

Bears cross country earns second place finish at conference championships

October 22, 2024 | Mountaineer, The (Waynesville, NC) Author: Aarik Long | Section: Sports | 517 Words OpenURL Link

Pisgah cross country hosted the Mountain 7 conference championship meet, grabbing second place in the boys' competition.

"Since day one, I have been preaching to these kids that if they wanted to perform well in the conference championship they could," Pisgah coach Joe Sayblack said. "All of them performed really well."

The event was originally supposed to be hosted at the Bears' baseball complex, but that site was damaged during Helene's flooding.

"We got tossed up there really quick," Sayblack said. "There were a couple of teams in the conference who had run on it in a meet right before the flood, but most had not run on it."

Even the Bears didn't have much experience on the course. Pisgah ran a few practices on the course leading up to the conference meet but still didn't fully get to take advantage of the home-field edge they expected to have.

But the runners still put up some really solid results.

"I was pleased with how our kids ran on a course they knew very little about," Sayblack said.

Sophomore Silas Hardin led the way for the Bears with a third-place finish. Senior Daniel Sayblack was just over a minute behind Hardin with his seventh-place finish.

"Both of them have been instrumental in what we've done all season," Sayblack said.

But the strength of the Bears came in the middle of the pack — a place that Sayblack says allows the Bears to pick up the most points.

"The real key to our kids' success has been the middle group in our pack. That's where you see a big pack of kids come in. We have the potential to really improve our placement overall the more those middle-of-the-pack kids can finish high up. There's a lot of potential to really well right in the middle," Sayblack said. "That's the key to why we finished as strong as we did."

Senior Devin Velasquez grabbed 15th place and junior Leo Bolejack finished 26.

"Leo Bolejack didn't run his best time ever, but he was running through a lot of pain and did what he needed to do for us that day," Sayblack said.

A pair of freshmen rounded out the top six for the Bears with Elijah Holland grabbing the No. 31 spot and Max Rich finishing in 32nd.

The Bears had several strong performances from underclassmen.

"That's huge," Sayblack said. "I've got Daniel and Silas who are really great runners and great role models and leaders. Now, these young kids have had a season to see what Daniel and Silas are doing. We're setting the groundwork for a tradition of cross-country excellence at Pisgah High School."

Now, the Bears prepare for the regional meet which will be hosted Oct. 26 in Salisbury. The event was originally scheduled to be held at Freedom High School, but flood damages have prevented that course from being used.

Pisgah is hoping to continue to exceed expectations as they head to the next stage.

"I'm telling them again. They can do it again. They can finish stronger than what they think they can," Sayblack said. "We'll be trying to qualify as many kids as we can to go to the state championship."

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We're taking a deep dive into election misinformation. Here's how you can help.

October 22, 2024 | News & Observer, The (Raleigh, NC) Author: Caitlyn Yaede and Emily Vespa, correspondents| Section: News | 352 Words Page: 2A

Keeping voters informed with reliable information about North Carolina's elections is a top priority for The News & Observer.

Now, with less than a month until Election Day, The N&O is asking readers to share examples of misinformation they see, hear and read, so we can investigate and set the record straight.

The N&O is one of eightpublications across six states receiving funding from the Center for Media Engagement at the University of Texas at Austin to identify, record and correct dishonest election information. The partnership, which began last month, aims to provide voters with accurate information about the 2024 elections. (The N&O retains full editorial control over its reporting when it receives funding from philanthropy and grants.)

To extend our eyes and ears, N&O has also asked a bipartisan group, the Commission on the Future of NC Elections, to flag potential misinformation for our reporters.

Now, we are inviting readers to report local election information that you think might be inaccurate, or that raises questions you want answered, to

https://truthsleuthlocal.netlify.app.

For example, you might see questionable information about where to vote or how to vote. From this dashboard, reporters can review submissions, notice trends and potentially report on widespread misinformation.

Already, this project has led to coverage of myths that arose after Hurricane Helene's devastation in Western North Carolina, such as misconceptions about FEMA disaster funding.and Al-generated photos of flooding.

You may also follow our Reality Checks - like one by Kyle Ingram debunking accusations of election theft after the North Carolina State Board of Elections removed 750,000 registrations from the voter rolls.

To anonymously submit misinformation you see, create a Truth Sleuth Local account. Then, select "New Report" and fill in the form, using as much detail as possible. All identifying information in recorded responses will be removed before publication, if your report is used.

Those unable to access the database for any reason can submit a report to this form [https://forms.gle/HM5i96FxA4w9dnzF9]. If you have already submitted a report to the database, you do not need to resubmit it.

If you have any questions about this project, how you can help or how your information will be used, email dome@newsobserver.com.

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Caitlyn Yaede and Emily Vespa, correspondents, 'We're taking a deep dive into election misinformation. Here's how you can help.', *News & Observer, The* (online), 22 Oct 2024 2A https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view? p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C6149A0D37BA60>



Western NC's largest DMV driver's license office reopens three weeks after Helene

October 22, 2024 | News & Observer, The: Web Edition Articles (Raleigh, NC) Author: Richard Stradling, News & Observer | Section: hurricane | 276 Words OpenURL Link

Western North Carolina's largest state driver's license office reopened Monday for the first time since the remnants of Hurricane Helene blew through the region over three weeks ago.

The DMV office on Patton Avenue in Asheville closed after the storm because of a lack of water. Helene badly damaged the city's utilities, leaving tens of thousands of customers without water for drinking, bathing, cooking and flushing.

The DMV office has water service again, though the city's boil advisory means customers and employees can't drink it, said agency spokesman Marty Homan.

"But you can flush toilets and wash your hands," Homan said, which is good enough to reopen the office.

Two DMV driver's license offices remain closed because of the storm. The Burnsville office in Yancey County still does not have water, Homan said, while the part-time office in Spruce Pine in Mitchell County needs new flooring before it can reopen.

On Sept. 27, the day Helene moved through Western North Carolina, 25 driver's license offices and 28 privately-run license plate agencies were closed. Only one of the license plate agency offices, in Marshall, remains closed.

The Asheville DMV office in Buncombe County is by far the largest and busiest in the region and was the only one operating in the county of 275,000 residents. A smaller express office on Tunnel Road across town was already closed while the building's roof and HVAC system are replaced.

The DMV has asked for authorization to waive late fees and provide no-cost duplicate licenses and IDs for people who lost theirs in the storm, Homan said. The agency is waiting for Gov. Roy Cooper to issue an executive order to make that possible, he said.

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Richard Stradling, News & Observer, 'Western NC's largest DMV driver's license office reopens three weeks after Helene', *News & Observer, The: Web Edition Articles* (online), 22 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view? p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C6027DAAB89988>



Why isn't the media reporting on thousands missing in Western NC? Because there's no proof.

October 22, 2024 | News & Observer, The: Web Edition Articles (Raleigh, NC) Author: Brian Gordon, News & Observer | Section: hurricane | 935 Words OpenURL Link

Karen Bruggemann of Chandler, North Carolina, assured she isn't missing.

"Sometimes I wish I were," she joked over the phone Tuesday.

Bruggemann's name appears on "Hurricane Helene People Finder," a Google Doc created after then-Tropical Storm Helene devastated multiple Western North Carolina communities. The storm disrupted phone and internet service, leaving thousands across the country unable to confirm the safety of relatives and friends in storm-impacted areas.

A concerned cousin in New York had typed Bruggemann into the Google Doc, adding her to more than 4,000 submissions. Many have since been updated from "missing" to "found." A few dozen statuses have changed to "deceased," with accompanying obituary links. But around 600 people on the list - including Bruggemann - still show as "missing."

At the top of the document, before any names appear, the unidentified administrator of Hurricane Helene People Finder emphasizes this "is NOT an official source" associated with "any county, state or federal agency, nor the American Red Cross."

"The information provided is not verified; community-sourced information may not be reliable, and there are no guarantees that the information listed is correct," it states. "This list is NOT making any claims that disagree with official sources about the number of missing persons. For reliable, verified information, contact local authorities."

In the past few days, social media accounts on X and TikTok have used Hurricane Helene People Finder to amplify unfounded claims about the number of missing people in Western North Carolina.

On Friday, the TikTok account Carolina Roots posted a video that scrolls through the names of people listed as "missing." "Why aren't they sharing the truth?" the account asks. This video has since been shared more than 7,000 times.

Two days later, the X account @Sassafrass_84 posted the Carolina Roots video and incorrectly suggested up to 3,000 people were on the communal missing persons list.

RAL_100524-HELENE-TEL-013.JPGA FEMA search and rescue team from Maryland search for human remains in debris from a structure in Swannanoa on Sunday, Oct. 6, 2024 after Tropical Storm Helene flooded the Swannanoa River.

"This is gut-wrenching," the account stated. "The media is lying. The North Carolina governor is lying."

@Sassafrass_84 has more than 336,000 followers. Its bio states "I'm here to re-elect Trump. Stay in in your lane Dems. Maga is strong." The account's post displaying Hurricane Helene People Finder has attracted 1.2 million impressions and 32,000 likes.

The News & Observer has accounted for a second "missing" person on the community list. In a phone call Monday, Tammy Broadbent confirmed her sister-in-law Summer Broadbent Carpenter of Henderson County is "fine." No relative or close friend had added Carpenter to this list. Instead, she was included by a worried stranger who had stopped hearing from her on social media.

Hurricane helene deaths by county map embed

Officials confront misinformation

As of Oct. 21, the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services said 26 people remain missing after Helene, which swept through the region in late September. This is down from the state's official count last week of 89 missing persons. North Carolina has so far confirmed 96 Helene-related deaths.

The state is working with local governments and nonprofits to gather reports on missing people and confirm their status. Last week, Gov. Roy Cooper said the official count of people missing is likely to fluctuate as more cases are uncovered or resolved.

Leaders from both major political parties have called out the spread of misinformation in the weeks since Helene.

"We have also seen an uptick in untrustworthy sources trying to spark chaos by sharing hoaxes, conspiracy theories, and hearsay about hurricane response efforts across our mountains," Republican U.S. Rep. Chuck Edwards said in an Oct. 8 online statement.

RAL_OLDFORT-NE-100524-RTW_4.JPGMembers of IChurch from Hickory, N.C. pray with Bob Smith, center, a Trustee of the Old Fort United Methodist Church on Saturday, October 5, 2024 in Old Fort, N.C.

Addressing specific rumors regarding the Rutherford County town of Chimney Rock, Edwards wrote "Rutherford County emergency services personnel are going to extensive lengths to search for missing people."

The N.C. Department of Public Safety warned online that "nefarious actors and those with ill intent may be taking advantage of this situation by spreading false information."

As the mayor of Canton, a Haywood County town 20 miles west of Asheville, Zeb Smathers said downed cellular service after Helene created a vacuum people filled with unverified information.

"There are people that have lost everything, either homes or loved ones," he said. "That is the standard we have to measure ourselves by. So if you are purposely putting things out there that are false or you don't know to be true, than you are not living up to that high standard."

HELENE-NE-101724-RTW_3.jpgLittle Crabtree Creek is littered with storm debris and vehicles on Thursday, October 17, 2024, three weeks after Hurricane Helene flooded the South Toe River and adjacent creeks near Micaville in Yancey County, N.C.

On Friday, three U.S. representatives from North Carolina requested a national intelligence briefing on the spread of online misinformation hindering efforts to rebuild parts of Western North Carolina. In a letter to the Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines, U.S. Reps. Deborah Ross, Wiley Nickel and Kathy Manning raised concerns about foreign governments promoting the misinformation to undermine public trust in government.

"This information is dangerous to saving life and property right now, and we need to get to the bottom of whoever might be disseminating it, manipulating it and manipulating our citizens," Ross, a Wake Democrat, told The N&O in an interview Saturday.

NC Reality Check is an N&O series holding those in power accountable and shining a light on public issues that affect the Triangle or North Carolina. Have a suggestion for a future story? Email realitycheck@newsobserver.com

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You can get free admission to the NC State Fair while helping Western NC. Here's how

October 22, 2024 | News & Observer, The: Web Edition Articles (Raleigh, NC) Author: Chyna Blackmon, News & Observer | Section: local | 446 Words OpenURL Link

If you've been searching for a way to support storm victims hit hard by Hurricane Helene, you'll have the opportunity to do so at the N.C. State Fair.

Once again, the fair will be hosting its annual donation drive on Thursday, Oct. 24 to offer free admission to those who donate non-perishable food items.

But this year, all food collected that day will be sent to Western North Carolina for those still struggling weeks after Helene swept through as the deadliest storm in the state's history.

"Hunger was a serious crisis in Western North Carolina long before Hurricane Helene, and our friends in the region have been absolutely devastated by the damage from this storm," said Charlie Hale, Interim CEO for Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina. "Donations during Smithfield Foods' Hunger Relief Day are incredibly important as food banks across the state work together to meet these challenges head on."

Donate these nonperishables to the NC State Fair

As cleanup continues in communities hit hard by the storm, the food bank is asking fair goers to donate six non-perishable food items, with victims most in need of:

Peanut butter and jams (larger plastic jars)Chicken, tuna, or salmon (in pouches or pop-top cans)Ravioli and other ready-to-heat meals (in pop-top cans)Crackers (boxes or sealed containers)Dried or canned fruit (sealed containers or pop-top cans)Granola or protein bars (boxes with individually-wrapped contents)

"I want us to have a record year to make a big impact and help those in need in Western North Carolina," said Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler.

"Please consider bringing six of the food items the Food Bank has told us are most needed. When fairgoers come to any gate, they'll have an easy opportunity to give back, and they'll know the Food Bank will help their donations do the most good."

Last year's donations totaled more than 253,000 pounds of food, equivalent to 315,547 meals, according to the Department of Agriculture.

Donate money to hurricane relief while buying tickets

Along with the annual food drive, the state fair team also launched a "N.C. State Fair Cares" donation tab for those buying tickets online with all proceeds benefiting MANNA FoodBank of Asheville.

"Many people have asked about doing something for Western North Carolina and this will give those who would like to donate an easy way to do that when they purchase their advance ticket," Troxler previously said in a statement. "The need is great in Western North Carolina and MANNA FoodBank will continue to work to meet those needs despite the setback."

Ask NC service journalism team EMBED

Support these Western NC artisans + Helene storm victims at 2024 NC State Fair

Want to donate clothing to Western NC? Here's where & when to drop it off

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Under the Dome: Trump's NC stops, fake flyers and lawmakers concerned about misinformation

October 22, 2024 | News & Observer, The: Web Edition Articles (Raleigh, NC) Author: Emily Vespa, correspondent, News & Observer | Section: politics government | 774 Words OpenURL Link

Good morning and welcome to the Under the Dome newsletter. I'm Emily Vespa.

Former president and GOP presidential nominee Donald Trump visited three North Carolina cities Monday. He first stopped in Swannanoa, a community that was hard-hit by the remnants of Hurricane Helene, where he criticized the federal government's response to the storm and thanked nonprofits and first responders who have helped with recovery.

As Trump left the news conference in Swannanoa, he dodged a question about whether he still supports Lt. Gov. Mark Robinson, whose gubernatorial campaign has been mired in scandal, saying he hasn't kept up with the state's governor's race.

Trump then took the stage at a rally in Greenville, where he restated false claims that FEMA diverted disaster relief funds to migrants and talked about his plans for a second term in office if elected. He said he would "launch the largest deportation program in American history," end the war in Ukraine and rid schools of "critical race theory and transgender insanity."

Finally, Trump traveled to Concord, where he joined his son, Eric Trump, and former U.S. secretary for Housing and Urban Development Ben Carson for the 11th Hour Faith Leaders Meeting.

Trump will hold another rally Tuesday night in Greensboro.

Read coverage of Trump's Monday visit from The Charlotte Observer's Mary Ramsey, Nora O'Neill and Josh Bergeron and our own Kyle Ingram.

Curious about what it's like on the ground at campaign rallies? Dawn Vaughan, Avi Bajpai and Kyle Ingram talk about what goes on behind-the-scenes at presidential campaign rallies in the latest episode of our Under the Dome podcast.

NC CONGRESS MEMBERS VOICE CONCERNS ABOUT POTENTIAL FOREIGN HELENE MISINFORMATION

Three North Carolina members of Congress on Friday asked for a national intelligence briefing on whether foreign adversaries are at play in the swarm of online misinformation about Helene, Virginia Bridges reports.

Rep. Deborah Ross, a Raleigh Democrat, pointed to reporting on research that suggests foreign governments, including China and Russia, are amplifying Helene misinformation to undermine trust in the government and hinder relief efforts.

In a letter to Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines, Democratic Reps. Ross, Wiley Nickel and Kathy Manning requested a briefing on any intelligence related to the misinformation.

UNAUTHORIZED ENDORSEMENT FLYERS CIRCULATE AT EARLY VOTING SITES

Two flyers that circulated at some Raleigh early voting sites and ostensibly list official endorsements from the Wake County Democratic and Republican parties are fake and incorrect, officials said.

Kristen Johnson reports that the unapproved flyers, which endorse candidates for local, state and federal races, look like legitimate endorsements but don't disclose who produced them.

A full list of the candidates endorsed by Wake's Democratic Party is on its website, wakedems.org. The county's Republican Party lists its official endorsements on wakegop.org.

CAMPAIGN WATCH

Former President
Former President

WHAT ELSE WE'RE WORKING ON

Polls show a tight race for state superintendent of public schools, with Democrat Mo Green boasting just a 2-to-3 point lead over Republican Michele Morrow, T. Keung Hui reports. North Carolina broke the state record for first-day early voting turnout, reports Kyle Ingram; 353,166 people voted in-person on Thursday. And by Sunday, over 1 million North Carolina voters had cast their ballots, the State Board of Elections said.

WHAT ELSE WE'RE READING

Elections integrity activist and Lee County GOP chair James Womack told North Carolina volunteers to flag people on the voter rolls with "Hispanic-sounding last names" as potential "suspicious voters," CBS reports.

VOTER GUIDE

In the latest candidate questionnaires from our 2024 NC Voter Guide, see what candidates for U.S. House District 13 have to say about the issues, and learn more about their biographies.

One candidate answered our questions:

Democrat Frank Pierce

Today's newsletter was by Emily Vespa. Check your inbox tomorrow for more #ncpol.

You can sign up to receive the Under the Dome newsletter at newsobserver.com/newsletters. Want your friends to get our email, too? Forward them this newsletter so they can sign up. We want to know what you would like to see in the Under the Dome newsletter. Do you like highlights from the legislature? Political analysis? Do you have a question you'd like The News & Observer team to answer? Tell us here. You can also email us at dome@newsobserver.comDon't forget to follow our tweets and listen to our Under the Dome podcast for more developments.

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Family grieved dog for 6 days after home exploded. Then barking is heard in rubble

October 22, 2024 | News & Observer, The: Web Edition Articles (Raleigh, NC) Author: Olivia Lloyd, News & Observer | Section: national | 393 Words OpenURL Link

It seemed unlikely that a family pet survived when a home exploded and "instantly disintegrated" in Virginia, firefighters said.

But six days after the explosion, the sound of barking came from the rubble pile.

On Oct. 15, a private contractor replacing a water line in Haymarket accidentally struck a gas line, causing a gas leak, according to the Prince William County Fire & Rescue System.

Firefighters and the gas company arrived at the scene and began evacuating nearby homes, when one suddenly exploded, according to first responders.

The home collapsed into a pile of rubble, which then caught fire, firefighters said.

Brandy_rescue2_fitted.jpegEfforts from firefighters and some "good old coaxing" helped free 6-year-old Brandy from the rubble of the collapsed home.

Two families comprised of six people living at the home had cleared out and no human injuries were reported, according to fire rescue, which extinguished the flames following the explosion.

But Brandy, a couple's 6-year-old dog, was inside at the time, her owners told InsideNoVa.

"There was a lot of grieving," Megan Schnapp told the outlet.

Then, on Oct. 21, six days after the "horrific" incident, an insurance investigator visiting the wreckage heard an unexpected sound - a dog barking, WUSA reported.

Crews returned to the scene and said they also heard the barking from underneath a collapsed part of the home.

"Firefighters were able to free the animal after about 20 minutes of deploying structure collapse stabilization shoring techniques and some good old coaxing by the home's owner," rescuers said. "She appeared to be in good shape and showed her happiness of being freed by rapid tail wagging."

Lt. Mark Waldrop of the Prince William County Fire Department told WUSA9 that structural collapses can make "a void space that creates livable conditions for anything that may be trapped in there."

He added it was "remarkable" that the dog withstood the immense water from firefighters' efforts to extinguish the blaze, on top of surviving without food.

Firefighters said the dog is expected to recover fully.

"And now our family is complete again," Schnapp told InsideNoVa.

The exact cause that sparked the explosion is under investigation.

Prince William County is part of the western Washington, D.C., metropolitan area.

Trapped dog saved from Helene flooding 'just in time,' NC shelter says. 'True bravery'

Trapped kitten could be heard crying inside storm drain. See Texas shelter step in

Dog sees car hit and kill owner on sidewalk and walks home alone, Virginia cops say

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Olivia Lloyd, News & Observer, 'Family grieved dog for 6 days after home exploded. Then barking is heard in rubble', *News & Observer, The: Web Edition Articles* (online), 22 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view? p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C5FF8E8C0750B0>



Trump stops in Greensboro, his 4th NC visit in two days, as election enters home stretch

October 22, 2024 | News & Observer, The: Web Edition Articles (Raleigh, NC) Author: Avi Bajpai, News & Observer | Section: election | 1101 Words OpenURL Link

Two weeks out from Election Day, former President Donald Trump returned to North Carolina for his fourth event in the state in two days.

Addressing an energized crowd in Greensboro on Tuesday night, Trump urged supporters to take advantage of early voting and tell Vice President Kamala Harris that she's "fired." Trump said Harris had been the "worst vice president" in history. Pointing to her dropping out of the 2020 presidential race before the Democratic primaries began, he said she "has no right to even run." He said the country would be "finished" if she won.

In an almost two-hour speech, Trump slammed the Biden-Harris administration's economic and energy policies, and response to the wars between Russia and Ukraine, and Israel and Hamas, assailing "stupid people running our country" that he said aren't respected by foreign leaders.

102224-TRUMP-GBORO-KLM-10.jpgA person holds up a sign in support of former President Donald Trump during a rally at the Greensboro Coliseum Complex on Tuesday, Oct. 22, 2024, in Greensboro, N.C.

Before wrapping up his remarks, he brought out former Democratic U.S. Rep. Tulsi Gabbard, a major supporter of his, who announced to the cheering crowd that after becoming an independent in 2022, she had decided to join the Republican Party.

Trump spent nearly all of Monday in North Carolina, heading west to Swannanoa to see the destruction caused by Hurricane Helene before flying to the other side of the state for a rally in Greenville at the same venue where Harris held her own rally a week earlier. He ended the day by heading back west for an invitation-only meeting with faith leaders in Concord.

As the presidential race enters the final stretch, the Trump and Harris campaigns are planning how best to deploy the candidates, their running mates, and their top surrogates to the swing states that will decide the election.

On Tuesday, Trump attended a roundtable discussion in Miami aimed at reaching Latino voters in the morning, before returning to the Tar Heel State for the rally at the Greensboro Coliseum Complex's Special Events Center, an arena with a capacity of 5,000.

Trump's visits over 24 hours illustrate the significance of North Carolina as a battleground state with 16 electoral votes. Polling shows an exceedingly close race between Harris and Trump.

Taxes & tariffs

Trump touted his plans to implement tariffs and cut taxes, including his call to eliminate taxes on tips, and a policy he recently announced in Detroit to make interest on car loans tax-deductible.

He said in his second term he would ramp up domestic energy production and crack down on illegal immigration. While on the campaign trail this year, Trump has frequently pledged to launch "the largest domestic deportation operation in American history" - a promise he reiterated on Tuesday.

Trump also called, to cheers and applause from the crowd, for migrants here illegally who kill American citizens or law enforcement to receive the death penalty. He made the same remark at rallies in Nevada and Colorado earlier this month.

Reflecting on his third bid for the White House drawing to a close, Trump said to cheers that his campaign to "Make America Great Again" was a "movement of love" and the "single greatest political movement in the history of our country."

102224-TRUMP-GBORO-KLM-12.jpgFormer President and Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump speaks during a campaign rally at the Greensboro Coliseum Complex on Tuesday, Oct. 22, 2024, in Greensboro, N.C.

Ahead of Trump's remarks on Tuesday, N.C. GOP Chairman Jason Simmons told The News & Observer that early voter turnout from Republicans across the state "has been fantastic" so far.

The State Board of Elections reported that as of 4 p.m. Sunday - the fourth day of early voting - more than a million of North Carolina's nearly 7.8 million registered voters had cast their ballots.

Simmons said early voting figures from those counties that report breakdowns of how many people voting early are registered Democrats, Republicans and unaffiliated voters, shows that Republicans "continue to overperform" this year.

The increase in GOP voters going to the polls early, instead of on Election Day, comes as Trump and his campaign have stressed the importance of voting however and whenever is easiest for them.

Simmons said that Republican and unaffiliated voters "have been frustrated with what they've seen over the last four years with this administration, with higher prices and public safety that's just out of control."

Other speakers at Tuesday's rally included U.S. Sen. Ted Budd, U.S. Rep. Virginia Foxx, and Addison McDowell, who is running for Congress from North Carolina's 6th Congressional District.

Campaign visits from candidates

Last week, after Harris visited Raleigh to pack supplies for Western North Carolina and rallied supporters in Greenville, her running mate Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz visited Durham and Winston-Salem.

In Durham, Walz was joined by former President Bill Clinton, who continued on with a bus tour of Eastern North Carolina that included stops in Wilmington, Fayetteville, Wilson, Greenville and Rocky Mount, and ended with a block party in Raleigh.

Trump's running mate, U.S. Sen. JD Vance of Ohio, campaigned and took questions from reporters in Wilmington last week as well.

During his swing across North Carolina on Monday, Trump urged supporters to get to the polling booths to "save America."

Ahead of Trump's Greensboro rally, Democrats held a news conference where they slammed the Republican nominee as unfit for office, and "too extreme for North Carolina."

State Sen. Michael Garrett, a Greensboro Democrat, said a second Trump presidency "would mean the repeal of the Affordable Care Act."

"Trump is also determined to cut Social Security and return America to a very dark past - back to failed economic policies that leave our seniors high and dry," Garrett said. "Our community deserves better than a second Trump presidency, and we're ready to elect Vice President Harris and Gov. Walz."

Mark Robinson not in attendance

Tuesday's speakers didn't include Lt. Gov. Mark Robinson, the GOP nominee for governor, who Trump has endorsed. During a March rally in Greensboro, where Robinson is from, Trump called him "Martin Luther King on steroids."

Robinson, who has trailed Democratic Attorney General Josh Stein in the polls for months, hasn't appeared with Trump since a mid-August rally in Asheboro, when Trump welcomed Robinson on stage.

In the weeks since the governor's race was upended by a CNN report that revealed alleged racist, sexually graphic, and antisemitic comments Robinson made on the message board of a pornography website a decade ago, Trump has distanced himself from Robinson.

As he was heading to North Carolina on Monday, Trump declined to answer when asked by a reporter if he would urge supporters to continue backing Robinson.

"I'm not familiar with the state of the race right now," Trump said, according to Politico. "I haven't seen it."

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Student served food to rescue crews in Marion

October 22, 2024 | News Herald, The (Morganton, NC) Author: MIYA BANKS mbanks@hickoryrecord.com| Section: News | 1138 Words OpenURL Link

Amidst the devastation of Hurricane Helene, one of the most striking things 16-year-old Wyatt Spencer witnessed was the desire of people to help one another.

"I saw hundreds of people who just lost everything, but the only thing they wanted to do was help the other person who lost everything else," Spencer said.

Spencer also noted the devastation he saw while volunteering in areas hit by the storm. He said he saw pictures on the news and, to a degree, knew what to expect. Seeing it himself put the damage into perspective.

"After seeing the community and the devastation up there on a firsthand level ... I knew I had to come back and help for as long as I could," Spencer said. "There's so many people in need."

He added, "There's people that don't know what they're going to do in the next stage of their life. And to some people, seeing you walk over with the cold drink, hot food and a smile on your face is the best part of their day. And you don't know how much longer it could be before they get that again."

Spencer said he was born and raised in Catawba County. He is an 11th-grade student at Bandys High School.

Spencer said he has volunteered in Spruce Pine, Burnsville, Red Hill, Bat Cave and around Lake Tahoma in McDowell County.

"No one asked him to do this," said Spencer's mother, Kristen Crawford. "(And) he didn't ask my permission. He said he was going."

Spencer said on an average day of volunteering, he would wake up at 3:45 a.m. to 4 a.m. and drive to a location over an hour away. He said he would get home around 11 p.m., sleep and repeat.

Three hours of sleep was a good night of sleep, Spencer said.

Crawford said she cannot put to words how proud she is of Spencer, though she is concerned about his mental health at times with everything he is witnessing.

"But he loves it, and he keeps going back for more, and he feels a calling for it," Crawford said.

Spencer said he plans to continue volunteering.

Spencer shared his experiences in an interview. This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

What made you want to volunteer?

It kind of started with my girlfriend's dad, Stephen Parker. He's a state trooper. I heard he was going up there with the N.C. Troopers Association and the North Carolina Fraternal Order of Police. As soon as I heard he was going up there, I knew immediately I wanted to go after seeing what had been done to the places up there. I knew I wanted to go and help people in need.

What was the most striking thing you saw?

The biggest thing I saw was the community coming together. I mean, I've seen a lot of bad, but through all the bad, I've seen a lot of good. I saw hundreds of people who just lost everything, but the only thing they wanted to do was help the other person who lost everything else. I met a couple who lost their house, and pretty much everyone they knew was presumably missing. We tried to bring them supplies one day, and even though they were running low on stuff, they wanted to pass it on to the next person. They said, 'We have enough to get us by for now, give it to the next person.' And even seeing rescue crews. You name a state, they were there. There was just so much good in a time of bad.

What type of volunteer work are you doing?

I served food to any rescue crews, any emergency personnel, because we were staged at the McDowell County emergency operations center, and we were serving around 1,500 meals a day for the first few days for emergency personnel and anybody in the community who needed them. And then, as the week went on, we slowed down a little bit. We probably got around 1,000 each day. I started out doing that.

And then I wanted to get more physically involved. I started doing supply runs for people that had no access to anything and started taking food to crews who were in places where they were working 18-20 hour days but weren't getting fed anything throughout the day. What I would do is, I would load up with hot food and cold drinks and take that to them while they were in the field.

Later in the week, I started doing some more hands-on stuff and went up towards Red Hill. We cut some roads up and cleared some driveways and stuff for people who, nobody had really got to them yet. Luckily, they were fine and they had plenty of supplies. But we made it to where they could get out of the driveway for the first time in 10 days.

What values have you grown up with?

Leadership is probably the biggest one, especially in a world like today where everybody kind of wants to see what the people around them are doing. Going ahead and taking charge and showing people the way we should be doing stuff instead of letting them try and figure it out on their own. That, and we need to help the people around us. Definitely caring. My mom owns Endeavors Pediatric Therapy in Statesville, that has a huge role in caring for kids in the community. So, caring is one of the biggest things. Also hardship. Like, not letting something stop you. Keep going and keep pushing until you get the results you want.

What makes you happy or gives you joy?

One of the biggest things that really made me happy and gave me joy is helping people, especially in the past week. Nothing made me feel better than coming home every single day knowing I helped as many people as I could within a community that just lost everything. Even the first responders in the field that had been working for 15 hours, it made them so happy just to have a hot meal in their hands. Whereas somebody that just lost their house, their cars, everything, and they're living in a shed that's 10 foot by 10 foot now, you bring them a case of water and a bag of snacks, and they're more than excited to see you. That's something that makes me happy. Success also makes me happy. Like, achieving a goal definitely makes me happy.

What motivates you?

I want to inspire people, and I want to be seen as a leader within my community. I want people to look up to me and really see what our generation can do. I feel like our generation is really looked down on. We make a lot of bad choices, but I want to show the world there's always hope for the future generations.

Miya Banks is an education reporter at the Hickory Daily Record.

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FEMA Disaster Recovery Center open in Morganton, will be open until Dec. 14

October 22, 2024 | News Herald, The (Morganton, NC) Author: Sharon McBrayer| Section: Government Politics | 200 Words OpenURL Link

A long-term FEMA Disaster Recovery Center is open in Burke County to help residents with FEMA registration and access to further resources.

Since Hurricane Helene hit, FEMA Disaster Survivors Assistance personnel have been setting up at different locations throughout the county to help residents register for assistance, Burke County said in a news release. The mobile sites will be replaced by the Disaster Recovery Center.

The long-term Disaster Recovery Center will be at Foothills Higher Education Center. Located at 2128 S. Sterling St., Morganton, the center is open seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. through Dec. 14. No appointment is necessary.

The center is a one-stop shop where residents can meet face to face with FEMA representatives, apply for FEMA assistance, receive referrals to local assistance, apply with the U.S. Small Business Administration for disaster loans and more.

FEMA financial assistance may include money for basic home repairs, personal property losses and other uninsured, disaster-related needs, such as child care, transportation, medical needs, funeral or dental expenses.

It is not necessary to go to a center to apply for FEMA assistance. The fastest way to apply is online at DisasterAssistance.gov or via the FEMA app. Applicants can also call 800-621-3362.

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Sharon McBrayer, 'FEMA Disaster Recovery Center open in Morganton, will be open until Dec. 14', *News Herald, The* (online), 22 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C5E7710DE33CA0



WHC title chase gains focus

October 22, 2024 | News Herald, The (Morganton, NC) Author: JUSTIN EPLEY Sports editor | Section: News | 464 Words OpenURL Link

H.S. FOOTBALL

VALDESE — Not so long ago, it was uncertain if the Western Highlands 1A/2A Conference would return to action in football this fall.

After all, many of the league's mountain communities were devastated by damage from Hurricane Helene, and playing football was far from the top focus.

But the WHC's schools and squads rallied and finally returned to the field this weekend, with one game played as normal on Friday night before a pair of contests were held on Saturday afternoon as schools in Avery County, Buncombe County, Mitchell County and Yancey County are faced with nighttime travel restrictions.

Madison won the first game back on the schedule, 9-0 at Rosman on Friday night, before Mountain Heritage earned a 44-7 home win over Avery County on Saturday, shortly before Draughn fell to Mitchell 33-14 at home in Valdese in the Wildcats' homecoming game.

With the Wildcats (3-3, 1-1 WHC), Patriots, Vikings and idle Owen already sporting one league loss and the Tigers sitting with a pair of WHC defeats, the conference championship chase already seems to be boiling down to the Mountaineers and Cougars, who have finished in the top three in the league standings in each of the previous three seasons in the current NCHSAA alignment, winning the conference once apiece.

Mountain Heritage took its turn atop the WHC by toppling Mitchell 28-14 and Draughn 52-15, both in Burnsville, a season ago.

The Mountaineers last won the conference in the fall of 2021 after beating the Wildcats 62-14 at home and the Cougars 33-0 on the road in consecutive games.

DHS won the league in 2022 after scoring home wins over Mitchell 56-21 and Mountain Heritage 49-21.

Barring any unexpected losses for either team, the Cougars and Mountaineers are scheduled to play for first place in the WHC at 1 p.m. on Nov. 2 in Bakersville. The Wildcats will have their crack at Mountain Heritage at 2 p.m. on Nov. 9 in Valdese, a game that could give them a chance to force a tie atop the league standings.

On Saturday, Draughn battled Mitchell to a scoreless tie through one quarter before trailing 14-0 at halftime and 27-0 following three quarters of play before Sterling Radabaugh's 31-yard touchdown run on fourth down made it 277. After the Mountaineers made it 33-7, DHS tacked on another late TD on Radabaugh's 7-yard pass to tight end Jacob Mull.

Quarterback Caleb Cook and utility man Owen Riddle scored two short rushing touchdowns apiece for Mitchell and running back Cole Young had a 29-yard score.

Marshall Brinkley (10-66) and Radabaugh (10-44-1) led the Draughn rushing attack. Radabaugh completed 9 of 21 passes for 90 yards, a TD and two interceptions, connecting with Brinkley (4-39), Kayden Lytle (2-26) and Mull (3-25-1).

Jamal Calloway tallied an interception for the Wildcats' defense.

Justin Epley can be reached at jepley@morganton.com or sports@morganton.com.

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It's time to consider purchasing flood insurance

October 22, 2024 | News-Topic, The (Lenoir, NC) Author: Mike Causey Insurance Commissioner | Section: Archives | 410 Words OpenURL Link

As I visit many of the western North Carolina communities devastated by Hurricane Helene, I'm heartbroken by the destruction I see. I'm also disturbed that many people whose homes were damaged or lost by floodwaters during Helene, which had tropical storm force winds when it passed through western North Carolina, did not have flood insurance.

While mobile homeowners and comprehensive (other than collision) automobile insurance policies do cover damage from flooding, standard homeowners' insurance does not cover damages from floods. Dwelling insurance and renters' insurance policies also do not cover damages from flooding.

Most flood insurance policies are written by the federal government through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). There is also a private insurance flood program offered in North Carolina.

To get flood insurance through the NFIP, you need to go to their website at www.floodsmart.gov or call them at 800-427-4661. Don't wait for another hurricane to head to North Carolina to sign up. There's a 30-day waiting period between the time you sign up for coverage to begin.

Most North Carolina homeowners do not have flood insurance. While mortgage companies usually require standard homeowners' insurance as a condition of getting a loan, many do not require flood insurance unless they're located in a high-risk flood zone.

NFIP statistics show that about 139,000 people have flood insurance through NFIP statewide, with most of those located in the coastal areas of North Carolina. Only about 0.7% of homeowners in the 25 counties falling under the Hurricane Helene disaster declaration had flood insurance.

I've said on many occasions, if it rains at your house, you need flood insurance. Since Hurricane Florence cause a lot of flood damage in 2018, I've initiated efforts to inform North Carolinians about the need to purchase flood insurance. We have flood insurance classes, where insurance agents, adjusters, real estate agents, engineers and others can get continuing education credit

by attending the classes. We remind homeowners many times during the year of the need to buy flood insurance.

We've made some progress, but obviously not enough progress.

Many people may not buy flood insurance because they think they don't need it or that it's expensive. I'm sure there are a lot of people in western North Carolina who wish they'd bought it. If you live in a low-risk flood zone, a flood insurance policy may be quite affordable.

I encourage you, while it's fresh on your mind, to consider purchasing flood insurance. Buying it can help put your mind at ease as future storms approach.

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Mike Causey Insurance Commissioner, 'It's time to consider purchasing flood insurance', *News-Topic, The* (online), 22 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C5E79D271C19A8



Enjoy the apples, remember the farmers

October 22, 2024 | News-Topic, The (Lenoir, NC) Author: ARLENE NEAL Columnist| Section: Archives | 656 Words OpenURL Link

Last weekend my daughter sent me pictures of an apple festival where she photographed a table filled with dozens of heritage apples. Those old timey apples reminded me of my grandfather's orchard in my childhood, memories my children have heard many times with descriptions of apples that I have never seen anywhere else.

That orchard was already old when I was growing up, and after Grandpa died no one was able or interested in maintaining the trees. One by one they started dying out with diseased limbs and woodpecker damage. One ancient-looking tree that stood beside our dirt road bore the blackest apples I have ever seen, their texture tough and leathery.

Mama didn't like those apples. She said the settlers had used them to make dried apples since the apple didn't seem to have much moisture. Another small tree bore little red apples so tart they made my mouth pucker. The sweetest apples came from a Stark Delicious tree—not the Red Delicious common today. The Stark variety, yellowish with red streaks, was grown in lowa back in the 1800s. At one time, it was considered the best tasting apple in the country.

When the state paved our road, the apple trees in the right of way fell to the bulldozer. Later on the rest of the orchard was cleared to turn into pasture, and that was the end of apples on our family's property. If we had apples after that, someone else grew them. If we had the money, orchards near us and over in Virginia would have plenty of apples most years.

I thought about the dependence we have on others for apples, when I learned that Henderson County produces 80% of the apples grown in North Carolina. NC State Extension reports that "if Henderson County was a state, it would rank No. 8 in the nation for apple production. Currently, North Carolina ranks No. 7 in the US." That's impressive!

It's unfortunate that Henderson County, with approximately 100 apple growers, was among the hardest hit counties in the catastrophic wind and flooding from Hurricane Helene. I watched videos of the destruction of orchards where raging flood waters uprooted trees and washed them into piles. Hilltop Farm showed their flooded orchard with downed trees and a sea of apples floating in the muddy water. Jeff Nix's orchards lost thousands of young Gala and Granny Smith apple trees which had just started to produce. The flood washed over his heavy machinery like toys in a mudpuddle.

"Apple Alley," as part of Highway 64 is called over there, will not have the usual fall tourist season as the farmers try to dig out and recover. The extent of damage to the county's farms will take months to assess, not only apples but strawberries, raspberries, and other fruit and vegetable crops.

I've never been so aware of how fragile our food production system can be. We take for granted the abundance of foods that appear on grocery store shelves, in produce bins, meat and dairy coolers, and freezers, with little thought of where the stuff is grown and processed. If I have apples today, a farmer somewhere grew them. (If you have trees and produce your own, you are fortunate.)

I do love apples and try to keep the traditional apple recipes from my growing up years—apple dumplings with drop biscuit dough, Mama's grated apple pie, fried apples, and attempts a few times at making fried apple pies. Today, we also enjoy apple crisp, apple cake, apple butter, and applesauce. Such gifts of God!

If you're privileged this fall season to hold an apple in your hands, one straight from an orchard or from a store,

pause to reflect on the marvel you possess, a treasure made of sunshine, water, and soil, subject to nature's insects, deer, freezing temperatures, droughts, storms and floods, while dependent on bees for pollination. And thank the farmers past and present who keep apple culture alive. We depend on them.

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Club News; Woodlake Women's Club

October 22, 2024 | Pilot, The (Southern Pines, NC) Author: Staff Writer | Section: Features | 154 Words OpenURL Link

The Woodlake Women's Club met Oct. 14, at Maples Grill. Witches, and fairies, and mice, oh my, so many clever costumes were on display. During the regular meeting the ladies passed the hat and collected \$605 to be used to help those affected by Hurricane Helene in western North Carolina. A split money raffle was held with three lucky winners. This month's presentation was by club member Mary Lancaster with her talk on learning new ways to stimulate your brain function and activity that will promote good brain health. Lancaster offered lots of handy tip,s and activities were presented to help keep your mind active and fresh. Members enjoyed a delightful German lunch and apple strudel with vanilla ice cream for dessert. The Woodlake Women's Club is open to adult women that live or own property at Woodlake. The next meeting is scheduled Nov. 14; advance reservations are required. Send any questions to wwc.est.1977@gmail.com.

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Staff Writer, 'Club News; Woodlake Women's Club', *Pilot, The* (online), 22 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C63D1336FB87F0



Editorial: Eagle, Three Birdies Highlight This Card

October 22, 2024 | Pilot, The (Southern Pines, NC) Author: Staff Writer | Section: Opinion | 635 Words OpenURL Link

Eagle, by Aberdeen native Sue Donathan White, who recently donated \$500,000 to the effort to refurbish an old building into the town's new library.

White, who lives in Greensboro but also has a home here, offered her contribution to the Friends of the Aberdeen Library to energize its years-long effort to raise funds for the project.

Work is already underway at the old warehouse on Exchange Street. When finished, it will replace the old Page Memorial Library, a building not much bigger than a standard apartment these days.

White remembers going to the old library downtown with her two siblings as a child to check out books and then grab a cherry coke from a downtown store. As an advocate for education, White emphasized the importance of developing a library that meets the needs of Aberdeen's growing population.

"I am just so excited about the prospect of having a new, innovative library there," White said.

Aberdeen Mayor Robbie Farrell characterized it well when he said, "This is philanthropy at its best. "This is great for a native to remember her home- town."

Birdie, by those too numerous to count, who sprung into action in the days after Hurricane Helene devastated western North Carolina. Following their hearts, hundreds of residents organized donation drives, loaded trailers and their personal vehicles and traveled northwest as far as they could go to drop off their care packages.

In addition, several emergency responders packed bags and headed west for several days to help their colleagues in mountain communities.

Deserving extra props: pilots operating out of Moore County Airport who, without hesitation, volunteered planes, time and expense to transport relief materials to western drop-off points.

"People are going to be impacted for weeks and months, and if we as a community can keep pushing to keep it going, we can keep helping," said Amanda Delgado, who organized drop-offs and shipment sat Red's Corner in Southern Pines. "The rural communities are going to need it most."

Birdie, by the organizers of a recent gala to honor some of the most pivotal youth leaders in the community: coaches.

The Coaches Recognition Gala was sponsored by the Bobby BC Collins Foundation and honored coaches Burgin Beale, John Buchholz, Nathaniel Carter, Barbara Foxx and James Moore. The five coaches taught, mentored and led thousands of students in a variety of high school sports over the years.

"Each person we have chosen to honor has dedicated his and her entire professional career guiding young people to fulfill dreams that have impacted an entire nation," Collins said. "We hope that each of our honorees will leave this place more assured that your work has not been in vain.

"We celebrate you with the love and appreciation that you deserve ... Tonight you are surrounded by many whose love for you is indelibly written in our hearts. You've been unselfish in your service. And we Bare eternally grateful."

Birdie, by the North Carolina Partnership for Children, Partners for Children and Families, and the Moore County Chamber of Commerce, for recently completing the test of a program that could help shape the future of child care for low-income parents.

The program, approved by the General Assembly last year, would essentially split the cost for child care among the parent, the employer and the state. Only parents making a certain income level would qualify for the program.

Moore was one of three counties to participate in the pilot study, using the Northern Moore Family Resource Center as a partner.

"The cost of child care is prohibitive, and if we split up the cost between three parties, we can make it more manageable," said Stuart Mills, executive director for Partners for Children and Families.

The effort is modeled off a similar program in Michigan, said State Sen. Jay Chaudhuri. "The hope," he said, "is that the pilot programs will establish the evidence to make this a statewide initiative."

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Sandhills Best Bets: Week of Oct. 23

October 22, 2024 | Pilot, The (Southern Pines, NC) Author: Staff Writer | Section: Features | 1059 Words OpenURL Link

Fire Safety Ready Readers

Southern Pines Fire and Rescue will host a storytime focused on fire safety on Wednesday, Oct. 23, at 3:30 p.m., at 500 W. Pennsylvania Ave., Southern Pines. Halloween costumes are encouraged!

Book Chat and Chill

Enjoy socializing and chatting about your favorite reads with the Southern Pines Public Library on Wednesday, Oct. 23, 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., at BHAWK, 175 Yadkin Road, Southern Pines. Whether you've been attending each month or this is your first time, everyone is welcome. Refreshments will be available for purchase.

Howl-o-ween Dog Costume Contest

Sandhills Dog Fair presents a Howl-o-ween dog costume contest and music bingo on Wednesday, Oct. 23, with registration starting at 5:30 p.m., at Southern Pines Growler Company, 160 W. New York Ave., Southern Pines. Music bingo follows at 7 p.m. Zoomies Funny Farm will be on-site with adoptable pups. Cost is \$5 for the costume contest or music bingo or a donation of pet supplies for participating rescue organizations.

Career Expo and Resource Fair

The Moore County Career Expo and ARPA Workforce Resources Fair is scheduled Thursday, Oct. 24, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., at the Fair Barn in Pinehurst. The event is sponsored by NCWorks, Mid-Carolina Workforce and Talent Development, Moore County Chamber of Commerce, Sandhills Community College, Moore County Schools and Moore County Economic Development Partnership. This is a free event, open to the public.

Festival D'Avion

Marking its sixth year, the Festival D'Avion returns Saturday, Oct. 26, ato the Moore County Airport. The outdoor event features classic and military aircraft displays, flyovers, precision jump teams, sightseeing tours, classic car displays, live entertainment, a "Junior Pilot" KidsZone, local vendors, food trucks and fun for the entire family. Purchase tickets in advance at www.ticketsignup.io/TicketEvent/FestivalDAvion24.

Holly Jolly Spooktacular Lights

Enjoy new Halloween blow-ups and light displays, fun for the whole family, at the Spooktacular Lights at 135 Fox Run Road, in Pinehurst. Tune your radio to 98.9 FM to view the show set to spooky music. The show runs nightly 6:30 to 10 p.m., through Oct. 31. Donations appreciated.

Corn Maze and Pumpkin Patch on the Farm

Pick your own pumpkin, make your way through the corn maze and play fun games at White Hill Farms, 5020 S. Plank Road, Cameron, open Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Saturdays, 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., and Sundays, 1 to 4:30 p.m. Admission is \$8 per person (kids 2 and under are admitted free).

Farm Corn Maze and Fall Fun

Kalawi Farm and Ben's Ice Cream host the annual Corn Maze and Fall Fun event on Fridays and Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Sundays 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Enjoy a hayride, corn maze, jump pillow, barrel trail and more. Tickets run \$10-\$12. Kalawi Farm is located at 1515 N.C. 211, in Eagle Springs.

Trunk or Treat

The Boys and Girls Club of the Sandhills will host a Trunk or Treat event on Friday, Oct. 25, 5 to 7 p.m., on the gravel parking lot behind the Moore Montessori School, 255 S. May St., Southern Pines. This is a free event, open to the public.

Frights and Pints Outdoor Movie

Aberdeen Parks and Recreation Department will sponsor an adult outdoor movie night on Friday, Oct. 25, featuring a screening of "Us." Games, beer and concessions open at 5:30 p.m., with film beginning at 7 p.m., at Aberdeen Lake Park. Bring a chair and blanket for comfort.

Dreams 4 All Gala

The Dream Maker Gala will be held Friday, Oct. 25, 6 p.m., at Village Pine Venue, 1628 McCaskill Road, Carthage. Anthony Ricciardi will be the special guest speaker. To purchase tickets or for sponsorship information, visit onecau.se/dream-maker.

'Paydert' Film Opening

Hollywood comes to the Sandhills on Friday, Oct. 25, at 6:30 p.m., at Carolina Cinemas Sandhills 10, in Southern Pines, with a screening of "Paydert," a mystery drama that delves into the deep well of ancestry history and connection. Immediately following the show, meet the filmmaker, cast and crew of this North Carolina-produced film by James Jones Jr.

Aberdeen Fear Factory

The terror returns to the largest indoor haunt at the Aberdeen Fear Factory with thrills 8:15 p.m. to midnight, weekends through Nov. 2, 10570 N.C. 211, in Aberdeen. Children 13 and under should be accompanied by an adult. Visit the 3D clown house or play Zombie Outbreak Paintball. For ticket prices and additional information, visit aberdeenfearfactory.com.

Trunk or Treat

Rufus McLaughlin American Legion Auxiliary will host a trunk or treat event on Saturday, Oct. 26, 1 to 4 p.m., at Pool Park, 730 S. Henley St., Southern Pines. Best trunk display will win a prize. To reserve a trunk space, text (919) 599-6605 or (910) 723-4454. Set-up is at 1 p.m.

Prayer Walk

Wear a white T-shirt and come pray with the Gathering Place of Shabach on a prayer walk Saturday, Oct. 26, 12 p.m., at Brookside Apartments, 432 Shaw Ave., Southern Pines.

Trunk or Treat

Culdee Presbyterian Church invites the community to enjoy a trunk or treat event with snacks, games and plenty of treats on Saturday, Oct 26, 4:30 to 6:30 p.m., at 916 N.C. 73, West End.

Concert for Carolina

Sunrise Theater will be live-streaming the Concert for Carolina featuring Luke Combs, Erick Church, James Taylor, Sheryl Crow, Keith Urban, Billy Strings, Bailey Zimmerman, The Avett Brothers, Scotty McCreery, Chase Rice and Parmalee on the big screen Saturday, Oct. 26, at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$20 donation to benefit those affected by Hurricane Helene. Purchase tickets at SunriseTheater.com.

Giant Puppet Show

The Paperhand Puppet Intervention presents "A World of Wonder" on Sunday, Oct. 27, at 2 p.m., at the R.E. Lee Auditorium at Pinecrest High School, to benefit Sandhills/Moore Coalition for Human Care. Purchase online at TicketMeSandhills.com.

Halloween Spook-tacular

The Moore County Library in Carthage invites the community for fun, games, refreshments, stories and face painting on Monday, Oct. 28, 4:30 to 5:30 p.m., at 101 W. Saunders St., Carthage. This is a free event.

Sunrise Live Auditions

Do you want to be part of the original cast for a brand-new holiday radio-play by a local playwright? Come by the Sunrise Theater on Oct. 28, or Oct. 30, 6 to 8 p.m., to audition. Casting for one man, four women, and one flexible role, and ages vary. Bring a headshot and an acting resume.

Hallelujah Night

Harrington Chapel Freewill Baptist Church will host a Hallelujah Night on Thursday, Oct. 31, 5 to 7:30 p.m., 164 S. Carlisle St., in Southern Pines. The evening event includes a trunk or treat event, fellowship, food and fun, and is free and open to the public.

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Tom Campbell: Be prepared for misinformation, violence this election season

October 22, 2024 | Rocky Mount Telegram: Web Edition Articles (NC) Author: Staff Writer | Section: News | 799 Words OpenURL Link

The County Compass is a tabloid-sized weekly publication distributed free to Pamlico, Beaufort, Craven, Jones and Carteret Counties. It claims to offer "360 degrees of thorough and honest news coverage — furnished FREE to thousands of loyal readers every week." The truth is that it is about 90 percent ads and any editorial content is so far to the right as to make Attila the Hun look liberal.

The issue for Sept. 12-16 caught our attention. On page 15 and bleeding over to page 16 is a big article for the 2nd Amendment Patriots of North Carolina. We assume it was a paid ad, however it is not identified as such.

There is a slug in a box within the message showing the County Compass logo. The group further identifies itself with the Pamlico County GOP and the ad was published within the Pamlico GOP website.

In a big bold box heading the ad is the slogan, "If you want peace, prepare for war."

The message attempts to connect the modern-day group to colonial militiamen, reminding readers that men between 16 and 60 were required to train regularly. It urges gun owners to stock up on ammo, get to the range and practice, claiming that protecting freedom is their job today.

Unwritten, but implied, is the message that if this election doesn't turn out right, with Trump winning, there will be violence and bloodshed.

In 2023, the Southern Poverty Law Center identified 50 hate and anti-government groups in our state. Twelve have a statewide footprint. But there is only one legal militia in North Carolina: the North Carolina National Guard.

"Be prepared" appears to be a common theme of these groups. All North Carolinians would be well advised to heed this warning.

The misinformation campaign since Hurricane Helene struck our state has grown to such proportions that federal officials have joined Governor Cooper and leaders from both political parties in warning people not to listen to the lies. Trump has been the genesis of many of the lies about disaster response. Marjorie Taylor Greene is posting garbage saying the National Weather Service and meteorologists can control the weather. Because of malicious and fallacious social media posts, federal officials who are trying to help have received threats in at least two counties.

Already we see attempts trying to discredit and disrupt our elections. The state GOP filed a lawsuit trying to get 225,000 registered voters thrown off the rolls. Another lawsuit from them claims the state is not canceling the voting registration of persons who refuse to serve on a jury because they aren't a citizen. The State Board of Elections vehemently denies this claim. Republicans are challenging absentee ballots that aren't sealed in the proper envelope (there are two envelopes enclosed with the ballot). They are also challenging ballots of overseas voters born in our state but who aren't living in our state. And the most preposterous of their claims is that Helene was merely an attempt to steal the election.

Some of the polling places in the western part of the state no longer exist and the State Board of Elections is doing all they can to ensure western voters are able to cast their ballots. It could only benefit Republicans if they helped instead of trying to disrupt. A close look at voting trends shows these western counties are almost solid red Republican.

And we need to be prepared for interference in polling places.

We're told outcomes might be learned later than Election Night this year to assure votes are accurately reported. It might take a week before the final presidential outcome is known. Our State Board of Elections has implemented rigorous procedures to ensure votes are recorded and tallied accurately, however they are also preparing for a barrage of expected challenges.

Donald Trump has intimated that if he doesn't win there might be bedlam. In an April Time magazine article, Trump, when asked about possible violence, said, "If we don't win, you know, it depends." In another interview he said, "If everything's honest, I'll gladly accept the results. If it's not, you have to fight for the right of the country."

Trump has never thought any election he was involved in was honest. He's never accepted the results. Not with Hilary Clinton. Not with Joe Biden. And he won't with Kamala Harris. He is still claiming the 2020 contest was rigged.

Are we so gullible, so partisan and mistrustful, that truth no longer matters? Can we not understand that these deliberate misinformation campaigns are designed to cause us to lose faith in all institutions? What happens when we no longer trust anyone?

Is it too late to stand up for the values that we once held dear? I cannot believe that lies and misinformation, that authoritarians who divide us and that fairness and justice no longer matter.

What has happened to us?

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p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C5EC480A680060>



Rowan County residents eligible for individual FEMA disaster assistance

October 22, 2024 | Salisbury Post (NC) Author: Robert Sullivan| Section: News | 324 Words OpenURL Link

Rowan County residents eligible for individual FEMA disaster assistance

Published 12:10 am Tuesday, October 22, 2024

By Robert Sullivan

RALEIGH — The Federal Emergency Management Agency has added Rowan County to its individual disaster assistance list, meaning that homeowners in the county who had uninsured damages or losses caused by Tropical Storm Helene are now eligible for assistance.

According to a release from FEMA, the addition of Rowan County to the list means that residents are now eligible for assistance with serious needs, displacement, temporary lodging, basic home repair costs, personal property loss and other disaster-caused needs.

There are multiple ways for people who need assistance to apply, including online at disasterassistance.gov, through the mobile FEMA app available on Google Play and the App Store and by calling the toll-free number 800-621-3362. The phone line is open every day and assistance is available in multiple languages. FEMA also has a video available at youtube.com/watch?v=LU7wzRjByhl providing accessible instructions on how to apply.

Residents will need a current phone number where they can be contacted, their address at the time of the storm and their current address, their Social Security number, a list of damage and losses, banking information if direct deposit is requested and an insurance policy number, the agent or the company name if the property is insured. FEMA advised residents with homeowner's, renter's or flood insurance to file claims as soon as possible, as federal assistance cannot duplicate benefits for losses covered by insurance but can provide funding if insurance does not cover all of the disaster-related expenses.

Rowan County was one of twelve Piedmont counties added to the disaster assistance list, along with Cabarrus, Cherokee, Forsyth, Graham, Iredell, Lee, Nash, Stanly, Surrey, Union and Yadkin counties. Previously, Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Clay, Cleveland, Gaston, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Lincoln, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mecklenburg, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Swain, Transylvania, Watauga, Wilkes and Yancey counties along with the Eastern Band of Cherokees were authorized for household assistance.

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Man injured in fiery crash on slow road to recovery, speed determined to be a factor

October 22, 2024 | Salisbury Post (NC) Author: Elisabeth Strillacci| Section: News| 1244 Words OpenURL Link

Man injured in fiery crash on slow road to recovery, speed determined to be a factor

Published 12:07 am Tuesday, October 22, 2024

By Elisabeth Strillacci

1 of 2

SALISBURY — A 20-year-old man who just moved his family back to Rowan County following Hurricane Helene is in intensive care after his truck caught fire following a crash around midnight Sunday, but he was able to talk to his wife Monday afternoon.

Statements from witnesses indicate Caleb Treadway was driving down West Innes Street in the 2800 block when he lost control of his Dodge 1500 truck, crashing into trees. The impact appears to have spun the truck around and it landed in the ditch, catching fire. The truck and the trees were heavily damaged by the fire.

According to N.C. State Highway Patrol, "It appears he crossed the yellow line and went off the left side of the road, over-corrected and ended up going off the other side of the road, striking a culvert." The truck also hit a grouping of trees just beyond the ditch. The state trooper investigating the crash said he was citing speed as a factor, given how hard the truck hit the trees, and that because he was informed Treadway had gone through the windshield, it was likely he unrestrained by a seatbelt, but added he was not planning to give any citation.

David Hood, who lives near the scene, said he had fallen asleep in his armchair and just after waking up "I heard what sounded like a bomb going off." He jumped in his car and went toward the sound.

He said the hood was gone from the top of the engine and Treadway was lying partially across the top of the engine and was unconscious when Hood found him. Hood, who says he is not a hero, just "doing what needed to be done," grabbed Treadway's arm and belt and pulled him away from the burning truck. Moments later, the fire flared up for some reason, but Hood had moved Treadway to safety, and others who had stopped to help then moved Treadway off the road and into a nearby yard.

Treadway grew up in the Rowan County area but had most recently lived in Michigan where he met his fiance, Molly, 19. The couple have a daughter who is one and a half. The young family had moved back to Salisbury because a close friend had said he could get Treadway a job, according to Molly's mother, Sarah Lauback.

"He just started his job this past Monday," she said, and Molly is a stay-at-home mother to their daughter.

One witness at the crash said the red pickup truck and her car were the only cars on the road at the time, and the truck passed her before losing control. The female driver said the truck landed in the ditch and burst into flames. She said she thought the truck was speeding when it passed her.

She immediately called 911. She struggled, she said, to process what had just happened in describing it to the dispatcher, but she did her best to explain it.

That same witness said other drivers had stopped to help and she saw Hood pull Caleb from the window of the truck, though she did not know who he was.

Firefighters had to work to put the fire out. They called for a tanker to bring more water when the fire flared up. At one point, a neighbor said she saw what appeared to be a small explosion just before the fire flared up again.

Firefighters and EMS arrived and called for a medical helicopter, confirming that Treadway was a flight candidate. Air Care One landed on the soccer field at North Hills School to take Treadway to Atrium Wake Forest Baptist Hospital in Winston-Salem.

Another witness, Kaiden Porter, said he was walking back from Catawba College when he "heard a loud car revving sound, then a crash and a pop, like a firework. I rushed over to the accident and there were five other people already there helping. Three of them pulled the unconscious man out of the car." He said he heard a dog crying but knew the dog did not survive. Hood said the dog was behind the truck but was too hot for him to touch, so he rolled it in a blanket and moved it a safe distance from the truck, and Animal Control later took the body. A second dog ran from the scene after the crash but was back home safe and sound Sunday.

Lauback said the couple were so new that they haven't yet found an apartment, and were just making ends meet, having used their savings to make the move. They were "very resilient," but right now, her daughter is distraught, because "she leaned on Caleb." The couple has no family in the area.

"Molly doesn't have a job, and now they have no vehicle, and because he just started working they had no medical insurance," Lauback said. "If he recovers, and right now we believe he will, it's going to be a long time before he can go back to work." She has started a GoFundMe for the family to help meet immediate needs while they figure out the next step.

"Molly told me he had gone out to get something for the baby, and minutes after he left, she looked at the clock and saw it was midnight and realized there probably was no store open," said Lauback. "She thought about calling him but then decided maybe he would find something." She said her daughter "had a sick feeling. They live just up from where it happened, and the fire station is right there. When she heard the sirens go off, she checked his location on her phone and saw it was not changing and knew something was wrong."

The Lauback family has suffered its share of losses in the past four years. Their home in Michigan burned down and another young family member passed away unexpectedly.

"I was talking with my own mom and I said we just need a break," Lauback said. But she is convinced "God was watching out for Caleb, because this could have been so much worse." He is not completely out of the woods yet, though doctors are optimistic. Lauback said Sunday he had been intubated, had numerous contusions, broken bones, cuts and a brain bleed. But Monday afternoon, Molly was on her way to see her husband and said she had spoken to him, which was what she needed — "I just wanted to hear his voice" — and she is hoping to bring him home soon.

Lauback, who is a nurse, said Treadway "is an amazing dad. He is one of a kind, loves to restore mechanical things in his spare time, and he and Molly are both very into nature. But his daughter is his baby girl, and she loves her dad." She hopes that Molly and their daughter will help give Treadway the determination to heal.

Anyone who wishes to donate to help sustain this young family as they figure out how to move forward can find the GoFundMe at https://gofund.me/0355237f

"When we lost our house, I was incredibly comforted by the way people came forward to help," said Lauback. "I have spent my whole life caring for other people (she was a director of nursing during COVID) but never thought about needing help myself. When we needed it, though, people were there. I hope they will be for my daughter's family, too."

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Matthews sends insulin, other meds to WNC

October 22, 2024 | Sampson Independent, The (Clinton, NC) Author: Michael B. Hardison mhardison@clintonnc.com | Section: news news-main top-stories | 635 Words OpenURL Link

As recovery efforts continue in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene, a local pharmacy has stepped to the plate to help fill some of the dire medical needs that have cropped up since the storm's devastation.

"We just got word that our EIGHT boxes of valuable insulin, cardiac meds and diabetic supplies made it to Operation Airdrop," Matthews Drugstore owner Tara Jackson posted on the Matthews social media page. "Those boxes were pretty to see. They were so appreciative. These crucial meds will go to rural areas. Our community really stepped up!!"

That was the message shared after news of the support medicine they sent reached Hickory campus of Appalachian State University on Oct. 7.

Those meds went towards a nationwide project called Operation Airdrop which, according to www.operation-airdrop.com, is a Texas based 501(c)(3) non-profit that organizes general aviation assets in the aftermath of a natural disaster.

Founded in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey in 2017, it mobilizes volunteer pilots and a diverse fleet of aircraft to deliver essential supplies to areas cut off from traditional aid routes. By partnering with local charities and organizations, the group's goals are to ensure that vital resources, such as the meds from Matthews Drug, reach those in need within hours, not days.

When Matthews and the community heard that Operation Airdrop was in need of supplies from Sampson County, it was a no-brainier for them to send aid.

"We were made aware of the need in western North Carolina for hard-to-find expensive, life-saving medications," Jackson said. "This was a niche in which we felt we could easily step in to assist and were thrilled to do so. Our customers and others in the community answered the call and allowed us to have eight boxes of meds and supplies delivered to Operation Airdrop."

Delivering those eight boxes of medical supplies was local resident Hugh Cundiff, who was headed out to make a delivery in Hickory when he got the call to deliver the medication for Matthews, an honor, he said, he was happy to have bestowed on him.

"It actually was a couple days this past week that I was actually up there, the day that I drove the insulin up there," Cundiff said in a phone interview. "It was just a coincidence; Tara had messaged me the night before and asked if I would be available to take it up there. I told her, well, I'm actually leaving in the morning to go up there for a couple of days to help out with some helicopter operations and some search and recovery stuff.

"So it just kind of worked out that she messaged me, and I was happy to do it and be able to help out in in that way," he added. "It was pretty bad out there to see it in person, I'm just grateful I played a small part in helping. I'm an able-bodied person with a background in fire and rescue, and I have an aviation background, so I was more than willing and physically able to help."

There were few as grateful as Jackson, who said their work wasn't quite done after just one delivery.

"A huge thank you to Clinton resident Hugh Cundiff who was making a delivery to that area and graciously volunteered to take our donations as well," Jackson said. "Halls Fire Department also reached out to help deliver if

needed. We are currently getting together another big supply to be donated as the needs in that area still exist. Sampson County and surrounding areas have certainly showed up for that area! We could not be more proud to call Sampson County home."

"Thank you to those who donated their insulins and unopened meds," the Matthews post stated. "Thank you to Hugh Cundiff for volunteering to take it. You are the best! We still need urgently, insulin, inhalers/nebulized medicines, eliquis and epipens."

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