

What's Up

October 11, 2024 | Daily Advance, The (Elizabeth City, NC) Author: Julian Eure | Section: Whats Up | 1163 Words OpenURL Link

TODAY

Computer help

The Pasquotank County Library will host computer assistance program on Google Drive today; Google Docs on Wednesday; and Word 1 on Thursday. All programs at 4 p.m. and require pre-registration by calling Mike at 335-7536.

Donations for western NC

Food Bank of the Albemarle is accepting donations of non-perishable food, personal hygiene items and cleaning supplies for delivery to western counties in North Carolina hard hit by Tropical Storm Helene. Items will be accepted Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Contact: 252-335-4035.

Secure Access Self Storage

The Elizabeth City Area Chamber of Commerce will host a ribbon cutting for Secure Access Self Storage at 1100 Megan Drive, Elizabeth City, from 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Splash Week

Arts of the Albemarle will host the annual Splash Week artists retreat in Elizabeth City's downtown Tuesday through Saturday, Oct. 19. Events will include the first-ever Splash Art Fair on North Poindexter Street on Saturday, Oct. 19, from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Artists and artisans are invited to sell their work at the fair. The event will also feature free music, family activities and crafts.

Library storytime

The Pasquotank County Library will host a storytime program on the theme "Cats" for kids ages 3-5 with an adult on Tuesday; kids ages 1-2 on Wednesday; and kids 1 and younger on Thursday. All classes at 10 a.m.

WEDNESDAY

Programming Room

The East Carolina Digital Literacy Program will host an online safety and privacy program at the Pasquotank County Library from 10 a.m. to noon. To register, call the library at 252-335-7536 or visit https://bit.ly/47CNVIw.

Boo Bowling

The Elizabeth City Area Chamber of Commerce will host "Boo Bowling" at Albemarle Lanes from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Cost is \$100 for team of four people.

THURSDAY

One-stop voting begins

One-stop voting for the 2024 election begins in area counties. In Pasquotank County, voting will be at the K.E. White Center weekdays from 8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.; on Saturday, Oct. 19, Oct. 26 and Nov. 2, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.; and on Sunday, Oct. 20, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.

FRIDAYMedicare outreach

The North Carolina State Health Plan will host a 2025 open enrollment Medicare outreach event at Museum of the Albemarle from 10 a.m. to noon.

Hertford Ghost Walk

Masonic Lodge 106 and Church of the Holy Trinity will host the Historic Ghost Walk in Hertford Friday and Saturday, Oct. 19 from 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. each night. Tickets are \$10 and available at the Perquimans Chamber of Commerce Office at 118 W Market St., Hertford; Tommy's Pizza at 309 Ocean S. Hertford; and Church of the Holy Trinity both nights of tour.

SAturday

Wings Over Edenton

The Wings over Edenton air show and pilot fly-in will be held at Northeastern Regional Airport in Edenton. The free event will feature static displays of historic and current aircraft, an aerobatic demonstration, Young Eagle flights for youngsters, helicopter rides, a car and tractor show, vendor displays, and food trucks. To participate in the fly-in, contact tyler.newman@edenton.nc.gov or call (252) 482-2155, ext. 535.

MONDAY

Red Cross blood drive

The American Red Cross will host a blood drive in the main room at Albemarle Area Association of Realtors in Elizabeth City, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

UPCOMING

Computer help

The Pasquotank County Library will host computer assistance program on PowerPoint Monday, Oct. 21; PowerPoint on Tuesday, Oct. 22; Google Docs 2 on Wednesday, Oct. 23; and Word 2 on Thursday, Oct. 24. All programs at 4 p.m. and require pre-registration by calling Mike at 335-7536.

Library storytime

The Pasquotank County Library will host a storytime program on the theme "Cake" for kids ages 3-5 with an adult on Tuesday, Oct. 22; kids ages 1-2 on Wednesday, Oct. 23; and kids 1 and younger on Thursday, Oct. 24. All classes at 10 a.m.

Programming Room

The East Carolina Digital Literacy Program will host a program on how to search for trusted online sites at the Pasquotank County Library Wednesday, Oct. 23 from 10 a.m. to noon. To register, call the library at 252-335-7536 or visit https://bit.ly/47CNVIw. Each participant who completes the pre-test and post-test will be entered in a drawing to win an iPad. Light refreshments will be served.

Red Cross blood drives

The American Red Cross will host blood drives in the Sentara Albemarle Medical Center education rooms Wednesday, Oct. 23 from noon to 5 p.m.; JP Knapp Early College High School gym in Currituck Monday, Oct. 28 from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.; the B&M Contractors, Inc. training room in Elizabeth City on Tuesday, Oct. 29, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.; and the City Road United Methodist Church fellowship hall in Elizabeth City Thursday, Oct. 31, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Programming Room

The East Carolina Digital Literacy Program will host a program on how to use healthcare online at the Pasquotank County Library Wednesday, Oct. 23 from 10 a.m. to noon. Students will learn how to use telehealth. To register, call the library at 252-335-7536 or visit https://bit.ly/47CNVIw. Each participant who completes the pre-test and post-test will be entered in a drawing to win an iPad. Light refreshments will be served.

Community Olympics

The Boys & Girls Club will host its Community Olympic Games at 108 East Ward St., Elizabeth City, Thursday, Oct. 24. Contact: ejmitchell@bgc-albemarle.org or call 252-216-5966.

YMCA Golf Classic

The 18th annual YMCA Golf Classic to benefit the Y's All Kids Swim Program will be held at the Pines of Elizabeth City, Friday, Oct. 25. Donations raised by the tournament will allow Albemarle Family YMCA to offer free swim lessons to area children. Check-in is 11 a.m. and shotgun start tee-off is at noon. Team of four costs \$450, individuals are \$113, and mulligans are \$10 each with a limit of two per player. Register and payment due Oct. 15. Send to Jane Snyder, Albemarle Family YMCA, 1240 N. Road St., Elizabeth City, 27909 or email jsnyder@ymcashr.org.

Computer help

The Pasquotank County Library will host computer assistance program on Google Docs Monday, Oct. 28; mouse and keyboarding on Tuesday, Oct. 29; Google Drive on Wednesday, Oct. 30; and PowerPoint on Thursday, Oct. 31. All programs at 4 p.m. and require pre-registration by calling Mike at 335-7536.

Soil and water programs

The Northeast Ag Expo will sponsor a workshop for farmers on Tuesday, Oct. 29 at 8 a.m. at the Pasquotank Extension Office in Elizabeth City. Attendees will learn from FSA, Soil and Water and NRCS about various available programs and deadlines as well as the resources these agencies offer area farmers. To register, contact the Perquimans Center of NC Extension at 252-426-5428.

Library storytime

The Pasquotank County Library will host a storytime program on the theme "Halloween" for kids ages 3-5 with an adult on Tuesday, Oct. 29; kids ages 1-2 on Wednesday, Oct. 30; and kids 1 and younger on Thursday, Oct. 31. All classes at 10 a.m.

Landslide to perform

The Elizabeth City Area Chamber of Commerce will host its Appreciation & Celebration Extravaganza featuring Landslide, a Fleetwood Mac tribute band, at Sagos on the River Nov. 9 from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. Drew Gregory and Chris Betts will be guest performers. Tickets are \$100, corporate tables are \$900.

• Citation (aglc Style)

Julian Eure, 'What's Up', *Daily Advance, The* (online), 11 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view? p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C365E283D56260>



RCS has one competitive school board race

October 11, 2024 | Daily Courier, The (Forest City, NC) Author: SCOTT CARPENTER scarpenter@thedigitalcourier.com| Section: Archives | 561 Words OpenURL Link

RUTHERFORDTON — There are four Rutherford County Board of Education seats, up for re-election this year.

Board Chairman Phillip Morrow, and Tracy Short, are incumbents who won their primaries; and newcomer Thomas Crawford won his primary. All three are Republicans, and face no opposition in the general election.

There is only one Board of Education race that is competitive. Incumbent Republican Angel King, will face Democrat Doyle G. Brown.

King and her husband have lived in Rutherford County 36 years. They have one adult son who attended Rutherford County Schools (RCS). She holds degrees from UNC-Wilmington, and attended the NC Principal Fellows Program at Western Carolina University where she earned a Master's degree in school administration. She worked for RCS as a teacher, assistant principal, principal, and district director of elementary education before retiring in 2019.

"I know our community cares deeply about our children and we all have a vested interest in the ongoing success of our schools," King said recently. "Serving our schools is a cause that I hold near and dear to my heart."

She says her experience working for RCS, and serving on the Board of Education the past four years, have offered her unique insights and experiences as she hopes to serve another term.

"It is essential that we prepare students to be successful for either post-secondary education or entering the workforce after graduation," King said. "I am thankful for our conscientious teachers, dedicated support personnel, and forward-thinking leaders who work extremely hard to provide optimal learning opportunities for our students. Rutherford County Schools, along with all school districts across the country, faed many challenges during the pandemic. I am proud of the tremendous progress our students and schools have made in the post-covid years."

"RCS is consistently outpacing the state and neighboring school systems in increasing student performance on a number of state and national indicators," King continued. "In addition to the district's sustained focus on academic gains, RCS has also made purposeful gains in addressing the social, emotional, and physical needs of our students. This has been accomplished through the addition of specialized personnel, forging strong community partnerships, and implementing virtual and school-based services."

"In the last few years, our school district has done a remarkable job of leveraging available funding sources to make needed repairs and improvements to our school facilities," King said. "Additionally, I am proud of the upgrades we have made to school security systems as well as the placement of school resource officers throughout the district. The prompt response of school personnel to students, coworkers, and families whose lives were upended by Hurricane Helene is a testament to the compassion and resolve of our public school family."

King says RCS will face major challenges in the next few years. Funding is the most critical challenge, she believes, stemming largely from increased labor costs, inflation, and unfunded legislative mandates.

"Meeting capital infrastructure needs will also be a priority for our board so that teachers can teach and students can continue to learn using updated technology and in well-equipped facilities," King said.

Recruitment and retention of qualified teachers will also continue to be a challenge, King noted.

"In the face of these and other challenges our school district is facing, I will continue to advocate for our students

and our schools to ensure that we provide a quality education for every child," King added.

The Daily Courier was unable to reach challenger Doyle Brown.

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• Citation (aglc Style)

SCOTT CARPENTER scarpenter@thedigitalcourier.com, 'RCS has one competitive school board race', *Daily Courier, The*(online), 11 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C29CC6CFA0A7F8



Helene brought out the best in Carolinians

October 11, 2024 | Daily Record, The (Dunn, NC) Author: John Hood| Section: Opinion| 653 Words OpenURL Link

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

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

We've only just begun to collect their stories of prudent planning, daring rescues, and dogged determination. These tales feature the likes of Hendersonville's James White, who led more than a dozen neighbors sheltering in his home to safety with ropes and lifejackets, as well as Eddie Hunnell, recently moved to North Carolina from Colorado, who leapt into the swollen New River to save a stranger, Lesley Worth, separated from her husband by the raging stream.

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

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

Democratic mayors have worked closely with Republican county commissioners to coordinate relief. Gov. Roy Cooper, U.S. Sens. Thom Tillis and Ted Budd, lawmakers from both parties — all have pitched in to comfort victims, survey damage, coordinate responses, and convey timely, accurate information to the public.

That's not to say there haven't been miscues and disagreements. Tillis and Budd questioned the pace at which military personnel from Fort Liberty and other bases were deployed into the devastated counties after the storm. Others have criticized the adequacy of response by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

While it will take some time to sort out all the claims and counterclaims, it's not too early to label these issues as legitimate topics for debate.

Unfortunately, much of the "debate" unfolding on social media over the past week has been anything but legitimate. Whether spreading wacky conspiracy theories about lithium mines and weather control or uttering grotesque slanders about Kamala Harris and Joe Biden intentionally "letting" Republican voters "drown," a host of very-online, supposedly conservative provocateurs and hacks have made a bad situation immeasurably worse.

Here's what a real conservative leader, state Sen. Kevin Corbin, had to say. "PLEASE help stop this junk," wrote Corbin, who represents North Carolina's eight westernmost counties. "It is just a distraction to people trying to do their job."

"Folks, this is a catastrophic event of which this country has never known. It is the largest crisis event in the history

of N.C. The state is working non-stop. DOT has deployed workers from all over the state. Duke [Energy] has 10,000 workers on this. FEMA is here. The National Guard is here in large numbers."

Some incendiary memes are likely the product of misunderstandings, such as emergency officials redirecting volunteers away from dangerous roadways or relief agencies refusing certain donated items they aren't equipped to store or distribute. Others may well be the result of bad calls made in good faith, in stressful conditions, by officials with incomplete information or inadequate training.

Can policymakers properly second-guess such decisions after the fact? Of course! That time will come. Right now, our immediate challenges remain rescue and relief — challenges our fellow North Carolinians have met with magnificent resilience.

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• Citation (aglc Style)

John Hood, 'Helene brought out the best in Carolinians', *Daily Record, The* (online), 11 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C247D620327650



BOE members concerned about western NC schools

October 11, 2024 | Daily Reflector, The (Greenville, NC) Author: Kim Grizzard Staff Writer | Section: Local | 488 Words OpenURL Link

Members of the Pitt County Board of Education this week expressed concern for schools in western North Carolina, where many districts remain closed in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene.

Some during Monday's regular monthly meeting recalled the effects of Hurricane Floyd on the local region 25 years ago.

District 4 representative Don Rhodes, who was working in Edgecombe County Schools during Floyd, said that district suffered the loss of two schools in the 1999 hurricane. He said the flooding had a lasting, traumatic effect on both students and faculty.

As some western N.C. districts prepare to resume classes, Pitt County Association of Educators President Mario Blanchard, a math teacher at J.H. Rose High School, said he is concerned about work requirements for his colleagues across the state.

"Some fellow educators I've met have told me about the work requirements their local agencies are requiring although travel is very difficult right now," Blanchard said during the public comment portion of Monday's meeting.

He asked about Pitt County Schools' policies on staff responsibilities during natural disasters.

"Morally, we should not have to make risky decisions for money," he said. "I'm sure the staff at large here in Pitt County will feel better if we know what the expectations are when something like this occurs."

Blanchard, who has previously advocated for a change in the state's school calendar law, said he had spoken with a state lawmaker about the possibility of piloting some year-round school programs locally. Year-round schools are exempt from the state's school calendar requirements.

"I'm just asking if this idea has any traction," he said. "I'm just curious and hopefully the public is curious about this idea as well."

The board, which according to policy does not respond to individuals who address the board except to request clarification, did not reply to Blanchard's questions.

Also Monday, the board:

Approved an expenditure of \$90,000 for fire alarm replacement at Sugg-Bundy Elementary. Approved an expenditure of about \$110,000 for new bleachers at South Central High School. Honored Ridgewood Elementary School for being named a Model Professional Learning Community school. Ridgewood was the first school in Pitt County and one of only four schools in North Carolina to receive this honor. The award was given by Solution Tree for the successful implementation of the Professional Learning Communities at Work process that focuses on learning, building a collaborative culture and creating a results orientation. Honored members of the Pitt County Girls Softball League who became the Little League Softball World Series champs in August. Girls on the 12-member team represent four middle schools in the district. Aurora Edwards, Braelyn Johnson, Brooklyn Medhus, Emery Peebles, Caroline Reynolds, Anna Rose and Brooke Rose all attend Hope Middle; Emma Pilgreen attends Ayden Middle; Candace Lynn attends C.M. Eppes; and Mikayla Bateman attends Farmville Middle. Kenzie Carson attends school in La Grange and Isabella Ford attends school in Wilson. Coaches Brad Medhus, Percy Edwards and Brandon Peebles also were recognized. Recognized October as Bullying Prevention Month and Physical Therapy

Month.

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Kim Grizzard Staff Writer, 'BOE members concerned about western NC schools', *Daily Reflector, The* (online), 11 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C244BBF1DDE268



State Mutual Aid Agreement adopted by Magnolia in board meeting

October 11, 2024 | Daily Reflector, The (Greenville, NC) Author: Shonda Kennion| Section: Local | 1101 Words OpenURL Link

The town of Magnolia Board of Commissioners held their regular monthly meeting in the Magnolia Municipal Building Conference Room on Oct. 8 at 6 p.m.

Members present: Mayor Dawn Ward, Commissioner Jeanine Cavenaugh, Commissioner Perry Raines, Commissioner Eric Graham, Commissioner Elvenia Wilson, and Commissioner Ethelene Southerland.

Staff present: Town Manager Twig Rollins, Finance Officer/Town Clerk Sonia Jaimes, Attorney Joseph Ezzell, and Police Captain Jason Holliday.

Commissioner Elvenia Wilson gave the invocation, and following was the Pledge of Allegiance. The floor was then given to the public for any public comments, and a Mr. Danny Gregory stood to address Mr. Twig Rollins on his many accomplishments for the town of Magnolia as Town Manager in just a year-and-a half and stated, "You've only been here a short time but you've really got the town heading in the right direction now and you've really been working on improving the town and I believe that you've gotten our Commissioners in a better spirit of doing that, and they've been to a lot of different programs where they've learned more about what they need to be doing and they have attended a lot of meetings. They have just been doing a really good job. You came in and went to work on day one. You've gotten grants that nobody ever knew they could get, and you just really worked, and you've been very knowledgeable about running a town. We hate that you're leaving but we understand too that you're bettering yourself and we don't blame anybody for bettering themselves. So, thank you Twig, for everything you've done for our town for the short time you've been here."

There was much to be discussed on tonight's agenda, Mayor Dawn Ward opened next with discussing having an adjustment to the agenda about adding a line item and putting it in at number eight to discuss a reinstatement of the 24th, for the Town of Magnolia, and the vote was 5/0, motion carried.

The discussion moved on to the planning board, and Town Manager Rollins discussed with the Commissioners to think over reinstating the planning board, with two options, 1) Recommending that they do not do a planning board because they've had a planning board in the past and as commissioners have the ultimate authority on all planning of the zoning issues for the subdivision; they're elected by the people and are highly recommended; it is best practices to have a planning board and 2) They need a planning board whereas they or the citizens can review the land that Marko is developing when he's finished before he departs. Twig wanted feedback from the commissioners on whether they wanted a planning board or not. Because if so, the plan is to get it up on the Town of Magnolia site for the public to let the people know they're looking for sign ups. Five is recommended, they can go as low as three, but with scheduling conflicts and whatnot, five is absolute. People can serve two to four years, possibly. Four must be from inside the town, and one can be from ETJ, about 1 mile from outside the town. The vote was 5/0, motion carried for hiring public citizens, along with one Commissioner on board.

The Public Safety Grant was discussed next, for cameras, radar equipment, body armor, for \$23,000. Rollins stated, "It is customary when we get a grant we must amend our budget, we have to add that to our budget so we can spend it out of our budget." Mayor Dawn Ward asked, "Do I have a motion to amend the Fiscal year 24-25 budget to include the anticipated grant funds from our NC Grant Public Safety?" No one opposed, motion carried.

In the matter of Appointment of Official Financial Custodian, Mr. Rollins stated, "Federal law mandates that we have an official custodian named that has authority over the funds at the bank and currently you all have selected me for that role but with my departure happening Saturday, we need to appoint somebody new so I'm recommending we appoint our finance officer, Sonia Jaimes, to be that official custodian. You can change it from her to the new Town

Manager or you can leave it with her because she is your Financial Officer, and I know I've said this a lot, but we're just covering all the bases." No one opposed so the motion was carried, and resolution adopted.

The Adoption of State Mutual Aid Agreement seemed something the public was most interested in. I saw many sit up straighter in their seats as Rollins explained the details, especially on the heels of Hurricane Helene and now Milton, and this is what he had to say, "Mutual Aid Agreements have been around for a long time, public and board of commissioners, what they say is if you need help, you can get it from a sister agency, fire departments have had it for decades, probably hundreds of years, police departments have it. The state has a Mutual Aid Agreement and I have to confess, I didn't know they had a statewide, it was an email that had come out after Helene and basically if you have this in place at the time of disaster and you request help and there's a state of emergency designated by the state or federal government those agencies is coming to help you or be paid by somebody else.

So, everybody going to the mountains to help that has a State Mutual Aid Agreement is paid for by state and federal funds. And so, it's really a formality, if they requested, we had the spare staff to send up there, they would pay the bill for our staff. Or if we have a disaster, we request them and it's under a state of emergency, that's what this is. We didn't have them in place but what this would do is authorize the need to execute if, not if we need help but when we need help, we would be able to execute this and not have to pay those bills for the people coming to help us. And if we could ever spare people to go to the mountain, then they would be paid to go, or to any disaster area, so." Motion to adopt the State Mutual Aid Agreement, carried and unopposed.

Closings ended with the town manager's report, the mayor's report, and the commissioner's report. Then we had the motion to adjourn. Before adjourning, there was also a lot of gratitude to Rollins for his accomplishments and all he's done for the town of Magnolia from each Commissioner, the Mayor, and Police Captain Jason Holliday.

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• Citation (aglc Style)

Shonda Kennion, 'State Mutual Aid Agreement adopted by Magnolia in board meeting', *Daily Reflector, The* (online), 11 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C25C2EA636D258



Beulaville commissioners discuss next steps for the neighborhood revitalization grant that will help homeowners

October 11, 2024 | Daily Reflector, The (Greenville, NC) Author: Lauren Branch| Section: Local | 1532 Words OpenURL Link

The Beulaville Town Board of Commissioners held the second public hearing on a CDBG-NR Neighborhood Revitalization Grant at its Oct. 7 meeting. The hearings were required by grant guidelines.

Tammy Daniels, of Adams Co., who is assisting the town with the grant process, addressed the board with additional information.

"Last time we told you what the application consisted of, who is eligible, and we talked about what you might want to do with this grant, etc.," Daniels said. "This time I am presenting to you who has been chosen to be in the application."

The maximum the town can apply for is \$950,000 and Beulaville plans to apply for that amount before the Oct. 23 deadline. According to Daniels, the application deadline may be pushed back due to Hurricane Helene.

If the grant is awarded, the town will help rehabilitate or reconstruct seven homes in town.

The purpose of the grant is to help low- and moderate-income homeowners fix up their residences and to aid in the elimination and prevention of slums and blight.

Residents chosen for the grant are: Verita Flowers, Hernando Garcia, Ruth Humphries, and Robert Hargrove. Bryan Maddox, Herbert Sloan and Nadine Davis were chosen as alternates. The board approved a resolution to apply for the grant.

A requirement of the grant is to put together a Citizen Participation Plan which outlines how the town will involve citizens in the planning, implementation, and assessment of the Community Development Block Grant (CBDG) program. The town also is required to create housing selection committee bylaws. The board approved both resolutions.

During public comments, resident, Jessica Thomas asked the board for updates on a previous issue presented to town hall in regards to the 162 Deer Run property that had a camper illegally parked and connected to town utilities.

In a previous meeting, Town Clerk Lori Williams said that the town had taken action by turning off the utilities as well as informing the owners that they have to remove the camper from the property.

"The camper has been hooked up with water and electricity for 10 weeks now. We know that you cut the water off, but I looked and they have not listed that house not one bit," Thomas said. "And just when you think they can't bring any more vehicles over there, there have been two new vehicles over there, and they have been more prominent about parking on the street — which is fine — but the streets are small.

"I know it's a dead end but I promise you there is a ton of traffic daily from the residents going up and down and the delivery trucks. I promise you that is an accident just waiting to happen. It is a ticking time bomb, so I was just wondering where we're at with it," Thomas said.

"Yes we did disconnect the water because they were connected to water and sewer. Once that was done, we did cut the water back on. We can't leave it off because of zoning violations," Williams said. "It was a violation of the water

and sewer ordinance.

"As far as the zoning violation of the travel trailer, they are being fined daily for that. It has now become a civil matter so a civil summons has been issued and one is about to be served. Jamie has it in his possession," Williams said. "Now it will go before a court system. A court will hear it, and a judge will have to order the removal of it.

"For liability reasons the town cannot hook to it and move it, but now that it is in the court system it has become a civil matter and fines are being issued each day until it is removed," Williams added.

"There are actually two separate civil matters. One is the dog issue that has not been remedied, and the second one is the camper," Williams explained.

"I also want an update on the dogs because I can't even walk my little dog down the road without fear that their two dogs are in the front yard, and they still have a third dog they keep in the back," resident Gwen Mercer said.

"The dogs in the front must be on a wireless system, but they don't always pay attention if the battery goes dead. Because they came to my house one day when I was getting groceries out the car," Thomas said. "I mean, I love animals. I think a lot of us in here are dog lovers, but if you leave a dog out and you don't really play with them, I kind of wonder what you are going to get there. It would thoroughly upset me if they were in my yard and they got my dog. I do worry about that."

"I appreciate you all coming up here and being so persistent because we are only as good as the things that are reported to us. Our role is the protection of the public and of these people as well," Mayor Hutch Jones said.

In the public works report, Williams gave information about electrical issues and washouts on the roads that are being addressed. She stated that Christmas decorations may be put up later than usual this year due to an issue with light polls. Duke employees are short-staffed because many employees are working in the western part of the state after damage from Hurricane Helene.

According to Williams, it may be next year before Duke can fix some of the poles, but the town can still move forward with the annual tree lighting event.

"That leads me to a question. Like at our house there is a huge issue with the drainage, and I think that some of it can be helped if the ditches are drained or dug out, so is that something that the town can do?" Mercer asked.

Public Works Director Ricky Raynor explained that town workers would have to speak to everybody on that street and each person would have to agree to have the ditch cleaned out.

Police Chief Karl Mobley gave updates from the previous month during the police report. He stated that there had been an increase in calls. He also stated that the department was losing an officer and would soon be hiring to fill the position.

Under new business, Williams discussed animal control ordinances. She stated that the county animal control will not come to Beulaville to provide services because the town has its own ordinance and does not operate under the county ordinance. She suggested that Beulaville should repeal the current town ordinance and adopt the county ordinance as stated. The town voted to adopt the county ordinance.

The town also adopted two resolutions — the Equal Opportunity Agreement and Assurance Agreement — that are both required by USDA stating they will not discriminate against contractors.

The last topic of discussion in new business was the renewal of a contract with Tons of Trash (TOT) for an additional three years. TOT also requested an amended contract that offers the town two different options. The first option is the same contract from before that includes a 96-gallon pullout trash cart and blue can for recyclables to be picked up weekly. Residents would pay a new price of \$18.50 monthly starting November.

The second option includes a resident cost of \$20 per month for a 96-gallon pullout trash cart and blue recyclable pull out with a twice a month pickup. Both would include a back-door service as needed and a 7% annual increase.

The board approved the renewal of the contract at \$18.50 per month with weekly pickup, and members decided to table the change of pickup schedule until they discuss in a future meeting.

Williams explained that the town received a grant from the Division of Water Quality for a water project. The town received \$3.6 million to replace water lines and fire hydrants and to move lines from under Highway 24. The bids received for the work were way over the anticipated price. McDavid's and Associates helped the town negotiate with the bidders with a reduction in the scope of work.

In the new plan the majority of the work will still be done on Main Street but some of the projects on the back streets were removed. Also the initial replacement of 25 fire hydrants was reduced to 20. The board approved a contract with Busco Contractors of Angier.

In the town manager's report, Williams presented several updates to the board:

The town has already received the first deposit of the \$51,918.32 that the town is qualified for from DOT for the 2024 State Aid to Municipalities Highway Fund (Power Bill) funding. The town was one of 508 municipalities that were qualified to receive this funding.

The Urban and Community Forestry Grant in conjunction with the Part F Project, awarded funding in the amount of \$30,855. The town shares as an in-kind match. These funds will be used to plant trees at the recreation park.

The town tested fire hydrants on Oct. 14-16. The Christmas parade will be held on December 14 at 2 p.m.

Williams asked the board to consider purchasing iPads or tablets for the board to use during meetings. Copies of board documents will still be printed for other people in attendance.

The meeting ended with the board going into closed session.

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• Citation (aglc Style)

Lauren Branch, 'Beulaville commissioners discuss next steps for the neighborhood revitalization grant that will help homeowners', *Daily Reflector, The* (online), 11 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view? p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C25C2E99AFB2E8>



State Mutual Aid Agreement adopted by Magnolia in board meeting

October 11, 2024 | Duplin Times, The (NC) Author: Shonda Kennion| Section: Local | 1101 Words OpenURL Link

The town of Magnolia Board of Commissioners held their regular monthly meeting in the Magnolia Municipal Building Conference Room on Oct. 8 at 6 p.m.

Members present: Mayor Dawn Ward, Commissioner Jeanine Cavenaugh, Commissioner Perry Raines, Commissioner Eric Graham, Commissioner Elvenia Wilson, and Commissioner Ethelene Southerland.

Staff present: Town Manager Twig Rollins, Finance Officer/Town Clerk Sonia Jaimes, Attorney Joseph Ezzell, and Police Captain Jason Holliday.

Commissioner Elvenia Wilson gave the invocation, and following was the Pledge of Allegiance. The floor was then given to the public for any public comments, and a Mr. Danny Gregory stood to address Mr. Twig Rollins on his many accomplishments for the town of Magnolia as Town Manager in just a year-and-a half and stated, "You've only been here a short time but you've really got the town heading in the right direction now and you've really been working on improving the town and I believe that you've gotten our Commissioners in a better spirit of doing that, and they've been to a lot of different programs where they've learned more about what they need to be doing and they have attended a lot of meetings. They have just been doing a really good job. You came in and went to work on day one. You've gotten grants that nobody ever knew they could get, and you just really worked, and you've been very knowledgeable about running a town. We hate that you're leaving but we understand too that you're bettering yourself and we don't blame anybody for bettering themselves. So, thank you Twig, for everything you've done for our town for the short time you've been here."

There was much to be discussed on tonight's agenda, Mayor Dawn Ward opened next with discussing having an adjustment to the agenda about adding a line item and putting it in at number eight to discuss a reinstatement of the 24th, for the Town of Magnolia, and the vote was 5/0, motion carried.

The discussion moved on to the planning board, and Town Manager Rollins discussed with the Commissioners to think over reinstating the planning board, with two options, 1) Recommending that they do not do a planning board because they've had a planning board in the past and as commissioners have the ultimate authority on all planning of the zoning issues for the subdivision; they're elected by the people and are highly recommended; it is best practices to have a planning board and 2) They need a planning board whereas they or the citizens can review the land that Marko is developing when he's finished before he departs. Twig wanted feedback from the commissioners on whether they wanted a planning board or not. Because if so, the plan is to get it up on the Town of Magnolia site for the public to let the people know they're looking for sign ups. Five is recommended, they can go as low as three, but with scheduling conflicts and whatnot, five is absolute. People can serve two to four years, possibly. Four must be from inside the town, and one can be from ETJ, about 1 mile from outside the town. The vote was 5/0, motion carried for hiring public citizens, along with one Commissioner on board.

The Public Safety Grant was discussed next, for cameras, radar equipment, body armor, for \$23,000. Rollins stated, "It is customary when we get a grant we must amend our budget, we have to add that to our budget so we can spend it out of our budget." Mayor Dawn Ward asked, "Do I have a motion to amend the Fiscal year 24-25 budget to include the anticipated grant funds from our NC Grant Public Safety?" No one opposed, motion carried.

In the matter of Appointment of Official Financial Custodian, Mr. Rollins stated, "Federal law mandates that we have an official custodian named that has authority over the funds at the bank and currently you all have selected me for that role but with my departure happening Saturday, we need to appoint somebody new so I'm recommending we appoint our finance officer, Sonia Jaimes, to be that official custodian. You can change it from her to the new Town

Manager or you can leave it with her because she is your Financial Officer, and I know I've said this a lot, but we're just covering all the bases." No one opposed so the motion was carried, and resolution adopted.

The Adoption of State Mutual Aid Agreement seemed something the public was most interested in. I saw many sit up straighter in their seats as Rollins explained the details, especially on the heels of Hurricane Helene and now Milton, and this is what he had to say, "Mutual Aid Agreements have been around for a long time, public and board of commissioners, what they say is if you need help, you can get it from a sister agency, fire departments have had it for decades, probably hundreds of years, police departments have it. The state has a Mutual Aid Agreement and I have to confess, I didn't know they had a statewide, it was an email that had come out after Helene and basically if you have this in place at the time of disaster and you request help and there's a state of emergency designated by the state or federal government those agencies is coming to help you or be paid by somebody else.

So, everybody going to the mountains to help that has a State Mutual Aid Agreement is paid for by state and federal funds. And so, it's really a formality, if they requested, we had the spare staff to send up there, they would pay the bill for our staff. Or if we have a disaster, we request them and it's under a state of emergency, that's what this is. We didn't have them in place but what this would do is authorize the need to execute if, not if we need help but when we need help, we would be able to execute this and not have to pay those bills for the people coming to help us. And if we could ever spare people to go to the mountain, then they would be paid to go, or to any disaster area, so." Motion to adopt the State Mutual Aid Agreement, carried and unopposed.

Closings ended with the town manager's report, the mayor's report, and the commissioner's report. Then we had the motion to adjourn. Before adjourning, there was also a lot of gratitude to Rollins for his accomplishments and all he's done for the town of Magnolia from each Commissioner, the Mayor, and Police Captain Jason Holliday.

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Beulaville commissioners discuss next steps for the neighborhood revitalization grant that will help homeowners

October 11, 2024 | Duplin Times, The (NC) Author: Lauren Branch| Section: Local| 1532 Words OpenURL Link

The Beulaville Town Board of Commissioners held the second public hearing on a CDBG-NR Neighborhood Revitalization Grant at its Oct. 7 meeting. The hearings were required by grant guidelines.

Tammy Daniels, of Adams Co., who is assisting the town with the grant process, addressed the board with additional information.

"Last time we told you what the application consisted of, who is eligible, and we talked about what you might want to do with this grant, etc.," Daniels said. "This time I am presenting to you who has been chosen to be in the application."

The maximum the town can apply for is \$950,000 and Beulaville plans to apply for that amount before the Oct. 23 deadline. According to Daniels, the application deadline may be pushed back due to Hurricane Helene.

If the grant is awarded, the town will help rehabilitate or reconstruct seven homes in town.

The purpose of the grant is to help low- and moderate-income homeowners fix up their residences and to aid in the elimination and prevention of slums and blight.

Residents chosen for the grant are: Verita Flowers, Hernando Garcia, Ruth Humphries, and Robert Hargrove. Bryan Maddox, Herbert Sloan and Nadine Davis were chosen as alternates. The board approved a resolution to apply for the grant.

A requirement of the grant is to put together a Citizen Participation Plan which outlines how the town will involve citizens in the planning, implementation, and assessment of the Community Development Block Grant (CBDG) program. The town also is required to create housing selection committee bylaws. The board approved both resolutions.

During public comments, resident, Jessica Thomas asked the board for updates on a previous issue presented to town hall in regards to the 162 Deer Run property that had a camper illegally parked and connected to town utilities.

In a previous meeting, Town Clerk Lori Williams said that the town had taken action by turning off the utilities as well as informing the owners that they have to remove the camper from the property.

"The camper has been hooked up with water and electricity for 10 weeks now. We know that you cut the water off, but I looked and they have not listed that house not one bit," Thomas said. "And just when you think they can't bring any more vehicles over there, there have been two new vehicles over there, and they have been more prominent about parking on the street — which is fine — but the streets are small.

"I know it's a dead end but I promise you there is a ton of traffic daily from the residents going up and down and the delivery trucks. I promise you that is an accident just waiting to happen. It is a ticking time bomb, so I was just wondering where we're at with it," Thomas said.

"Yes we did disconnect the water because they were connected to water and sewer. Once that was done, we did cut the water back on. We can't leave it off because of zoning violations," Williams said. "It was a violation of the water

and sewer ordinance.

"As far as the zoning violation of the travel trailer, they are being fined daily for that. It has now become a civil matter so a civil summons has been issued and one is about to be served. Jamie has it in his possession," Williams said. "Now it will go before a court system. A court will hear it, and a judge will have to order the removal of it.

"For liability reasons the town cannot hook to it and move it, but now that it is in the court system it has become a civil matter and fines are being issued each day until it is removed," Williams added.

"There are actually two separate civil matters. One is the dog issue that has not been remedied, and the second one is the camper," Williams explained.

"I also want an update on the dogs because I can't even walk my little dog down the road without fear that their two dogs are in the front yard, and they still have a third dog they keep in the back," resident Gwen Mercer said.

"The dogs in the front must be on a wireless system, but they don't always pay attention if the battery goes dead. Because they came to my house one day when I was getting groceries out the car," Thomas said. "I mean, I love animals. I think a lot of us in here are dog lovers, but if you leave a dog out and you don't really play with them, I kind of wonder what you are going to get there. It would thoroughly upset me if they were in my yard and they got my dog. I do worry about that."

"I appreciate you all coming up here and being so persistent because we are only as good as the things that are reported to us. Our role is the protection of the public and of these people as well," Mayor Hutch Jones said.

In the public works report, Williams gave information about electrical issues and washouts on the roads that are being addressed. She stated that Christmas decorations may be put up later than usual this year due to an issue with light polls. Duke employees are short-staffed because many employees are working in the western part of the state after damage from Hurricane Helene.

According to Williams, it may be next year before Duke can fix some of the poles, but the town can still move forward with the annual tree lighting event.

"That leads me to a question. Like at our house there is a huge issue with the drainage, and I think that some of it can be helped if the ditches are drained or dug out, so is that something that the town can do?" Mercer asked.

Public Works Director Ricky Raynor explained that town workers would have to speak to everybody on that street and each person would have to agree to have the ditch cleaned out.

Police Chief Karl Mobley gave updates from the previous month during the police report. He stated that there had been an increase in calls. He also stated that the department was losing an officer and would soon be hiring to fill the position.

Under new business, Williams discussed animal control ordinances. She stated that the county animal control will not come to Beulaville to provide services because the town has its own ordinance and does not operate under the county ordinance. She suggested that Beulaville should repeal the current town ordinance and adopt the county ordinance as stated. The town voted to adopt the county ordinance.

The town also adopted two resolutions — the Equal Opportunity Agreement and Assurance Agreement — that are both required by USDA stating they will not discriminate against contractors.

The last topic of discussion in new business was the renewal of a contract with Tons of Trash (TOT) for an additional three years. TOT also requested an amended contract that offers the town two different options. The first option is the same contract from before that includes a 96-gallon pullout trash cart and blue can for recyclables to be picked up weekly. Residents would pay a new price of \$18.50 monthly starting November.

The second option includes a resident cost of \$20 per month for a 96-gallon pullout trash cart and blue recyclable pull out with a twice a month pickup. Both would include a back-door service as needed and a 7% annual increase.

The board approved the renewal of the contract at \$18.50 per month with weekly pickup, and members decided to table the change of pickup schedule until they discuss in a future meeting.

Williams explained that the town received a grant from the Division of Water Quality for a water project. The town received \$3.6 million to replace water lines and fire hydrants and to move lines from under Highway 24. The bids received for the work were way over the anticipated price. McDavid's and Associates helped the town negotiate with the bidders with a reduction in the scope of work.

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Helene brought out the best in Carolinians

October 11, 2024 | Enquirer-Journal, The (Monroe, NC) Author: JOHN HOOD | Section: Enquirer Journal | 651 Words OpenURL Link

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

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

We've only just begun to collect their stories of prudent planning, daring rescues, and dogged determination. These tales feature the likes of Hendersonville's James White, who led more than a dozen neighbors sheltering in his home to safety with ropes and lifejackets, as well as Eddie Hunnell, recently moved to North Carolina from Colorado, who leapt into the swollen New River to save a stranger, Lesley Worth, separated from her husband by the raging stream.

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

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

Democratic mayors have worked closely with Republican county commissioners to coordinate relief. Gov. Roy Cooper, U.S. Sens. Thom Tillis and Ted Budd, lawmakers from both parties — all have pitched in to comfort victims, survey damage, coordinate responses, and convey timely, accurate information to the public.

That's not to say there haven't been miscues and disagreements. Tillis and Budd questioned the pace at which military personnel from Fort Liberty and other bases were deployed into the devastated counties after the storm. Others have criticized the adequacy of response by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

While it will take some time to sort out all the claims and counterclaims, it's not too early to label these issues as legitimate topics for debate.

Unfortunately, much of the "debate" unfolding on social media over the past week has been anything but legitimate. Whether spreading wacky conspiracy theories about lithium mines and weather control or uttering grotesque slanders about Kamala Harris and Joe Biden intentionally "letting" Republican voters "drown," a host of very-online, supposedly conservative provocateurs and hacks have made a bad situation immeasurably worse.

Here's what a real conservative leader, state Sen. Kevin Corbin, had to say. "PLEASE help stop this junk," wrote Corbin, who represents North Carolina's eight westernmost counties. "It is just a distraction to people trying to do their job."

"Folks, this is a catastrophic event of which this country has never known. It is the largest crisis event in the history of N.C. The state is working non-stop. DOT has deployed workers from all over the state. Duke [Energy] has 10,000

workers on this. FEMA is here. The National Guard is here in large numbers."

Some incendiary memes are likely the product of misunderstandings, such as emergency officials redirecting volunteers away from dangerous roadways or relief agencies refusing certain donated items they aren't equipped to store or distribute. Others may well be the result of bad calls made in good faith, in stressful conditions, by officials with incomplete information or inadequate training.

Can policymakers properly second-guess such decisions after the fact? Of course! That time will come. Right now, our immediate challenges remain rescue and relief — challenges our fellow North Carolinians have met with magnificent resilience.

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• Citation (aglc Style)

JOHN HOOD, 'Helene brought out the best in Carolinians', *Enquirer-Journal, The* (online), 11 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C29D2EE6B6F320



Parton, Walmart team up to assist Helene victims

October 11, 2024 | Fayetteville Observer, The (NC) Author: Marcus K. Dowling , and Devarrick Turner; Nashville Tennessean Section: News 491 Words Page: A9 OpenURL Link

Dolly Parton's vast charity is helping Americans impacted by Hurricane Helene.

The eastern Tennessee native announced a partnership with Walmart to assist with relief efforts after the storm killed hundreds, destroyed homes and left millions without power in Florida, Georgia, North and South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia.

Parton is donating \$1million to the Mountain Ways Foundation, a nonprofit providing immediate assistance to flood victims. In addition, Parton's eastern Tennessee businesses including Dollywood, as well as the Dollywood Foundation, are combining efforts and have pledged to match her donation with a \$1million contribution of their own.

"They're active and already making a difference in Tennessee. So for me, it made complete sense. No time to wait," Dollywood President Eugene Naughton said of Mountain Ways. "They're feeding about 2,000 people a day, and I felt like we could scale them up and really go out under their nonprofit umbrella and get to work."

Parton announced her charity partnership at the Walmart Supercenter in Newport, Tennessee. She used to go to the dentist in Newport as a child, she recalled.

"I just want you to know that I am totally with you because I am part of you. I love you," Parton told over 250 community members in the parking lot. "I look around and I think, these are my mountains, these are my valleys, these are my rivers flowing like a stream. These are my people. These mountain-colored rainbows, these are my people, and this is my home."

Parton said she couldn't believe the devastation Helene caused in the region where she grew up. She sang a rendition of her classic song "Jolene":

"Helene, Helene, Helene, you came in here and broke us all apart,

"Helene, Helene, Helene, we're all here to mend these broken hearts."

During the event, Walmart U.S. President and CEO John Furner announced that the company, including Sam's Club and the Walmart Foundation, would increase its earlier hurricane relief commitment from \$6million to \$10million.

Dollywood made other donations as well, including working with sponsorship partner Coca-Cola to donate a semitruck of water in Cocke County, Tennessee; donating 60,000 reusable masks, 30,000 disposable protective garments and 2.5million disposable masks for cleanup; and providing utensils for the thousands of meals Mountain Ways is distributing. The theme park is a drop-off location for those wishing to provide items for the cleanup.

"This beautiful region, which we all love so much, has an extreme challenge ahead," Naughton said. "We know the spirit of the people in this region will help them overcome what faces them in the days ahead."

Parton has a long record of giving back, including contributing to relief efforts in Tennessee after natural disasters.

"I just go wherever my heart leads me," Parton told the Knoxville News Sentinel earlier this year. "If I feel that certain kind of tugging, knowing that I should do this or do that, I just go."

• Citation (aglc Style)

Marcus K. Dowling , and Devarrick Turner, Nashville Tennessean, 'Parton, Walmart team up to assist Helene victims', *Fayetteville Observer, The* (online), 11 Oct 2024 A9 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view? p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C23D9221775648>



Fayetteville-area organizations aiding Western NC counties devastated by Hurricane Helene

October 11, 2024 | Fayetteville Observer, The: Web Edition Articles (NC) Author: F.T. Norton, Fayetteville Observer | Section: News | 429 Words OpenURL Link

As cleanup continues in parts of Western North Carolina left devastated by Hurricane Helene, local government agencies are taking part in the region's recovery.

The Fayetteville Public Works Commission announced Wednesday it is sending multiple water construction crews and others to help restore drinking water and sanitary sewer services in one of the hardest-hit areas — the town of Black Mountain.

"Hurricane Helene caused significant damage to critical infrastructure, particularly affecting drinking water systems and wastewater management facilities in multiple counties," PWC said in a statement. "Many residents are experiencing disruptions in essential services, such as drinking water and wastewater management, which poses serious health and safety concerns."

The NC Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network has mobilized resources, expertise, and volunteers from across the region. The PWC statement said its team is working to assist communities with materials and supplies, repairing damaged pipelines, clearing debris, and ensuring safe drinking water access. They are also helping restore water reclamation facilities to prevent further sanitary sewer overflows and mitigate environmental hazards.

The PWC workers could be deployed for at least 2-4 weeks, the statement said.

"As one of the largest public utilities in NC, we understand the need to provide critical services to our community and how important it is to work together during emergencies. We are proud of our team members who volunteer to leave their families to help our neighbors in Western North Carolina," said Timothy L. Bryant, PWC CEO and general manager.

More Hurricane Helene news: 1K Fort Liberty soldiers deploying to help with Hurricane Helene relief efforts in NC

Cumberland County sends crews

From Cumberland County, teams with various county departments including Social Services, Emergency Management and Public Information have deployed to Avery, Yancey and Buncombe counties, working alongside local organizations and volunteers to assist with recovery efforts.

"In times of crisis, our commitment to help one another shines through," Glenn Adams, chairman of the Cumberland County Board of Commissioners, said in a statement Wednesday. "Our staff is dedicated to supporting our neighbors during this challenging time, and we encourage our residents to join us in making a difference."

The Cumberland County teams are focusing on a range of critical services, including providing shelter, distributing food and supplies, and assisting in communications efforts. They are also working closely with local agencies to assess damage and identify ongoing needs, the statement said.

In addition to county efforts, several local non-profits and agencies are actively collecting donations for those impacted by Hurricane Helene.

For information about specific donation needs visit cumberlandcountync.gov/stormupdates. The state of North Carolina has also established an official portal at nc.gov/donate where people can donate money or volunteer.

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DEVASTATING - How Gastonia, Shelby athletic programs are aiding those affected by Helene

October 11, 2024 | Gaston Gazette, The (Gastonia, NC) Author: Joe L Hughes II; Gaston Gazette | Section: Sports | 593 Words Page: B1 OpenURL Link

Gratitude served as somewhat of a keyword the past two weeks for high school athletic programs in Cleveland, Gaston and Lincoln counties, thankful for another opportunity to participate in activities which they enjoy.

For as much as a return to normalcy has been welcomed by those fortunate to escape the brunt of Tropical Storm Helene, a palpable sense of grief and sympathy has also been notably present in its aftermath.

The tropical system came ashore Sept. 27 as a Category 4 hurricane, carving a path of destruction through six states in the Southeastern U.S. Hardest hit were the mountains and foothills of North Carolina, where high winds and heavy rains combined to down trees, create landslides and wash out entire communities.

"(We're not dealing with anything) compared to what those guys in the mountains are going through; I feel real strong about how hard that is for the people up there, a whole lot of good people up there," said South Point football coach Adam Hodge following his team's win over Crest last Friday night. "I called several coaches, talked to them and it's a real devastating thing going on up there. We get to play football, and that isn't anything like what they are going through."

A moment of silence was observed last week at high school sporting events throughout the area. However, programs in Cleveland, Gaston and Lincoln counties are going the extra mile in aid of their mountain neighbors.

Since Helene left a path of carnage, local programs have used their platform to garner much-needed resources for communities in the mountains and foothills.

A tractor-trailer welcomed patrons to Burns High's Ron Greene Stadium last Friday night, cramming as many cases of water as possible before the hometown Bulldogs' victory over Bessemer City. North Lincoln challenged those in Pumpkin Center to do the same, requesting materials ranging from batteries, blankets, heavy coats and gloves to detergent, baby formula, as well as items for pets and livestock.

Proceeds from Shelby High's junior varsity matchup with Burns, as well as its varsity game against Highland Tech the following night were to benefit Samaritans' Purse relief efforts. The school also sought bottled water, diapers, wipes, paper towels and medical supplies among other items

Such charity will continue into this week. Prior to its key Big South 3A matchup with South Point, the Kings Mountain athletic department announced \$2 from each ticket sold Friday night will go to help Pisgah High School recovery efforts.

"Pisgah High, a fellow western 3A school, has been a valued partner, hosting wrestling and golf regionals in recent years," according to a prepared statement by the Kings Mountain High athletic department. "They are now facing the challenges of Helene after recovering from Tropical Storm Fred (in 2021), and we hope this contribution helps their students and staff during this difficult time."

Such comes on the heels of the Mountaineer volleyball team's "Fill the Jug" campaign, hoping spare change could "make change" for those impacted by Tropical Storm Helene. They also accepted canned goods and water.

Also getting in on the act is Ashbrook High, its booster club announcing a portion of funds raised via concessions will go to help Owen High School in Swannanoa.

"One of the messages we put out (last week) was to take advantage of your opportunities, because it can be taken away," said Ashbrook football coach Darius James. "You have guys in the mountains, they don't have football right now. Some of them are either grieving, looking at loss of homes, family members and that's more important than football. So (it's about) putting that all in perspective."

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Joe L Hughes II, Gaston Gazette, 'DEVASTATING - How Gastonia, Shelby athletic programs are aiding those affected by Helene', *Gaston Gazette, The* (online), 11 Oct 2024 B1 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view? p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C23DB671FF2DD8>



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Since Helene left a path of carnage, local programs have used their platform to garner much-needed resources for communities in the mountains and foothills.

A tractor-trailer welcomed patrons to Burns High's Ron Greene Stadium last Friday night, cramming as many cases of water as possible before the hometown Bulldogs' victory over Bessemer City. North Lincoln challenged those in Pumpkin Center to do the same, requesting materials ranging from batteries, blankets, heavy coats and gloves to detergent, baby formula, as well as items for pets and livestock.

Proceeds from Shelby High's junior varsity matchup with Burns, as well as its varsity game against Highland Tech the following night were to benefit Samaritans' Purse relief efforts. The school also sought bottled water, diapers, wipes, paper towels and medical supplies among other items

Such charity will continue into this week. Prior to its key Big South 3A matchup with South Point, the Kings Mountain athletic department announced \$2 from each ticket sold Friday night will go to help Pisgah High School recovery efforts.

"Pisgah High, a fellow western 3A school, has been a valued partner, hosting wrestling and golf regionals in recent years," according to a prepared statement by the Kings Mountain High athletic department. "They are now facing the challenges of Helene after recovering from Tropical Storm Fred (in 2021), and we hope this contribution helps their students and staff during this difficult time."

Such comes on the heels of the Mountaineer volleyball team's "Fill the Jug" campaign, hoping spare change could "make change" for those impacted by Tropical Storm Helene. They also accepted canned goods and water.

Also getting in on the act is Ashbrook High, its booster club announcing a portion of funds raised via concessions will go to help Owen High School in Swannanoa.

"One of the messages we put out (last week) was to take advantage of your opportunities, because it can be taken away," said Ashbrook football coach Darius James. "You have guys in the mountains, they don't have football right now. Some of them are either grieving, looking at loss of homes, family members and that's more important than football. So (it's about) putting that all in perspective."

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• Citation (aglc Style)

Joe L Hughes II, Gaston Gazette, 'DEVASTATING - How Gastonia, Shelby athletic programs are aiding those affected by Helene', *Gaston Gazette, The* (online), 11 Oct 2024 B2 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view? p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C23DB679CA6B18>



Want to give? Here's how to spot a scam

October 11, 2024 | Gaston Gazette, The (Gastonia, NC) Author: Kara Fohner; Gaston Gazette | Section: News | 721 Words Page: A1 OpenURL Link

People looking to help Western North Carolina in the wake of Hurricane Helene should be on the lookout for scammers, according to the Better Business Bureau. Here's how you can spot them.

Fake charities

"So what happens oftentimes is scammers will actually go on social media and create big charities. They'll create fake donation websites. They'll create social media campaigns, crowdfunding pages, and it looks like they're supporting relief efforts," said Juliana O'Rork, vice president of Marketing, Communications and Business Development for the Better Business Bureau. "And they use, you know, that emotional appeal to try to get people to donate immediately and in the moment ... They're creating fake websites, fake links for people to click on and then provide their credit card for donations. And unfortunately, they're just not legit."

Storm chasers

People affected by the hurricane also should be on the lookout for storm chasers, businesses or scammers that approach people after a storm and pressure them into paying for services, O'Rork said.

"So people will come out of the woodwork. They will travel across state lines and try to offer their services. They'll go door to door sometimes, and sometimes the companies are legitimate, but you know, oftentimes they're not," O'Rork said. "They'll show up at your door. They're gonna say they can fix your roof ... They may take a 50% down payment upfront and literally never return to do the work."

"If you have ... an unsolicited person offering these services to you, if they're pressuring you, if they're using these tactics that you have to hire them now, you have to make these payments up front, those are going to be red flags that they're more than likely a storm chaser," O'Rork added.

Be cautious

People who need help should carefully research people or organizations that offer their services. Websites set up by scammers might have misspellings, broken links, photos used elsewhere online, and icons that don't work correctly.

"One thing we just always recommend is to do your research. If you're looking for a specific service, research the heck out of it online. Make sure that you feel comfortable. Make sure the websites look legitimate," O'Rork said. "You know, there's no misspellings. There should be very visible contact information, phone numbers, addresses where they're located, prior pictures from prior work, so that you can see the work that they've done."

People who want to donate to the relief efforts in WNC should check online to see if the charity they wish to give to is legitimate.

You can do this on the Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance at give.org, or go to https://www.charitynavigator.org/.

"You know, most of the time when it comes to charities, especially if you're visiting like their website or seeing where they've been vetted, you can find things like financial records. You know exactly what their mission is, what

they're doing with the donations, how they're actually helping people, versus just saying, you know, we're helping victims of the hurricane," O'Rork said. "It's like, okay, but you're helping victims of the hurricane. In what capacity? Are you providing meals? Are you providing food, clothing, cleanup assistance? So we would recommend those two websites ... to be able to determine which charities are legitimate and which ones we have vetted."

People who wish to donate should donate directly to the organization they want to support, using the organization's official website. They should also use a credit card, O'Rork said.

"Obviously, a credit card offers additional protection against fraud, so we always encourage people to use your credit card and avoid sending cash or using like the ... payment apps, like Venmo or Cash App," she said.

When donating to crowdfunding campaigns on websites like Go Fund Me, people should be cautious.

"GoFundMe is an accredited business, so we know as an organization, they do good work. It's just the scammers that (are) raising funds for X, Y and Z. But if you don't know the individual, you may want to steer clear of that, just because ... if they're not explaining exactly what they're doing with the money, how they're helping victims, it could potentially be a scam," she said. "Make sure you do have enough information to know whether it's legitimate or not."

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• Citation (aglc Style)

Kara Fohner, Gaston Gazette, 'Want to give? Here's how to spot a scam', *Gaston Gazette, The* (online), 11 Oct 2024 A1 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C23DB6821664B0



Helene help will be 'unprecedented'

October 11, 2024 | News & Record (Greensboro, NC)

Author: RICHARD CRAVER Staff Reporter | Section: Main | 1344 Words

Page: 1A OpenURL Link

Paying for repairing roads, highways and water and sewer infrastructure are the top priorities for the bulk of the \$273 million "rainy-day" funds approved Thursday for Hurricane Helene relief efforts in western North Carolina.

Gov. Roy Cooper signed into law Thursday House Bill 149, titled "Disaster Recovery Act of 2024," which represents the first round of disaster relief funding. The state House and Senate voted unanimous Wednesday for HB149.

Those priorities represent the realities of helping affected western N.C. communities to return to normal life, according to legislators and Cooper administration officials.

The rainy-day fund exceeded \$4.75 billion before Helene. Legislators have established a limit on how much rainy-day funds can be spent at any one time.

"Recovery for Western North Carolina will require unprecedented help from state and federal sources, and this legislation is a strong first step," Cooper said in a statement.

"Hurricane Helene caused catastrophic damage, but also showed the resiliency of North Carolina's people and its communities, and we must continue the bipartisan work to help them build back strong."

About \$250 million is going to state agencies and local governments toward relief and recovery operations in the 25 affected counties that include Alleghany, Ashe, Watauga and Wilkes.

Essentially, funds appropriated to the N.C. Emergency Management agency will serve as upfront cash flows that are expected to be reimbursed at up to 100% from the federal government, primarily the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

About \$100 million in state funding already has been designated toward disaster relief efforts, including N.C. Department of Transportation efforts toward repairing or new construction of private roads and bridges.

Cooper said that "significant progress is already being made to reopen roads, restore electricity and repair water and communications systems."

Most of the energy and communications repairs are being done by private companies, such as Duke Energy, Pike Electric and mobile and internet providers.

"This initial investment is helpful in satisfying federal matching funds requirements and cash flow to help ensure maximum impact," Cooper said.

"In coming weeks and months, damage assessments will continue and the governor will work with state and federal appropriators to identify the significant funding that will be required to rebuild communities devastated by this storm."

Next legislative session

A second one-day session focused on disaster relief efforts is scheduled for Oct. 24.

State Emergency Management officials are expected to provide before that session the results of an accelerated preliminary damage-and-needs assessment so legislators can determine the next amount to withdraw from the rainy-day fund.

The typical damage-and-needs assessment takes between six to eight weeks to conduct and present to the legislature, A more thorough assessment likely will be presented to the legislature after the Nov. 5 general election.

However, the availability of drones and other technological advancements has helped to speed up the assessments.

The assessment is designed in part to determine what damages FEMA will pay for and what disaster relief expenses the state will have to pick up. State officials, both with the Cooper administration and the administration of the next governor, will negotiate with FEMA officials on those expenses.

Funding also will be dedicated to "unmet basic needs" for affected communities, such as providing shelter and warmth as the cooler nights of fall arrive.

"There is not a specific earmark of any of these dollars for a specific program," said Senate leader Phil Berger, R-Rockingham.

When asked about why the legislature is not providing more from the rainy-day fund, Berger said, "This is not all of it, not by a long shot."

"We don't want to get too far ahead of the federal government on that because we don't want to supplant those federal dollars with state dollars if we're not required to."

House speaker Tim Moore, R-Cleveland, said legislators know "this is just a drop in the bucket to what's going to be the total cost."

"We're well over \$10 billion, and it's going to be higher than that. This will (be) multiple years that this (recovery) process has to be dealt with at the state level and the federal level."

Non-financial details

A legislative staff analysis of HB149 shows how legislators are providing guidance to board of elections in the 25 affected counties for handling the upcoming Nov. 5 general election.

Most of the affected counties are conservative leaning outside Buncombe, Mecklenburg and Watauga.

About \$5 million will be provided to county boards of elections for voter outreach and communication efforts.

Absentee ballots for voters in the 25 counties can be returned to any county board of elections, early voting sites or precincts, as well as establishing a hotline for displaced voters from the 25 counties.

Berger said there will be "additional flexibilities for appointing election judges and poll workers, including from outside a particular county," such as state employees without taking leave from their jobs.

HB149 contains language providing direction for how school systems in the 25 affected counties can adjust their 2024-25 calendars.

HB149 allows public schools to excuse days missed for schools that closed during September and October related to Hurricane Helene damages.

Other elements include:

Expands the amount of authorized remove instruction time for schools in the 25 affected counties for the remainder of the school year. Treats employees and contractors of public school units as having worked on days deemed completed and provide funding to replaced lost compensation of school nutrition employees. Requires the state Department of Public Instruction to report on calendar flexibility and compensation provided. Waives requirements for students enrolled in educator preparation program to complete clinical internships over a certain amount of time if they were scheduled to complete the internships in December. Extends the deadline for bonuses to be paid out to qualifying principals in affected counties.

Berger said HB149 will suspend into at least March 1 the post-COVID-19 pandemic law that requires the Council of State to renew every 30 days a governor's executive orders on declared emergencies.

The bill will waive temporarily driver's license renewals in those counties, along with certain environmental regulations, such as burning, road construction and wastewater, to accelerate the recovery process.

There will be small business loans made in conjunction with Golden Leaf Foundation that will be reimbursed through FEMA.

"There are thousands of businesses in this region that have been severely damaged or destroyed," said Sen. Warren Daniel. R-Burke.

"They're struggling to figure out whether they will ever be able to rebuild and reopen. Local residents and the state economy depend heavily on the businesses in Western North Carolina, especially small businesses.

"It's the General Assembly's duty to provide them help during their darkest hour and we are intent on doing just that."

The law also includes the Potential Tropical Cyclone #8 Fund for Brunswick and New Hanover counties, as well as language to fund the relief needs for the Nash County tornado that caused damage in Rocky Mount.

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• Citation (aglc Style)

RICHARD CRAVER; Staff Reporter, 'Helene help will be 'unprecedented'', *Greensboro News & Record* (online), 11 Oct 2024 1A https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C23D574F0F31B0



Week 8 may mark end of a local rivalry

October 11, 2024 | News & Record (Greensboro, NC) Author: BRYANT ROCHE Staff Reporter | Section: Life | 1088 Words

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HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL WEEK 8

The Northern-Northwest rivalry could fade into history as a conference game as realignment approaches.

However, this chapter of the series concludes in style as this installment pits the undefeated Nighthawks, Triad No. 7 against the one-loss Vikings, Triad No. 8, in a matchup with Metro 4A Conference implications.

1. Northern Guilford (6-0, 3-0) at Northwest Guilford (5-1, 2-1), 7:30 p.m.

Northwest narrowly won in overtime last year. This season, Northern enters in a tie for first place with Grimsley, which handed Northwest its only loss this season. A win for Northern keeps it in control of its own destiny while in pursuit of their first conference title since 2013 and its first since joining the Metro 4A. Northwest, only one game behind with four games to play, is 7-1 in home conference games over the past three seasons. Northern leads the all-time series 9-5, but Northwest has won the last two games. A good Northern offensive line led by Sam Bagley and Tristen Swinney has helped Northern average 6.3 yards per carry but must face a stout Northwest defensive front led by edge defender Robert Lange, a Division I recruit, and defensive tackle Collyn Shokes. Northwest will need to stop the run and hope this plays into an advantage as its secondary has 12 interceptions on the season, although Northern has only thrown three to its 12 passing touchdowns.

2. West Forsyth (4-2, 2-1) at Reagan (4-2, 2-1), 7 p.m.

Triad No. 6 West goes against the Triad No. 10 Raiders in a matchup of western Forsyth County rivals. Reagan lost by a combined 111-28 to current Triad No. 1 Grimsley and No. 2 East Forsyth in their first two games without starting quarterback Jacob Smith, but since then have defeated Glenn and Davie County by a combined 52-20 with a strong defense and running game. However, the challenge comes as West brings the best offensive line they have faced since those two losses. It appears to be a must-win game for both teams, who hope to contend for a conference title. West comes off a 40-0 win over Glenn after struggling the prior few weeks.

3. West Stokes (6-1, 3-0) at Reidsville (6-0, 2-0), 7:30 p.m.

This could be a de-facto Mid-State 2A Conference championship game. West Stokes will have to get over nemesis Reidsville, which has outscored them 183-23 in their last four matchups beginning from fall 2021. Last year, Reidsville won 49-8 in the regular season in a similar scenario and won 42-7 in a second round playoff game. Reidsville only ran nine offensive plays in their 66-0 win last week over McMichael, while West Stokes had a much tougher task and defeated North Forsyth, 30-21. The Stokes defense will have to step up if it has any hopes of containing Rams running back Jariel Cobb, who has 848 rushing yards and is helped by a passing game completing 74.5% of its throws.

4. Walkertown (5-1, 2-0) at North Forsyth (4-4, 1-2), 7:30 p.m.

Another neighborhood matchup. Walkertown has its best team since going 8-3 two years ago with current East Forsyth quarterback Bryce Baker, a North Carolina recruit, at the helm and looks to keep pace in the Mid-State 2A race. A win here keeps them among the unbeatens with the winner of Reidsville and West Stokes. Walkertown can't make the mistake of looking ahead to Reidsville. North hopes to have its first five-win mark since 2016. Walkertown's Cam Kelly leads the Triad with 1,085 rushing yards on the season.

5. Western Guilford (4-2, 1-2) at Page (2-4, 2-1), 7:30 p.m.

Western took a tough 48-0 loss to Grimsley last week but will get another chance to reach five wins for the first time since 2019 and just its second since 2009. This week, it faces a Page team that has experienced ups and downs under first-year coach Caylon Hann. Western's biggest strength has been a ground game that averages 6 yards per carry, while Page's young offense must avoid turnovers and penalties.

6. Clear Dot Charter (1-4) at High Point Christian (6-0), 7 p.m.

HPCA was to have faced two-time defending state champion Asheville School, but the effects of Hurricane Helene forced the Cougars find a replacement opponent, and they came up with one in a Columbia, South Carolina, school. The Cougars look to match the 7-0 start they had last year. Cougars running back Jaylen Moore is second in the Triad behind Walkertown's Kelly with 912 yards rushing, despite only playing in five games, Quarterback Tyler Eley has completed 73.3% of his passes for 14 touchdowns and six interceptions.

7. Smith (2-4, 0-3) at Southern Guilford (2-4, 1-2), 7 p.m.

Neither team has a winning record, but the matchup appears to be pretty even on paper. Southern comes off an exciting 26-21 win over Atkins, who won just 28-22 over Smith on Sept. 20. Apart from last week's 49-6 loss to Dudley, the Golden Eagles' three other losses came by a combined 14 points, with two of those coming to Mid-State 3A opponents Atkins and Rockingham County. Smith will have to adapt to Southern's mix of RPO and power run schemes and try to contain playmaker Travis Covington. The Smith offense will need to move the chains and stay on the field.

8. Glenn (2-4, 1-2) at Reynolds (3-3, 1-2), 7 p.m.

You can't say for certain who will show up for either team, making this matchup all the better. Reynolds quarterback Tommy Elrod comes off a Player of the Week performance in the Demons' 25-3 win over Parkland, but defense is a strength for the Bobcats, who were only allowing an average of 15 points per game prior to giving up 40 to West Forsyth last week. Reynolds hasn't won four games in a season since going 5-7 in 2018.

9. Mount Tabor (4-2, 2-1) at Davie County (2-4, 1-2), 7 p.m.

Win or lose, Davie may need a morale boost after taking a blowout loss to East Forsyth and a 31-14 home loss to Reagan. Tabor can't get too down on itself after possibly letting a conference title slip away late against East after mounting a comeback.

10. Parkland (3-3, 1-2) at East Forsyth (6-0, 3-0), 7 p.m.

East will be heavily favored, but the Mustangs did hang with West Forsyth until the bitter end, so the Eagles can't look past them. East needs to approach this game seriously and can't be overconfident after a close win over Mount Tabor.

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• Citation (aglc Style)

BRYANT ROCHE; Staff Reporter, 'Week 8 may mark end of a local rivalry', *Greensboro News & Record* (online), 11 Oct 2024 1B https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C23D573B3A3F28



Fifth District race gets heated

October 11, 2024 | News & Record (Greensboro, NC) Author: KEVIN GRIFFIN Staff Reporter | Section: Main | 1573 Words

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Age: 81

Job: Educator & small business owner

Education: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, A.B. in English and M.A.C.T. in Sociology. UNC-Greensboro, Ed.D. in Curriculum and Teaching/Higher Education

Political/civic involvement: Served as U.S. rep since 2005, served in the North Carolina State Senate, served on the Executive Committee of North Carolina Citizens for Business and Industry, elected to three four-year terms on the Watauga County Board of Education, confirmed by the United States Senate for a Presidential appointment to the National Advisory Council for Women's Educational Programs, served on the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation Advisory Panel, the Board of Directors of the John William Pope Center for Higher Education Policy, Board of Directors of the N.C. Center for Public Research, the UNC-Chapel Hill Board of Visitors, National Conference of State Legislatures' Blue Ribbon Advisory Panel on Child Care, Charter Member of the Mount Airy Museum of Regional History and the Foscoe-Grandfather Community Center Board.

Top priority if elected:

I'm running to serve and faithfully represent the hard-working North Carolinians of the Fifth Congressional District.

Every day I hear from people across the district who are fed up with the Biden-Harris administration's high inflation, big government policies and national security failures at our borders.

I plan to continue to build on my track-record of successfully fighting for my constituents, for standing up to the Biden administration, and enacting conservative solutions that actually work.

Today I am laser-focused on helping my constituents recover from the devastation wrought by Hurricane Helene in North Carolina and channel federal resources to where it is needed.

My constituents know that I work tirelessly to represent them in Congress, to solve problems and to fight for North Carolina values. I have a record that proves I take constituent service seriously and that I will not be outworked by anyone.

Age: 61

Job: Former Journalist and Newspaper Publisher

Education: Wofford College, Bachelor of Arts in English

Political/civic involvement: Board Member, Wilkes Recovery Revolution; Member, Wilkes Child Abuse Prevention Team' Member, Wilkes Prison Ministry

Top priority if elected:

My top priority is to represent working class people.

Costs are rising, wages aren't keeping up with inflation, and small businesses can't compete with corporations.

Meanwhile, Congress just continues the bidding of mega corporations and the richest among us. I'm running to tell Congress it's not about them, it's about you.

For the past two elections, all of Guilford County has been a part of the Sixth Congressional District represented by Democratic Rep. Kathy Manning.

That will change this year under the new maps adopted by Republicans in the N.C. General Assembly last year.

Now, Guilford County is split into three congressional districts, all of which are heavily Republican. The change in the map prompted Manning to opt out of the race for another term.

In terms of population for Guilford County and the city of Greensboro, the largest district is the Fifth Congressional District, which stretches west to the mountains and includes Rockingham, Stokes, Surry, Wilkes, Alleghany, Ashe, Watauga, Caldwell and Alexander counties.

An analysis by the nonprofit advocacy group Common Cause found Republicans have a 13-point advantage in the new district that will be used in this year's election.

Rep. Virginia Foxx, a Republican from Banner Elk, is seeking her 11th term representing the district. Foxx is known for conservative views and support for former President Donald Trump.

During the certification of the 2020 election in January 2021, Foxx voted against accepting electors from the state of Pennsylvania, citing election-law changes in Pennsylvania that she felt violated the Constitution.

Foxx's Democratic opponent is Chuck Hubbard, a retired journalist and newspaper publisher from Wilkesboro.

Hubbard has criticized Foxx as "a ruthless lawmaker who has worked to dismantle public education and workforce protections" while pledging that he will "prioritize our working families and small businesses, support public education, work to build an economy that works for all of us, and expand access to affordable healthcare" if he is elected.

Both candidates submitted responses to questions about their campaigns. Here is what they had to say:

Virginia Foxx

Why should the voters of the Fifth District choose you over your opponent?

It's simple. I have a strong, conservative voting record and a reputation of providing top-notch constituent services to folks in the Triad and across the Fifth Congressional District. My experience means I know how to get things done.

Plus, I've demonstrated my dedication to conservative values with common sense solutions that work for all North Carolinians. No one needs to wonder where I stand or whether I will fight for conservative principles. I have a clear and proven track-record as someone who won't back down from fighting for solutions that will make a difference in my constituents' lives.

Common sense solutions means things like my legislation, the SKILLS Act, which is helping workers build 21st century job skills, while slashing bureaucracy and wasteful spending.

The committee I chair also passed the first ever "Parents Bill of Rights" to ensure parents' rights are protected in public schools. I am currently leading a successful major investigation into rampant antisemitism at college

campuses - which has already resulted in the resignation of university presidents who had tolerated antisemitism and discrimination on their campuses.

There's also my very first bill, the HERO Act, which is now helping our military men and women by increasing their access to retirement savings accounts.

I'm an educator, mother, grandmother and small businesswoman, allowing me to understand many of the issues my constituents must grapple with. I am 100% committed to fighting for the North Carolina values we hold dear and solving our problems with conservative solutions to our tough problems.

What do you see as the greatest challenge facing the district and what solutions would you support to address the problem?

My constituents are fed up with the Biden-Harris economy, which is crushing average, hard-working North Carolinians, thanks to spiraling inflation and job-killing regulation. The Biden administration's policies have produced a punishing cost of living and a slowing economy, which are bleeding families in the Triad dry.

If elected, I will continue to fight for legislation to rein in wasteful federal spending. I will support legislation to restart using taxpayer-owned federal lands to safely produce American energy - which the Biden administration has basically banned, helping drive up energy costs.

The solution to reining in out-of-control government spending is to stop pumping out more inflationary "stimulus." That's why, in the 115th Congress, I voted for legislation to rescind \$15 billion dollars of previously authorized, but unused, funds from overfunded or expired programs.

I also cosponsored the Unauthorized Spending Accountability Act. This bill puts many government programs on a three-year pathway to sunset. It forces Congress to take responsibility for spending, rather than putting programs on spending autopilot-potentially saving 100's of billions of dollars per year.

How will you ensure you adequately represent your constituents in Guilford County and the Triad?

Excellent and responsive constituent service has always been a top priority for me and my dedicated staff.

I will continue to fight for my constituents - including those in the Triad - in Congress, while also fighting to ensure that any one of my constituents who deals with any federal agency or bureaucracy is treated with the fairness and respect due to every citizen.

Most importantly, I will never stop listening to the people I represent. The voice of the people of the fifth district matters to me. When I travel the district and talk with folks I meet, their stories of success, hardship or struggle serve to inspire me to work tirelessly on their behalf.

That's what motivates me to tackle tough problems like our border security and immigration crisis, or repairing the Biden-Harris administration's failed policies that caused the cost of living to spiral out of control for regular folks living in the Triad.

The truth is, we can't afford another four years of Biden-Harris policies. So I'm working hard to ensure we get back to focusing on growing our economy, keeping inflation in check and securing our border. By addressing these issues with conservative solutions that empower people, we can make life more prosperous and more free for everyone in the Triad.

Chuck Hubbard

Why should the voters of the Fifth District choose you over your opponent?

I spent 40 years at the Wilkes Journal Patriot as either a reporter or a publisher.

For the last 20 years, I have watched Virginia Foxx harm my community by tearing down public education and workplace protections as Chair of the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

Foxx's voting record speaks for itself: she continues to vote against the interests of the district she is supposed to represent. I can't sit back and watch this happen any longer.

My intimate knowledge of this district and its struggles positions me to represent my community in a completely different way.

What do you see as the greatest challenge facing the district and what solutions would you support to address the problem?

I will do everything in my power to combat rising prices and the high cost-of-living.

The federal minimum wage is still \$7.25. This is unacceptable. We need to push for an increase to a livable standard.

Additionally, I will be supporting bills like the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which has helped North Carolina receive investment funds across the counties in the fifth district.

The creation of quality, livable wage jobs will be a priority.

How will you ensure you adequately represent your constituents in Guilford County and the Triad?

I will continue to show up in my community and make myself available to my constituents.

I will listen. I will be a legislator for the people. I will reject political theater, which has been central to my opponent's tenure.

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• Citation (aglc Style)

KEVIN GRIFFIN; Staff Reporter, 'Fifth District race gets heated', *Greensboro News & Record* (online), 11 Oct 2024 1A https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C23A8B90ABFD78>



Helene presents leaders with a choice on western NC schools

October 11, 2024 | Herald-Sun, The (Durham, NC) Author: Bryan Proffitt| Section: Editorial/Opinion | 668 Words

Page: 13B OpenURL Link

As the tragedy facing Western North Carolina continues to unfold, our state faces a critical choice about its future. As public school educators, we know that challenging life events like divorce or the loss of a loved one can stunt a student's learning, growth and happiness. Young people living in the wake of Hurricane Helene's havoc will face immeasurable stress, as will the public school staff who love and serve them. In the coming months, our state's elected leaders have the ability to relieve a great deal of that stress.

For years, members of the North Carolina Association of Educators have advocated for resources to remediate crumbling infrastructure in our schools across the state. From sweaty trailers, freezing classrooms, and libraries with mold, we have asked for those resources because our students deserve better. Our public schools are the centers of our communities.

Beyond the bonds we build at Friday night games and Saturday performances, our public schools serve as sites of refuge when things go wrong. Throughout our mountain region, we have seen neighbors gathering at public schools for showers, water and cell service. Educators have called through class rosters, offering support and love to students and their families. Public schools in counties around the state have already started to welcome displaced families into their communities. Schools keep more of us connected on a regular basis than any other institution in our community. A storm won't change that.

This storm will, however, create a moment of choice for our elected leaders. We can keep neglecting our constitutionally-guaranteed public schools, or we can prioritize safe and stable public schools as we rebuild for the future.

We can start by protecting our public school employees. They need their pay, leave and benefits until it is safe to go back to work. They should be able to focus on rebuilding and supporting their families through this trauma, not stress over finances.

School districts should have what they need too. As we did during COVID, we can keep funding schools as their student populations fluctuate. Thousands of students will be displaced, and some will bounce from county to county as their families seek stability. Public schools, as the most stable institutions in our communities, need resources for the long haul. They need to be ready to welcome our kids home.

We also need the resources to help them thrive. Too many students and staff have been dealing with substandard schools. To serve as stable centers of our communities, we need modern, safe and sturdy schools that can withstand the kinds of disasters that Eastern North Carolina families have been accustomed to. Rebuilding schools with updated infrastructure, in and out of the current disaster area, keeps our kids and communities safer and invests in the future of our state. Legislative action can also provide free student meals.

Before Helene, the General Assembly was considering giving away more than \$400 million of public tax dollars this year, and more than \$4 billion over the decade, to private school vouchers. Those vouchers cannot be the priority right now. Instead, let's allocate those same resources to relief, rebuilding and resourcing safe and stable public schools as the center of Western North Carolina communities.

Every day, our students and staff accomplish incredible things in public schools across the state. In the coming months, many public school communities will accomplish more than they ever imagined. Not only will they serve every student, regardless of background, ability, or income, public schools will also keep our communities safe, our

families fed, and all of our lives a little more stable. Our kids deserve a strong and resilient state-let's rebuild Western North Carolina with a recognition that our public schools are at the heart of what makes that possible.

Bryan Proffitt is a high school history teacher in Durham and the North Carolina Association of Educators vice president.

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• Citation (aglc Style)

Bryan Proffitt, 'Helene presents leaders with a choice on western NC schools', *Herald-Sun, The* (online), 11 Oct 2024 13B https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C273D29356A348



Helene rattles the faith of some while others vow to rebuild

October 11, 2024 | Herald-Sun, The (Durham, NC) Author: Adam Wagner; Staff Writer | Section: News | 1158 Words

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SALUDA Margie Derwort's friends told her to flee her home during Tropical Storm Helene, worried that the two-story red house the 81-year-old has lived in for almost five decades would be inundated by the heavy rains.

But Derwort and her son, Michael, stayed. They watched as muddy water ran down the steep slope behind the house, running around both sides of it into the front yard.

Then came the knock at the door. It was one of their neighbors, Michael Derwort recalled, clad only in sweatpants. The man was soaking wet and distraught, saying he couldn't reach his wife.

It quickly became clear that the home next door, set some ways back from the road, had collapsed in a landslide. The man, who had been downstairs, had somehow been bounced out of a window. After drying off and being given a hoodie, Margie Derwort said, the man quickly moved on to check in on other neighbors.

His wife, who had been upstairs, was killed. A Polk County spokeswoman confirmed the woman's death to The News & Observer but did not identify her.

Everyone in Western North Carolina has a story about how they fared during Helene, which wreaked devastation across the region almost two weeks ago.

In the wake of that storm, some have decided that if they could weather Helene, they can weather anything. Others are shifting the other way, rattled by Helene's torrential rains and the flooding and hundreds of landslides that followed, leaving wide swaths of the region without basic services like cell signal, electricity and water for days.

Margie Derwort is in the latter camp, keenly interested in selling her home on U.S. 176 about four miles east of Saluda's downtown after Helene's impacts came so close.

"I am scared now. I need to leave if I can sell it. I need to do that," Derwort told The News & Observer on Monday.

Derwort's age is part of her thinking, as is her son's health. Michael is still coping with the effects from a battle with colon cancer.

'A mess' outside of Saluda

When a reporter approached, Derwort and Michael were sitting on their front porch with a friend.

They had just returned home after six days in a nearby inn, taken into downtown Saluda by the National Guard after the worst of Helene passed through. The yard around the slightly raised porch was still squishy to the step, and the power wasn't back on inside the house yet.

Margie Derwort said the home has a "bad history" and described how her husband had been killed about 20 years ago when a tree fell on his car nearby.

As badly as she wants to leave, the Derworts can't afford to just pick up and go. She needs somebody to buy her current house first

"You don't know what to do or which way to turn. Finances aren't where you can just go out and make a change, I'd have to sell the house. Now, how long will it take me to sell it? I can't move without money," Derwort said.

About 400 feet to the west, where the home had collapsed, a gate was pulled shut. A hand-written sign was laced through the iron bars, black letters traced with orange highlighter reading, "DANGER No Trespassing!! Mudslide in Progress." Large chunks of debris had collected in a stream bed along that home's property line.

"This is a mess," Michael Derwort said.

U.S. 176 is closed just to the east of the Derworts' home. The road is damaged in several places by landslides from above, while shelves of asphalt dangle over the North Pacolet River in other places, the earth that was supporting them washed away.

Rapid response in a mountain retreat

About a mile down that road is a long, steep driveway that wends past two waterfalls before ending at a home overlooking U.S. 176 and the river below.

Michael Bell has lived at the top of that driveway for about nine months. He moved there from Los Angeles, seeking to escape the chaos and crowds of the city.

Like many others in the region, Bell admits that he did not expect that Helene would be so severe.

"I wasn't prepared for this. I didn't think that the rain was going to hit as hard as it did," Bell said Monday While one work crew dug in the soil around his front door and another spread gravel at the base of his 1,900-foot driveway.

As Helene passed over the 30-acre property on Sept. 27, Bell walked down to the uppermost waterfall, one short hill down from his house. There, he saw the normally relaxing falls gushing, black water flying off the mountain side to meet water flying off the mountain in two other places just to the east.

"I never saw something more disgusting in my life," Bell said.

Debris carried in that water clogged a culvert at the bottom of Bell's driveway. That led to significant erosion of the driveway, which along with downed trees would leave Bell stranded at the top of the hill for days after the storm.

Bell returned to the house and noticed that the wind was starting to roar. Trees in the forest around the house were tilting in the gusts, some toppling over.

Then, Bell said, a red oak toppled over and slammed into the roof. The mature tree miraculously did not break through, but its weight was braced against the roof.

Bell scrambled as soon as the storm passed over, taking his chainsaw and cutting an A-shaped notch into the log to ease the weight that was resting on the roof.

Asked if he was worried about his safety at any point, Bell said, "I was so caught up with just trying to save the structure and everything else, there wasn't really time for that."

The tree cracked an eave inside, but it didn't cause any leaks or more significant damage.

In the days that followed, Bell rewired his well so he could power it with his generator and draw water from it. It would take nine days for power to be restored.

As the sound of the work crews' heavy machinery buzzed around him, Bell sounded a defiant note. Having made it through Helene, he said, his confidence in his new home was bolstered, his ability to live through any disaster there

upheld.

"I don't care what it takes. I'm going to rebuild and I can bounce back," Bell said. "I can get through anything."

This story was produced with financial support from the Hartfield Foundation and Green South Foundation, in partnership with Journalism Funding Partners, as part of an independent journalism fellowship program. The N&O maintains full editorial control of the work. If you would like to help support local journalism, please consider signing up for a digital subscription.

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• Citation (aglc Style)

Adam Wagner, Staff Writer, 'Helene rattles the faith of some while others vow to rebuild', *Herald-Sun, The* (online), 11 Oct 2024 1A https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C273D2E791D648>https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C273D2E791D648>https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C273D2E791D648>https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C273D2E791D648>https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C273D2E791D648>https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C273D2E791D648>https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C273D2E791D648>https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C273D2E791D648>https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C273D2E791D648>https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C273D2E791D648>https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C273D2E791D648>https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C273D2E791D648>https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C273D2E791D648>https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C273D2E791D648>https://infoweb.news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C273D2E791D648>https://infoweb.news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C273D2E791D648>https://infoweb.news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&document-view?p=AMNEWS&document-



Cooper describes - 'all hands - on deck' Helene response

October 11, 2024 | Herald-Sun, The (Durham, NC)

Author: Adam Wagner; Staff Writer | Section: News | 783 Words

Page: 1A OpenURL Link

Gov. Roy Cooper vowed Wednesday that the state government will continue to provide the resources Western North Carolina communities need to recover from Tropical Storm Helene.

"This is a true all-hands-on deck moment," Cooper said.

In a wide-ranging briefing, officials touched on a number of topics related to the Helene response.

Notably, Cooper called out the effects of wide-reaching disinformation that has been spreading in Helene's wake; FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell vowed to keep significant assets in North Carolina even as the agency responds to Hurricane Milton's impending landfall in Florida; and Cooper called for direct assistance for small businesses impacted by the storm.

"This is a historic disaster, the magnitude of which we have never experienced before in our state. The road to recovery will be long, but North Carolinians are strong and resilient and together we will recover," said NC Emergency Management Director Will Ray.

Ray described the response to Helene - including other states, the federal government, the private sector, nonprofits and volunteers - as "the largest whole-of-community response in North Carolina history."

Cooper said there are fewer than 81,000 power outages remaining, down from hundreds of thousands after the storm passed through. He said 80% of AT&T and Verizon outages have been repaired; and FEMA has approved about 126,000 Individual Assistance applications with more than \$60 million in aid paid.

The state has confirmed 88 storm-related deaths.

Additionally, there are about 2,600 people staying in hotels through FEMA's Transitional Sheltering Assistance program.

"It's clear that we're still at the beginning of this recovery and much more work remains ahead for Western North Carolina to recover stronger than ever, and it will," Cooper said.

FEMA head: No resources leaving NC

FEMA has more than 900 staff members on the ground in Western North Carolina assisting with the response to Helene.

That staff will stay in North Carolina even after Hurricane Milton makes landfall, Criswell said Wednesday.

"I want to assure the people of North Carolina that while we watch Hurricane Milton approach the coast of Florida, you can be assured that no resources are going to be taken from North Carolina," Criswell said.

While Criswell is headed to Florida to coordinate the Milton response, she vowed she would return to North Carolina and said FEMA's regional administrator would remain in North Carolina.

There are already 1,000 FEMA employees in Florida working on Helene and other disasters, Criswell said, with

additional search-and-rescue teams headed south. Some people are leaving the Helene response in Georgia, South Carolina and Tennessee to head toward the Milton response, Criswell added.

"We are not moving resources that are actively engaged in the priorities that the governor has set here in North Carolina," Criswell said.

'Onslaught of lies and misinformation'

Cooper made a point to call out the rampant rumors about the Helene response that are spreading on social media.

Those rumors have resulted in FEMA and N.C. Emergency Management each creating rumor response web pages, while U.S. Rep. Chuck Edwards, a Republican who represents Western North Carolina, has also sent a press release debunking myths about the Helene response. The News & Observer and Charlotte Observer have also been gathering and fact-checking rumors and disinformation.

"It's important to point out the onslaught of lies and misinformation that are impacting people there on the ground. This misinformation is confusing to people trying to get help. It's demoralizing and dangerous for people working so hard to deliver that help," Cooper said.

Cooper urged people to verify information they have been sent with "respected news sources" or to reach out directly to FEMA or state responders.

Stay off WNC roads

More than 460 roads have reopened, NC Department of Transportation Secretary Joey Hopkins said Wednesday, but more than 600 remain closed due to storm damage.

"This number's still changing daily as communications improve and we reach more sites," Hopkins said.

There are 5,800 sites that have sustained damage, Hopkins said, including 500 bridges and 600 culverts. Of those, DOT anticipates that at least 100 bridges will need to be replaced.

DOT's response include 2,100 employees, 1,700 of them working in Western North Carolina. There are also hundreds of contract employees, N.C. National Guard and U.S. Army forces helping DOT.

"Non-essential traffic is hindering our efforts to get roads opened back up. Crews are having to stop work to allow traffic to pass through damaged areas. To hep us get roads open, cleared and open as fast as possible, we again ask that traffic use alternative routes," Hopkins said.

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