

# THE NEWS HERALD

Monday, October 14, 2024

WHERE **YOUR STORY** LIVES

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## COMMENTARY

# Hurricane brought out best in NC



WALT UNKS, WINSTON-SALEM JOURNAL

Volunteers assemble food boxes and health care items at the Columbia Forest Products warehouse in Old Fort, one of a handful of distribution centers set up across McDowell County to help victims of Hurricane Helene. The photo was taken on Oct. 3.

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

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

We've only just begun to collect their stories of prudent planning, daring res-

cues, and dogged determination. These tales feature the likes of Hendersonville's James White, who led more than a dozen neighbors sheltering in his home to safety with ropes and life jackets, as well as Eddie Hunnell, recently moved to North Carolina from Colorado, who leapt into the swollen New River to save a stranger, Lesley Worth, separated from her husband by the raging stream.

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

On the ground, we've seen a great deal of cooperation across jurisdictional and political boundaries. Agriculture Com-

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

Democratic mayors have worked closely with Republican county commissioners to coordinate relief. Gov. Roy Cooper, U.S. Sens. Thom Tillis and Ted Budd, lawmakers from both parties — all have pitched in to comfort victims,

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**JOHN HOOD**



MATT FREED, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Former President Barack Obama speaks Thursday during a campaign rally supporting Vice President Kamala Harris, the Democratic nominee for president, at the University of Pittsburgh's Fitzgerald Field House.

## ELECTION 2024

# Harris campaign's supporters pursue reluctant male voters

Former president, others make direct appeals to men

**WILL WEISSERT AND ZEKE MILLER**  
Associated Press

The concern has been there all along, but now it's being talked about openly: Are some men reluctant to vote for Democrat Kamala Harris because she's a woman?

The vice president rarely references her gender on the campaign trail, but her key supporters are starting to make more direct appeals to male voters, hoping to overcome ingrained sexism — or just plain apathy — as Election Day looms.

Former President Barack Obama said he was speaking to Black men in particular when he suggested some "aren't feeling the idea of having a woman as president." Actor Ed O'Neill implores in a new ad, "Be a man: Vote for a woman." And Harris' running mate, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, is helping lead "Hombres con Harris" — "Men with Harris" — to help energize Hispanic male voters.

"I think, in many ways, it's other people who need to be the messenger," said Debbie Walsh, director of the Center for American Women in Politics at Rutgers University.

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