

## Western NC residents worry about health risks from mud

October 11, 2024 | Charlotte Observer, The (NC)

Author: Catherine Muccigrosso; Staff Writer | Section: News | 559 Words

Page: 1A OpenURL Link

As historic floodwaters recede in western North Carolina, the destruction left behind from former Hurricane Helene also involves dealing with massive amounts of mud that some residents and business owners fear is toxic.

Helene leveled the Biltmore Village where Origami Ink has been "completely destroyed," the gift shop said on its Facebook page last week. The flood waters reached the second floor, "literally smashing everything to bits and leaving everything coated in toxic mud," Origami Ink said.

But as of Wednesday, federal and state officials would not confirm that the mud from Helene is toxic.

As part of the state and federal storm response, North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality and other state agencies are working with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to identify and address potential contamination in the affected region, the agencies said in a joint statement to The Charlotte Observer.

"Given the widespread impacts of the storm and flooding, generally speaking, the public is advised to treat areas that have flooded and any substances of unknown origin with caution," the agencies said.

Western North Carolina residents are urged to use caution during cleanup, especially if there is a noticeable chemical odor or spilled container of a hazardous material and to ask the local health department or fire department for help.

More guidance is available online at deq.nc.gov and the NCDHHS websites.

Federal and state agencies did not make an official available for interview.

Testing for potential contamination

DEQ has received reports of concerns about potentially toxic mud downstream in Madison County near Marshall from damaged IPEX's Silver-Line Plastics plant in Asheville. Marshall, with less than 800 residents, is on the French Broad River about 20 miles north of Asheville.

In response, inspectors have visited the site and found no injuries were confirmed related to potential exposure in this area, according to the federal and state agencies.

Silver-Line is not listed as a hazardous waste generator in DEQ permitting records.

"They have an air permit with the local air program in Buncombe County and did not have significant quantities of hazardous chemicals," DEQ and EPA said.

How to handle cleaning up the mud?

Flood water can bring microorganisms from sewage and other sources inside buildings, according to the EPA. During flood cleanup, exposure to microorganisms can cause allergic or irritant effects, or in some cases even infectious diseases.

The EPA urged residents are urged to wear an N-95 respirator, sealed goggles, gloves, pants, long-sleeved shirt,

and boots or work boots.

NC DHHS also advises residents to clean their hands with soap and water before preparing food or eating after contact with flood waters.

"Never assume that a water-damaged house is safe," NC Department of Health and Human Services said in a statement to the Observer on Tuesday.

"Going into a building that has been flooded, even after the water is gone, can present a wide variety of hazards that can cause injury, illness or even death," the agency said.

Origami Ink Shop owners Cathie and Jonathan Robbins have been digging through the mud daily looking for anything salvageable. "Cathie and I have been doing most of it ourselves since we could not risk the health of any of our customers who have offered to pitch in," Origami Ink said Saturday on Facebook.

The store, which sells stationery, fountain pens and gifts, set up a Go Fund Me page Saturday to help rebuild. Origami Ink officials did not respond to multiple requests for comment.

Catherine Muccigrosso: 7043585198, @CatMuccigrosso

Copyright (c) 2024 The Charlotte Observer

#### • Citation (aglc Style)

Catherine Muccigrosso, Staff Writer, 'Western NC residents worry about health risks from mud', *Charlotte Observer, The* (online), 11 Oct 2024 1A <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C2741D1AAAF720">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C2741D1AAAF720</a>



## Charlotte teams help UNC Asheville recover post-Helene

October 11, 2024 | Charlotte Observer, The (NC)

Author: Langston Wertz Jr.; Staff Writer | Section: Sports | 1264 Words

Page: 1B OpenURL Link

Janet Cone has been athletic director at UNC Asheville for 21 years. She intentionally built a house in an area where, even when the snow and bad weather would come - and it always comes in the mountain winters - Cone knew she could still get to work.

That was until Hurricane Helene blew through Asheville last week, delivering a double-fisted blow of wind and rain like the area had not seen since "The Great Flood" of 1916.

Businesses closed. Nearly 100 lives were lost. The power went out. The water stopped working.

"In the 20-something years I've been here," Cone said, "I don't think I've ever not been able to get work until that Friday. My neighborhood wasn't bad. There were trees blown all over, but when you came out to the county road and you look to the right, it was like, 'Well I can't go that way.' There just trees and power lines down. Then I looked to the left and it was the same thing.

"All I could do was go back home."

Like many people in the area, Cone didn't really know how bad things were.

She couldn't turn on the TV, although she did find an old transistor radio that could pick up one station. By Sunday, she could finally get a cellphone signal, and one of the first messages she read was from Charlotte 49ers AD Mike Hill.

How can I help you?

"At first, I told Mike, 'Let me get back to you,'" Cone said. "My first thing was to make sure our students were safe. We were making sure we could get student-athletes off campus."

The aftermath on campus

When Cone finally got to UNC Asheville, she was able to see the damage, which included a building that houses athletic offices, golf and tennis locker rooms being flooded with water that was, she said, between eight and 12 feet high.

And once she got a head count of her athletes, Cone began to work on a plan - with Hill and other N.C. universities as well as the NBA's Charlotte Hornets, who'd also reached out.

This week, the UNC Asheville swim team went to live and train at Garnder-Webb University in Boiling Springs. Track went to Emory & Henry in Virginia.

But most of the Bulldogs' teams playing now or training for the upcoming winter sports seasons came to Charlotte.

The men's and women's basketball teams moved into hotels near UNC Charlotte. The men's and women's soccer and volleyball teams are living in dorms on Charlotte's campus. The Asheville teams are practicing and training at Queens University and at Charlotte. The men's and women's basketball teams will practice at the Hornets' uptown facility, beginning Thursday.

In all, that's about 140 athletes on five teams. They will practice here and the teams currently in season will travel for all away games. Basketball starts next month.

"Athletics is just a small part of the story of what's happened to western North Carolina," Cone said. "It's horrible up there, but it's getting better each day. But it will be a long time before these communities in Asheville and around Asheville recover. But I want people to understand that due to the generosity and hospitality of these college athletic directors and college presidents that it's allowing our student-athletes to continue to practice and play and have a semblance of a fall semester on a college campus.

"And we're grateful for that."

The million dollar question

Chris Thomasson, the Charlotte 49ers' executive associate athletic director for internal affairs, said he isn't sure how long the Asheville students will be on campus.

But he said it doesn't matter.

"Look this is what athletics is all about," Thomasson said. "We hear so much about college athletics and how we're turning, more and more, into a pro model, but it really is about helping young people and developing them for life and putting them in positions where they learn and are exposed to life lessons. It makes me feel great as a university and athletic department that we're able to do this. And we're excited to do this."

Thomasson said the Asheville athletes moved onto campus at Charlotte on Monday and have been using the 49ers' team facilities or campus rec centers for things like weight training and watching film. The Asheville athletes eat in the 49ers' dining hall.

In a statement provided to The Observer, the Hornets said they have "a long-standing" relationship with UNC Asheville, including hosting the NBA team for training camp and a preseason game.

Beginning this week, the Bulldogs' basketball teams will use the practice facility at Spectrum Center, including the Novant Health Training Center. On days when the space is not available, the Hornets said they will secure additional facilities for the Asheville teams to use.

"We're proud to return the favor and host them at our home, especially during this time of need," the team said in its statement.

'No playbook for something like this'

There are about 95,000 people who live in Asheville, which is bordered by the French Broad and the Swannanoa, which makes the city and the region susceptible to floods.

And when the city was blanketed by heavy rain, ahead of Helene last week, men's basketball coach Mike Morrell knew it could be bad.

He canceled a Friday practice and prepared for the worst.

He said the worst of the storm blew through Thursday night and, the next morning, he walked to a bridge that look out over the famous River Arts District near where he lives. Morrell said he literally had to crawl through trees to get there.

"I wanted to see what the river was like," he said. "They had talked about how high it could get."

He stood there looking, he said, with about 30-40 people. And when he tried to go back, just a few hours later, the bridge he had been standing on was under water.

"That was the first time, I was like, 'Oh my gosh, this ain't good,'" Morrell said.

Morrell said his players lost power about 7:30 a.m. Friday and he lost it about 30 minutes after that. Phones worked for little while longer, but when they went dark, it was hard to know what was going on.

"It was like you were in 'The Truman Show,' or 'The Hunger Games,' where everybody can see what's going on top of you," Morrell said, "and you don't know what they're seeing."

Morrell checked on his family in Tennessee, also affected by the storm, and then circled back to his players, who by then, had lost running water.

"We had to get the guys out of town, man," he said. "This is not safe."

The mother of fifth-year guard Josh Banks - who played at Charlotte's Olympic High School - drove up and Morrell said she took some guys back to Charlotte. Two other players, Kam Taylor and Jordan Marsh, both from the Charlotte-area, also drove back, taking teammates with them.

By Monday, all of Morrell's players had all gotten to Charlotte and in the team hotel.

"I told our players there is really no playbook for this," Morrell said. "You're asking for a lot of grace from a lot of people in Charlotte. It makes you feel good but it's really not surprising. I would like to think that we would do the exact same thing. So we're just inconvenienced right now. That's all this is. We're not without power and water the way some people are in western North Carolina or Tennessee or Georgia, or people in Florida having to evacuate (due to Hurricane Milton).

"So we're inconvenienced, but we're also thankful. It's probably not the only time in life you'll find yourself in a situation like this."

Langston Wertz Jr.: 704-358-5133, @langstonwertzjr

Copyright (c) 2024 The Charlotte Observer

#### • Citation (aglc Style)

Langston Wertz Jr., Staff Writer, 'Charlotte teams help UNC Asheville recover post-Helene', *Charlotte Observer, The* (online), 11 Oct 2024 1B <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C2741D5209A918">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C2741D5209A918</a>



## Family tries to pick up the pieces after landslide tragedy

October 11, 2024 | Charlotte Observer, The (NC)

Author: Théoden Janes; Staff Writer | Section: News | 2377 Words

Page: 1A OpenURL Link

The moment Jamie and Melissa Guinn laid eyes on the house - nestled on the edge of the tiny Avery County town of Minneapolis, N.C. - they adored it.

Two stories, about 1,900 square feet, built in the late '80s but with cedar siding in a style that made it look even older and more rustic. Almost like a cabin, they thought.

On top of that, the house's surroundings were heavenly: the North Toe River babbled up at the front deck from the other side of Highway 19E; on multiple sides there were dense thickets of lush, tall, green trees; and out back was a very steep, very tall hill, which made it seem as if the home was built right into the side of a mountain.

They weren't at first sure they would get approved to buy it. Jamie, a packing supervisor at Baxter Healthcare's manufacturing plant, and Melissa - then a sub-assembly operator, at Baxter - had four other mouths to feed and were at the time living in an apartment in Marion in neighboring McDowell County.

But upon falling in love with the house, the couple couldn't stop fantasizing about how they would make it their own if everything went smoothly with the offer.

And when everything did, when they were handed the keys, Jamie and Melissa felt like they had since the day they met

They felt like the luckiest people in the world.

"We both said that we never thought we would have a house that nice in our life. She was so happy to have it," Jamie says, by phone, from a bed at Cannon Memorial Hospital in Linville, with members of Melissa's family gathered around him.

Then he briefly falls silent.

At the time of the conversation, on Thursday night, it's been not even a week since Hurricane Helene raged across the sky over Western North Carolina. Not even a week since the storm triggered a series of landslides and mudslides that knocked the couple's beloved home off its foundation. Not even a week since he suddenly, violently lost the 41-year-old woman of his dreams.

The father of their 8-year-old son River and stepfather to her older boys takes a deep, shaky breath. Takes a few seconds to compose himself. There are things he's open to sharing about the tragic way Melissa died.

First, however, he wants to talk about the beautiful ways she lived.

Enamored by everything about her

Melissa met Jamie at Baxter when she was still married to her first husband, with whom she'd had three sons.

After her divorce, Jamie was slow to make a move. So she had to make her own, marching up to him while he was sitting in the cafeteria during a power outage - and plopping right down in his lap. The ice broken, he was able to work up the courage to walk her out at the end of that night. They started falling in love on the spot, as they

chatted and flirted through the window of her silver Dodge Durango.

It escalated quickly.

He was enamored by everything about her. The intense love she had for her little boys, Brandon, Sebastian and Ethan. The ability to pull off camouflage clothes and mud-covered boots one minute, a fancy girly-girl dress the next. That fearlessness. That contagious laugh.

Those eyes, and the way they looked (as her younger sister Elizabeth describes them) like the color of honey in a jar when it's held up to the sunlight.

They spent years dating before he formally proposed ... but leading up to that day, he informally popped the question over and over - with Ring Pops, or little black-plastic spider rings (because she loved Halloween), or other assorted toy rings he'd pull out of vending machines near the fronts of stores they shopped at.

Jamie would drop to a knee while holding his 25-cent offering and wearing a silly grin; she'd just laugh and wave him off.

You have to find a better way to propose, Melissa would tell him, every time.

Finally, on Halloween in 2013, he did it for real, secretly taking the day off to carve "Will You Marry Me?" into a collection of pumpkins, finishing his project literally the second she walked through the front door of their apartment.

In the run-up to the big day, Jamie accidentally saw her in the first wedding dress she bought. Feeling superstitious, she sold it.

The second one was a traditional-looking stunner that she wore in their October 18, 2014 ceremony, which they held in a majestic field in Roan Mountain, Tennessee. Everything proceeded perfectly, from her older boys serving as groomsmen right down to the four-leaf clover Jamie found on the walk to where they posed for their wedding portraits.

Two years later, they welcomed River, a redheaded bundle of joy that made their family of six complete.

And Melissa loved nothing more than spending time with them doing ... pretty much anything - whether that meant taking the boys for the hundredth time to traipse through Backyard Terrors Dinosaur Park just across the state line in Tennessee; or dressing up like superheroes with River; or just getting fast food from the drive-through with Jamie, parking next to the restaurant, and talking about life as they watched traffic go by.

The only thing that dissatisfied her in life was her job, and she solved that last year when she left it to start her own cleaning business, enabling her to spend more time with Jamie and the kids.

It seemed as if her life couldn't get much better. But then it started raining.

'The hill behind it was terrifying to us'

Melissa's younger sister, Elizabeth Hensley, had always felt extremely uneasy about Melissa's home.

On the couple of occasions when she and her fiancé Tony would come up from where they lived in the Linville Caverns area and spend the night at Jamie and Melissa's, Tony in particular would have trouble sleeping because, he'd say, of "that thing behind me."

Some people are claustrophobic. Some people are afraid of heights. Tony had always been spooked that something - maybe everything up above the house - could slide down that hill at any moment and wind up doing some serious

damage. Ahead of Hurricane Helene, this fear gripped Elizabeth, too.

"The house was gorgeous," Elizabeth says, "but the hill behind it was terrifying to us.

"So you just sit here and you think and you wonder. ... I try to figure out, you know, if I would have just driven the 40 minutes up there, or if I pushed a little bit harder, or sent more messages, or -" she lets out a big sigh, then begins crying. "The guilt's just real right now."

But she just didn't think the storm was going to be that bad. Neither did Jamie and Melissa. No one did.

And other than a little buzzing about Helene approaching, Thursday was pretty typical for the Guinns. Jamie had a day off from work, so he went and helped Melissa on one of her cleaning jobs. When their work was done, they decided to drive over to the Tennessee town of Elizabethton, where they picked up miso soups from a Japanese place for them, and pizza and Crazy Bread at Little Caesars for River.

They brought it back home and after River went to bed, Jamie watched Investigation Discovery while Melissa perused TikTok, occasionally leaning over to show her husband a funny pet video.

Overnight, the sound of the rain hitting their roof woke them up a couple of times, but on Friday morning, they still had electricity.

Then, without warning, the situation took a fierce turn. The power went out. The wind whipped up. Stuff outside the house started getting blown around. One tree fell, then a second. Their cellphone signals cut out. Another tree toppled over, taking out a transformer near the road and pulling down a power line onto their driveway. The winds picked up even more speed.

Yet in the midst of it all, Melissa saw something beautiful - something she'd seen during other hard rainstorms: a little waterfall behind the house, running down that very steep, very tall hill.

She took a video of it with her phone and brought it back to show Jamie. Look how pretty this is, she said to him.

Before long, the wind died down, and with no electricity and no TikTok or TV, Jamie, Melissa and River sat on their front porch and watched the river, which had swollen over its banks. The storm seemed to settle after that. They hoped the worst was over.

And then, right around 11 a.m. Friday, they heard a crash.

Landslide after landslide after landslide

They jumped up, ran through to other side of the house, and reacted in horror as they saw that a landslide had taken out their detached garage.

The messy pile of mud and debris was redirecting rainwater toward the main house and both Jamie and Melissa were frantically trying to move logs and vehicles to try to divert the flow of the water down the driveway. Jamie ran upstairs to get something - he now can't remember what - but while looking for it, there was another even louder crash, almost like an explosion.

Jamie felt himself being crushed as the house seemed to cave in on him. The house groaned and popped and snapped as it slid down the bank into the river. Jamie screamed for River, who called back in a way that implied to Jamie that his son was OK.

Although Jamie was bleeding from a gash in his head and his back was in searing pain (he'd later learn his spine was fractured), he was able to get clear of the wreckage and make his way halfway up the bank to where River was stuck in muddy water.

As Jamie was picking him up, he looked up and saw Melissa standing over the foundation where the house had been - just in time to hear her scream, "Babe, watch out!"

In the next moment, he shoved River up the riverbank and lunged after him. Then an instant later, there was another thunderous crashing sound as a third landslide pummeled their property.

When he looked up again, Melissa was no longer there.

Jamie raced up the hill as fast as he could, fighting against gravity, mud, serious injuries and panic. He got to where their house had stood just a few minutes earlier and saw nothing but a swath of empty land. He screamed for her again and again and again.

But she was gone.

'She's gonna be River's new superhero'

After a few minutes, Jamie realized that if there had been three vicious landslides, there could certainly be a fourth.

He realized he needed to get River to safety.

It would take hours before he was able to navigate over devastated hillsides and around raging rivers to reach a friend's house nearly two miles away; it would take several more before first responders on off-road vehicles were able to reach the house and transport him to Cannon Hospital.

But with communication lines cut off throughout Western North Carolina, it would take days before Melissa's family knew anything was wrong.

Her parents, Brian and Bernice Hensley of Marion, had driven to Hickory on the Sunday after the storm to get water to bring back. They were in Walmart when Jamie's sister finally was able to get a phone call through to Bernice - who started screaming and wailing right in the middle of the store.

Elizabeth, Melissa's younger sister, remembers initially thinking, OK, she's missing. But somebody's got her. She's fierce, she's a fighter, she's mean. Somebody's got her.

Last Monday, three days after being swept away, Melissa's body was recovered.

It was like a blade through the heart. But at the same time, the family was comforted by a couple of notions.

For one, "she's a hero," Bernice believes, "because she saved Jamie and River by warning them - for making him look up. She gave her life for theirs, because that's how much she loved them. ... She would want River and Jamie to be OK, and I know she would do it again. I know it. It's so hard to put into words, but she -

"I guess she's gonna be River's new superhero."

Even more so, they're just so grateful that they have her back. That they know. They can't imagine how they'd be feeling right now if she still was missing. If she'd been somehow lost forever out there. So they were glad, on Monday morning, to have found at least some small sense of peace.

Then later that day, they found something that gave Jamie yet a little bit more.

A memento from the best day of his life

Jamie was with Melissa's family, all of them in the throes of unimaginable grief. Talking about Melissa. Talking about

that house. About how she was gone, and how it was gone, and how all the memories they'd made together were literally lying in ruins.

"I would do anything," he said at one point, "to have her wedding dress back."

The room stayed quiet for several seconds. Then Melissa's oldest son Brandon, 22, suddenly stood up. "Come on," he said to his brothers Sebastian, 21, and Ethan, 17. Melissa's father Brian joined them, too, as they got into a car and drove over to Minneapolis via the one road that still provided access to where Jamie and Melissa's house once stood.

Together, the boys managed to cut their way into the old downstairs master bedroom, which was wedged between some trees, and together they disappeared into the hole.

When they came out, Ethan was holding onto his mother's wedding dress.

"They come carrying it in, and it was completely caked in mud and soaking wet, but they found it," Jamie recalls, crying softly.

Asked why he'd wanted it back so badly, he gives the simplest and sweetest possible answer: "Cause it was the best day of my life, the day she married me."

The 10th anniversary of that day is Oct. 18, by the way - and if Helene had chosen another path, they almost certainly would have celebrated the occasion in the place they loved more than any other.

At home.

A GoFundMe has been established to help Jamie Guinn and his sons: gofundme.com/f/help-jamie-and-his-sons-rebuild-their-lives

Théoden Janes: 704-358-5897, @theodenjanes

Copyright (c) 2024 The Charlotte Observer

### • Citation (aglc Style)

Théoden Janes, Staff Writer, 'Family tries to pick up the pieces after landslide tragedy', *Charlotte Observer, The* (online), 11 Oct 2024 1A <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C2741CCE07B0A8">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C2741CCE07B0A8</a>



## Bizarre dead-body rumors impede Helene disaster response, NC county spokeswoman says

October 11, 2024 | Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles (NC) Author: Joe Marusak and Adam Wagner, The Charlotte Observer Section: north\_carolina | 722 Words OpenURL Link

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article included state and county death toll statistics, including from Buncombe County, which has had the highest number of Helene-related deaths. The state Department of Health and Human Services has since taken over death-count reporting for Buncombe County. As of Oct. 17, 2024, DHHS reported 42 confirmed deaths in Buncombe, with a statewide total of 95.

False social media rumors are hurting the emergency response to the Helene disaster in Western North Carolina, the spokeswoman for hard-hit Buncombe County said Thursday.

"1,000 unidentified bodies" at the Asheville hospital, one rumor claimed this week. "Buzzards everywhere."

Two-thousand people trapped in a Candler church, another since-debunked rumor stated.

And a photo shared online showed people in a supposed N.C. mountain mudslide during Helene. The slide happened elsewhere in the world and not during Helene, Buncombe County spokeswoman Lillian Govus said Thursday.

"Those are not true," Govus said, replying to a question from The Charlotte Observer and The News & Observer during her county's daily Helene disaster-response news conference on Zoom.

Lillian Govus.pngVerifying Hurricane Helene social media rumors as false "takes away time and resources from us being able to do those critical lifesaving maneuvers in our community," Buncombe County spokeswoman Lillian Govus said on Oct. 10, 2024.

"And those hurt, because ... we have to redivert resources and make sure that our emergency personnel check that off the list. And it may be the fourth time that we've done that.

"... It takes away time and resources from us being able to do those critical lifesaving maneuvers in our community," Govus said.

"Verified information is critical at this time," she said. "But as we are trying to disseminate accurate, correct and truthful information in real time," investigating outlandish rumors "is a really big obstacle for us to overcome."

"So I would ask that if you are so compelled to share information on social media, that those sources be from the county, the city of Asheville, the agencies that are supporting us at the federal level, at the state level with North Carolina Emergency Services, and verified individuals."

Hurricane helene deaths by county map embed

Kody Kinsley, secretary of the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services, called the social media rumors of hundreds of bodies piled up "disinformation."

"It's just not true," he said Thursday.

"We don't have a big backlog of work here," Kinsley said. "There's no large number of decedents that we're

processing."

As of Wednesday afternoon, North Carolina was working on identifying four bodies, he said.

As of Oct. 17, 2024, the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services reported 42 confirmed deaths in Buncombe, with a statewide total of 95.

Fake, misleading images of Helene spread on social media. Here's how to spot them.

Reporting human remains during Helene cleanup

If someone finds human remains while cleaning up debris, Kinsley said, they should call their local law enforcement's non-emergency phone number. Those local officials will work with the state team to gather the remains and start processing them.

To help identify bodies, DHHS has shifted medical examiners from the eastern part of the state to the west. When a body is found, Kinsley said, it is collected by one of six fatality recovery teams working in the storm-damaged region.

Next, the body is taken to a central processing site where examiners first try to identify the person. When they were found in their home or were carrying identification, that's easier. But sometimes, Kinsley said, identification requires DNA work or assistance from North Carolina's State Crime Lab.

After a body is identified, the examiners work to determine whether the cause of death is storm-related. In the case of a drowning or the victim of a landslide, that's obvious.

Other times, it's more difficult, Kinsley said, as in the case of someone who is found in a home and could have died from either blunt force trauma or a heart attack.

Those cases require more extensive work from forensic pathologists.

DHHS tries to let families of storm victims know what happened as soon as it can, Kinsley added.

"We very quickly inform the family and then after that we add them to our storm total. And then we continue to process the remains to return them to the family," Kinsley said.

Helene fact check: Here are the rumors and the reality in Western North Carolina

No, disaster funding isn't being sent to the border. Here's how FEMA spends its money

News & Observer reporter Virginia Bridges contributed.

Copyright (c) 2024 The Charlotte Observer

#### • Citation (aglc Style)

Joe Marusak and Adam Wagner, The Charlotte Observer, 'Bizarre dead-body rumors impede Helene disaster response, NC county spokeswoman says', *Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles* (online), 11 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C23B6BCE325A88">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C23B6BCE325A88</a>



## 'Still reeling.' Challenges are just beginning for some Western NC schools after Helene

October 11, 2024 | Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles (NC) Author: Rebecca Noel, The Charlotte Observer | Section: education | 1375 Words OpenURL Link

Michael Luplow stood in front of FernLeaf Community Charter School two weeks ago, feeling optimistic. He thought the school had been spared the worst of Hurricane Helene.

But in less than 24 hours, the school — and his life's work — would be swept clean off its foundation.

"It was absolutely heartbreaking," he said of the school he launched in 2016 in Fletcher. "The Creek campus has been a big part of our identity from the beginning."

The campus in Henderson County sits surrounded by Cane Creek, where students in kindergarten through fourth grade would go for outdoor learning during the week. It's flooded before — but nothing like this. Outdoor learning spaces and athletic fields were washed away, and each of the campus's three buildings became unusable as 5 feet of water crept up the walls.

"The shared experience of watching the loss of this space is creating real, intense feelings for all of us," Luplow said.

FernLeaf is slated to begin classes again Oct. 16, but other nearby school districts will need more time. They're racing to get access to running water and get kids back in the classroom. And parents can't help but wonder whether this break from school might be as devastating for student learning as COVID.

Immediately after the storm, Luplow began trying to contact staff — a tall task when few people in the region had cell phone or internet service. They reached out via email, text, phone calls and, eventually, contacting neighbors and friends until they confirmed all staff and students were safe and accounted for.

"The two happiest days were when they told us that every staff member had been accounted for and then the day when they told us every student had been accounted for," said Lisa Spalding, a third grade teacher at FernLeaf.

Spalding says most staff members, including herself, still lack running water.

But not all is lost. The school has a second campus for middle and high school that 430 elementary school students will now share.

"We've been able to put together a really solid plan to allow for the least amount of disruption," Luplow said. "We are incredibly fortunate that we have been building our facilities to accommodate growth, so we have some flexibility."

FernLeaf (1).jpegFernLeaf Community Charter School's buildings were washed from their foundations by Helene.

Luplow still feels a personal connection to the Creek campus, but after Helene, he's hesitant to rebuild there.

"I would love to see us rebuild the Creek campus because it is such an integral part of who we are, but we're conscious that storms of this magnitude are on the rise," he said. "We know that what makes us who we are are the people."

#### What's the damage

Buncombe County Schools, the largest public district in the region and 13th largest in the state, aims to reopen its campuses "as quickly as possible," but only 40 out of 45 schools had power as of Wednesday afternoon. Only 13 had running water.

"We've looked at every viable option we could imagine for the safest and quickest solution to get students back in school," Buncombe County Schools Superintendent Rob Jackson said at a community briefing Wednesday. "We've looked into sharing buildings that do have power and water, looked into partial day schedules and bussing students across the county."

The district, along with Asheville City Schools, is even considering assembling "flush brigades" of community volunteers to carry non-potable water to schools throughout the day to supply and flush their toilets. Both districts said they're ordering portable toilet trailers, though delivery dates have not been announced.

RAL\_HELENE-NE-100624-RTW\_7.JPGFederal Emergency Management Agency employee Jirau Alvaro, traveled into Western North Carolina from Puerto Rico to work in Buncombe and surrounding counties in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene. On Sunday, October 6. 2024 Alvaro met with Daniel Mancini, who lost his home, and two cars along the banks of the Broad River in rural Buncombe County, near Black Mountain, N.C.

None of Buncombe County's campuses sustained catastrophic structural damage. Some classrooms need carpet replaced and one school saw flooding in its boiler room. Maintenance and facilities crews started repairs and removing downed tree limbs and debris blocking entrances, Chief Communications Officer Ken Ulmer told The Charlotte Observer.

Once some internet and cell service started returning, teachers, administrators and other staff teamed up to try to contact families and educators. As of Wednesday, the district had made contact with 100% of its staff and 98% of families.

"Communication continues to be challenging, but we're connecting with students everyday," Ulmer said. "I was able to connect to a student while I was at a water distribution site. We had several schools where teachers found spots where they had cell service and started calling."

Asheville City Schools initially announced it would close indefinitely, but Superintendent Maggie Furman said Wednesday the district wants to bring students back Oct. 28. It's drilling wells at each of its schools.

"While the city continues to make progress with the municipal water system, we can't wait until it is fully repaired to open our schools," Furman said Wednesday. "Yesterday, we began drilling a well at Hall Fletcher Elementary School and were able to hit groundwater."

She cautioned that it will still take two to three weeks before the district can start using that water in its buildings.

"I felt immense relief that there is some kind of timeline being announced because, at first, there was messaging that suggested we could be out for weeks and weeks," said Liz Tallent, a parent to two second-graders and one sixth-grader in Asheville City Schools. "There was basically a 100% communication blackout. It was really like we were transported to another era."

Tallent says she worries for teachers, most of whom still don't have water in their homes.

"I would almost call teachers first responders in this situation because they're having to make these huge sacrifices and get back to work for the sake of the rest of us," she said. "It really highlights the importance of schools. When there's no school, the whole community is at a standstill."

september 011.JPGDebris from Hurricane Helene are seen on and under the old bridge that connects Lake Lure and Chimney Rock in Lake Lure, N.C. on Sunday, September 29, 2024.

North Carolina has strict laws in place for when the school year can start and end as well as how many remote learning days are permitted. State Superintendent of Public Instruction Catherine Truitt announced she's requesting more flexibility for school districts after Helene from the General Assembly, including the ability to continue the school year past mid-June.

Tallent's sixth-grader was in first grade when the pandemic hit in 2020. She said Helene's damage feels similar — life grinding to a halt yet again in the face of a disaster.

"It really feels like déjà vu," she said. "I'm putting some of those lessons that I learned during the pandemic into practice now, which is not something I really thought I'd have to do again. I think I'm kind of in shock."

She's concerned about learning loss like kids saw during the pandemic, which schools are still recovering from. She's finding opportunities for her kids to do lessons with teachers. But she's worried for people who don't have those opportunities.

"This kind of thing, just like the pandemic, exacerbates the difference between those who have the resources and the bandwidth and those who don't," Tallent said. "It just widens the inequities that Asheville already struggles with."

Luplow said parents at his school are echoing some of Tallent's concerns.

"Parents are still reeling from some of the experiences from COVID," Luplow said. "They're concerned about learning loss."

#### Pulling together

Luplow and Tallent said their communities have sprung into action, volunteering to clear away road blockages, clean rivers and get resources to people who need them most.

"With that heartbreak, also there's immediately been a sense of hope and optimism and opportunities to rebuild," said Luplow. "It's been astounding to watch."

Luplow said schools across the country have sent loads of school supplies to FernLeaf. Tallent said parents in her community have set up a GoFundMe for teachers in her area who may need help covering the cost of home repairs.

Still, they say, it will take years to fully recover.

"I think it's important for our community and the broader community to understand the true impact of this storm," Luplow said. "We need all the help we can get."

Copyright (c) 2024 The Charlotte Observer

## • Citation (aglc Style)

Rebecca Noel, The Charlotte Observer, "Still reeling.' Challenges are just beginning for some Western NC schools after Helene', *Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles* (online), 11 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/19C24504C247ADEO>



# Charlotte chefs, breweries and venues host dinners and concerts for Helene victims

October 11, 2024 | Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles (NC) Author: Tamia Boyd, The Charlotte Observer | Section: c5\_things\_to\_do | 559 Words OpenURL Link

With homes destroyed and lives disrupted by Hurricane Helene, the storm that swept through North Carolina two weeks ago, the spirit of resilience is evident as many residents of the state want to help out the hurricane victims.

State and local officials advise not to travel in Western North Carolina due to the risks, but that isn't stopping Charlotteans from wanting to support recovery efforts from afar.

Charlotte restaurants and concert venues are hosting an array of culinary dinners, music events and fundraisers for those in need. Here are a few in October:

Oaklore Distilling

Location: 11136 Monroe Rd, Matthews, NC 28105

When: For 10 days, beginning Oct. 11

Empty the shelves for Carolina: For 10 days starting Friday, Oct. 11, Oaklore Distilling will donate 200% of all store bottle sales to Community Foundation of Henderson Country. "If you buy a bottle for \$40, we will donate \$80. If you buy a \$100 bottle, we will donate \$200. It's that simple, you get a bottle, we rebuild our state together!" the distillery posted on Instagram.

[MORE WAYS TO HELP: Check out these fundraisers, drives and more around the state.]

The Amp Ballantyne

Location: 11115 Upper Ave, Charlotte, NC 28277

When: Thursday, Oct. 17

The Amp Ballantyne will host a benefit concert with performances by Asheville-based Steep Canyon Rangers and Ashes & Arrows. Portions of the proceeds will support BeLoved Asheville.

Resident Culture

Location: Plaza Midwood location, 2101 Central Ave, Charlotte, NC 28205

When: Saturday, Oct. 19, 12-11 p.m.

At Resident Culture's 7th anniversary party at its Plaza Midwood location, the brewery will collect both monetary donations and essential items to support the communities of Western North Carolina. Monetary donations will be used to provide daily hot meals and benefit local WNC charities assisting people across the region. Donations can be made at the taproom, online or via Venmo (@residentculture). Essential items and urgent medical supplies can be dropped off at the Plaza Midwood location both at during the event and for a few weeks after.

[HELP FOR WESTERN NC: Shops and restaurants in Chimney Rock, Boone, Burnsville, Spruce Pine and more could

use our help from afar — here's how.]

Drift on Lake Wylie

Location: 315 Lanyard Lane M, Belmont, NC 28012

When: Wednesday, Oct. 23, 6 p.m.

Drift is hosting a fundraising dinner to benefit Western North Carolina service industry workers that will feature live music and a curated cocktail party with passed hors d'oeuvres and chef-manned stations. Tickets are \$100 per person, with all proceeds benefiting The Giving Kitchen. Beer and cocktails are not included, but they will be available for purchase.

Concert for Carolina

Location: 800 S Mint St, Charlotte, NC 28202

When: Saturday, Oct. 26

"Concert for Carolina" is a benefit show to support storm victims across the region. Music artists like Luke Combs, Eric Church, Sheryl Crow and many more will be performing at the concert. Proceeds from the event will be split between Combs' and Church's Chief Cares Foundation to administer to different organizations' relief efforts in the Carolinas, including Samaritan's Purse, Manna Food Bank, Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest NC and Eblen Charities. Tickets are now sold out, but a livestream option is available.

Neighborhood Theatre and other independent music venues

Location: 511 E 36th St, Charlotte, NC 28205

Independent music venues across the state, including Neighborhood Theatre, will make a donation for every ticket sold in October to assist with hurricane recovery efforts.

462542476\_554293963744343\_8867447956554599734\_n.jpgDamage shown at Riverwatch Coffeehouse & Gift Shop in Chimney Rock after Hurricane Helene.

Copyright (c) 2024 The Charlotte Observer

### • Citation (aglc Style)

Tamia Boyd, The Charlotte Observer, 'Charlotte chefs, breweries and venues host dinners and concerts for Helene victims', *Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles* (online), 11 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/19C240586C68F138>



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

October 11, 2024 | Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles (NC) Author: Simone Jasper, The Charlotte Observer | Section: north\_carolina | 353 Words OpenURL Link

A "resilient" kitten was rescued from a storm-ravaged North Carolina shelter — and now, the "special little survivor" needs a home.

"Despite what we can only imagine as a crazy and challenging week full of changes, Piper is the sweetest and most affectionate girl, always seeking out attention and cuddles," the Forsyth Humane Society wrote Oct. 9 on Facebook.

The humane society said Piper is waiting for a second chance after she was saved from a Rutherford County shelter "that was devastated by Hurricane Helene." The storm, which made landfall in Florida in late September, caused widespread flooding and wind damage across Western North Carolina.

In the aftermath, the Forsyth Humane Society was among the organizations that took in pets from the hurricanebattered region. Some animals had been in shelters that needed to free space as they worked to reunite lost pets with their owners, The News & Observer reported.

#### 1011-catrescuencembed

The humane society, located in Winston-Salem, said Piper's previous shelter experienced a power outage.

She's now in foster care, where she has shown her "adventurous, playful and spunky" side. She's also a "sweet and resilient" kitten who has has feline leukemia virus, according to the social media post and details marketing manager Malinda Massey told McClatchy News via email.

"This is a condition that affects her immune system," the shelter wrote. "While FeLV can shorten her lifespan, it doesn't stop her from living a happy and playful life."

Due to her condition, 6-month-old Piper needs to be the only cat in her next home, unless the other cats also have the virus or have been vaccinated against it. As of Oct. 11, the animal organization's website still listed her as available for adoption.

"Piper deserves a family who will cherish her as much as she'll love them," the shelter wrote. "If you're ready to open your heart and home to this special little survivor, Piper could be your new best friend!"

More details about the humane society's adoption process can be found at forsythhumane.org.

Kitten with heart murmur needed a home. Then came adoption that was 'meant to be'

Sweet kitten with 'wobbly cat syndrome' needed a home. Then came good news

Copyright (c) 2024 The Charlotte Observer

#### • Citation (aglc Style)

Simone Jasper, The Charlotte Observer, "Resilient' kitten rescued from devastation of Helene. 'Little survivor' needs a home', Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles (online), 11 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/19C24C9D9EC6C0F0>



# 'Sad' cat struggled with loss of feline sibling. Then came a heartwarming adoption

October 11, 2024 | Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles (NC) Author: Simone Jasper, The Charlotte Observer | Section: north\_carolina | 426 Words OpenURL Link

A "sad" cat struggled with the loss of a feline sibling — then came an emotional adoption.

A grieving family took home a new furry companion in early October, days after Hurricane Helene hit Western North Carolina. The adoption was a "bright spot" in a region that experienced so much devastation.

"It was so heartwarming," Sarah Swartz, donor relations manager for the Blue Ridge Humane Society, told McClatchy News in a phone interview. "It came a week after one of the hardest days any of us that live and work in this community have ever seen."

PXL\_20241002\_002148608.PORTRAIT.ORIGINA\_fitted.jpegTony is known as a friendly and playful North Carolina cat.

Two days before the storm left the region with widespread flooding and wind damage, the shelter said Amber and David Moss came to its adoption center. The two were mourning the death of a "beloved feline family member and were looking to bring home a companion for their other cat who had become noticeably withdrawn and sad."

During the visit, Tony the cat caught the Moss' eye. Tony was in the middle of a "bite quarantine" period, so the family asked to be notified when he would be available for a meeting, the shelter wrote in a Facebook post.

Then, when Helene hit in late September, the shelter's adoption center lost power. Since Tony was still in quarantine, Swartz took him into foster care at her office in another building that had electricity.

The cat, described as friendly and playful, was cleared for adoption on Oct. 4. That's when the shelter reached out to the family who had shown interest in him.

#### 1011-catadoptionncembed

"We had no idea, when we called, what their personal circumstances were going to be, understanding that this area was simply devastated by Hurricane Helene," Swartz said. "And many homes, many business, many lives were damaged or lost."

Several shelter animals were moved outside the area after the storm, and the family was "overjoyed" that Tony was still around.

They rushed to the shelter, kicking off their next chapter.

"In a time when nearly all of our adoptions have taken place in foster homes and away from our adoption center, this one was extra special," the shelter wrote, adding that "it was the purrfect match (contrary to the look on Tony's face on adoption day!)."

Tony, who may be re-named Otto, had been at the humane society for about two weeks after being transferred from another facility. The humane society is in Hendersonville, a roughly 25-mile drive south from the mountain town of Asheville.

Kitten with heart murmur needed a home. Then came adoption that was 'meant to be'

Copyright (c) 2024 The Charlotte Observer

## • Citation (aglc Style)

Simone Jasper, The Charlotte Observer, "Sad' cat struggled with loss of feline sibling. Then came a heartwarming adoption', *Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles* (online), 11 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/19C259E4C49A2190>



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

October 11, 2024 | Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles (NC) Author: Simone Jasper, The Charlotte Observer | Section: north\_carolina | 326 Words OpenURL Link

A litter of "abandoned" kittens needed help — then a mama cat took them in "without hesitation."

Now that Honey the cat is done raising the little ones, she's up for adoption in North Carolina.

"With the tasks of motherhood behind her, Honey deserves to be someone's beloved cat companion," the Cashiers-Highlands Humane Society wrote Oct. 9 on Facebook. "She is still a youngster herself and quite playful and she loves every human she has met."

Honey needs a new home after she and her babies arrived at the humane society in June. The shelter in its social media post didn't say why the family ended up at the shelter or reveal the kittens' names.

#### 1011-mamacatncembed

"Shortly after her arrival, Honey did something remarkable," the shelter wrote. "While she was still weaning her offspring, we took in a litter of abandoned newborns so young they had not even opened their eyes. (Ah, such is life when kitten season is in full swing.) We tried to see if Honey would 'adopt' the newborns along with her existing children and she did so without hesitation."

Shelter workers watched "with awe and admiration" as Honey cared for the two litters. Now that the kittens are older, the animal organization hopes 1-year-old Honey will get her own stroke of luck.

As of Oct. 11, Honey was still listed among the cats available for adoption on the shelter's website. The shelter said it's experiencing internet and phone outages after Hurricane Helene, so those wanting more information should visit in person or email info@chhumanesociety.org.

The humane society didn't immediately share additional information with McClatchy News on Oct. 11. The animal organization is based in the Sapphire area, a roughly 55-mile drive southwest of the mountain town of Asheville.

Cat up for adoption has can't-miss feature. 'There's big cheeks, and then there's this'

Kitten found outside movie theater waited as others got adopted. She still needs home

'Sweet' cats Lemon and Lime are up for adoption. 'Don't let their sour names fool you'

Copyright (c) 2024 The Charlotte Observer

#### • Citation (aglc Style)

Simone Jasper, The Charlotte Observer, 'Mama cat helped 'abandoned' kittens 'without hesitation.' But who will step in for her?', Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles (online), 11 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/19C260032406C740>



### IV Fluid Plant in Florida Remains Functional After Milton

October 11, 2024 | Courier-Times, The (Roxboro, NC) Author: Staff Writer | Section: Health | 980 Words OpenURL Link

#### Key Takeaways

Damage from Hurricane Helene has disrupted production of vital IV fluids at a plant in North Carolina, triggering shortagesA second plant in Daytona Beach, Fla., which produces a quarter of the U.S. supply, was in the path of Hurricane Milton but has survived and is functionalManufacturers and the federal government are scrambling to boost IV fluid supply from overseas

FRIDAY, Oct. 11, 2024 (HealthDay News) -- Facing a nationwide shortage of vital IV fluids after Hurricane Helene knocked out a North Carolina production plant, officials heaved a sigh of relief at the news that a second plant in Daytona Beach, Fla., was spared by Hurricane Milton and remains functional.

According to the New York Times, a spokeswoman for B. Braun, the company that runs the Daytona Beach plant, said the facility remained intact and would reopen on Friday.

Between them, the North Carolina and Florida plants produce 60% and 25%, respectively, of the IV fluids that many patients in hospitals and dialysis centers need to survive.

With supplies already crippled by the closure of Baxter's Marion, NC, plant after Helene, the closure of the B. Braun facility would have been devastating, experts said.

IV fluids are needed for the care of patients such as premature babies, people on dialysis and frail individuals who rely on IV feeding.

Hospitals across the United States are already postponing surgeries and rationing IV fluids as shortages take hold, the Times said.

Hannah Hale, 37, lives near Dallas and for eight years has required IV feeding with a concentrated dextrose solution, after Crohn's disease led to surgeries that impaired her digestive tract.

Her specialized pharmacy told her on Monday it cannot find enough of the IV solution to replenish her supply.

"They're not supposed to just drop me like that," she told the Times, adding that calls to 14 other pharmacies failed to find a new supplier.

"I don't have any recourse," Hale said.

Anticipating Milton, B. Braun had told the Times that on Tuesday it had loaded trucks headed north full of products, to get them to a safer location.

At Baxter, staff have been working overtime to help patch together new supply chains, increasing production at plants located overseas.

On Wednesday, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) said that it was authorizing imports of IV products from Baxter plants in Canada, Ireland, the United Kingdom and China.

Baxter had been forced to limit supplies to hospitals to 40% of usual following the damage to its plant by Helene,

but the company told the Times that deliveries would have already risen to about 60% of usual by Wednesday of this week.

Baxter would not say when it expected its Marion plant to become fully operational again, but said it hoped to resume production in phases by the end of the year.

A bridge near the plant is being prioritized for repair so that trucks already loaded with Baxter product can leave and distribute supplies not damaged by the storm, the Times said.

"We will spare no resource -- human or financial -- to restart operations and help ensure patients and providers have the products they need," José Almeida, the chief executive at Baxter, said in a statement Wednesday.

Hospitals across the nation need IV fluids to hydrate and feed patients, including those battling a life-threatening blood infection known as sepsis.

"When you're coming in with sepsis, and specifically the septic shock, those one-liter bags are the most immediate form of treatments, and sometimes you're getting two, if not three, of them in rapid succession," Dr. Chris DeRienzo, chief physician executive of the American Hospital Association, explained to the Times. "There are so many special populations impacted by the shortage, what it really leads to is an impact on the whole population."

IV fluids made by Baxter and B. Braun are also essential to the care of people in dialysis, because patients need specially formulated liquids to help clean their blood once kidneys begin to fail.

The Marion plant was a major supplier of such fluids, William Poirier of the Renal Healthcare Association told the Times.

Responding to the crisis, Xavier Becerra, secretary of the Health and Human Services Department, said in a letter to health care providers posted Wednesday that his agency was doing all it can. HHS was working with Baxter closely to help minimize disruptions in supply, he said.

"My department commits to mitigating the impact of Hurricane Helene and doing all we can to prevent further disruption as a result of Hurricane Milton," the letter from Becerra said.

The suddenness of the IV fluid crisis highlights ongoing concerns about the fragility of the supply chain of essential medical supplies in the United States. Experts have long noted that the manufacture and distribution of certain items is concentrated in only a few companies.

The COVID pandemic revealed many vulnerabilities, as officials scrambled to find essential supplies of masks, gloves and ventilators. In 2023, tornado damage to a Pfizer plant in North Carolina sparked a frenzied search for new supplies of certain generic drugs.

Most of the products involved in these shortages are low-cost, low-profit items with few incentives for new manufacturers to enter into production, experts explained.

Whether government is doing enough to build capacity is uncertain, Tom Cotter, executive director of Healthcare Ready, a nonprofit founded after Hurricane Katrina, told the Times.

"We haven't seen a really big uptick in investment in resiliency from the government to harden our supply chains," Cotter said. "Storms are reaching areas where they've never been before with greater severity. There is an increased need to widen the scope of what we think is vulnerable in our medical supply chain."

More information

Find out more about IV fluids and what they are used for at the Cleveland Clinic.

SOURCES: Statements, Baxter International, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration; The New York Times

What This Means For You

With a manufacturing plant in North Carolina knocked out by Hurricane Helene, the nation's supply of crucial IV fluids is dwindling.

Copyright 2024, The Courier-Times, All Rights Reserved.

### • Citation (aglc Style)

Staff Writer, 'IV Fluid Plant in Florida Remains Functional After Milton', *Courier-Times, The* (online), 11 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C25EA154066760">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C25EA154066760</a>



## Hurricane Milton leaves at least 16 dead as Florida cleans up

October 11, 2024 | Courier-Times, The (Roxboro, NC) Author: Gerard MARTINEZ| Section: National | 643 Words OpenURL Link

The death toll from Hurricane Milton rose to at least 16 on Friday, officials in Florida said, as residents began the painful process of piecing their lives and homes back together.

Nearly 2.5 million households and businesses were still without power, and some areas in the path cut through the Sunshine State by the monster storm from the Gulf of Mexico to the Atlantic Ocean remained flooded.

Milton crashed into the Gulf Coast late Wednesday as a Category 3 storm, smashing communities still reeling from Hurricane Helene two weeks ago, which killed 237 people across the US southeast, including in Florida.

On Siesta Key, a beautiful barrier island near Sarasota where the storm made landfall, Milton left a desolate landscape.

Some streets were still flooded on Friday. Fallen trees and debris -- sofas, beds, chairs and appliances, much of it left behind by Helene -- were strewn haphazardly on roadsides.

Resident Mark Horner, who moved there six years ago, said while his house was largely spared, the island "got hit really hard" and people were reassessing the future.

But the 67-year-old sounded a note of optimism, telling AFP: "Our paradise will come back. It's just a little shocking to absorb it."

Tornadoes, not floodwaters, were behind many of the storm's deaths.

In Fort Pierce, on Florida's Atlantic coast, four people died in a tornado spawned by Milton.

"They did find some people just outside dead, in a tree," 70-year-old resident Susan Stepp told AFP. "I wish they would have evacuated."

At least six people were killed in St. Lucie County, four in Volusia County, two in Pinellas County, and one each in Hillsborough, Polk, Orange and Citrus counties, officials said.

The storm downed power lines, shredded the roof of the Tampa baseball stadium and inundated homes, but Florida avoided the catastrophic devastation that officials had feared.

"The storm was significant, but thankfully this was not the worst-case scenario," Governor Ron DeSantis told reporters.

The National Weather Service issued a record 126 tornado warnings across the state Wednesday, wrote hurricane expert Michael Lowry.

"It is not easy to think you have everything and suddenly you have nothing," said Lidier Rodriguez, whose Tampa Bay apartment was flooded.

- 'Get a life' -

Search operations were ongoing Friday, and the Coast Guard reported the spectacular rescue of a boat captain who

rode out the storm clinging to a cooler in the Gulf of Mexico.

"This man survived in a nightmare scenario," Dana Grady of the Coast Guard's St. Petersburg sector said in a statement.

President Joe Biden on Thursday urged people to stay inside until downed power lines and debris are cleared.

Florida's back-to-back battering by Helene and Milton has become election fodder as Republican Donald Trump spreads conspiracy theories claiming Biden and Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris are abandoning victims.

Biden snapped back on Thursday, telling the former president, "Get a life."

- 'We'll probably sell' -

Experts said Friday that human-induced climate change made Hurricane Milton wetter and windier.

"Heavy one-day rainfall events such as the one associated with Milton are 20-30 percent more intense and about twice as likely in today's climate," the World Weather Attribution group of climate scientists said in a report.

The effect boosted Milton's wind strength by about 10 percent, making what would have been a Category 2 storm a more destructive Category 3, on a five-point scale, the report said.

Milton left some weary Floridians fed up and others digging in for the long haul.

In Orlando, on the east coast, 58-year-old Joe Meyer was loading his car after five days in a hotel to return home to Madeira Beach, south of Tampa.

Helene had hit his house "like a bomb went off," and he had to swim to a neighbor's house. Milton left less water but more wind damage.

"We'll probably sell" and move to a less flood-prone location in the area, he said.

"We're just to the age now where moving everything up, moving everything down -- it's just become too much for us."

#### bur-bbk/sst

Copyright 2024, The Courier-Times, All Rights Reserved.

### • Citation (aglc Style)

Gerard MARTINEZ, 'Hurricane Milton leaves at least 16 dead as Florida cleans up', *Courier-Times, The* (online), 11 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C25EA182E6C858">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C25EA182E6C858</a>



## Supercharged hurricanes trigger 'perfect storm' for disinformation

October 11, 2024 | Courier-Times, The (Roxboro, NC) Author: Manon JACOB | Section: National | 547 Words OpenURL Link

Monster hurricanes slamming the United States in recent weeks have triggered a torrent of misinformation, with politicians and social media users reviving conspiracy theories about weather manipulation ahead of the November 5 presidential election.

False accusations of the government waging "weather warfare" spread online with social media posts claiming the storms were "deliberately deployed against red states" likely to vote for Republican Donald Trump.

"We are in a geoengineering 'meltdown' perpetrated by Globalists who want to 'control' the whole of humanity," said one post on X.

Rumors also focused on the Alaska-based High-frequency Active Auroral Research Program (HAARP), which was formerly run by the US military, and cloud seeding, despite a lack of evidence linking the technologies to the formation of large storms.

The wave of falsehoods emerged after Helene became the deadliest hurricane to hit the US mainland since 2005's Katrina, and Milton quickly followed, making landfall in Florida on October 9.

Both storms ravaged entire neighborhoods, forcing widespread evacuations and causing massive power outages.

Ethan Porter, a professor and researcher at The George Washington University Misinformation/Disinformation Lab, said some people are using misinformation "as a convenient way to express their political beliefs."

He said the focus is less on the details, but rather the underlying message -- "that neither science nor government should be trusted, that climate change isn't real, and that somehow, Democrats are responsible for the unfolding catastrophe."

Pro-Trump Republican Congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene has repeatedly told her followers that the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration authorizes programs that "control the weather."

Methods such as cloud seeding can help increase rain and snow in localized areas, but they cannot create storms like Helene.

Experts told AFP it is concerning that politicians are engaging with such narratives.

"This is coming at a time of real political tension," said Callum Hood, head of research at the Center for Countering Digital Hate.

"The social media landscape is a friendlier place for hate and disinformation than it has been in a long time, particularly on X."

University of Miami professor Joseph Uscinski, who researches why people believe in conspiracy theories, agreed: "We have members of Congress who are pushing ideas that this is real, when, in fact, it's not."

- 'Scary world' -

The situation highlighted the sharp divide over climate change, as scientists warned that supercharged storms were

the result of warmer ocean temperatures.

Storms, also amplified by warmer air, show a potential to impact inland areas as well as coastal regions that have historically been in the path of destruction.

"Hurricane Helene showed us that it is not (only) the coast we have to worry about. A hurricane with a lot of moisture passing through a mountainous area -- such as Asheville -- is a bad combination," Jayantha Obeysekera, director of the Sea Level Solutions Center at Florida International University, told AFP.

Nature Conservancy chief scientist Katharine Hayhoe said weather control narratives help defer the responsibility of curbing emissions.

She worries such logic brings a false sense of security and comfort for people trying "to make sense of what is rapidly becoming a very scary world."

These conditions create "a 'perfect storm'" for disinformation, Hayhoe said, highlighting how disbelief can further delay action on the ground or prevent proper resilience and mitigation plans against a warming climate.

"It moves us in exactly the opposite direction from where we need to be going," she said.

### mja/rl/mgs/sst

Copyright 2024, The Courier-Times, All Rights Reserved.

### • Citation (aglc Style)

Manon JACOB, 'Supercharged hurricanes trigger 'perfect storm' for disinformation', *Courier-Times, The* (online), 11 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C25EA188CA1B58">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C25EA188CA1B58</a>



## Despite hurricanes, Floridians refuse to leave 'paradise'

October 11, 2024 | Courier-Times, The (Roxboro, NC) Author: Gerard MARTINEZ| Section: National | 515 Words OpenURL Link

Florida resident Kristin Hale weathered Hurricane Milton tired and scared, but like many of her fellow Floridians, she refuses to move away -- even after a second hurricane has hit the state in as many weeks.

"You persevere when you live in Florida," the 42-year-old said as she moved tree branches and other debris out of the restaurant she runs on Siesta Key, an idyllic island located between Sarasota Bay and the Gulf of Mexico on the state's west coast.

"When you live in paradise, that's what you pay for," she added. "We have some of the best beaches in the world, they're just absolutely stunning. We are blessed."

Even though the southeastern US state is highly vulnerable to catastrophes caused by climate change, including rising sea levels and stronger hurricanes, nothing seems to dampen its appeal.

The state is the third most populous in the country, and it attracted the second highest number of new residents in 2023, behind only Texas, according to US census data.

The frequent natural disasters -- Milton was the third hurricane to hit Florida in the past two months after Debby and Helene -- have also sent home insurance premiums skyrocketing.

In 2023, homeowners paid an average of \$10,996 to insure their residences, 421 percent more than the national average, according to data from Insurify, an insurance comparison firm.

None of that seems to matter, though, when compared with the appeal of living in a sunny climate near the ocean.

- 'Something special' -

"Being near the water is just something special. Nothing can replace that," said Victoria Thoma, a resident of Sarasota who went to inspect the damage on nearby Siesta Key, where Milton made landfall.

The 49-year-old Russian woman settled along Florida's west coast a decade ago after living in the northeastern state of Connecticut. She said she is happy where she has made her home with her husband and their eight children.

"This place is magic," she said.

Nearby, residents who evacuated before the storm were slowly returning to see how their homes fared.

The small town of roughly 5,000 people was hit hard by the dual hurricanes.

Streets were flooded, trees knocked over and piles of items destroyed during Helene were strewn about, given there was little time to clean up between storms.

At the beach, Matt Fueyo explained he had no intention of leaving the Florida coast, just like his neighbors.

"I've traveled the world, been to so many other countries, and seen some beautiful places. But this is unique," said the boat rental company owner. "Siesta Key is very powerful. There's a good energy here, there's good people here. This is a very special place."

Across the bay in Sarasota, Chicago resident Andy Johnson looked out at a yacht that was left stranded in the harbor due to Milton.

He had come to visit family a few days ago when he learned of the hurricane barreling towards the state.

"It was very terrifying for a guy who's never been through anything like this," he recalled.

"But people here are strong. And even with all this, as my stepbrother says: 'It's better than shoveling snow from up north.' So they just rebuild every time."

### gma/nn/jgc/acb

Copyright 2024, The Courier-Times, All Rights Reserved.

### • Citation (aglc Style)

Gerard MARTINEZ, 'Despite hurricanes, Floridians refuse to leave 'paradise'', *Courier-Times, The* (online), 11 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C29CB4452765A0">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C29CB4452765A0</a>



## Milton leaves at least 16 dead, millions without power in Florida

October 11, 2024 | Courier-Times, The (Roxboro, NC) Author: Gerard MARTINEZ| Section: National | 590 Words OpenURL Link

The death toll from Hurricane Milton has risen to at least 16, officials in Florida said Friday, and millions were still without power as residents began the painful process of piecing their lives back together.

More than two million households and businesses were still without power, officials said, and some areas in the monster storm's path through the state remained flooded.

"There's places where water is continuing to rise," Governor Ron DeSantis warned on Friday. But while the storm was "significant," he said, "thankfully this was not the worst-case scenario."

In a White House briefing, US President Joe Biden said experts estimated the cost of storm damage at \$50 billion.

The federal response to the huge storm -- and to Hurricane Helene, which devastated parts of the US southeast just two weeks earlier -- has taken on an increasingly political edge, and Biden said he would visit Florida on Sunday.

Amid questions as to whether the federal response is adequately funded, the president called on Congress to "step up" its efforts, particularly to shore up hard-hit small businesses. The agency that lends to them and families said Friday it is overwhelmed by this disaster and others and is running out of money.

Former president Donald Trump has falsely claimed that the Biden-Harris administration has diverted hurricane response funds to care for migrants, drawing pushback even from some Republican officials.

Asked whether Trump was singularly to blame for a dangerous swirl of misinformation, Biden replied, "No... but he has the biggest mouth."

- Hope amid desolation -

On Siesta Key, a beautiful barrier island near Sarasota where the storm made landfall, Milton left a desolate landscape.

Some streets were still flooded on Friday. Fallen trees and debris -- sofas, beds, chairs and appliances, much of it left behind by Helene -- were strewn haphazardly on roadsides.

"It's just terrible," John Maloney, 61, who owns a home remodeling company, said as he removed tree limbs from a seaside house he was working on. "But I think we'll rebuild again."

Tornadoes, not floodwaters, were behind many of the storm's deaths.

At least six people were killed in St. Lucie County, four in Volusia County, two in Pinellas County, and one each in Hillsborough, Polk, Orange and Citrus counties, officials said.

The storm downed power lines, shredded the roof of the Tampa baseball stadium and inundated homes.

In Sarasota, around 100 vehicles lined up to get fuel at one of the few service stations still selling it. Other people waited patiently in line on foot with jerry cans.

"We got word that they got fuel here, so here we are and so is everybody else today," said resident Dave Stone.

### - Record tornado warnings -

The Small Business Administration, a government agency which lends money to people and businesses struck by disasters, said it is now supporting people hit by 36 such catastrophes and is running out of money, its administrator Isabel Casillas told CNN.

"It is a matter of days," Casillas said.

The National Weather Service issued a record 126 tornado warnings across the state Wednesday, said hurricane expert Michael Lowry.

Search operations were ongoing Friday -- DeSantis said 1,600 people had been brought to safety -- and the Coast Guard reported the spectacular rescue of a boat captain who rode out the storm, 30 miles (48 kilometers) from the shore, clinging to a cooler in the Gulf of Mexico.

Experts said Friday that human-induced climate change made Hurricane Milton wetter and windier.

What would have been a Category 2 storm, the World Weather Attribution group of climate scientists said in a report, instead grew into a more destructive Category 3, on a five-point scale.

#### bur-bbk/sst/dw/bfm

Copyright 2024, The Courier-Times, All Rights Reserved.

### • Citation (aglc Style)

Gerard MARTINEZ, 'Milton leaves at least 16 dead, millions without power in Florida', *Courier-Times, The* (online), 11 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C29CB48EA04340">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C29CB48EA04340</a>



## Preparation helping recovery after third Florida hurricane in 66 days

October 11, 2024 | Courier-Times, The (Roxboro, NC) Author: Shirleen Guerra | The Center Square | Section: National | 408 Words OpenURL Link

(The Center Square) – More than 12,000 miles of state roads are cleared, nearly 2,000 areas on bridges have been inspected and 1,600 people and 140 pets have been rescued following Hurricane Milton's hit in Florida.

Reports say 16 people have died from the storm, the third to hit Florida this year. Teams have made more than 1.000 water rescues.

Debby made landfall as a Category 1 hurricane near Steinhatchee on Aug. 5, Helene made landfall as a Category 4 hurricane in Dekle Beach on Sept. 26, and Milton made landfall as a Category 3 hurricane near Siesta Key on Wednesday night.

"Please exercise caution," said Gov. Ron DeSantis from St. Petersburg on Friday, where more than 18 inches of rain in 24 hours qualified as a 1-in-1,000 years flood.

Florida Division of Emergency Management Director Kevin Guthrie and Maj. Gen. John D. Haas, adjutant general of Florida, were alongside the governor as they updated efforts after Milton.

The storm's damage and the estimated three dozen tornadoes in St. Lucie County led to several deaths due to the destructive force of high winds and significant flash flooding.

"What we're seeing now are fatalities that are preventable," DeSantis said, saying fatalities are happening due to interaction with downed power lines and water. "We are in the position where everything is stabilized, and you need to make the proper decisions and just know that there are still some hazards out there."

The governor stressed the importance of staying out of the flood waters, the safety of using ladders, and the proper operation of generators, adding that they should not be used inside.

Damage from the three hurricanes in 66 days is well into the billions of dollars.

About 2.2 million homes and businesses were still without power across the state Friday afternoon.

DeSantis said the storm weakened enough before landfall to minimize the worst-case storm surge, saying that doesn't mean there is not a lot of damage, but they have an abundance of resources because of preparation.

He said removing debris from Helene before Milton made landfall also mitigated some of the damages.

In a separate press release, the governor said they are working with FEMA to incentivize more trucks for 24/7 cleanup across the state so Floridians can get through the debris.

Several airports and schools across the state reopened Friday.

The state has volunteer organizations on standby and can be reached by those in the affected areas through 833-Get-Hope to connect them to the needed resources, either food or debris cleanup.

Copyright 2024, The Courier-Times, All Rights Reserved.

Shirleen Guerra | The Center Square, 'Preparation helping recovery after third Florida hurricane in 66 days', *Courier-Times, The* (online), 11 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/19C29CB3F6F657D0>



## Interest groups push for quick action before Election Day

October 11, 2024 | Courier-Times, The (Roxboro, NC) Author: Elyse Apel | The Center Square | Section: State | 571 Words OpenURL Link

(The Center Square) – With early voting starting in North Carolina on Thursday of next week, the State Board of Elections moved quickly following the devastation of Hurricane Helene to help the hardest-hit counties prepare for voters.

Still, there are concerns from public policy groups about if the state's measures are enough and if voters will still prioritize voting amid the storm recovery efforts.

"I have great sympathy for the people who are dealing with this," Heritage Foundation voting expert Hans von Spakovsky told The Center Square. "I know it's very important for them to get power back, to get homes repaired, to get food, to get water. I hope people also realize that in the midst of all that, if they can go vote, they really need to do that, because that's also a really important right."

North Carolina is squarely among the most toss-up of states for the presidential election. More than 7.7 million are registered, and 75% was the turnout in 2020 when Republican Donald Trump carried the state over Democrat Joe Biden by less than 75,000 votes of more than 5.5 million cast. The congressional representation in the districts hardest hit are Republican.

Von Spakovsky said it is important for polling locations to be quickly repaired, especially with any potential delays in the United States Postal Service.

"In the 2020 election, the U.S. Election Assistance Commission reported that about 43% of Americans cast their ballots through the mail," he said. "That also means that it's really important for election officials to get early voting sites open."

At a press conference on Thursday afternoon, Karen Brinson Bell, executive director of the Board of Elections, reported that, before the hurricane, the 25 counties most affected by the storm had planned to open 80 early voting sites. When early voting begins on Oct. 17, which is next Thursday, 75 will open.

Protect Democracy, a nonpartisan organization dedicated to "defeating the authoritarian threat" put out a memo detailing the measures the Election Board could take to ensure voting continues.

It expressed concerns about "depressed turnout," which has been seen in elections after other natural disasters, even when emergency election measures are taken.

"The expansion of early and mail-in voting did not offset this depreciation," the memo stated. "Any emergency measures should be aimed at ensuring that all eligible voters can vote while minimizing the risk of delays in the post-election process."

The state's General Assembly and the Election Board have taken many measures, in conjunction with FEMA and other emergency services, to help voting go smoothly.

"The State Board of Elections, the county boards of elections and our many partners are doing everything possible to ensure you can vote in this important election," Bell said at the press conference.

This includes multiple options for returning absentee ballots, replacement polling sites, and more. The board is also updating NCSBE.gov with the most up-to-date Election Day and early voting information.

Von Spakovsky said measures like these will be important to ensure voting continues. He added that it will be important for the board to ensure election integrity.

"They've got to be sure that they have very careful procedures in place to ensure that people don't vote twice," he said. "Somebody may have sent in an absentee ballot and think it didn't get delivered, so they go and they vote in person."

The board has said that safety and security of election results continues to be a priority, which says the "chain of custody process" will be preserved.

Copyright 2024, The Courier-Times, All Rights Reserved.

#### • Citation (aglc Style)

Elyse Apel | The Center Square, 'Interest groups push for quick action before Election Day', *Courier-Times, The* (online), 11 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C29CB4ADFE1BE0">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C29CB4ADFE1BE0</a>



## Recovery ongoing in Florida from Milton

October 11, 2024 | Courier-Times, The (Roxboro, NC) Author: Shirleen Guerra | The Center Square | Section: National | 404 Words OpenURL Link

(The Center Square) – Recovery in Florida continued Friday morning following Wednesday's overnight strike of Hurricane Milton that left 12 dead and millions without power.

Reports vary on the number killed, from as low as eight to as many as 14. An estimated three dozen tornadoes were part of the destructive force of high winds along with significant flash flooding.

The storm had reduced from a Category 5 hurricane to a Category 3 when it landed in Sarasota County, about 70 miles from Tampa.

Gov. Ron DeSantis sent out an update outlining state response and recovery efforts for Hurricane Milton, providing updates on immediate response efforts.

The Urban Search and Rescue Teams and the Florida National Guard successfully rescued 999 individuals and 105 animals.

At its peak, the storm knocked out power to nearly 4 million. Friday morning, according to poweroutage.us, that number had dropped to 2.4 million.

"With the full support of the state and the prestaging of over 50,000 linemen, utility companies and telecommunications providers are working hard to restore power and connectivity to these communities as quickly as possible," DeSantis on Facebook.

He continued, "We are a resilient state, and I have no doubt that Siesta Key and all areas affected by Hurricanes Helene and Milton will bounce back. We are here for them every step of the way."

National Weather Service teams will be checking the damage and strength of suspected tornadoes that hit the region in southeast Florida, where at least six people died.

There are 18 points of distribution mobilizing in Glades, Hardee, Highlands, Hillsborough and Marion counties; 43 more are waiting to be opened throughout the affected areas, overseen by the Florida Division of Emergency Management.

Uber partnered with the state to provide free rides to residents in mandatory evacuation zones who were returning home from local shelters.

There are 23 urban search and rescue teams of 1,600 personnel working across the state with 10 swift water teams. These teams have rescued 306 civilians and assisted 64 others.

There are 6,500 Florida National Guardsmen alongside 2,500 active members with feet on the ground from other states to help in response to the storm's catastrophic aftermath.

The Guard supplied 31 rotary wing aircraft, approximately 500 high-wheeled tactical vehicles, 180 high-wheeled tactical vehicles, and over a dozen boats.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission has conducted seven rescues, three welfare checks, and two arrests. Over 100 officers are assisting with the aftermath.

# There have been 407 health care facilities to report evacuations.

Copyright 2024, The Courier-Times, All Rights Reserved.

## • Citation (aglc Style)

Shirleen Guerra | The Center Square, 'Recovery ongoing in Florida from Milton', *Courier-Times, The* (online), 11 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C25EA1D5BED560">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C25EA1D5BED560</a>



## 'Party atmosphere': Skygazers treated to another aurora show

October 11, 2024 | Courier-Times, The (Roxboro, NC) Author: Daniel Lawler | Section: National | 650 Words OpenURL Link

Scientist Jim Wild has travelled to the Arctic Circle numerous times to study the northern lights, but on Thursday night he only needed to look out of his bedroom window in the English city of Lancaster.

For at least the second time this year, skygazers in many parts of the world were treated to colourful auroras at latitudes beyond the polar extremes where they normally light up the skies.

The dazzling celestial shows were caused by a gigantic ball of plasma -- and an accompanying magnetic field -- which erupted from the Sun earlier this week.

When this eruption, called a coronal mass ejection (CME), arrived at Earth at around 1600 GMT on Thursday, it triggered a strong geomagnetic storm.

This storm in turn sparked northern and southern lights -- aurora borealis and aurora australis -- in swathes of Europe, the United States, Australia and elsewhere.

While Wild could see the shimmering reds and greens from his back garden, he jumped in the car with his family to get a better look away from the bright lights of Lancaster.

"All the little back roads and parking spots were full of people with flasks of coffee and deck chairs looking at the northern lights," he told AFP.

"It was a party atmosphere," he said, comparing the scenes to UFO spotters looking up at the sky in the movie "Close Encounters of the Third Kind".

While Wild was explaining the phenomenon to his 11- and 13-year-old children, another nearby skygazer approached and asked how come he knew so much about it.

"Well, actually, this is what I study for a living," responded the professor in space physics at Lancaster University, who specialises in how solar weather disrupts power grids and transport here on Earth.

- 'Perfect hit' -

Auroras were also visible across northern Europe, including near London and Berlin, and as far south in the US as the state of Virginia. In the Southern Hemisphere, areas of Australia and New Zealand were also treated to a show, AFP photos showed.

The CME that triggered Thursday's auroras erupted from a spot on the Sun pointed directly at Earth, said Juha-Pekka Luntama, the head of the European Space Agency's Space Weather Office.

"It was a perfect hit," he told AFP.

The CME caused a "severe" geomagnetic storm given a rating of G4. This fell narrowly short of the highest level of G5, which was seen in May, when auroras delighted many skygazers across swathes of the world.

Storms on the Sun have been intensifying as solar activity approaches -- or may have already reached -- the peak of its 11-year cycle.

While such storms offer pretty light shows for skygazers, they can pose a serious threat to satellites, GPS services, power grids and even astronauts in space.

The US Space Weather Prediction Center warned on Thursday that the geomagnetic storm could disrupt emergencies services already stretched thin by deadly hurricanes Helene and Milton.

Luntama said the European Space Agency had not received any information about disruptions caused by the latest storm, but sometimes this can take days.

The storm is "gradually dissipating", he added, which means that any auroras on Friday night or over the weekend will likely be farther north in Europe, such as central Sweden.

- 'Delighted' -

But for those still hoping to see an aurora, there could be some more chances in the next couple of years.

Luntama explained that during past solar cycles, the biggest eruptions have come in the two years after the Sun passed its peak.

Wild also did not expect a repeat of Thursday's "magical" display.

But space weather -- like Earth's weather -- is not an "exact art," he emphasised.

And if there is an aurora lighting up the sky nearby, it is worth seeking out.

Wild said his neighbours had travelled to Norway twice to see the northern lights -- but had been foiled by clouds both times.

Then on Thursday night, they saw an aurora from their garden.

"They were really delighted to finally have seen it," Wild said.

dl/giv

Copyright 2024, The Courier-Times, All Rights Reserved.

### • Citation (aglc Style)

Daniel Lawler, "Party atmosphere": Skygazers treated to another aurora show, *Courier-Times, The* (online), 11 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C25EA16DEF3760">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C25EA16DEF3760</a>



## How we can help Hurricane Helene's victims in western NC

October 11, 2024 | Daily Advance, The (Elizabeth City, NC) Author: Celia Stone Columnist| Section: Columnists | 483 Words OpenURL Link

One of the most beautiful parts of the United States, especially in the autumn, has got to be western North Carolina. With 125 peaks over 5,000 feet in elevation, including Mount Mitchell which rises to 6,684 feet, it is no wonder that people love to hike, vacation and live amidst this breathtaking scenery.

The areas around the Great Smokies, the Blue Ridge Mountains and other parts of the Appalachians provide the perfect backdrop for countless Christian camps, children's homes, retreat and conference centers and various ministries.

Teen Valley Ranch, Camp Tekoa, Windy Gap, Cragmont Assembly, Crossnore School and Children's Home, Black Mountain Home, Broyhill Home, Montreat Conference Center, Community of the Cross, Lake Junaluska Conference and Retreat Center, Billy Graham Training Center at the Cove and Samaritan's Purse make up just a part of the different denominational and parachurch organizations providing outreach, service and training in the western part of our state.

Since Hurricane Helene made landfall and wreaked havoc across areas of Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, Tennessee, North Carolina and Virginia, over 200 lives have been lost due to the storm. More than half of those have been in North Carolina, where many towns have been cut off due to already saturated land, massive amounts of new rainfall and mudslides, plus collapsed roads and bridges.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reported that over 40 trillion gallons of rain fell across the Southeast during Hurricane Helene and during the preceding rainfall event in the mountains of North Carolina — an amount that would fill 60 million Olympic swimming pools.

All of us have a big job ahead. First of all, we continue to pray for and give comfort to the families and friends who have lost loved ones and those who have experienced deep trauma from this storm. We also can pray for those who have faced the horrifying losses of pets, homes, places of business, schools and houses of worship.

Secondly, we can donate money and supplies to the many faithful organizations that have been finding ways to get help on the ground to those who need it most.

Finally, in the weeks and months to come, we should consider being part of or helping to send a cleanup crew, rebuilding team or feeding program.

Tragedies like this tend to bring out the best and the worst in people. Helene can bring out the best in us, as we share generously and remember the words of the Prophet Isaiah and of Jesus.

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand," God says to Isaiah in Isaiah 41:10.

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid," Jesus says in John 14:27.

Copyright @ 2024 The Daily Advance. All rights reserved.

<a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C2461CB387D178">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C2461CB387D178</a>



# Chamber will be trying to help those who helped us

October 11, 2024 | Daily Advance, The (Elizabeth City, NC) Author: Lewis Hoggard Business Columnist| Section: Columnists | 531 Words OpenURL Link

Less than two weeks ago, unbelievable amounts of rainfall brought a lot of hardship and death to the western part of North Carolina as they deal with the impact of Hurricane Helene. Literally billions of dollars of damage in North Carolina from the storm with at this time a couple of hundred of known deaths with more to come.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the people of the mountains of North Carolina who have been very supportive of our area in times of crisis and flooding.

The Chamber has decided to provide help to McDowell Chamber of Commerce which includes Marion which was heavily impacted by flooding. The town of Windsor sent a group of four workers, along with equipment, to help repair severed water lines in Boone. They spent the week there.

The county also provided Bertie County Emergency Services workers to Asheville to help them in their time of crisis.

We have experienced numerous flooding events over the last 25 years as a community and have received lots of help from the people in the western part of the state. We know that they have a long road ahead of them, and we are willing to help them if we can.

The second annual Pecan Pickling Film Festival was held in Windsor on the weekend of Sept. 13 through Sept. 15. With over one hundred submissions this year, the film festival is certainly growing. The weekend included a number of classes and workshops for aspiring filmmakers and those who were just interested in improving their film making skills.

Films were screened over the weekend at the auditorium on the campus of Bertie High School. Awards were presented on Sunday in a variety of categories. Festival creator Patricia Ferguson has made this event quite an experience for our community. Hollywood has come to eastern North Carolina for at least one weekend a year.

There will be a ribbon-cutting on Oct. 30 at 11 a.m. in front of the building, 119 East Granville Street in Windsor. Bream Medical will be celebrating their presence here in Windsor.

They actually opened in late July, and have started to acquire new clients. They also offer a medical subscription service for an individual and a family subscription service, so people may want to check them out.

Upcoming events include the Bertie Spectacular 5k which will occur at 9 a.m. on Saturday, Oct. 26 behind the Windsor Town Hall on York Street.

Individuals may sign up for this event at runtheeast.com with an entry fee of \$25. The purpose of this race is to raise money for the Good Shepherd Food Pantry which provides a lot of help to literally hundreds of Bertie County citizens.

Runners in this race are encouraged to dress in Halloween costumes and there are cash prizes for the best costumes. The Chamber will be hosting as usual the children costume contest at this event. There is no charge to enter but the participants do need to be twelve or under unless an exception is given by the Chamber director. There will be candy awarded to all contestants, but no other prizes.

The year is flying by, everyone stay safe and if you can help those less fortunate than yourself, please do!

•	Citation	(aglc	Stv	۱۵۱

Lewis Hoggard Business Columnist, 'Chamber will be trying to help those who helped us', *Daily Advance, The* (online), 11 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C2461CC25C1C58">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C2461CC25C1C58</a>