

Helene takes toll on trucking routes

September 30, 2024 | Thomasville Times, The (NC) Author: Paul B. Johnson PAXTON MEDIA GROUP | Section: Thomasville Times | 206 Words OpenURL Link

TRIAD — Old Dominion Freight Line Inc. leaders are studying ways to cope with the loss of a major east-west trucking route as Tropical Storm Helene's wrath collapsed a section of Interstate 40 at the North Carolina-Tennessee line.

I-40 is closed in both directions for 43 miles between Exit 432 at U.S. 25-70-411 in Tennessee and Exit 20 at U.S. 276 in North Carolina, according to the N.C. Department of Transportation. Current estimates are that it will take a year to repair and reopen the section of expressway.

"We're still working through a plan at the moment to reroute freight that typically moves through that area," said Patrick Budd, manager of communications for the Thomasville-based national trucking company.

The tropical storm has directly affected Old Dominion because the company has a service center in Arden in the Asheville area.

"Right now, we're thinking of our neighbors, employees and customers in the impacted areas," Budd said.

One alternative route for Old Dominion, other trucking companies and motorists is to take Interstate 81 to Interstate 26 and then back to I-40 in Asheville. Another alternative route is I-81 to Interstate 77 and then to I-40 north of Statesville. But either route would add several hours to the trip.

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• Citation (aglc Style)

Paul B. Johnson PAXTON MEDIA GROUP, 'Helene takes toll on trucking routes', *Thomasville Times, The* (online), 30 Sep 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BFF853868520E0



Helene leaves 'overwhelming' destruction - Stunned residents of Fla. town assess the damage

September 30, 2024 | Times-News, The (Hendersonville, NC) Author: Trevor Hughes; USA TODAY | Section: News | 931 Words Page: A5 OpenURL Link

STEINHATCHEE, Fla. – For nearly two decades, Scott Peters poured his heart and soul into his Crabbie Dad's bar just across the road from the Steinhatchee River on Florida's Big Bend coast.

He's weathered storms and floods, the ups and downs of the tourist trade, the overall economy and pretty much anything else the world has thrown at him. And for a long time, hurricanes have been a fact of life – and usually mild enough to ride out in town.

Locals threw hurricane parties, cracking open beers and howling defiance at the wind. But after 2016, when Hurricane Hermine trashed the small town he calls home, they started taking the storms more seriously.

"We're basically at sea level," Peters said Wednesday.

That was before Hurricane Helene roared ashore pushing a wall of water. Helene's eye hit the coast a few miles away, and Steinhatchee got hit maybe harder than almost anywhere else.

And Peters' bar maybe got hit the hardest.

He rode out the storm in Gainesville, about 70 miles away, and hadn't yet made it home to assess the damage.

His friends and neighbors texted him photos and videos of the bar, but he worried the small bridge to his house was gone, and maybe the house itself.

"It's total devastation," he said by phone Friday, while sheriff's deputies blocked entry to the town. "I've got to start completely over."

Helene shoved a wall of water estimated at least 10 feet high into the lowest-lying areas of Steinhatchee, including where the bar sat. The iconic sign is gone, and only a few of the dollar bills once stuck to the rafters remained to flutter in the wind.

Also gone are the pieces of plywood workers carefully but hastily fastened over the windows. And the windows are gone, too. And the jaunty peach-colored walls.

Mostly what's left are the concrete steps, the back patio and the partially collapsed tiled floor.

"This is overwhelming," Steinhatchee resident Jamie Lee said as she surveyed the damage. "I don't think it's sunk in."

For days leading up to the storm, Peters and his staff moved out the beer coolers and liquor bottles.

"The thing's coming so damn fast, we didn't have time to prepare much," Peters said before the storm.

Anything small enough to haul away, they moved to higher ground. Peters checked and rechecked to make sure his insurance policy would cover damage from a named storm.

"We're taking everything I can lift and move and things I didn't take out last time that I learned a lesson from," he

said Wednesday. "You take every storm as serious as you can, because this is such a low-lying area."

On Friday, stunned residents shuffled though the town's muddy streets or bumped around on golf carts and pickups as a Coast Guard helicopter clattered overhead.

The storm surge piled more than a foot-thick mat of sea grass onto some low-lying areas, shoved docks and boats across Riverside Drive and left sticky mud in other areas.

"We've got somebody's freezer in the yard," said Pamela Keen, 62, as she stood on her deck looking at scattered packages of shrimp, green peppers, soda cans and a tub of shucked oysters nestled amid the seagrass covering their front yard. Down the road, plates, beer cans and a paring knife lay on the pavement.

Keen and her husband, Gary, rode out the storm in a motel a few miles inland, counting themselves lucky to get a room at the last minute. Unfortunately, she said, it was also infested with roaches.

"I'm thankful we had a room, even if we did have a lot of company," Keen said with a laugh, before kissing her husband and chiding their grandchildren to watch out for snakes.

Driving with his wife around town in a golf cart, retiree John Kujawski pointed out damage still lingering from past storms, including last summer's Hurricane Idalia, which also whacked Steinhatchee.

A longtime resident of the Naples area, Kujawski had been visiting Steinhatchee for nearly 20 years when they decided to move here permanently, drawn by the sense of community and small-town feel.

Navigating their bumpy way along muddy Riverside Drive, the couple pointed out guest houses that had been flattened, docks tossed ashore, and boats overturned and jammed into pilings near the Sea Hag Marina.

They noted which new roofs were destroyed all over again and mourned the damage to the recently opened Vargo's Buffalo Style Pizza restaurant.

From Gainesville, Peters was still grappling with the loss of his bar and possibly his house. He does some scallop fishing and hoped that might be enough to tide him over while waiting for insurance and any possible government assistance.

He said he has previously turned down offers of government aid but this time is ready to accept whatever help he can get.

"I'm going to jump through all the hoops," he said. "I have to. I don't just want to just take a huge loss and sell a blank slate piece of property. I'm not one to give up that easy. But it all depends on the insurance."

And he said that if it takes him years to rebuild, adding back on piece by piece as he gets the money, that's what he'll do.

"Over the years, I'll keep building on when I can afford it," he said. "At least I saved the liquor. But now I don't have anywhere to put it."

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• Citation (aglc Style)

Trevor Hughes, USA TODAY, 'Helene leaves 'overwhelming' destruction - Stunned residents of Fla. town assess the damage', Times-News, The (online), 30 Sep 2024 A5 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view? p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BE9DA0E3788160>



'Worse than I thought' - Asheville family might have lost everything to Tropical Storm Helene

September 30, 2024 | Times-News, The (Hendersonville, NC) Author: Jacob Biba; Asheville Citizen Times | Section: News | 722 Words Page: A1 OpenURL Link

ASHEVILLE - Kuroe Gray's first step the morning of Sept. 27 was straight into ankle deep water.

The A.C. Reynolds High School freshman woke up around 8 a.m. to the sound of her father yelling for her to get dressed because their home was flooding. Kuroe, 14, didn't even have time to grab a pair of shoes before boarding a rescue boat, she told the Citizen Times Sept. 27.

By the time she evacuated, water was halfway up the family's front door.

Earlier this week, Western North Carolina saw a "predecessor" rainfall event that brought up to 8 inches in many areas. And then on Sept. 26 and Sept. 27, Hurricane-turned-tropical-storm Helene delivered even more rain to the already swollen French Broad and Swannanoa rivers. The storm also brought high winds that knocked down trees and electrical lines across Buncombe County, leaving more than 100,000 Duke Energy customers without power that morning.

On Sept. 27, the French Broad River in Asheville's River Arts District covered Lyman Street, flooding the greenway and partially submerging surrounding buildings. That morning, area residents stood on the bridge spanning the river, watching debris float away atop the rushing water. A flock of pigeons tried to brave the wind but were pushed back to a roost beneath the bridge.

At River Ridge Apartments in East Asheville, where Kuroe lives with her father, David Gray, 58, and next door to her grandmother, Sharon Gray, 83, the Swannanoa River forced the family from their homes.

Sharon Gray told the Citizen Times the water that flooded her apartment washed away her wheelchair and walker. When the rescue crew moved her, it was so painful she thought she might die.

"I haven't walked for over a year," she said. "So, there I was, walking, actually walking so that I could get to the boat."

Her son, David, said the family lost almost everything. All he could save was the family guinea pig, Brown, his mother's cat, Ellie and medications.

And it's not like the Gray family wasn't ready for the storm.

"I prepped for losing power and for being able to flush the toilet — filling up the tubs, stocking up on water and food," David Gray said. "I had portable battery packs and camping gear for cooking."

But how much can a family really prepare for what one county official described as a "500-year-flood?"

"This morning, when the water was coming up closer and closer, I was like, this looks worse than I thought," he said.

"And before you know it, I guess they opened up the dam and water started coming in."

FEMA, National Guard step aiding in flooding devastation

In the early morning hours Sept. 27, Buncombe County ordered a mandatory evacuation order from the North Fork Reservoir, where water breached the spillway, to Biltmore Village along the Swannanoa River.

Crews working in the area have conducted more than 40 swiftwater rescues, according to county spokesperson Lillian Govus. Additional teams from Illinois, New Jersey and other locations in North Carolina have arrived to support the effort, she said.

An 82-person urban search and rescue team from the Federal Emergency Management Agency were also assisting with rescue efforts, the City of Asheville said in a news release. The National Guard was also providing support.

Evacuated from River Ridge, the Gray family was at Harrah's Cherokee Center, where the city set up an emergency shelter in the early morning hours Sept. 27.

By the time the Gray family arrived, the rain and wind had ended. Tourists strolled Haywood Street surveying damage, snapping photographs of broken tree limbs covering sidewalks and streets.

Soon, the sun came out.

Meanwhile, the Gray family stood inside the lobby of Harrah's, where more than 400 people evacuated to by the late afternoon, assuming they had lost everything and wondering what they would do next.

Brown, the guinea pig, was in the family's Toyota across the street, which David feared would be towed. Harrah's parking garage didn't offer enough clearance for him to enter.

For a moment, Ellie, the cat, appeared to be missing. Fortunately, she was still resting in her carrier next to her owner.

And Kuroe was still in her bare feet.

Jacob Biba is the county watchdog reporter at the Asheville Citizen Times. Reach him at jbiba@citizentimes.com. Copyright 2024 Times-News, The (Hendersonville, NC), All Rights Reserved.

• Citation (aglc Style)

Jacob Biba, Asheville Citizen Times, "Worse than I thought' - Asheville family might have lost everything to Tropical Storm Helene', *Times-News, The* (online), 30 Sep 2024 A1 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?
p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BE9DA0CD7144D8>



Helene leaves hundreds in the dark

September 30, 2024 | Tribune, The (Elkin, NC) Author: Ryan Kelly| Section: Mtairy| 1048 Words OpenURL Link

Hurricane Helene made her presence felt as she passed through North Carolina and dumped months' worth of rain across the region. In anticipation of the storm, schools had closed on Friday which alleviated one major headache that would have hampered emergency responses or worse, created more by having school busses on the road.

By Friday evening, many locales were seeing the sun but the storms impact on a normal Friday was already complete.

Some of the most severe local impact from the storm was found in Elkin. Clean-up efforts were underway quickly on Saturday in downtown Elkin in the wake of flooding caused by heavy rains. Standard Street and Bridge Street were closed on Friday as flood waters from the Yadkin River blocked access to the Gwyn McNeil Bridge. The bridge was reopened by Saturday morning.

Elkin Town Manager Brent Cornelison said the fire department and public works hosed off the mud-caked street and pickle ball courts on Standard St. on Saturday morning. The Yellow Door Café on Standard did sustain damage to its floors and will take additional clean up and work before it can reopen.

Due to the flooding, Saturday's Pumpkin Festival in Elkin was cancelled, but the Great Pumpkin Weigh-off took place on Sunday.

Area offering support for mountain communities

Surry County Emergency Services Chief Eric Southern said Monday that the county stands by to assist neighbors in need to the West, "As the efforts in Western North Carolina continue, Surry County will continue to send resources and assets."

He shared data from N.C. Emergency Management's (NCEM) Monday morning update where they reported 182 roads closed in Western North Carolina. "All- access to the area is closed to the public because of trees and washed-out roads." The report said that communication in the mountains is still limited in many areas and that no donations are being accepted at this time as there is not collection point available.

Crews from Mount Airy Rescue Squad and Elkin Rescue Squads were sent to assist in Ashe County, Surry County Telecommunicators were sent to aid Avery County, and Surry County Emergency Manager Byron Isaacs was deployed to the area as well. On Monday, the Surry County morgue trailer was sent to the Black Mountain to assist.

Southern said he knows that people are looking for a way to help in any way they can but urges residents to heed the advisories from NCDOT and resist the urge to just drive West looking for ways to pitch in.

"Very grateful for the desire to help but the state has closed all roadways into Western North Carolina, and they will be turned away at the checkpoints. Search and recovery efforts are still on-going," he said.

The Surry County Emergency Services Department provided an update to residents before the storm had moved completed moving through the area. Surry EMS reported 332 calls related to the storm since Thursday night into Friday morning.

Thankfully, they reported there had been no injuries have been reported during Friday's extreme weather incident.

The most pressing issue for the majority of Surry County residents during the storm were a lack of power and downed trees and limbs blocking roadways.

Even Monday morning there were still calls being received by Surry County Central Communications about downed trees on power lines including in the 800 block of East Pine Street in Mount Airy. Resident Cindy Martin observed online that there had been limbs dangling above power lines in that area all weekend, "Just glad they didn't fall on anyone while driving."

The majority of local schools were closed to students for class on Monday but Surry County Schools and Mount Airy City Schools both announced meal service would be available. Some county schools even opened up access to locker rooms for those without power who may have needed access to a hot shower following the storm.

ReadyNC.gov reported Surry County still had 633 outages as of 11 a.m. Monday while Wilkes County was reporting 8,351. Stokes and Yadkin Counties were both reported to have under 20 outages each NCEM.

Duke Energy said there were approximately 40 outages in Surry County keeping some 450 customers in the dark as of late Monday morning. Their website gave an estimated time of restoration to services in Surry County as 7:30 p.m. Monday. Their data concurred with NCEM stating under 20 customers each in both Stokes and Yadkin Counties were still affected.

Wilkes County still bore the brunt of the regional damage with over 5,600 customers still with power due to 1765 active outages. The estimated time to restoration for residents of Wilkes County was 11:45 p.m. Monday.

Surry-Yadkin Electric Membership Corporation reported 173 customers without power in Surry County and 783 in Wilkes County.

Blue Ridge Energy said in Alleghany County that 2,484 of their 9,835 served customers, or 25.25 percent, are waiting for their power to be restored following Helene.

Statewide there were still 463,087 outages reported across the state with Buncombe County, where hard hit Asheville is found, reporting the highest total of outages with 98,559. The website PowerOutage.us reported Monday that South Carolina still had over 760,000 customers without power, Georgia had 571,000, and Virginia had nearly 100,000.

Across the state line in Virginia, Appalachian Power told their customers they are bringing in crews from outside the area to work to get service restored but as of 9 a.m. Monday, 117,500 customers remain without electric service.

Given the number of outages Appalachian Power are facing, they have released a rolling schedule of restoration estimates adding that as power is restored in their services areas, crews are moving over to the next area in need.

In Carroll County alone they reported 227 outages affecting 11,154 customers including 2,093 in the area around Cana which has an estimated restoration time of 11 p.m. on Tuesday. Appalachian Power said, "Most customers without service will have power restored before the above estimates."

Nationally there have been over 100 deaths reported as a result of Hurricane Helene; 35 of those were reported in Buncombe County, home of Asheville. Areas of North Carolina's mountain communities saw record amounts of rainfall, some experts estimated that nearly four to five months of rain fell in some mountain communities in the 72 hours Helene's impact was felt.

The National Weather Service office based in Greenville-Spartanburg, South Carolina, offered a sobering assessment of the storm calling it, "the worst event in our office's history."

• Citation (aglc Style)

Ryan Kelly, 'Helene leaves hundreds in the dark', *Tribune, The* (online), 30 Sep 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BEFAB18D035838>



Here's the latest from Duke Energy on power restoration efforts

September 30, 2024 | Tryon Daily Bulletin, The (NC) Author: Staff Reports | Section: News | 330 Words OpenURL Link

Electric power officials in Western North Carolina said Sunday the catastrophic damage left in the wake of Hurricane Helene was unprecedented.

"We've never seen a storm like this in our company's history," Duke Energy officials wrote on a written release sent to the regions elected officials and key leaders.

"The damage to our infrastructure is extensive, with much of the transmission lines and substations that feed large numbers of customers and geographic areas requiring repairs — and in some cases, needing to be entirely rebuilt."

Duke Energy officials said they have 18,000 workers in the field and are working with state and local officials to get access to the hardest-hit areas to assess what is needed to restore service to those areas.

"Based on what we can see on the ground, from helicopter and by drone, there are lots of areas across the South Carolina Upstate and North Carolina mountains where we're going to have to completely rebuild parts of our system, not just repair it," said Jason Hollifield, Duke Energy storm director for the Carolinas. "And there are stretches of damage that we still can't even assess due to mudslides, flooding and blocked roads."

"Our teams of lineworkers and other storm responders will continue to work with local and state officials to gain access to the hardest-hit areas so we can do what our customers and communities expect from us – safely and swiftly get their power up and running."

As of 9 p.m. Sunday the company said the following numbers of outages still existed.

Cleveland County - 22,014 customers out.

Henderson County - 64,848 customers out.

Polk County - 10,665 customers out.

Rutherford County - 24,623 customers out.

Transylvania County - 12,063 customers out.

Officials said they hope to have most customers back online by Friday evening at the latest, but acknowledge some areas that are still inaccessible or unable to receive service due to transmission grid infrastructure could take longer.

The post Here's the latest from Duke Energy on power restoration efforts appeared first on The Tryon Daily Bulletin. Copyright 2024, The Tryon Daily Bulletin, All Rights Reserved.

• Citation (aglc Style)

Staff Reports, 'Here's the latest from Duke Energy on power restoration efforts', *Tryon Daily Bulletin, The* (online), 30 Sep 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BE99C0707FE4C0



Emergency shelter open, food being distributed at high school

September 30, 2024 | Tryon Daily Bulletin, The (NC) Author: Staff Reports | Section: Community | 180 Words OpenURL Link

Polk County officials have sent out the following update on Monday, Sept. 30:

Due to the widespread devastation caused by Hurricane Helene, Polk County has set up an automated hotline to provide up-to-date information for the public. Call (828) 722-5086. This is an unmanned line for information purposes only. For life-threatening emergencies, please dial 911.

To request a welfare check on a friend or relative, please call 828-722-5025 or 828-722-5026. Return calls will be made during the operational hours of the Emergency Operations Center.

A temporary emergency shelter has been established at Polk County High School, 1681 NC Hwy 108, Columbus.

Food is being distributed at Polk County High School from 1 to 6 p.m until supplies last.

The Polk County landfill will be closed today. Staff is working diligently to reopen as soon as safely possible.

For your safety, please stay at home or in a safe location. This hotline will share updated information as soon as it becomes available.

Stay safe, and thank you for your cooperation.

The post Emergency shelter open, food being distributed at high school appeared first on The Tryon Daily Bulletin. Copyright 2024, The Tryon Daily Bulletin, All Rights Reserved.

• Citation (aglc Style)

Staff Reports, 'Emergency shelter open, food being distributed at high school', *Tryon Daily Bulletin, The*(online), 30 Sep 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BECC028877FFD0



Want to help western North Carolina residents? Here's how

September 30, 2024 | Washington Daily News (NC) Author: Holly Jackson | Section: News | 108 Words OpenURL Link

Western North Carolina residents saw unprecedented destruction when Hurricane Helene ripped across the area causing catastrophic damage to homes, towns and roads on Friday, Sept. 27. As of Monday, officials are racing to get more food, water and supplies covered over by flood water, according to North Carolina news outlets. Outlets report that state officials have closed 400 roads that are unsafe for travel; approximately 30 people have died and hundreds are missing.

Beaufort County residents who would like to donate food, water and/or clothing can do so through the following organizations:

The post Want to help western North Carolina residents? Here's how appeared first on Washington Daily News. Copyright © 2024 Washington Daily News, Boone Newspapers Inc., All rights reserved.

• Citation (aglc Style)

Holly Jackson, 'Want to help western North Carolina residents? Here's how', *Washington Daily News* (online), 30 Sep 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BECB5F993FB308



Hurricane Helene: Florida sending search and rescue teams to North Carolina, Tennessee

September 30, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Mike Sunnucks APG Newspapers | Section: Local | 203 Words OpenURL Link

Florida is sending search and rescue teams, state police agents, airboats and aircraft to North Carolina and Tennessee to help with rescues related to flooding from Hurricane Helene.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis announced "Operation Blue Ridge" Sunday to help rescue Floridians in Western North Carolina, the Blue Ridge Mountains and the Tennessee Valley.

Those areas are popular seasonal getaways for Floridians escaping hot and humid weather.

Now, Florida, Georgia, the Carolinas and Tennessee are recovering from Hurricane Helene.

The mammoth Category 4 storm barreled through the Gulf of Mexico and into the southeastern U.S. bringing record storm surges to Florida's west coast and treacherous flooding and mudslides to other states — including the Carolinas.

The Florida operation includes deploying search and rescue and emergency response teams from the Florida National Guard and 36 state law enforcement agents as well as dispatching airboats, high-water vehicles, two Chinook helicopters and an airplane, according to DeSantis' office.

Florida is also sending 10 truckloads of water and more than 100 Starlink internet satellite links as part of the effort.

Hurricane Helene has killed more than 90 persons, left more than 4 million without power across multiple states and scores of people are missing or needing rescue across the Carolinas, Tennessee and other states.

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• Citation (aglc Style)

Mike Sunnucks APG Newspapers, 'Hurricane Helene: Florida sending search and rescue teams to North Carolina, Tennessee', Watauga Democrat, The(online), 30 Sep 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view? p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BEBECF1F77A618>



Double the trouble: Many left homeless by Hurricane Helene face limited, expensive housing options

September 30, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Mike Sunnucks APG Newspapers | Section: Local | 771 Words OpenURL Link

Hurricane Helene left destruction and devastation in its wake, displacing thousands of people with their homes flooded out by historic storm surges in Florida, record rains in Georgia and overflowing and rampaging rivers in the Carolinas and other states.

Some of those displacements and rebuilding processes could take months to complete.

On top of all the storm's physical tolls, lost property, destroyed homes, appliances and cars, those left homeless by Helene have been challenged to find new temporary housing to live in while they regroup and rebuild.

In Florida, 12 officers with Tampa Police Department lost their homes to Helene's storm surge floods, said Brandon Barclay, president of the Tampa Police Benevolent Association law enforcement union.

Barclay said two of the TPD officers are married and the police union is raising money for the 11 displaced households to help them replace appliances, cars, clothing and to pay for new temporary housing while keeping up with mortgage payments even as they look for new short-term housing.

"We're just trying to get them as much as possible," Barclay said of the displaced officers' financial needs.

"Even though your house is destroyed, you still have a mortgage due at the end of the month," he said.

Barclay said displaced households face limited supplies of available homes and already high housing prices that are being pushed higher with post-hurricane demand.

He said one officer found a small rental house available for \$3,100 per month.

"One of them is buying a camper to park in his yard," he said.

Similar scenarios are playing out in the Carolinas, Georgia and other areas with social media posts from college students to seniors looking for short-term housing options after the storms and floods.

HI

GH PRICES

And it's not like housing was cheap before the storm with home prices and apartment rents skyrocketing during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to real estate firm Zillow, just before the hurricane the median rent in Tampa was \$2,100 per month. It was \$2,300 per month in Clearwater and \$2,800 in Sarasota — two other areas that felt the Helene's storm surge.

In North Carolina, the median rent was \$2,300 per month in Boone and \$2,136 in Asheville before the storm, according to Zillow.

Consumer watchdogs and attorneys general in hurricane-impacted states, including North Carolina and Florida, are warning of post-storm repairs, debris removal and charity scams and that the public is encouraged to report price

gouging.

However, price gouging is rarely prosecuted.

There is also the potential for post-hurricane housing scams on popular social media and booking websites.

GOOD SAMARITANS

Still, Barclay said other officers with rental properties and some local apartment complexes have stepped forward offering rentals to displaced officers — sometimes for free.

Airbnb.org — the nonprofit arm of short-term rental booking site Airbnb — is also offering free, temporary housing to residents of Florida and North Carolina left homeless by Helene.

Airbnb.org is working with nonprofits and state agencies in North Carolina and Florida to connect residents in need with free temporary housing.

Short-term rental hosts are part of the effort, which was announced Monday, and are done in conjunction with 211 public information services in both states.

As of Monday, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is still figuring the path forward in terms of housing needs after Helene.

"We understand that housing is one of the most important things on people's minds after this disaster. We are working together with our partners in affected states to identify ways to provide assistance," FEMA said in a statement to APG Newspapers.

Residents of states with major disaster declarations can potentially qualify for housing assistance from FEMA. Currently, Florida, North Carolina and South Carolina have that designation after Helene.

FEMA has offered temporary housing in the form of manufactured homes and trailers to help those left homeless by past hurricanes and natural disasters.

HELPING HAND

There is also a corps of helpers ready to help communities, homeowners and small businesses rebuild.

Samaritan's Purse — a Christian relief group — has established disaster response centers in Boone, North Carolina, Valdosta, Georgia, Perry and Tampa, Florida.

Grace Carson, spokeswoman for the group, said a similar center will be located in Asheville, North Carolina, "as soon as road access is available."

"Volunteers are helping in these locations by tarping damaged roofs, clearing debris, removing downed trees, and helping families salvage personal belongings," Carson said.

Habitat for Humanity — which helps build and rebuild homes after disasters — is assessing damage and construction needs in 150 states across eight states (from Florida all the way up to Ohio and Virginia)

"We are particularly concerned about how this is affecting families who were already struggling to make their mortgage and rent payments, before this storm upended their lives," said Habitat for Humanity Senior Vice President Adrienne Goolsby.

• Citation (aglc Style)

Mike Sunnucks APG Newspapers, 'Double the trouble: Many left homeless by Hurricane Helene face limited, expensive housing options', *Watauga Democrat, The*(online), 30 Sep 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view? p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BEFA22C1C385D8>



Authorities trying to help in variety of ways after Hurricane Helene destruction

September 30, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Elaine Allen-Emrich Adams Publishing Group | Section: Local | 819 Words OpenURL Link

With catastrophic damage, volunteers, first responders and rescue organizations mobilized in safe areas in the region to help those suffering great losses from Hurricane Helene.

For residents like Ashe County's Katie Double, there's no telephone service.

"Everything is word of mouth," she wrote on social media. "People will need food soon (like bars) and/or some multivitamins. We need chainsaws and information on how to safely use them. We need places to charge our phones to call loved ones."

Double made it to the local Home Depot and got supplies. She said there's so much damage, unlike she's ever seen before. She's concerned about those who may need medicine or medical supplies.

"People will also need medicine. Sona Pharmacy on Fairview is a solid local one."

Emergency managers and law enforcement in Watauga, Boone, Blowing Rock, Ashe and Avery are asking residents to adhere to a 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. curfew to prevent first responders from doing dangerous nighttime rescues.

To keep the 911 call center open for emergency calls, residents are asked to use non-emergency numbers for non-urgent inquiries and reports related to storm impacts.

Residents can call Appalachian Medical Reserve Corps non-emergency call center at 828-263-4178 from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. If the line is busy or it's after hours, leave a message, officials stated.

Shelter options are available for anyone in need. In coordination with the Red Cross, an emergency shelter for students and community members is at the Holmes Convocation Center, at 111 Rivers Street in Boone. This shelter has food, water and dry beds available now. The building has a capacity for about 8,300.

Off-campus students, faculty and staff in need of shelter should call 1-800-733-2767.

More than 100 roadways and bridges are washed out or damaged in the region. All residents are asked to avoid unnecessary travel.

Watauga County Emergency Services created an updated countywide road closures map. Motorists are encouraged to use the map before attempting to travel. Visit https://tinyurl.com/yc62sxyj

With President Joe Biden declaring major disaster declarations for 25 counties in North Carolina, survivors can immediately access funds and resources to jumpstart recovery and can apply for assistance with Federal Emergency Management Administration. Survivors can apply online by visiting disasterassistance.gov, calling 1-800-621-3362 or on the FEMA app.

FEMA assistance in North Carolina may include upfront funds to help with essential items including food, water, baby formula and other emergency supplies.

Funds may also be available to repair storm-related damage to homes and personal property, as well as assistance to find a temporary place to stay. FEMA can provide support for urgent disaster response activities.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is assessing the impact of the water systems and what is needed to bring these online. Several counties issued boil water notices. Also, several federal agencies are moving in portable equipment to help reestablish communications in some of the hardest hit areas.

Water rescues continue in northwest North Carolina with more than a dozen search and rescue teams involved.

Florida is helping North Carolina by bringing temporary bridge building supplies.

Florida crews are also bringing 100 Starlink (satellite systems), shallow draft vessels, airboats, high-water vehicles, 4x4 trucks, air crafts and Emergency Cut and Toss Strike Teams, Infrastructure Damage Assessment Teams and Bridge Inspection team.

Ashe County Emergency Management has already begun expanding satellite internet access.

Starlink Satellite Internet is at several locations across the county and available to the public including at the Pond Mountain Volunteer Fire Department. The SSID: PondMTNFD and the password is Emergency.

Other locations include:Lansing Volunteer Fire Department withSSID: LansingFD and the password is Emergency.

At the Warrensville Volunteer Fire Department, the SSID: WarrensvilleFD and the password is Emergency

At the Glendale Springs Volunteer Fire Department, the SID is Starlink — Glendale Springs and the password is Station16

Volunteer opportunities in the region

Samaritan's Purse is coordinating day and night volunteer opportunities for tree work, debris cleanup, roof tarping and mud outs. Sign up is at spvolunteer.org.

The Appalachian Medical Reserve Corps is coordinating volunteers with state and national emergency response teams. Sign up by filling out this interest form: https://forms.gle/AaKy78d2pL7V2sNk7

To donate locally

There is a donation station at Colin's Discount Outlet (102 S Main St Four Oaks NC) from 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Friday and 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday. Supplies needed include: paper products, feminine hygiene, first aid, non-perishable food items, flashlights, battery-powered radios, water, baby wipes, diapers, formula, trash bags, snacks, cleaning supplies, toiletries and socks.

The Ashe Food Pantry to open

On Tuesday, the pantry will do a mega distribution in Jefferson at Main Pantry from 12:30 p.m 2 p.m. or later and at Laurel Springs Volunteer Fire Department from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Tuesday.

Online financial donations are welcome at www.AsheFoodPantry.org. It's the best way to help right now, according to the pantry volunteers.

Finding missing family or neighbors

If a family member is missing in the hurricane disaster areas, the Red Cross has a reunification team. Call, 1-800-REDCross.

For those not in North Carolina, call-888-892-1162 to access the NC211 call center.

The state partnered with the United Way to do welfare checks.

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• Citation (aglc Style)

Elaine Allen-Emrich Adams Publishing Group, 'Authorities trying to help in variety of ways after Hurricane Helene destruction', Watauga Democrat, The(online), 30 Sep 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view? p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BEFA22CA19FFA0>



Where to donate and sign up to volunteer to help with local recovery efforts

September 30, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Moss Brennan moss.brennan@wataugademocrat.com| Section: Local | 480 Words OpenURL Link

WATAUGA — The following are places those interested can donate items and sign up to volunteer. This story will continually be updated.

Volunteer Sign Up:

Those with chainsaws and other equipment can go to the Perkinsville Baptist ChurchInterested volunteers may go to Alliance Bible FellowshipSamaritan's Purse is coordinating day and night volunteer opportun ities for tree work, debris cleanup, roof tarping and mud outs. Sign up at spvolunteer.org.Holmes Convocation Center Red Cross Emergency ShelterDebris clean-up through Samaritan's Purse call Brent Graybeal at (828) 773-9580 or Andy Burke at (828) 434-5554.Appalachian Medical Reserve Corps is coordinating volunteers with state and national emergency response teams. Sign up by filling out this interest form: https://forms.gle/AaKy78d2pL7V2sNk7Hunger and Health Coalition

For supply drop off and pick up:

The Summit Pickleball facility (278 Industrial Park Drive) — drop-off of supplies until 6 p.m. Sunday and starting again at 8 a.m. Monday. Holmes Convocation Center — Food, showers and supplies availableApp State Dining Hall — hot meals availableCornerstone Church (1100 E. King Street) — food, water, hygiene products for drop off or pick upWatauga High School — Water, food, cleaning supplies, toiletries, paper goods, or other households items from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Non-water donations should be sent to The Summit PickleballWCES is also working with churches on distributionCove Creek Ruritan ClubValle Crucis Conference Center

Fire departments with water and supplies:

Deep Gap VFDStewart Simmons VFDZionville VFDBeaver Dam VFDShawneehaw VFDFoscoe VFD

Other

Pet Care Clinic of the High Country, located at 1614 NC-105, Boone, NC, has received temporary authorization from the USDA to provide this service for both dogs and cats. The Hunger and Health Coalition has a limited supply of insulin for those in need. Please, if you can, bring a box/vial/anything with directions so HHC can appropriately dispense your insulin. Located beside the Hospitality House on Brook Hollow Road (141 Health Center Drive, Suite C). Call 828-264-5212 if you need assistance. Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. — 4 p.m.

Monetary Donations

The newly formed Boone Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation is accepting donations to help with community and business relief in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene's impact on the High Country. Gifts can be made at this link and the Chamber will distribute funds locally to businesses and community efforts as needs are further assessed throughout Watauga County over the days and weeks ahead. More information can be found at www.boonechamber.com/foundation.United Way of North Carolina (UWNC) has launched of its UW Helps NC Fund, an initiative designed to support both immediate and long-term recovery efforts in communities impacted by Hurricane Helene. Contributions to the UW Helps NC Fund can be made easily online at www.unitedwaync.org. Donors have the option to designate their contributions to a specific United Way or allow UWNC to allocate funds to the areas of greatest need.Donations to the Governor's NC Disaster Relief Fund can be made by visiting nc.gov/donate.App State Disaster Relief Recovery Fund (support impacted students, faculty and staff):

appstate.edu

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• Citation (aglc Style)

Moss Brennan moss.brennan@wataugademocrat.com, 'Where to donate and sign up to volunteer to help with local recovery efforts', *Watauga Democrat, The*(online), 30 Sep 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view? p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BEBECF1A711AA0>



Applying for federal disaster relief

September 30, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Ben McNeely | Section: Local | 518 Words OpenURL Link

The White House approved a major disaster declaration for 25 counties in western North Carolina and the Eastern Band of the Cherokee on Sunday. That means federal funds and assistance to the region can move quickly, Cooper said.

For residents affected by Hurricane Helene, residents should apply through FEMA.

That can be done three ways:

disasterassistance.gov1-800-621-3362 from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. in your time zone, seven days a week. Hours may be extended during periods of high demand. Through the FEMA app.

To be eligible, residents and business owners must live in one of the 25 counties listed in the emergency declaration: Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Clay, Cleveland, Gaston, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Lincoln, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Transylvania, Watauga, Wilkes, and Yancey, as well as the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

FEMA spokesperson Michael Hart said it's important for residents to begin the application process as soon as they

Federal assistance can include money for home repairs, temporary housing, and low-cost loans to replace uninsured property loss. Residents may also be eligible for help with child care, medical, lodging, moving, and funeral expenses.

Hart said when someone applies for federal aid, they will work with a FEMA agent to help determine what and how much they are eligible to receive.

It's hard to give a timeframe for when a family or resident will get federal assistance, Hart said. It often depends on whether they have important documents on hand, such as Social Security numbers, insurance cards, information about damage to property, and direct deposit account numbers.

"As long as things move swiftly, believe me, we are working to get money in families hands to begin the recovery process," Hart said.

Business owners who have property damage and economic loss may qualify for assistance for loans through the U.S. Small Business Administration.

SBA disaster loans are for personal or business losses not covered by insurance or FEMA. The loans can also be used for business operating expenses that could have been met had the disaster not occurred, according to the SBA.

Business owners, homeowners, renters, and private nonprofit organizations can apply at the SBA website.

The North Carolina Department of Public Safety also has a Hurricane Helene information and resource website which has information about resources and frequently asked questions about disaster relief.

What Documentation is Needed?

Your Social Security NumberYour address at the time of the disaster and your current address if displacedA current phone number for FEMA follow-upA general list of damages and losses (document clean-up efforts with photos)Banking information for direct depositInsurance details (policy number and company name)

Important: If you have homeowners, renters, or flood insurance, file claims with your provider ASAP, as FEMA cannot duplicate insurance benefits. If your insurance doesn't cover all expenses, you may still qualify for federal assistance.

When Can You Apply?

Applications are open now and will remain available for the near future. The sooner you apply, the faster you may receive assistance.

Why You Need to Apply

FEMA can assist with essential needs like temporary lodging, home repairs, personal property loss, and other disaster-related expenses. As we rebuild, outside assistance will be vital for our community. For more details, visit DisasterAssistance.gov.

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• Citation (aglc Style)

Ben McNeely, 'Applying for federal disaster relief', *Watauga Democrat, The*(online), 30 Sep 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BEFA22B5CC8988



26.5 inches

September 30, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Ben McNeely | Section: Local | 533 Words OpenURL Link

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That can be done three ways:

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FEMA spokesperson Michael Hart said it's important for residents to begin the application process as soon as they

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Business owners, homeowners, renters, and private nonprofit organizations can apply at the SBA website.

The North Carolina Department of Public Safety also has a Hurricane Helene information and resource website which has information about resources and frequently asked questions about disaster relief.

What Documentation is Needed?

Your Social Security NumberYour address at the time of the disaster and your current address if displacedA current phone number for FEMA follow-upA general list of damages and losses (document clean-up efforts with photos)Banking information for direct depositInsurance details (policy number and company name)

Important: If you have homeowners, renters, or flood insurance, file claims with your provider ASAP, as FEMA cannot duplicate insurance benefits. If your insurance doesn't cover all expenses, you may still qualify for federal assistance. You can still apply for FEMA assistance before an insurance claim is approved or denied.

When Can You Apply?

Applications are open now and will remain available for the near future. The sooner you apply, the faster you may receive assistance.

Why You Need to Apply

FEMA can assist with essential needs like temporary lodging, home repairs, personal property loss, and other disaster-related expenses. As we rebuild, outside assistance will be vital for our community. For more details, visit DisasterAssistance.gov.

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• Citation (aglc Style)

Ben McNeely, '26.5 inches', *Watauga Democrat, The*(online), 30 Sep 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C0BCB835317A38



Blue Ridge Energy: 'This storm has been the worst in our history'

September 30, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Frank DiFiore and Scott Lawson Adams Publishing Group| Section: Local | 410 Words OpenURL Link

HIGH COUNTRY — Local power companies are working to restore electricity after Hurricane Helene tore through the region.

The sheer amount of damage has delayed work. Crews are dealing with continued flooding, severely damaged or debris-laden roads and destroyed poles, according to utility representatives.

Renee Walker, public affairs director for Blue Ridge Energy, estimated about 64,000 customers — effectively 80% of their customer base — lost power by Friday.

"This storm has been the worst in our history," she said.

By Monday, the number of power outages was about half that — 33,880, or 42% of the customer base.

Most of that number is in Ashe County, with 12,630 outages as of Monday, and Watauga County, with 10,588.

Walker said some customers may be waiting for power to be restored throughout the week. Linemen are unable to access flooded substations or lines with destroyed roads.

"So we can't even get in there to work," she said.

In one case, workers found that a power pole had fallen down a mountainside and into a nearby river.

Despite the challenges, Walker said that Blue Ridge Energy crews are working "24/7" to restore power to their customers across 8,500 miles of power lines.

She also extended thanks to the local groceries and restaurants that have provided food to linemen out on restoration work

Mountain Electric Cooperative, based in Mountain City that serves, Avery County estimated they have 15,000 out of 19,000 customers without power as of Monday afternoon.

But they have been able to get two substations online. So while it's not a fix, it is slow progress.

"We still have some breakers out," Mountain Electric Cooperative General Manager Rodney Metcalf told the Avery Journal.

Crews are facing "devastating" damage, he said.

"The biggest thing we've been facing is large trees down," he said.

Water has damaged most of the roads, Metcalf said.

He said he knows their customers are out of power and he's hoping for some patience.

"It's just taking us time to get the trees off, roads repaired and polls repaired. We're practically having to rebuild it. ... It's going to be a slow-go," he said.

The area didn't expect to get slammed like it did, with forecasts suggesting it was going to go north and west of the region before swinging back into it.

"We got hit a lot worse than we thought it was going to be. The wind was bad but the water — as much water as we got, it washed bridges out...This is probably the worst that I've saw... just for the water damage."

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• Citation (aglc Style)

Frank DiFiore and Scott Lawson Adams Publishing Group, 'Blue Ridge Energy: 'This storm has been the worst in our history'', Watauga Democrat, The(online), 30 Sep 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view? p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BEFA22A18FCFE8>



Like many, Bavarian Village Apartment residents facing uncertainty after extreme damage

September 30, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Luke Barber luke.barber@wataugademocrat.com| Section: Local | 570 Words OpenURL Link

BOONE — Residents at Bavarian Village in Boone have been forced to evacuate in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene, as much of the apartment complex is extremely damaged due to major flooding.

On Sunday morning, Sept. 29, the parking lot at the apartment complex was filled with U-Hauls, pickup trucks, and other vehicles as the residents and their friends and family members worked to empty the apartments of their belongings after their leases were terminated.

Jonah Walker said the first floor of his apartment was completely flooded out, and he had to wait out the storm on the second floor.

"The flood that occurred first, a huge sewer line burst," Walker said. "So all of the water in this place was poop water. We had about a foot and a half of poop water."

Walker said they had to have all of their belongings out by Monday morning, and like many of the residents, he wasn't exactly sure what his next steps were.

"We're homeless now," Walker said. "We have to find a place to live, and in Boone, that's impossible because of the housing crisis."

Walker's neighbor, Tasha Yoder, said she was unaware of the situation at the apartments until she came into town after the flood had subsided.

"Me and my daughter evacuated Thursday. We were lucky enough to get to a friend's house, and then we happened to come into town yesterday to get a propane tank. We bumped into (our neighbors) and that was the only way we were able to know what was going on," Yoder said.

Yoder said she works three jobs from home and now has to begin the process of looking for a place to live after paying \$1,215 a month for a three-bedroom apartment. She said they will be staying at a friend's house for the time being.

"I have no idea where to go or what to do or what's even around anymore," Yoder said "The main concern is how can we stay local so (my daughter) can finish school?"

Katie Brook Hauser-Hill and her husband were newlyweds when they moved into Bavarian Village back in July. Hill works as a teacher in Lenoir, while her husband works for Appalachian State University.

"We got really lucky with our placement," Hill said. "About two or three doors down from us, they had water rushing in. Ours seeped through the floor, went under and came up. We were lucky it wasn't nearly as bad as others."

Hill said many of the residents lost their cars due to the flooding, and the residents who lived near the creek experienced the worst of it. After evacuating, she will be moving back to the Charlotte area with her parents until they are able to find a new place.

"We're just lucky to have a place to go," Hill said.

When DeKashia Person-Hill came to Boone on Sunday to help her daughter, who is a student at App, she arrived

with more than just a U-Haul. In fact, the U-Haul was packed with water, toiletries, batteries, flashlights, gas money, and other supplies.

Hill said her community in Asheboro helped donate the items so they would be able to bless people during their trip to Boone. They stayed busy handing out the supplies to the residents at Bavarian Village as they worked to have their belongings out by Monday.

"It's really heartbreaking, but feel like God has brought us here to help people and let them know they're not alone," Person-Hill said.

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• Citation (aglc Style)

Luke Barber luke.barber@wataugademocrat.com, 'Like many, Bavarian Village Apartment residents facing uncertainty after extreme damage', *Watauga Democrat, The*(online), 30 Sep 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view? p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BEFA22AE5BF738>



Town of Boone lifts boil water advisory

September 30, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Staff Report staff@wataugademocrat.com| Section: Local | 339 Words OpenURL Link

BOONE – The Town of Boone has lifted its boil water advisory after first instituting the public notice on Friday, Sept. 27 due to multiple water main breaks.

According to the town, town staff have taken multiple water samples from many locations throughout its water system for testing, all of which have returned absent or negative for contamination. As of today Sept. 30th, 2024 at 2:30 p.m., the boil water advisory has been lifted. It is safe to use water for human consumption directly from the town's system.

Over the past 72 hours, many areas of Boone have experienced low or no water pressure. The town has been working diligently to make necessary repairs and fully restore water service to its customers, however, note that service may be interrupted periodically as staff continue to work.

Hunting Hills Lane, Whitener Drive, Eagle Drive, Horn in the West Drive, and Assembly Drive areas remain partially or fully without water and/or sanitary sewer services. Hunting Hills Lane and Whitner Drive Areas will not be restored for an extended period due to complete roadway washout which includes water and sewer lines.

However, the town is developing plans to temporarily restore services as quickly as possible to each of these areas until permanent repairs can be made.

According to the town, this event has been unprecedented in Boone's modern history. The combination of rapid flooding and high winds from Hurricane Helene created washouts and ground shifting that produced roadway failure, sinkholes, mudslides and down trees all of which contributed to numerous water main breaks in the aforementioned areas of town as well as the emergency interconnection with the Town of Blowing Rock.

The town's water treatment plant is fully operational and water system storage capacity is restored. However, the full extent of damage is still being assessed and evaluated and will continue. The town is asking residents to conserve water when possible and to report service outages, damage and water leaks.

The town continues to ask for patience and cooperation during this difficult period as it works to make repairs.

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swath of destruction - Flooding in Morganton and Burke County

September 30, 2024 | Winston-Salem Journal (NC)

Author: KATE PAYNE, JEFFREY COLLINS and PATRICK WHITTLE Associated Press | Section: A | 1343 Words

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Hurricane Helene aftermath

The U.S. Southeast grappled Sunday with rising death tolls, a lack of vital supplies in isolated, flood-stricken areas and the widespread loss of homes and property while the devastating toll of Hurricane Helene became more clear and officials warned of a lengthy and difficult rebuild.

A North Carolina county that includes the mountain city of Asheville, reported 30 people killed due to the storm, pushing the overall death toll to at least 84 people across several states.

North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper predicted the toll would rise as rescuers and other emergency workers reached areas isolated by collapsed roads, failing infrastructure and widespread flooding.

He implored residents in western North Carolina to avoid travel, both for their own safety and to keep roads clear for emergency vehicles. More than 50 search teams spread throughout the region in search of stranded people.

"Many people are cut off because the roads are impassable," Cooper said. Supplies were being airlifted to the region around Asheville, a city in western North Carolina's mountains known for its arts, culture and scenery.

One rescue effort involved saving 41 people north of Asheville. Another mission focused on saving a single infant. The teams found people through both 911 calls and social media messages, North Carolina Adjutant General Todd Hunt said.

The storm upended life throughout the Southeast. Authorities were rushing to airlift supplies and restore communications and roads in flooded Asheville on Sunday as residents along the storm-battered Florida coast gathered for church services.

Hurricane Helene roared ashore with 140 mph winds in Florida's Big Bend region as a Category 4 hurricane late Thursday. From there, it quickly moved through Georgia, where Gov. Brian Kemp said Saturday that it "looks like a bomb went off" after viewing splintered homes and debris-covered highways from the air. A weakened Helene then soaked the Carolinas and Tennessee with torrential rains, flooding creeks and rivers and straining dams.

Several million were still without power Sunday afternoon. South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster asked for patience as crews dealt with widespread snapped power poles.

"We want people to remain calm. Help is on the way, It is just going to take time," McMaster told reporters outside the airport in Aiken County.

Jessica Drye Turner in Texas had begged for someone to rescue her family members stranded on their rooftop in Asheville amid rising flood waters. "They are watching 18-wheelers and cars floating by," Turner wrote in an urgent Facebook post on Friday.

But in a follow-up message Saturday, Turner said help had not arrived in time to save her parents, both in their 70s, and her 6-year-old nephew. The roof collapsed and the three drowned.

"I cannot convey in words the sorrow, heartbreak and devastation my sisters and I are going through," she wrote.

Western North Carolina was isolated by landslides and flooding that forced the closure of Interstate 40 and other roads. There have been hundreds of water rescues, including in rural Unicoi County in East Tennessee, where dozens of patients and staff were plucked by helicopter from a hospital rooftop Friday.

The storm hovered over the Tennessee Valley into Sunday, the National Hurricane Center said. It unleashed the worst flooding in a century in North Carolina. One community, Spruce Pine, was doused with over 2 feet of rain from Tuesday through Saturday.

The state is sending water supplies and other items toward Buncombe County and Asheville, but mudslides blocking Interstate 40 and other highways are preventing supplies from making it. The county's own supplies of water were on the other side of the Swannanoa River, away from where most of the 270,000 people in Buncombe County live, officials said.

Law enforcement was making plans to send officers to places that still had water, food or gas because of reports of arguments and threats of violence, the sheriff said.

"If you will bear with us and be patient one more day - I hate to say that but I know how desperate water is in our community - but we are pushing as hard as we can to get them up the mountain," Buncombe County Manager Avril Pinder said.

FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell said the federal disaster agency was actively engaged across six states in meeting the requests of governors and state-level responders. She noted the Appalachian regions across North Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia presented particular concerns. Criswell toured south Georgia on Sunday and planned to be in North Carolina on Monday.

"It's still very much an active search and rescue mission" in western North Carolina, Criswell said. "And we know that there's many communities that are cut off just because of the geography" of the mountains, where damage to roads and bridges have cut off certain areas.

In Florida's Big Bend, some lost nearly everything they own. With sanctuaries still darkened as of Sunday morning, some churches canceled regular services while others like Faith Baptist Church in Perry opted to worship outside.

Standing water and tree debris still covers the grounds of Faith Baptist Church. The church called on parishioners to come "pray for our community" in a message posted to the congregation's Facebook page.

"We have power. We don't have electricity," Immaculate Conception Catholic Church parishioner Marie Ruttinger said. "Our God has power. That's for sure."

In Atlanta, 11.12 inches of rain fell over 48 hours, the most the city has seen over two days since record keeping began in 1878.

In eastern Georgia near the border with South Carolina, officials notified Augusta residents Sunday morning that water service would be shut off for 24 to 48 hours in the city and surrounding Richmond County. A news release said trash and debris from the storm "blocked our ability to pump water." Officials were distributing bottled water.

President Joe Biden said Saturday that Helene's devastation has been "overwhelming" and pledged help. He also approved a disaster declaration for North Carolina, making federal funding available for affected individuals.

With at least 25 killed in South Carolina, Helene is the deadliest tropical cyclone for the state since Hurricane Hugo made landfall north of Charleston in 1989, killing 35 people. Deaths also have been reported in Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and Virginia.

Moody's Analytics said it expects \$15 billion to \$26 billion in property damage.

Climate change has exacerbated conditions that allow such storms to thrive, rapidly intensifying in warming waters and turning into powerful cyclones sometimes within hours.

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• Citation (aglc Style)

KATE PAYNE, JEFFREY COLLINS; and PATRICK WHITTLE; Associated Press, 'swath of destruction Flooding in Morganton and Burke County', *Winston-Salem Journal* (online), 30 Sep 2024 1 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view? p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BE9F933A783360>



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• Citation (aglc Style)

Fayetteville Observer, The (online), 30 Sep 2024 3 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?
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Fayetteville Observer, The (NC): Page 2

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Fayetteville Observer, The (NC): Page 1

September 30, 2024 | Fayetteville Observer, The (NC) Fayetteville, North Carolina Page: 1 OpenURL Link

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Fayetteville Observer, The (online), 30 Sep 2024 1 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?
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