

## Top tips for cleaning up and rebuilding after hurricanes

October 9, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Mike Sunnucks APG Newspapers | Section: Local | 1047 Words OpenURL Link

Rob Drexler has years of experience in the construction, mitigation and restoration sectors. That includes plenty of work after big storms and extreme weather events.

Drexler serves vice president of operations for commercial storms for Fort Lauderdale, Florida-based PuroClean. The national company specializes in water, fire and other restoration work. Drexler is based in Tennessee and has been in the restoration business for almost two decades.

We asked Drexler some top tips for homeowners and small businesses as they clean up and rebuild after Hurricane Helene, face potential impacts from Hurricane Milton in Florida and how much storms have changed. He said there could be higher prices and limited supplies for construction and other material and noted a number of other challenges and best practices.

What are some of the major challenges and frustration points homeowners and business owners might expect to face after Helene?

Home and business owners face significant challenges during the cleanup and rebuilding process after natural disasters like the damage caused by Hurricane Helene. Some of these challenges are:Emotional toll: The stress of dealing with property damage, financial losses and the fear of potential future disasters is an immense burden. Mold and structural issues: If cleanup isn't started immediately, problems like mold growth or foundational damage may worsen over time. Access to contractors and materials: High demand after large-scale events often means long waits for skilled professionals and essential supplies. Delays in insurance processing: Waiting for claims to be reviewed and approved can halt progress. Proper documentation is vital for your insurance to process claims.

What are the common mistakes people make during cleanup and rebuilding?

Waiting too long to begin cleanup: Water damage needs immediate attention. Delaying remediation efforts can lead to further deterioration, including mold growth and structural damage. Removing excess water and wet items as soon as possible can make a major difference in the amount of damage.Not documenting damage thoroughly: Failing to take pictures and note damage for insurance claims can result in delays, reduced, or even denial of payouts. Choosing unverified contractors: In a rush to rebuild, people might hire contractors without properly checking references or credentials, leading to substandard repairs, as they may not understand the science of drying. Improper drying can later lead to mold and structural damage that oftentimes is not covered by insurance. Skipping professional help: Some attempt to handle cleanup without consulting professionals, which may lead to missed issues and safety risks.

Where should we act fast and where should we take our time after storms and natural disasters?

Act fast: Water and mold remediation should be the top priority. Water damage worsens with time, leading to secondary issues like mold, mildew, and structural degradation. Board up windows or cover exposed areas to prevent additional weather from entering the exposed structure. Contact a licensed property remediation company such as PuroClean, to make sure that your property is dried quickly and according to industry standards, and they can help you navigate your insurance claims. Take your time: Planning long-term rebuilding efforts and navigating insurance claims are steps to approach with patience. A rushed decision could lead to hiring an unreliable contractor or receiving less from insurance than you're owed.

What kind of scams should homeowners watch out for after Helene?

After disasters, scammers often take advantage of homeowners who are desperate to get their lives back to normal:

"Storm chasers": These are fraudulent contractors who go door to door offering quick fixes. They are often unlicensed, and they don't have the proper understanding of the drying science. They often demand cash upfront and then do substandard work or disappear without completing the work. Fake charities: Scammers may set up fake charities to collect donations for disaster relief. Always verify that you're donating to a legitimate organization. Insurance fraud: Be cautious of anyone who offers to negotiate with your insurance company on your behalf in exchange for a portion of your payout. These could be fraudsters trying to steal personal information. Make sure that you always have proper documentation, including photos and videos of damage, discarded items, and any work performed on your property.

It's essential to vet contractors, check licenses, and confirm that charities are legitimate through resources like the Better Business Bureau or Charity Navigator.

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Are you seeing storms and major events and their impacts changing?

Yes, storms and weather events are evolving, with many experts noting an increase in both the frequency and intensity of these disasters.

Larger, more intense hurricanes, severe flooding, and prolonged droughts are becoming more common due to climate change.

This shift places additional pressure on recovery efforts, as communities need to build stronger, more resilient infrastructure to withstand future storms.

At PuroClean, we've noticed that response times, preparedness, and the scale of services required are becoming more critical in our operations.

What is your top piece of advice for homeowners recovering from Helene in North Carolina, Florida and other states?

My top piece of advice for those cleaning up and rebuilding after a disaster is to focus on both immediate action and long-term planning.

Begin mitigation efforts quickly—removing water, securing property, and preventing mold—but don't rush into

major decisions. Take the time to properly vet contractors, understand your insurance policies, and plan to rebuild with resilience in mind, considering the increased intensity of storms. Always ensure that you're working with professionals, whether it's for cleanup or reconstruction, to avoid common pitfalls and scams.

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## • Citation (aglc Style)

Mike Sunnucks APG Newspapers, 'Top tips for cleaning up and rebuilding after hurricanes', *Watauga Democrat, The*(online), 9 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C1BA9A747DCA38>



## Being the church in a time of crisis

October 9, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Luke Barber luke.barber@wataugademocrat.com| Section: Local | 723 Words OpenURL Link

BOONE — Times of crisis can be a time for transformation. This sentiment has become especially true for local churches in the area, as many have transformed themselves inside out to respond to their congregations and the community.

At Cornerstone Summit Church in Boone, the inside looks markedly different from just two weeks ago. What was once a worship space fit for the 20-year-old non-denominational congregation has become a distribution center for food and supplies to those impacted by Hurricane Helene.

"We would rather have a church full of supplies and figure out where to have church than to have good church and not supply the community," Reggie Hunt, the lead pastor at Cornerstone Summit, said.

April Wilkinson, the resource coordinator for Cornerstone Summit Church, said that since Hurricane Helene hit, the church has been flooded with donations from Michigan, Pennsylvania, Virginia, South Carolina and other parts of the country.

Wilkinson said the church has already completed more than 100 deliveries to eight different counties, including those in Virginia and Tennessee. Donations are delivered to sites in rural areas, such as local churches and fire departments, which have more access to remote areas that have been cut off.

She said one drop-off point at the Roses in Burnsville was equipped with dozens of ATVs and four-wheelers to move supplies to the most remote regions of Yancey County. As the work has progressed, Wilkinson said the operation is becoming increasingly efficient at getting food, water, and other supplies to areas in need.

"What we're thinking is long-term, and we're trying to build a network," Wilkinson said. "We have places that need items, and we're scheduling out deliveries. We're willing to go. We have tons of stuff."

Meanwhile, Seth Norris, the lead pastor at Perkinsville Baptist Church, said the church's current efforts include transporting generators to homes without power via ATVs and side-by-sides.

Norris is also the chief of the Deep Gap Fire Department and an Army veteran with experience in civil affairs, psychological operations, and as a chaplain. Having worked in emergency management for much of his career, he says the church has a special place when it comes to responding to natural disasters.

"Disasters start local, and they end local," Norris said. "The church has staying power. I'm thankful for FEMA and all the resources that are coming at us from the state and the feds, but the local church is the only thing that has staying power in communities. It's ours no matter how long it takes."

Perkinsville Church is also a host site for Baptists on Mission, which responds to human and spiritual needs through 19 different ministries, including disaster response. Norris said he has already seen hundreds of volunteers respond locally through the organization.

Norris and others emphasize the most important trait a volunteer can have is "patience" since recovery efforts will be ongoing for some time. He encourages volunteers to schedule their times to volunteer weeks or months out in advance.

Norris said recovery after Hurricane Helene will not merely take time and hard work but also spiritual guidance as

people continue to grapple with the storm's sudden changes. Norris refers to this practice as "applied theology."

"People are resilient when they find a community, and the biggest thing we can offer is community. Tragedy is not foreign to God. The entire gospel is built on a tragedy that brings about hope," Norris said.

Meanwhile, the Rock Church in Boone continues to respond to the needs of volunteers at Alliance Bible Fellowship and Samaritan's Purse through its Soul Food ministry.

Pastor Michael Gragg of The Rock Boone said the opportunity to serve began by contacting one of the members of the church's childcare ministry. Fortunately, Gragg said one of the things The Rock does is "feed people well."

"We went from expecting to be out there one or two days to being able to send volunteers out there for the whole week," Gragg said. "We have good relationships with a lot of churches here in the High Country. We try to come together and work together because we know this has impacted our entire community. We want to make sure that we're able to meet the needs of the High Country. There are thousands of volunteers up here serving."

To get involved with Baptists on Mission, visit baptistsonmission.org.

For more information on Cornerstone Summit Church, The Rock Church and Perkinsville Church, visit cornerstonesummit.org, therockboone.church and perkinsville.org.

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Luke Barber luke.barber@wataugademocrat.com, 'Being the church in a time of crisis', *Watauga Democrat, The* (online), 9 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C1BA9A85B0A658">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C1BA9A85B0A658</a>>



## Local business responds to accusations of price gouging

October 9, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Luke Barber luke.barber@wataugademocrat.com| Section: Local | 705 Words OpenURL Link

BOONE — Selina Bell, who is co-owner of the La Quinta Inn & Suites and Graystone Lodge in Boone along with her brother Justin Patel, said it came as a shock to them when they received an official letter from the North Carolina Department of Justice accusing the businesses of price gouging.

According to Bell, the letter is the result of a misunderstanding, since the business was working to respond the best it could to a sudden and unforgiving situation in the wake of Hurricane Helene.

On Friday, Sept. 27, as the town and surrounding area was experiencing historic flooding, Bell said she set the rate as high as she could in order to deter people from making reservations who were from outside the area.

"It was in no way intended to price gouge anyone," Bell said. "It was intended to keep people from off the mountain from trying to come up for the App State game because it had still not been canceled. It was intended to protect those people who were trying to drive on the roads that were not safe, and it was intended to make sure that we kept rooms open for those that were in need, who were walking in the door. I did not charge a single person that price."

Bell said La Quinta charges an inclement weather rate of \$69, which was offered to locals who were walking into the hotel due to their homes either being flooded, destroyed by landslides or were inaccessible for various storm-related reasons.

She said the intent of the artificially high prices was to prevent people from outside the area from making reservations online while offering rooms to people walking through the door. However, one reservation did make it through the system at around the artificially high rate, but Bell said the person was immediately refunded their money.

"We've never experienced a crisis like that before to know how to handle the system and be able to close it from outside reservations but still allow guests who were walking in. I did figure out the next day how to do that in the system, but in that moment of crisis with the lack of communication, it was just something that I missed. I do feel like the DOJ will see the evidence and that all will be fine," Bell said.

On the day of the storm on Friday, Bell said 30 rooms were issued to folks who walked through the door, while another 43 rooms were issued the next day. Since Saturday, she said the hotel has been at capacity, as those who are in a state of transition remain sheltered and as volunteers come into town to help with cleanup efforts.

Bell added the hotel just got approved for FEMA assistance and there are 16 locals currently staying there with the help of money from FEMA.

Meanwhile, Bell said the Graystone Lodge will have to undergo extensive repairs to its first floor due to damage it sustained from flooding. However, rooms on the upper level are operational and are being used by those in need.

Bell said the hotels' staff has also been dealing with the aftermath of the Hurricane, as homes of some staff members remain without power, and one staff member lost their home altogether.

If the stresses of Hurricane Helene were not enough, Bell said they have also begun the process of submitting their appeal to the North Carolina Department of Justice.

"At this point, we've hired a lawyer to help us appeal it. My job is basically to get all the evidence that shows that we were only charging people \$69, and there was absolutely nobody that was charged anything egregious in any way," Bell said.

According to the office of North Carolina Attorney General Josh Stein, the state's price gouging law is usually triggered when the state suffers or is threatened by a natural disaster, such as a hurricane, tornado, winter storm or flooding.

Price gouging — or charging too much in times of crisis — is against North Carolina law when a disaster, an emergency or an abnormal market disruption for critical goods and services is declared or proclaimed by the Governor or a municipality.

The Attorney General's office has not responded to a request for comment as of publication.

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Luke Barber luke.barber@wataugademocrat.com, 'Local business responds to accusations of price gouging', *Watauga Democrat, The* (online), 9 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/19C1BA9AA14D3520>



## Board of Elections to consider changes to early voting hours

October 9, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Moss Brennan moss.brennan@wataugademocrat.com| Section: Local | 282 Words OpenURL Link

WATAUGA — The Watauga County Board of Elections is considering changing early voting hours.

At Tuesday night's meeting, the board voted to have staff create a draft resolution — to be considered at its Thursday, Oct. 10, meeting — that would change early voting hours to 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 1 to 5 p.m. Sunday during the early voting period, which begins on Oct. 17.

The current early voting hours are from 8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Board members want to change the hours due to dangerous road conditions in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene, as they do not want poll workers — or voters — driving on them after dark for safety reasons.

The draft resolution is not set in stone as Director of Elections Matt Snyder will bring more information to the board Thursday night that could influence their decision. The board could vote against that resolution and create a new one. However, according to Snyder, the board must approve a resolution related to early voting at the Thursday meeting per the State Board of Elections.

The bipartisan State Board of Elections on Monday, Oct. 7, unanimously approved a long list of emergency measures to help Helene victims vote in the 2024 election and ensure election officials can provide accessible, safe, and secure voting options for residents of Western North Carolina.

One of the measures allows county boards of elections in the 13 counties the flexibility to modify early voting and Election Day voting sites and recruit additional poll workers to best accommodate their voters based on local conditions.

The early voting period goes from Oct. 17 to Nov. 2.

The BOE also approved absentee by mail ballots during the Tuesday meeting.

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## Legal Aid of North Carolina to assist with hurricane recovery on Thursday

October 9, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Staff Report| Section: Local | 171 Words OpenURL Link

BOONE — Legal Aid of North Carolina will be in Boone to assist residents affected by Hurricane Helene with their disaster-related legal needs.

LANC will be at the Hospitality House — 338 Brook Hollow Rd. — in Boone on Thursday, Oct. 10, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

This mobile legal aid unit provides free, confidential assistance to those in need, including help with:

Providing survivors with information about their rightsAnswering questions about insurance and claimsAdvocating for people when they are applying for recovery fund assistance and appealing decisions

About Legal Aid of North Carolina

Legal Aid of North Carolina (LANC) is a statewide nonprofit law firm dedicated to providing free legal services to low-income individuals and families across the state. Our mission is to ensure equal access to justice by assisting clients in areas such as housing, family law, public benefits, and disaster relief. Through our team of experienced attorneys and community outreach initiatives, we empower clients with the information and resources they need to navigate the legal system. For more information, visit www.legalaidnc.org.

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## FEMA establishing operations center at Horn in the West parking area

October 9, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Luke Barber luke.barber@wataugademocrat.com| Section: Local | 421 Words OpenURL Link

BOONE — The Federal Emergency Management Agency is establishing its operations center at the Horn in the West parking area in Boone to assess damage and assist Hurricane Helene victims throughout the area.

According to information presented by Mayor Tim Futrelle at an emergency meeting of the Boone Town Council, the site will be a temporary home to approximately 50 active FEMA personnel who will be going out into the broader community to assist folks by conducting site assessments and helping people with filling out applications.

"We're glad they're here, and we're facilitating getting communications out to the public and assisting in any other types of communication they need, such as fighting misinformation. We want them to be able to help as many people as they can," Futrelle said.

The agency's operations are part of broader efforts to provide approximately 350 personnel to the region to assist with hurricane recovery. Futrelle said the agency is looking at other sites to establish about 30 trailers, which FEMA workers will use for recreation, communication, food, housing and other purposes.

Futrelle described the site at Horn in the West as a "small city" as the agency works to construct 10 temporary trailers. Those impacted by the storm can also visit the FEMA office next to the Department of Social Services.

"They know people need them to come to them as well," Futrelle said.

The town has entered into a short-term lease agreement with FEMA to use the site. Futrelle said FEMA intends to stay no longer than 21 to 30 days, although the town council approved a motion that provides stipulations in case the agency needs to use the site for a longer period of time. The council also discussed working with the farmer's market to help find them a temporary home.

The council then discussed temporary housing, with council member Eric Plaag expressing his concern about the amount of displacement caused by the storm, especially in light of Appalachian State University's decision to resume classes on Wednesday, Oct. 16.

Council member Todd Carter said he has been working with Legal Aid of North Carolina, those sheltering at Hospitality House, and those who lost their homes in the Bradford Park neighborhood. He said one of the main bottlenecks is getting people into temporary housing like hotels and Airbnb.

Futrelle said the FEMA application and assessment process is part of getting access to temporary housing.

"We have every assurance from FEMA so far that those resources will be made available," Futrelle said. "This is not a part of the way operation; they're going all-in."

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Luke Barber luke.barber@wataugademocrat.com, 'FEMA establishing operations center at Horn in the West parking area', *Watauga Democrat, The*(online), 9 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/19C1F1EB80CC8378>



## Couple has two houses in the path of hurricanes. They've spent their time helping others.

October 9, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Nick Fogleman nick.fogleman@wataugademocrat.com| Section: Local | 432 Words OpenURL Link

BLOWING ROCK — Jerry Traudt and his wife, Lynda Lasseter, always knew their house in Daytona Beach, Florida, was in the path of hurricanes. What they never expected was their house in Blowing Rock to be in the path of a storm like Hurricane Helene.

"I've never seen anything like this up here," Traudt said.

Their house in Blowing Rock had minimal damage, but they did stay at a neighboring condo while their power was out for three days.

"Our home got spared, but there are people who lost everything," Traudt said. "We're very, very thankful."

Instead of heading back to Florida to prepare their house for potential damage from Hurricane Milton, the couple has stayed in Blowing Rock and spent their time volunteering at the American Legion building, which has become an intake hub for donations that travel to other counties.

"We are always looking to help people; it's just the way we are," Traudt said. "We enjoy doing it. We wear ourselves out, but we don't mind."

"There's no feeling like being a helper. When we see a need, we fill it," Lasseter said.

Traudt is a member of the service group Lions Clubs International and has spent time volunteering for Habitat for Humanity. Lasseter has trained with the Red Cross and has always found ways to help the community.

"If I see a branch blocking a stop sign, I'll go out and clip it. If I see a tire in the road, I always call to make sure someone goes and gets it," Lasseter said. "The tiniest bit of taking control of the situation is so much more rewarding than shopping."

Their house in Daytona hasn't had damage in recent storms, but last year flood water came within two inches of their house.

"Everybody is really worried. If the canal next to our house comes up like it did again, we believe our house will get wet," Traudt said.

"We got someone to come over to prepare the house, remove some files, take things inside and board up the windows," Lasseter said.

The couple hopes Milton's path remains south of Daytona but have a very positive attitude toward the situation.

"We're convinced our house will flood, but you can't take it with you," Lasseter said of any potential damage.

"Whatever happens, happens," Traudt said. "Thank the lord we don't have carpets."

With Milton headed towards Florida, the couple is still focused on helping others who were impacted by the storm in North Carolina.

"We have been so busy here. It's been a mad dash for hours," Lasseter said.

"The more we can do to help them, the more we're happy to do it," Traudt said.

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Nick Fogleman nick.fogleman@wataugademocrat.com, 'Couple has two houses in the path of hurricanes. They've spent their time helping others.', *Watauga Democrat, The*(online), 9 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/19C1F1EB6AAF8938>



## FAQ: I applied for FEMA assistance - what's next?

October 9, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Staff Report editor@wataugademocrat.com| Section: Local| 1054 Words OpenURL Link

If you live in Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, or Tennessee and have damage to your home or personal property related to Hurricane Helene, FEMA may be able to help with temporary housing expenses, basic home repairs or other essential disaster related needs that are not covered by insurance.

What happens after I apply for FEMA assistance?

Registered survivors will be contacted by a FEMA-contracted inspector within about 10 days of applying to schedule an appointment for an inspection, which generally takes about 30-40 minutes. The inspector's call may come from an out-of-state or "unknown" number, and they may ask you to verify personally identifiable information by phone.

FEMA inspectors make several attempts to contact you through phone call or text to schedule an appointment. If FEMA is unable to get in touch, you will be sent a letter indicating your application cannot be processed further — to proceed, you must call FEMA's Helpline at 1-800-621-3362 to confirm your contact information and need for assistance. There is no fee for the inspection.

Why do I need a FEMA home inspection?

FEMA home inspections help determine whether a home is safe, sanitary, and livable, and to verify disaster-caused damage. Specifically, the FEMA inspector will:

Verify your name, address, contact information, and insurance

Confirm the individuals living in your disaster-damaged residence; bedrooms occupied; clothing, medical, dental, transportation, or miscellaneous losses; and items you purchased as a result of the disaster (e.g., chainsaw, dehumidifier)

Assess your pre-disaster residence's structure, furniture, and appliances for damage caused by the disaster, as well as undamaged items

Document your pre-disaster residence's square footage, foundation, and structural type (e.g., one or multiple stories). Record the cause of damage, applicable water levels, impacted utilities, and accessibility features; andConfirm with you that all damage has been viewed, and describe next steps in the FEMA process.

Not all losses require an inspection. You should also monitor your mail or your FEMA Online Account (www.disasterassistance.gov) and respond to any requests from FEMA for additional information quickly.

How do I know if the person at my door is a legitimate FEMA inspector?

Always ask an inspector for identification and never give out your personal information like your social security number. If you are not shown photo identification, then do not allow the inspection. Disasters often bring out scam artists who prey on the needs of disaster survivors. Government officials will never ask for money or other forms of compensation for the inspection.

What do I need to be prepared to show my FEMA inspector?

Have the following ready for your inspection:

Photo identification. If you lost your id in the disaster, let the inspector know. FEMA has other ways to verify your identification. Proof of ownership/occupancy of damaged residence (structural insurance, tax bill, mortgage payment book/utility bill). Insurance documents: home and/or auto (structural insurance/auto declaration sheet). 

List of household occupants living in residence at time of disaster. All disaster-related damages to both real and personal property.

I won't be home during the time of my scheduled inspection. Can someone be there in my place?

Yes. You can have anyone like a trusted neighbor, family member or friend that is 18 years of age or older handle the inspection if you are unavailable.

What happens after the inspector visits?

Once the inspection process is complete, your case will be reviewed by FEMA, and you will receive a letter outlining the decision about your claim.

If you qualify for FEMA assistance, FEMA will send you a check by mail or deposit it directly into your bank account, depending on the method of payment you chose on your application. If you receive money for rental assistance, be sure to keep documentation and receipts of payments. If you pay to stay somewhere, you should have a written landlord/tenant agreement for the time frame you use the assistance. If you do not qualify for a FEMA grant, you will receive a letter explaining why you may not be eligible and will be given a chance to appeal the decision. Your appeal rights will be described in the letter. Appeals must be in writing and mailed within 60 days of FEMA's decision.

Can I appeal a decision?

You have the right to appeal any FEMA decision or award amount by sending documents that show you qualify and need more help, like estimates for repairs, receipts, bills, etc. Each decision letter you receive from FEMA explains types of documents that may help you appeal your FEMA's decision or award amount for that type of assistance. Many times, an application is determined "not approved" because of missing documentation like proof of identity, proof of occupancy, proof the damaged property was your primary residence and others.

How can I submit documentation?

You can visit DisasterAssistance.gov to upload your documentation online and check the status of your application online. You can also call 800-621-3362 for assistance or visit a Disaster Recovery Center.

What If I applied for FEMA assistance and was later evicted?

If you have already applied for FEMA assistance but were later evicted due to damage to other parts of your home, you should call the FEMA Helpline at 800-621-3362 or visit a local FEMA Disaster Recovery Center (DRC), if available.

You can contact FEMA even if you were previously not approved for FEMA assistance and FEMA may still be able to help. Check the FEMA App or visit the FEMA DRC Locator to find the locations and hours of operation. You will need to provide FEMA with documentation demonstrating your eviction was due to the disaster.

Do I need to pay FEMA back for any financial assistance I received?

No. In most cases, FEMA grants do not have to be paid back. If you have insurance that covers your temporary housing costs but ask FEMA to advance you some money to help you pay for those costs while your insurance is delayed, you will need to pay that money back to FEMA after you receive your insurance settlement.

FEMA assistance is not taxable income and won't affect eligibility for Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, or other federal benefits.

What if I can't rebuild my house with the money FEMA is offering me?

FEMA Home Repair Assistance is limited and is intended to provide funds for basic repairs to make the home livable. It is not the same as insurance and in most cases, it cannot restore your home to its pre-disaster condition.

For a full list of questions and answers, visit fema.gov.

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October 9, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Staff Report editor@wataugademocrat.com| Section: News | 1054 Words OpenURL Link

If you live in Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, or Tennessee and have damage to your home or personal property related to Hurricane Helene, FEMA may be able to help with temporary housing expenses, basic home repairs or other essential disaster related needs that are not covered by insurance.

What happens after I apply for FEMA assistance?

Registered survivors will be contacted by a FEMA-contracted inspector within about ten days of applying to schedule an appointment for an inspection, which generally takes about 30-40 minutes. The inspector's call may come from an out-of-state or "unknown" number, and they may ask you to verify personally identifiable information by phone.

FEMA inspectors make several attempts to contact you through phone call or text to schedule an appointment. If FEMA is unable to get in touch, you will be sent a letter indicating your application cannot be processed further — to proceed, you must call FEMA's Helpline at 1-800-621-3362 to confirm your contact information and need for assistance. There is no fee for the inspection.

Why do I need a FEMA home inspection?

FEMA home inspections help determine whether a home is safe, sanitary, and livable, and to verify disaster-caused damage. Specifically, the FEMA inspector will:

Verify your name, address, contact information, and insurance

Confirm the individuals living in your disaster-damaged residence; bedrooms occupied; clothing, medical, dental, transportation, or miscellaneous losses; and items you purchased as a result of the disaster (e.g., chainsaw, dehumidifier)

Assess your pre-disaster residence's structure, furniture, and appliances for damage caused by the disaster, as well as undamaged items

Document your pre-disaster residence's square footage, foundation, and structural type (e.g., one or multiple stories). Record the cause of damage, applicable water levels, impacted utilities, and accessibility features; and Confirm with you that all damage has been viewed, and describe next steps in the FEMA process.

Not all losses require an inspection. You should also monitor your mail or your FEMA Online Account (www.disasterassistance.gov) and respond to any requests from FEMA for additional information quickly.

How do I know if the person at my door is a legitimate FEMA inspector?

Always ask an inspector for identification and never give out your personal information like your social security number. If you are not shown photo identification, then do not allow the inspection. Disasters often bring out scam artists who prey on the needs of disaster survivors. Government officials will never ask for money or other forms of compensation for the inspection.

What do I need to be prepared to show my FEMA inspector?

Have the following ready for your inspection:

Photo identification. If you lost your id in the disaster, let the inspector know. FEMA has other ways to verify your identification. Proof of ownership/occupancy of damaged residence (structural insurance, tax bill, mortgage payment book/utility bill). Insurance documents: home and/or auto (structural insurance/auto declaration sheet). 

List of household occupants living in residence at time of disaster. All disaster-related damages to both real and personal property.

I won't be home during the time of my scheduled inspection. Can someone be there in my place?

Yes. You can have anyone like a trusted neighbor, family member or friend that is 18 years of age or older handle the inspection if you are unavailable.

What happens after the inspector visits?

Once the inspection process is complete, your case will be reviewed by FEMA, and you will receive a letter outlining the decision about your claim.

If you qualify for FEMA assistance, FEMA will send you a check by mail or deposit it directly into your bank account, depending on the method of payment you chose on your application. If you receive money for rental assistance, be sure to keep documentation and receipts of payments. If you pay to stay somewhere, you should have a written landlord/tenant agreement for the time frame you use the assistance. If you do not qualify for a FEMA grant, you will receive a letter explaining why you may not be eligible and will be given a chance to appeal the decision. Your appeal rights will be described in the letter. Appeals must be in writing and mailed within 60 days of FEMA's decision.

Can I appeal a decision?

You have the right to appeal any FEMA decision or award amount by sending documents that show you qualify and need more help, like estimates for repairs, receipts, bills, etc. Each decision letter you receive from FEMA explains types of documents that may help you appeal your FEMA's decision or award amount for that type of assistance. Many times, an application is determined "not approved" because of missing documentation like proof of identity, proof of occupancy, proof the damaged property was your primary residence and others.

How can I submit documentation?

You can visit DisasterAssistance.gov to upload your documentation online and check the status of your application online. You can also call 800-621-3362 for assistance or visit a Disaster Recovery Center.

What If I applied for FEMA assistance and was later evicted?

If you have already applied for FEMA assistance but were later evicted due to damage to other parts of your home, you should call the FEMA Helpline at 800-621-3362 or visit a local FEMA Disaster Recovery Center (DRC), if available.

You can contact FEMA even if you were previously not approved for FEMA assistance and FEMA may still be able to help. Check the FEMA App or visit the FEMA DRC Locator to find the locations and hours of operation. You will need to provide FEMA with documentation demonstrating your eviction was due to the disaster.

Do I need to pay FEMA back for any financial assistance I received?

No. In most cases, FEMA grants do not have to be paid back. If you have insurance that covers your temporary housing costs but ask FEMA to advance you some money to help you pay for those costs while your insurance is delayed, you will need to pay that money back to FEMA after you receive your insurance settlement.

FEMA assistance is not taxable income and won't affect eligibility for Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, or other federal benefits.

What if I can't rebuild my house with the money FEMA is offering me?

FEMA Home Repair Assistance is limited and is intended to provide funds for basic repairs to make the home livable. It is not the same as insurance and in most cases, it cannot restore your home to its pre-disaster condition.

For a full list of questions and answers, visit fema.gov.

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### • Citation (aglc Style)

Staff Report editor@wataugademocrat.com, 'FAQ: I applied for FEMA assistance – what's next?', *Watauga Democrat, The*(online), 9 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C19E528541FA50">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C19E528541FA50</a>



## Watauga High JV and Middle School roundup

October 9, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Zach Colburn | Section: Sports | 327 Words OpenURL Link

WEST JEFFERSON — The Lady Pioneer JV volleyball team saw its undefeated streak to start the 2024 season end with a 2-1 decision at Ashe County on Sept. 25 in a battle of unbeaten.

Both clubs could not have been closer in the opening set, which the Lady Huskies won 26-24 despite Watauga (10-1) leading by as many as nine.

The Lady Pioneers rebounded to claim the second set 25-11 and even things up, forcing a tie-breaking third set.

Despite the back-and-forth, the Lady Huskies took the set 15-10 to win the match and remain undefeated at 12-0.

Ava Zaragoza did a little bit on both sides of the net as she recorded 15 assists and collected five digs while Graycie Collins and Jillian Martin paced the Lady Pioneer defense with 11 and eight digs, respectively.

Julia Rowan paced the Lady Pioneer offense with five kills, and Kira Beasley and Hannah Adams scored four apiece. Rae Coffey chipped in three kills.

Middle School soccer

The Watauga district middle school boys soccer team dropped a 5-0 decision to neighbor Ashe County on Sept. 24.

The Wolverines are currently 2-2-1.

Middle School volleyball

Before athletic events were halted due to Hurricane Helene, Hardin Park handed Parkway its first defeat of the season a three-set thriller of Sept 24.

The Lady Patriots took the opening set 26-24 and the Lady Golden Eagles evened things up with a 25-10 win and Hardin Park took the exciting third set 16-14.

Parkway rebounded with wins of 25-21 and 25-22 over Cove Creek. Hardin Park also swept the Lady Raiders by scores of 25-16 and 25-8.

Green Valley kept itself within striking distance of both Parkway and Hardin Park in the county standings with wins against Bethel (25-17, 25-7) and Mabel (25-21, 25-8). Mabel rebounded against Bethel with wins of 25-12 and 25-22.

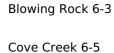
Blowing Rock squared off with Valle Crucis and the Lady Rockets were victorious, 25-23 and 25-18.

Current Records after Sept. 24 matches

Parkway 10-1

Hardin Park 9-2

Green Valley 8-2



Mabel 4-7

Bethel 1-9

Valle Crucis 0-10

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## • Citation (aglc Style)

Zach Colburn, 'Watauga High JV and Middle School roundup', *Watauga Democrat, The* (online), 9 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C1BA9AAA790048">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C1BA9AAA790048</a>



## NCHSAA Board approves revisions to Fall sports schedule

October 9, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Zach Colburn | Section: Sports | 624 Words

OpenURL Link

CHAPEL HILL — The North Carolina High School Athletic Association's Board of Directors met to discuss options for concluding the Fall Sports Season including the postseason calendar.

These discussions were necessitated by the devastation caused by Hurricane Helene in western North Carolina.

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

On Wednesday morning, the Board approved changes and modifications to the schedule. Sunday practices and competitions are still prohibited.

"I am grateful the NCHSAA has allowed some extra time and I look forward to all Pioneer athletic fall sport teams getting back to competition ASAP," Watauga athletic director Dustin Kerley said in a statement to the Watauga Democrat on Wednesday.

The calendar below encompasses the changes made by the Board. Specific Modifications to the Watauga High School fall sports schedule will be posted once they are available (check back to www.wataugademocrat.com throughout the week for an update).

Girl's Tennis

Individual

Reporting deadline: October 14, 11:59 p.m. (revised from 3 p.m. to allow for an extra day of competition)

Regionals: October 18-19

State Championships: October 25-26

**Dual Team** 

Reporting deadline: October 17, 11:59 p.m. (revised from October 10)

Seeding: October 18

First Round: October 21

Second Round: October 23

Third Round: October 28

Fourth Round: October 30

Regionals: November 5

State Championships: November 9

Girl's Volleyball

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

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

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

First Round: October 22

Second Round: October 24

Third Round: October 26

Fourth Round: October 29

Regionals: October 31

State Championships: November 2

Boy's and Girl's Cross Country

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

Regionals: October 26

State Championships: November 2

Boy's Soccer

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

Reporting deadline: November 6, 11:59 p.m. (revised from October 31)

Seeding: November 7

First round: November 9

Second Round: November 12

Third Round: November 14

Fourth Round: November 16

Regionals: November 19

State Championships: November 22-23

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

No calendar changes

Cheerleading

No calendar changes

Football

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

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

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

First round: November 15

Second round: November 22

Third round: November 29

Fourth round: December 6

Regionals: December 13

State Championships: December 20-21

**Special Provision** 

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

Prior approval from NCHSAA

The contest cannot exceed the daily or weekly limitations

The contest must exceed the season limit for both schools

The contest MUST NOT be entered into MaxPreps

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## • Citation (aglc Style)

Zach Colburn, 'NCHSAA Board approves revisions to Fall sports schedule', *Watauga Democrat, The*(online), 9 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C1F1EB87366B98">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C1F1EB87366B98</a>



## Pioneers in college football: Pryor's first touchdown caps off Paladins rally

October 9, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Zach Colburn | Section: Sports | 634 Words OpenURL Link

CHARLESTON, SC — Jackson Pryor's first collegiate touchdown could not have come at a better time for Furman University.

The 2024 Watauga graduate and true freshman caught a late touchdown pass to help the Paladins rally for a 17-16 win against the Citadel in the 104th clash of the oldest Southern Conference rivalry Saturday afternoon at Johnson Hagood Stadium.

Trailing as much as 16-3, the Paladins rallied to make it a one-possession game, and then Trey Hedden hit Pryor with a 6-yard touchdown pass with just over a minute remaining to cap off a fourth-guarter comeback.

The victory was the fourth straight for Furman (2-3, 1-0 SoCon) against The Citadel (2-4, 0-3). The Paladins' scheduled league opener against Samford on Sept. 28 was postponed due to Hurricane Helene. Furman returns home this Saturday to face the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

Listed as a tight end, Pryor has seen action in two games so far this fall and has caught four passes for 113 yards to go along with the touchdown.

Zach West, Cole Horine, Carlton Horine, Eli Greene (East Tennessee State)

Four former Pioneers are currently on East Tennessee State's football roster and three of them have seen game action so far this season.

Greene, a true freshman, has dressed out for every Buccaneer contest this fall, and was listed as a participant in their contest against the University of Virginia-Wise.

Carlton Horine, a true sophomore, has participated in two games this year but has not recorded any stats yet (after returning a kick last season).

Cole Horine, also a true sophomore, has participated in all six games for ETSU, and even though he has not registered any stats, he's seen field action on special teams.

A redshirt senior, West has participated in all six games this season and has recorded at least one tackle in each.

The outside linebacker has recorded six tackles in each of the Bucs' last two games and has compiled 24 for the season. He's also recorded a sack and forced a fumble (both of those coming in the win against UVA-Wise).

ETSU is currently 3-3 overall and 1-1 in SoCon play after its 17-10 loss to the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. The Buccaneers return to action on Saturday at home against Samford.

Isaiah Shirley, Levi Temple (N.C. State)

The duo of Shirley and Temple are currently on the Wolfpack's roster and while Temple has not seen action this fall, Shirley has played in five of N.C. State's six games this fall.

So far, the 2023 Watauga graduate has recorded nine tackles (two solo), including a pair of tackles for loss. Shirley, who also forced a fumble in the season opener against Western Carolina, also recorded a sack against the

Catamounts.

Shirley recorded a season-high four tackles against Tennessee.

The Wolfpack are currently 3-3 overall and 0-2 in the Atlantic Coast Conference ahead of Saturday's home game against Syracuse.

Jaiden Bond (Western Carolina)

A redshirt-junior, Bond has seen action in one game — the season opener at N.C. State — but did not record any statistics at the running back position.

The Catamounts are currently 2-3 overall and 1-0 in Southern Conference play.

Morgan Henry (Stephen F. Austin)

A 2024 Watauga graduate, Henry is listed as an outside linebacker for the Lumberjacks (3-2). He has not seen game action or registered any game stats.

After its 59-17 win against Northwestern State on Saturday, Stephen F. Austin is currently 1-1 in Southland Conference place.

Luke Peays (Wheaton College)

Listed a defensive back on the Thunder's roster, Peays has yet to register any game stats for Wheaton, which is currently 2-2 and 2-1 in College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin play.

Note: These are players outside of Appalachian State, who are playing college football. If anyone knows of a former Watauga student-athlete playing a college sport, feel free to email sports reporter Zach Colburn at zach.colburn@wataugademocrat.com. Please specify, name, school, sport and possible year.

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#### • Citation (aglc Style)

Zach Colburn, 'Pioneers in college football: Pryor's first touchdown caps off Paladins rally', *Watauga Democrat, The* (online), 9 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C1BA9AB1146078>



## Martin: The great floods of 1916 and 2024

October 9, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: D. G. Martin| Section: Opinion | 726 Words OpenURL Link

One of Miss Letitia Currie's favorite topics in her history class in the 1950s at Davidson Junior High School was the Great Flood of 1916.

Miss Currie was the daughter of a Davidson College professor.

Many of her students also knew what she was talking about because their parents had experienced that 1916 flood and talked about it whenever rain poured down hard.

Today, many of Miss Currie's students, their parents and grandparents, great grandparents, and their children and grandchildren are having a similar experience dealing with the flooding that followed Hurricane Helene.

And they will be talking about it for the rest of their lives, calling it "The great flood of 2024."

"News of Davidson," the news outlet in my hometown, published the following account by Gatewood Payne Campbell, granddaughter of Davidson professor Gatey Workman and niece of the late, great opera singer William Workman. Gatewood and her husband Johnny live near Black Mountain.

"Life has stopped. We don't know dates or times. Sirens are 24 hours a day. It's relentless. Helicopters invade our sky. Chainsaws sound nonstop and we run outside in hopes it's in our neighborhood. ...

"Let me back up. We awoke around 6 Friday morning without power. The storm was loud and pounding but we didn't know where we were in the storm. We could not get updates. Around 8:30 we lost internet across cell lines. I called a friend and got her to look at radar and let me know an ETA on rain ending. That was the last call I was able to make. By 9:30 ALL cell signal was completely lost. The rain was increasing. We could see the creek rising. Johnny stepped outside under the porch and was soaked from head to toe after 30 seconds.

"Around 11 we felt like we could go out and survey the neighborhood. We began to feel the weight of the destruction, yet we had NO clue. The creek had turned into a river greater than 50 yards wide. The noise of water heaters, propane tanks, bikes, grills, construction supplies and yard equipment banging on the rails of our bridge to Black Mountain was deafening. We saw two neighbors with trees on their homes and knew they were taking on water."

Meanwhile in Asheville, Bryan King and his wife Angela Koh are assessing the damage to their 12 Bones Smokehouse on Foundry Street in the River Arts District. As I wrote in my book, "North Carolina's Eateries," "Even if 12 Bones had not been made famous by Barack Obama's visits there, it would be a 'must-do' in Asheville." When I first visited 12 Bones several years ago, it was located closer to the French Broad River. Had Bryan and Angela not moved the restaurant few blocks up the hill it would have been completely washed away. At its current location they may be able to repair and survive.

Angela's sister writes, "As the floodwaters recede, we seecatastrophic damage to homes and businesses, including the River Arts District, where 12 Bones was founded. Entire livelihoods have been lost. In nearly every direction you look, everything is caked in mud and scattered debris. Broken wood and mangled wiring now stand where intersections once existed."

Coincidentally, on October 15, the publisher Blair is releasing "River Road," a book of poems by mountain author Wayne Caldwell. His fine poetry describes the power of the flooding waters on the French Broad as shown in the

following excerpt:

SELECTION FROM "RIVER ROAD" BY WAYNE CALDWELL

The French Broad, being a river, floods.

How many times over the millennia has it left its banks

and moved whatever was swept up in it

To some far away (and sometimes ridiculous) place?

Perhaps thousands. And each time it returned to its placid face.

The worst (in the last century) was in July 1916.

Asheville's Riverside Park was washed away.

Parts of which one could have seen rushing by my house

Had it been there then. (Even this relatively high ground

Would have been inundated for several days.)

Only a half dozen people died in Asheville,

Which I'd consider a small miracle. Thanks to the telephone,

Warning came to Marshall, and only two or three drowned,

Even though the courthouse was about the only thing left

On Main Street. Fifty-Three houses disappeared.

From high ground one could have seen rushing by

Bales of cotton, houses, mules, gas tanks,

Vehicles, sheds, chickens, roosting on pieces of roof,

Tires, fences, trees, pigs, dogs, cats,

Anything not tied down — and many things that were.

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### • Citation (aglc Style)

D. G. Martin, 'Martin: The great floods of 1916 and 2024', *Watauga Democrat, The*(online), 9 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C19E52985431F8">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C19E52985431F8</a>



# Board of Elections seeking people to serve on Multi-Partisan Assistance Teams

October 9, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Staff Report news@wataugademocrat.com | Section: Local | 366 Words OpenURL Link

WATAUGA — The Watauga County Board of Elections is seeking community members to serve on Multi-Partisan Assistance Teams for the upcoming election.

The North Carolina State Board of Elections approved a resolution on October 7 that allows counties in the affected areas of Helene to serve voters in a new way. Multi-Partisan Assistance Teams (MAT) will be able to serve any voter in the affected counties. Previously, these teams primarily visited care facilities to assist their patients/residents.

Below is the language of that resolution.

"Multi-partisan Assistance Teams (MATs). Pursuant to G.S. § 163-27.1, by way of this resolution, the boards of elections for the same counties identified above, by bipartisan majority vote, are authorized to do the following: Appoint MAT members who are registered voters of other North Carolina counties.

Appoint MAT members who are unaffiliated or affiliated with a minor political party by bipartisan majority vote, where there are insufficient registered voters to appoint to a MAT from each of the two political parties with the highest number of affiliated voters in the State.

Schedule MATs to assist with absentee ballot requests and absentee voting at disaster shelters and other places where disaster relief is provided to the general public, to the same extent that MATs are authorized to assist in these counties are also authorized to receive and deliver to the county board of elections the completed absentee ballot envelopes or ballot cure documentation for any voters, regardless of disability, at any site that the MAT is authorized to serve, either under state law or under this resolution. If a MAT member fails to sign the assistance section of the absentee envelope, that is not a ballot application deficiency, as long as the county board can otherwise determine that assistance was provided by the MAT."

While the elections teams in the affected counties are making progress every day, the plates are full of work.

"We need you to send us people that can serve as Multi-Partisan Assistance Team (MAT) members," Director of Elections Matt Snyder said in a email.

There is a brief training required.

Time is of the essence as this way of serving voters ends with the absentee ballot request deadline on Oct. 29. Early voting starts on Oct. 17.

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#### • Citation (aglc Style)

Staff Report news@wataugademocrat.com, 'Board of Elections seeking people to serve on Multi-Partisan Assistance Teams', *Watauga Democrat, The*(online), 9 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/19C1BA9AA6007C30>



## 'Unbelievable' scenes in wake of Helene - Greensboro Water Resources manager describes 'unbelievable' scenes in wake of Helene

October 9, 2024 | Winston-Salem Journal (NC)

Author: KEVIN GRIFFIN Staff Reporter | Section: A | 787 Words

Page: 5 OpenURL Link

Greensboro Water Resources

Greensboro Water Resources crews have been working in western North Carolina communities to help restore water and service following the destruction brought by Hurricane Helene.

The department currently has 19 employees working in western North Carolina. Patrick Smith, an operations manager in the department, has been among those assisting with the recovery.

He said workers replaced a main distribution line into the town of Black Mountain and had moved onto working in the town of Bakersville, about 60 miles north of Asheville, where Smith said the team was rebuilding water and sewer systems demolished by the storm.

Smith said the conditions in western North Carolina are "unbelievable when you see it with your own eyes." He likened it to a war zone and a movie set.

He also said the devastation was a testament to the destructive power water can have.

He recalled seeing a water line buried nearly 6 feet in the ground that had been completely uncovered and broken by the storm.

"It just washed out so much dirt and rocks from different places," Smith said. "I'm talking about 5-, 6-foot-deep as far as your eye can see. It's, like, amazing to see that type of force at work."

The people affected by the storm expressed gratitude for the assistance.

"The people are hanging on best they can," Smith said. "They are very appreciative of everyone coming in, volunteering, helping them out."

He said the areas the crews worked in were "flooded with people from all over the country," including public and private entities and personnel from as far away as Oklahoma.

Smith said some of the workers pulled an American flag out of Cane Creek and draped it over their truck.

"It's just a sense of pride to be able to help people in need because I would like to think if needed that help in the Triad that other places would come in and help us," Smith said.

Water Resources is not the only department helping out west. The Greensboro Fire Department had 26 personnel working in the region as of Tuesday.

There are no Greensboro police officers currently working in western N.C., Greensboro Communications and Marketing Director Carla Banks confirmed Tuesday. The Greensboro Police Department sent an initial 36 officers, including members of the department's all-terrain vehicle (ATV) Team to help in Asheville on Sept. 29. Banks said the officers returned to Greensboro on Sunday.

Banks said the city receives reimbursement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency for the hours employees work on hurricane response efforts.

Greensboro officials have pledged their continuing support for western North Carolina communities ravaged by Helene.

Last week, Mayor Nancy Vaughan suggested the possible use of the former American Hebrew Academy as a shelter for people displaced by Helene.

The property has been earmarked as a site for housing immigrant teens who come into the country without their parents, but the site is currently unoccupied.

U.S. Rep. Kathy Manning has said her office is in talks with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services about the potential of using the site.

#### kevin.griffin@greensboro.com

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#### • Citation (aglc Style)

KEVIN GRIFFIN; Staff Reporter, "Unbelievable' scenes in wake of Helene Greensboro Water Resources manager describes 'unbelievable' scenes in wake of Helene', *Winston-Salem Journal* (online), 9 Oct 2024 5 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C196218F88E5F0">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C196218F88E5F0</a>



# Control the path of a hurricane? No way, scientists say - Control the path and power of hurricanes like Helene or Milton? Forget it, scientists say

October 9, 2024 | Winston-Salem Journal (NC)

Author: MELINA WALLING and SETH BORENSTEIN Associated Press | Section: A | 1075 Words

Page: 7 OpenURL Link

Hurricanes are humanity's reminder of the uncontrollable, chaotic power of Earth's weather.

Milton's powerful push toward Florida just days after Helene devastated large parts of the Southeast likely has some in the region wondering if they are being targeted. In some corners of the Internet, Helene has already sparked conspiracy theories and disinformation suggesting the government somehow aimed the hurricane at Republican voters.

Besides discounting common sense, such theories disregard weather history that shows the hurricanes are hitting many of the same areas they have for centuries. They also presume an ability for humans to quickly reshape the weather far beyond relatively puny efforts such as cloud seeding.

"If meteorologists could stop hurricanes, we would stop hurricanes," Kristen Corbosiero, a professor of atmospheric and environmental sciences at the University at Albany. "If we could control the weather, we would not want the kind of death and destruction that's happened."

A fully developed hurricane releases heat energy that is the equivalent of a 10-megaton nuclear bomb every 20 minutes - more than all the energy used at a given time by humanity, according to National Hurricane Center tropical analysis chief Chris Landsea.

And scientists are now finding many ways climate change is making hurricanes worse, with warmer oceans that add energy and more water in the warming atmosphere to fall as rain, said Chris Field, director of the Stanford Woods Institute for the Environment.

"The amount of energy a hurricane generates is insane," said Colorado State University hurricane researcher Phil Klotzbach. It's the height of human arrogance to think people have the power to change them, he said.

But that hasn't stopped people from trying, or at least thinking about trying.

Jim Fleming of Colby College has studied historical efforts to control the weather and thinks humans have nowhere near the practical technology to get there. He described an attempt in 1947 in which General Electric partnered with the U.S. military to drop dry ice from Air Force jets into the path of a hurricane in an attempt to weaken it. It didn't work.

"The typical science goes like understanding, prediction and then possibly control," Fleming said, noting that the atmosphere is far more powerful and complex than most proposals to control it. "It goes back into Greek mythology to think you can control the powers of the heavens, but also it's a failed idea."

In the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, the federal government briefly tried Project STORMFURY. The idea was to seed a hurricane to replace its eyewall with a larger one that would make the storm bigger in size but weaker in intensity. Tests were inconclusive and researchers realized if they made the storm larger, people who wouldn't have been hurt by the storm would now be in danger, which is an ethical and liability problem, the project director once said.

For decades, the National Hurricane Center and its parent agency, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, have been asked about nuclear-bombing a hurricane. But the bombs aren't powerful enough, and it

would add the problem of radioactive fallout, Corbosiero said.

Bringing cooling icebergs or seeding or adding water-absorbing substances also are ideas that just don't work, NOAA scientists said.

Failed historical attempts to control hurricanes differ somewhat from some scientists' futuristic ideas to combat climate change and extreme weather. That's because instead of targeting individual weather events, modern geoengineers would operate on a larger scale - thinking about how to reverse the broad-scale damage humans have already done to the global climate by emitting greenhouse gases.

Scientists in the field say one of the most promising ideas they see based on computer models is solar geoengineering. The method would involve lofting aerosol particles into the upper atmosphere to bounce a tiny bit of sunlight back into space, cooling the planet slightly.

Supporters acknowledge the risks and challenges. But it also "might have quite large benefits, especially for the world's poorest," said David Keith, a professor at the University of Chicago and founding faculty director of the Climate Systems Engineering initiative.

Two years ago, the largest society of scientists who work on climate issues, the American Geophysical Union, announced it was forming an ethics framework for "climate intervention."

Some scientists warn that tinkering with Earth's atmosphere to fix climate change is likely to create cascading new problems. University of Pennsylvania climate scientist Michael Mann expressed worries on the ethics framework that just talking about guidelines will make the tinkering more likely to occur in the real world, something that could have harmful side effects.

Field, of Stanford, agreed that the modeling strongly encourages that geoengineering could be effective, including at mitigating the worst threats of hurricanes, even if that's decades away. But he emphasized that it's just one piece of the best solution, which is to stop climate change by cutting greenhouse gas emissions.

"Whatever else we do, that needs to be the core set of activities," he said.

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#### • Citation (aglc Style)

MELINA WALLING; and SETH BORENSTEIN Associated Press, 'Control the path of a hurricane? No way, scientists say Control the path and power of hurricanes like Helene or Milton? Forget it, scientists say', *Winston-Salem Journal* (online), 9 Oct 2024 7 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C196210B161E98">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C196210B161E98</a>



## Wednesday's letters: Confront Trump's lies about Helene front and center

October 9, 2024 | Winston-Salem Journal (NC) Section: A| 759 Words Page: 11 OpenURL Link

Refute Trump's lies

The lies that Donald Trump and the MAGA party are creating and spreading about the Hurricane Helene relief efforts are heinous and unforgivable.

His false narrative about FEMA and the government response is damaging to the morale of the people affected by the hurricane and everyone who is trying to help them. The constant barrage of lies is the only campaign strategy he has. He is intentionally trying to tear our country apart and create chaos and distrust.

"Trump's lies are not errors. They are part of a well-documented strategy to overturn democracy by using modern media to create a false political world," Boston College historian Heather Cox Richardson says. "Voters begin to base their political decisions on that fake image, rather than on reality, and are manipulated into giving up control of their government to an authoritarian."

Trump's lies need to be fact-checked and refuted in big front-page headline stories in every media news outlet. The story and the headlines need to be as big and bold as the bold-faced lies that Donald Trump is perpetuating everywhere he goes and every time he opens his mouth.

It is time to make front-page news of the facts versus the lies.

Robyn Williams

Clemmons

Helene and flimsy codes

There have been a couple of pieces over the weekend, notably the New York Times ("How the North Carolina Legislature Left Homes Vulnerable to Helene") and Charlotte's WBTV, highlighting the erosion of building codes by Republican lawmakers in Raleigh, many of whom, like Jeff Zenger, own construction companies and are financially backed by the N.C. Home Builders Association.

Unfortunately, this type of legislation is not very exciting until a catastrophe the size of Helene makes it so. I am hopeful the Journal is fast at work doing a deep dive into this legislation so voters have a clear picture of the folks they have an opportunity to choose to represent them going forward.

Martha Apple

Winston-Salem

She'll be truly missed

I am truly saddened by the departure of Melissa Hall (Straight Answer Ma'am) from the Journal. Like so many of her former colleagues, Melissa was a wonderful asset to our community in so many informative ways. I will miss Melissa's insight and knowledge she brought to us in so many ways through the media.

Perhaps lesser known, Melissa was the editor of the Aging Matters column which appears each Sunday. Aging Matters is a significant public service which reaches thousands of older adults throughout our community and has been a valuable resource for many years. Aging Matters has served as a continuing vital connection between aging adults, family caregivers and others for valuable access to timely information and resources.

I trust that the Aging Matters page will continue to remain active and serve as a significant resource for the growing older adult population of our community.

I want to express my heartfelt thanks to Melissa for her dedication to her craft and our community. She will be truly missed and her loss will be felt beyond the written word. Thank you, Melissa!

Sam Matthews

Winston-Salem

The writer is executive director of the Shepherd's Center of Greater Winston-Salem.

Conditional aid?

I own a home in Asheville and was - lucky for me - out of town when disaster hit last week. I appreciate that the Biden administration is working with Govs. Cooper, Kemp, Youngkin and McMaster, regardless of political party, to restore my home and our devastated city. All four governors have praised Biden, and FEMA administrator and Secretary Buttigieg for calling up and saying, "Hey, what do you need?"

We need so much.

I remember during the COVID crisis, Trump refused to answer calls for help from two Democratic governors because they had criticized his federal COVID policy. He bragged that he wasn't returning calls from Whitmer and Inslee, saying, "We don't like to see the complaints. ... If they don't treat you right, I don't call."

You pay taxes so when disaster hits, the federal government will help. You deserve to have money spent on your community, whether the president likes you or not.

This November, just ask yourself this: Who's going to have my back when the next disaster strikes?

Linda Falcao

#### Asheville

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'Wednesday's letters: Confront Trump's lies about Helene front and center', *Winston-Salem Journal* (online), 9 Oct 2024 11 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C19622065863C0">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C19622065863C0</a>



# Price-gouging complaints up in wake of hurricane - Price gouging complaints surge in wake of Hurricane Helene

October 9, 2024 | Winston-Salem Journal (NC)

Author: RICHARD CRAVER Staff Reporter | Section: A | 499 Words

Page: 3 OpenURL Link

Nearly 200 complaints about price gouging have been reported in North Carolina in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene, including three in Guilford County and one in Forsyth County, the Attorney General's Office reported.

The vast majority of the 196 complaints come from western North Carolina and most involve groceries (primarily water) at 44%, hotel costs at 26% and fuel at 18%.

The majority of complaints involve businesses in Buncombe, Cleveland, Madison and Mecklenburg counties.

For the 14 counties in the Triad and northwest North Carolina, there were 22 price-gouging complaints: 11 in Watauga, four in Randolph, two in Ashe and one each in Alamance and Wilkes. The AG's office did not provide a breakdown of types of complaints by county.

North Carolina's law against price gouging, or charging too much in times of a crisis, goes into effect when the governor or the legislature declares a state of emergency.

In some cases, businesses and industries that are heavily impacted by the incident causing the state of emergency have a reasonable need to increase prices in order to resupply, but they should disclose these increases so people can make informed purchasing decisions.

Businesses cannot, however, unreasonably raise the price of goods or services to profit from a state of emergency. Price gouging complaints can be submitted at 877-5-NO-SCAM or www.ncdoj.gov/pricegouging.

"I have seen firsthand the devastation people in western North Carolina are facing," Attorney General Josh Stein said.

"The people I've spoken with have more than enough to worry about as they recover and rebuild. The last thing they need is a scammer coming in to take advantage of their desperation.

"If you see price gouging or any other scam, please report it to my office so we can investigate and take action."

The office provided several recommendations for those affected by Helene-related damage.

If a storm damages your property, you may need repairs. Be sure to get a written estimate from contractors before rushing into a deal. Check out a business's credentials and visit Better Business Bureau or call our office to make sure the company does not have complaints against them. Do not pay upfront. Some companies may pressure you to pay the full cost up front before they start the work, but then will fall short of what was asked of them. Pay your contractors as you go, once you are satisfied with the work they have done, and hold back a percentage until the job is done. Be wary of limited-time assistance. Some businesses may offer special "now or never" deals to your family following hurricane damage. A lot of these offers might come directly to your door, with out-of-state companies showing up at your doorstep and offering to do work immediately. If the deal seems too good to be true, it probably is. Don't sign unless you've done your research.

## • Citation (aglc Style)

RICHARD CRAVER; Staff Reporter, 'Price-gouging complaints up in wake of hurricane Price gouging complaints surge in wake of Hurricane Helene', *Winston-Salem Journal* (online), 9 Oct 2024 3 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a> p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C1962106528F90>



## What's inside

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# Biden mostly a no-show on campaign trail - Biden pledged to campaign hard for Harris. So far, he's been mostly a no-show

October 9, 2024 | Winston-Salem Journal (NC) Author: WILL WEISSERT and BILL BARROW Associated Press | Section: A | 1187 Words

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WASHINGTON - On the last day of August, President Joe Biden was asked about his fall campaign plans. He promised a Labor Day appearance in Pittsburgh and said he would be "on the road from there on."

Biden did campaign with Vice President Kamala Harris on Labor Day, but he's largely been a campaign no-show since.

And sometimes his official events pushed hers to the background.

Case in point: After Hurricane Helene, Harris scrapped campaign events in Las Vegas to hurry back to Washington for a briefing at the Federal Emergency Management Agency. But as she stepped to a podium in the command center, Biden delivered his own storm response comments from the Oval Office, pulling the political spotlight away from his intended successor.

The lack of presidential campaigning and occasional schedule clashes could matter not just for Harris but as Democrats try to hold control of the Senate and retake the House and compete in down-ballot races.

Even former President Barack Obama announced he will campaign for Harris. Obama is scheduled to appear in Pittsburgh on Thursday and plans to spend the remaining time before the Nov. 5 election traveling to battleground states. He also recorded ads promoting Democratic Senate candidates in Michigan, Maryland and Florida.

It is not uncommon for a lame-duck president to struggle with finding the right balance between fulfilling the job and carving out a role in a would-be successor's campaign. Biden's situation is unusual because he sought a second term until his dramatic July departure from the race left Harris with a condensed time frame for her own run.

"I think he's doing his job as president," White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said Friday. "I think that's the most important thing."

Hurricane Helene complicated matters. Biden canceled a campaign stop in Pennsylvania last week, and he and Harris made separate trips last Wednesday to the Carolinas and Georgia, respectively, to survey the damage and offer support.

That time, their remarks did not overlap. But on Friday, while Harris was speaking about the importance of unions outside Detroit, Biden caused a stir by making a surprise appearance in the White House briefing room. It was the first of his presidency.

Biden took official trips to battleground states, and he was slated to be in suburban Philadelphia on Tuesday to campaign for Democratic Sen. Bob Casey. He was also scheduled Tuesday to visit Wisconsin to spotlight a signature legislative achievement, the 2021 infrastructure law that provides \$15 billion to find and replace the toxic pipes.

The Harris team had no comment on its hopes for Biden's campaign role.

The president was born in Pennsylvania and maintains a strong connection to its union leaders and blue-collar voters, and former Democratic National Committee chief Donna Brazile said she would "put him on a bus" to campaign there.

"I would make sure he is out there in the closing weeks and days of the campaign," Brazile said. "He connects with people she will need."

Biden and Harris appeared together at other official events, including a recent one at the White House on combating gun violence, and at a health care-related event in August where Biden said, "We cannot let Kamala lose." Both were frequently in the Situation Room to discuss the conflicts in the Middle East.

On Labor Day, when Biden and Harris made their lone joint political appearance since the vice president took over the top on the ticket, the White House asked that Biden introduce Harris. The break with protocol was meant to highlight her record of supporting union workers.

"If you elect Kamala Harris as president, it will be the best decision you will have ever made," Biden told the crowd.

When he finished speaking, Biden shook hands with those around him - an awkward moment because Harris had yet to have her turn at the podium.

It is an open question whether Harris really wants Biden's help, given Democratic voters say they are happier with her than they were with Biden as their nominee.

Harris praised the administration and her work in it, while also seeking to show distance on some key issues.

That includes her call for raising long-term capital gains taxes for wealthy Americans when Biden pushed to lower them, getting tougher on the U.S.-Mexico border by potentially further stiffening limits for immigrants seeking asylum and talking up being a gun owner in ways Biden does not.

"You don't need to campaign when you're just doing your job," said Nikki Fried, chair of the Democratic Party in Florida. Biden visited parts of the state Thursday, demonstrating, as Fried put it, that "the full force of the federal government stands with the people during times of heartbreak and uncertainty."

There are always big demands on a president's time - from the U.N. General Assembly meetings last month in New York to Biden's upcoming travel to Germany and Angola. Though the White House says there will be more political events after that, the trip means he will not have time to turn his attention to campaigning for Harris until at least mid-October.

Fried thinks Biden will make it work. "Joe Biden loves being on the campaign trail," she said. "You can see him walking around and talking to voters and to communities, and it certainly puts an extra lift in his step and a smile on his face."

There are times when a president's absence can be helpful to that party's candidate.

Paul Begala, a key architect of Democratic former President Bill Clinton's 1992 campaign, said Biden would do best to "focus on governing, and leave the campaigning to Kamala" and her top supporters.

"Lots of people can campaign for her: the Obamas, the Clintons, Oprah, Taylor Swift," Begala said. "But only Joe Biden can be president."

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#### • Citation (aglc Style)

WILL WEISSERT and BILL BARROW; Associated Press, 'Biden mostly a no-show on campaign trail Biden pledged to campaign hard for Harris. So far, he's been mostly a no-show', *Winston-Salem Journal* (online), 9 Oct 2024 12 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C196220AF173E0">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C196220AF173E0</a>