

# #NCStrong: Local police deliver first supplies to Marshall, NC

October 5, 2024 | Salisbury Post (NC) Author: Elisabeth Strillacci| Section: Local| 2412 Words OpenURL Link

#NCStrong: Local police deliver first supplies to Marshall, NC

Published 12:10 am Saturday, October 5, 2024

By Elisabeth Strillacci

1 of 13

MARSHALL — Dwight Cody and his wife, who live in Marshall, N.C., had not been able to reach their oldest daughter in a week by Thursday afternoon.

That was just one piece of information Cody, 58, a volunteer firefighter, shared when a cadre of police officers from Spencer, Cleveland and Granite Quarry arrived at Cody's firehouse with the first delivery of supplies the community had received since Helene swept through.

Led by Spencer Police Chief Michael File and Granite Quarry Police Chief Chief Todd Taylor, the group of eight men drove a load of five pickup trucks, a 13-foot trailer and a box truck packed tight with supplies of everything from canned goods to diapers to medication up into the western North Carolina mountains.

And they agreed to let me come along to get first-hand look at what the area looks like and to see how some of our Rowan first responders are helping.

The area was devastated by the blast of Hurricane Helene, which caused river levels of both the Swannanoa and French Broad rivers to crest above record levels set in 1916.

Back on July 5, 1916, first one storm hit, then before the saturated ground could recover, on July 14, a Category 2 hurricane made landfall on the South Carolina coast, reaching the North Carolina mountains on July 15. Record rainfall was widespread. Reports state that between July 15-16, 22.22 inches of rain fell over parts of western North Carolina. Official reports are that 80 people were killed in total as a result of the flood, although the precise number of people who lost their lives will likely never be known.

Forward to Friday, Sept. 2, 2024. Helene, a Category 4 hurricane and likely the deadliest since Katrina, slammed into Florida then barreled her way up the country, striking Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia.

As of the most recent count end of day Friday, the death toll was 223 and climbing, and more than half of them were in the North Carolina mountains.

The roads are still in disrepair in much of the mountains area, and as you travel, you receive constant alerts, when you have cell service, about I-40 and I-26 remaining closed in some stretches. There are alerts letting tractor-trailer drivers know certain roads will not support their weight and they will get stuck. In some areas of Asheville, you can hear alarms going off intermittently.

On the side of I-40 west as you drive along, the scenery is at times almost normal. Trees are changing colors, traffic is moving smoothly and it feels like life as usual. And then you come to a swath of trees, root balls in the air, all flattened in a large path as if a large hand reached down and swatted them all.

You pass fields that are not fields but massive mud flats, and when you look closely, you realize you are not looking at rocks but at the bottoms of upside down cars, still buried in the silt.

You pass what might be mistaken for construction, but is in fact a foundation where a house, or two, once sat.

But life is still going on, there is still activity, still movement.

At the bottom of the exit for Marshall there was a road block with law enforcement checking on travelers' destinations and contacts, because the roads off that exit were blocked in some areas by debris, and in others, too unstable to support large vehicles.

The group stopped for a quick break at a convenience store, and a truck pulling a trailer came in alongside them with a side-by-side vehicle on the trailer. The side-by-side was covered in mud, top to bottom. The owner said he had grown up in Marshall, and though he no longer lives there, he felt obligated to help. The vehicle was covered in mud after a day helping with search and rescue, he said.

Another man and his wife were there pulling an empty trailer that had been packed with supplies they had just dropped off in another community, and he thought they would probably be making another trip back next week.

As the group got back on the road, it became more and more narrow, with constant switchbacks. There was no longer a shoulder, and in most instances the roads were next to a small stream. The road was in a valley of sorts, and on the flatter land on one side, houses cropped up from time to time, most with a wooden bridge crossing the stream to reach them. On the other side, steep hillsides had houses built on ledges or outcroppings, with their backs pressed to the mountainside.

A few here and there showed some sign of life, but most were empty. Some had long been abandoned, but not all. And yet, the activity, the life, was not there.

We were driving through what felt like a ghost town.

The group's arrival at the Ebbs Chapel Fire Station was met with smiles and quiet greetings, along with some ribbing for Taylor. He'd packed the trailer so full that one of the back tires was nearly sideways. On the trip up, an even larger trailer was disabled on the roadside with an entire axle that had sheered off, likely from too much weight.

"Yeah, I pushed it, but once we unload it, it'll be fine," laughed Taylor, who was determined to bring all the donations from his community. The amount of supplies, from across Spencer, Salisbury, Granite Quarry, Faith, Cleveland and points across Rowan County, made the faces of Cody, his son and another firefighter light up.

Cody brought us in to the one-room portion of the firehouse attached to the garage were trucks and tools are stored, and showed us what they were down to — one small desk with a few boxes on top.

"My son and I have been picking up supplies at the co-op and delivering hot meals, water and military rations to individual homes," said Cody, but the supplies are limited at best. The local Ingles grocery store has not been able to get a delivery, their shelves are nearly bare, and they are only allowing so many people in at a time, he said.

Cody said a number of people who live in the area have spring water, or gravity water, and initially they turned away bottled water, but "then the spring water got cloudy with the silt, so they started accepting the bottled water to drink." In addition, the town's water treatment plant was damaged and there has been some concern about possible contamination of water and of the mud.

He said the prognosis he has heard for getting deliveries back to normal is six weeks.

"We're a poor community, but a lot of people have been chipping in, volunteering," Cody said. "There are lots of family members that have been flooded out, don't have anywhere to go. My wife is the director of the health department for our county and they have opened a shelter at the Madison High School Early College. So there's showers there, cots, the Red Cross is there and they serve meals. I think one night, Saturday maybe, we had 250 people in the shelter."

One day, he said a van pulled up with 28 people inside who had been stranded with no gas and nowhere to go, and they were welcomed.

"A lot of the people that have homes along the river, they're kinda poor, like us, and they've lost everything they had," Cody explained. "There's a little community called Rollins that's down the river and it washed just about all the homes down there away. One of the ladies that works for my wife at the health department saw her home go down the river. But, this is a strong community."

Among the stories of loss, are the stories of resourcefulness and rescue.

"There was a little lady that the water started getting up in her house," Cody said, "and some of the railroad people took one of their backhoes, and she came to the back of her house, and she got her dog and crawled out of a window and they hauled her out in a bucket. There's been so many good things happen with this. It's brought our community tighter, and with all the donations you guys brought and other donations we know are coming in, the health department has set up a store at the high school" offering clothing and blankets and toiletries and those kinds of supplies and folks can come in and get what they need for free.

At this point, I asked Cody about those who are still missing, and his answer stunned me.

"Yes, there are several people missing in our area, hundreds from Buncombe County alone, including my daughter, and multiple bodies have been found. They have been searching, and they have brought in cadaver dogs," Cody said. "We haven't been able to reach our oldest daughter since last week."

Cody has lived in the same community all of his life, having worked for a time at the local prison and served as a firefighter, and his wife working in public service. He said his sister-in-law runs My Sister's Place in the town of Marshall, a domestic violence shelter, and the two-story building was flooded. When flood waters receded, the structure's first floor was filled with mud.

"It didn't make it to the second floor but it did get to the 15th step," he said. Volunteers have been working to get the mud out so the center can reopen, but he added that it might need "taking a fire hose and blasting all that mud out."

He and his wife, who live just up the road from the firehouse, lost power for "five or six days, and we had some trees come down, but we came out good compared to a lot of other people, other than not being able to find our daughter."

The entire group spent a solid hour and a half relaying supplies from the trucks to the firehouse, separating items into categories to make it easier to distribute. There was laughter and joking but Cody also said he was not putting the word out about the delivery in order to make sure the building was not looted. There have been reports, he said, of supply deliveries having issues with people trying to take advantage or even steal, and he was determined to make sure those supplies got where they needed to be.

Once all the supplies were unloaded, a pile of clothing, towels, blankets and similar items had been separated and were loaded onto trucks for delivery to the high school for the store for people who need a change of clothes or other items for comfort or to just feel clean, said Cody.

Sgt. Brian Leonard, of the Spencer Police Department who grew up in the Marshall area, said when File first mentioned the idea of collecting supplies to then deliver to the mountains, he knew he could help.

"This is my home, my people," he said during a short break from unloading. "I am so glad we could offer this help."

After all the work was complete, Cody asked if a word of prayer would be alright.

"Absolutely," File said. "In fact, we have our chaplain with us."

Pastor Sam Mills, the minister of New Hope Baptist Church and the Spencer police chaplain, offered a word of prayer for the community, for the officers, and for all trying to recover from the disaster.

The trip home was quieter. There was still laughter, but as the sun began to set behind us, and the beautiful skyline of the mountains was outlined in dusk, the contributions and the gratitude sank in.

"Those people were genuinely thankful for us to be there," said File. "Best day we could have hoped for."

Spencer Mayor Jonathan Williams said he was "incredibly proud of the men and women of our departments for their efforts. They truly have hearts of service, and they represent our community well." He said the level of commitment is indicative of the teams both File and Fire Chief Michael Lanning have been working to put together, and they have the same outlook that the rest of the town leadership has.

"Our goal is recognizing community needs and working to fill them," Williams said. "And there are times when the community is larger than just your town. This is one of those times, and we're glad to have people so ready to help."

Granite Quarry Mayor Brittany Barnhardt said because she had phone signal during the first few days after Helene, her "phone rang off the hook."

She said she worked to connect people and resources with where they needed to go, and was glad when the opportunity came to join forces with Spencer, one of the first locations to put the word out about donations.

"I had phone calls from companies, good Samaritans, et cetera, all wanting to help," she said. "It was so overwhelming operating from a distance." She said she had to turn her phone off for a short time to recover from a migraine, and when she turned it back on she had 74 missed calls and 39 text messages.

"The mayor of Wilmington said it best recently at a Mayor's Convention," she said. "They had just had a tropical storm in the east a few weeks ago that delivered more rain than expected, and he said no one stopped to ask if anyone was a Republican or a Democrat, they just helped, sent resources, and that's how it should be. It's been a roller coaster of emotions, but it's been overwhelming to say the least, seeing the outpouring of love, support, giving and prayer throughout Helene. God bless WNC."

Crews from first responders all over Rowan County have been going to western North Carolina all week, delivering supplies, helping clear debris, offering first aid, assisting in search, rescue and recovery. File and Taylor both said they hope donations continue to come in, and they will plan a second trip. Anyone interested in continuing to make contributions can drop them at the Spencer PD/town hall, the Granite Quarry town hall or in Faith or Cleveland.

There continue to be stories coming out of our mountains, stories of rescue, of loss, of recovery, of grief and of relief. The images inundate news and social media daily. As Barnhardt said, it's an emotional roller coaster.

But this story has a happy ending. Friday morning, Cody messaged — his daughter was located, safe and sound. Copyright 2024 Salisbury Post, All Rights Reserved.

# • Citation (aglc Style)



# Sampson first responders answer WNC call for help

October 5, 2024 | Sampson Independent, The (Clinton, NC) Author: Sherry Matthews smatthews@clintonnc.com | Section: news news-main top-stories | 642 Words OpenURL Link

Even as local churches, civic organizations and individuals collect — and deliver — water and other necessities for those across western North Carolina devastated by Hurricane Helene, county and city rescue and fire personnel are deep in the trenches offering their expertise and help as well.

County EMS Director Rick Sauer is in Haywood County working with the Incident Management Team there to assist in the Waynesville area, helping oversee first responders coming in from across the state and nation to one of the hard hit regions of the mountains.

A team of local firefighters from Taylors Bridge, Clinton and Harrells left Wednesday for a seven-day deployment, answering a call for help from the McDowell County Rescue to assist in recovery efforts, and another joint team of Sampson EMS providers, including the Suttontown EMS, are already in Caldwell County, where they've been since Monday.

Along with personnel from Sampson, first responders took with them a four-wheeled drive ambulance to assist with the life-threatening emergencies still taking places in mountainous areas.

Clinton Fire Chief Hagan Thornton said two of his firefighters left Wednesday for McDowell County, joining Taylors Bridge and Harrells volunteers and one from Pender in making a four-person team. Two additional men were sent with a pair of volunteers from the Newton Grove Fire Department Monday to Spruce Pine and Ledger in Mitchell County.

"We are all working together to assist in any way we can," Thornton stressed in a telephone interview. "Most of these guys want to go, they want to help in any way they can."

Thornton said assignment rosters have been going out since Hurricane Helene hit, showing the fire departments that need assistance.

"The Newton Grove chief saw what was needed and was going to staff it; he called me and we sent two with them on Monday to Mitchell County. Then yesterday (Wednesday) the rescue association folks sent out a call for a quick fill for a heavy duty rescue for McDowell County. Taylors Bridge had a truck with one person and they needed four certified in rescue, so we (Clinton) sent two people, and they sent the truck and one from Taylors Bridge, one from Harrells and one from Pender."

Those certified in rescue, Thornton said, are designed to help in heavy rescue and are trained in things like rope specialty, high angle, trench and confined space rescue.

While he wasn't exactly sure what the teams from Sampson were doing, he said he expected the crews would handled anything from welfare checks and clearing streets and houses to handling natural gas leaks and helping remove people trapped in residences. "They will be doing pretty much anything that is needed, and there is a lot needed."

The fire chief said he communicates with his staff at least once a day, mainly because cell service is spotty and so many people are trying to get calls out to friends and loved ones.

"They are all safe and doing fine. They are helping, and that's exactly what they wanted to do," Thornton said.

He stressed the importance of good communication between his fire department and others throughout the county, saying between that open line and the mutual aid agreements both the county and the state have it made pulling together and helping those in need far easier and faster.

"We have a good relationship with other folks in the county. We can put people together, split a crew and still have folks here to handle calls. It works well, and it has this time," the fire chief stressed.

And, he said, having crews up there helping is vital to an area in desperate need.

"I've talked to other fire chiefs and friends up there. There are entire towns that are just gone, wiped away. People lost. There are fire stations that are gone, fire trucks lost. It's terrible. We are trained to help in these situations. I'm glad we have teams there."

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#### • Citation (aglc Style)

Sherry Matthews smatthews@clintonnc.com, 'Sampson first responders answer WNC call for help', *Sampson Independent, The* (online), 5 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a> p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C07AC70F0ABD10>



# Harnett ministerial group taking donations for Helene victims

October 5, 2024 | Sanford Herald, The (NC) Author: THE SANFORD HERALD| Section: News | 160 Words OpenURL Link

DUNN — The Dunn United Ministerial Association is taking donations to help the people of Western North Carolina in the aftermath of flooding caused by Hurricane Helene.

These items are suggested for donation: non-perishable foods, hydration powder packs, cleaning supplies, baby wipes, plastic sheets/tarps, diapers, toiletries, baby formula, toothpaste, bug spray, sunscreen, pet food, plastic utensils, hand sanitizer, manual can openers, feminine hygiene products, large trash bags, work gloves, new socks, batteries, flashlights, power banks, phone charging cables, rubber boots, paper towels and paper products.

Check donations should be made payable to DUMA and note "Hurricane Relief" in the memo line.

Cash app donations should go to \$BLACKRIVERSERVICE.

Items can be dropped off at these locations during business operation hours: the Harnett County Sheriff's Office, the Harnett County Courthouse, all local police departments in Harnett County, the Dunn License Plate Agency, the Lillington Chamber of Commerce, the Black River Fire Department and Mt. Pisgah Church in Erwin.

The deadline for donations is Oct. 21.

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#### • Citation (aglc Style)

THE SANFORD HERALD, 'Harnett ministerial group taking donations for Helene victims', *Sanford Herald, The* (online), 5 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C04CB22E143BF0">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C04CB22E143BF0</a>



# WAGNER: Hurricane Helene and Helping Hands

October 5, 2024 | Sanford Herald, The (NC) Author: BO WAGNER| Section: Archives | 864 Words OpenURL Link

Where to even begin, with a column like this...

Hurricane Helene. The impact has been pretty devastating and over a massive area. The mountains of Western North Carolina, just a short drive up the road from me, seem to have been the hardest hit. Chimney Rock Village, an iconic little town I have enjoyed since my childhood, is simply gone. Other areas are cut off entirely as I write this, accessible only by air. Our area was hit, but not nearly so hard. Trees are down everywhere, and power to my town, the church I pastor, and my house is expected to be out for more than a week.

There have been reasons to smile through it all. We live on the Broad River, which flooded to a historic level. It did not reach our house. It did put my barn halfway underwater. We parked our vehicles at the top of our road so we could hopefully get out if needed — a massive oak tree from way across the road decided to kamikaze it. Our driveway ended up under a six-foot deep, sixty-foot wide flood of water from what is normally a tiny creek running under it and into the river. We used kayaks to get back and forth across it. My son, the perfect dog dad, kayaked himself and his full-grown German Shepherd across the water. Seeing that dog sit in his lap as he paddled across is a sight I will not soon forget.

Our 20-year-old generator has performed like a champ. We can't run much off of it, but we have been able to have a few lights, internet, periodically run the fridge and freezer to hopefully save what we can, and charge phones and flashlights.

Sunday, Sept. 29, though, was a banner day. With no power at the church, we nonetheless met at 10 a.m. and, using propane-powered griddles, made a pancake breakfast for anyone who came, which included a lot of folks from the community who had not been able to get a decent meal for a while. Then we worshiped the Lord; that is always appropriate. From there, we divided up into several different teams and headed out into the community with chainsaws, cases of water, and other supplies. At least two other churches had sent people down to help with this effort, which we had announced only the night before. We went to eight different homes and started cutting and removing trees from roofs and driveways and bringing supplies to those who needed them.

I had not even thought of lunch; it simply never occurred to me. But our ladies had. By about 1, when the first wave of work was done, we started heading back to the church to regroup. When we arrived, we found lunch ready and waiting for us. Then it was back out to other locations. One group of us went to a Children's Home to deal with two massive downed trees. Another headed for Hendersonville for a similar task.

I had not thought of supper, either. How is it possible to miss things like that? Our ladies, though, were way, way ahead of me. Not only had they thought of it, they had also put out a notice on social media that they would be serving supper to anyone in the community who needed a meal. By the time we got back, they had served more than 250 meals to our town and those from neighboring communities.

I am blessed; I have incredibly good people.

As I write this, other churches are gathering supplies to send our way for us both to use here and to forward on to areas harder hit than our own. People we know, and even people we do not know, have been sending money for relief efforts. And please pay close attention to what I say next because it is one of the main things I want to convey: we are not the only ones doing things like this. Churches all over the place are doing things like this. Some, in fact, are dwarfing our best efforts.

And this is why I so deeply love God's people in local churches all over the place. They are the hands and feet of Jesus in this world. They give selflessly, love unconditionally, and do so without seeking fanfare or applause. In all of the work done yesterday, I never saw a single person take a selfie; they just worked like dogs for others, not caring about the fact that they themselves would be going home to darkened houses with no power.

So, to churches and pastors everywhere who are both holding the line on Biblical truth and ministering to the daily needs of people around you, I say thank you. Both sides of that coin are part and parcel of what it means to be a Christian. James 1:27 put it this way, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

Keep preaching the truth, keep spreading the gospel, keep doing right, keep serving and loving others, and know that I am for you, and I appreciate you.

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#### • Citation (aglc Style)

BO WAGNER, 'WAGNER: Hurricane Helene and Helping Hands', *Sanford Herald, The* (online), 5 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C04CB1F36FF030">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C04CB1F36FF030</a>



# Camels doing hurricane relief at Saturday's game

October 5, 2024 | Sanford Herald, The (NC) Author: THE SANFORD HERALD| Section: Archives | 325 Words OpenURL Link

Campbell will welcome nearby North Carolina Central on Saturday, October 5, closing out a three-game homestand at Barker-Lane Stadium. Kickoff is set for 4 p.m. for the Fighting Camels' regular season nonconference finale.

The game, presented by Christie Yarbrough with RE/MAX United, will be Military Appreciation Day at CU.

Watch the Camels take on the Eagles on FloSports. Live stats are also available at GoCamels.com, and follow on Twitter and Instagram @GoCamelsFB for live updates.

HURRICANE HELENE RELIEFAt Saturday's game, Campbell will be collecting donations for Hurricane Helene relief for western North Carolina. Donation bins will be located at the East Gate of Barker-Lane Stadium, in conjunction with a campus-wide drive this week in partnership with Baptists on Mission, with transport provided by Jerry Milton and Southeastern Interiors.

Items collected will include:

Unscented laundry podsTall kitchen garbage bags (unscented)Paper products (such as paper plates, paper towels and toilet paper)Baby wipes

Donation bins are also located in the Harris Student Union, Wallace Building, Butler Chapel, Lundy-Fetterman Building, Leon Levine Hall, the Alumni House (for alumni drop off only) and the Wiggins Law School. Future collection needs will be communicated in the coming days at Campbell.edu.

Campbell's men's basketball team will be in attendance, available for autographs and pictures from 2:30-3:30 p.m.

THE MATCHUP: NC CENTRAL

The Eagles are 3-2 on the season, coming off back-to-back wins over North Carolina A&T, 66-24, and Norfolk State, 37-10, in their MEAC opener.

QB Walker Harris is averaging 181.0 passing yards per game with nine touchdowns on the year, while the duo of Joaquin Davis and Markell Quick have combined for 530 yards and five TDs receiving. J'Mari Taylor has also rushed for seven scores, total 451 yards on the ground. Defensively, Jaki Brevard owns a team-high 37 tackles.

Saturday will mark the third straight season, and third all-time meeting, between the Camels and Eagles. Campbell claimed the initial matchup 48-18 in Buies Creek in 2022 before then-No. 15 ranked NCCU took last season's game 49-48 in overtime in Durham.

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# Citation (aglc Style)

THE SANFORD HERALD, 'Camels doing hurricane relief at Saturday's game', *Sanford Herald, The* (online), 5 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C04CB205EE3810">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C04CB205EE3810</a>



# hurricane helene aftermath - Test of patience and fortitude - WNC residents digging in for the long haul

October 5, 2024 | Star, The (Shelby, NC)
Author: Keith Sharon, Tiana Kennell, Iris Seaton and Kelly Puente; USA TODAY NETWORK Section: News | 1008 Words
Page: A1
OpenURL Link

The toughest test of will, patience, fortitude and faith is coming for the residents of Western North Carolina.

As the searches for missing people continue, as the receding water reveals horrors that had been submerged, as the roads (slowly) re-open, as FEMA representatives scramble and stumble, how do people who have lost so much get their lives back to some semblance of normalcy?

COVID may have seemed like the toughest test, but the virus may prove to be a practice round for local business owners, government officials and families. COVID didn't knock out roads. COVID didn't lift homes off their foundations. COVID didn't change beautiful countryside into dangerous terrain.

"We're going through this and we're still trying to recover from the pandemic," Asheville bartender Alex Cohn-Derrick said.

The daily death counts have become more grim in the wake of Tropical Storm Helene.

President Joe Biden surveyed damaged Western North Carolina from a helicopter — after a similar trip to Greenville, South Carolina — on Wednesday afternoon. The president has said he wants to "jump start" the recovery effort by asking Congress to approve a supplemental bill to help cover federal costs for Helene relief efforts.

Biden has directed up to 1,000 active duty troops to immediately deploy to assist with response and recovery efforts in communities hit by Helene, the White House said on Wednesday.

National Guard members this week were dropping supplies in Blackhawk helicopters in Helene-devastated mountain towns that have largely been cut off from the world for days.

Cohn-Derrick was displaced from her home in Candler after it was consumed by rushing water from a nearby creek. She sought shelter with her Cantina Louie co-workers, Elizabeth Bryan and Trevor Cox. Though the water has retreated, the damage and mold have made her home uninhabitable.

"We've all been fighting for many years to get a fair living wage since COVID, so this hit us hard," Bryan said. "Being in this industry with so many restaurants out of business we don't know what to do from here."

Bryan said many aren't unaware of how to file for unemployment.

The Trinity Fairview Church southeast of Asheville has been serving as a hub where the community has been gathering supplies and working on plans to reach others that have been cut off by downed trees and demolished roads.

"We don't have any cell service, we haven't heard anything," said resident Gina Fowler. "But everyone has been coming together."

Dozens of adults and even their small children formed an assembly line to unload water and other supplies from the helicopter.

They said they were grateful to get bottled water after drinking well water for several days.

Wilkerson said he was glad to be able to personally deliver supplies to his church as a National Guard member, but had to fight back tears.

"It's hard to see them like this, but they're making it," he said.

More than 100 nurses as well as physicians arrived at Mission Hospital in Asheville from sister hospitals across the nation within the HCA Healthcare system, which owns Mission and is headquartered in Nashville, HCA spokesperson Harlow Sumerford said.

They've set up mobile units with kitchens, bathrooms and handwashing stations and are setting up mini marts inside the hospital and in other HCA hospitals across the region to provide doctors, nurses and other hospital staff with free groceries, including food, water and toiletries.

"Though the level of destruction is immense, I am proud of the dedication of our colleagues, who have continued to support our patients, our community and one another," said Greg Lowe, president and CEO of Mission Health. "We remain dedicated to helping our colleagues through this time, just as they have selflessly served their community and supported patients without hesitation."

Vulnerable animals are being shipped out of town for their safety.

The Asheville Humane Society has evacuated around 100 animals to shelters outside of Western North Carolina.

AHS facilities weren't damaged severely during the storm. But a lack of potable water caused by outages affecting all of Asheville and many surrounding areas made it impossible to provide adequate care for a large amount of the animals at the Buncombe County Animal Shelter.

"Potable and clean water is an essential resource for keeping the animals happy and hydrated, but it's also necessary for cleaning the kennels and ensuring that hands are sanitized in preparation for medical procedures," AHS Content Coordinator Colleen Daly said. "And it's extremely difficult, if not impossible, to take care of the number of animals in our care given those circumstances."

For humans, drinking water may be difficult to find for weeks.

North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Kody Kinsley warned western North Carolina residents that well water in addition to municipal water sources may not be safe to drink because of contamination from the flood damage.

"Only use bottled, boiled or treated water for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene," Kinsley said.

There is no timetable for running water restoration in some of the most devastated areas said Asheville Assistant City Manager Ben Woody.

Biltmore Church is supplying community members with water, ice and meals at its Arden campus, 35 Clayton Road.

The Arden campus, in addition to supplying community members, is also a staging ground for groups of Southern Baptist disaster recovery teams that will go out to the community with chainsaws to help clear paths and help with access to homes.

Many of the supplies Biltmore is providing out of its Arden campus were sent from fellow Southern Baptist churches across the state. The Arden campus supply center is open to community members from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on October 2.

"The total recovery will be many, many months but the urgent needs right now would be trying to help people survive this early thing," said Bruce Frank, Biltmore's lead pastor, in an interview.

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# • Citation (aglc Style)

Keith Sharon, Tiana Kennell, Iris Seaton and Kelly Puente, USA TODAY NETWORK, 'hurricane helene aftermath - Test of patience and fortitude - WNC residents digging in for the long haul', *Star, The* (online), 5 Oct 2024 A1 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C042F28FF386D0">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C042F28FF386D0</a>



#### HURRICANE HELENE ONE OF THE DEADLIEST IN US HISTORY

October 5, 2024 | Statesville Record & Landmark (NC) Author: Staff Writer | Section: Mapping | 105 Words OpenURL Link

Falling trees and raging floods from Hurricane Helene killed at least 200 people after it made landfall late last week as a Category 4 storm in the Big Bend area of Florida's Gulf Coast. Helene then plowed through the Southeast as one of the deadliest storms in U.S. history. People died in six states: Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia. The powerful storm left a wide path of destruction, including downed trees and power lines, massive flooding and water outages. Above, Anne Schneider, right, hugs her friend Eddy Sampson as they survey the damage left in Helene's wake Tuesday in Marshall, N.C.

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#### • Citation (aglc Style)

Staff Writer, 'HURRICANE HELENE ONE OF THE DEADLIEST IN US HISTORY', *Statesville Record & Landmark* (online), 5 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C050D7AEE35390">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C050D7AEE35390</a>



#### SHIFTING SITES?

October 5, 2024 | Statesville Record & Landmark (NC) Author: TOM FOREMAN JR. WinstonSalem Journal | Section: Mapping | 1009 Words OpenURL Link

As athletics director at Appalachian State, Doug Gillin has spent part of the last week trying to help some of his student-athletes find housing after flooding caused by Hurricane Helene displaced them from their apartments. He's also looking to help the football team find a potential home for the rest of the 2024 season, and Wake Forest and Charlotte could provide a solution.

With Boone still in recovery mode from the effects of flooding that has closed the school for at least two more weeks, the football team is looking for alternatives to playing games at Kidd Brewer Stadium. While Gillin said the press box leaked and some of the suites were soaked by rain, the Mountaineers could play there. But he said it's not the stadium that's the problem.

"The thought process is, is it safe to do it here?" Gillin said on Thursday. "And we really don't know the answer yet."

Gillin said he's hesitant to have people come to Boone because he doesn't want fans taking hotel rooms away from people who can't stay in their own homes, or from emergency responders and others addressing the problems associated with Helene's aftermath.

"When you start thinking about playing a football game, there's a lot that goes around it when you're in active recovery and relief operation," he said.

#### **Options**

In case Boone isn't an option when the Mountaineers are scheduled to play Georgia State at home on Oct. 26, Gillin said the program has been in talks with Wake Forest and Charlotte about playing home games there.

For example, on that weekend, the Demon Deacons will be playing at Stanford, meaning Allegacy Stadium would be free for a game. Same thing for Nov. 2, when the Mountaineers are scheduled to host Old Dominion and Wake Forest has a bye, and on Nov. 23, when the Mountaineers are to face James Madison and Wake Forest will be at Miami.

As for Charlotte, the 49ers will be at Memphis on Oct. 26 and have a Oct. 31 game against Tulane and won't be in their stadium on Nov. 2. They're also on the road for Florida Atlantic on Nov. 23.

"Had conversations with both athletic directors," Gillin said. "You know, in a lot of darkness, one of the rays of sunshine is people being willing to help. And that includes our colleagues at Wake Forest and Charlotte and across the country.

"Quite frankly, you know the amount of outpouring and checking in, the Sun Belt Conference and other schools helping us raise money for western North Carolina has been really good to see in a really bad situation.

John Currie, the athletics director at Wake Forest, said his door is open.

"Our hearts ache for all whose lives have been disrupted by Hurricane Helene," Currie said in a statement. "I have been in touch with Appalachian State AD Doug Gillin since last weekend to offer our assistance, including the use of Allegacy Federal Credit Union Stadium to host Mountaineer home football games if needed."

Mike Hill, the Charlotte AD, wasn't immediately available for comment on Thursday.

East Carolina's response to Hurricane Floyd

This isn't the first time a North Carolina college football team has had to change venues because of a hurricane.

After Hurricane Floyd ravaged eastern North Carolina with flooding rains in 1999, East Carolina was faced with a dilemma. It had just played at South Carolina, where it pulled off a 21-3 upset. However, because of the floods, the team couldn't return to Greenville. Given the upset, the Gamecocks weren't the least bit generous when ECU asked if it could borrow their facilities to practice ahead of the upcoming game against Miami. That forced the Pirates to gc to a high school field to get ready for their next game.

And because the team couldn't get back to Greenville, the Pirates had to face the Hurricanes at NC State's Carter-Finley Stadium. ECU came back from a 23-3 halftime deficit to take a 27-23 victory in front of approximately 45,900

fans. Eventually, the Pirates returned to Greenville to finish the season, but then-coach Steve Logan said the changes had an impact. Just like what happened at Appalachian State, some players were forced to find alternative housing after they returned to find their apartments had been flooded.

"You just had to adjust your way through it. It took a long time to get back on track, you know, of any kind of rhythm," Logan said this week. "It took well over a month before things were halfway back to manageable."

Logan said he can understand the troubles Appalachian State Head Coach Shawn Clark and his players are going through.

"I don't know what all Appy State is dealing with," he said, "but it ain't going to be fun, I can tell you that much."

App State taking one day at a time

For now, Appalachian State is proceeding with its season. The Mountaineers will bus to Marshall for Saturday's game, then fly to its game at the University of Louisiana in Lafayette on Oct. 12, with an open date on Oct. 19.

"In terms of traveling a football team to an away game, this week is manageable because we're driving east and north," Gillin said. "We feel like the roads going in those directions are safe and that we can find a safe route to go."

Gillin said the team will fly out of Hickory for the Louisiana game.

At some point during the two road trips, Appalachian State will have made a decision on where it will finish the home portion of its 2024 schedule. Right now, playing in Kidd Brewer doesn't appear to be on the table because the town of Boone will still be in recovery mode. But as football coaches might tend to say, it's a day-by-day process.

"We really need to get through Saturday," Gillin said. "The good news is the recovery and relief operations are ongoing. ... And then, maybe, probably once we get through Louisiana, because of some of these places were we could play, they need two to three weeks to get ready, so we'll have to make this (decision) a couple of weeks out."

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#### • Citation (aglc Style)

TOM FOREMAN JR. WinstonSalem Journal, 'SHIFTING SITES?', *Statesville Record & Landmark* (online), 5 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C050D7DADA6B90">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C050D7DADA6B90</a>



# No classes at App State Hickory for a few weeks

October 5, 2024 | Statesville Record & Landmark (NC) Author: BILLY CHAPMAN wchapman@hickoryrecord.com| Section: Mapping | 273 Words OpenURL Link

Students attending Appalachian State's Hickory campus will not meet for classes until at least Oct. 16, according to a release from the university.

The university's campus in Boone was heavily impacted by Hurricane Helene, which was a tropical storm when it hit North Carolina on Sept. 27. Flooding, mudslides and downed trees damaged infrastructure and buildings throughout Boone and Watauga County.

A fall break for the university is also scheduled for Oct. 14 and 15.

Classes in Boone are also canceled until at least Oct. 16, the release said.

Appalachian State Interim Chancellor Heather Norris said during a press conference Tuesday the university's Boone campus briefly lost power and internet service.

She said many campus buildings sustained water damage, but residence halls remained structurally sound.

Norris said widespread

flooding and transportation issues were affecting faculty and staff.

"We've been focused on mitigating the effects of Hurricane Helene and keeping our community safe," Norris said during the press conference.

During the press conference, Watauga County Director of Emergency Management Will Holt said the county's 911 system received 2,000 calls for assistance the first day of the storm. He said the county normally receives 3,000 calls in a month.

Holt said dozens were sheltered at Appalachian State's Holmes Convocation Center.

"Everyone, please stay out of Watauga County unless you are called upon," Holt said at the press conference.

Community colleges

Catawba Valley Community College also canceled classes and closed the campus this week. The college said it would provide information about classes during the week of Oct. 7 by late afternoon Oct. 4.

Western Piedmont Community College in Morganton was also closed this week. The college said hundreds of utility trucks are using the campus as a base.

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#### • Citation (aglc Style)

BILLY CHAPMAN wchapman@hickoryrecord.com, 'No classes at App State Hickory for a few weeks', *Statesville Record & Landmark* (online), 5 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C050D8A2835F78">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C050D8A2835F78</a>



# 'They're not forgotten' - Helene recovery in Clyde brightened by food, aid from neighbors

October 5, 2024 | Times-News, The (Hendersonville, NC) Author: Lici Beveridge; Asheville Citizen Times | Section: News | 775 Words Page: A4 OpenURL Link

CLYDE — A small neighborhood on Old Clyde Road in Haywood County was bustling just a few days after Tropical Storm Helene wreaked havoc.

Clyde residents along the Pigeon River were clearing debris from their flooded homes and yards. Some tried to find a few belongings to salvage, with little success.

As Tropical Storm Helene battered western North Carolina Sept. 26 and 27, the Pigeon River reached 25.89 feet at nearby Canton, setting a new record before receding to below flood stage.

The previous record was 22.8 feet, in September 2004, when Hurricane Ivan forged a path from the Gulf of Mexico to Georgia and North Carolina before continuing northward.

The buzz of chainsaws was a familiar sound to some who heard them just three years ago, when Tropical Depression Fred brought record-breaking rainfall of more than 14 inches to Haywood County in 2021.

But the sound of chainsaws was new to 10-year-old Ady Asenciocorado, who was sitting outside what used to be her home at a picnic table with her mother Delmi and 2-year-old sister Cene. Ady's stepfather Tomas Quiroz and his helper were clearing debris — a task they had been working on for days.

The water came up to about 10 feet at the family's home. Little more than the frame was left of the house the family bought just two years ago, but the family plans to rebuild. They moved to North Carolina from Guatemala three years ago and had never experienced anything like the devastating storm.

Ady, translating for her mother, said Delmi was afraid for the safety of her children as the floodwaters rose. The family was able to escape as the water continued to rise.

Neighbor Ashley Rogers stopped by to see the family, bringing a basket of food. Earlier, other people brought bottled water, diapers and other necessities to help the family, since they lost everything. She saw the family and went home to gather up what she could to give the family.

"I know that we would want help if that happened to us," she said. "She's got kids. And just to let them know people are thinking of them, too, and that they're not forgotten."

"There's a sign down the road that says, 'Unity in love lasts forever,' so that kind of just pulled on me, too."

Rogers asked Ady if the family needed anything else.

"Shoes, " Ady told her. Rogers asked for her size. Less than an hour later, another neighbor brought her two pairs.

The saddest part for Ady was losing her chickens, since they reminded her of her grandmother and the farm she grew up on in Guatemala.

"All of them died except one," she said.

In West Asheville, Maggie and Katie Gay had a giant tree fall on part of the house and in their driveway. Maggie Gay

was home alone when she heard the tree crashing down around 3 a.m. Friday. Katie Gay was away on a business trip in Switzerland but had heard about the devastation.

The couple's home was without internet or cell service, so Katie couldn't get in touch with her wife. After being stranded at an airport in New Jersey for a while with no flight home on the horizon, Katie decided to rent a car and drive the rest of the way home.

Katie was able to make calls from afar, but felt helpless until she could get home.

"I was happy to be here," Katie said.

On Monday, the couple with the help of the landlord, friends and neighbors, began dismantling the massive tree and move the debris to the road. They were able to rescue the Gays' car, which was underneath the fallen tree. The car suffered a few scratches but was otherwise in good shape. The house also survived.

"It's spectacular," Maggie Gay said of all the help the couple received. "We're really realizing what matters and what doesn't."

Katie agreed.

"It's great," she said. "Lots of folks have come together, trying to be as helpful as they can be. It's real strange to ask for help, but everybody needs help. It's something beautiful and it's something chaotic."

Lici Beveridge is a reporter for the USA TODAY Network. Contact her at lbeveridge@gannett.com . Follow her on X @licibev or Facebook at facebook.com/licibeveridge .

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#### • Citation (aglc Style)

Lici Beveridge, Asheville Citizen Times, "They're not forgotten' - Helene recovery in Clyde brightened by food, aid from neighbors', *Times-News, The* (online), 5 Oct 2024 A4 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a> p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C04336ADDEE3B0>



# HELENE'S AFTERMATH - First storm victims, now heroes - Mission ER workers braved Helene's impact

October 5, 2024 | Times-News, The (Hendersonville, NC)
Author: Beth Warren and Jacob Biba; Asheville Citizen Times | USA TODAY NETWORK Section: News | 1754 Words
Page: A1
OpenURL Link

Dr. Matt Riester and his wife were about to head out of town to celebrate their 10th wedding anniversary when Tropical Storm Helene pummeled the area.

Flood waters were raging and Riester's house went dark, so the medical director of the emergency department at Asheville's Mission Hospital had a new plan to fight his way through the chaos and get to work. "I looked at my wife, who's also an emergency room physician, and she knew that I needed to get to the hospital," he said.

It normally takes him 30 minutes to drive from his home in Mills River south to Asheville. This trip took him two hours.

He maneuvered around downed power lines and bumpted over tree limbs.

He saw the surging French Broad River, typically 20 feet below the bridge, nearly level with the road.

"It was a very difficult and terrifying experience going over a bridge and you're not sure if it's going to get washed away," he said.

When he walked into the hospital, it was a hectic sight.

Patients at the hospital, owned by Nashville-based HCA Healthcare kept pouring in through the emergency room entrance, some with make-shift bandages and slings. One person had caution tape wrapped around an injury as a tourniquet. The hospital typically treats 275 patients on a typical day, attended to 600 and many of them were very ill, the doctor said.

About 300 of those patients rushed in during a six-hour period Friday afternoon.

Nurses triaged patients, writing names on a whiteboard and lining up 12 bed zones near each other so doctors could move quickly from patient to patient. Some of the patients didn't make it, but the hospital system hasn't yet given a number of those who died there from storm-related injuries.

"Obviously, it was very loud and seemed very chaotic." Riester said.

There were patients crying out in pain with broken limbs, head gashes and other injuries. Adding to the frenzy, men and women rushed in to search for loved ones and check on their conditions.

Riester helped treat patients injured from the storm as well as patients already at the hospital for other conditions.

Mission lost power, including access to electronic medical records, but the backup generator soon kicked on. The Western North Carolina region lost cell phone service.

Unable to reach his wife, Mission Hospital's Dr. Alexa Riester, and kids, Riester headed back home through the mess at about 4 a.m.

"A lot of the emergency room staff, nurses, the doctors, respiratory therapists and techs, everybody, we're all in the

same boat," the medical director said during an interview Thursday with a USA TODAY reporter. "We all have families. We all have houses. Many people had damaged to their houses and a lot of people who were here when it initially hit, they didn't leave the hospital for days.

"Some people who have been here voluntarily haven't left the hospital yet," Riester said. "Obviously, they've taken some walks outside for sanity, but they've been here through the entire time."

Many doctors and nurses are sleeping on mats and air mattresses.

Hospital aid arriving in Asheville

Within a couple of days, HCA Healthcare sent 300 nurses from Music City and other cities and states to Mission. And Asheville area nurses and doctors who were off duty hurried to the ER.

One doctor on her way home to Maine after a trip to Florida showed up and helped treat patients, one of 150 medical professionals, along with the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Due to the influx of patients, Mission Hospital is only accepting certain patients brought in from other facilities, such as trauma and stroke patients.

Riester and other ER staff are part of the Southeast group for TeamHealth, a nationwide physician-founded and led provider network. He said he was thankful when TeamHealth chartered private planes to fly in relief clinicians from Florida to Asheville.

The network, based in Knoxville, Tennessee, also is using commercial airlines to fly in more doctors, nurses with advanced training and physician assistants from across the country to Asheville and other ravaged areas of Western North Carolina on Thursday, through the weekend and longer if needed, said Dr. Michael Corvini, president of TeamHealth's Southeast group.

"I wouldn't say it's been discouraging because we saw how everyone rose to the occasion," Riester said.

Critical access hospitals across the region were isolated.

Days after the storm hit, Dr. Ashley Eville learned about exhausted doctors a sister hospital and hurried in at 6 a.m. and volunteered to be flown by helicopter to Marion, typically a 35-mile drive rendered impossible due to flooding. She went not knowing when she's be able to return home.

"She's one of the true heroes," Riester said.

He also praised his co-medical director, Dr. David Mullins, who was hunkered down for days helping an onslaught of patients at Transylvania Regional Hosptial, 33 miles southwest of Asheville in the town of Brevard.

HCA has brought in relief medical personnel, food, supplies and water to all of its six regional hospitals. The hospital system also brought in gas tankers and is donating \$1 million toward disaster relief efforts.

Residents have brought in food and are leaving it in the ambulance bay. Volunteers manned the grill to feed doctors, nurses and other staff hotdogs and hamburgers.

As Riester drove from his home to the hospital Thursday, he saw fire trucks from Los Angeles bringing in Zodiac boats, Sea-Doo watercraft and other equipment to assist with emergency personnel.

"I honestly started crying, just knowing everyone from across the country is supporting us," the medical director said. "That's been fantastic."

Nurses describe difficult conditions treating patients

HCA is bringing in more than 200,000 gallons of water each day and thousands of bottles of water.

When asked if the healthcare system dug a well near the hospital, HCA spokesman Harlow Sumerford said:

"We are exploring alternative ways, including the drilling of additional wells, to provide water to cool our HVAC units so we can continue to maintain proper temperatures in our hospital. We are hopeful that the Asheville community's infrastructure will be restored soon, but we have contingency plans in place and will continue to evaluate how best to take care of patients and our colleagues."

Hospital nurses are employed by HCA Healthcare, which sent about 300 relief nurses to Mission Hospital from sister hospitals across the nation, including Kansas, Utah, Texas, Virginia, Georgia, Florida and California.

Kelly Coward, a nurse in the cardiovascular intensive care unit at Mission Hospital, left her home in Canton around 5 a.m. Friday, Sept. 27. As Tropical Storm Helene pounded Western North Carolina, her normally 30-minute drive to work took three times as long.

When she finally arrived, the hospital already had lost power and was relying on its generators, she said. Around midday, the hospital's electronic charting system went down, which sent nurses scrambling to organize and print out information with patients' vital information.

Some nurses, Coward said, had never used paper charts, which often require at least five pieces of paper, along with multiple copies, per patient.

"So, there was a learning curve for them, and it really slowed down the process of patient care," she said.

Adding to the challenge, according to Coward, was that some of the hospital's printers weren't functioning, which caused even more delays.

By the time patients' charts were organized, Coward and other ICU nurses were having to shuffle about 30 pages of information, she said.

Nurses were so busy, she added, they really didn't understand the magnitude of the disaster unfolding outside. But they knew it was bad and they were worried about their families, who they were unable to contact after cell service across the region went out Friday morning.

Coward said it was difficult to stem the sense of inner panic from not being able to reach her parents or 25-year-old daughter in Canton, which experienced severe flooding and destruction from Tropical Storm Fred a little more than three years earlier.

"It was very chaotic, very scary, because you couldn't talk to your family, but you still have to take care of these patients that are in need," she said.

Water already was out at the hospital, she said, so nurses were dumping buckets of water in toilets so they could flush them.

On Saturday, food was scarce, she said, and staff were relying on MREs – meals ready to eat – and whatever supplies community members were dropping off, like chips, drinks and granola bars.

Kerri Wilson, a registered nurse who works on a medical cardiology step-down unit at Mission, was supposed to work Sunday, Sept. 29. But trapped in Henderson County, where she lives 45 minutes away, she couldn't make it in, she told the Citizen Times.

She spent Friday hearing trees crack and watching them fall all around her home. She didn't realize what was going on in the hospital, and how frantic it was, until she arrived for her shift Monday morning.

"It was kind of an eerie feeling walking in," Wilson said. "It was pretty dark inside and we were just using as little power as we could."

By the time Wilson arrived, the electronic charting system was back up and "a lot of the kinks of the chaos had been worked through," she said. But the hospital was running low on supplies, and some of her coworkers hadn't left the hospital for days, relying only on the little food the hospital had left – and with no running water, sponging off their bodies however best they could.

"It was really weird not to just be able to go to the sink and wash my hands, especially after I was helping flush and clean 40 toilets," Wilson said.

Many of her coworkers were not only stuck at the hospital, where they had to sleep over, but cut off from the outside world, disconnected from their loved ones, worried if they were OK.

"Trying to balance taking care of your patients and also being to take care of yourself and your family, that adds a lot of mental anguish and anxiety when you feel the need and the pressure to be there and sleep there knowing that you're leaving your family behind, especially when communications are down," Wilson said.

"That was really hard."

Jacob Biba is the Buncombe County Watchdog Reporter for the Asheville Citizen Times. Email him at JBiba@citizentimes.com.

**MORE** 

**INSIDE** 

What happened to Nina Simone's childhood home? 3A

Loved ones unable to contact WNC prisoners, woman says. 3A

Helene recovery in Clyde brightened by food, aid from neighbors. 4A

Climate change likely worsened floods. 5A

WHERE TO

FIND HELP

See 7A for the latest on emergency resources.

**TEXT UPDATES** 

We are staffing a text message service to bring you the latest on Hurricane Helene, connect you with resources and answer any questions you might have. To sign up, text "Hello" to (239) 241-6343.

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#### Citation (aglc Style)

Beth Warren and Jacob Biba, Asheville Citizen Times | USA TODAY NETWORK, 'HELENE'S AFTERMATH - First storm victims, now heroes - Mission ER workers braved Helene's impact', *Times-News, The* (online), 5 Oct 2024 A1 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C04336D42FE478">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C04336D42FE478</a>



# Woman claims loved ones unable to contact WNC prisoners

October 5, 2024 | Times-News, The (Hendersonville, NC) Author: Lici Beveridge; Asheville Citizen Times | Section: News | 489 Words Page: A3 OpenURL Link

Laetitia Rel has been engaged to her fiancé Jared for four years. Until about a week ago, she was able to talk with him, but in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Helene, that has changed.

Jared is incarcerated at Foothills Correctional Institution, a minimum-custody prison in Burke County, one of several facilities impacted by the storm.

"It's been eight days since I spoke to my fiancé," Laetitia said in an email. "I don't know if he's OK. I know that he has recovered the water and electricity but not the WiFi, nor the telephone, nor the mail."

More than 2,000 prisoners were evacuated from five facilities in the days after Helene hit:

Avery-Mitchell Correctional Institution, Spruce Pine

Black Mountain Substance Abuse Treatment Center for Women, Black Mountain

Craggy Correctional Institution, Asheville

Mountain View Correctional Institution, Spruce Pine

Western Correctional Center for Women, Swannanoa

Laetitia is one of many who haven't been able to contact their loved ones who are incarcerated in North Carolina institutions affected by the storm.

"These walls are so hard, so when the weather gets involved and we're not in the country, it's horrible," she said. "In more than four years, not a day has gone by without us speaking at all."

Visitation at the affected correctional facilities is suspended until further notice, officials reported on the North Carolina Department of Adult Correction website.

Although prisoners at the Foothills facility were not evacuated, they were temporarily without power and water. The Department of Corrections' website says all the facilities have phone service and the staff is working to make sure the evacuated prisoners' tablets are operational. It is unclear why Laetitia hasn't been able to reach Jared. She was told the medium- and maximum-security prisoners are not allowed access to WiFi for now, with no word on when access will be restored.

Laetitia has contacted prison officials to see if she could get information about Jared or get a message to him, but since the couple isn't married, she cannot receive information. She has heard from others who, like herself, have had a similar experience.

"We have to wait without knowing anything," she said. "These walls are already difficult but then when the weather gets involved it's even worse. We have a horrible feeling inside us like a weight on our chest and until I hear my fiancé's voice it won't go away."

Laetitia said other women with incarcerated loved ones feel the same way.

"There are plenty of women here who haven't had the chance to tell their husbands, 'Sister hasn't come back' or 'Your mom has lost everything.' We are the forgotten ones like they are, too."

For Laetitia, the challenge is even more difficult since she lives in Belgium.

"I'm desperate and I don't know what to do anymore," she said. "As I'm in Europe, my opinion doesn't count, and my relationship doesn't count either."

Lici Beveridge is a reporter for the USA TODAY Network. Contact her at lbeveridge@gannett.com . Follow her on X @licibev or Facebook at facebook.com/licibeveridge .

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# • Citation (aglc Style)

Lici Beveridge, Asheville Citizen Times, 'Woman claims loved ones unable to contact WNC prisoners', *Times-News, The* (online), 5 Oct 2024 A3 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C04336B3A04730">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C04336B3A04730</a>



# Climate change likely worsened floods

October 5, 2024 | Times-News, The (Hendersonville, NC) Author: Dinah Voyles Pulver; USA TODAY | Section: News | 662 Words Page: A5 OpenURL Link

Flooding on some western North Carolina rivers blew past records set in 1916 as extreme rainfall amounts in the last week of September led to a rampaging slush of mud and debris.

Scientists said this week they see the unmistakable fingerprint of climate change in the flooding rain ahead of and during Hurricane Helene. Enormous rainfall totals took place over three days along more than 200 miles of the Appalachian Mountains from Georgia into Virginia.

At least 184 people have been killed by the direct and indirect effects of Helene's devastating trip across the U.S., most from the cataclysmic rainfall in the mountains.

In one provisional rapid attribution statement, a trio of scientists at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory said the rainfall over the 24 hours Helene moved through was made "up to 20 times more likely in these areas because of global warming."

"Our best estimate is that climate change may have caused as much as 50% more rainfall during Hurricane Helene in some parts of Georgia and the Carolinas," according to the statement by Mark Risser, Joshua North and Michael Wehner at the laboratory. Although the work used attribution methodology that the scientists have used in the past, they cautioned their initial assessment could still be adjusted.

Warm waters in Gulf of Mexico fuel extreme rain

As the Gulf of Mexico continues to experience record or near-record warm temperatures, scientists have repeatedly said it's supercharging storms with copious amounts of rainfall, leaving evidence that shows up in models that compare the hurricanes of today to hurricanes of the last century. They cite simple science that shows a warmer atmosphere holds more water.

They see it again in the immense rainfall inside and ahead of Hurricane Helene. Scientists saw the same fingerprint during Harvey, and again during Hurricane lan.

"We would expect that Helene rained more because of climate change," said Kevin Reed, associate provost for climate and sustainability programming at Stonybrook University, who's among many researchers studying how the warmer Gulf adds water to some hurricanes.

Another rapid assessment looked at total rainfall over the full three-day rain event and concluded it's likely the heat content in the Gulf contributed to both Helen's rapid intensification and the exceptional atmospheric river that started on Wednesday, more than 24 hours before Helene made landfall. Together, those events caused extreme floods over the southeastern U.S.

The statement, which calls for additional study, was released this week by a group of scientists at ClimaMeter, a Europe-based group using a framework developed by a team at the Laboratoire des Sciences du Climat et de l'Environnement in Paris-Saclay. ClimaMeter conducted a rapid analysis based on historical meteorological information from the last 40 years, comparing low pressure systems.

The scientists found the "heavy rainfall from Hurricane Helene up to 20% more intense and the strong winds up to 7% stronger" than during the period from 1980-2000. Ocean oscillations in the Atlantic and Pacific also may have

played a role alongside human-driven climate change, they said.

"This extreme precipitation event was caused by the interaction of an off-the-charts atmospheric river driven by Helene from the Gulf of Mexico with the Appalachian mountain range," the ClimaMeter analysis explained. The lifting in the mountains "exacerbated the already extreme weather conditions."

#### Warnings from climate scientists

The ClimaMeter study came with a warning. "Without reducing greenhouse gas emissions, these events will strike larger portions of the U.S., affecting territories and communities that were previously sheltered from such phenomena," stated co-author Davide Faranda, IPSL-CNRS, France. "Extreme precipitation in Hurricane Helene has been largely intensified by fossil fuel burning," Faranda said.

"Our analysis clearly highlights that anthropogenic climate change is amplifying the impacts of natural events that have always occurred, but now with far more devastating consequences," said study co-author Tommaso Alberti. "In the case of Hurricane Helene, the intensity of extreme rainfall has significantly increased due to fossil fuel emissions and these events will increasingly affect larger and previously less vulnerable regions."

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#### • Citation (aglc Style)

Dinah Voyles Pulver, USA TODAY, 'Climate change likely worsened floods', *Times-News, The* (online), 5 Oct 2024 A5 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C04336E19A6EA8">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C04336E19A6EA8</a>



# Where to find help in the Asheville area

October 5, 2024 | Times-News, The (Hendersonville, NC) Section: News | 1436 Words Page: A7 OpenURL Link

Here is essential information that may help Asheville-area residents in the aftermath of Helene and extensive flooding.

Where to find ice

As of Thursday, free ice is available at Home Depot at 795 Fairview Road until supplies run out. Ice is available in 7-lb bags.

Where to drop off donations

Asheville has partnered with United Way and opened a new donation drop-off site, announced police on Thursday. Donations may be dropped off at Harrah's Cherokee Center, at 87 Haywood St., at the front door. Donations are accepted 9 a.m.-5 p.m. seven days a week.

The site can accept small donations, including:

Water

Nonperishable food

Personal care items

Infant care

Pet food supplies

Disposable plates and utensils

Clothing

Cleaning supplies (including buckets)

Items requiring refrigeration or flammable liquids are not accepted.

Where to find water for flushing toilets

Water for flushing toilets will be available at Asheville JCC Pool, 40 Clyde St., on Tuesdays and Fridays from 10 a.m. to noon. Enter from Clyde Street and pull up to the pool gate on North Crescent Street.

Where to find hot meals in Western North Carolina

Several churches, businesses and organizations are providing hot meals to those impacted by Tropical Storm Helene in Western North Carolina. Here's a list of known locations and when people can visit:

**Haywood County** 

Clyde Central United Methodist Church, 410 Charles St., is offering meals from noon-6 p.m. daily, a Haywood County government spokesperson said in a Wednesday email.

**Buncombe County** 

Tupelo Honey's South Asheville Store, at 1829 Hendersonville Road, will serve free hot meals from 11 a.m. until 5 p.m., or until supplies run out, each day until at least Monday, possibly longer, Amanda Stevens announced Wednesday.

Tyson Foods will bring a Meals that Matter Disaster Relief team to Weaverville in northern Buncombe County later this week to distribute hot meals, water and ice. Volunteers will be set up at the Walmart Supercenter, 25 Northridge Commons Parkway, from 11 a.m.-5 p.m. daily.

Transylvania County

Daily, 9-11 a.m., noon-2 p.m., 4-6 p.m.

Cedar Mountain Community Center, 10635 Greenville Highway, daily until power is restored, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.

Balsam Grove Community Center, 8732 Parkway Road. Daily, noon-2 p.m.

Bread of Life, 238 S. Caldwell St. through Friday, Oct. 4, 1-4 p.m.

Smoke On at Champion Park parking lot, 38 Main St., Rosman, through Saturday, Oct. 5, noon-4 p.m.

Destiny Church, 48 Tiptop Road through Friday, Oct. 4, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

The Hunger Coalition at The Family Place, 970 Old Hendersonville Highway, Friday, Oct. 4, 5:30 p.m. and Saturday, Oct. 5, 8 a.m. and noon.

Meals and supplies at Rosman High School old gym, 749 Pickens Highway, Saturday, Oct. 5, noon-5 p.m.

Bethel A Church, 290 Oakdale St.

Urgent care locations

Mercy Urgent Care locations are open from 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.:

West Asheville: 1201 Patton Ave.

Weaverville: 61 Weaver Blvd.

Brevard: 22 Trust Lane

Waynesville: 120 Frazier St.

Mercy Urgent Care Foothills: 140 W Mills St.

Novant Go-Health is open 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. at 349 New Leicester Highway.

Hendersonville's AdventHealth open, accepting patients

AdventHealth Hendersonville, at 100 Hospital Drive, is open and accepting patients, officials announced.

The hospital in northern Henderson has enacted contingency plans to safely care for patients and has received supplies including food, medicine, fuel and oxygen while working to confirm water safety, according to a news release. The facility has power and phones are working.

How to receive housing aid

Anyone whose home has been destroyed or severely damaged is eligible to apply for mortgage insurance from the Department of Housing and Urban Development. HUD is also enabling homeowners to finance rehabilitation and repairs for damaged homes, read a statement from the White House. HUD will provide housing counseling assistance, offer waivers and additional flexibilities to public housing agencies, tribes, and recipients of designated federal funding to allow for further aid.

Shelter updates

A new general shelter has opened at the former Gold's Gym, 1815 Hendersonville Road in Asheville. It has a playroom for children, making it ideal for families. No pets are allowed.

A general shelter is also available at AB Tech Conference Center, 16 Fernihurst Drive in Asheville. Use Victoria Road entrance.

A Medical Emergency Shelter, 10 Genevieve Circle in Asheville, remains available for those dependent on medical equipment.

The shelter at the WNC Agricultural Center is full.

Food and water distribution

The city's water system was heavily damaged in the storm, and a boil advisory is in place for Western North Carolina. In a news release, city officials said "restoring service to the full system could potentially take weeks." Meanwhile, food and water distributions are taking place at the following locations from noon-4 p.m.

The Asheville Police Department is advising people to bring their own containers for water, as supplies are limited. Donations will not be accepted at these sites, however, if you would like to donate, please email helenedonations@buncombecounty.org.

William W. Estes Elementary School - 275 Overlook Road, Asheville

Sand Hill Elementary - 154 Sand Hill School Road, Asheville (enter via Acton Circle)

North Windy Ridge Intermediate School - 20 Doan Road, Weaverville

Fairview Elementary School - 1355 Charlotte Highway, Fairview

MANNA FoodBank - 570 Brevard Road. Food and water distribution at the farmers market.

BeLoved Asheville - 32 Old Charlotte Highway. Providing water, food, diapers, and baby formula. Spanish-speaking volunteers are available.

Carolina Day School - 1345 Hendersonville Road. Water distribution from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Each person can receive six bottles or one gallon of water. Distribution will continue until supplies run out, said police.

First Baptist Church in Weaverville - 63 North Main Street. Free meal opportunities start at 1 p.m. and will continue while supplies last. Police plan to continue this daily as possible, and a volunteer team will provide updates if there

are any changes or added resources.

The McDonalds located at 950 Patten Ave. will be handing out hot meals from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Thursday through Saturday.

The Asheville Dream Center is providing rolling updates on aid distribution sites on social media.

Communications: Wi-Fi locations

Duke Energy is working to restore power across Buncombe County. Cell service is also down throughout much of the county, with no known restoration timeline. Active Wi-Fi locations include:

Buncombe County Health Department, 40 Cox Ave., Weaverville.

Citizen Vinyl, 14 O'Henry Ave., Asheville.

DoubleTree Hilton Downtown, 199 Haywood St., Asheville.

Asheville Shelter, Ferguson Building, 340 Victoria Road, Asheville.

Operating pharmacies

As of Wednesday, these pharmacies in Western North Carolina were operating.

**Buncombe County:** 

CVS/pharmacy, 505 Smokey Park Highway, Asheville

CVS/pharmacy, 324 Long Shoals Road, Arden

Pinnacle Apothecary Candler, 1388 Sand Hill Road, Set 100, Candler

PSA Pharmacy/Associated Pharmacy Services, Inc., 2294 U.S. Highway 70, Swannanoa

Publix Pharmacy, 1830 Hendersonville Road, Asheville

Publix Pharmacy, 165 Weaver Blvd., Weaverville

Walgreens, 2501 Hendersonville Road, Arden (Cash only)

Walgreens, 1835 Hendersonville Road, Asheville (Cash only)

Haywood County:

CVS/pharmacy, 88 N.C. Highway 107, Sylva

CVS/pharmacy, 773 Russ Ave., Waynesville

Publix Pharmacy,124 Frazier St., Waynesville

Walgreens, 590 Russ Ave., Waynesville (Cash only)

**Henderson County:** 

CVS/pharmacy, 2001 Spartanburg Highway, Hendersonville

Pardee Rx - Fleming, 1027 Fleming St., Suite A, Hendersonville

Publix Pharmacy, 635 Greenville Highway, Hendersonville

Madison County:

CVS/pharmacy, 191 Carl Eller Road, Mars Hill

Marshburn Medical Center, 590 Medical Park Drive, Marshall

McDowell County:

CVS/pharmacy, 555 N. Main St., Marion

Curfews in effect

In effect from 7:30 p.m. to 7:30 a.m. within Asheville city limits.

**Emergencies** 

For any life-threatening situations, always call 911. Buncombe County has a line for reports of downed trees, debris and other non-emergencies: 828-250-6650.

Groceries

Food Lion: 179 Paragon Pkwy., Clyde.

Trader Joe's: 120 Merrimon Ave., Asheville.

Ingles Markets (cash only): 575 New Leicester Highway, Asheville.

Walmart: 1636 Hendersonville Road, Asheville.

Publix: 165 Weaver Blvd., Asheville.

West Village Market is open with limited hours selling groceries, such as produce, meat and vegan and nondairy items at 771 Haywood Road, Asheville.

Walls Wine Bar is open and selling beer, wine, vegan cheese and chocolate at its art gallery and wine bar at 38 Broadway St. downtown.

Money: Getting cash at ATMs

Many stores are unable to take credit or debit cards because of communications disruptions. If you need to get cash, note that lines at working ATMs can be long.

Missing persons reports

To report a person believed to be missing or unaccounted for, voicemails can be left for the Buncombe County Family Assistance Center at 828-820-2761. The county also created a form — bit.ly/3TLSLNK — to notify Buncombe officials of loved ones who aren't accounted for.

School closures

Asheville City Schools: closed.

Buncombe County Schools: closed through Friday, Oct. 4.

Asheville-Buncombe Tech: closed until further notice.

UNC Asheville: all departments Closed until Monday, Oct. 7; classes suspended until Wednesday, Oct. 9.

Western Carolina University: all departments closed through Friday, Oct. 4.

Appalachian State University: Closed through Friday, Oct. 4.

Supplies: Construction

Ace Hardware: 800 Fairview Road, Asheville.

Lowe's: 95 Smokey Park Highway, Asheville.

Home Depot: 795 Fairview Road, Asheville.

Home Depot: 127 Acton Circle, Asheville.

How to help the Asheville Humane Society

The Asheville Humane Society was able to evacuate around 100 animals to shelters outside of Western North Carolina, but are now in need of gas and monetary donations. People are able to donate via Venmo @ashevillehumane or at tinyurl.com/AshevilleHumaneDonate.

The humane society is also in need of volunteers. People interested in volunteering may join their volunteer Facebook group to keep an eye out for volunteer requests.

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#### • Citation (aglc Style)

'Where to find help in the Asheville area', *Times-News, The* (online), 5 Oct 2024 A7 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C04336DD65AE38">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C04336DD65AE38</a>



#### Simone's childhood home survives storm

October 5, 2024 | Times-News, The (Hendersonville, NC) Author: Lici Beveridge; Asheville Citizen Times | Section: News | 394 Words Page: A3 OpenURL Link

Nina Simone, singer-songwriter, activist, was a force to be reckoned with. Her explosive lyrics were quickly followed by rapid-fire staccato on her piano.

At other times, Simone was a sultry songstress, tantalizing listeners with her bewitching tunes.

Whatever musical style Simone performed, she did it with conviction.

Simone, born Eunice Waymon, taught herself to play piano at an early age, and she perfected her craft in the hills of Western North Carolina in Tryon, a small town in Polk County. Her skills grew from there as she became an international star, known as much for her activism as her music.

The place where it all began, Simone's childhood home, is undergoing restoration, and will be preserved for generations under the protection of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

The three-room home was as defiant as the child who once lived there. It withstood nearly 13 inches of rain within a few hours and high-speed winds as Tropical Storm Helene blazed a path through the state.

"The Action Fund is happy to report that the Nina Simone childhood home in Tryon is safe and sound," Melissa Jest, senior manager of preservation projects at the African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund, said in an email. "We offer our sincere gratitude to our neighbors in the East Side community there, who sent photos of the home earlier this week.

Neither the house nor the surrounding property was damaged by the storm that hit in the early hours of Sept. 27.

As recovery from Helene continues, restoration work will also resume, Jest said.

"Every Angle Inc., the project's general contractor from Marshall, plans to resume preservation work early next week after assessing the site," she said.

The town of Tryon, with a population of around 1,600, experienced power and internet outages. Town officials are actively working to restore services as quickly as possible, lest reported.

Even though the East Side community reached out to let the Action Fund know the home was safe, some East Side residents needed medical attention and others experienced property damage. Neighbors with St. Luke CME and Garrison Chapel Baptist churches are assisting in the East Side community.

Lici Beveridge is a reporter for the USA TODAY Network. Contact her at lbeveridge@gannett.com . Follow her on X @licibev or Facebook at facebook.com/licibeveridge .

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#### • Citation (aglc Style)

Lici Beveridge, Asheville Citizen Times, 'Simone's childhood home survives storm', *Times-News, The* (online), 5 Oct 2024 A3 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C04336B0D772D0">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C04336B0D772D0</a>



# No time for tourists - NC Gov. Cooper: 'We don't want you here'

October 5, 2024 | Times-News, The (Hendersonville, NC) Author: Will Hofmann; Asheville Citizen Times | USA TODAY NETWORK | Section: News | 953 Words Page: A1 OpenURL Link

ASHEVILLE – As peak leaf season approaches in the mountains, N.C. Gov. Roy Cooper told the Citizen Times that tourists are not wanted in Western North Carolina in the fallout of the historic, devastating floods have been confirmed to have taken 97 lives in the state and devastated the region's infrastructure.

Cooper said he only wants people who are dedicated to response efforts coming to the region.

"Whenever you come to Western North Carolina you get emergency notifications that we don't want you here unless you are directly helping with the response," Cooper told the Citizen Times Oct. 3 . "So we're continuing to ask people not to come. And that's tough for an area that was about to enter its peak season for tourism economy. But I've talked with people in the Chamber of Commerce, they understand that meeting people's immediate needs, saving lives, is first," he continued.

Visit North Carolina, the state's official destination marketing organization, has continued to issue a travel advisory warning to all who intend to visit the region typically known for its strong tourism industry as the leaves turn in the fall.

Currently, the message is: Do not travel to the region as cities and towns continue to battle power and water outages.

"State and local officials strongly advise all motorists avoid travel in Western North Carolina due to the continued challenges and risks from riverine flooding, landslides, slope failures, road closures and downed trees," the Visit North Carolina advisory, updated Oct. 3, read. "Power and cell phone service outages are also widespread as are shortages of water, food and gas."

Cooper said the goal is to continue to expand rescue and recovery efforts, which would be hindered and strained by the additional resources and road space required to maintain tourists.

"We want to keep those roads open for utility trucks, for rescue personnel, for medical people, for supplies, for fuel – all of this transportation that is 10 times more than you would normally need roads just to bring in basic necessities for people who don't have them now," Cooper said.

Explore Asheville and the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority have also put out information regarding resources being provided by the industry at this time. The authority issued an update on the status of the local tourism industry.

"People have always been drawn to Asheville and the mountains of Western North Carolina. We know many people around the country care deeply and want to support our community. It's not just about what's happening now, but about planning for the months and years ahead," the BCTDA and Explore Asheville said in a statement to the Citizen Times Oct. 3.

"Right now, the focus is on taking care of area residents and workers and servicing the many first responders who have answered the call from all over the country — helping those impacted and addressing the economic and emotional toll at hand," the statement said.

The city of Asheville, along with a swath of other cities and towns across WNC, are facing crisises after the floods

caused by Tropical Storm Helene. Water is out for most of the city, and is not expected to return for weeks. Cell service continues to be spotty, if not unreliable. Whole districts of the town, like the River Arts District — a beloved tourism district near the French Broad — remain in ruins.

Through the storm, VisitNC has been working to address visitor displacement throughout the region, fielding 7,300 calls about the topic, according to the advisory. Many regional attractions are currently closed. The entire Blue Ridge Parkway in North Carolina is closed. The Biltmore is closed. The WNC Nature Center is closed. The Omni Grove Park Inn is closed.

While the leaf season had been expected to be vibrant and bring in thousands to the region, boosting local business, this fall is likely going to hurt as businesses attempt to recover.

"Traditionally, fall is the most vibrant time of year for us, both visually across the Blue Ridge Mountains and for our economic vitality. This is definitely going to hurt. Our hearts and minds are focused on supporting our community right now and starting to lay the foundation for recovery in the days and months ahead," the BCTDA statement finished.

The organization encouraged those who want to support the region to donate to The Salvation Army of Asheville, MANNA FoodBank or United Way of Asheville and Buncombe County.

The BCTDA and Explore Asheville also provided information about how to apply for disaster relief unemployment and how to apply for Federal Emergency Management Agency business loans. Here's what to know:

Info for tourism employees, businesses

NC Works Disaster Unemployment (DUA): If your employment in the tourism industry has been impacted by Tropical Storm Helene, you may be eligible for disaster relief from the state of North Carolina.

Home Disaster Loans: Loans to homeowners or renters to repair or replace disaster-damaged real estate and personal property, including automobiles.

Business Physical Disaster Loans: Loans to businesses for repairing or replacing disaster-damaged property, including real estate, inventories, supplies, machinery, and equipment. Businesses of any size and private, non-profit organizations are eligible.

Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL): Working capital loans available to help small businesses, agricultural cooperatives, aquaculture businesses, and non-profit organizations of all sizes meet their financial obligations during a disaster recovery period.

USA Today reporter Chris Kenning contributed to this story.

Will Hofmann is the Growth and Development Reporter for the Asheville Citizen Times, part of the USA Today Network. Got a tip? Email him at WHofmann@citizentimes.com. Consider supporting this type of journalism with a subscription to the Citizen Times.

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#### • Citation (aglc Style)

Will Hofmann, Asheville Citizen Times | USA TODAY NETWORK, 'No time for tourists - NC Gov. Cooper: 'We don't want you here'', Times-News, The (online), 5 Oct 2024 A1 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a> p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C04336C49A5458>



# IRS provides relief for Helene victims in the Carolinas

October 5, 2024 | Tribune, The (Elkin, NC) Author: Staff Report| Section: News | 416 Words OpenURL Link

WASHINGTON — The Internal Revenue Service this week announced disaster tax relief for all individuals and businesses affected by Hurricane Helene, including the entire states of Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina and parts of Florida, Tennessee and Virginia.

Taxpayers in these areas now have until May 1, 2025, to file various federal individual and business tax returns and make tax payments. Among other things, this includes 2024 individual and business returns normally due during March and April 2025, 2023 individual and corporate returns with valid extensions and quarterly estimated tax payments.

The IRS is offering relief to any area designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Besides all of Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina, this currently includes 41 counties in Florida, eight counties in Tennessee and six counties and one city in Virginia.

Individuals and households that reside or have a business in any one of these localities qualify for tax relief. The same relief will be available to other states and localities that receive FEMA disaster declarations related to Hurricane Helene. The current list of eligible localities is always available on the Tax relief in disaster situations page on IRS.gov.

The tax relief postpones various tax filing and payment deadlines that occurred beginning on Sept. 22, 2024, in Alabama; Sept. 23 in Florida; Sept. 24 in Georgia; Sept. 25 in North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia; and Sept. 26 in Tennessee. In all of these states, the relief period ends on May 1, 2025 (postponement period). As a result, affected individuals and businesses will have until May 1, 2025, to file returns and pay any taxes that were originally due during this period.

This means, for example, that the May 1, 2025, deadline will now apply to:

Any individual or business that has a 2024 return normally due during March or April 2025.

Any individual, business or tax-exempt organization that has a valid extension to file their 2023 federal return. The IRS noted, however, that payments on these returns are not eligible for the extra time because they were due last spring before the hurricane occurred.

2024 quarterly estimated income tax payments normally due on Jan. 15, 2025, and 2025 estimated tax payments normally due on April 15, 2025.

Quarterly payroll and excise tax returns normally due on Oct. 31, 2024, and Jan. 31 and April 30, 2025.

In addition, the IRS is also providing penalty relief to businesses that make payroll and excise tax deposits. Relief periods vary by state.

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### • Citation (aglc Style)

Staff Report, 'IRS provides relief for Helene victims in the Carolinas', *Tribune, The* (online), 5 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C10B845AB3B568">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C10B845AB3B568</a>



# Blue Ridge Parkway in North Carolina and Virginia remains closed

October 5, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Staff Report news@wataugademocrat.com | Section: Local | 234 Words OpenURL Link

The entire length of the Blue Ridge Parkway in North Carolina and Virginia remains closed as crews continue their assessment of the damage from Hurricane Helene.

To assist with recovery efforts, the National Park Service has deployed its Eastern Incident Management Team, which brings specialized skills and resources to support the parkway with employee emergency needs, emergency stabilization of affected park resources, and damage assessments. As of Saturday morning, 214 National Park Service employees representing 57 national parks from 32 states and the District of Columbia are working with Blue Ridge Parkway staff in the recovery efforts.

National Park Service assessment teams are still completing their initial inspections of the parkway, acquiring the data they will need to analyze the full impact of Hurricane Helene. Based on what the teams have seen so far, significant, and in some cases catastrophic, damage has occurred along the parkway, particularly from milepost 280 to milepost 469 in North Carolina.

In the coming weeks, the assessment teams will utilize the data from their inspections to determine the full extent of the damage including the timeline and cost estimates for repairs. A projected reopening date of any section of the Blue Ridge Parkway in North Carolina has not yet been established. In Virginia, damage assessments and the clearing of debris from the road are nearing completion, which will for allow a phased reopening in Virginia in the coming days to weeks.

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#### • Citation (aglc Style)

Staff Report news@wataugademocrat.com, 'Blue Ridge Parkway in North Carolina and Virginia remains closed', *Watauga Democrat, The* (online), 5 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a>
p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C0663B62F8E568>



# Mountaineers fall to Thundering Herd in return to competition

October 5, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Zach Colburn | Section: Sports | 730 Words OpenURL Link

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Zach Colburn, 'Mountaineers fall to Thundering Herd in return to competition', *Watauga Democrat, The*(online), 5 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C0A19AAD9DD758">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C0A19AAD9DD758</a>



# Watauga County Schools confirms all students, staff accounted for

October 5, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Moss Brennan moss.brennan@wataugademocrat.com| Section: Local | 172 Words OpenURL Link

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

WCS Superintendent Leslie Alexander confirmed the news Saturday morning.

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

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

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

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

WCS is closed for the week of Oct. 7.

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