October 1, DUA is available for 25 counties in Western North Carolina as well as the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

To file a claim, you must first create a MyNCUIBenefits account. Select "I am an individual/claimant", enter your social security number, a username, email and password.

When asked to give a reason for unemployment, be sure to select "a federally declared disaster".

The deadline for hurricane victims to apply for DUA in North Carolina is Dec. 2.

Jacob Wilt is a reporter for The Commercial Appeal. You can reach him at jacob.wilt@commercialappeal.com. Copyright 2024 Times-News, The (Hendersonville, NC), All Rights Reserved.

## • Citation (aglc Style)

Jacob Wilt, USA TODAY NETWORK, 'Here's how to apply for federal aid with recovery', *Times-News, The* (online), 4 Oct 2024 A3 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BFEEE028DFC690">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BFEEE028DFC690</a>



# Where to find help

October 4, 2024 | Times-News, The (Hendersonville, NC)

Section: News | 759 Words

Page: A3
OpenURL Link

Here's a list of essential information that may help Asheville-area residents in the aftermath of Helene and extensive flooding.

Asheville Shelters

There are three shelters available:

General public shelter at WNC Agricultural Center (pets accepted), 1301 Fanning Bridge Road, Fletcher

General public shelter at Asheville-Buncombe Technical College, 6 Fernihurst Drive, Asheville (no pets allowed) (use Victoria Road entrance).

Medical Emergency Shelter at Asheville-Buncombe Technical College for individuals dependent on medical equipment requiring power,10 Genevieve Circle, Asheville.

Water Distribution

The city's water system was heavily damaged in the storm, and a boil advisory is in place for Western North Carolina. In a news release, city officials said "restoring service to the full system could potentially take weeks." Meanwhile, water distributions are taking place at:

City Hall. Each person must bring their own container, none will be provided. Each person will be provided 1 gallon of water per person, with a maximum of 5 gallons per family.

Asheville Middle School, 211 S. French Broad Ave., Asheville.

William W. Estes Elementary School, 275 Overlook Road, Asheville.

Sand Hill Elementary, 154 Sand Hill School Road, Asheville (Please enter via Acton Circle).

North Windy Ridge Intermediate School ,20 Doan Road, Weaverville.

Fairview Elementary School, 1355 Charlotte Highway, Fairview.

Pack Square Park. Bring your own container. For the safety of everyone involved, traffic will be directed around the park and the distribution site will be walk-up only.

The Asheville Dream Center is providing rolling updates on aid distribution sites on social media.

Communications:

Wi-Fi Locations

Duke Energy is working to restore power across Buncombe County. Cell service is also down throughout much of the county, with no known restoration timeline. Active Wi-Fi locations include:

Buncombe County Health Department, 40 Cox Ave., Weaverville.

Citizen Vinyl, 14 O'Henry Ave., Asheville.

DoubleTree Hilton Downtown, 199 Haywood St., Asheville.

Asheville Shelter, Ferguson Building, 340 Victoria Road, Asheville.

Curfews in effect

In effect from 7:30 p.m. to 7:30 a.m. within Asheville city limits.

**Emergencies** 

For any life-threatening situations, always call 911. Buncombe County has a line for reports of downed trees, debris and other non-emergencies: 828-250-6650.

Food Distribution Sites

Monte Vista Hotel(food and wifi), 310 W. State St., Black Mountain.

Bears Smokehouse, 135 Cox Ave., Asheville

Firestormis operating as a food and supplies dropoff and distribution location for community members at 1022 Haywood Road in West Asheville.

Asheville Poverty Initiative's 12 Baskets Cafe is serving food to the community.

Rosetta's Kitchen & The Buchi Bar, 68 North Lexington Ave. downtown.

Flour began distributing free biscuits, other baked goods and hot coffee to the public on the morning of Sept. 30 and will continue until supplies last at S&W Market, at 56 Patton Ave., downtown.

Itto Ramen will distribute free food from 2:30 p.m. until supplies last at its West Asheville restaurant, 630 Haywood Road.

Groceries

Food Lion: 179 Paragon Pkwy., Clyde.

Trader Joe's: 120 Merrimon Ave., Asheville.

Ingles Markets (cash only): 575 New Leicester Highway, Asheville.

Walmart: 1636 Hendersonville Road, Asheville.

Publix: 165 Weaver Blvd., Asheville.

West Village Market is open with limited hours selling groceries, such as produce, meat and vegan and nondairy items at 771 Haywood Road, Asheville.

Walls Wine Bar is open and selling beer, wine, vegan cheese and chocolate at its art gallery and wine bar at 38 Broadway St. downtown.

Money: Getting cash

at ATMs

Many stores are unable to take credit or debit cards because of communications disruptions. If you need to get cash, note that lines at working ATMs can be long.

Missing persons reports

To report a person believed to be missing or unaccounted for, voicemails can be left for the Buncombe County Family Assistance Center at 828-820-2761. The county also created a form — bit.ly/3TLSLNK — to notify Buncombe officials of loved ones who aren't accounted for.

School closures

Asheville City Schools: closed.

Buncombe County Schools: closed through Friday, Oct. 4.

Asheville-Buncombe Tech: closed until further notice.

UNC Asheville: all departments Closed until Monday, Oct. 7; classes suspended until Wednesday, Oct. 9.

Western Carolina University: all departments closed through Friday, Oct. 4.

Appalachian State University: Closed through Friday, Oct. 4.

Supplies: Construction

Ace Hardware: 800 Fairview Road, Asheville.

Lowe's: 95 Smokey Park Highway, Asheville.

Home Depot:

795 Fairview Road, Asheville.

127 Acton Circle, Asheville.

To donate

to relief efforts

American Red Cross: redcross.org

GoFundMe: www.gofundme.com/c/act/hurricane-helene

The Salvation Army: www.disaster.salvationarmyusa.org

United Way: support.unitedway.org/page/Helene

World Central Kitchen: wck.org

Humane Society Disaster Relief: www.humanesociety.org

Text message updates

As a resource in these tough times, we are manning a text message service to bring you and your loved ones the latest updates on Hurricane Helene, connect you with resources and answer any questions you might have. This will give you direct access to reporters and editors in the newsroom who can help you find information about ongoing weather warnings, local services and more.

To sign up, text 'Hello' to (239) 241-6343.

If you have friends in the area, please feel free to share this phone number with them so they can sign up for updates as needed.

Copyright 2024 Times-News, The (Hendersonville, NC), All Rights Reserved.

## • Citation (aglc Style)

'Where to find help', *Times-News, The* (online), 4 Oct 2024 A3 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a> p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BFEEE02DFEF6A0>



# Mayor Manheimer details FEMA help after Biden visit

October 4, 2024 | Times-News, The (Hendersonville, NC) Author: Evan Gerike; Asheville Citizen Times| Section: News| 623 Words Page: A1 OpenURL Link

"(President Joe Biden) understands this is a catastrophe that far exceeds any local government, or even state government's, ability to recover from on our own." Asheville Mayor Esther Manheimer

ASHEVILLE - Mayor Esther Manheimer and President Joe Biden flew over the damage from Tropical Storm Helene to discuss rescue and recovery efforts as aide, and funding, continues to be pumped into Western North Carolina.

Along with North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper and FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell, who has been directed by the Biden Administration to stay in Asheville until the situation is stable, Manheimer and Biden flew in Marine One from the Greenville-Spartanburg International Airport, over Brevard and into Asheville, then flew towards Swannanoa and Black Mountain, Chimney Rock and Lake Lure, and finished over Columbus before heading back to Greenville.

"(Biden) knew how severe it is," Manheimer said. "He also understands that this is a catastrophe that far exceeds any local government, or even state government's, ability to recover from on our own."

In the disaster relief effort, FEMA hopes to use a model similar to the one it used to help Puerto Rico recover from Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017, using a similar bureaucratic system, Manheimer said.

The government has secured a Level I Emergency Management Team from New York. The team does disaster relief, documenting every aspect of the damage to help local communities get the money needed to help relief. The team was signed off by Cooper.

The 40-person team, which is the highest level of EMT, will set up in a mobile unit in East Asheville. From there, they can break down the flooded areas into quadrants to send teams to sort through debris.

"If they find a car that's washed down the river, they can enter the license plate," Manheimer said. "All that data is entered and documented."

Something less than Level I would not have worked for the relief needed in Asheville and Western North Carolina, Manheimer said.

The team will start debris removal and emergency protective measures, like the law enforcement in the community, Manheimer said.

FEMA will be stationed in North Carolina for six months. On Wednesday, Oct. 2, Biden approved the federal costshare to be increased from 75% to 100% over that time frame, according to a release, meaning it will be entirely funded by the federal government.

The second phase, essentially the rebuilding phase, is the permanent work to be done after the first six months. FEMA will aide in rebuilding infrastructure.

In the cost sharing system, local government would pay 25%, but Manheimer said the area will reach a spending threshold that would push FEMA to cover 90% of the funding.

"We're in a situation where there's a lot of momentum around helping us," Manheimer said. "But I think we're in a critical period that we need to secure that aid now."

Evan Gerike is a reporter for the Asheville Citizen Times. Email him at egerike@citizentimes.com or follow him on X, formerly Twitter, @EvanGerike. Please support this type of journalism with a subscription to the Citizen Times.

More coverage

José Andrés, restaurants rush to feed survivors. 2A

Ready to lend a hand? Here's how to help. 4A

Post-Helene updates: Curfew, resources, donations, wellness check status map. 7A

Biden, Harris tour Helene damage, console victims in battered South. 7A

Boone area's remote terrain slows recovery. 8A

Advice for helping children grieve the disaster. 9A

Where to find help

See 3A for emergency resources and how to apply for federal financial aid.

Text updates

We are staffing a text message service to bring you the latest on Hurricane Helene, connect you with resources and answer any questions you might have. To sign up, text "Hello" to (239) 241-6343.

"(President Joe Biden) understands this is a catastrophe that far exceeds any local government, or even state government's, ability to recover from on our own." Asheville Mayor Esther Manheimer

Copyright 2024 Times-News, The (Hendersonville, NC), All Rights Reserved.

### • Citation (aglc Style)

Evan Gerike, Asheville Citizen Times, 'Mayor Manheimer details FEMA help after Biden visit', *Times-News, The* (online), 4 Oct 2024 A1 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BFEEE0253C6CC8">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BFEEE0253C6CC8</a>



# 'So many hollers' - Boone area's remote terrain slows recovery

October 4, 2024 | Times-News, The (Hendersonville, NC) Author: Chris Kenning; USA TODAY NETWORK | Section: News | 1221 Words Page: A8 OpenURL Link

MEAT CAMP, N.C. — Carolyn and Clifford Coffee's home is less than 10 miles from Boone, a North Carolina mountain town popular with tourists and home to a college campus, set between a creek and steep hillsides.

The two-lane road to reach it, which winds past cornfields and cattle farms, heading upwards along Meat Camp creek, is now dotted with washed-out pavement and bridges, downed powerlines and damaged homes.

The couple, Carolyn, 77, and Clifford, 80, have lived here for 40 years. Clifford built their home himself by connecting two trailers. But Hurricane Helene's torrential rains, which caused deadly landslides and floods, left Carolyn terrified. "We just prayed to God," she said.

Their home survived, but getting help into such rural mountain areas has proven difficult. Many lack power, water and cell service. And it's likely to take a long time to rebuild the area or make it safer from floods or landslides.

"I want to move," she said, looking at her husband. "He don't want to."

Days after Hurricane Helene contributed to rainfall totals of up to 30 inches in some parts of North Carolina and left at least 160 people dead across the Southeast, residents of nearby Boone are cleaning up flood damage to homes and infrastructure. Power, cell service and many businesses were back in operation.

But in more rural areas of Watauga County and others nearby, where landslides scarred Appalachian slopes and the storm sent water thundering into narrow valleys, the damage to roads, homes and the power grid was more severe. About 200 county roads remained inaccessible. Rescue crews had taken to foot and horseback to reach some residents.

The same factors that made the storm so devastating also make recovery and rebuilding slower and more difficult, according to officials, recovery volunteers and residents.

"There's just so many hollers," said Chris Blanton, who is leading a Baptist volunteer recovery effort in and around Boone this week. "It's going to be years, probably, instead of months, trying to get back to normal."

The challenges wrought by Helene in more remote mountain communities are also bringing renewed attention to longer-term mitigation efforts in such areas at a time when climate change is expected to fuel more frequent extreme weather, said Antonia Sebastian, an assistant professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill who studies climate and flood risks.

Storm brings new needs

Lindsey Miller pulled into a drive-through feeding kitchen at a church in Boone this week, thanking volunteers who handed her Styrofoam boxes with hot dogs and green beans.

Miller lives in a home built on a hillside near Todd, north of Boone, with her autistic son and baby. The storm washed out her gravel drive, damaged the roads and toppled power lines.

She can still reach her fast food job, but on Tuesday, there was no power, cell service or water. Nearby residents hauled buckets of river water to flush toilets. Neighbors shared food and supplies.

Her mother, who lives next to her, doesn't have insurance. She said the storm was a wake-up call to be better prepared. "I told mom, 'You need some kind of insurance."

William Holt, Watauga County's Emergency Services Director, said on Tuesday that the county fielded more than 2,000 911 calls the first day of the storm. Two people died in landslides, he said. Several dozen remained sheltered at the university and more were staying with family or friends. Many hotels were renting rooms only to locals or storm recovery workers.

Help has poured into the city from volunteer groups, water rescue teams, the National Guard, power utilities, tree companies, the Red Cross and others. Officials said they were working to add more locations for water, hot meals, showers, restrooms and cell phone charging stations.

He said the storm constituted "the worst natural disaster in modern history" in his county.

In an interview, Holt said recovery would be complicated by the terrain and housing patterns, with homes often scattered along creeks that turned into torrents.

"And it's not quick fixes," he said.

As Boone digs out, remote area braces for long road to recovery

In Boone on Tuesday, restaurant staff were cleaning out mud from floors and parking lots. In one neighborhood, mud coated a street of flooded homes where volunteers helped families. About 200 structures have been deemed unsafe, officials said.

Holt said the storm's fallout may take an economic bite in the area, impacting everyone from small business owners to those relying on tourism. Right now, officials are asking tourists not to come so that recovery work can proceed.

Further outside of town, people were mucking out homes and putting mattresses and belongings by the road. Some residents and crews worked to temporarily patch washed out sections of road along Meat Camp Creek to make it navigable.

Roy Dobyns Jr., a Baptist pastor in Boone who lives outside of town, said it has taken a toll on some people's mental health. And it's created long-term struggles for people who will have to wait weeks for power or repairs.

"All the bridges and roads blew up, so they can't get to them. A five-minute drive takes an hour," he said.

Once everyone is reached and their immediate recovery needs met, Sebastian said longer-term mitigation efforts are needed for mountainous areas. The state is at a good starting point given its experience with hurricanes hitting the coast, she said, though the challenges in remote mountain areas don't lend themselves to easy answers.

Enacting measures to buffer residents from disasters – from installing infrastructure such as piping and drainage systems to bolstering financial and health protections for vulnerable people – are costly and face an array of challenges, experts said.

In Meat Camp, a community thought to be named because hunters once dressed animals there, Clifford sat on his porch sipping tea mixed with orange juice. Across the yard were chickens kept for their grandchildren. Nearby was a tree branch he'd used to prop up a fallen power line, its lines splayed across the yard.

Clifford, in his eighth decade, still works mowing several lawns. When he suggested he sometimes struggled to get it done, Carolyn interjected. "You do good," she told him, arguing that he could still outwork a 30-year-old.

If they could afford to leave, Clifford - unlike his wife - doesn't want to. Even if he had known how bad the storm

was going to be, he said he'd have probably chosen to stay put in their place framed by scenic mountains. His wife pointed out that he navigated the broken roads to get to church the day after the storm.

But she worries another similar storm will take down the hillside or cut them off again: "Like you need to go to the doctor, you can't," she said. "You can't get in touch with anybody."

Whether to move away from an area that people may decide is too risky in Helene's wake, Holt said, is a difficult conversation many may be having in the months to come.

Copyright 2024 Times-News, The (Hendersonville, NC), All Rights Reserved.

## • Citation (aglc Style)

Chris Kenning, USA TODAY NETWORK, "So many hollers' - Boone area's remote terrain slows recovery', *Times-News, The* (online), 4 Oct 2024 A8 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BFEEE01788D760">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BFEEE01788D760</a>



# Port strike stokes some panic buying - Many likely getting items they don't need to get

October 4, 2024 | Times-News, The (Hendersonville, NC) Author: Betty Lin-Fisher; USA TODAY| Section: News| 981 Words Page: A6 OpenURL Link

During her lunch break Tuesday – the day 45,000 East Coast port workers went on strike – Shayna Turbovsky went to the grocery store to stock up on meat, rice, beans, bananas and toilet paper. She also filled up her gas tank and plans to keep it topped off.

Turbovsky, who lives in Fort Worth, Texas, had not been planning to go to the store, but when a co-worker told her she should stock up since there could be shortages and price increases due to the strike, she decided to go.

"I don't know how bad it's going to get, but the south east just got smacked by a hurricane and now the supply chain is going to be impacted through this strike," Turbovsky posted on X. "I would rather be overprepared than scared."

During lunch hour Wednesday at a Costco in Arlington, Virginia, shelves that are normally stocked to the ceiling with paper towels and toilet paper still had supply, but the amount appeared lower than usual. Meanwhile, at a Los Angeles-area Costco, a worker said there had been an uptick in toilet paper sales, though it was nothing close to the pandemonium that occurred during the COVID-19 lockdown.

But consumers may be stocking up on the wrong things - and panic buying when they don't need to.

Economic effects of strike

On Tuesday, 45,000 union workers went on strike when negotiations for a new contract broke down, shutting down 36 East and Gulf Coast ports. It was the first International Longshoremen's Association strike since 1977.

Half of all U.S. ocean imports flow through the East Coast and Gulf ports, which means consumers may face higher prices and shortages, experts have previously told USA TODAY. But those shortages would be for items like bananas, alcohol, seafood, electronics, pharmaceuticals, cars, auto parts and machinery parts.

Officials for President Joe Biden said in a previously reported USA TODAY story that the strike's impact on consumers would be "limited," including "in the important areas of fuel, food and medicine."

But some economists have told USA TODAY that the strike could cost the economy up to \$5billion each day as imports and exports are blocked.

'PTSD of the pandemic'

Turbovsky said she knows that most of the things she stocked up on may not be affected by the port strike.

"But what I thought in my mind was the pandemic. ... Once people are scared, once this country feels the fear of anything, we will all feel the PTSD of the pandemic, so immediately people think of toilet paper, paper towels, food supply," she told USA TODAY.

"People feel the fear and want to overconsume and buy everything they can," she added.

Turbovsky spent \$280 buying more than 30 pounds of meat to stash in her freezer, along with bananas, which she also froze, and other essentials. Turbovsky said she had a hard time finding meat during the pandemic when there

were supply chain issues.

She felt guilty buying so much meat, "but at the end of the day, I slept better at night knowing that I was prepared for the days to come," Turbovsky said.

Different supply chain issues

The reasons the port strike might cause product shortages differ from those that sparked the shortfalls during the pandemic when there were production shutdowns, said Josh Stillwagon, an associate professor and chair of the economics department at Babson College in Massachusetts.

"If all of the ports in the U.S. closed and we didn't have the West Coast (ports), I think you'd see something more like that (COVID-19 supply chain issues), where you'd have to worry about stockpiling," Stillwagon told USA TODAY.

Instead, Stillwagon thinks any strike-related shortages will mirror what occurred in 2021, when ports became congested as supplies started coming back online, delaying deliveries. Depending on how long the strike lasts, consumers should expect backlogs in goods arriving as shipments will have to be rerouted to the West Coast, he said.

Consumers will also pay more as extra transportation costs to get the goods from the West Coast to the East Coast will have to be built into prices, he said.

Stillwagon said he understands how consumers could feel uncertainty, leading them to stockpile goods.

"People have that ambiguity about what the outcome will be, and so they sort of flock to the necessities that were very inconvenient last time when we didn't have them," he said. Concern may also be exacerbated by the aftermath of Hurricane Helene, which has left many of the people impacted struggling for necessities, "so people are stockpiling, given both of these major news events."

Whether there will be shortages of goods from the strike depends on how long it lasts, said Stillwagon. Inventories are back to pre-pandemic levels, and suppliers are "a little more attuned to disruption in the supply chain after COVID, so you may not notice it if it lasts a week or two," he said.

Not everyone is stocking up

Not all consumers were panic buying.

Shoppers crowded the aisles at Grosvenor Market in Rockville, Maryland, at lunchtime Wednesday. But that was less about hoarding and more about Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, which began Wednesday evening, said Scot Shuck, the store's owner.

By midday on day two of the port strike, Grosvenor customers had barely made a dent in the store's inventory of milk, toilet paper, bread and other staples.

Shuck said he hasn't witnessed any of the panic buying that gripped supermarkets back in 2020, at the height of the pandemic. Nor does he expect many supply-chain shortages to come.

If the strike does drag on, Shuck said, the store may have trouble procuring some of his customers' favorite imports: "Wines, cheeses and, I think, more fruits than vegetables," he said.

And so, Shuck said, "let's hope that it blows over very quickly."

Contributing: Josh Rivera, Medora Lee and Daniel de Visel, USA TODAY

# • Citation (aglc Style)

Betty Lin-Fisher, USA TODAY, 'Port strike stokes some panic buying - Many likely getting items they don't need to get', *Times-News, The* (online), 4 Oct 2024 A6 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a> p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BFEEE040F400D8>



# Rescue operations suspended Wednesday, county manager says

October 4, 2024 | Tryon Daily Bulletin, The (NC) Author: Jeff Allison| Section: Community | 473 Words OpenURL Link

One fatality in Polk confirmed due to Tropical Storm Helene

POLK COUNTY—Rescue operations related to Tropical Storm Helene were underway throughout Polk County up until Wednesday, according to County Manager Marche Pittman. Those efforts have now transitioned into a recovery phase.

Emergency Response Leadership, with the support of the National Guard, conducted an aerial assessment of the damage caused by the storm on Wednesday. This bird's-eye view provided a comprehensive understanding of the devastation, particularly in areas near rivers, creeks, and dams where flooding and destruction were most severe.

Areas in the valley between Tryon and Saluda and in Green River Cove saw dozens of rescue missions, beginning with Helene's arrival on Friday, September 27. Multiple mudslides outside of Tryon and Saluda damaged or destroyed at least 27 homes or structures, including the beloved Caro-Mi Restaurant along Hwy. 176, which was knocked off its foundation by the flooding. Many people were stranded by flood waters or debris, requiring emergency assistance to be evacuated. The number of structures severely damaged will likely continue to grow as numbers are updated.

Large sections of Green River Cove Road outside of Saluda have remained completely isolated, leading to multiple helicopter rescues throughout the week, and extreme flooding along the Green River near the Lake Adger Dam on Hwy. 9 caused severe damage to the bridge there.

One death has been confirmed in Polk County as of Thursday evening, which occurred in the early stages of the storm due to the collapse of their residence in the Pearson's Falls Road area.

"Specialized Search and Rescue Units from New York/New Jersey, the National Guard, Brunswick County, and local emergency response teams have been actively deployed throughout the county, utilizing all necessary resources to assess the status of homes, residents, and infrastructure, particularly in areas where roadways have sustained significant damage," Pittman said Thursday. "Every welfare check reported to the Emergency Operations Center or 911 is being thoroughly investigated and addressed."

While utility restoration is gradually progressing in certain areas, the county's immediate priority has been the distribution of MREs and water at five designated points throughout the county to ensure residents have access to critical resources. Pick up points and location hours are available on tryondailybulletin.com.

"The Meals on Wheels program continues to operate with the highest level of care, ensuring that all registered clients receive meals and benefit from physical contact during each delivery," Pittman added. "Our focus remains on providing consistent support, essential nutrition, and personal care to these vulnerable members of our community."

The county is also working closely with FEMA, which has embedded a liaison here in Polk County to guide both county officials and community members through the next steps of the recovery process.

"This partnership is key to ensuring a coordinated and effective recovery effort," Pittman said.

The post Rescue operations suspended Wednesday, county manager says appeared first on The Tryon Daily Bulletin.

# • Citation (aglc Style)

Jeff Allison, 'Rescue operations suspended Wednesday, county manager says', *Tryon Daily Bulletin, The*(online), 4 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C01B146915BB10">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C01B146915BB10</a>



## A heartfelt thanks

October 4, 2024 | Tryon Daily Bulletin, The (NC) Author: Jeff Allison| Section: Columnists | 551 Words OpenURL Link

The outpouring of love and community spirit I've seen as we recover from Tropical Storm Helene has been overwhelming, to say the least. As I've said before, we will get through this. We will come out of the other side stronger than before.

It is incredible how various organizations and businesses have pooled their resources to help others when help is needed most. The mobilization of outside entities—FEMA, Operation AirDrop, American Red Cross, and countless others—is inspirational.

I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge and thank a few folks here. Without their help, the Tryon Daily Bulletin would not have been able to function and perform the vital task of getting out timely, accurate news each day. We did not miss a single edition or day of coverage, which is admirable in and of itself.

Ben Hillyer and Kevin Cooper, writers and organizers based out of Mississippi and Alabama, respectively, went above and beyond to help facilitate news each day and get information posted to our website. John Carr with the Salisbury Post went above and beyond as well, helping behind the scenes and organizing food, water, and fuel for the staff, and for the community, that was delivered to our facility. Thank you all for your help; it will not be forgotten.

Delaney Scalf and his team at the Elizabethton Star printed our newspaper while we were without electricity. Jamie Lewis, our pressman and "digital guru," made the arduous drive to Elizabethton, Tenn., multiple times to retrieve print editions, joined by Alex Greene; all of these men were instrumental in getting the newspaper out. Team, I cannot thank you enough.

Our office manager, Stacey Tully, and marketing consultants Lynn Cromer and MJ Parsons worked tirelessly to help in any way they could, even staying late to hand out free water bottles and non-perishable food items at our front door. I am forever grateful to all of you.

Tania and Davey Shealey with Trade Street Diner, thank you so much for all of your help. Chef Sharone at Huckleberry's Restaurant, thank you as well. Both of these businesses provided internet access at a pivotal time. It will not be forgotten.

A very special thanks goes out to Kathy and Danielle Moroney, who were kind enough to charge my phone on Tuesday morning in their vehicle, using up precious fuel in the process. Without them, building the paper would have been incredibly difficult, if not impossible.

I also want to thank the Tryon Fire Department, Columbus, Saluda, and Landrum Fire departments, and all local and regional emergency crews that have risked life and limb to do the most important work—saving lives. The hundreds of linemen who worked tirelessly to restore power to our area—as of Thursday, lights are on in downtown Tryon—deserve all of our gratitude. Thank you so much for all your hard work.

We're all in this together. In times of crisis, the very best of humanity is often on full display. That is the case here and now, no doubt.

To all of our faithful readers, THANK YOU. Your support means the world to us. Know that we are here for you, filling in the vital role of providing information each and every day, which is needed now more than ever.

We will always have your back.

The post A heartfelt thanks appeared first on The Tryon Daily Bulletin.

Copyright 2024, The Tryon Daily Bulletin, All Rights Reserved.

## • Citation (aglc Style)

Jeff Allison, 'A heartfelt thanks', *Tryon Daily Bulletin, The*(online), 4 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C01B14606A89C8">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C01B14606A89C8</a>



# Columbus Town Council holds emergency meeting

October 4, 2024 | Tryon Daily Bulletin, The (NC) Author: Storme Smith| Section: Community | 233 Words OpenURL Link

COLUMBUS—On Wednesday, October 2, at 11 a.m., the Columbus Town Council held an emergency meeting to discuss water and sewer infrastructure, postponing automatic payments for water bills and an upcoming shipment of supplies.

The meeting was attended by approximately a dozen local citizens and commenced with a discussion about the current state of the water and sewer systems in the Town of Columbus. Town Manager Tim Barth and Mayor Pat McCool stated that despite significant pressure, the systems performed remarkably well and are now back to normal.

The council also decided to postpone automatic payments for water and sewer bills from October 5 to October 10. This change only applies to individuals using automatic payments.

The council then addressed the incoming supplies, Meals Ready to Eat (MREs), and water that are expected to arrive, with a major portion designated for the more severely affected areas of Sunny View and Saluda.

Additionally, Columbus Police Chief Scott Hamby reminded attendees to contact the police or sheriff's office with any concerns about missing persons in the area, and they will follow up and check on them.

The council also discussed the process for applying for disaster assistance from FEMA, which can be done by phone or through www.disasterassistance.gov. Those considering filing for assistance were advised to take plenty of pictures of damage from Tropical Storm Helene.

The post Columbus Town Council holds emergency meeting appeared first on The Tryon Daily Bulletin.

Copyright 2024, The Tryon Daily Bulletin, All Rights Reserved.

## • Citation (aglc Style)

Storme Smith, 'Columbus Town Council holds emergency meeting', *Tryon Daily Bulletin, The*(online), 4 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C01B1463C35D70">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C01B1463C35D70</a>



# Blue Ridge Parkway closed in Virginia and North Carolina as crews assess damage from Helene

October 4, 2024 | Warren Record, The (NC) Author: National Park Service | Section: News | 208 Words OpenURL Link

The National Park Service has released that the entire length of the Blue Ridge Parkway in North Carolina and Virginia is closed as crews continue their assessment of the damage from Hurricane Helene. The National Park Service has deployed its Eastern Incident Management Team, which brings specialized skills and resources to support the parkway with employee emergency needs, emergency stabilization of affected park resources, and damage assessments. As of Thursday afternoon, 250 National Park Service employees from 32 states and the District of Columbia are working with Blue Ridge Parkway staff in the recovery efforts.

National Park Service assessment teams are still completing their initial inspections of the parkway, acquiring the data they will need to analyze the full impact of Hurricane Helene. Based on what the teams have seen so far, significant, and in some cases catastrophic, damage has occurred along the parkway, particularly from milepost 280 to milepost 469.

In the coming weeks, the assessment teams will utilize the data from their inspections to determine the full extent of the damage including the timeline and cost estimates for repairs. A projected reopening date of any section of the Blue Ridge Parkway in North Carolina has not yet been established; assessment crews are finishing their work in Virginia.

Copyright © 2024 The Warren Record, Womack Publishing Co., Inc., All rights reserved.

## • Citation (aglc Style)

National Park Service, 'Blue Ridge Parkway closed in Virginia and North Carolina as crews assess damage from Helene', *Warren Record, The* (online), 4 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a>
p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C04B6E7AED4BF0>



# BCSO deputies deployed to Madison County, assist with disaster response

October 4, 2024 | Washington Daily News (NC) Author: Beaufort County Sheriff's Office | Section: News | 157 Words OpenURL Link

Deputies with Beaufort County Sheriff's Office were deployed on Thursday, Oct. 3 to the Town of Marshall in Madison County to assist Madison County Sheriff Buddy Harwood. The Town of Marshall is one of many towns in the Appalachia that suffered catastrophic flooding during Hurricane Helene, leaving millions of people devastated. Many agencies across North Carolina and from other states are stepping up to meet the needs of the counties affected by flooding and storm damage.

Sheriff Hammonds has been in constant contact with the North Carolina Sheriff's Association and has coordinated our response based on the needs expressed by fellow sheriffs to the Association. Standing with Sheriff Hammonds from left to right are Lieutenant Richards, Deputy Jordan, Magistrate Daniels, Magistrate Jones, Deputy Wainright, and Sergeant Best. Magistrate Daniels prayed with everyone before their departure and wished them safe travels.

The post BCSO deputies deployed to Madison County, assist with disaster response appeared first on Washington Daily News.

Copyright © 2024 Washington Daily News, Boone Newspapers Inc., All rights reserved.

## • Citation (aglc Style)

Beaufort County Sheriff's Office, 'BCSO deputies deployed to Madison County, assist with disaster response', *Washington Daily News* (online), 4 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a> p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C01B0925DE7540>



# Disaster Unemployment Assistance available

October 4, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Staff Report news@wataugademocrat.com | Section: Local | 480 Words OpenURL Link

Following a federal disaster declaration because of Hurricane Helene, Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) benefits are now available in 25 counties as well as the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

People in these counties have 60 days from Oct. 1 to file an application for Disaster Unemployment Assistance at des.nc.gov. The deadline to apply is Dec. 2.

What is Disaster Unemployment Assistance?

If your employment has been lost or interrupted because of a federally declared disaster, you may be eligible for Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA).

DUA is a federal program that provides temporary payments for people who, as a direct result of a disaster:

No longer have the job that provided their primary source of income. Are unable to reach their place of employment. Cannot work because of an injury caused by the storm. Were unable to begin employment or self-employment due to the storm. Have become the major supplier of household income due to a storm-related death of the previous major supplier of household income.

Am I eligible for DUA?

People, including self-employed, or business owners may be eligible for DUA if:

You lived, worked or were scheduled to work in an area declared a disaster area by the President of the United States. You lost employment or had your employment interrupted as a direct result of the disaster; and You have exhausted or are not eligible for state unemployment benefits.

Eligibility for DUA is determined weekly. You must continue to be out of work as a direct result of the Hurricane Helene each week to get benefits.

What do I need to apply?

Name and address of all employers you worked with within the last 24 months.

County of residence. County of employment. Mailing address and zip code. Valid telephone number. Your Social Security number or your Alien Registration number. Have proof of employment and income if you're self-employed, a farmer, or a commercial fisher.

How do I apply?

The Division of Employment Security announces the counties in which DUA benefits are available and deadlines for applying when there is a federal disaster in North Carolina.

The fastest way to file a claim is to file online at des.nc.gov. If you need help or don't have access to a computer, you may file over the phone by calling the DUA hotline 919-629-3857.

Go to des.nc.gov.Create a MyNCUIBenefits account. View more details: https://www.des.nc.gov/create-online-

account-english/download?attachment. Sign in to file your claim.Click File a New Unemployment Insurance Claim. File for state unemployment benefits and DUA during the same claim process.If you are eligible for state benefits, you must exhaust those benefits before you can receive DUA.If you are not eligible for state benefits, DES will determine if you are eligible for DUA benefits.When filing for DUA, select A federally-declared disaster when asked to give a reason for unemployment.If you are self-employed, a farmer or a commercial fisher, you must provide proof of employment and income within 21 days of filing your claim.DES notifies you once your eligibility is determined.

Visit the Disaster Unemployment Assistance FAQ page for more information.

 $\hbox{@2024 Watauga Democrat -} \ Mountain \ Times \ Publications, \ All \ rights \ reserved.$ 

## • Citation (aglc Style)

Staff Report news@wataugademocrat.com, 'Disaster Unemployment Assistance available', *Watauga Democrat, The* (online), 4 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C0104ACADDD470">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C0104ACADDD470</a>



# Valle Country Fair, Woolly Worm Festival canceled

October 4, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Staff Report news@wataugademocrat.com | Section: Local | 539 Words OpenURL Link

WATAUGA/AVERY — The destructive path of Hurricane Helene has forced the cancellation of two popular High Country events as the community works to recover from the devastation.

According to organizers, the 46th Annual Valle Country Fair will not take place on Oct. 19 as originally planned.

The event's co-sponsors, Holy Cross Episcopal Church and the Valle Crucis Conference Center, are working on alternative plans to provide necessary human and financial resources to the non-profit agencies and families in need that we so faithfully serve.

"In the meantime, please keep our entire region in your thoughts and prayers," organizers said in a release. "Godspeed to all the first responders and local service agencies who are working mightily in this time of unprecedented need."

Following the announcement of other closings and cancellations across Avery County and the region, officials announced on Wednesday, Oct. 2, that the 47th Annual Banner Elk Woolly Worm Festival, a tradition that attracts thousands annually to the High Country, has been canceled as a result of the devastating damage inflicted by the recent storm Helene.

"It is with pure heartbreak that I bring you the official decision that the 47th Annual Woolly Worm Festival has been canceled," Festival Chairperson Victoria Bowman shared in an email to the community. "The main goal for this year's festival was to connect our entire community to showcase how wonderfully unique Avery County truly is. We wanted so badly to be able to share our magic with you all, but we simply can't do that justice when so many of our locals are suffering."

Bowman noted that the spirit that drives the festival is being exemplified by the connection and galvanized heart of Avery County and its people.

"I suppose the irony in this horrific circumstance is that we are indeed showcasing the county to the world, maybe not with racing worms and funnel cakes, but with the strength and resilience that our people have. Mountain folks are truly built differently; they take care of one another regardless of circumstance," Bowman added. "I experienced it firsthand as my neighbors sheltered and fed us as our property was destroyed before our eyes. Everywhere I look, I see examples of selflessness, determination and tenacity. From our county and town leaders to our first responders, linemen and local business owners, everyone has jumped in to help. We are simply blessed to call this place home and I know we will build back stronger than ever."

Bowman recognized the logistical complications of the festival's cancellation, but provided some insight to plans moving forward.

"We realize that there are financial ramifications for a lot of our attendees with this cancellation, but we do hope that you make plans to attend next year instead. When we are back on our feet, our businesses will need your full support to help regain what has been lost in this," Bowman explained. "The planning committee is dedicated to maintaining the magic of this weekend for our vendors, volunteers, locals and tourists alike. The 2025 festival will be all that more special because of what has transpired this past week. Please be patient as we navigate through the e-ticket refunding process. Vendors, Sponsors and Partners will be contacted directly with a move forward plan as our communication infrastructure is rebuilt."

# • Citation (aglc Style)

Staff Report news@wataugademocrat.com, 'Valle Country Fair, Woolly Worm Festival canceled', *Watauga Democrat, The*(online), 4 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C14EEF380C7320">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C14EEF380C7320</a>



# STORM RECOVERY: Heating safety tips

October 4, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Staff Writer | Section: Local | 439 Words OpenURL Link

Weather forecasts show temperatures dropping into the upper 30s and 40s in the week ahead. Many residents in the area will be switching to secondary heating sources due to damaged infrastructure from Hurricane Helene. What they may not realize is that turning up the heat can increase the risk of home heating fires and carbon monoxide-related deaths, according to the town of Boone.

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), half of all home-heating fires occur in winter. On average, NFPA research shows that heating equipment is involved in more than 56,000 reported U.S. home structure fires per year, with associated loss of more than 470 civilian deaths, more than 1,490 civilian injuries, and roughly \$1 billion in direct property damage per year.

While these numbers are frightening, nearly all of these fires are preventable. By taking some simple precautions and using heating equipment properly, the community can reduce the number of home heating fires, carbon monoxide poisoning, and deaths in the community.

The National Fire Protection Association and Boone Fire Department recommend some simple home heating safety tips so residents can help keep the community safe and warm while recovering from Hurricane Helene's effects.

Install UL-approved smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each separate sleeping area, and on every level of the home. Interconnect all smoke alarms throughout the house so that when one sounds, they all sound. Test smoke alarms at least once a month and change batteries annually. If you heat with fossil fuels such as fuel oil, kerosene, propane, and natural gas, or if you burn wood, or if your home has an attached garage, you should install carbon monoxide alarms. Install and maintain a carbon monoxide alarm outside each separate sleeping area, on every level of the home, and in other locations as required by laws, codes, or standards. Never use an oven to heat your home. Practice your home fire escape drill. Have your chimney inspected yearly by a qualified professional and cleaned if necessary. Use a sturdy fireplace screen. Allow ashes to cool before disposing. Dispose of ashes in a metal container with a tight-fitting lid and store it at least 10 feet away from the home. Do not dispose of ashes near flammable vegetation. Space heaters and wall heaters need space. Keep everything that can burn, such as paper, bedding, furniture, and towels, at least 3 feet away from heating equipment. Turn portable heaters off when you go to bed or leave the room. Only plug power cords into outlets with sufficient capacity and never into an extension cord. Only plug one heat-producing appliance into an electrical outlet at a time. 'Inspect for cracked or broken plugs or loose connections. Replace before using.

 $\hbox{@2024 Watauga Democrat -} \ Mountain \ Times \ Publications, \ All \ rights \ reserved.$ 

## • Citation (aglc Style)

Staff Writer, 'STORM RECOVERY: Heating safety tips', *Watauga Democrat, The*(online), 4 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C04B79A4D3EEC8">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C04B79A4D3EEC8</a>



# SBA launches disaster assistance for N.C. residents, businesses impacted by Helene

October 4, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Staff Report news@wataugademocrat.com| Section: Local| 831 Words OpenURL Link

WASHINGTON – Low-interest disaster loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration are available to businesses and residents in North Carolina following the announcement of a Presidential disaster declaration for Tropical Storm Helene that began on Sept. 25.

"SBA's mission-driven team stands ready to help small businesses and residents in North Carolina impacted by this disaster in every way possible under President Biden's disaster declaration for certain affected areas," said SBA Administrator Isabel Casillas Guzman. "We're committed to providing federal disaster loans swiftly and efficiently, with a customer-centric approach to help businesses and communities recover and rebuild."

The disaster declaration covers 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 and The Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians in North Carolina which are eligible for both Physical and Economic Injury Disaster Loans from the SBA. Small businesses and most private nonprofit organizations in the following adjacent counties are eligible to apply only for SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDLs): Cherokee, Graham, Iredell, Mecklenburg, Surry, Swain and Yadkin in North Carolina; Rabun, Towns and Union in Georgia; Cherokee, Greenville, Oconee, Pickens, Spartanburg and York in South Carolina; Carter, Cocke, Greene, Johnson, Sevier, and Unicoi in Tennessee; and Grayson in Virginia.

Disaster survivors should not wait to settle with their insurance company before applying for a disaster loan. If a survivor does not know how much of their loss will be covered by insurance or other sources, SBA can make a low-interest disaster loan for the total loss up to its loan limits, provided the borrower agrees to use insurance proceeds to reduce or repay the loan.

Businesses and private nonprofit organizations of any size may borrow up to \$2 million to repair or replace disasterdamaged or destroyed real estate, machinery and equipment, inventory, and other business assets.

For small businesses, small agricultural cooperatives, small businesses engaged in aquaculture and most private nonprofit organizations, the SBA offers Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDLs) to help meet working capital needs caused by the disaster. Economic Injury Disaster Loan assistance is available regardless of whether the business suffered any physical property damage.

Disaster loans up to \$500,000 are available to homeowners to repair or replace disaster-damaged or destroyed real estate. Homeowners and renters are eligible for up to \$100,000 to repair or replace disaster damaged or destroyed personal property.

Interest rates are as low as 4% for businesses, 3.25% for nonprofit organizations, and 2.813% for homeowners and renters, with terms up to 30 years. Interest does not begin to accrue, and monthly payments are not due, until 12 months from the date of the initial disbursement. Loan amounts and terms are set by the SBA and are based on each applicant's financial condition.

Building back smarter and stronger can be an effective recovery tool for future disasters. Applicants may be eligible for a loan amount increase of up to 20% of their physical damages, as verified by the SBA for mitigation purposes. Eligible mitigation improvements may include a safe room or storm shelter, sump pump, French drain or retaining wall to help protect property and occupants from future disasters.

"SBA's disaster loan program offers an important advantage-the chance to incorporate measures that can reduce

the risk of future damage," said Francisco Sánchez, Jr., associate administrator for the Office of Disaster Recovery and Resilience at the Small Business Administration. "Work with contractors and mitigation professionals to strengthen your property, and take advantage of the opportunity to request additional SBA disaster loan funds for these proactive improvements."

With the changes to FEMA's Sequence of Delivery, survivors are now encouraged to simultaneously apply for FEMA grants and SBA low-interest disaster loan assistance to fully recover. FEMA grants are intended to cover necessary expenses and serious needs not paid by insurance or other sources. The SBA disaster loan program is designed for your long-term recovery, to make you whole and get you back to your pre-disaster condition. Do not wait on the decision for a FEMA grant; apply online and receive additional disaster assistance information at sba.gov/disaster.

Applicants may also call the SBA's Customer Service Center at (800) 659-2955 or send an email to disastercustomerservice@sba.gov for more information on SBA disaster assistance. For people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability, please dial 7-1-1 to access telecommunications relay services.

The filing deadline to return applications for physical property damage is Nov. 27, 2024. The deadline to return economic injury applications is June 30, 2025.

About the U.S. Small Business Administration

The U.S. Small Business Administration helps power the American dream of business ownership. As the only go-to resource and voice for small businesses backed by the strength of the federal government, the SBA empowers entrepreneurs and small business owners with the resources and support they need to start, grow or expand their businesses, or recover from a declared disaster. It delivers services through an extensive network of SBA field offices and partnerships with public and private organizations. To learn more, visit www.sba.gov.

©2024 Watauga Democrat - Mountain Times Publications, All rights reserved.

### • Citation (aglc Style)

Staff Report news@wataugademocrat.com, 'SBA launches disaster assistance for N.C. residents, businesses impacted by Helene', *Watauga Democrat, The*(online), 4 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a> p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C04B799B3A0438>



# WCES: Thankful for volunteers, but sign up with a vetted organization to best help

October 4, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Moss Brennan moss.brennan@wataugademocrat.com| Section: Local | 278 Words OpenURL Link

WATAUGA — Volunteers should register through an approved volunteer organization to help those in Watauga so their services can be utilized in the best way.

"We love their help, but we love their help in a way that we can use the resources best," said WCES Emergency Planner Kristi Pukansky. "If someone knows how to use a chainsaw, we don't want them just to be standing and carrying a box. So if they could register what they can do and what equipment they have, then they can be allocated in their best position."

Pukansky said those wishing to help should sign up through Samaritan's Purse at Alliance Bible Fellowship, which is set up to have a "copious amount of volunteers," or Baptists on Mission at Perkinsville Church.

To volunteer with Samaritan's Purse, visit www.spvolunteer.org/project-response/743.

To volunteer with Baptists on Mission, visit baptistsonmission.org/Mission-Projects/By-Mission-Type/Disaster-Relief/Hurricane-Helene/Get-Involved.

"Samaritan's Purse is knocking it out. Baptists on Mission is knocking it out," Pukansky said. "If there's anything that is for a private individual, that is the best place to go to see what volunteer help (can be offered)."

Pukansky said community members should first contact those two organizations for help as most likely, it will already be paid for.

"If you have a conversation with somebody and they're like, 'I can help you with that,' well, you need to be very blunt about is this a donated thing, or is it not?" Pukansky said, "If you go through one of these organizations, it's already vetted (as it) is a donation-based thing. That's how we need to be doing things, especially as private individuals."

Individual business who want to register through FEMA to help with recovery should visit tinyurl.com/m3bkx2aa.

For more resources, visit www.townofboone.net/711/Hurricane-Helene-Resources-and-Services.

©2024 Watauga Democrat - Mountain Times Publications, All rights reserved.

### • Citation (aglc Style)

Moss Brennan moss.brennan@wataugademocrat.com, 'WCES: Thankful for volunteers, but sign up with a vetted organization to best help', *Watauga Democrat, The*(online), 4 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a> p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C04B798CA4B990>



# More FEMA personnel arriving in Watauga County to help community members apply for aid

October 4, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Moss Brennan moss.brennan@wataugademocrat.com| Section: Local | 129 Words OpenURL Link

WATAUGA — More FEMA personnel are arriving in Watauga County to help community members apply for aid after Hurricane Helene.

Watauga County Emergency Services Emergency Planner Kristi Pukansky said personnel will be in the area late Friday afternoon or early Saturday and will be available at approved sites to assist people with applying for aid.

In the meantime, if community members have access to the internet, they should go to www.disasterassistance.gov/ and start filling out the form.

"If they get stuck, they can definitely come by and talk to somebody just as soon as we get that up," Pukansky said.

FEMA personnel have been working closely with WCES in Watauga County.

Pukansky said that everyone is encouraged to apply for FEMA aid even if an insurance claim has not been approved or denied.

©2024 Watauga Democrat - Mountain Times Publications, All rights reserved.

## • Citation (aglc Style)

Moss Brennan moss.brennan@wataugademocrat.com, 'More FEMA personnel arriving in Watauga County to help community members apply for aid', *Watauga Democrat, The*(online), 4 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a> p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C04B79892F70C0>



# Equip, volunteers, start the rebuilding process

October 4, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Zach Colburn | Section: Sports | 677 Words OpenURL Link

BOONE — As Watauga County starts the clean-up process after Hurricane Helene, several of the athletic facilities used by county programs endured significant damage.

But more than 125 volunteers assisted Equip Sports, a Mount Vernon Baptist Church ministry, on Wednesday afternoon, Oct. 2, to help fix the fields at the Boone Optimist Club.

Eric Henderson, the pastor of recreation ministry at Mount Vernon Baptist Church and founder of Equip Ministries, was blown away by the turnout to help clean up the two fields, which are located across from the Watauga Community Recreation Center.

"Oh man, I tell you, I say tragedy brings out the best in people, and it turns the coin or flips it, puts it on its head," said Henderson. "You think people don't care in this world, but this, the spirit of humanity, of wanting to help a brother out, and just this. Optimist Park has been a community icon for years. I mean, I grew up playing on these fields, and if you've been here, these were the first fields in Boone, so what a blessing it is to just see the people pour out. They want to do something.

"We, we put out a APB, kind of, and the youth group there, radiate with Jason Powers, the youth pastor; he was able to help coordinate that with me," added Henderson. "Then we reached out to the Equip family and said, hey, we're all going to be here between two and six or whatever, and then also cook and try to get some food from the community as they drop by through the Optimist Club, because it's, it's a central location and man, they came out — we're just overjoyed, full."

Henderson and a group of around 20-30 adults came armed with shovels, rakes, power tools, and several other pieces of construction equipment to help clean debris off the fences, put up the outfield fence on the big field, and drain the excess water from the fence pipes.

In addition, members of the Watauga High School cross country team were also present in cleaning up the Boone Greenway, located behind the ballfields.

While the youth of Watauga County couldn't do a ton of heavy lifting or construction, Henderson was encouraged that they were willing to do anything they could to help with clean-up within their abilities.

"When there's so much hurt, people want to serve, and they want to help; they just responded in droves, and we're just so blessed to have all these people come out," Henderson said. "Kids can't go in and do major construction, they can't go do major backhoe work that needs done, but they can do this (clean up or collect debris), and that's we wanted — to give them an opportunity to serve and they flat did it."

Optimist has always been special to Henderson and has been one of the main facilities for Equip's baseball teams the last five years. It's also used by the Watauga District Middle School baseball team.

Henderson was originally approached 12 years earlier, after Equip started back in 2005, about his vision and the were close but it wasn't proving though. The Optimist Club was close to letting them use them, but decided to walk away.

Then in 2019, Optimist approached them and as Henderson said "they want to see kids on those fields" and says they've gotten the support.

With the work put in on Oct, 2, Henderson stated they've cut the repair time in half.

He feels it shouldn't take a lot of extra work to flip the playing surfaces around, add dirt, and sow the grass so that it will be ready by spring.

"It's been an awesome partnership with the Optimist Club, and we knew what we were getting into," said Henderson. "We knew these were flooded, floodplains, but we said, 'Look, we'll do whatever it takes to get them back,' and that was the agreement. And so it showed up today with Mount Vernon and Equip and our community — I saw other people that just pulled in here off the street and said, 'we just want to help.'"

 $\hbox{@2024 Watauga Democrat -}\ Mountain\ Times\ Publications,\ All\ rights\ reserved.$ 

## • Citation (aglc Style)

Zach Colburn, 'Equip, volunteers, start the rebuilding process', *Watauga Democrat, The* (online), 4 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C0104AD26A4B60">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C0104AD26A4B60</a>



# 500+ continue power restoration efforts, BRE offers generator safety

October 4, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Staff Report news@wataugademocrat.com| Section: Local | 655 Words OpenURL Link

HIGH COUNTRY — An army of more than 500 line technicians, along with tree and grading contractors, continue 24/7 power restoration efforts to some 18,000 Blue Ridge Energy members after Hurricane Helene left behind historic damage to western North Carolina.

Crews have made progress since last Friday when 63,000 members were without power at the height of the most damaging storm to hit western North Carolina in recent history.

"Our crews won't stop until every member has power," said Renee Walker, director of public relations for Blue Ridge Energy. "They are working in extremely dangerous conditions to restore power as quickly and safely as possible. We are completely rebuilding parts of our electric grid that were washed away by flooding or mudslides or destroyed by the storm."

Walker also added that even though you may not see a truck in your neighborhood, efforts by crews work together to restore all power. "There is damage in areas that feed into lines in neighborhoods and to homes—if these are not restored, power won't flow to individual areas," she explained. "You may also be served by a different tap than your neighbor, which is why power may be on in one location but not yet restored in another."

General estimated restoration dates are provided at www.BlueRidgeEnergy.com. These are broad community descriptions and include other nearby area to those listed; if your area isn't specifically listed, look for the nearest listed community.

The cooperative reminds the public of several crucial safety messages to protect the public and those working to restore power:

## Generator Safety:

Never connect it to your home's electrical system. It can "backfeed" and potentially harm or kill line technicians working on power lines. Always let a generator cool down before refueling. Keep generators away from water. Never use a generator inside your home or garage. Install a carbon monoxide detector for added safety. Attach a ground wire to the generator to ensure proper grounding and avoid electrocution. The only safe way to connect a portable generator to your home's wiring is to have a licensed electrical contractor install a transfer switch.

## Protect Line Workers:

Move over if you see a line worker set working on roadsides. \*This is especially difficult under current conditions with many roads washed out, severely damaged, or down to one lane roads so please slow down for your safety and the protection of all those working to restore power.Pay attention for flaggers and other traffic directions and indications of work under way.Don't drive distracted. Road damage and debris is scattered throughout our service area and crews are working in many areas to put up new power line, bring in new power poles and working to clear fallen trees, limbs and debris to conduct their work.

# Downed Power Line Safety:

Downed power lines can still be energized and therefore dangerous or even deadly so stay far away. Downed lines can be hidden underneath fallen trees, water and other affected structures so use caution around these areas. Only a trained line technician should ever go near a downed power line. Report downed lines by calling 1-800-451-5474.

To check outage status:

Call 1-800-451-5474 to speak with a member service representativeCheck our outage map: https://bremco.maps.sienatech.com/Refer to restoration estimates at www.BlueRidgeEnergy.comReport new outages by calling 1-800-448-2383Use our Blue Ridge Energy mobile appText "OUT" to 70216

Chief Executive Officer Doug Johnson's most recent video update can be found on the cooperative's website at BlueRidgeEnergy.com or at: https://youtu.be/ga79fL4dAZ0.

"I ask for continued thoughts for the people who are working in the field in very difficult conditions and for the people who are working in the office answering the phones, preparing food and all the many, many things that it takes to oversee an effort of this magnitude," said Johnson. "We're not going to stop until your power is restored."

Blue Ridge Energy serves some 80,000 members in Caldwell, Watauga, Ashe, and Alleghany counties as well as parts of Avery, Alexander and Wilkes counties. Learn more at www.BlueRidgeEnergy.com or on the cooperative's social media on Facebook, X and Instagram.

©2024 Watauga Democrat - Mountain Times Publications, All rights reserved.

#### • Citation (aglc Style)

Staff Report news@wataugademocrat.com, '500+ continue power restoration efforts, BRE offers generator safety', *Watauga Democrat, The* (online), 4 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a> p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C04B7986F1FC10>



# Officials ask for weekend 'pause' on unscheduled donation deliveries to Watauga

October 4, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Moss Brennan moss.brennan@wataugademocrat.com| Section: Local | 477 Words OpenURL Link

WATAUGA — Officials in Watauga County are asking for a "pause" on unscheduled deliveries as they get organized with everything currently in the community.

"We just want to start this off by saying thank you for the tremendous outpouring of support (and) monetary donations that you have shown our area over this last week as we have dealt with the impacts of Hurricane Helene," said Boone Area Chamber of Commerce President/CEO David Jackson. "As you can imagine, there have been a great number of supplies that have been dropped off in our area. There have been a great number of monetary donations that have been made to organizations in our area, and that outpouring of support means more than we will ever be able to express."

Jackson has helped Watauga County Emergency Services coordinate private donations to the area.

The network of distribution sites around the county has been working to distribute those supplies to various shelters and staging areas.

"We've also begun to service other communities around our area and other counties, especially those that are still cut off from large truck access and just can't get supplies in easily," Jackson said. "We've been flying some of those missions out of Boone today, and we'll continue to try to get aid to those communities as we move forward."

Right now, with the abundance of supplies in the area, they are asking for a pause on the unscheduled deliveries so they can sort through the supplies and distribute them through the network to those communities that need them. Officials will take time this weekend to reassess what the needs are.

"We're a week out from the storm's impact, and we're able to deal with the immediate aftermath, but we know that we're going to be shifting into other longer-term aspects of our recovery," Jackson said. "We'll take some time this weekend (to) refine our list, and then we will communicate on Monday what that new set of needs may be."

Those who have directly scheduled a donation to a distribution site can still bring those donations. Those that have not been prearranged should hold off for the weekend.

Jackson said monetary donations tend to fit all of the needs up here right now.

Those wishing to make a monetary donation should consider the following donation sites:

Boone Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation: boonechamber.com/foundationApp State Disaster Relief Fund: appstate.eduNorth Carolina Disaster Relief Fund: nc.gov/donate

"Again, we thank you. Our community could not have gotten through the last week without you," Jackson said. "Let us take a little bit of time this weekend to rest for just a moment, get our priorities for next week ironed out, and then we will be right back in touch with you on Monday with a fresh set of needs and exactly what those mechanics look like."

Some area churches and other locations are still accepting donations and people are encouraged to call first.

# • Citation (aglc Style)

Moss Brennan moss.brennan@wataugademocrat.com, 'Officials ask for weekend 'pause' on unscheduled donation deliveries to Watauga', *Watauga Democrat, The* (online), 4 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a> p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C04B79A03D5390>



# FIGHTING MISINFORMATION - Climate change deniers spread misinformation about Hurricane Helene

October 4, 2024 | Winston-Salem Journal (NC)

Author: CHAEWON CHUNG STAFF WRITER Section: A 1160 Words

Page: 1 OpenURL Link

Hurricane Helene has not only caused devastating physical damage in Western North Carolina but has also triggered a wave of widespread online misinformation about the storm and its connection to climate change.

While the online claims suggest that the storm was unrelated to climate change, meteorologists in North Carolina assert that the hurricane is "certainly" connected to climate change.

One X user posted on Sunday, referencing the 1916 case when Asheville was significantly impacted by the remnants of Hurricane Charleston, noting that atmospheric CO2 levels were lower at that time than they are today. The post has garnered more than 34,000 likes and has been retweeted 7,800 times.

Corey Davis, assistant state climatologist at the North Carolina State Climate Office, told the Journal that what the post is arguing is essentially implying that "if some extreme events are caused by climate change, then all extreme events historically must have been caused by climate change as well."

"We had a number of events like that across the country throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, but in any given area, they were quite uncommon during that time period. The difference now is that we're seeing events of that magnitude, or even worse, happening much more often than they did historically."

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has projected a season of "above-normal" hurricane activity in the Atlantic basin this year, anticipating between 17 and 24 named storms, defined as systems with winds of at least 39 mph.

Among these, NOAA has expected that 8 to 13 could strengthen into hurricanes with winds reaching 74 mph or more, including a potential 4 to 7 major hurricanes, which are categorized as storms with winds of 111 mph or higher.

Scientists and meteorologists have identified warm ocean waters and the La Niña pattern as two significant contributors to this prediction.

When sea surface temperatures exceed 80°F, they create optimal conditions for tropical storms to form and strengthen into hurricanes. The warmer waters supply the necessary heat and moisture that drive hurricanes, enabling them to intensify and sustain their power.

In addition, during a La Niña phase - characterized by cooler-than-average sea surface temperatures in the central and eastern tropical Pacific - the strongest upper-level winds shift northward, away from the tropics. This shift reduces wind shear, fostering a more conducive environment for the development and longevity of tropical storms.

"One thing is clear - that the temperatures in the Gulf of Mexico were extraordinarily warm," Charles Konrad, professor of geography at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, told the Journal. "Some of that warmth, maybe a lot of it, had to do with climate change."

In August, the Gulf reached its highest temperatures on record in modern history, with surface averages approaching 90 degrees, according to Brian McNoldy, a climatologist at the University of Miami.

Strong hurricanes, like Hurricane Helene, require specific conditions such as warmer water and low vertical wind shear, meaning minimal change in wind speed or direction with height.

The confusion about the hurricane's irrelevance to climate change arises from the fact that some of Helene's "ingredients," as Konrad explained, are not linked to the effects that scientists suggest climate change brings.

For example, while climate change is thought to potentially increase vertical wind shear, Hurricane Helene's low vertical wind shear is likely not tied to those climate change effects. As well, the upper-level low pressure system, which exists at higher altitudes and can steer storms and influence their paths, affected Helene's trajectory but is likely not related to climate change.

"What you could say is that there is a mix of ingredients here, a few of which we could certainly associate with climate change, but others that we cannot," Konrad said, adding that what climate change has done is increasing the probabilities of the hurricane.

"In a normal climate without added carbon dioxide, there's a possibility of very strong tropical systems moving north and hitting the mountains and dropping incredible amounts of rainfall ... but what climate change has done is that it's increasing the probabilities of that happening," Konrad added.

Another post, which received more than 1,200 likes and 100 retweets, claimed that the severe flooding in Asheville was caused not by climate change, but heavy rain the city received last week before Hurricane Helene hit. The user argued that the combination of this initial heavy rain and the hurricane's arrival worsened the situation, not climate change.

However, this perspective can also be misleading, according to Davis, as it is "clear" that climate change played a role in increasing the duration and rainfall totals during the event.

"We know the oceans are absorbing the brunt of warming on our planet, and it's showing with those extremely warm water temperatures that provide even more fuel for tropical storms and hurricanes," Davis said.

In addition to the Gulf's record-high temperatures over the past two years, he noted that the atmosphere above the Gulf was exceptionally humid last week, with minimal dry air surrounding the storm. This created favorable conditions for Hurricane Helene to expand and push moist air into North Carolina as a cold front moved through, he explained.

"A warmer and more humid atmosphere is also a known consequence of climate change, so I think that's a natural connection to make with last week's event," Davis added.

Chaewon Chung covers climate change and the environment in the Triad and Northwest North Carolina. Her work is funded by a grant from the Green South Foundation and the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation.

© Copyright 2024, Winston-Salem Journal, Winston-Salem, NC

## • Citation (aglc Style)

CHAEWON CHUNG; STAFF WRITER, 'FIGHTING MISINFORMATION Climate change deniers spread misinformation about Hurricane Helene', *Winston-Salem Journal* (online), 4 Oct 2024 1 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a> p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BFF044B802F570>