

Disaster Unemployment Assistance available in 25 counties, l Indian Tribe following Hurricane Helene

October 9, 2024 | News-Topic, The (Lenoir, NC) Author: STAFF REPORTS | Section: Archives | 527 Words OpenURL Link

RALEIGH — Following a federal disaster declaration resulting from the devastating impacts from Hurricane Helene, the Division of Employment Security (DES) has announced that 25 North Carolina counties and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians of North Carolina have been approved for Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA), according to a press release from the N.C. Department of Commerce.

DUA benefits are available for residents who live or work in the following counties: 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 Counties as well as the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians of North Carolina. Additional counties may be added to the list of those eligible for DUA at a later date, according to the press release.

People in the above-listed counties who are unemployed as a direct result of Hurricane Helene may be eligible for unemployment benefits under the DUA program. Business owners and self-employed individuals affected by the storm may also qualify for benefits, according to the press release.

People in the 25 counties as well as the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians of North Carolina have 60 days from Oct. 1, 2024 to file an application for DUA at des.nc.gov. The deadline to apply is Dec. 2, 2024, according to the press release.

DUA is available in these counties for weeks of unemployment effective Sept. 29, 2024, and may last for up to 26 weeks (or through March 29, 2025). Eligibility for DUA is determined weekly, and you must continue to be out of work as a direct result of the disaster each week to get unemployment benefits, according to the press release.

DUA is a federal unemployment program that provides temporary payments for people who, as a direct result of Hurricane Helene:

No longer have the job that provided their primary source of income. Are unable to reach their place of employment. Cannot work because of an injury caused by the storm. Were unable to begin employment or self-employment due to the storm. Have become the major supplier of household income due to a storm-related death of the previous major supplier of household income.

Applying for DUA

You must apply for state unemployment benefits. If you are determined to be ineligible for or have exhausted your regular benefits, then you may be eligible for a DUA claim. You will need the following to file for unemployment: Name and address of all employers you worked with within the last 24 months. County of residence. County of employment. Mailing address and ZIP code. Valid telephone number. Your Social Security number or your Alien Registration number. Have proof of employment and income if you're self-employed, a farmer, or a commercial fisher.

To get DUA benefits, all required documentation must be submitted within 21 days from the day the DUA application is filed. DES will work with people who cannot provide all documentation to ensure that their unemployment benefits are not delayed.

Claims are filed through the DES website at des.nc.gov. If you are not able to file through the website, you can call

the DUA Hotline at 919-629-3857 to apply for benefits, according to the press release.

For more information and an updated list of approved counties, go to our website at: des.nc.gov.

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Caldwell County debris removal to continue into next month, county suggests well users test water

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Caldwell County continues to recover from Hurricane Helene with many places returning to normal operations, according to a press release from the county.

Debris removal started on Monday in southern Caldwell County. Crews will work from south to north and make three passes around the county. Removal will continue through Nov. 22. Debris should be separated into three piles, vegetation, construction debris, and items like furniture, hot water heaters, according to the press release. Guidelines for debris pickup can be found at https://www.caldwellcountync.org/494/Helene

Due to the overwhelming generosity of the community, Caldwell County is not currently accepting donations. Items are being distributed this week at Hudson First, 345 Main Street, Hudson, between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. Yokefellow is holding a food drive-thru at their location, 202 Harper Avenue, Lenoir, on Wednesday between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Caldwell County Environmental Health encourages homeowners who use wells to have their well water tested for contamination if flood waters came within approximately 1000 feet of the well. Fees for water testing have been waived, according to the press release. For more information visit https://nc-caldwellcounty.civicplus.com/227/Septic-Wells.

Caldwell County is working with local churches to connect volunteers with people in need. To volunteer visit https://nc-caldwellcounty.civicplus.com/497/Volunteer. To report damages, visit https://nc-caldwellcounty.civicplus.com/494/Helene.

People who have suffered storm damage can apply for FEMA assistance online by visiting disasterassistance.gov, by calling 800-621-3362 or by downloading the FEMA app.

For more information, visit www.caldwellcountync.org/494/Helene.

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p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C1B5B88A88C700>



Disaster relief resources available through FEMA, SBA

October 9, 2024 | News-Topic, The (Lenoir, NC) Author: SHELBY POWELL spowell@newstopicnews.com| Section: Archives | 818 Words OpenURL Link

Following the impact of Tropical Storm Helene and throughout ongoing recovery efforts within Caldwell County and the rest of western North Carolina, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Small Business Administration (SBA) are preparing to offer resources to the impacted regions.

The SBA

According to an SBA press release from Monday, Oct. 7, "businesses and residents in six additional counties included in the North Carolina Presidential disaster declaration resulting from Tropical Storm Helene are now eligible to apply for low interest disaster loans to assist in their recovery from the disaster." Caldwell County is included in the list of counties covered in the declaration.

Caldwell applicants are eligible for both Physical and Economic Injury Disaster Loans from the SBA and are encouraged to reach out to a customer service representative, which are available in every FEMA Disaster Recovery Center. These representatives can answer questions and help applicants complete disaster loan applications, accept documents and provide application status updates. Applicants can see these agents via walk-in or schedule an appointment in advance at appointment.sba.gov.

The release listed 3 SBA centers:

Disaster Loan Outreach Center in Charlotte, hours 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday thru Friday. Business Recovery Center in Asheville, hours 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday thru Friday, Saturday 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Business Recovery Center in Boone, hours 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday thru Friday, Saturday 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Applicants are encouraged to apply even if they have not yet settled with their insurance companies. The SBA can "make a low-interest" disaster loan for the total loss up to its loan limits" in the event that applicants do no know how much of the loss will be covered by insurance on the condition that applicants use the insurance funds "to reduce or repay the loan."

"With the changes to FEMA's Sequence of Delivery, survivors are now encouraged to simultaneously apply for FEMA grants and the SBA low-interest disaster loan assistance to fully recover. FEMA grants are intended to cover necessary expenses and serious needs not paid by insurance or other sources. The SBA disaster loan program is designed for your long-term recovery, to make you whole and get you back to your pre-disaster condition. Do not wait on the decision for a FEMA grant; apply online and received additional disaster assistance information at sba.gov/disaster.

Applicants may also call the SBA's Customer Service Center at 800-659-2955 or send an email to disastercustomerservice@sba.gov for more information on SBA disaster assistance. For people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability, please dial 7-1-1 to access telecommunications relay services. The filing deadline to return applications for physical property damage is Nov. 27, 2024. The deadline to return economic injury applications is June 30, 2025."

FEMA

FEMA disaster assistance may provide grant funds to disaster survivors to help them get back on their feet. According to FEMA documents accessible through the Caldwell County Helene page at caldwellcountync.org/495/Resources, the organization is offering assistance for housing, privately owned roads,

bridges, docks, renting, hazard mitigation, damaged wells and septic systems, and other serious needs following the impact of a disaster.

Survivors in need of assistance are encouraged to visit DisasterAssistance.gov or download the FEMA app to apply. Applicants may also call 800-621-3362 for help available in most languages.

In another press release from Wednesday, Oct. 9, FEMA outlined various websites where storm survivors may replace important documents lost due to flooding or displacement.

Insurance policy information: Call your insurance company or agent and ask for a copy of your policy, including the Declaration Page.Birth and death certificates, marriage and divorce documents: Order certificates online: NCDHHS: DPH: NC Vital Records: Order a CertificateDriver Licenses: If your driver license has been lost or damaged, you may apply for a replacement at any driver license office. Standard licenses may also be replaced online: Official NCDMV: License Renewal & Replacement (ncdot.gov). If there is a change of address, North Carolina driver license or ID card holders have 30 days to update their address on the credential.Social Security Cards: ssa.gov/number-card/replace-card. You may be able to do this online, or you can fill out an application for a Social Security card and bring it to your local office along with unexpired identification. Documents must be original or have a signature, stamp, or raised seal from the issuing agency, no photocopies.Medicare Cards: To replace your card, call Medicare at 800-633-4227(TTY 877-486-2048), visit your local Social Security office, request a new card through you online account with Social Security or visit MyMedicare.gov.G

reen Card: Go to uscis.gov and complete the Form I-90 application to replace a permanent resident card, and file it online or by mail. uscis.gov/green-card/after-we-grant-your-green-card/replace-your-green-card.

Passports: How to Report a Passport Lost or Stolen (state.gov). Federal Tax Returns: About Form 4506, Request for Copy of Tax Return. Learn more at fema.gov/disaster/Military Records: Request Military Service Records | National Archives.

For the latest information about North Carolina's recovery, visit fema.gov/disaster/4827. Follow FEMA on X at x.com/femaregion4 or on Facebook at facebook.com/fema.

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West Caldwell falls to Maiden

October 9, 2024 \mid News-Topic, The (Lenoir, NC) Author: CHRIS CHURCH Special to the News-Topic Section: Archives \mid 1132 Words OpenURL Link

The Maiden Blue Devils stormed into town on Tuesday night to face the West Caldwell Warriors at home in a midseason matchup that featured two teams on divergent paths. The small but lively crowd was treated to a beautiful evening with the temperature hovering in the lower 70s as game time drew near. Recent weather-related cancellations have caused many a shakeup in the schedules of all area sporting events, and as the obligatory shelter in place announcements were read on the public address system, the contrast between clear blue skies and the devastating effects of Hurricane Helene were certainly just as palpable as the calm breeze.

With West Caldwell's band playing a somber version of the national anthem from the stands, and the Warriors winning the coin toss at midfield, the home team elected to receive the opening kickoff. It was once again time for football.

West Caldwell started things at their own 21 yard line, and opened with several running plays that showed some tenacious running from Jerry Henline but were contained and forced to punt on fourth down and short. The Blue Devils would take over on offense at their 36 yard line, and they would quickly go to work.

Maiden, a noticeably bigger team overall, used their advantage with three straight running plays for positive yardage before turning to the passing game. The next play was an impressive 53 yard toss from quarterback Grant Lawing to wide receiver Raheim Misher, and Maiden took the early lead. Kicker Alessandro Colle connected on the extra point, and the Devils were now on top, 7-0.

The Warriors took a touchback on the kickoff and went three and out on the ensuing possession, which resulted in a punt. On their first play from scrimmage, Maiden ran the ball from their own 39 yard line, and David Young made a fantastic defensive play for the Warriors, causing a fumble and running it to the Maiden 10 yard line. After a couple of running plays that didn't amount to much, Warriors quarterback Joshton Blankenship took matters into his own hands, got a nice block from his undersized but fired up offensive line, and scrambled to just short of the goal line. The drive was temporarily hampered by an illegal motion penalty which set the ball back to the 6 yard line, but Blankenship found wide receiver Jayden Quisenberry for a touchdown pass, and the home team was on the board. The point after touchdown failed, but West Caldwell found themselves in contention, at least for now, with the score 7-6.

Maiden wasted no time answering as their offense took the field after returning the kickoff to their own 30. A 15 yard run was followed by a quarterback sack on an excellent defensive play by West Caldwell's Ronald Massey, and another fine stop by Jerry Henline, but the Blue Devils overcame the tough defensive showing, connecting on a 44 yard touchdown pass from Lawing to receiver Josh Stover. Colle's point after kick was good, and Maiden now led 14-6.

The first quarter ended soon after, and West Caldwell's offense couldn't overcome the Maiden defense and a costly delay of game penalty, which led to a punt from deep in their own territory. Maiden took over near midfield, and the Blue Devils immediately produced another huge play. Lawing passed to tight end Michael Ly, who truly worked hard to find his way into the end zone. The thrilling 58 yard touchdown was followed by a missed extra point, but the visitors now had the upper hand by the score of 20-6.

West Caldwell moved the ball well on their next set of downs, with gritty running by Henline, a nifty move on a big play by Blankenship, and a tough catch by Jacorian Logan near midfield. The hand of fate, and the hand of one of the linemen of the much larger Maiden defense, appeared as an attempted pitch back was slapped away. The deflected toss was recovered by Maiden, and It only took one play for the Devils to add more pain to the Warriors.

Another touchdown pass from Lawing to Stover, and a successful 2 point conversion run by Kendall Roberts brought the score to Maiden 28, West Caldwell 6.

West Caldwell's offense was no match for the swarming defense of the Blue Devils on the next series, which ended on a third down sack, and a punt, which brought Maiden's energized offense back onto the field near the 50 yard line. Solid running and an unfortunate personal foul on the Warriors defense set up a pass play that landed the visiting squad at the 12 yard line, and from there Kendall Roberts scampered into the end zone for another Maiden score. The extra point by Colle moved the tally to 35-6.

West Caldwell, to their credit, then showed the type of effort that keeps hope alive for this team. Overcoming the aforementioned size disadvantage, the offense combined passionate running from Xavier Ferguson and excellent passing from Blankenship to Quisenberry with a personal foul call against Maiden to end up deep in Blue Devils territory as the final seconds of the first half ticked away. Blankenship's determination paid off on a dramatic touchdown pass to Jay Maxwell, giving the crowd plenty to cheer for. The two point conversion, a run by Brian Jones, cut the lead to 35-14, and it looked as if West Caldwell had finally gained some much needed momentum as the half came to a close.

After a truncated but solid set by the Warriors' band at halftime, Maiden put an end to any hopes of a West Caldwell comeback. They struck on their first possession of the second half, methodically driving down the field and scoring on a 6 yard rushing touchdown by Roberts. The extra point made it 42-14, and as the temperature fell into the fifties on this crisp fall evening, things began to really cool off for the home team.

From this point, there wasn't a lot to report, especially for the Warriors. Maiden's defense gave them little room to cause much of a stir, and the Blue Devils offense provided two more scoring drives, both ending with rushing touchdowns, as time ran out with the final score of 56-14.

West Caldwell, now 0-5 on the season, travels to Lincolnton this Friday to play their second game in four days. Fans should continue to support the Warriors, as their big play capabilities are there, and they can be a lot of fun to watch. If a showing of consistency occurs, and a little bit of luck can bounce their way, this team could yet surprise some opponents. Maiden is a strong team with a record of four wins and two losses, and they also have a second contest this week, traveling to Bandys for a Friday evening matchup.

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General Assembly unanimously passes \$278M in initial Helene funding

October 9, 2024 | North State Journal (NC) Author: A.P. Dillon| Section: Article | 1218 Words OpenURL Link

RALEIGH — The General Assembly approved a \$273 million dollar Hurricane Helene relief package that leadership says will just be the first of many to come as recovery efforts from the storm are likely to span years into the future.

House Bill 149 will serve as the vehicle for the package. The bill's original language will be stripped and replaced with the funding items and be retitled the "Disaster Recovery Act of 2024." Both chambers passed the bill unanimously on Wednesday and was signed by Governor Roy Cooper the following day.

During a press conference Wednesday morning before the votes on the measure, Senate Leader Phil Berger (R-Eden) and House Speaker Tim Moore (R-Kings Mountain) unveiled the funding package, which includes \$250 million to provide state agencies with spending flexibility to address critical needs. That is the same figure requested by State Budget Director Kristin Walker in an Oct. 7 letter to the legislature.

"Areas of many towns are unrecognizable; some even washed away completely," said Berger. "Roads have been obliterated. Power is needed still in many places. Recovering from Hurricane Helene will be no small task. But I believe we, the state of North Carolina, the people of North Carolina, are up to that task."

"As Sen. Berger mentioned, we know many have lost their lives," Moore said. "We know the numbers unaccounted for. ... We don't know those numbers yet, but we know that everyday efforts are being made to get there. The recovery that is going to have to be done is going to be something that is a Herculean task, but it is something that we will get done."

Berger and Moore both underscored multiple times that this round of funds was just a first step. The lawmakers indicated the \$273 million will be pulled from the Savings Reserve, also known as the "Rainy Day Fund."

The state has several reserve funds available to help with the impacts of Helene. According to the Sept. 27 state Cash Watch report, the State Emergency and Disaster Relief Fund has nearly \$733 million that can be tapped, and the state's Savings Reserve has more than \$4.75 billion available to draw from.

The funding also contains \$166 million for public school-related needs, \$16 million tied to federal matching dollars for lost compensation for school nutrition programs, and \$50 million for water and sewer issues. Another \$2 million will provide technical assistance for FEMA grants for affected counties, and \$5 million will go to the N.C. State Board of Elections (NCSBE) for voter outreach and communication in affected areas.

The NCSBE had asked for \$2 million for voting needs, and Moore said lawmakers were expanding the funding by \$3 million to include all 25 counties plus tribal areas that are under the emergency declaration instead of just the 13 selected by the NCSBE in a resolution passed by the board on Oct. 7.

"We felt that it was necessary to not only provide the state board with adequate resources to do what they're needing to do based on the changes that are taking place but also some flexibility so that local boards could get some of that money and assist some of the cash flow issues and some of the shortfalls that they might have," Moore said.

Moore said finding people to work the polls and finding viable polling sites were part of the consideration for more funds.

"They're trying to find people to work. ... When you have poll sites that literally no longer exist, I mean, they're not

there, right?" he said. "Like a fire department or a church or that community building — that building is no longer there. And I know that you all have been shown the photos of what's happened and how just dramatic it is in these areas, but even just seeing the photos does not fully capture the extent of it."

A full list of the items addressed by the \$273 million initial aid package are outlined in a Senate press release. Moore and Berger said the General Assembly will reconvene on Oct. 24 to address more Helene recovery needs.

"I've visited every single affected county except for one that I'll get to this weekend, met with our members, and some of these folks right here standing behind me today even lost everything they had lost homes, you name it," said Moore, motioning to the dozens of House and Senate Republicans who joined Berger and Moore during the press event.

Several legislators in districts that were hardest hit spoke of the devastation but also the resilience of the people in those communities and how thankful they are for the support and supplies that have come from all corners of the state and across the country.

Sen. Ralph Hise (R-Mitchell) was among the handful of legislators who gave brief remarks. He represents portions of nine of the 25 counties hit by the storm and flooding; Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Caldwell, Haywood, Madison, Mitchell, Watauga and Yancey.

"This is by far the most devastating thing I've ever experienced as a community," a cleary upset Hise said. He said the majority of areas have no water, power, sewer or cell service, and some areas are inaccessible.

"In Mitchell County, the water treatment system for the entire county, both towns, is gone," said Hise." It does not exist and it's unsalvageable. That's a four-year process to put a water treatment plant back in. We don't have a temporary solution for these things right now."

"I promised I wouldn't cry, but people are still needing help even though we didn't ask for it," said Rep. Jennifer Balkcom (R-Henderson). "This is just a start. This is a start to give people what they need."

Like Hise, Rep. Dudley Greene (R-Burke) appeared to choke up during the press conference.

"There was not a corner of my district that was unimpacted, if not decimated by this, by this storm," he said.

Greene said his town has no grocery store at all right now, and supplies on-hand may only last a few weeks. He also said with colder temperatures coming, it's becoming critical to make sure those in shelters have what they need.

"This morning, the lows were in the 40s. Next week, they'll be in the 30s," Greene said, adding, "things like kerosene heaters, blankets, warm coats" are going to be needed very soon.

"I can't say enough thanks to the folks of North Carolina for what you've done, but specifically the folks that are in the mountains right now," said Rep. Mark Pless (R-Haywood). "There were some challenges initially that could not be met for reasons that we will determine. But the folks stepped up."

Pless said that as the co-chairman of the Disaster Recovery and Homeland Security Committee, he has concerns "just like everyone else" that some things were not done correctly.

"I'm not going to dismiss everything I've heard as being misinformation, but I am going to say there's a time and there is a place for us to figure out what went wrong," said Pless. "I've sat in on hearings for Matthew, Florence and Tropical Storm Fred. There's no one in this room that's perfect and there's no agency in this state that's perfect. But we need to figure out what didn't work."

For information on N.C.'s Hurricane Helene Recovery and Resources, click here.

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NC Congressional Republicans ask for Greensboro migrant facility use for Helene victims

October 9, 2024 | North State Journal (NC) Author: A.P. Dillon | Section: Article | 810 Words OpenURL Link

RALEIGH — North Carolina Congressional Republicans have asked the Biden-Harris administration to allow a migrant facility in Greensboro to be used to help aid Hurricane Helene victims.

North Carolina's Rep. Richard Hudson (NC-09) and Sen. Thom Tillis led a letter making the request, which was sent to Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra on Oct. 5.

"As you may know, Health and Human Services (HHS) currently operates GCC as an Influx Care Facility (ICF) meant to house and support unaccompanied alien children (UAC) in the case of an emergency," the letter states. "However, in June 2024, HHS's Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) at the Administration for Children & Families (ACF) announced that GCC has 'ramped down its operations to facility upkeep.'

"Based on our understanding of this facility, we think that it could be incredibly useful in supporting the people of western North Carolina as the region recovers from Hurricane Helene. To the best of our knowledge, GCC has hundreds of beds, as well as extensive facilities for medical care, meals, and education. We believe that this ICF could be repurposed to support the state's rescue and recovery efforts."

The letter suggests the site could be used as a staging area for relief and aid workers or even house citizens displaced from their homes by the storm.

Sen. Ted Budd and Reps. Chuck Edwards (NC-11), David Rouzer (NC-07), Dan Bishop (NC-08), Virginia Foxx (NC-05), Greg Murphy (NC-03) and Patrick McHenry (NC-10) all signed onto the letter.

In response to the letter, FEMA issued a press release through a spokeswoman indicating the site would be used for Helene efforts.

"FEMA continues to lead a comprehensive, whole-of-government approach to assist communities impacted by Hurricane Helene," the statement reads. "As part of our effort to ensure that every available resource is mobilized, FEMA will soon sign an agreement with the Department of Health and Human Services to transfer the Greensboro Facility in North Carolina, previously operated by HHS, to FEMA. The Greensboro facility will be another resource to ensure that FEMA has access to a wide array of assets and resources should they be needed for the recovery."

The Greensboro ICF was announced to be "operational" earlier this year on March 15 but the announcement said no children have been placed at the facility to date despite the fact that HHS entered into an almost \$50 million contract for the space more than two years ago. The five-year contract was signed on June 9, 2022, and expires in 2027 with an option to renew.

ORR's fact sheet on the ICF has continued to display the same update since the March 15 announcement, which in part says, "No children have been in care at the Center since it became operational in March. It will continue to have no children in care but must be ready to resume operations and accept children eight weeks after being notified by ORR."

Following the March 15 announcement, Hudson and Tillis had also sent a letter to Becerra, criticizing HHS for failure to respond to multiple past congressional inquiries for information about the ICF.

"Our offices were notified late afternoon on Friday, March 1, 2024, despite repeated, outstanding requests for answers about plans for operationalizing the facility," the lawmakers wrote in a Mar. 7, 2024, letter to Becerra. "We

are frustrated by this sudden announcement and the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) lack of transparency to Congress and the State of North Carolina related to this issue."

While the ICF stands empty, an August 2024 report by the Office of the Inspector General for the Department of Homeland Security found that the status and location of approximately 291,000 detained migrant children was unknown.

The ICF is the former American Hebrew Academy (AHA) campus, a sprawling 100-acre property with \$26 million in original loans attached to it. North State Journal found the loans have changed hands several times between multiple entities and individuals with ties to China. Two of the companies involved are registered in the British Virgin Islands.

The campus operated from 2001 through 2019, when closed due to financial issues. There was a brief window in 2020 when AHA rebranded as an "International School" following the \$26 million loan from Puxin Ltd., a Chinese company. The rebranded school was supposed to reopen in 2021 but never did.

In December 2023, North State Journal attempted to get answers about why the facility was still empty but w-/ turned away at the gate by contracted security forces who said no one there would speak with a reporter.

Following North State Journal's visit to the ICF, residents in the area said there had been activity at the site in summer 2023. One resident provided images of multiple charter buses with blacked out windows coming and going from the ICF's side gate.

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MCMAHON: Putting North Carolina first

October 9, 2024 | North State Journal (NC) Author: Linda McMahon | Section: Article | 742 Words OpenURL Link

As a native of New Bern, North Carolina, I know firsthand that my fellow North Carolinians are some of the most hard-working, tough, and innovative people in the country. As communities across the state recover and rebuild after Hurricane Helene — even in the wake of the federal government's failure — the resilience of my home state has never been clearer.

But no matter how much grit and determination we bring to the table, it's becoming harder and harder to make ends meet in the economy that President Biden and Vice President Harris have built.

Under this administration, our state's workers, small businesses, and families are being squeezed like never before. With just weeks to go until the most consequential election of our lifetimes, it's time to take stock of the last four years and decide whether we want more of the same or if we want to take our state — and our country — in a new direction.

North Carolinians are feeling the pinch everywhere. From heating homes to putting food on the table, the cost of living has spiraled out of control. In North Carolina alone, electricity prices have jumped by 29%, gas prices have surged by 56%, and grocery prices are up by 20%. For small business owners, these rising costs are making it nearly impossible to stay afloat, let alone expand, hire new workers, or invest in growth.

These challenges are not happening by chance. They are a direct result of the Biden-Harris administration's reckless and misguided policies. Their unprecedented \$6 trillion spending spree unleashed historic inflation, pushing prices through the roof for everyday essentials. To contain this inflation, interest rates have climbed, making it harder for families to buy homes and for small businesses to access capital. Families are stuck with skyrocketing bills while wages can't keep up, and business owners are left struggling to keep their doors open.

To make matters worse, the Biden administration has layered on \$1.7 trillion in new regulations on businesses, along with nearly 330 million hours of additional paperwork. These burdens fall hardest on small business owners, who don't have the resources to navigate the endless red tape coming out of Washington. Unlike big corporations, they can't afford armies of lawyers and consultants to comply with the onslaught of new regulations.

And while Biden touts his "green energy" agenda, everyday Americans recognize the damage it's done to both our jobs and energy security. His war on fossil fuels and heavy-handed push for electric vehicle mandates have threatened thousands of jobs in North Carolina's manufacturing sector. Beyond the job losses, these policies have driven up energy prices, hitting working-class families the hardest. Union leaders and progressive advocacy groups may cheer these policies, but it's the people of North Carolina who are stuck footing the bill through higher prices and reduced access to affordable, reliable energy.

At a time when North Carolinians are struggling, we need leadership that puts our people first. We need policies that recognize that every new regulation, every tax increase, and every bureaucratic hurdle makes it harder for families to get ahead and for businesses to succeed. What we need is an America First agenda — because we know these policies work.

Under the previous administration, we cut taxes, reduced regulations, and prioritized American workers. These policies unleashed one of the strongest economies in U.S. history. We saw record-low unemployment, rising wages, and more money staying in the pockets of hardworking North Carolinians. Small businesses thrived because they weren't bogged down by excessive regulations and high taxes. North Carolinians felt confident in their futures again.

Now, as we head into the next election, we face a clear choice. We can continue down the current path of rising prices, shrinking job opportunities, and ever-growing government interference in our lives. Or we can choose leaders who will put North Carolina first — who will restore economic sanity, lift up our workers, and support the small businesses that are the backbone of our state.

An America First agenda worked before, and it can work again. It's time to bring back the policies that strengthen our economy, empower our workers, and give every North Carolinian the chance to succeed. This election is our opportunity to choose a better future — for ourselves, our families, and our great state.

Linda McMahon serves on the board of America First Works and is the former administration of the U.S. Small Business Administration.

The post MCMAHON: Putting North Carolina first first appeared on The North State Journal.

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NCHSAA Adjusts Fall Sports Schedule

October 9, 2024 | Pilot, The (Southern Pines, NC) Author: Staff Report| Section: Sports | 343 Words OpenURL Link

The North Carolina High School Athletic Association's Board of Directors met to discuss options for concluding the fall sports season, including the postseason calendar.

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

Sunday practices and competitions are still prohibited, but schedules and contest limitations were adjusted.

Football

To fit in the lost contests, a minimum of three calendar days must occur in between contests.

The playoff seedings will be Nov. 10. The first round of the playoffs will be Nov. 15, the second round on Nov. 22, the third round on Nov. 29, the fourth round on Dec. 6, the regional final round on Dec. 13 and the state championships on Dec. 20 and 21.

Girls Tennis

The individual playoffs are adjusted to regional on Oct. 18 and 19, and state championships Oct. 25 and 26.

The dual team playoffs will start with seeding on Oct. 18, the first round on Oct. 21, the second round Oct. 23, the third round Oct. 28, the fourth round Oct. 30, the regionals on Nov. 5 and state championships on Nov. 9.

Volleyball

The weekly limitation is modified to allow affected schools to make up multiple postponed matches, but not to exceed eight in a week.

Seeding will be Oct. 20, with the first round on Oct. 22, second round on Oct. 24, third round on Oct. 26, fourth round on Oct. 29, regionals on Oct. 31 and state championships on Nov. 2.

Cross Country

The regionals will be on Oct. 26, followed by the state championships on Nov. 2.

Boys Soccer

The weekly limitation is modified to allow affected schools to make up multiple postponed matches, not to exceed four in a week.

Playoff seeding will be Nov. 7. The playoffs start with the first round on Nov. 9, second round on Nov. 12, third round on Nov. 14, fourth round on Nov. 16, regionals on Nov. 19 and the state championships on Nov. 22 and 23.

No changes were made to the girls golf championship schedule, but the nine-hole scores required to qualify for regionals has been revised from five to three scores.

• Citation (aglc Style)

Staff Report, 'NCHSAA Adjusts Fall Sports Schedule', *Pilot, The* (online), 9 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C1B614CE127A60



NCHSAA extends fall sports seasons due to Helene impacts

October 9, 2024 | Robesonian, The (Lumberton, NC) Author: Staff report | Section: sports | 754 Words OpenURL Link

CHAPEL HILL — The North Carolina High School Athletic Association has extended the season for several fall sports, choosing to do so after the impact of Hurricane Helene on the western part of the state.

The NCHSAA's Board of Directors approved the changes Wednesday morning.

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

Sunday practices and competitions will remain prohibited for all NCHSAA schools.

As a special provision, the board also approved for one additional contest to be allowed in sports that have a season limit, under the conditions of: the contest has prior approval from the NCHSAA; it cannot exceed daily or weekly limitations; it must exceed the season limit (i.e. be an additional game) for both schools; and cannot be entered into MaxPreps, so not to affect RPI standings. This would appear to give schools in non-storm-affected areas the option to play an extra game during the days in which the regular season has been extended, should they choose to do so to avoid a span of several days between the end of the regular season and the start of the playoffs.

While the start of the playoffs will be pushed back by as much as one week in some sports, the regular-season impact to Robeson County schools is likely to be minimal. Western North Carolina schools, however, will use that extra time to play makeup contests and complete as much as possible of their schedules after many schools were unable to play for days or weeks after Helene hit the area Sept. 26-27.

Football

The state playoffs in football will be pushed back by one week, with a reporting deadline of 11:59 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 9 for all regular-season results; this deadline was originally Nov. 1.

Playoff seeding and matchups will be announced on Nov. 10 before the first round of the state playoffs on Nov. 15. Each successive round will still be one week after the previous round, with state championships will now be played Dec. 20-21.

The state will require three calendar days (72 hours) between contests, which may impact scheduling for some western schools as they try to make up games from recent weeks affected by Helene and its aftermath.

Boys soccer

The boys soccer postseason schedule was also bumped back one week, with the reporting date changed from Oct. 31 to Nov. 6. Seeding and brackets will be released Nov. 7 before the first round of the state playoffs on Nov. 9. Regionals are Nov. 19 with the state championships scheduled for Nov. 22-23.

The weekly limitation of three matches has been modified to allow schools to play multiple makeup matches in a week, not to exceed four total matches. No change was made to daily limitations.

Volleyball

Volleyball's reporting deadline was pushed back three days, from Oct. 16 to Oct. 19, with seeding scheduled for Oct. 20.

The state playoffs will begin on Oct. 22, with regionals on Oct. 31 and the state championships on Nov. 2.

Weekly limitations have been modified to allow for up to eight matches in a week.

Girls tennis

The reporting deadline for individual girls tennis results was pushed back to 11:59 p.m. on Oct. 14; it was originally 3 p.m. that day, and this change will allow for an additional day of competition for those who need it. Individual regionals will be held Oct. 18-19 and the state championship tournaments will be Oct. 25-26.

The dual team girls tennis reporting deadline was pushed back one week, from Oct. 10 to Oct. 17, with seeding scheduled for Oct. 18. The state playoffs will begin Oct. 21, with regionals on Nov. 5 and state championships on Nov. 9.

Cross country

The reporting deadline for cross country was pushed back three days to Oct. 22, from Oct. 19. Regionals will be held Oct. 26 with the state championships set for Nov. 2.

Girls golf

No scheduling changes were made for girls golf, but instead the NCHSAA made a change to the qualification process for regional championships.

The minimum of nine-hole scores required to qualify for regionals was reduced from five to three.

Regionals remain scheduled for Oct. 21-22 and state championships will be played Oct. 28-29. The reporting deadline is Oct. 16.

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Staff report, 'NCHSAA extends fall sports seasons due to Helene impacts', *Robesonian, The* (online), 9 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C1B9CECA8B66E0



The great

October 9, 2024 | Robesonian, The (Lumberton, NC)

Section: yankees 728 Words

OpenURL Link

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

Miss Currie was the daughter of a Davidson College professor.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

following excerpt:

SELECTION FROM "RIVER ROAD" BY WAYNE CALDWELL

The French Broad, being a river, floods.

How many times over the millennia has it left its banks

and moved whatever was swept up in it

To some far away (and sometimes ridiculous) place?

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

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

Asheville's Riverside Park was washed away.

Parts of which one could have seen rushing by my house

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

Would have been inundated for several days.)

Only a half dozen people died in Asheville,

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

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

Even though the courthouse was about the only thing left

On Main Street. Fifty-Three houses disappeared.

From high ground one could have seen rushing by

Bales of cotton, houses, mules, gas tanks,

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

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

Anything thing not tied down — and many things that were.

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Anguish in Ashe County: 'Shock' of Helene tests the limits of these self-reliant mountain people

October 9, 2024 | RockinghamNow (NC) Author: Susan Spear| Section: Rockingham Now | 1644 Words OpenURL Link

WARRENSVILLE — Loss is all too familiar to Gloria Graybeal.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lansing, an Ashe County town of 128, brimmed with activity Thursday as shop owners and residents directed

volunteers with loaded trailers to the most remote reaches of the area where people were still without food and water.

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

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

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

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

Problems are so vast, they are nearly unfathomable, Burleson and others explained. With fences washed away, livestock are roaming and often in roadways.

Once they're corralled, farmers will need hay to replace what has been lost. That need will be most keen in about three weeks, locals said.

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

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

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

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

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

Automobiles float in the North Fork of the New River.

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

Clothing, tin roof panels, toys and bikes hang in chalky vines by the river.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"We don't know if it's livable," she said of her still-standing 114-year-old historic frame house on Big Horse Creek near Lansing. Houses that flanked it were lifted from their foundations by the flood water, Shuford said.

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

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

Like most, Shuford's building lacked flood insurance. "It's so expensive, you can't afford to get it," she said.

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

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

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

Greg Aldridge and his wife, Annette Aldridge, drove in Thursday morning from Monroe to help. "It's my birthday," she said, toting bananas and Gatorades to workers and state troopers directing traffic. "But I'm right where I want to be."

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

Juanita Bledsoe of Three Top Road ran toward a crew member, who ducked out in helmet and fatigues. Bledsoe threw her arms upward and said, "My Jesus sent this!" She hugged the guardsman tight.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Tears welled in his eyes. "You just have to have faith that the good Lord saved me because he had another purpose for me."

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Robinson blasts state's response to Helene; blames Cooper

October 9, 2024 | Rocky Mount Telegram: Web Edition Articles (NC)

Author: Bill West | Section: Local | 659 Words

OpenURL Link

Lt. Gov. Mark Robinson at a campaign gathering Monday afternoon in Rocky Mount called the state-level response to Hurricane Helene in the western part of North Carolina "100 percent abysmal" and placed the blame on Gov. Roy Cooper.

Robinson, who is the Republican nominee for governor in the Nov. 5 election, spoke at the North Wesleyan Boulevard location of Gardner's Barbecue and gave attendees who packed the venue an update about what he has seen in the devastated areas of the state.

"This is not a Republican or a Democrat issue," Robinson said. "That storm blew in and it didn't stop at the door and say, 'Hey, are you a Republican or a Democrat? Let me know before I blow your house over and wash all your stuff away."

Robinson was critical of the state's relief and recovery response to the storm and said he would be just as critical if the governor were a Republican.

Cooper, a Nash County native, is a Democrat in his second term as governor. By state law, he cannot run for a third consecutive four-year term.

Cooper has endorsed the Democratic gubernatorial nominee, N.C. Attorney General Josh Stein.

Robinson said Monday that he believes Cooper does not like him and that he does not like Cooper.

"I don't like the way he treated the people of this state during COVID," Robinson added. "I don't like how many bills he has vetoed — good bills that he has vetoed — just because of his own personal opinion."

Robinson, who is completing his first four-year term as the state's number two official, said that after he took office in 2020, he had hoped that at some point he and Cooper could be seen somewhere together working on something that they agree on.

"The man never calls me," Robinson said. "He never consults with me. He hardly looks at me. I don't even think I exist in his eyes. That is poor leadership, folks."

Robinson criticized the governor for attending a fundraiser in New York while Helene was "brewing."

Robinson also said that once it was known Helene was going to hit, he would have called together the state's executive officials that make up the Council of State and he would have told each member, "I'm doing this — and I expect you to do this."

Robinson also said that he would have told the Council of State members to go to western North Carolina and would have told the members that, "You may be campaigning right now, but guess what? You can put that on hold."

Mary Scott Winstead, who is the senior communication director at Cooper's office, in response to an email from the Telegram seeking comment, said Monday evening that the lieutenant governor was spreading false information.

"Mark Robinson's dangerous lies about the state's response demoralizes the thousands of National Guard soldiers, emergency responders, highway patrol troopers, Department of Transportation workers, state medical personnel

and more who have been on the ground risking their lives and working in a coordinated way under the direction of Governor Cooper to respond to the most catastrophic storm in North Carolina's history," Winstead said.

Winstead also said that Robinson was hurting recovery efforts by misleading voters for political purposes.

Cooper's office, in a news release Monday evening, said that, regarding the response by the National Guard, more than 2,500 soldiers and airmen are now working in western North Carolina, with about 500 more on their way.

The news release also stated that more than 800 Federal Emergency Management Agency staff are in the state to help with the relief effort in western North Carolina.

More than \$33 million in FEMA Individual Assistance Funds have been paid so far to western North Carolina disaster survivors and more than 109,000 people have registered for help individually, according to information from the governor's office.

The N.C. Department of Transportation currently has more than 2,050 employees and 1,100 pieces of equipment working on more than 4,100 damaged road sites in the western part of the state, Cooper's office stated.

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Sauer speaks on WNC in aftermath of Helene

October 9, 2024 | Sampson Independent, The (Clinton, NC) Author: Chuck Thompson cthompson@clintonnc.com| Section: news news-main top-stories | 686 Words OpenURL Link

Over six days in western North Carolina assisting in what may be one of that areas worst natural disasters, Sampson's EMS director said he witnessed heartbreaking devastation, hundreds of volunteers reaching out a helping hand, the challenge of misinformation and, above everything else, hope.

Rick Sauer, emergency management director for Sampson, shared stories of his time in Waynesville with Sampson County commissioners Monday night, just hours after he returned from the area.

"It was heartbreaking disaster, and sometimes disasters bring people together, and that's what we saw while we were there" Sauer told the commissioners.

Sauer arrived in Waynesville Wednesday night, and, he said the team he was with went to work immediately at 7 a.m Thursday morning, Sept 26.

He worked with the Haywood County Sheriff's Department, coordinating the evacuation of the detention center, and other facilities in the county, such as nursing centers.

"We had a difficult time communicating," Sauer acknowledged, noting they lost all electrical power. "We lost all cell service and public radio communication, too," he attested.

He said they did 65 rescues Thursday night into Friday morning. By Saturday, there was limited radio communication, and every town was still without water services.

"That Sunday morning we realized that we were overwhelmed and needed additional resources," Sauer explained, noting that even the rescue workers were in need of help.

He said teams from Indiana and Kentucky arrived first to assist with aid to residents. They delivered first aid, water, and food to locals, with the help of crews from Raleigh, Ohio, Wisconsin, Massachusetts, Maryland, and elsewhere.

"During the six-day operation, we had 921 missions using 41 different agencies," he recalled.

At that time, 700 people in and around Waynesville were reported missing. "The big part of that was communication," Sauer noted, stating that anyone accounted for who could not get in touch with someone was considered missing, but most were due to only lack of phone and internet service.

"On Friday, Oct. 4, 95 percent of the water and sewer was restored in the county, and 96 percent of the power was restored (in Haywood County)."

Unfortunately, Sauer said, five fatalities were discovered.

He Sampson County 911 operation manager Cliff Brown was deployed to McDowell County where they faced similar challenges.

While many fire, EMS, and law enforcement personnel volunteered to go, they only took a limited number, he said. "We had to measure resources and make sure we still had coverage here (for Sampson County residents).

"Several fire departments, from Newton Grove, Harrells, Taylors Bridge and Clinton were deployed to western

North Carolina to different locations. Turkey and Piney Grove were on stand-by, but did not deploy."Sauer said. "The Sheriff's Department sent six members."

He also added that local fire departments are collecting extra equipment and gear for those departments utterly destroyed by Hurricane Helene, so they can have some necessary items to cover calls. Many, Sauer said, will have to rebuild and restock their fire houses.

"One fire department I visited was operating from a church parking lot because there were no buildings," he stressed.

And, he added, one of the biggest challenges was getting drinking water and food to those in need. Sauer's group took eight pallets of drinking water with them to distribute.

"There were food insecurity challenges that I hope we helped solve before we left," Sauer said, also noting that the ability to get gas for vehicles and generators was seriously lacking. "It was there in the ground, but without electricity we couldn't pump it."

The EMS director also assured that, despite rumors to the contrary, FEMA was there, on the ground, helping citizens in need.

He added that a "phenomenal amount of resources are flooding into the area now.

But Sauer also came back with a warning for residents.

"Be prepared" he said of the lesson learned. "Each person needs to be prepared with supplies for five to seven days. Food, water. medicine."

He mention the current hurricane in the gulf, but thinks Milton will go across Florida, out into the Atlantic, and he reassured the commissioners that they will keep an eye on things as they develop.

Commissioner chairman Jerol Kivett thanked Sauer and the teams that answered the call, as other commissioners followed up with their appreciation.

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• Citation (aglc Style)

Chuck Thompson cthompson@clintonnc.com, 'Sauer speaks on WNC in aftermath of Helene', *Sampson Independent, The* (online), 9 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C1BA106E754B98



CCSO K9 Uno offers comfort amidst Helene recovery

October 9, 2024 | Sanford Herald, The (NC) Author: RANDALL RIGSBEE | Section: Archives | 505 Words OpenURL Link

In the wake of Hurricane Helene's devastating impact on Western North Carolina, the Chatham County Sheriff's Office has reinforced its efforts to support the ongoing recovery.

This past Friday, a second group of deputies deployed to Yancey County, relieving the first team sent from Chatham earlier in the week. Among the responders was the CCSO's emotional support K9, Uno, whose visit to the region brought a much-needed sense of calm and comfort to both displaced residents and first responders.

Yancey County, a region known for its rugged landscape and the towering presence of Mount Mitchell — the highest point east of the Mississippi River at 6,684 feet — covers more than 313 square miles. Military and civilian helicopters conducting evacuations and supply drops are a frequent sight in the skies.

In the county seat of Burnsville, where Blue Ridge Elementary School is serving as a shelter for residents displaced from their homes, Uno visited with children and families. Uno also made a stop at the Yancey County Emergency Response Command Center, where workers coordinate rescue and relief efforts. The center is a hub of activity, with law enforcement and first responders from all over North Carolina and neighboring states lending their assistance.

"We've been running on adrenaline," said one worker from Alabama, who enjoyed a few moments petting Uno.

The Chatham County Sheriff's Office deployment is part of the broader Sheriffs Helping Sheriffs initiative, launched by the North Carolina Sheriffs' Association to provide aid to counties hardest hit by the hurricane.

Sheriff Mike Roberson, president of the NCSA, emphasized the importance of this statewide effort.

"The damage in Yancey County and other parts of Western North Carolina is extensive," he said. "It's going to take a while for these communities to recover, but we're committed to being there for the long haul."

North Carolina Sheriff's Offices have so far sent approximately 300 personnel to help the hard-hit region.

As recovery efforts continue, the signs of devastation remain stark. In Burnsville, a Roses department store parking lot now serves as a distribution center for donations — water, diapers, non-perishable food, and other essentials. While fallen trees have largely been cleared from major roadways, mud and debris still line many roadways one week after the storm tore through the region. An Ingles grocery store displays a sign that reads, "Cash Only — Yancey Strong," a reminder that normal services remain impacted, but the community remains resilient.

Volunteers on four-wheelers traverse the most hard-to-reach areas, delivering desperately needed supplies to those who remain isolated. A man now living in a shelter described the aftermath bluntly: "Our beautiful town was chopped all to pieces."

Chatham County deputies have taken on a range of duties while in the mountains. Their presence, along with support from agencies across the state, has been vital as Yancey County works to get back on its feet. "It's about more than just physical recovery," Roberson said. "The emotional toll is real, especially in communities that have lost so much."

"This is about neighbors helping neighbors, and right now, Western North Carolina needs us all," he said.

• Citation (aglc Style)

RANDALL RIGSBEE, 'CCSO K9 Uno offers comfort amidst Helene recovery', *Sanford Herald, The* (online), 9 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C19EEB5443B00



FEMA administrator blasts disinformation

October 9, 2024 | Star, The (Shelby, NC) Author: Sudiksha Kochi; USA TODAY| Section: News| 375 Words Page: A4 OpenURL Link

WASHINGTON – FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell pushed back Tuesday against former President Donald Trump's false claims about recovery efforts following Hurricane Helene and indicated she was disappointed in the misinformation he was spreading.

Trump has spread baseless claims about hurricane relief efforts, including allegations that there are "no helicopters, no rescue" in North Carolina and that the federal government is giving only \$750 to those who have lost their homes. FEMA has addressed misinformation on its website and social media.

Hurricane Helene ravaged Southeastern states including North Carolina and Florida, killing more than 200 people, destroying buildings and leaving millions without power.

"I would say just because you don't see somebody in a FEMA shirt on the ground doesn't mean FEMA is not here, and FEMA is one part of the team – our urban search and rescue teams, the Army Corps of Engineers," Criswell said in a press call Tuesday.

The \$750 figure has also been misrepresented, she said, explaining that that money is going out first to individuals in the most impacted areas. As more information is collected about the individuals and their housing situation, they will get additional assistance as needed, she said.

She said she thinks the disinformation being spread during recovery efforts in the wake of Hurricane Helene is causing harm to both volunteers on the ground and impacted families.

"It's creating distrust in the federal government, but also the state government. And we have so many first responders that have been working day and night to go out and help these communities," Criswell said. "It's just really demoralizing to them. It hurts their morale when they've left their families to be able to come in here and help people."

Criswell added that bad actors are "misrepresenting the types of programs that FEMA offers."

"It's creating fear in some of the individuals, and so I worry that they won't apply for assistance, which means I can't get them the necessary items they need to support them," she said.

Asked about whether she thinks Trump is playing politics with the hurricane response, Criswell said, "I'm frankly disappointed that we're still having to have this conversation."

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• Citation (aglc Style)

Sudiksha Kochi, USA TODAY, 'FEMA administrator blasts disinformation', *Star, The* (online), 9 Oct 2024 A4 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C1994AE2D6CED8



Shelters help animals affected by Helene - Dogs, cats evacuated to number of other states

October 9, 2024 | Star, The (Shelby, NC) Author: Saman Shafiq; USA TODAY | Section: News | 889 Words Page: A4 OpenURL Link

Hundreds of dogs and other animals were evacuated from Hurricane Helene-ravaged areas in Florida, Tennessee and North Carolina and relocated to animal shelters across the country.

Helene's devastating path across the Southeast moved the animals to facilities in Maryland, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Wisconsin and D.C., where they are up for adoption and a second chance.

The Humane Society of the United States said in a news release on Monday that 45 adoptable animals from shelters struggling with the loss of power and water in Tennessee were evacuated to its care and rehabilitation center in Maryland.

About 100 animals were evacuated from another shelter in Tennessee's Unicoi County and are being placed with different groups as the shelter undergoes cleanup and construction, the Humane Society said.

"By transporting animals who were available for adoption pre-storm out of the region, local animal services will be better positioned to take in and care for displaced animals in their community, increasing the likelihood of reunifications," the Humane Society said in the news release.

Kirsten Peek, a spokesperson for the organization, said in an email to USA TODAY on Thursday that efforts to relocate the animals are still ongoing and the society does not have an estimated update on the total number of animals that have been evacuated.

Wisconsin

Meanwhile, multiple shelters in Wisconsin including the Humane Animal Welfare Society in Waukesha, Elmbrook Humane Society, Wisconsin Humane Society and Washington County Humane Society are taking in dozens of cats and dogs affected by Hurricane Helene.

About 88 dogs and 44 cats were in flown from Florence, South Carolina, to Waukesha, outside Milwaukee, last week with the Wisconsin shelters helping them get adopted, according to the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, part of the USA TODAY Network.

"It was a challenging decision to help as there is a high population of local animals recently," Angela Speed, vice president of marketing and communication for the Wisconsin Humane Society, told the Journal Sentinel, but people in the community have always "stepped up and helped" in these situations, she said.

CEO of Greater Good Charities Liz Baker, who oversaw the relocation, told the Journal Sentinel that "the best thing is to move out adoptable pets and to move them into the community where there are adoptable homes."

"Most are adopted, and this clears out space for other animals in need," Baker said, explaining that the "animals in need" are the pets who are homeless and are waiting to be reunited with their owners.

North Carolina

The Humane Society of Charlotte assisted the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals with the emergency transport of 44 homeless dogs and cats from the Brother Wolf Animal Rescue in Asheville, which was

devastated by the hurricane.

The animals were placed in emergency foster homes ahead of the hurricane's making landfall, before being moved to temporary shelter, after which they were transported to Charlotte, ASPCA said in a news release.

"The 14 dogs and 30 cats – all of whom are unowned – are receiving medical and behavioral care until they are made available for adoption in the coming weeks," the ASPCA said.

Massachusetts

In Massachusetts, the Dakin Humane Society, based in Springfield, is waiving 50% off all adoption fees through Oct. 12 to encourage people to adopt quickly and help make space in the shelter for animals being transported from Southern partner shelters impacted by Hurricane Helene. The shelter did not specify how many animals were transported to Springfield, but pictures shared by the organization showed that cats, dogs and even a sparrow were up for adoption.

The Dakin Humane Society is also collecting relief goods such as dog food, cat food and toys to be sent to its partners in hurricane-ravaged areas.

The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals said it welcomed 34 dogs from eastern Tennessee and 15 cats from Florida with 75 more animals expected to come sometime later this week from Asheville, which is one of the most affected areas. The dogs that arrived from Tennessee are now up for adoption, the shelter said on Friday.

Rhode Island

Potter League for Animals, an animal shelter in Middleton, took in 14 dogs from the Aiken County Animal Shelter in South Carolina. Kara Montalbano, a spokesperson for the shelter, clarified in an email to USA TODAY that the dogs "were already in the shelter prior to the hurricane and are not owned pets displaced by the storm," adding they were relocated to Rhode Island to create space at the Aiken County Animal Shelter for animals impacted by the hurricane.

The Aiken County Animal Shelter in Aiken, about 132 miles from Charleston, has been dealing with an influx of animals before and during Hurricane Helene while struggling with no power and limited resources in the aftermath of the hurricane.

In a post on Facebook Friday, the shelter said it received 93 animals in the three days before the hurricane hit and "desperately (needs) fosters who live in Aiken County" to take in a homeless dog for a short time.

Montalbano shared that of the 14 dogs, five have already found homes and that the shelter is planning to coordinate another transport with the Aiken County Animal Shelter in the coming weeks.

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• Citation (aglc Style)

Saman Shafiq, USA TODAY, 'Shelters help animals affected by Helene - Dogs, cats evacuated to number of other states', *Star, The* (online), 9 Oct 2024 A4 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?
p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C1994ADD485A68>



Fla. residents brace for hurricane landfall - again

October 9, 2024 | Star, The (Shelby, NC) Author: Christopher Cann and Trevor Hughes; USA TODAY Section: News | 533 Words Page: A4 OpenURL Link

TAMPA, Fla. – At a high school in Tampa, Florida, a frustrated Bill Brotherton signed up to stay for the duration of Hurricane Milton.

With his rescue parrot Mikey perched atop his shoulder, Brotherton said Hurricane Helene inundated his home with 4 feet of seawater. He's been sleeping in his car since.

"It's so overwhelming, I can barely speak. I can't think. I can't spell. I'm having chest pains," he said, tears welling in his eyes. "I go to sleep and I don't want to wake up but I keep waking up."

Brotherton is one of many Florida residents who were in the midst of recovering from Helene – removing soaked furniture, tearing down walls, contacting their flood insurers – when Hurricane Milton began churning toward the state, forcing them to drop everything and begin fortifying their homes again.

Mountains of debris and household items, including couches, bedframes and refrigerators, lined the streets of several coastal communities. And as residents evacuated en masse, many wondered if they'll have a home to return to.

Near the Tampa Bay Marina, Nancy Heidt, 80, watched Tuesday as her son Scott Heidt continued clearing the mess left by Helene. The storm pushed floodwater into her bayfront home, ruining most everything but the tile floor of the kitchen and living room.

Workers had already cut out several feet of drywall around the entire house to help halt the growth of black mold, which flourishes in humid, post-hurricane conditions. A large dumpster sat in the driveway, overflowing with drywall debris, ruined food and broken appliances.

Heidt said she had lived in the house for 50 years and although the area had seen many hurricanes, Helene was the single worst she'd ever experienced. And the forecasts are for Milton to hit even harder, though she hoped it would be milder than predicted.

"I beat cancer. I beat having a broken hip," she said. "I'm still fighting."

"We had 4 feet of flooding from the last one," Scott Heidt said. "If we get 12 feet from this one, we're toast."

The past 10 days of Elasa Tiernan's life were focused on getting her house back in order. That is, until she heard about Milton.

"I was going to squeegee more water out today, but with this all coming again, we pretty much just had to throw in the towel," said Tiernan, whose home in the coastal community of Crystal Beach was flooded with 2 feet of storm surge from Helene. Most of her neighbors suffered the same fate.

After the storm passed to the north, Tiernan's husband – now bedridden with breathing problems, possibly from mold exposure – got rid of waterlogged furniture and took a sledgehammer to the cabinets and concrete walls.

On Monday, Tiernan bolted the doors shut, turned off the main breaker and headed for her aunt's house in Tarpon Springs, where she plans to shelter with her husband and daughter.

"I'm a survivalist, I guess," Tiernan said. "Being a mom of a 14-year-old, you don't really have a lot of time to think otherwise, right?"

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• Citation (aglc Style)

Christopher Cann and Trevor Hughes, USA TODAY, 'Fla. residents brace for hurricane landfall – again', *Star, The* (online), 9 Oct 2024 A4 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C1994AE0676130



High school football - Picks for Gastonia, Shelby area for Week 8 games

October 9, 2024 | Star, The (Shelby, NC) Author: Joe L Hughes II; Gaston Gazette | Section: Sports | 803 Words Page: B1 OpenURL Link

Here are previews for Week 8 high school football games in Cleveland, Gaston and Lincoln counties, with reporter loe Hughes making a prediction for each.

Games kickoff at 7:30 p.m., unless otherwise noted.

'Pick 3': Area's top games

East Gaston at Bessemer City

Records: East Gaston is 3-3 (2-0 Southern Piedmont 1A/2A). Bessemer City is 4-3 (2-1).

The word: Bessemer City can earn a landmark victory under coach Shane Short when it hosts East Gaston on Friday. Limiting East Gaston running back Isaac Brown will be key, however, this after he scored three touchdowns last week against Cherryville. East Gaston has a task of its own, quarterback Gavin Chastain and wideout Kameron Rice connecting for seven TDs thus far.

Pick: Bessemer City

South Point at Kings Mountain

Records: South Point is 4-0 (2-0 Big South 3A). Kings Mountain is 4-1 (2-0).

Web: KMHS Sports YouTube

The word: South Point survived a Week 7 gut-check, rallying to down Crest, 27-26. No rest for the weary, however, the Red Raiders readying for another test at Kings Mountain. Mountaineer all-purpose man Jayden Gash is becoming a factor with each given week, last Friday catching a touchdown pass and returning a kick for another in a win over Forestview. However, this one is likely to be decided by how Kings Mountain's defense handles South Point's vaunted rushing attack, which hasn't been much trouble in three straight Mountaineer victories.

Pick: Kings Mountain

Newton-Conover at West Lincoln

Records: Newton-Conover is 1-4 (1-1 Catawba Valley 2A). West Lincoln is 3-3 (1-2).

The word: Now two games back of league leader Bunker Hill, the focus for West Lincoln now shifts to securing a postseason berth. Newton-Conover also has work to do, the Red Devils currently out of the playoff picture. The Rebels must fare better on the ground against Newton-Conover than their last two outings, unable to tally 200 rushing yards, including a 73-yard performance Saturday in a loss to Bunker Hill. Meanwhile, the Red Devils have allowed 30 points or more in their four losses.

Pick: West Lincoln

The rest

Big South 3A

Forestview (1-5, 1-2 Big South 3A) at Hunter Huss (2-2, 1-1): Huss quarterback Javarion Brown is coming off a career game, tallying more than 300 yards of total offense and five touchdowns. He presents a challenge for a Forestview defense which has allowed 30 points or more in four of its six games. | Pick: Hunter Huss

North Gaston (2-3, 0-2) at Crest (4-1, 1-1): Crest legend Tre Harbison now serves as the North Gaston assistant coach, serving under former Charger defensive coordinator and NOGA head man Darrel Wilson. Don't expect Crest to take any pity, looking to make amends following last week's 27-26 loss at South Point. | Pick: Crest

Stuart Cramer (1-4, 0-2) at Ashbrook (5-1, 2-1): Tackling has been an issue for Stuart Cramer in recent weeks, its defense allowing 90 points in losses to South Point and Hunter Huss. Meanwhile, Ashbrook can't be caught looking ahead to a key league matchup next week against South Point. | Pick: Ashbrook

Southern Piedmont 1A/2A

Burns (4-2, 2-0 Southern Piedmont 1A/2A) at Thomas Jefferson (2-5, 0-3): Burns has won three straight, allowing a total of 15 points during the stretch. Last week against Bessemer City, the Bulldogs rushed for 414 yards, bad news for a TJCA team returning to the field in the aftermath of Helene. | Pick: Burns

Highland Tech (3-3, 0-3) at Cherryville (1-5, 0-2): Highland Tech has lost 24 straight in conference play. An opportunity looms against a Cherryville team which has scored 38 points through six games. | Pick: Highland Tech

Western Foothills 3A

East Lincoln (4-2, 1-2 Western Foothills 3A) at Foard (0-5, 0-2): Chris Daley II got back on track last week, rushing for 121 yards and two touchdowns in a win over West Iredell. Look for more of the same against a Foard defense allowing 27.8 points per game. | Pick: East Lincoln

North Lincoln (5-1, 2-1) at St. Stephens (1-5, 1-2): St. Stephens has allowed just shy of 37 points per game this season. Such isn't a recipe for success against a vaunted North Lincoln rushing attack, one averaging above 340 yards per game. | Pick: North Lincoln

Catawba Valley 2A

West Caldwell (3-3, 0-1 Catawba Valley 2A) at Lincolnton (2-4, 2-1): Lincolnton seeks its third straight win following an 0-4 start. The Wolves' rushing attack has started to heat up, averaging 286.5 yards over their last two games. | Pick: Lincolnton

Catawba Shores 1A/2A

Christ the King (2-4, 2-1 Catawba Shores 1A/2A) at Mountain Island Charter (2-4, 1-2): Mountain Island Charter rushed for 337 yards last Thursday, ending a three-game skid at Winston-Salem Prep. The Raptors will test a Christ the King defense which had two sacks and three turnovers last week in a win over Pine Lake Prep. | Pick: Mountain Island Charter

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As the mountains call for help after Helene, NC legislature approves recovery funds

October 9, 2024 | StarNews (Wilmington, NC) Author: Sarah Gleason, Wilmington StarNews| Section: News| 942 Words OpenURL Link

(This story was updated to add new information.)

Mountain people don't normally ask for help, Rep. Jennifer Balkcom, R-Henderson, said as she shuffled tears away from her eyes, but right now, they need it.

North Carolina legislators returned to Raleigh for a morning news conference and votes in the afternoon on Wednesday for initial Helene recovery funds.

The bill, which passed in the House and Senate unanimously was introduced by Senate Leader Phil Berger, R-Rockingham, and House Speaker Tim Moore, R-Cleveland, and includes \$273 million in funds, for now.

The governor signed the bill into law on Thursday, noting his support and calling the bill a "strong first step."

Helene swept across the Southeastern U.S., devastating Western North Carolina. In the wake of the devastating effects of the storm, entire homes were swept away in the overflowing rivers, landslides destroyed personal property, and residents were left without power and service, some even losing their family and friends.

It's been a little over a week since the unprecedented destruction occurred, and over 20 counties are finally able to start repairing some of the damage. But one thing is very clear, this recovery will take years.

"This is just a first step for us to take as legislators," Berger said.

Legislators are scheduled to return on Oct. 24 to continue what Moore called "a herculean task."

House Bill 149, is just one piece of the relief puzzle, with federal funding and assistance flowing in and community members stepping up.

"If it weren't for nonprofits, if it weren't for the churches, if it weren't for just ordinary citizens, we would have a much bigger crisis on our hands than what we do right now," Moore said.

President Joe Biden approved 100% Federal Emergency Management Agency reimbursement to affected North Carolinians for six months, Cooper has been on the ground connecting residents with resources, over 1,500 North Carolina National Guard members have been deployed and the state's Department of Justice is working to hold companies accountable for any instances of price gouging.

Affected residents can apply for aid at Home | disasterassistance.gov.

Left displaced after Helene: How to apply for shelter assistance at FEMA approved hotels

What the bill includes

In total, they are spending \$273 million which will go toward the established "Hurricane Helene Disaster Recovery Fund (Helene Fund)," according to the bill. It also extends the declaration of emergency until March, 2025.

The funding can be used in the affected counties established by the president and Nash County.

For those wondering why more money is not being spent, Berger said this is just the beginning.

"This is not all of it," Berger said. "Not by a long shot."

Moore also noted the role that federal funding plays in the matter, saying they expect the federal government to contribute 90 percent and the state 10 percent. They don't want to get ahead of federal funding as to take up unnecessary costs, he added.

The Department of Public Safety and the Division of Emergency Management, state agencies who are supporting Helene recovery, will receive \$250 million.

The Department of Public Instruction will receive \$16 million, which will support the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program. The bill also includes school calendar flexibility, remote instruction allowance and states that teachers will still be compensated regularly.

To provide grants to local government, \$2 million will go to the Office of State Budget and Management.

The North Carolina State Board of Elections will receive \$5 million. The board asked for around \$2 million, but the legislature wanted to provide additional funding to support local boards as well as include several other counties affected by Helene that were not included in the board's resolution made this week that only applied to 13 counties.

Helene and voting: Absentee ballot rules, polling sites to change for 13 counties in Western NC after Helene

The bill also includes water treatment, building and burning provisions that Moore said are supposed to help speed up recovery efforts.

"We don't need these efforts tied up in bureaucracy," Moore said.

Additionally, this bill asks the governor to put a hold on late and lost fees within the Department of Motor Vehicles.

Rep. Caleb Rudow, D-Buncombe, requested a separate bill be brought to the floor which would have extended the deadline to register to vote among other voting asks, however, the bill was not picked up for a vote.

Despite both chambers having Republican supermajorities, House Democratic Leader Rep. Robert Reives, D-Chatham, said "This is not a partisan issue," saying they represent the entire state.

The House also took a moment of silence for those lost in the storm before adjourning for the day.

Looking forward

Misinformation surrounding the presence of relief efforts from the state and federal government has been swirling, some fueled by top politicians like Donald Trump who has been criticizing the administration's handling of Helene recovery efforts. His claim that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) doesn't have enough funding because they've been using it on undocumented immigrants is false.

Without referencing specific concerns, Mark Pless, R-Haywood, Madison, said the legislature will need to look into why certain issues occurred directly after Helene, while adding that now is not the time to do so.

"There were some challenges initially that could not be met for reasons that we will determine," Pless said, who is co-chair of the House Disaster Recovery and Homeland Security committee.

In response to a New York Times article which claimed regulatory reform from state Republicans made Helene worse in the state, Moore said it was not true.

"They want to play politics with a disaster," Moore said about the claims that he rejected.

Rep. Lindsey Prather, D-Buncombe, spoke with emotion about her community, saying "we need to show folks that the government has their back, right now, at the time they need it most."

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17 things to do in Wilmington this weekend: performances, festivals, family fun and more

October 9, 2024 | StarNews (Wilmington, NC) Author: John Staton, Wilmington StarNews | Section: Entertainment | 960 Words OpenURL Link

It's kind of an in-between week in the Wilmington area this weekend, without a ton of huge festivals or big concerts, but still a ton of entertainment activity nonetheless.

For starters, we've got a few community festivals; some musical benefits for Western N.C.; several promising stage performances; and even the screening of a spooky silent film with live pipe organ accompaniment.

If you want to look a bit further ahead, check out our list of 25 Wilmington-area fall festivals for 2024 and 55 fall concerts you need to know about. To plan things out beyond this weekend, check the links below.

Top shows: From rock and jam to jazz and classical, 55 great concerts to see in Wilmington this fall

Family fun: Celebrate fall in Wilmington with these 25 can't-miss festivals

ALL WEEKEND

'Autumn'

Oct. 10-27 at Brunswick Little Theatre: BLT presents this comic play by Peter Quilter about "sisterhood, growing older and finding laughter and hope in a life of constant challenges." Carolyn Stringer and Holly Niebauer star, Cat Thomas directs. 7:30 p.m. Oct. 10-12, 17-19 and 24-26; the 3 p.m. matinees Oct. 13, 20 and 27 are sold out.

Vincent Bryant

Oct. 11-12 at Dead Crow Comedy Room: Atlanta comic was a New Face at Montreal's Just For Laughs festival in 2018, and he's been on Comedy Central's "Hart of the City" and written for the Emmy-nominated "Ms. Pat Show" on BET+. Bryant is a really funny comic with some great material about relationships and family issues. 7 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. Oct. 11-12, tickets are \$18 and \$28.

FRIDAY

'Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus'

Oct. 11 at Kenan Auditorium: Touring comedy inspired by John Gray's best-selling book of the same title mixes stand-up with sketches as it explores the differences between men and women when it comes to dating, marriage, sex and more. 7:30 p.m. Oct. 11, tickets are \$55. 910-962-3500.

Perpetual Groove

Oct. 11 at Bowstring Burgers & Brewyard: Veteran Georgia jam band will bring its deep rock grooves and extended improvisations to this Soda Pop District hotspot. 7 p.m. Oct. 11, tickets are \$20.

Night Fever

Oct. 11 at Odell Williamson Auditorium: Touring tribute band will play the songs of The Bee Gees at this Brunswick County venue. 7 p.m. Oct. 11, tickets are \$35-\$39.

Jazz Club

Oct. 11 at Bourgie Nights: Monthly jazz night features Wilmington's Jim Ferris Trio playing a mix of jazz standards. 7 p.m. doors, 8 p.m. show, tickets are \$10 in advance, \$15 day of show.

Blue Cactus

Oct. 11 at Live at Ted's: North Carolina country duo made up of Steph Stewart and Mario Arnez has a gorgeously rootsy sound, with both upbeat foot-tappers and lush ballads. 8 p.m. Oct. 11, tickets are \$12.

'Nosferatu'

Oct. 11 at St. Paul's Episcopal Church: Juilliard-trained Wilmington organ player Dorothy Papadakos will provide the spooky live soundtrack to F. W. Murnau's classic 1922 silent film "Nosferatu," the first film adaptation of Bram Stoker's novel "Dracula." 7 p.m. Oct. 11, tickets are \$10.

Fall Festival at Maides Park

Oct. 11 at Maides Park: City of Wilmington's parks and rec department presents this family-friendly festival featuring games (with piñatas at 6:30, 7 and 7:30 p.m.), bounce houses, trick or treating, food, vendors and live music. 6-8 p.m. Oct. 11, free.

SATURDAY

The Fabulous Equinox Orchestra

Oct. 12 at Thalian Hall: Group blends a classic big band sound with modern flourishes of R&B, country and more. 7:30 p.m. Oct. 12, 910-632-2285.

Futurebirds

Oct. 12 at Greenfield Lake Amphitheater: Rootsy Athens, Georgia, indie rock band has been playing Wilmington for years, starting at smaller venues but gradually moving up to bigger stages like GLA. 7 p.m. Oct. 12, tickets start at \$40.

'Richard III'

Oct. 12 at Cameron Art Museum: Wilmington's Alchemical Theatre Company has done some wonderful Shakespearean productions over the years, including a stellar "Much Ado About Nothing" back in 2017. "Richard III" will employ some top Wilmington actors for a dramatic reading of the play about the title character, who "cunningly schemes and murders his way to the throne, becoming one of Shakespeare's most notorious villains." 2-5 p.m. Oct. 12. Free. Donations accepted.

Baseball on Wilmington's Southside

Oct. 12 at MLK Jr. Center: Take a two-hour walk through the history of the forgotten baseball fields of Wilmington's South Side, which produced such major league players as Sam Bowens of the Baltimore Orioles. On these fields, teams with names like the Wilmington Clippers and the Castle Street Bears competed against other Negro League semipro teams. 10 a.m.-noon Oct. 12, free.

Veg-Out Festival

Oct. 12 at Greenfield Lake Rotary Garden: Fourth annual festival features "green living" vendors, vegan and vegetarian food, information on fitness and massage, traditional alternative health care practitioners and more. 11

a.m.-4 p.m. Oct. 12, free.

Northside Movie Night

Oct. 12 at Portia Hines Park: The Northside Food Co-op, Cucalorus Film Foundation, CFCC Wilson Center, city of Wilmington and DREAMS Center for Arts Education present a free, outdoor screening of the Disney/Pixar film "Inside Out 2." With free hamburgers, hotdogs and drinks; vegan options available, with additional food available for purchase. 5:30 p.m. vendor market, 7 p.m. screening. Free.

SUNDAY

Operation NOT 86'd

Oct. 13 at The Eagle's Dare: Billed as "a hospitality fundraiser for Western North Carolina," which recently suffered devastating effects from Hurricane Helene, this event organized by local hospitality professionals includes a pig pickin', silent auction and music from Oc3eans (5 p.m.) and The Midatlantic (7 p.m.). Proceeds will be "routed to multiple non profit organizations," according to the fundraiser's event page. 2-8 p.m. Oct. 13.

APP AID

Oct. 13 at Bowstring Burgers and Brewyard: Fundraiser for Western N.C. hurricane damage features a full day and night of music on two stages. Acts include Signal Fire, Harvey Street Co., Domocile, Oc3eans, Justin Cody Fox, Galloway and Dickey Hazel. EDM after-party with Krispee Biscuits, Froggy P, Deemster, Arkivez and Breach B2B Jahva. 2 p.m Oct. 13, tickets are \$20, to benefit The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina.

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