

# Landrum Farmers Market brings community together after storm

October 7, 2024 | Tryon Daily Bulletin, The (NC) Author: Storme Smith| Section: Community | 365 Words OpenURL Link

LANDRUM—In the aftermath of Tropical Storm Helene, the Landrum Farmers Market has emerged as a crucial hub for supporting those affected by the disaster. The Joe Cunningham, Jr. Market Pavilion, which served as a supply center for individuals without power and water, has played a vital role in aiding the community.

Despite the challenges posed by the storm, the Landrum Farmers Market demonstrated resilience by resuming its operations last Thursday evening and continuing with its usual Saturday morning schedule from 8 a.m. to noon. Vendors from various locations, including Lake Lure, Cowpens, Gramling, Campobello, Polk County, and Landrum, returned to the market, sharing their stories of adversity and loss and expressing gratitude for the support they had received.

Sheri Singh, owner of Bud & Bloom CBD Wellness Products from Lake Lure, tragically lost six sheep when a river of mud from the mountain swept away their pasture on Bill's Creek. However, the Farmer's Market customers and staff rallied around her in solidarity, providing much-needed support during this challenging time.

Reflecting on the efforts to resume market activities, Landrum Farmers Market Manager Lisa Gunter stated, "We met and came up with a plan, and we think we did a pretty good job of putting it together." Assistant Manager Joanne James also emphasized the importance of supporting local small businesses and farmers, acknowledging the impact of a canceled market on vendors' livelihoods.

The return of the Farmers Market brought together a diverse array of vendors, including Bluebird Coffee, TK Farms, Smooth Acres Finest, Thompson Family Farm, Round Bottom Farm, Saxon's Swine, Lit'l Mushroom Farm, Barton's Eggs, Cosmic Candy, Bob's BBQ, Horton Homestead, Two Sisters Elderberry Syrup, Painter Red Dumonde, Freedom Acres Farm, Lukens Land & Cattle, Sprinkle Fun Market, Paint Horse Flower Farm, Hidden Creek Heritage Farm, Viktar's Bee Farm, Cinch Spice Blends, Cindy Armstrong, Butterfly Cakes & Cookies, Ayers Market, Hive to Home Honey, Rooster Ridge Farm, The Egg Roll Lady, Calico Vineyard, and more.

Amidst the adversity caused by Helene, the Landrum Farmers Market stands as a symbol of resilience and community spirit, bringing people together to support one another during challenging times.

The post Landrum Farmers Market brings community together after storm appeared first on The Tryon Daily Bulletin.

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# Local government shares public notice with Polk County residents

October 7, 2024 | Tryon Daily Bulletin, The (NC) Author: Staff Reports | Section: Community | 560 Words OpenURL Link

POLK COUNTY—In a public notice shared with Polk County residents, the local government provided information about FEMA assistance, damage repair and debris removal, and services and supplies provided by the county.

"In the wake of Hurricane Helene, Polk County stands united in the spirit of rescue and recovery," said County Manager Marche Pittman. "Together, we will support one another, heal our community, and build a future grounded in hope and resilience."

**County Operations** 

Polk County Government is operating on a normal schedule beginning today, October 7.

Debris Removal

If you need help clearing debris or trees from your driveway or creating a path to your home, the Baptist on Mission group is here to assist. Please contact Jeff Shuford at (704) 477-1859 for assistance. Avoid placing debris on exposed utility or cable lines, as crushing them can delay repairs and lead to broader outages. For a graphic on properly sorting and preparing debris for pickup, visit https://www.fema.gov/node/debris-removal-guidelines.

Damage Repair and Information

If your home or property has sustained damage, take clear photos of the damage before making any repairs. These photos are crucial for insurance claims and repair assessments. For added accuracy, include a frame of reference in the photos—such as a person, a tape measurer, or another familiar object—to help provide perspective on the extent of the damage.

**Disaster Recovery Center** 

County leaders have contacted FEMA representatives to coordinate Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) plans. This effort will help organize support and resources for residents affected by Hurricane Helene, with more information expected in the upcoming week. Residents can register for FEMA assistance now by visiting

https://www.fema.gov/assistance/individual/program/road-to-recovery. An additional Individual and Public Assistance Information Hotline (919)-605-8105 or FEMA helpline at (800) 621-3362.

**Essential Needs Distribution** 

Starting Monday, October 7, the distribution point will be at Tryon International Equestrian Center (2676 John Shehan Road, Mill Spring, NC) from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. From Tuesday, October 8, through Sunday, October 13, the center will be open daily from 12:00 to 4:00 p.m. No more donations for human supplies are needed as the site is at capacity. If you wish to volunteer to distribute supplies, you can sign up at https://bit.ly/3YcW8jp.

Food and Nutrition Services

Residents of Polk County enrolled in Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) who Hurricane Helene impacted will automatically receive 70% of their September benefits as a replacement on their EBT cards, with no action required. This applies to 23 Western North Carolina counties, including Polk, and provides over \$24 million in aid to

more than 200,000 people. FNS participants can check their balances via the ebtEDGE website, app, or by calling 1-888-622-7328. Additionally, participants can temporarily use benefits to purchase hot food until November 3, 2024.

## Stay Alert

After a disaster, scammers often target survivors. Stay alert to protect yourself from fraud. Be cautious of fake contractors by verifying credentials, getting written estimates, and avoiding upfront payments. Watch out for fake charities by verifying organizations before donating. Scammers may pose as FEMA representatives; never share personal information unless you know their identity. FEMA representatives will have proper ID and will never ask for money. To report fraud, email StopFEMAFraud@fema.dhs.gov or call 1-866-223-0814. To report price gouging, contact the North Carolina Attorney General at (877) 5-NO-SCAM.

#### **Laundry Services**

Laundry services will be available at Polk County High School on Tuesday, October 8, from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

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# Landrum, Campobello schools to open Tuesday

October 7, 2024 | Tryon Daily Bulletin, The (NC) Author: Staff Reports | Section: Community | 251 Words OpenURL Link

Spartanburg School District One announced that it will be reopening Landrum and Campobello schools on Tuesday, October 8, on a regular school day schedule.

"Throughout today, our team has been diligently preparing for the safe return of students to the classroom. Bus routes have been checked for any obstacles, food supplies have been replenished, and we have closely monitored the ongoing restoration efforts following the impact of Hurricane Helene," school officials said in a message to families. "Teachers have also been working hard in their classrooms, ready to welcome students back to their second home—their school. We are pleased to also report that power, internet, and phone services have been fully restored in all our schools.

"Please know that making decisions in the aftermath of such an event can be difficult, especially given the size and geographic reach of our district. We know that some families may still be without power. If you are unable to send your child to school on Tuesday due to storm-related circumstances, please contact your child's school directly. We are here to work with you and will do everything we can to accommodate your family's individual needs.

"We are eager to welcome our students back, and reopening our schools is a crucial step in helping us all—students, families, and staff—move forward together. We are deeply grateful for the way our community has come together over this past week. Thank you for your continued support."

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# Tryon International Film Festival announces postponement of tenth annual event

October 7, 2024 | Tryon Daily Bulletin, The (NC) Author: Staff Reports | Section: Community | 260 Words OpenURL Link

Festival will now take place in November

TRYON—Due to the regional damage from Tropical Storm Helene, the Polk County Film Initiative announced Friday that it has decided to postpone the 10th annual Tryon International Film Festival. The yearly event, which celebrates filmmaking and cinema, was scheduled to begin Thursday.

"Our region is without crucial community resources and has suffered loss of life, and our businesses will need a few weeks to recover," said PCFI director Debra Torrence. "We understand the impact this decision may have on filmmakers, attendees, and our community, and we deeply regret any inconvenience this may cause. Our goal is to ensure that the festival can proceed in a manner that supports the community the best we can, honors the filmmakers and their work and provides a safe environment for all attendees."

The new dates for TRIFF24 will be Friday, November 22, through Sunday, November 24.

Torrence said individuals who have already purchased tickets for the festival's various showings and events may use those tickets for the future dates. Current pass holders may also request a credit in writing for a future PCFI/TRIFF event by emailing Torrence at directorpcfi@gmail.com.

On Friday, October 11, TRIFF will host a free concert by the Casual Zealots from 6 to 8 p.m. at St. Luke's Plaza on Trade Street in Tryon. The band was scheduled to play during the festival's opening event and has agreed to perform that evening in the plaza instead.

For more information, visit tryoninternationalfilmfestival.org.

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# Community helps clean up Valle Crucis Community Park after Hurricane Helene damage

October 7, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Moss Brennan moss.brennan@wataugademocrat.com| Section: Community | 137 Words OpenURL Link

VALLE CRUCIS — Community members rallied to help begin cleaning up Valle Crucis Community Park, which saw "historically devastating" impacts from Hurricane Helene.

Soon after Helene made its way through the High Country, the park posted that "we considered ourselves lucky it wasn't worse, this is still historically devastating." The park is closed until further notice.

According to Bob Griffin, one of the volunteers, more than 100 Friends of Valle Crucis Community Park showed up on Saturday, Oct. 5, to help clean up.

Pictures posted on the park's Facebook page show cars in the river, damage to park buildings, washed-out paths, and debris everywhere.

Those interested in donating to the park as they recover can do so at secure.qgiv.com/for/bt9mmo/.

"Please keep the Valle Crucis Community as a whole in your thoughts as we progress through these unprecedented times," the park posted.

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# FEMA launches site to respond to rumors, confirm facts related to Hurricane Helene response and recovery

October 7, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Staff Report news@wataugademocrat.com| Section: Local | 735 Words OpenURL Link

WASHINGTON — After a disaster, rumors and misunderstandings can spread rapidly through traditional and social media and via word of mouth by friends, neighbors and colleagues. False or misleading information can harm survivors by causing confusion and preventing people from getting the help they need.

FEMA has always used a rumor response page during disasters to get critical information to survivors. To help correct rumors and provide accurate information for Hurricane Helene, FEMA launched a rumor response page (www.fema.gov/disaster/current/hurricane-helene/rumor-response) and a Hurricane Helene web page (www.fema.gov/disaster/current/hurricane-helene) to provide accurate information, keep people aware of rumors and scams and explain the federal disaster assistance programs and processes.

There are ways that you can keep yourself, your family and your community safe after Hurricane Helene:

Find trusted sources of information. Share information from trusted sources. Discourage others from sharing information from unverified sources.

Here are some common rumors and facts:

Rumor: FEMA does not have enough money to provide disaster assistance for Helene.

Fact: This is false. FEMA has enough money for immediate response and recovery needs. If you were affected by Helene, do not hesitate to apply for disaster assistance as there is a variety of help available for different needs. FEMA's Disaster Relief Fund has enough funding to support Hurricane Helene efforts and FEMA has what it needs for immediate response and recovery efforts. As FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell has said, she has the full authority to spend against the President's budget, but we're not out of hurricane season yet so we need to keep a close eye on it.

Rumor: FEMA will ONLY provide \$750 to disaster survivors to support their recovery.

Fact: This is false. This is a type of assistance that you may be approved for soon after you apply, called Serious Needs Assistance. It is an upfront, flexible payment to help cover essential items like food, water, baby formula, breastfeeding supplies, medication and other emergency supplies. There are other forms of assistance that you may qualify for to receive and Serious Needs Assistance is an initial payment you may receive while FEMA assesses your eligibility for additional funds. As your application continues to be reviewed, you may still receive additional forms of assistance for other needs such as support for temporary housing, personal property and home repair costs. If you have questions about your disaster assistance application and what you qualify for, contact us at 1-800-621-3362 to speak with a FEMA representative in your language.

Rumor: FEMA is asking for cash donations and turning away volunteers.

Fact: This is false. FEMA does not ask for or accept any cash donations or volunteers. We encourage people who want to help to volunteer with or donate cash to reputable voluntary or charitable organizations. After a disaster, sending cash to reputable voluntary organizations is often the best way to help as it provides the greatest flexibility for these organizations working on the ground to purchase exactly what is needed. To get in touch with a volunteer organization involved in Hurricane Helene response, visit www.nvoad.org.

If you encounter someone claiming to represent FEMA and asking for donations, be careful as that is likely a scam. Government employees are not authorized to solicit money or donations.

Rumor: Funding for FEMA disaster response was diverted to support international efforts or border-related issues.

Fact: This is false. No money is being diverted from disaster response needs. FEMA's disaster response efforts and individual assistance is funded through the Disaster Relief Fund, which is a dedicated fund for disaster efforts. Disaster Relief Fund money has not been diverted to other non-disaster related efforts. The funding for communities to support migrants is appropriated by Congress to Customs and Border Patrol — it has nothing to do with FEMA's Disaster Relief Fund. FEMA's Disaster Relief Fund has enough funding to support Hurricane Helene efforts and FEMA has what it needs for immediate response and recovery efforts. As FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell has said, she has the full authority to spend against the President's budget, but we're not out of hurricane season yet so we need to keep a close eye on it.

Rumor: FEMA is confiscating donations meant for survivors.

Fact: This is false. FEMA does not take donations and/or food from survivors or voluntary organizations. Donations of food, water, or other goods are handled by voluntary agencies who specialize in storing, sorting, cleaning and distributing donated items.

FEMA does not conduct vehicle stops or handle road closures with armed guards — those are done by local law enforcement.

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# In Bethel, one church has a new family after Hurricane Helene

October 7, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Moss Brennan moss.brennan@wataugademocrat.com| Section: Community | 979 Words OpenURL Link

BETHEL — At Bethel Baptist Church, one of the rooms downstairs has become a mini convenience store. The lower parking lot has become a landing zone for helicopters and a place to take a hot shower. An area on the top floor became a FEMA office to help people apply for disaster relief. Above all, it has become a place for the community after the devastation Hurricane Helene left in the High Country.

On Sunday morning, the church held its first service after the storm.

"I've been to this church now, I would guess, for almost 30 years. (It was) probably the best service I've ever attended," said worship leader Carter Dishman. "The spirit was strong. Part of it was a relief from the day-to-day of what we're in the middle of right now. The only way I knew how to put it this morning was, 'Today we didn't come to church. Today, we were the church."

With many in the community in need in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene, Bethel Baptist Church has become a place where they can get food and hygiene items, as well as hot meals, showers, and ADA bathrooms.

In the first few days, the church and Beaver Dam Volunteer Fire Department worked together to create a community plan. At the time, both the fire department and church were collecting donations. However, with the outpouring of volunteer support, they decided to take donations at the church so the fire department could focus on emergencies.

There wasn't a free space in the room where donations were gathered, as supplies — from snacks to diapers — were piled high for those in need.

The showers have especially been good for community members. While it can't fix a house or driveway, Dishman said just taking a hot shower can help with a little bit of "mental stability."

"At least if nothing else, they smell better, and they feel better," Dishman said.

The church hasn't just been a place for those in need to pick up much-needed supplies. It's also been a place where volunteers can gather to help other community members recover from the storm.

Dishman has coordinated the volunteers as they go into the community and help those who need some repairs or access to their homes or out of their homes. For the last four days or so, their focus has been getting everybody out.

"We've gotten now to the point where most people are out, and they're trying to repair driveways and that kind of stuff," Dishman said.

As volunteer and church member Matt Marton said, once the sun started to come out from behind the clouds, it sounded "like a hornet's nest" up and down the road.

"The fact that we were able to open up roads ourselves before anybody could even get out here. Made a huge difference," Marton said. "I mean, by Saturday morning, we were able to take any supplies that we had and what was coming in and drive it to people. Even if they couldn't get out of their house or across their bridge, we could walk them into them because the main road was opened up. It's just awesome to see how fast people out here came together, worked together, and cared for one another."

Dishman said there have been countless people who have helped in the community and that there's "not enough time" in the day to list them all. He did mention

Dishman made a point to mention Ground Effects Landscaping — among many — who have been absolute heroes in helping people start the recovery process.

He said National Guard soldiers stationed at the church helping with supply drops and manning the showers and bathrooms have become close with everyone. When not needing to help at the bathrooms or showers, the soldiers — six in total — could be seen playing catch with children in the field outside the church or singing during the worship service.

With the community coming together like it has in the aftermath of Helene, Dishman knows they have a new family.

"We've got a new family through this. I think the church family and the community family has definitely grown in numbers and in spirit this week," Dishman said. "I've got names and numbers of people that I want to be, I think, long life friends with after this."

Dishman and Marton know there will be a new normal in their community and across Watauga County and western North Carolina. They know that roads that were completely destroyed won't be repaired overnight. They know that — as Dishman out it — "a lesson in patience has been learned throughout all this."

"I've seen more good than I've seen bad," Dishman said. "That's a testament to the community."

Marton said he doesn't have any expectations on the community getting fixed. He just wants people to be able to get out and that services be able to get to them in an emergency. He also does not want it to go completely back to normal.

"I don't know if I want to go completely back to normal right away because watching this community get so close together, whether you're part of the church or not, this community has grown so close together that I don't want to see it go back," Marton said.

He said he knows that, as a community, they are better than big cities in terms of closeness, but even then, he met people he hadn't met before. He doesn't want to go back to where the community was splintered in some ways.

"The mountain people are sticking together," said Charlene Capps, a community member utilizing the showers. "Everybody's pulling together. Everybody's helping everybody."

Bethel Baptist Church is located at 125 Mountaindale Rd. They have hot food available for lunch and dinner as well as ADA showers and toilets daily from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

"Our community took care of each other before, but now it's like on steroids," Dishman said.

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# Watauga County Farmers Market reopens after Hurricane Helene

October 7, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Staff Report news@wataugademocrat.com| Section: Community | 383 Words OpenURL Link

BOONE — The Watauga County Farmers Market successfully reopened on Saturday, Oct. 5, after much uncertainty following the devastation caused by Hurricane Helene.

While the market space is currently being shared with the Town of Boone for storm debris storage, creative solutions have been implemented allowing the organization to resume operations in order to ensure that the market can continue to serve the community.

A temporary fence has been erected through the lot, requiring a complete re-imagining of the market's layout. Vendors have adjusted by dropping off inventory and parking off-site to maximize parking space for customers. Although the market is operating with reduced space, 26 of the usual 60 vendors were in attendance at the reopening. Many vendors are still recovering from the storm, with some having lost everything and others busy with cleanup efforts in their own communities.

The reopening also featured live music from local band Rastacoustic, who raised \$737 for F.A.R.M. Café's feeding program by donating their tips and a portion of merchandise sales. Their efforts exemplified the community spirit and support so needed in this challenging time.

"We're so grateful to the vendors who were able to make it back, and we know more will join us in the coming weeks," said Market Director Michelle Dineen. "It is more important than ever to keep our local commerce thriving post-disaster. Local farms and businesses need our support. Many have an abundance of crops that are going to waste because other market channels have been shut down. Supporting the market means supporting your neighbors and ensuring our local food system stays strong."

The Watauga County Farmers Market will continue to update the public on any changes to the location of the Saturday market.

In addition, the Double Up Food Bucks program remains available, allowing SNAP/EBT, WIC, and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program voucher recipients to double their benefits up to \$75 per market visit. Please note that the spend-by date for Senior FMNP vouchers has been extended until October 15th, allowing participants additional opportunities to redeem these benefits.

The market expects more vendors to return in the coming weeks and encourages the community to come out in full support. Now, more than ever, local farmers and producers need the backing of their customers as they work through recovery efforts.

For more information, visit wataugacountyfarmersmarket.org or contact wataugacountyfarmersmarket@gmail.com. ©2024 Watauga Democrat - Mountain Times Publications, All rights reserved.

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# Watauga County Farmers Market reopens after Hurricane Helene, will have new location for rest of the season

October 7, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Staff Report news@wataugademocrat.com| Section: Community | 423 Words OpenURL Link

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Starting on Oct. 12, the market will take place at Leon Levine Hall, 1179 State Farm Road in Boone due to ongoing recovery efforts and space limitations at the current site.

In addition, the Double Up Food Bucks program remains available, allowing SNAP/EBT, WIC, and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program voucher recipients to double their benefits up to \$75 per market visit. Please note that the spend-by date for Senior FMNP vouchers has been extended until October 15th, allowing participants additional opportunities to redeem these benefits.

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# Mountaineers fall to Thundering Herd in return to competition

October 7, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Zach Colburn | Section: Sports | 732 Words

OpenURL Link

HUNTINGTON, W.Va. — Playing for the first time in 16 days, and just a little more than a week removed from the devastating arrival of Hurricane Helene in western North Carolina, Appalachian State football lost, 52-37, at Marshall on Saturday in Joan C. Edwards Stadium.

Days of rains in advance of Helene's arrival, coupled with the storm's wide-ranging impact, led to the cancelation of a Sept. 28 home game against Liberty.

With the long recovery process starting for many in Boone, Watauga County, the western part of the state and several surrounding states, the Mountaineers hit the road for Huntington on Friday to face a longtime rival.

"Football is very important, but the most important thing is those families back in Boone who lost everything and we'll continue to support them," said Appalachian State head football coach Shawn Clark. "I know it's tough on them and hopefully it'll be a shining light for them one day. But I know our kids are excited to get back and help, but we have to make sure we do that for our football team."

Joey Aguilar threw two touchdown passes to Dalton Stroman, who made five catches for 75 yards in his second career start, and finished 26-of-44 for 293 yards through the air. Ahmani Marshall had a pair of 2-yard touchdown runs in the final seven minutes and Kaedin Robinson totaled 94 yards on eight receptions.

{p class="p1"}The offense went 6-for-6 on fourth-down conversions, and Thomas Davis led the defense with 1.5 tackles for loss, but the Mountaineers committed 15 penalties for 158 yards.

App State (2-3, 0-2 Sun Belt) won the toss and elected to receive, but a three-and-out punt preceded an opening series touchdown drive from Marshall (3-2, 1-0 Sun Belt) — the fourth straight game an opponent has scored a touchdown on its first series.

"Very disappointing loss; this one hurt because we had a lot to play for. Our kids played hard, but we have almost 500 yards of total offense and the two picks hurt us and the penalties hurt us," said Clark. "Then, we started getting some momentum back in the game and big plays on defense hurt us; so, you take away three big plays on defense and one turn of ball, it might be a different story.

The Mountaineers took a 10-7 lead thanks to a 42-yard field goal on the first career attempt from Jackson Moore, a redshirt freshman filling in for the sidelined Michael Hughes, and a 10-yard touchdown run from Kanye Roberts to open the second quarter.

Marshall regained the lead for good as running back Jordan Houston scored a 75-yard touchdown after catching a short swing pass from Braylon Braxton on the second play of the next series, and the Thundering Herd scored again 12 seconds later when a bobbled swing pass on the first play of the next possession resulted in a 13-yard interception return for a touchdown by J'Coryan Anderson.

Marshall responded to a missed App State field goal by increasing its advantage to 28-10 on a 5-yard touchdown pass with five minutes left in the first half to cap a 79-yard drive, but Aguilar's 21-yard touchdown pass to Stroman on a fourth-and-5 throw in the final minute of the half cut the deficit to 11 points entering the break.

{p class="p1"}"We went up, we had some momentum and then two plays later, we give up big plays for a touchdown and those things can't happen," said Clark. "We have to make teams drive it the long way, instead of

those plays that are two plays for 70 yards and a touchdown. We'll go look at the tape, we'll have to do some soul searching to see who we really are."

The Thundering Herd scored the first 10 points of the third quarter, getting a 29-yard touchdown run and kicking a 38-yard field goal after App State committed a first-play turnover. The Mountaineers did pull within 38-24 late in the third quarter on Stroman's 27-yard, jump-ball grab of a fourth-and-19 throw from Aguilar, but Marshall gained more separation by eating up more than five minutes on a 10-play, 65-yard touchdown drive.

Marshall scored on a 2-yard touchdown run with 6:05 remaining, and he accounted for the Mountaineers' final points on a short touchdown run with 1:13 remaining.

App State is scheduled to return to action next Saturday at Louisiana. The game has a kickoff time of 7:30 p.m. ET, or 6:30 p.m. CT.

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#### • Citation (aglc Style)

Zach Colburn, 'Mountaineers fall to Thundering Herd in return to competition', *Watauga Democrat, The*(online), 7 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C14EEF545F9B50">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C14EEF545F9B50</a>



# Watauga County Schools confirms all students, staff accounted for

October 7, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Moss Brennan moss.brennan@wataugademocrat.com| Section: Local | 172 Words OpenURL Link

WATAUGA — Watauga County Schools has officially accounted for all students and staff in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene.

WCS Superintendent Leslie Alexander confirmed the news Saturday morning.

"I am so proud of our administrators, teachers, and staff for all the effort they put into locating and caring for our students and families," Alexander said.

Watauga High School Assistant Principal Coleman Bailey posted on Facebook what it meant to confirm all 1,647 WHS students had been accounted for.

"Need some great news today......after 40 of our staff worked 4 days of calling, emailing, posting, driving door to door ALL 1647 students of Watauga High School have been accounted for....many are with other relatives because they have had to abandoned their mountain home but they are all safe and alive!!!!!! Yes if you know me you know I cried when I heard that we had found the last one," Bailey posted.

WCS officials have worked to communicate with all staff and students since Hurricane Helene tore through High Country.

WCS is closed for the week of Oct. 7.

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## • Citation (aglc Style)

Moss Brennan moss.brennan@wataugademocrat.com, 'Watauga County Schools confirms all students, staff accounted for', *Watauga Democrat, The*(online), 7 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/19C14EEF4D37A6D8>



# Jones House hosting Fink, Marxer on Oct. 13

October 7, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: JERRY SNOW | Section: News | 196 Words OpenURL Link

BOONE — The Jones House Cultural Center, located downtown, re-opened on Oct. 6 after being closed last week due to the devastation left across the town by Hurricane Helene.

Last week the Jones House canceled its music lessons, kids jam, old-time jam and gallery reception, and postponed the Boone Fall Fest, according to joneshouse.org.

The Jones House website will have updates about upcoming programming and events.

The Cultural Center is scheduled to host Cathy Fink & Marcy Marxer on Sunday, Oct. 13. Tickets are \$20 each and RSVP is required. Their workshop from 4-5 pm. is free, and also requires RSVP. The Concert starts at 7 p.m.

Cathy Fink and Marcy Marxer are revered as master musicians. They are two-time GRAMMY® Award winners.

They are known for their harmonies, which are backed by the guitar, five-string banjo, ukulele, mandolin and cellobanjo, according to their website. They play classic country, western swing, gypsy jazz bluegrass, old-time string music and contemporary folk. Learn more about them at www.cathymarcy.com.

On Nov. 4, the Jones House will host Joshua White starting at 4 p.m.; tickets are \$5 and RSVP is required. White, a banjo player, performs old-time music.

For more information about White, go to www.joshuawhiteart.com

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JERRY SNOW, 'Jones House hosting Fink, Marxer on Oct. 13', *Watauga Democrat, The*(online), 7 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C10D4AB0E5AF58">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C10D4AB0E5AF58</a>



# App State reports no missing students, faculty or staff

October 7, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Luke Barber luke.barber@wataugademocrat.com| Section: Asu News| 449 Words OpenURL Link

BOONE — Appalachian State University Interim Chancellor Heather Norris reported that the university currently has no actively missing students, faculty, or staff, and no fatalities were reported on campus.

Norris reported via email on Saturday, Oct. 5, that the university is continuing to assess damage to the campus and acknowledged that road conditions continue to improve, but many remain treacherous or impassable. Norris said not a single person in the area hasn't felt the impact of the storm.

"Some of our students, faculty and staff have lost everything. We are so grateful to the emergency responders, volunteers and utility providers, and so many others, for their incredible work," Norris said.

Due to adverse weather conditions, classes remain canceled on the Boone and Hickory campuses through 5 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 11. With fall break on Oct. 14 and 15, classes will resume no earlier than Oct. 16. The modality and locations will be determined based on university infrastructure.

Norris said the intent is for the university to resume classes "as soon as possible."

She added the university understands that many are facing significant challenges with housing, power and communications connectivity,

"As always, Academic Affairs is prepared to work with each and every student to ensure they are able to be successful, especially those on track to graduate in December," Norris said.

Furthermore, Norris reported all residence halls are structurally sound with minimal issues. Several academic buildings have significant damage from flooding, including Walker Hall, Rankin Science Building, Varsity Gym and the academic areas.

"Our facilities team, along with the private contractors we've brought in, has already made incredible progress addressing this damage, and we will see more results from their efforts next week as we work toward returning to normal operations," Norris said.

In response to the effects of Hurricane Helene, App State opened a Red Cross shelter at the convocation center and has opened its dining hall to anyone in need of a meal. Since the storm began, university staff have served more than 50,000 meals. App State continues to provide access to other amenities, such as showers, Wifi, health services, health counseling and the ability to wash and dry clothes.

App State leadership continues to stay in touch with local and state officials as recovery efforts progress.

"In the last few days, amidst terrible devastation, we have seen tremendous acts of kindness and humanity, neighbors helping neighbors, strangers helping strangers. To the many, many people from across the state and nation who are sharing support for the university and our broader community — thank you. It means so much as we manage and respond to this crisis," Norris said.

For information on the university's disaster relief resources, visit appstate.edu/disaster-relief/ or contribute to its disaster relief fund at appstate.edu.

# • Citation (aglc Style)

Luke Barber luke.barber@wataugademocrat.com, 'App State reports no missing students, faculty or staff', *Watauga Democrat, The* (online), 7 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/19C14EEF658EB730>



# 'COMPLETE, DEVASTATING SHOCK' - Anguish in Ashe County: 'Shock' of Helene tests the limits of these self-reliant mountain people

October 7, 2024 | Winston-Salem Journal (NC)

Author: SUSIE C. SPEAR Staff Reporter | Section: A | 1949 Words

Page: 1 OpenURL Link

WARRENSVILLE - Loss is all too familiar to Gloria Graybeal.

As night fell Thursday evening, she propped her shovel against the wall and rested in a portable chair inside the modest used car dealership her dad opened decades ago on N.C. 88, the main riverfront roadway in Warrensville, population 1,400.

Outside, a fleet of sedans, compact cars and trucks all bear distinct muddy water marks etched above their doors to define the flood that washed over this Ashe County community over a week ago.

All are likely a total loss, with floorboards and upholstery caked with sludge from the unprecedented surge of the North Fork of the New River - the end result of countless inches of rain dumped by Hurricane Helene in just 72 hours. The violent storm sent water 40 feet up a grassy bank to road level, then another 5 feet higher. The water crept inside Graybeal's dealership and on across N.C. 88.

Just opposite the auto lot, across N.C. 88, stands a cross unmoved by the deluge - a marker signifying Graybeal's greatest loss. That of her precious son.

In February 2021, Ethan Seth Shrader, 21, passed away after his motorcycle crashed into the side of a frame building that sits along the curve. It's a pain Graybeal can't speak about.

In the wake of the storm, she's taking comfort from friend Tony Severt and boyfriend Chris Roland, both helping clear debris with Graybeal and cranking engines to see which cars may sputter to life.

"I'm doing the best way I know how," Graybeal admitted. "I'm just digging up mud and doing what we can to start over."

Like nearly every business owner in the area, Graybeal lacks flood insurance. She'd always felt secure being positioned so high on a hill, she said.

But this once-in-a-lifetime event caused a universal shock to the region.

"We're so deep in the hole," said Graybeal, growing emotional. She wiped her eyes. "I don't know what to do, but we're gonna try to get back."

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Graybeal's stoicism is not uncommon for residents in these Blue Ridge Mountains. They come from a legacy of self-reliant people, intrepid folks who carved out their lives in the rugged hills, knowing their winters would be more harsh, their plow rows more steep and resources for their homes and farms more scarce. They established a network of neighbors to help mend fences, dig wells and tend to the sick.

Now, that very kind of support system is in full force as this area, like many other enclaves in the rural counties of North Carolina and Tennessee, makes do with help from volunteer relief groups until more state and federal aid arrives.

Lansing, an Ashe County town of 128, brimmed with activity Thursday as shop owners and residents directed volunteers with loaded trailers to the most remote reaches of the area where people were still without food and water.

Johnny Burleson delegated traffic and resources at Command Central, a portable trailer set up by the Wilkes County Rescue Squad.

"We organized our own emergency response team," said Burleson, who lives in the nearby Horse Creek community.

Earlier Thursday morning, he greeted Gov. Roy Cooper and top administrators with the state's Department of Health and Human Services when they arrived by helicopter to assess the damage.

"They spent a few hours and saw firsthand what is going on, and we felt very good about their response," Burleson said.

Problems are so vast they are nearly unfathomable, Burleson and others explained. With fences washed away, livestock are roaming and often in roadways. Once they're corralled, farmers will need hay to replace what has been lost. That need will be most keen in about three weeks, locals said.

Infrastructure damage is staggering. Roadways leading in and out of communities are dangerously eroded by the assault from the storm surge.

Steep curved roads in many areas have been reduced to one lane because the shoulders collapsed. The asphalt appears to have been bitten away by the jaws of a monster.

Yellowjackets blanket trash scraps and have become a hazard for children and adults. For that reason, residents are pleading for donations of EpiPens and Benadryl for those who suffer anaphylactic shock from bee stings and lesser reactions.

Bridge after bridge is destroyed and laden with felled trees and other debris. In fact, some volunteers have used drones to drop food to people who cannot be reached by plane or ATVs.

Cornfields are laid flat and burned blonde, as if folded down like sheets of paper by wind and water.

Automobiles float in the North Fork of the New River.

Every mile or so, you see the foundation of a riverside house - then glimpse the splintered remains snagged in trees downstream.

Clothing, metal roofing panels, toys and bikes hang in chalky vines by the river.

The front yards and carports of houses are heaped with the mildewed, soggy contents of once-cozy homes.

And in some yards, salvaged homemade quilts are stretched to dry in the welcome sun - flags of optimism.

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So far, one woman has been confirmed dead in the Rich Hill area, according to Lansing Fire Chief Jeff Venable. The unnamed woman was trying to escape a flooded Jeep with the aid of her husband, but perished in the rushing river.

Watching his house wash away was more than one man could bear in neighboring Grayson County, Va., according to Venable. He knew the tradesman personally.

"He said he was too old to start over and went to his truck and shot himself," said Venable with a sober nod.

Like many, Venable has a timeline of events from Helene seared into his mind's eye.

"We lost two of our firetrucks," he recalled. "And Christy Matkins, who was trying to help us with dispatch the day of the flood, got caught in the building when the water started rising. The water rose all the way to her neck and stopped. She was lucky."

People in a nearby Lansing building, caught off-guard by the swift rise of water, were forced to "punch through" ceiling tiles to get to rooftops, Burleson said.

Other casualties still may be discovered in the northern-most part of the county, Burleson said, though no official number of missing persons was available.

A military crew was conducting a foot search in remote areas throughout the day on Thursday.

Rene Shuford lost everything in floodwaters, including a treasured box car from the historic "Virginia Creeper" train that once ran from Abingdon, Va., to Elkland. The train car had long rested on the lawn of her Tuckerdale community home.

"We don't know if it's livable," she said of her still-standing 114-year-old historic frame house on Big Horse Creek near Lansing.

Houses that flanked it were lifted from their foundations by the floodwater, Shuford said.

"I was at my house until 9 a.m. on Friday (Sept. 27). Then I took my dogs up the road and stayed at my neighbors, and the water came way up the road," she said. "The next morning, the house that had been to the right of mine was moved to the left of my house."

She lamented the fact that two businesses located in a building she owns in downtown Lansing also lost everything when water rose 8 feet in their antique and barber shops.

Like most, Shuford's building lacked flood insurance.

"It's so expensive, you can't afford to get it," she said.

For now, working among other people helps her move forward, said Shuford, a Boone native.

"Whatcha gonna do? We're obviously gonna be super busy."

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At Riverview Community Center near Creston, a hamlet of 855 folks, a troupe of helpers from across the state trudged through the mire to get foodstuffs, cleaning supplies and other essentials to a staging room.

Greg Aldridge and his wife, Annette Aldridge, drove in Thursday morning from Monroe to help.

"It's my birthday," Annette Aldridge said, toting bananas and Gatorades to workers and state troopers directing traffic. "But I'm right where I want to be."

Around 2 p.m., the rhythmic roar of helicopter blades drew the attention of dozens at the community center. An Army National Guard chopper full of much-needed supplies had arrived in a nearby field.

Juanita Bledsoe of Three Top Road ran toward a crew member, who ducked out in helmet and fatigues. Bledsoe

threw her arms upward and said, "My Jesus sent this!" She hugged the guardsman tight.

Courtney Eldreth, a medical assistant from Creston, was feeling lucky Thursday as she packed her side-by-side with supplies for neighbors who lost homes. She lost only power, the 27-year-old said.

"Three or four more feet and we would have lost everything. We are so fortunate. It's been such a shock," said Eldreth, who watched the "creek become a river" in her yard and from her front window counted 32 tires float by last Saturday.

"I don't know if people even have words for it yet. We knew it was gonna be bad, but this is complete, devastating shock."

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E.H. Farmer remembers building the ranch-style brick house for his family in 1968. His wife was expecting, and life for the couple was just starting.

On Thursday at dusk, Farmer and his son, Eric, who inherited the house, cleaned debris from the yard and assessed the gutted structure.

A sheet of bricks along the front had buckled and an aluminum carport lay twisted on the front lawn.

"I was born in 1969, and I was in the house as a baby," the younger Farmer said. "They kept me in that house in a dresser drawer as a baby."

On that treacherous Friday, he and his wife left their house around 11 a.m. as water rose inside. They were able to rescue two of their three dogs - Lexi and Haichi - but lost beloved hound Simone.

"I don't know if the county will let us build back, but we want to," said Farmer, an industrial engineer. "The river is so beautiful 95% of the time. It's just that 5% of the time that it's a mess."

Tears welled in his eyes.

"You just have to have faith that the good Lord saved me because he had another purpose for me," Farmer said.

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# Home becomes refuge from the storm - Journal reporter opens his home to family and friends from Asheville

October 7, 2024 | Winston-Salem Journal (NC)

Author: SCOTT SEXTON Staff Reporter | Section: A | 934 Words

Page: 1 OpenURL Link

It took the kid, the second-oldest girl and one of four in the blended family, two days to make her way home from Asheville after Tropical Storm Helene.

The first attempt, last Friday, came not long after she'd sent a "We're OK" text. Unaware of landslides that had buried Interstate 40 in both directions, she and her boyfriend turned around after making it maybe 8 miles.

The second began just after first light Saturday. They'd seen and felt enough - a water rescue and rising anxiety - to know that the risk was worthwhile.

Indeed, the journey took more than five hours over downed power lines, uprooted trees and chunks of buildings carried into the roadways by floodwaters but they made it before noon.

After a long, tearful and joyous hug in the driveway, the kid's thoughts turned to close friends who'd remained.

"Mom, can Tom and Amanda come here, too?"

Harrowing sights

The earliest reports, those that were immediately available, indicated that Helene was bad but not biblical in its destruction.

But as we know well now, that was due to the loss of communications and outlying areas being cut off from anything resembling civilization.

So yeah, when your kid - a grown woman named Cameron Nieters who practices law in Asheville - is visibly shaken and asks if her friends can come, there's only one answer.

Of course. How soon can they get here?

One week in, eight adults, six cars and the four dogs sharing three bedrooms, 2½ baths, limited WiFi and a tiny home office converted into a fourth bedroom are making the best of it.

(We'd expected some guests for a day or two due to a wedding scheduled for this weekend in Raleigh, but nothing like the makeshift emergency shelter we've been experiencing.)

Anyhow, after Cameron told friends Tom Harrington and Amanda Smith that we'd leave the light on, a few details spilled out during the decompression.

Friday afternoon, after they'd made it back, Cameron and Ben, her boyfriend, decided to take a walk. They headed downhill toward Biltmore Village.

Just past the Burial Forest Camp Brewery - Asheville is loaded with craft breweries and ale houses - the first shock presented itself.

A man, most likely one of the homeless living in the woods under I-40, was sitting on a mound of debris in a flooded intersection pleading for help.

"He kept saying he was cold, that he wasn't going to make it much longer, and he didn't want to die," Cameron said.

A small crowd had gathered, she said, and individuals began debating what to do. A 911 dispatcher told them that water rescue was tied up all over Buncombe County; the best authorities could do was add the location to a rapidly growing list.

Unwilling to wait, some in the crowd began rifling nearby warehouses and storage buildings. A kayak, one paddle and a pool noodle in hand, a thin young man volunteered to make his way toward the stranded man.

The kayaker made it and succeeded in pulling the man to safety against a surprisingly stout current.

"He was really fighting it," Cameron said.

Once the stranded man had been given dry clothes - crowd-sourced off the backs of relieved onlookers - Cameron and Ben knew they had to get out.

A confluence of factors

Meanwhile, Harrington and Smith decided they could ride the storm out.

Harrington's people live in northern Ohio and Smith's in Pennsylvania, so their immediate options were limited.

Besides, they had food and enough cash to last a few days, their house was mostly spared, and they knew to boil water. Other people had it worse, they reasoned, and surely the power would be back on by Monday or Tuesday at the latest.

They'd politely declined an initial offer to come to our house, but their resolve started to break down by midafternoon Saturday.

They, too, decided to take a walk around Asheville to survey the damage for themselves. When they got to a commercial area on Tunnel Road, they saw just how bad the situation could get.

A grocery store, only able to take cash, had a line that wrapped around the outside of the building. "It was going to take hours," Smith said.

It wouldn't be long before the shelves were stripped bare. Trucks had no way into the city to restock.

They walked past a Target and couldn't believe what they were seeing.

"A grown man walked out of the emergency door carrying a Playstation and looked right at us," Harrington said.

A few steps away, four young men stood in a semi-circle pulling masks over their faces.

The last straw - the single biggest factor - was the realization that it could take weeks for Asheville to have reliable water service restored. So Harrington and Smith loaded up a lovable mutt named Leo and made their way here.

They arrived about 10:30 p.m., six hours after they pulled out.

The house wasn't designed for eight adults and four dogs. The driveway isn't set up to handle six cars. Showering and laundry require precise scheduling. Work space is limited, too.

But those are mere inconveniences. Harrington and Smith are super nice - Tom, an engineer, fixed a sputtering leaf blower because he "needed a chore" - and having them here meant that Cameron and Ben wouldn't need to try and get back to Asheville to help their friends.

It's a small thing, but the welcome mat is out for as long as necessary.

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# Florida prepares as another hurricane approaches - Florida prepares as another hurricane approaches

October 7, 2024 | Winston-Salem Journal (NC) Author: ASSOCIATED PRESS | Section: A | 287 Words Page: 7 OpenURL Link

MIAMI - People across Florida were given notice Sunday that Hurricane Milton is intensifying rapidly and will likely be a major hurricane before slamming midweek into the storm-ravaged Gulf Coast.

While forecast models vary widely, the most likely path suggests Milton could make landfall Wednesday in the Tampa Bay area and remain a hurricane as it moves across central Florida into the Atlantic Ocean, forecasters said. That would largely spare other southeastern states ravaged by Hurricane Helene, which caused catastrophic damage from Florida into the Appalachian mountains and a death toll that rose Sunday to 230 people.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis said Sunday that while it remains to be seen just where Milton will strike, it's clear that Florida is going to be hit hard - "I don't think there's any scenario where we don't have major impacts at this point."

"You have time to prepare - all day today, all day Monday, probably all day Tuesday to be sure your hurricane preparedness plan is in place," the governor said. "If you're on that west coast of Florida, barrier islands, just assume you'll be asked to leave."

Meanwhile, the U.S. government's top disaster relief official said Sunday that false claims and conspiracy theories about the federal response to Hurricane Helene - spread most prominently by Donald Trump - are "demoralizing" aid workers and creating fear in people who need recovery assistance.

"It's frankly ridiculous, and just plain false. This kind of rhetoric is not helpful to people," said Deanne Criswell, who leads the Federal Emergency Management Agency. "It's really a shame that we're putting politics ahead of helping people, and that's what we're here to do. We have had the complete support of the state," she said, referring to North Carolina.

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ASSOCIATED PRESS, 'Florida prepares as another hurricane approaches Florida prepares as another hurricane approaches', *Winston-Salem Journal* (online), 7 Oct 2024 7 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a>
p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C0EE79AC017CD8>



# App regroups, but falls to Marshall - Appalachian State falls to Marshall in first football game in 16 days

October 7, 2024 | Winston-Salem Journal (NC)

Author: TOM FOREMAN JR. Staff Reporter | Section: B | 662 Words

Page: 3 OpenURL Link

It may have been a lot to ask of Appalachian State to play a football game, but the Mountaineers have been through a lot already in a short period of time.

Hurricane Helene carved a devastating path through western North Carolina, and Boone was not spared. City streets were flooded, cell phone service was lost and so was power. The Mountaineers were scheduled to play Liberty about 24 hours after Helene had caused so much destruction, but the game was canceled. Classes at App State were suspended as students tried to put their lives back together in the storm's aftermath.

The football team regrouped in the midst of the chaos and traveled to play Marshall on Saturday. The Mountaineers outgained the Thundering Herd and picked up more first downs. But App State was assessed 15 penalties for 158 yards, and an old bugaboo - the explosive play - reared its head once again in a 52-37 loss in Huntington, West Virginia, on Saturday.

Marshall had eight plays that gained 10 yards or more, and of those, two covered 15 yards or more. One was a 75-yard pass play from Braylon Braxton to Jordan Houston at the start of the second quarter. There was also a 26-yard Braxton pass to Charles Montgomery for another score late in the third quarter. The first touchdown pass erased a 10-7 Appalachian State lead, and the other extended Marshall's lead to 45-24.

"Very disappointed," Appalachian State coach Shawn Clark said. "This is not what we came down here for, to play like we did. Too many mistakes on both sides of the ball. Too many penalties. You have almost 500 yards of offense but you have two turnovers. We have to limit the big plays. We can't give up those plays and be successful."

App State erased an early 7-0 deficit and climbed into a 10-7 lead after a Jackson Moore 42-yard field goal midway through the first quarter and a Kanye Roberts 10-yard touchdown run at the start of the second quarter. But Marshall scored on their next two possessions and threw in a pick-six to leave the Mountaineers in a hole they couldn't emerge from.

Joey Aguilar threw for 293 yards and two touchdowns, but he had the two interceptions that Clark alluded to. Aguilar added 55 yards rushing to lead the ground game.

Clark said the ride back to Boone on Saturday night would include a film session to figure out what needs to be fixed. But he acknowledged that it's been a tough go of it for more than a week, and one way to help in the healing and recovery in western North Carolina would be to get a win. App State gets that chance next weekend at Louisiana. After an open week, officials have to decide whether they will play the scheduled home game against Georgia State in Winston-Salem or in Charlotte, primarily to divert traffic away from Boone as it continues its cleanup.

"It has been tough. You can't deny that a lot of people lost everything in Boone and Watauga County," Clark said. "Those fans, those residents of Watauga County have a lot of pride in Appalachian State football. We have to eventually come through for them."

# • Citation (aglc Style)

TOM FOREMAN JR.; Staff Reporter, 'App regroups, but falls to Marshall Appalachian State falls to Marshall in first football game in 16 days', *Winston-Salem Journal* (online), 7 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/19C0EE79B69BF330>



### Helene shows value of fiscal restraint

October 7, 2024 | Yadkin Ripple, The (Yadkinville, NC) Author: John Hood| Section: Opinion| 651 Words OpenURL Link

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The next best thing, then, is for future Congresses and presidents to take their budgeting responsibilities more

seriously. As I've pointed out many times, the opportunity to bring federal revenues and expenditures closer to alignment without painful adjustment has long since passed. The gap is too large.

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

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

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# Floods of '40, '16 still the kings of the beasts

October 7, 2024 | Yadkin Ripple, The (Yadkinville, NC) Author: Stephen Harris Contributing Columnist| Section: Columnists | 737 Words OpenURL Link

Such a helpless, odd — yet tinged with awe — feeling for those standing on the Gwyn-McNeil Bridge — the only physical connection these days for Elkin and Jonesville — who gawked at choked, brown, roiling floodwaters passing over Standard Street and its adjoining businesses in Elkin.

And there was nothing anyone could do about it. But watch.

Those who made it to downtown during flooding from the storm Helene got a fresh reminder of the power of nature and the inability of mankind to tame the untamable beast.

And yet the waters that crept up to as far as Elkin Antiques on South Bridge Street rank only fourth among the Hometown's worst floods.

The 24.11-foot crest of the Yadkin River in Elkin during the latest storm fell far short of those of the legendary 1940 and 1916 floods, and even fell short of a 1983 flood, which reached 24.88 feet, according to the National Water Prediction Service of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

When we hear about floods Back in the Hometown we tend to think of the historic 1916 flood that took out the South Bridge Street bridge at the time. But the 36-foot '16 flood here actually was bested by the 1940 flood that reached 37.50 feet above flood stage.

As evidence I offer a remarkable photo from '40 taken by a second cousin of mine, the late Lester Luffman. It shows folks standing on the north sidewalk of East Main Street, looking at the flood-covered road with the old Smithey's store/now Yadkin Valley Community School building with its familiar rock walls standing in water.

Here is an updated list of top 10 downtown Elkin floods:

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37.50' — Aug. 16, 1940
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Source: National Water Prediction Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. For the top 60 Elkin floods, see https://water.noaa.gov/gauges/elkn7 on the internet. Flood stage is considered at 18 feet. Normal is around eight feet.

I remember most vividly the 1970 flood (No. 5 on the list). Dad drove me down to Big Elkin Creek on Preacher Field Road north of Elkin, and we marveled at the flood-covered bridge and the brown, rushing water that made us turn the car around and head back up to high ground, back to home.

There, Dad bailed water with our one, metal bucket at the basement sump pump (and I toted bucket loads outside for dumping) that was overwhelmed by uncoated, leaking cinder blocks that served as the house's foundation.

After the latest storm I returned home to find in that same basement only rugs soaked and a puddle at the low point of the basement floor. A drainage system installed some two decades ago averted the exasperation that I once saw in my father's face.

Now a new generation will have their own, vivid memories of, say, the flooded Heritage Center parking lot or maybe Crater Park or Elkin Park along Big Elkin Creek and will comment to others: do you remember the flood of '24?

"I've seen the football field flooded and the park but never anything like this," Matt Settle, a neighbor of mine and member of that new generation, told ABC45 TV news (internet address: https://abc45.com/news/local/residents-in-elkin-shocked-over-historic-flooding-jonesville-helene-north-carolina-surry-county).

"This is just such a great community," the new Hunt's Homestyle restaurant co-proprietor Matt Ponce de Leon, who's also a minister, also told ABC45, "a community where the love of God is absolutely present. We definitely have faith in the Lord that we will be able to do what he will have us do." The Standard Street restaurant flooded.

The floods of '40 and '16 will never be revisited upon us thanks to the 1962 installation of a flood-control dam on the Yadkin west of Wilkesboro, the W. Kerr Scott Dam and Reservoir. It protects us from the worst of floodwaters from upriver drainage systems like the Yadkin headwaters starting at Blowing Rock, Buffalo and Kings creeks in Caldwell County, and Elk and Beaver creeks and Lewis Fork in western Wilkes.

Think of the mess we would have had a couple of weeks ago if not for the reservoir.

But we must contend still with floodwaters downriver from the dam like those from Reddies and Roaring rivers and Big Elkin Creek.

Let us never ignore the roar of the untamable Yadkin. Always keep an eye out for the beast.

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# The great floods of 1916 and 2024

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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 see catastrophic 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 thing not tied down — and many things that were.

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