

### EDITORIAL: Nourishing our beaches strengthens our county

September 29, 2024 | Carteret County News-Times, The (Morehead City, NC) Author: Staff Writer | Section: Opinions | 1014 Words OpenURL Link

Pictures and videos of ocean front cottages in the Outer Banks town of Rodanthe collapsing into the ocean as well as the pictures of severe beach erosion in Carolina Beach resulting from Potential Tropical Cyclone number 8 (PTC#8) are clear wake up calls for Carteret County and the region. We cannot take our good fortune for granted, thinking that these events will never happen here. They can, and based on the county's history with storms, we should expect similar natural events in the near future.

And now, Hurricane Helene has struck Florida's Gulf Coast with major tidal surge and heavy rains with an anticipation of significant damage to beachfront communities as well as inland areas. The final analysis of the destruction will not be determined for easily a week or more, but when that tally is complete there will be, or at least should be, a recognition that the storm's destruction of inland properties was mitigated by the beach fronts which took the first assault from the ocean.

Considering all of the natural events that have taken place in the past few weeks, the recent decision by the county's beach commission to begin planning for a new beach nourishment program is timely. But even before these recent hurricanes and the unnamed tropical cyclone, PTC#8, hit the news, the county's beaches along Bogue Banks were already being scrutinized by the Newport-based surveying company Geodynamics. This is a locally grown company by the way, that has received international recognition for its state-of-the-art coastal surveying procedures.

It is ironic that Gregory Rudolph, the county's first shore protection office manager, is now working with Geodynamics, following almost 20 years as the county's lead beach and inland waterway expert. During that time, Rudolph was highly regarded along the entire east coast for his initiatives in creating and managing the county's beach nourishment program, de novo, without benefit of any existing template for the position or operational structure.

Because of the extensive baseline work created by Rudolph since the commission first began as the beach task force in 1999, the county has a clear understanding of the benefits resulting from nourishment programs as well as documentation following cases of severe beach erosion.

That baseline information, along with constant studies of the county's beaches, resulted in a recommendation to the commission last week that plans should begin now for a beach nourishment project. Nicole VanderBeke of Moffatt and Nichol, an internationally recognized marine engineering firm, remarking on surveys recently concluded on 122 transects, straight line measurements of the beach that showed significant loss of sand, created what she described as a "sand deficit."

In her presentation to the commission according to News-Times reporter, Brad Rich, VanderBeke "told the commission there was significant sand loss along almost all of the Bogue Banks" that has occurred over the past year. This was brought about, she noted, as a result of a more active than usual winter storm season during which some storms created wave heights cresting 10 feet or more.

The commissioners, remembering the damage caused by Hurricane Florence in 2018, during which the 36-hour Category 1 storm created two record high tides scraping thousands of yards of sand from the Bogue Banks beaches, quickly agreed to begin planning for another nourishment project.

Before any sand can be deposited on the county's beaches, there are a multitude of permits to be acquired. This is a major undertaking when considering the number of federal and state agencies, such as the Army Corps of

Engineers, EPA, NOAA, and a plethora of agencies within the Department of the Interior as well as state agencies that have to sign off on the plan. And then there are the non-governmental organizations, the NGO's that constantly challenge any effort to nourish beaches out of a variety of hyper concerns such as turtle, fish and even bird migrations.

Once the permits are granted and funding is found, then the next phase of beach nourishment is finding the dredges, which are few in number and in high demand for both coastal and river management. All of these permitting efforts and the incumbent bidding requirements for dredging services are anticipated to take at least two years, so time is of the essence in initiating a new nourishment project.

Planning and managing a beach nourishment program is akin to writing the score for a symphony orchestra, assuring each instrument or in this case, each agency, is in synch with the conductor. But unlike a musical production there is one major variable- weather. If mother nature does not cooperate, the project is put on hold which, for the dredge operators and even the approving agencies, can set the whole plan back or force its cancellation.

The value of our stable beaches, both financially and structurally, cannot be overlooked or overstated. They provide the core attraction for our county's number one industry, tourism, which according to the county's Tourism Development Authority (TDA), employed over 3,700 people last year alone, generating a payroll of \$143.8 million, a 5% increase over the previous year.

In addition to the payroll and sales tax generated from tourism, the beaches play a major role in the county's ad valorem tax base. Bogue Banks property owners underwrite close to 60% of the county's property tax receipts, and because most of the property owners are only part-time residents, they put little stress on the county's services, particularly the county's public schools which consume over half of the county's annual budget.

As for the structural value of our beaches, they are holding back the ocean. They are the county's first defense in the case of major storms. It is our beach front facing a sometimes violent ocean that protects the county's inland sounds that are important to our commercial and recreational fisheries, as well as protecting the inland communities where most of the county's permanent residents live.

Our beaches are important and the sooner that nourishment planning begins the better. Our county's economy, our livelihoods, homes and even our recreational opportunities are dependent on a quick conclusion – one that will hopefully better prepare us for that inevitable storm that is lurking somewhere in the atmosphere.

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### Helene killed a person in Charlotte; a million in Carolinas lost power

September 29, 2024 | Charlotte Observer, The (NC) Author: Joe Marusak; Staff Writer | Section: News | 858 Words

Page: 1A OpenURL Link

The storm that came ashore as Hurricane Helene knocked out power to a million Duke Energy customers in the Carolinas on Friday, including 84,000 in Charlotte and tens of thousands of others in surrounding counties.

One person was killed in northwest Charlotte and a second had life-threatening injuries when a tree fell on a house in the 4200 block of Brookway Drive, MEDIC reported shortly after 6 a.m. Friday.

Rescues were underway in the North Carolina mountains, where the National Weather Service expected up to 20" of rain and "catastrophic flooding."

A 4-year-old girl died in a Catawba County head-on wreck during heavy rains Thursday morning, State Highway Patrol Trooper Christopher Casey said.

A 2-year-old and a 12-year-old in the vehicles were hospitalized with life-threatening injuries, Casey said.

Helene brought trees down onto roads across the region, including on Interstate 85 southbound at the U.S. 321 exit in Gastonia, where a wreck involving a tractor-trailer also was reported.

The intersection of Providence and Queens roads in Charlotte was closed Friday morning. In York County, U.S. 21 was closed at Coltharp Road due to downed trees, the sheriff's office said.

As the storm barreled into the Carolinas Friday morning, Haywood County in the mountains said residents should consider all roads closed in the county due to treacherous conditions.

Burke County emergency crews rescued a person injured in flooding in the N.C. 126 area north of Lake James, Christopher White, assistant county 911 director, told Charlotte Observer news partner WSOC.

By Thursday afternoon, heavy Helene rains had closed 97 roads in western North Carolina, according to the N.C. Department of Transportation.

More than 50 traffic crashes were reported on Thursday in Mecklenburg and crashes continued Friday, according to MEDIC.

### Flooding in Mecklenburg

Some areas of western Mecklenburg County received up to 4 inches of rain as of 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, officials said. Rainfall totals were less on the eastern side of the county.

By Friday morning, some areas of west Mecklenburg had received over 6 inches of rain in the previous 48 hours.

Mecklenburg issued a voluntary evacuation order Thursday for areas around Riverside Drive, Lake Drive, Riverhaven Drive and parts of Beagle Club Road and Hart Road, north of the airport, because of the risk of flooding. Charlotte firefighters were in the area to monitor rising water.

The county opened a shelter at 10 p.m. Thursday for people in those areas at Tuckaseegee Recreation Center.

"This is an unusually dangerous storm that threatens to bring heavy rain and potentially catastrophic flooding tonight and tomorrow for central and particularly Western North Carolina," Gov. Roy Cooper said at an 11 a.m. news conference Thursday. "It can be deadly. Beware and prepare."

Thursday, President Joe Biden approved an emergency declaration for North Carolina. That allows the Federal Emergency Management Agency to help fund emergency protective measures in much of Western North Carolina, including evacuations and emergency shelters.

200,000 without power in NC mountains

Nearly 200,000 Duke Energy customers were without power in the North Carolina mountains at 9 a.m. Friday, according to the company outage map.

Statewide, at least 483,000 had no power, including at least 31,600 in Cleveland County, 28,400 in Gaston County and 10,500 in Cabarrus County.

In South Carolina, at least 220,600 customers had no power at 9 a.m. in Greenville County and 30,100 in York County.

Shelters opened Thursday in Avery, Buncombe and McDowell counties, emergency officials said.

Thursday morning, Helene became a category 2 hurricane, "with significant additional strengthening expected before landfall in Florida," and by evening it had become a category 4 hurricane according to National Hurricane Center bulletins.

At 8 a.m. Friday, the center of Helene was about 35 miles southwest of Clemson, South Carolina, with 60 mph winds.

Earlier Friday morning, the storm surged along the Florida coast and west Florida and penetrated Georgia and the Carolinas, according to the National Hurricane Center.

As of Friday morning, 475 flights were delayed and 349 were canceled at Charlotte Douglas International Airport, according to FlightAware, an online website providing real-time information. More than 2,000 flights have been disrupted in Charlotte this week.

"We recommend passengers check their airline's flight status before heading to the airport, including those picking up arriving passengers," a CLT spokesman told the Observer.

Gov. Cooper declares NC State of Emergency

Cooper declared a state of emergency on Wednesday, activating the National Guard and deploying swift-water teams in advance of Helene.

"Helene threatens heavy rain, flash flooding, landslides, and damaging winds to the mountains and Piedmont areas of our state," Cooper said in a statement. "Now is the time for North Carolinians to prepare, make sure emergency kits are up-to-date and pay attention to the weather alerts in your area."

On Thursday, Cooper said Helene's "path is wide, and its impacts will be felt far from the center of the storm."

Duke Energy called in power line and tree crews from other states. Wind damage and flooding could delay restoring power, but its crews will do so "as quickly and safely as possible," according to a company statement Thursday morning.

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### Tornado hit mountain tourist town before Helene, NWS says

September 29, 2024 | Charlotte Observer, The (NC) Author: Joe Marusak; Staff Writer | Section: News | 116 Words

Page: 19A OpenURL Link

A tornado packing 90 mph winds hit the N.C. mountain tourist town of Blowing Rock ahead of Hurricane Helene, a National Weather Service team confirmed Thursday.

A separate severe weather system spawned the EF-1 tornado that uprooted and snapped trees for just over a half-mile before dissipating, investigators said.

No injuries were reported, according to a report by the team from the NWS office in Blacksburg, Virginia.

The tornado touched down at 6:38 p.m. Wednesday near the intersection of Birch Drive and Hill Street and raced northeast before lifting near Chetola Lake Drive, the team found.

A few tents near Bass Lake Drive and Chetola Lake Drive also were blown down, according to the NWS report.

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### Pass rushes key as - Eagles visit Buccaneers

September 29, 2024 | Charlotte Observer, The (NC)

Section: News 553 Words

Page: 12B OpenURL Link

The Tampa Bay Buccaneers have surrendered 12 sacks while recording none of their own in their past two games.

Flipping that script could be critical to Sunday's result as the Philadelphia Eagles visit Tampa, Fla., for a battle of 2-1 teams.

Baker Mayfield was sacked seven times in last weekend's stunning 26-7 home loss to the previously winless Denver Broncos. For the second straight week, he threw for fewer than 200 yards and tossed an interception.

Tampa Bay enters Week 4 ranked 26th in the NFL in total offense and 27th in rushing, but Mayfield refused to place all the blame for his dirty uniform on the offensive line.

"There were a few pressures this week that were actually on me," Mayfield said. "There's a mindset of trying to fix the protections when they're bringing some of these pressures, and there's also a mindset to snap the ball and get it out of your hands.

"Not all of that is on the O-line."

The last time Philadelphia visited Raymond James Stadium, Mayfield threw for 337 yards and three touchdowns in a 32-9 wild-card playoff victory on Jan. 15 of this year.

The Eagles sacked Mayfield four times in that loss - the same number their pass rush has generated through three games this year.

Philadelphia sacked Atlanta's Kirk Cousins only once in a last-minute 22-21 loss at home in Week 2, then took down Derek Carr only once in a last-minute 15-12 win at New Orleans in Week 3.

Second-year Eagles defensive tackle Jalen Carter is still looking for his first sack of the season, but he shined against the Saints with four tackles (two for losses), two batted passes and a quarterback hit.

"Obviously, this past game was his best game by far," defensive coordinator Vic Fangio said. "And hopefully that will set the trend moving forward. I don't know what actually triggered it, other than he, and we as a D-Line unit, didn't play good in the previous game. So I'm sure that had something to do with it."

The headliners for this contest on offense include Eagles running back Saquon Barkley and Buccaneers wide receiver Chris Godwin.

Barkley leads the NFL in rushing (351 yards) and is tied for the lead in touchdowns from scrimmage (five) through his first three games with Philadelphia. Godwin already has 21 catches and has scored touchdowns in all three games.

Including the playoffs, Tampa Bay has won five of the past six meetings dating back to 2015.

Both teams are keeping an eye on injuries and the weather, with Tropical Storm Helene expected to reach hurricane strength before striking Florida's Gulf Coast on Thursday night.

Eagles star receiver A.J. Brown (hamstring) still wasn't practicing Wednesday after missing the last two games. No. 2 wideout DeVonta Smith and right tackle Lane Johnson are both in concussion protocol, while right guard Mekhi Becton (finger) and left guard Landon Dickerson (wrist) were listed as limited participants.

Defensive lineman Calijah Kancey (calf) and safety Antoine Winfield Jr. (foot) did not practice for the Buccaneers on Wednesday. Limited participants included defensive tackle Vita Vea (knee), left tackle Tristan Wirfs (knee), rookie running back Bucky Irving (hamstring) and wideouts Godwin (neck) and Mike Evans (knee).

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# With Adam Thielen out, here's who the Carolina Panthers - will turn to at receiver

September 29, 2024 | Charlotte Observer, The (NC) Author: Alex Zietlow; Staff Writer | Section: Sports | 1155 Words Page: 9B OpenURL Link

Jonathan Mingo hasn't been on social media since his college days in an effort to find clarity under the brightest spotlight - to find tranquility despite all the football noise.

So when you tell him that the fantasy football world has taken notice of his potential for a breakout performance in Week 4, his response is what you'd expect:

"Nah," he said with a smile Thursday.

"I don't do that type of stuff," added Mingo, who is projected to score 10 fantasy points this week. "I just try to do my job every day."

The Panthers will need him to do his job at 1 p.m. Sunday when they host the Cincinnati Bengals in Bank of America Stadium - perhaps even more so than in previous weeks.

The second-year wide receiver might hear his name called Sunday a bit more than usual. A lot of that has to do with the hamstring injury suffered by Adam Thielen, the team's No. 2 wide receiver who will now miss at least the next four games on injured reserve.

But a lot of that, too, has to do with how Mingo played Sunday. In the Panthers' 36-22 win over the Raiders - one in which Andy Dalton put on a vintage, 300-plus yard, three-TD performance - Mingo lived up to his role. He notched 49 snaps (66% of all offensive plays), which is a season high. He also caught three of his four targets for 18 yards and took an end-around rush that looked promising before the Raiders defense made a nice play to hold it to 2 yards. (That's the second time in three games they've called an end-around rush for Mingo.)

His biggest play of the day came when he caught a pass in the flat behind the line of scrimmage and then took it for 15 yards with his team backed up deep in its own territory.

How that play came together even more so speaks to Mingo's expected elevated role in the offense.

"We had something else called (out of the huddle)," Mingo told The Charlotte Observer of that 15-yard catch. "Andy checked to a Cover 0 answer. So it was a good check by him, saw he was getting (blitzed). Had a good block on the outside and tried to take advantage of running the ball in space. It's something that I've been trying to prove to people that I can do."

So ... who will replace Adam Thielen in the offense?

It's true that replacing Thielen won't be easy. The 34-year-old is the second-leading receiver on the team and notched three catches for 40 yards and a touchdown in one half Sunday before going down with an injury that'll have him sidelined for a while.

Ask offensive coordinator Brad Idzik, though, and the plan to make up for Thielen's absence is pretty simple. It's designed that way.

"They both did a phenomenal job stepping in," Idzik said of Mingo and rookie Xavier Legette. "And again, it's just a testament to them owning the full game plan. The thing that we value in this offense is guys not just memorizing

one spot, whether it's a heavy tackle coming in and playing tight end for us in the run game or the pass game, or it's a receiver who's typically the Z having to come in and spell us at F or X."

Ideally the plan for the Panthers is to look for Diontae Johnson, who hauled in a career-high 122 yards Sunday, on every passing play. After that, there's Mingo and Legette; the duo will almost certainly round out most three-receiver sets. Legette, like Mingo, also saw some more attention in Thielen's absence. The first-round pick played 44 snaps - 49% - and caught two of three targets for 42 yards, which included a 35-yard catch that was mostly thanks to his speed after the catch.

And then behind them is Jalen Coker, a once-coveted undrafted free agent and practice squad promotion this week who flashed in the preseason enough to make the team's initial 53-man roster.

Coker said Thielen - one of the most successful undrafted free agents in league history himself - has been a great leader to all the rookies, and that has only helped prepare Coker for Sunday.

"He's always going to take you under his wing and try to guide you through this process, which is awesome," Coker told The Charlotte Observer on Wednesday. "Especially because we do have similar backgrounds. So it's really kind of an amazing opportunity for me and experience for me, where I get to learn from probably one of the best guys to ever do it."

Shaq Thompson wanted to play in the preseason

The question of whether the Panthers should have played their starters in the preseason was a storyline for a bulk of training camp. Head coach Dave Canales ultimately chose to not play most of his starters outside of one series in the final preseason game - an approach other teams across the NFL took.

After the Panthers' slow start, that decision lingered under scrutiny. And on Thursday, veteran linebacker Shaq Thompson shared that he wished his defense had played in the preseason.

"That's just my opinion, I'm not the head coach or the GM who calls that shot. But I like playing in the preseason," Thompson said. "Getting all the jitters and all that stuff out. ... But you know what? It is what it is. We got a win last week, and we're 0-0 this week, and we're trying to get a win this week."

He added: "Helps with everything. Communication, tackling, going out with your guys, playing football. It helps with everything."

#### Quick hits

- \* With rain from Hurricane Helene whisking into Charlotte and with the Panthers currently without an indoor facility in their practice space the team practiced in soggy conditions Thursday. That is still optimal, according to Thompson, who said he prefers to play on grass over turf no matter the weather conditions. (Thompson has shared this view before.)
- \* There's really only one big change on Thursday's injury report. And that involves arguably the Panthers' most explosive player. Diontae Johnson didn't practice Thursday because of a groin injury; he told reporters that the decision was primarily because of the field conditions and that he'll be good to play Sunday. Those who showed up as "Did Not Participate" on Thursday's injury report: Lonnie Johnson (hip), Damien Lewis (elbow), Shy Tuttle (foot), Taylor Moton (rest) and Johnson (groin). Those who showed up as limited: A'Shawn Robinson (knee) and Nick Scott (quadriceps).
- \* Something fun for Panthers fans to look forward to: At halftime of Sunday's game against the Bengals, Julius Peppers will receive his Pro Football Hall of Fame Ring of Excellence, according to a release from the Hall. The legendary defensive end was inducted into the Hall this summer.

Mike Kaye contributed to this report.

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# Video: Scenes of Helene flooding devastation around NC's Lake Lure

September 29, 2024 | Charlotte Observer, The: Video (NC)

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### How to help people and volunteer in NC in Hurricane Helene aftermath

September 29, 2024 | Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles (NC) Author: Julia Coin, The Charlotte Observer | Section: north\_carolina | 554 Words OpenURL Link

In Western North Carolina, many are dead, missing and cut off from the outside world — and help — in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene.

The Category 4 hurricane made landfall in northern Florida and was still a raging tropical storm when it passed over the Carolinas. The storm flooded North Carolina towns, wiped neighborhoods away and killed at least 11 across the state.

President Joe Biden Saturday approved Gov. Roy Cooper's request for FEMA help in 25 counties, and federal aid flocked to Asheville and Charlotte Sunday. Crews set up base camps, waiting for some of the 280 closed roads to reopen, as Red Cross planes and helicopters searched for people stranded in the towns near the Appalachian Mountains, said American Red Cross Vice President of Disaster Response Jennifer Pipa Sunday.

Floods severed towns from nearby roads, and emergency services struggled to reach those suffering without using aircraft.

How to help people affected by Helene

If your organization would like to be added to this list, please email news@charlotteobserver.com with the subject line "How to Help NC."

"Cash is best," according to FEMA's website. It's the most effective, flexible way to aid organizations. FEMA recommends donating to verified organizations directing money to on-the-ground groups that know what communities need. A list of organizations can be found on the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster website. Those same organizations accept volunteers, too.

FEMA cautions people to not self deploy to affected areas — especially any still-flooded areas.

How to volunteer to help

You can find more information about volunteer opportunities with VolunteerNC and meal assistance with local food banks.

Hurricane Helene GoFundMe

GoFundMe, a crowdfunding platform that allows individuals to create their own fundraisers, launched a Hurricane Helene Relief page with verified fundraisers Friday. As of Sunday, it had nearly 400 fundraisers on the verified landing page.

In Charlotte, a tree struck down during Helene fell onto a Hoskins home and killed a man inside. That man, according to a GoFundMe page set up by his nephew, was Anthony "Tony" Taylor. His wife and four children survived, but he did not.

Neighbors said half the tree fell onto another home months before. It should have been cut down already, they said.

"For some time, we had been trying to get the tree removed, but since it wasn't on our property, there was little we could do," wrote Taylor's nephew, Stephen Taylor, in the post.

Also in Charlotte, a group of pilots is asking for money to help air-drop supplies to those in communities surrounded now by water instead of roads.

"We believe that small aircraft can deploy resources faster because we don't need to wait for roads to be cleared. We'll use funds to purchase supplies like nonperishable foods, hygiene items, and baby supplies," wrote Benjamin Spells.

In Swannanoa, host to some of the state's worst flood scenes, a couple and their children — ages 2 and 7 — took refuge in their attic as orange floodwaters moved sludge and debris through their neighborhood. The Zara Family last frantically called family at 11 a.m. Friday, after hours without contact. A neighbor with a kayak rescued them and their home was destroyed.

Jessica Allred, the wife's sister, is asking for funds to help The Zara Family. Hundreds of more families with harrowing stories are listed on GoFundMe.

More ways to help

We've put together more ways to help and send donations in this story.

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### Helene closings: Charlotte-area school districts announce plans for Tuesday classes

September 29, 2024 | Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles (NC) Author: Staff reports, The Charlotte Observer | Section: education | 570 Words OpenURL Link

Some public school districts across the Carolinas are still dealing with power outages and damage from Helene, which brought historic rain and flooding to the region.

Helene hit Florida as a Category 4 hurricane before dumping up to 29 inches of rain as a tropical storm on some North Carolina communities. On Sunday, more than 900,000 homes in South Carolina were still without power, with the majority of them in the Upstate region. More than 500,000 in North Carolina were without power.

Here's what's been announced and what hasn't in Charlotte-area districts:

« Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools were closed Monday as issues from Helene linger, the district said Sunday afternoon. That's a change from Friday when the district said it expected to resume normal operations. Monday instead was an optional teacher workday, and there will be no after-school enrichment programs at any CMS schools. The decision does not affect the rest of the 2024-25 calendar year, CMS said.

UPDATE, 5:18 p.m.: CMS schools will be open on Tuesday.

- « Cabarrus County Schools hasn't announced any closure plans. It rescheduled four varsity football games that would've been played Friday to Monday.
- « Catawba County Schools canceled classes Monday. QUEST Childcare will also be closed, but teachers can come in for a workday.

UPDATE 5:48 p.m. Catawba schools remain closed Tuesday.

« Chester County School District in South Carolina canceled Monday classes but school resumes on Tuesday. It will have a weather-related make up day Nov. 25.

UPDATE 5:30 p.m. Chester County schools will be open on regular schedule Tuesday.

« Clover School District in South Carolina canceled Monday classes but opened Clover High School's doors from 9 a.m. until 12 p.m. Monday to allow people to charge cell phones and fill up water bottles.

UPDATE 5:49 P.M.: Clover schools will be open Tuesday.

UPDATE 5:30 p.m. Clover schools will be open on regular schedule Tuesday.

- « Fort Mill School District in South Carolina resumed classes Monday.
- « Hickory City Schools canceled classes Monday and again Tuesday. Teachers can come in for an optional work day "if it is safe... to do so."
- « Iredell-Statesville Schools will have a two-hour delay for students and staff on Tuesday. "This additional time will allow our bus drivers to have better visibility and our student drivers more time to use extra caution when driving to their school," the district said in a Facebook post.

- « Kannapolis City Schools hasn't announced any closure plans
- « Lancaster County School District resumed classes Monday.
- « Mooresville Graded School District hasn't announced any closure plans.
- « Lincoln County Schools: No school for students on Tuesday due to power outages and damage. Staff will operate on an optional workday. Check your email for updates from your principal. The county was also out of school on Monday.
- « Rock Hill Schools canceled classes Monday. It also said it cannot provide food service because its cafeterias "experienced losses" after the extended power outage.

UPDATE 5:30 p.m. Rock Hill schools will be open on regular schedule Tuesday.

- « Rowan-Salisbury Schools hasn't announced any closure plans.
- « Union County Public Schools said it will operate on a normal schedule Monday.
- « York School District 1 in South Carolina canceled Monday classes and announced a make up day Jan. 6.

UPDATE 5:30 p.m. York school district 1 in South Carolina schools will be closed on Tuesday, according to its Facebook social media. It will again provide lunch for its students' families Tuesday in York Comprehensive High School's band room, Jefferson Elementary School's bus loop and Hickory Grove-Sharon Elementary School's bus loop.

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Staff reports, The Charlotte Observer, 'Helene closings: Charlotte-area school districts announce plans for Tuesday classes', Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles (online), 29 Sep 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a> p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BE698F55E1E5F0>



# 'Apocalyptic' damage: Helene kills at least 30 in Western NC, severs power, water, roads

September 29, 2024 | Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles (NC)
Author: Ames Alexander, Drew Jackson, Nora O'Neill, Ryan Oehrli and Julia Coin, The Charlotte Observer Section: north\_carolina | 1754 Words
OpenURL Link

In the Western North Carolina town of Canton, Mayor Zeb Smathers has never seen anything like it.

"It is truly the worst storm we have faced, and not just us, but our friends across the mountains," Smathers said.

"The word I keep coming back to ... is apocalyptic."

Across North Carolina, many residents are voicing similar sentiments about the devastation left by Tropical Storm Helene, a disaster that has left thousands without power, safe roads, cellphone service or potable water.

RAL\_092922-HURRICANE-HELENE-TEL-10.JPGA rescue team paddles down the Swannanoa River on Sunday, Sept. 29, 2024. The remnants of Hurricane Helene caused widespread flooding, downed trees, and power outages in western North Carolina.

At least 30 people have died in Buncombe County alone, Sheriff Quentin Miller announced in an afternoon press briefing.

"Tragically, we know there will be more," Gov. Roy Cooper said at an earlier news conference Sunday, in which 11 deaths were announced.

"Many people are cut off because roads are impassable. They don't have power or communications."

RAL\_092922-HURRICANE-HELENE-TEL-37.JPGA search and rescue team out of Atlantic Beach, N.C. examines a van swept into the river in Swannanoa, N.C. by flooding from Helene. They were assisting in the community, Sunday, Sept. 29, 2024.

President Joe Biden has agreed to provide immediate federal help to 25 western North Carolina counties battered by Helene, the White House announced Saturday night.

The "major disaster" declaration, approved at Cooper's request, means FEMA will be able to provide quicker additional help to those who need it. The federal government says it will also reimburse local governments, state agencies and nonprofits for repairing facilities, roads and other infrastructure.

The counties in the declaration are Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Clay, Cleveland, Gaston, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Lincoln, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Transylvania, Watauga, Wilkes, and Yancey. The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians is also included.

chmineyrock\_04.JPGTwo people and a dog are escorted to a rescue boat in Chimney Rock, N.C. on Sunday, September 29, 2024.

Cooper had requested a disaster declaration for 38 North Carolina counties. It was not immediately clear why 13 of those counties weren't included, but Cooper's office said more counties may be added.

The tropical storm that was once Category 4 Hurricane Helene made it to North Carolina Friday and touched all parts of the state. It led to flash flooding in the Triangle, a tornado in Rocky Mount and historic levels of devastation throughout the Western North Carolina mountains.

The full extent of the damage in Western North Carolina continues to unfold. By midday Sunday, nearly 464,000 customers still lacked power, Cooper said. More than 500,000 in South Carolina remained without electricity, according to Duke Energy's outage map.

lakelurechmineyrock\_16.JPGThe bridge that connects Lake Lure and Chimney Rock in Lake Lure, N.C. on Saturday, September 29, 2024.

On Sunday morning, Duke Energy said that nearly all of its customers outside of western North Carolina should have their power restored by midnight. Many will have power before then, Duke said.

Floodwaters on Friday wiped out bridges, remote highways and sections of interstates — not only cutting off travel to and through the region, but isolating those sheltering in place during the storm.

RAL\_092922-HURRICANE-HELENE-TEL-07.JPGSwannanoa residents walk through devastating flood damage from the Swannanoa River on Sunday, Sept. 29, 2024. The remnants of Hurricane Helene caused widespread flooding, downed trees, and power outages in western North Carolina.

In Asheville, residents were stunned to see houses and businesses swept into the Swannanoa River.

As of Sunday morning, about 1,000 people in Buncombe County were unaccounted for, according to Miller, the sheriff. But county officials expect that number will drop once cell and internet service are restored.

Two sheriff's officers are among those who've died, the North Carolina Sheriff's Association said in a Facebook post. The deputies, from the Macon and Madison county sheriff's offices, "were tragically killed in raging flood waters," the post said.

Video: Scenes of flooding devastation around NC's Lake LureSee scenes of the massive devastation caused by flooding from Helene in the Lake Lure and Chimney Rock areas of North Carolina, Sunday, Sept. 29, 2024.

"The people in western North Carolina are hurting from this devastating storm and we are all working to get resources to people as fast as we can," Cooper said in a news release Sunday. "We have deployed rescue teams, transportation crews, water, mobile kitchens and more. This is going to be a long-term recovery and this federal declaration will help us respond."

RAL\_092922-HURRICANE-HELENE-TEL-18.JPGWestern North Carolina residents salvage bottled water from a flooded tractor-trailer in Swannanoa on Sunday, Sept. 29, 2024. The remnants of Hurricane Helene caused widespread flooding, downed trees, and power outages in western North Carolina.

Many in Western North Carolina remained without fresh water, internet or cell service. Seven water plants in Avery, Burke, Haywood, Jackson, Rutherford, Watauga and Yancey counties are closed, according to a news release issued by Cooper's office Saturday night. That affects nearly 70,000 households.

More than 50 water plants have no power, state Emergency Management Director Will Ray said at a news conference Sunday. Those who rely on water from 93 other systems have been advised to boil water before using it, he said.

"Flooding damages infrastructure and wells with contaminants," Ray said. "Only use bottled, boiled or treated water for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene in impacted areas. For more information, please visit your local health department, social media platforms or websites."

See photos and video from Helene's devastation in the mountains of western NC

Stay clear of western NC roads, officials say

More than 200 people were rescued from flood waters, Cooper's office said. The governor has deployed the North Carolina National Guard — with about 550 troops, more than 100 vehicles and 11 aircraft — to help with rescues, transport patients to medical care, and deliver personnel and equipment to where they're needed.

On Saturday, emergency workers rescued 117 people, including a baby, according to Todd Hunt, adjutant general of the North Carolina National Guard. They also brought 11 pets to safety.

RAL\_092922-HURRICANE-HELENE-TEL-39.JPGA man crosses a narrow section of flood damaged bridge in Swannanoa on Sunday, Sept. 29, 2024. The remnants of Hurricane Helene caused widespread flooding, downed trees, and power outages in western North Carolina.

Twenty-four shelters, with room for 1,000 people, have also opened. Information about shelters, road conditions, power outages and evacuation routes can be found at readync.gov.

State transportation officials urged people to avoid travel anywhere in Western North Carolina. About 280 roads and dozens of main highways remained closed Sunday due to flooding, downed trees, landslides or storm damage. Parts of Interstate 40, a major thoroughfare into and out of the region, were closed Sunday, though a closed section of Interstate 26 was reopened.

RAL\_092922-HURRICANE-HELENE-TEL-07.JPGSwannanoa residents walk through devastating flood damage from the Swannanoa River on Sunday, Sept. 29, 2024. The remnants of Hurricane Helene caused widespread flooding, downed trees, and power outages in western North Carolina.

One section of the eastbound lanes of I-40, three miles from the Tennessee border, washed out and fell into the Pigeon River.

"It will take a long time to fix that," Transportation Secretary Joey Hopkins said at Sunday's news conference. "We're probably talking months at best."

# Briefing 092924

Images from newsrooms and social media showed submerged cars, houses floating down a muddled French Broad River, and the town of Chimney Rock seemingly erased by a mudslide.

"The images and reports we're getting from Western North Carolina are heartbreaking and devastating," North Carolina Senate leader Phil Berger said in a news release Sunday afternoon. "Entire towns have been flooded beyond recognition and roadways have been washed out."

RAL\_092922-HURRICANE-HELENE-TEL-09.JPGSwannanoa residents walk through devastating flood damage from the Swannanoa River on Sunday, Sept. 29, 2024. The remnants of Hurricane Helene caused widespread flooding, downed trees, and power outages in western North Carolina.

More than 30 inches of rain fell in parts of Western North Carolina. Adding to the devastation: winds that gusted up to hurricane strength.

At the Asheville station, the French Broad peaked at 24.67 feet Friday evening, a level surpassing the Great Flood of 1916, which the city says crested at 21 feet and killed 80 people.

The rain also gathered in the Catawba River Basin. Lake James, northwest of Charlotte, was 10 feet over its "full-pond" level. Duke Energy starting Friday moved water from Lake Norman to Lake Wylie to ease flooding. That movement, though, worsened flooding around Mountain Island Lake. As of Sunday, the weather service still declared emergencies in Lake James, Mountain Island Lake and the Catawba River.

RAL\_092922-HURRICANE-HELENE-TEL-25.JPGAsheville residents residents line up for gasoline at a gas station on Sunday, Sept. 29, 2024. The remnants of Hurricane Helene caused widespread flooding, downed trees, and power outages in western North Carolina.

Cell phone blackout, long waits for gas

In many Western North Carolina towns, people have waited in long lines for gas, only to find that the stations only took cash.

Bobby Thompson, who's lived in Clyde for 57 years, was able to gas up at a BP station after about an hour of waiting.

"This is by far the biggest water event (I've seen)," he said.

RAL\_092922-HURRICANE-HELENE-TEL-03.JPGAsheville residents residents line up for gasoline at a gas station on Sunday, Sept. 29, 2024. The remnants of Hurricane Helene caused widespread flooding, downed trees, and power outages in western North Carolina.

And in Canton, Mayor Smathers said the town faces massive flooding, building collapses, and probable loss of life. On Saturday, a cellular service blackout there left people unable to communicate with one another and with first responders.

"I've had tears fill my eyes from random people reaching out to me, looking for their loved ones, because they cannot communicate," Smathers said. "It is unacceptable and disgusting that in our time of need, cellular service for the entire region is blocked out. There's no excuse for that. I mean, we knew the storm was coming. I can't believe this is a normalcy."

Ray, the state emergency management director, urged residents in Western North Carolina to turn their cellphones off and on periodically to allow them to connect to a network. On Friday, telecommunications partners activated disaster roaming on all networks, meaning that any any carrier can access any network to place calls, Ray said.

But Smathers said the lack of cellphone service remained widespread Saturday. The road to recovery will be long, he said.

"We need prayers," he said. "This is not a Canton issue alone. We share it with every community, town, city in west North Carolina. This is a regional apocalypse."

Editor's note: Those in 25 western North Carolina counties who had uninsured damage or losses caused by Tropical Storm Helene may be eligible for FEMA disaster assistance. How to apply: Go online to DisasterAssistance.gov, use the FEMA App or call 800-621-3362 from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. ET daily.

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# 'Friend to everyone.' Community mourns Charlotte father of four killed during Helene

September 29, 2024 | Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles (NC) Author: Joe Marusak, The Charlotte Observer | Section: local | 320 Words OpenURL Link

Tony Taylor was a Charlotte father of four who treated everyone he met like family, his nephew, Stephen Barbour, said.

"Uncle Tony was a friend to everyone," Barbour recalled on the GoFundMe he started for Taylor's wife, Sandy Lucille Taylor, and the couple's children.

Taylor, 62, died when a neighbor's tree fell during Helene on his family's home on Brookway Drive, in northwest Charlotte's historic Hoskins neighborhood.

A 4-year-old girl and a 58-year-old man died in wrecks on Helene-slickened Charlotte-area roads.

Although Taylor's wife and four children survived, "the loss of such a kind and loving man has left a profound void," Barbour said on the GoFundMe site.

"For some time, we had been trying to get the tree removed, but since it wasn't on our property, there was little we could do," he said.

"Now, we are left not only to mourn the loss of a man whose smile could light up any room but also to support his grieving family through this incredibly difficult time," Barbour said.

By Saturday night, 81 people had donated a total of \$4,476. By Monday morning: \$10,750 from 178 donors.

The top donation was a man's \$500 contribution. A woman donated \$100 with this message to the family: "I will be praying to Jehovah God our Heavenly Father to provide you comfort and peace in your time of grief and loss."

Barbour started the site Friday to help pay for his uncle's funeral expenses and repairs to the home, and to replace the family's belongings.

Donations also would help pay for a temporary place for the family to stay and to assist with day-to-day expenses, Barbour said.

"We are asking for any contribution to help support his wife and children as they rebuild their lives in the wake of this unimaginable loss," Barbour said.

Tony Taylor 2.jpegTony and Sandy Lucille Taylor

"Your generosity means more than words can express, and we are deeply grateful for any support you can offer during this time," he said.

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### The Panthers showed promise vs. Bengals, but it wasn't enough on 'a day of near misses'

September 29, 2024 | Charlotte Observer, The: Web Edition Articles (NC) Author: Scott Fowler, The Charlotte Observer | Section: carolina\_panthers | 987 Words OpenURL Link

The home fans at Bank of America Stadium saw another loss Sunday for the Carolina Panthers, and there was nothing unusual about that.

But the way the Panthers lost? That was actually encouraging. Yes, the Panthers have fallen far enough that they are allowed to have encouraging losses, and that's what Cincinnati's 34-24 win over Carolina was.

"A day of near misses," Carolina head coach Dave Canales would call it later, and that's true. But it was the right type of near misses, the "you did the right thing and it still went wrong" sort of errors that you can live with — especially if you're a supporter of a team that went 2-15 and looked hopeless throughout 2023.

The Panthers went for it on fourth-and-inches inside the Cincinnati 1 on their first drive. Didn't make it. They called a fake punt and had a first down all but assured after punter Johnny Hekker threw a great pass. Reserve tight end Feleipe Franks dropped it.

"I loved the mindset, the mentality," quarterback Andy Dalton said.

And yet despite those critical fourth-down misses, the Panthers kept coming. And in doing so, a little of their fraught relationship with their fans was repaired.

CLT\_CARvsCIN\_2721.JPGPanthers wide receiver Diontae Johnson celebrates scoring a touchdown against Cincinnati Sunday. Johnson had seven catches for 83 yards, but the Panthers lost, 34-24.

"The energy is just different," said Panthers wide receiver Diontae Johnson, who scored one touchdown but had his hands on another that he said later he should have caught as well. "To me, I feel like it's a different team."

After the Panthers got bombarded with boos in their home opener Sept. 15 - a 26-3 loss to the L.A. Chargers that was also the last game Bryce Young started at quarterback — this time the Carolina fans were far more positive with Dalton in charge. And they should have been.

In danger of being blown out when they went down 31-14 in the late in the third quarter, the Panthers instead scored 10 straight points.

Then, with the deficit cut to 31-24, Carolina forced a punt and got the ball back. With 4:42 to go, the ball was in Dalton's hands — albeit at the Panthers' 8-yard line — with a chance to tie the game if Carolina could go 92 yards.

CLT\_CARvsCIN\_2594.JPGPanthers quarterback Andy Dalton runs with the ball against Cincinnati on Sunday at Bank of America Stadium.

Alas, that's where it fell apart. Jonathan Mingo dropped an easy 7-yard pass on first-and-10. Then Dalton threw two more incompletions and the Panthers punted when Canales chose to trust the defense instead of go for a fourth-and-10 at his own 8 with 4:31 to go. Cincinnati ran the clock down and kicked a game-clinching field goal, and that was that.

Still, much like last week and the win in Las Vegas, there was some hope for Carolina.

Dalton threw for 220 yards and two touchdowns, including the first career TD for rookie Xavier Legette and a dart of a 21-yarder to Johnson. Chuba Hubbard rushed for 100-plus yards again behind a steady offensive line that also didn't allow a sack. Dalton's only interception came when left tackle Ickey Ekwonu allowed Cincinnati defensive end Trey Hendrickson to hit the quarterback's arm as he threw, resulting in a flutterball that was easily picked off.

Otherwise, though, the offense was pretty good. The Panthers scored 24 points and none of them came cheap. All three of their TD drives covered at least 65 yards. Except at the 1-yard line, they ran the ball well again. "This is exactly my dream of how this thing works from an offensive standpoint," Canales said.

It was the defense and the fourth-down misses that let Carolina down in this one.

CLT\_CARvsCIN\_1386.JPGBengals wide receiver Ja'Marr Chase (1) runs the ball into the end zone to finish a 63-yard touchdown against the Panthers. Carolina missed three tackles on the play. Cincinnati won, 34-24.

The Bengals scored touchdowns on four straight drives spanning the second and third quarters, On one remarkable play, wide receiver Ja'Marr Chase pinballed through and around three Carolina defenders for a 63-yard TD that made all the Bengals fans in attendance (and there were a lot of them in the lower deck) roar in glee.

Panthers safety Xavier Woods had the most egregious missed tackle on that play, as he lowered a shoulder and hit Chase, but didn't wrap him up. The Panthers saw their fundamentals lacking on several similar plays. Woods would make up for some of that, however, by intercepting Joe Burrow in the fourth quarter and returning the ball 33 yards to set up a field goal.

Of course, nothing that happened on a football field in Charlotte matters a bit compared to what's going on in western North Carolina right now. It was an incongruously sunny day where football seemed secondary after the devastating flooding and loss of life caused by Hurricane Helene in the Carolinas over the past several days. Canales acknowledged that tragedy at the beginning of his news conference.

CLT\_CARvsCIN\_1407.JPGBengals wide receiver Ja'Marr Chase, left center, and quarterback Joe Burrow jump in the air to celebrate a touchdown during their game against the Panthers on Sunday at Bank of America Stadium.

But if you're only talking about football, the Panthers lost one the right way Sunday. If they had scored on that first drive, as they should have — they ran four straight plays at the Cincinnati 2- or 1-yard line — things might have been different. My only quibble is that fourth-down play was run out of the shotgun when they only needed a few inches. Still, Carolina should have been able to bang that one in.

"That's going to haunt me tonight," Panthers offensive guard Robert Hunt said.

The belief in this team is there," Canales said. "But we just have to pair it with our execution."

That's right. The Panthers hit rock bottom a couple of weeks ago, getting outscored 73-13 in their first two games.

At least, for now, they've stopped digging.

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# Duke women's soccer coach Robbie Church secures 300th career win at home against SMU

September 29, 2024 | Chronicle, The (Duke University) (Durham, NC) Author: Elle Chavis | Section: News | 737 Words OpenURL Link

It was a Mia to Mia connection for the goal. After scoring her own goal early on in the Blue Devils' match against SMU, sophomore Mia Oliaro sent the ball into the box for her name-twin Mia Minestrella at the end of the first half. Minestrella kept control of the ball amidst a sea of red jerseys, shaking off defenders and charging toward the goal to solidify the lead.

Clad in black and pink jerseys in honor of Kick Cancer night, No. 3 Duke logged its first ACC home win, besting SMU in a well-earned 3-0 victory Friday afternoon. The win marked head coach Robbie Church's 300th career coaching win in his final season with the team.

"It was a little bit different of a game than we've had up to this point," Church said after the game. "The girls showed a lot of character."

The Blue Devils' character shined immediately, as they scored their first goal a mere 90 seconds into the match. Graduate student Hannah Bebar slid to the ground to pick the pocket of a defender, sending the ball back into Blue Devil hands — or rather, to the feet of junior Devin Lynch.

As the Mustang defenders converged on Lynch, she quickly sent the ball down the left side of the pitch where a waiting Ella Hase used her speed to get ahead. Hase, who is tied for the most assists on the team, crossed the ball across the box towards a wide open Oliaro, who finished the job that her teammates started and put Duke on the board early.

"You score a goal in the first minute and a half to put you on that front foot. That was so important for us," Church said.

The early goal gave Duke the control it needed for the rest of the match. From that point, the Blue Devils did what they do best: disrupt any semblance of offense from their opponents. As has become the norm, Duke outshot the Mustangs 12-1 in the first half and kept the ball firmly on SMU's half of the pitch. Its defensive trio, backed up by goalkeeper Leah Freeman, refused to give the Mustangs the chance to set up an offense or put points on the board.

As Hurricane Helene rolled through the Raleigh-Durham area, the effects of playing on a soaked field in windy conditions were obvious. A wet ball meant first touches weren't always solid, and the wind often blew the long ball a bit off target.

But, despite the challenges posed by Mother Nature, Duke managed to stay on top. Minestrella's goal with about a minute and a half left in the first half sent the Blue Devils into the locker room with a solid 2-0 lead.

Still, it was the Mustangs who trotted out of the locker room with all the momentum. As light rain rolled into Koskinen Stadium, so did SMU's offensive energy. Feeling the pressure of being in a two-goal hole, the Mustangs were aggressive, refusing to let Duke's stifling high press keep them quiet.

After being left with little to do in the first half, the Mustang's renewed offensive drive forced Freeman to work hard to log the 26th shutout of her college career. The Berkeley, Calif., native made four saves in a three minute period as SMU, led by sophomore standout Nyah Rose, pounded shot after shot towards the goal.

"Leah [Freeman] has become one of the best goalkeepers in the country," Church said. "Anytime we've had breakdowns, we have Leah back there."

With their goal well defended, the Blue Devils went back on the offensive for the rest of the second half. Though they were already up, Hase decided that one assist on the night was not enough. Once again using her speed to leave the Mustangs in the dust, the Orland Park, Ill., native powered down the left side of the field. Waiting in the box this time around was freshman Mary Long. She took control of the low-ball and sent it towards the goal, solidifying Duke's victory to 3-0.

"I think I'm old," Church joked when asked about the 300-win milestone. "I've been a very blessed person, to be at a school that I love and just having a great time [in my] last year."

Duke will start the month of October still at home, continuing conference play against Virginia Oct. 3 Thursday evening.

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### More than 60 dead from storm Helene as rescue, cleanup efforts grow

September 29, 2024 | Courier-Times, The (Roxboro, NC)
Author: Gerard MARTINEZ with Lucie AUBOURG in Washington | Section: National | 695 Words
OpenURL Link

Rescuers struggled on Saturday with washed-out bridges and debris-strewn roads in the search for survivors of devastating Storm Helene, which killed at least 63 people across five states and caused massive power outages.

Helene slammed into Florida Thursday as a Category 4 hurricane and surged north, gradually weakening but leaving in its wake toppled trees, downed power lines and mudslide-wrecked homes.

Federal emergencies were declared in six states -- Alabama, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee -- with more than 800 personnel from the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) deployed.

Now classified as a "post-tropical cyclone", the remnants of the storm are expected to continue inundating the Ohio Valley and central Appalachians through Sunday, according to the National Hurricane Center (NHC).

In affected communities across the eastern coast and midwest, storm victims and volunteers toting trash bags, mops and hammers tried to repair what they could and clean up the rest.

"There's only a couple businesses open. They have limited supply. So I'm just worried about families that have kids and stuff like that, getting somewhere to stay and have something to eat," said Steven Mauro, a resident of Valdosta, Georgia.

At least 24 people died in South Carolina, 17 in Georgia, 11 in Florida, 10 in North Carolina and one in Virginia, according to local authorities and media tallied by AFP.

The National Weather Service said conditions would "continue to improve today following the catastrophic flooding over the past two days."

But it warned of possible "long-duration power outages."

"Main issue is the electrical power," said another man from Valdosta who declined to give his name. "With the whole town down, the traffic lights are out. So driving around... people should just stay home."

More than 2.6 million customers were still without electricity across 10 states from Florida in the southeast to Indiana in the midwest as of early Sunday morning, according to tracker poweroutage.us.

- 'It breaks my heart' -

Helene blew into Florida's northern Gulf shore with powerful winds of 140 miles (225 kilometers) per hour. Even as it weakened into a post-tropical cyclone, it has wreaked havoc.

Record levels of flooding threatened to break several dams, but Tennessee emergency officials said Saturday that the Nolichucky Dam -- which had been close to breaching -- was no longer in danger of giving way and people downriver could return home.

Massive flooding was reported in Asheville, in western North Carolina. Governor Ray Cooper called it "one of the worst storms in modern history" to hit his state.

There were reports of remote towns in the Carolina mountains without power or cell service, their roads washed away or buried by mudslides.

In Cedar Key, an island city of 700 people off Florida's Gulf Coast, several pastel-colored wooden homes were destroyed by record storm surges and ferocious winds.

"I've lived here my whole life, and it breaks my heart to see it. We've not really been able to catch a break," said Gabe Doty, a Cedar Key official, referring to two other hurricanes in the past year.

In South Carolina, the dead included two firefighters, officials said.

Georgia's 17 deaths included an emergency responder, according to state officials.

In the Tennessee town of Erwin, more than 50 patients and staff trapped on a hospital roof by surging floodwaters had to be rescued by helicopters.

- 'Overwhelming' damage -

In a statement Saturday, President Joe Biden called Helene's devastation "overwhelming."

Biden was briefed by FEMA administrator Deanne Criswell and Homeland Security Advisor Liz Sherwood-Randall on "the tragic loss of life across the region," the White House said.

Criswell, who went to Florida on Saturday to survey damage, will visit Georgia on Sunday and North Carolina on Monday.

September has been an unusually wet month around the world, with scientists linking some extreme weather events to human-caused global warming.

The North Atlantic hurricane season runs from the beginning of June to the end of November, with most of the severe storms historically forming around the end of August or beginning of September.

Forecasters are carefully watching two more named storm systems expected next week: Joyce and Hurricane Isaac.

Isaac is expected to weaken into a powerful post-tropical cyclone by Sunday night or early Monday, while Joyce is expected to be a tropical storm for a couple more days, according to the NHC.

# bur-bbk-jgc/lb/mtp

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Gerard MARTINEZ with Lucie AUBOURG in Washington, 'More than 60 dead from storm Helene as rescue, cleanup efforts grow', Courier-Times, The (online), 29 Sep 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a> p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BE55E68069F500>



### Death toll soars in US from storm Helene, North Carolina reeling

September 29, 2024 | Courier-Times, The (Roxboro, NC) Author: Chandan KHANNA| Section: National | 658 Words OpenURL Link

The death toll from powerful storm Helene jumped to at least 93 on Sunday, with one county in North Carolina alone reporting 30 deaths, authorities said, as rescuers battled to reach people in need across the southeastern United States.

The storm response took on a political tinge after President Joe Biden and the two candidates vying to replace him, Kamala Harris and Donald Trump, announced plans to soon visit hard-hit areas, some of them in key battleground states in the November election.

High winds and torrential rain pummeled towns and cities across Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee. Homes were destroyed, roads flooded out and power cut off to millions.

"We're hearing (of) significant infrastructure damage to water systems, communication, roads, critical transportation routes, as well as several homes that have been just destroyed by this," the administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Deanne Criswell, said Sunday.

At least 93 people were killed in the extreme weather -- 37 in North Carolina, 25 in South Carolina, 17 in Georgia, 11 in Florida, two in Tennessee and one in Virginia, according to tallies from local authorities compiled by AFP. That total was expected to rise.

"We have another devastating update. We now have 30 confirmed losses due to the storm," Quentin Miller, the sheriff in North Carolina's Buncombe County, which includes the tourist city of Asheville, told a briefing.

Flood warnings remained in effect in parts of western North Carolina, amid fears of potential dam failures.

Conditions were expected to improve in the affected areas by around Tuesday, National Weather Service director Ken Graham said.

Nearly 2.2 million households remained without power on Sunday, according to tracker poweroutage.us.

US Department of Energy official Matt Targuagno said that crews were working hard to restore electricity but warned it would be "a complex, multi-day response."

Thousands of people continued to seek assistance in shelters run by the American Red Cross, organization official Jennifer Pipa said.

- Bridges washed away -

Helene blew into Florida's northern Gulf shore as a huge Category Four hurricane with winds of 140 miles (225 kilometers) per hour.

Even as it weakened, it wreaked havoc.

North Carolina saw some of the worst of the flooding, with Governor Roy Cooper saying rescuers were being forced to airlift supplies in some areas due to damaged or flooded roads.

"I don't know that anybody could be fully prepared for the amount of flooding and landslides that they are

experiencing right now," Criswell said on CBS, adding that more search and rescue teams were being deployed.

William Ray, director of the state's emergency management department, warned that conditions were still extremely dangerous.

Hundreds of roads across the region remained closed, with several bridges washed away by floodwaters.

Four major interstate highways were closed across North Carolina and Tennessee, with "multiple" bridges still out, said Kristin White of the US Department of Transportation.

Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina each had more than 100 road closures, she added.

In the Georgia city of Valdosta, the storm ripped the roofs off buildings, and left road intersections a tangle of felled utility poles and trees.

"The wind started really hitting, like, felt branches and pieces of the roof hitting the side of the building and hitting the windows," said Valdosta resident Steven Mauro.

"And then we were looking out and then literally this whole street, just everything went black."

Trump, the Republican former president seeking another term, will visit Valdosta on Monday for a briefing on the disaster, his campaign said.

Biden, who has approved federal aid for several states in the wake of the disaster, intends to travel to hard-hit areas this week, "as soon as it will not disrupt emergency response operations," the White House said Sunday, later adding that Harris would do the same.

"We will stand with these communities for as long as it takes to make sure that they are able to recover and rebuild," Harris said Sunday evening at a campaign rally in Las Vegas.

Biden was scheduled to speak about the post-storm response from the White House on Monday.

### bur-sst/jgc

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Chandan KHANNA, 'Death toll soars in US from storm Helene, North Carolina reeling', *Courier-Times, The* (online), 29 Sep 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BEAA4E4193DEA0">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BEAA4E4193DEA0</a>



### Asheville cut off from world; damage estimated \$100B in South

September 29, 2024 | Courier-Times, The (Roxboro, NC) Author: Alan Wooten | The Center Square | Section: State | 218 Words OpenURL Link

(The Center Square) – Asheville and other parts of western North Carolina were cut off from the world on Saturday, with no roads open into or out of the most populous city in the region and electricity and cell towers limited or inoperable.

Fatalities from the storm Helene in the South were more than five dozen, and the Buncombe County numbers – where Asheville is county seat – were not included due to trouble reaching next of kin, said the Emergency Services director. Nearby Spruce Pine collected 24 inches of rain between Tuesday and Saturday, dwarfing the 11-plus in metro Atlanta in a 48-hour period that eclipsed records dating to 1878.

Helene, a Category 4 hurricane when she hit the Big Bend of Florida on Thursday night, is forecast to leave behind between \$95 billion and \$110 billion in damage and economic loss. Property damage alone is forecast by Moody's to run \$15 billion to \$26 billion.

President Joe Biden on Saturday granted emergency aid to North Carolina through a declaration.

"To say this caught us off guard would be an understatement," Buncombe County Sheriff Quentin Miller said.

Commerce and tourism will be impacted for some time by the loss of Interstate 40 between Asheville and Knoxville, Tenn. Two eastbound lanes fell into the Pigeon River about 4 miles into North Carolina.

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Alan Wooten | The Center Square, 'Asheville cut off from world; damage estimated \$100B in South', *Courier-Times, The* (online), 29 Sep 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BE6C90DB2E2CF8">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BE6C90DB2E2CF8</a>



### 'Like a bomb went off'

September 29, 2024 | News & Record (Greensboro, NC) Author: JOHN HINTON Staff Reporter | Section: Main | 1082 Words

Page: 1A OpenURL Link

Gov. Roy Cooper has requested a major disaster declaration from President Joe Biden for 38 counties in North Carolina to help residents recover from the massive flooding and countless damage caused by Hurricane Helene.

The extreme weather event has been blamed for at least 52 deaths in states ranging from Florida to North Carolina, where two perished from storm-related incidents.

In his letter Friday night to Biden, Cooper included Forsyth, Yadkin, Surry, Wilkes, Watauga, Alleghany and Ashe counties as part of his request.

"I have determined that this incident is such unusual severity and magnitude that effective recovery is beyond the capabilities of state and affected local governments and that supplementary federal assistance is necessary," Cooper wrote.

All across the Southeast, the massive deluge has left many stranded and millions without power.

Helene blew ashore in Florida's Big Bend region as a Category 4 hurricane late Thursday packing winds of 140 mph and then quickly moved through Georgia, the Carolinas and Tennessee, uprooting trees, splintering homes and sending creeks and rivers over their banks, churning up tornadoes and straining dams.

"It looks like a bomb went off," said Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp after surveying the damage from the air.

More than 700,000 customers were without power across North Carolina, including 160,000 in Buncombe County. Interstate 40 was impassible in multiple locations, and a state transportation department map showed that most routes into Asheville and across much of the mountains were snarled.

All told, western North Carolina was essentially cut off because of landslides and flooding.

State officials say roughly 30 swift water teams have conducted more than 100 rescues so far in flooding that hasn't been this bad in a century.

In fact, there have been hundreds of water rescues, none more dramatic than in rural Unicoi County in East Tennessee, where dozens of patients and staff were plucked by helicopter from a hospital rooftop Friday.

And the rescues continued into Saturday in Buncombe County, where part of Asheville is literally under water.

"To say this caught us off-guard would be an understatement," said Quentin Miller, the county sheriff.

Among the desperate family members waiting for news was Francine Cavanaugh, whose sister told her she was going to check on guests at a vacation cabin as the storm began hitting Asheville. Cavanaugh, who lives in Atlanta, said she hasn't been able to reach her since then.

"I think that people are just completely stuck, wherever they are, with no cell service, no electricity," she said.

The storm, now a post-tropical cyclone, was expected to hover over the Tennessee Valley on Saturday and Sunday, according to the National Hurricane Center.

Meanwhile, the western part of the state is trying to gather itself after the historic flooding. Power. Communication. Lives. They've all been lost.

That much, at least, is known. What isn't - yet - is how bad things really are. And that may take days, maybe even weeks, before officials fully have a grasp.

The storm produced widespread flooding Friday in Boone and at Appalachian State University, prompting Watauga County officials to declare a countywide state of emergency.

Appalachian State suspended its operations until 5 p.m. Sunday. The floodwater began to recede on Friday in Boone as the rain slackened, the university said in a statement.

Officials with Rutherford County Emergency Management said Friday night that engineers evaluated the Lake Lure dam and determined that it was no longer at imminent risk of failure. Still, as a precaution, residents who live below the dam were ordered to evacuate to higher ground.

In Asheville, floodwaters pushed by the remnants of Hurricane Helene left North Carolina's largest mountain city largely cut off Saturday by damaged roads and a lack of power and cellphone service, part of a swath of destruction across southern Appalachia that left an unknown number dead and countless worried relatives unable to reach loved ones.

More than 400 roads remained closed as floodwaters began to recede and reveal the extent of damage. Cooper said that supplies were being airlifted to that part of the state.

Among those rescued from rising waters was nurse Janetta Barfield, whose car was swamped on Friday morning as she left an overnight shift at Asheville's Mission Hospital. She said she watched a car in front of her drive through standing water and thought it was safe to proceed. But her car stalled, and within minutes water had filled her front seat up to her chest. A nearby police officer helped her to safety.

"It was unbelievable how fast that creek got just in like five minutes," Barfield said.

Early on Saturday morning, many Ashevillle gas stations were closed because they didn't have electricity, and the few that were open had hourlong lines wrapped around the block.

The hub of tourism and arts, home to about 94,000 people, was unusually still after floodwaters swamped neighborhoods known for drawing visitors including Biltmore Village and the River Arts District, which is home to numerous galleries, shops and breweries.

There was no cellular service and no timeline for when it would be restored. Residents were also directed to boil their water.

While there have been deaths in the county, Emergency Services Director Van Taylor Jones said Saturday that he wasn't ready to report specifics, partially because the communication outages hindered efforts to contact next of kin.

"We have had some loss of life," he said.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

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# GNR weather and index

September 29, 2024 | News & Record (Greensboro, NC) Section: Main | 40 Words Page: 1A OpenURL Link Vol. 134, No. 273 **WEATHER** 78/63 Humid with a stray shower. Weather on B6. **INDEX** Advice C9 Classifieds C12 Comics Insert Crossword C11 Editorial C2 Features C16 Nation & World B1 **Obituaries B4** Sports D1 **TV C10 BOTTOM BILLBOARD:** Even the wind and rain of Hurricane Helene couldn't stop the 'Walk for Commutation.' News, A3 Copyright (c) 2024 Greensboro News & Record

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'GNR weather and index', *Greensboro News & Record* (online), 29 Sep 2024 1A <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BE49BB33565580">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BE49BB33565580</a>



### 'Walk for Commutation' to pass through Greensboro

September 29, 2024  $\mid$  News & Record (Greensboro, NC) Author: NANCY MCLAUGHLIN Staff Reporter | Section: Main | 398 Words

Page: 3A OpenURL Link

Anti-death penalty advocates have begun a 136-mile walk that passes through Greensboro on Sunday in an effort to get Gov. Roy Cooper to commute the sentences of those on death row. For more information about the route, go to nccadp.org/walk-for-commutation.

GREENSBORO - Death penalty opponents have begun a 136-mile walk that passes through the city on Sunday in an effort to get Gov. Roy Cooper to commute the sentences of the many people on death row.

The winds and rains of Hurricane Helene slowed, but didn't halt, their trek, which began Thursday.

That the route is 136 miles isn't by accident. That's how many people currently sit on North Carolina's death row awaiting the ultimate punishment.

The "Walk for Commutation" by members of The North Carolina Alternatives to the Death Penalty and their supporters includes the screening of a film called "Racist Roots" at First Friends Meeting that is open to the public and details the history of the death penalty.

"There are many people who are on death row who should not be on death row," said Lia Scholl, the pastor of the church.

Of her many reasons for being against the death penalty is the possibility of it being carried carrying out on someone who may be innocent.

"And one person dying on death row who is not guilty is too many," Scholl said.

Scholl has also talked to the family of crime victims.

"What I hear from folks who have been through this is that the death is not closure," Scholl said. "They are still missing their family member. The execution does not end their pain."

She is hoping Cooper, a Democrat, clears death row before he leaves office.

"He has less to lose than anybody by commuting these 136 sentences," Scholl said of Cooper, who is not up for reelection.

Anti-death penalty protests on street corners in North Carolina largely got little more than a passing notice until recently. North Carolina has suspended executions, but that could change as other states, including South Carolina, have reinstated the death penalty and conversations are again taking place.

The organization started its walk in Winston-Salem on Thursday and will call on the governor to commute the death sentences when it ends Oct. 10 - a Thursday - in Raleigh.

The group intentionally planned its route to begin and end in two counties, Forsyth and Wake, where they say more people are sentenced to death than anywhere else in the state.

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# Cougars' D stuffs Eagles

September 29, 2024 | News & Record (Greensboro, NC) Author: JIM SANDS Staff Reporter | Section: Local | 766 Words

Page: 1B OpenURL Link

WENTWORTH - Once again Rockingham's lights-out defense was stellar as they made three critical goal line stands. Meanwhile, the offense came through with a couple of big plays for scores in monsoon-like conditions to notch a 9-6 Mid-State 3A Conference win over Smith on Thursday night at Cougar Pride Stadium.

The approach of Hurricane Helene, which made landfall in Florida on Thursday, already had saturated the field before the 6 p.m. kickoff. But what started out as poor conditions at the beginning of the game kept getting worse as the rain began coming down in sheets in the second quarter which carried through for the remainder of the game.

Both teams had problems holding onto the ball over the course of the night, but in two game-changing situations, Rockingham was clutch with the outcome on the line.

Rockingham junior quarterback Parker Upchurch went deep and connected over the top with Brady Ross near the Eagles 30. Ross wrestled the ball away from the Smith defender then turned and raced to the end zone for the first score of the night to give the Cougars a 6-0 lead with 8:50 to go in the third quarter.

"Our offensive coordinator, coach T (Charlie Robinson) has been saying we had that open. Brady Ross is one of our best football players, and we were going to give him a chance to make a play, and he made it," Rockingham head coach Doug Robertson said. "We just haven't made any of those and finally made one for the first time in a long time. We expect Brady to make those type of plays, and he made a big play for sure."

The lead was short-lived, however. Following a turnover inside the Cougars 10-yard line, Smith scored after scooping up their own fumble for a touchdown to tie the game at 6-6 with 2:09 to go in the third period.

On the ensuing drive, the Cougars began a 13-play drive that carried over to the fourth quarter. With fourth and goal at the 1-yard line, junior Jaxon Wray hit a 19-yard field goal that just cleared the uprights by inches for the 9-0 advantage with 7:16 to go in the game as the rain continued to pour.

"We practice it a lot, so we do have confidence," Robertson said. "We tried three last week and only made one, and tonight we were one-of-one on kicks. Obviously we did change kickers. Diego Abad Martinez missed the first extra point, so I gave Jackson Wray a try and he made it.

"It don't matter if it goes a foot over or 10 feet over; it counts the same as three, and that was the game-winner."

Smith had several opportunities to take control of the game. On three separate occasions, the Eagles had the ball near the goal line over the course of the night, but the defense came through with three fourth-and-goal stops.

Rockingham's defense forced Smith to punt on the Eagles' ensuing possession following the field goal, which allowed the Cougars to run out the clock down the stretch to lock up the team's second consecutive win.

"The defense played lights-out again as they did last week," Robertson said. "I think they had the ball inside the 10 three times and didn't score. They wouldn't have if we didn't fumble and let them scoop one up. Really, that's how our team is geared. We play our best guys on defense, and they've got to carry us."

The Cougars defense held the Eagles to 64 yards rushing and 35 passing yards.

Upchurch did a solid job stepping in for starting quarterback Luke Strittmatter, who was out due to a high ankle sprain he suffered in the first half versus Southern Guilford Sept. 20.

Upchurch completed 4 of 5 passes for 63 yards while the Cougars compiled 127 yards rushing by committee.

The Cougars also defeated Smith by a 29-13 margin Sept. 22, 2023 in Greensboro.

Rockingham is now undefeated in the Mid-State 3A Conference standings.

UP NEXT: Rockingham (2-0, 4-1) travels to take on Eastern Guilford (2-0, 2-3), which shutout High Point Central by a whopping 60-0 margin Sept. 26. Ben L. Smith (0-2, 2-3) hosts Dudley (1-0, 4-0) Oct. 4.

OTHER COUNTY SCORESNorth Forsyth 59, McMichael 0

West Stokes 24, Morehead 6

Reidsville, bye

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### Scale of damages from Helene in Western NC still unfolding

September 29, 2024 | Herald-Sun, The (Durham, NC)

Author: Drew Jackson and Joe Marusak; Staff Writer | Section: News | 646 Words

Page: 17A
OpenURL Link

Hundreds of thousands of people remained without power Saturday morning in North Carolina in the aftermath of a tropical storm that started as Hurricane Helene.

Helene's remnants dumped historic levels of rain across the state, leading to devastating flooding in Western North Carolina and a web of impassable roads and interstates.

In a state familiar with the power of hurricanes along its long coast, the level of devastation in North Carolina's mountains, hundreds of miles inland, has been sobering.

Images from newsrooms and social media show houses floating down a muddled French Broad River, submerged cars and the town of Chimney Rock seemingly erased by a mudslide.

Gov. Roy Cooper has asked the federal government for a major disaster declaration for 38 North Carolina counties and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians that would expand access to assistance to governments, some nonprofits, and individuals.

There were nearly 400 closed roads across the state Saturday, according to the North Carolina Department of Transportation. That is going to hinder efforts to help those harmed.

"The entire emergency response effort will be hampered by the damage to roads and powerlines," said said NCDOT spokesman Jamie Kritzer.

Those closures include multiple sections of Interstates 40 and 26 around Asheville, the main arteries for traveling through the mountainous region. One section of the eastbound lane of I-40, three miles from the Tennessee border, washed out and fell into the Pigeon River.

"At this point, we're still advising people not to travel in Western North Carolina," said NCDOT spokesman Jamie Kritzer. "We're still assessing what the damage looks like but in many spots, the recovery effort will be long term and labor intensive."

Of the 400 closed roads, Kritzer said 64 were primary roads, the state's designation for significant roadways, including highways and interstates. Those closures could impact recovery efforts.

Water supply down, outages widespread

In Buncombe County, I-40 and I-26 are impassable in multiple locations, emergency officials said at a news conference Saturday morning.

A boil-water advisory continues for Asheville. The county also has no cellular coverage, with no estimated restoration time.

As of Saturday morning, around 400,000 in North Carolina were still without power, according to Duke Energy, with most of those outages occurring in the western region.

Most of the outages have no timeline for when power will be restored, as the extend of the damage is still being

assessed, according to the Duke Energy outage map.

In one of Friday's most harrowing moment, an alert was sent out Friday afternoon that the Lake Lure Dam in Rutherford County was set to fail at any moment, with residents below the 100 foot structure ordered to evacuate.

Hours later the Lake Lure Dam continued to hold.

Water levels throughout the Western region reached historic levels of flooding. The Pigeon River crested at more than 25 feet near the Canton station.

People living through the chaos on Saturday were doing what they could to cope. In the town of Hot Springs, where the swollen French Broad river had closed the Bridge Street Bridge, residents met at Sara Joe's Gas Station Saturday morning to try and figure out a way around the road closures. The gas station had posted on its Facebook page Friday afternoon that there was free ice in the cooler and that people could take some if they needed it.

A few hours after that message the French Broad River rose to more than 20 feet, reaching major flood level, according to a water data station in Hot Springs. On Saturday afternoon, the river remained at 15 feet deep.

At the Asheville station, the French Broad peaked at 24.67 feet Friday evening, a level surpassing the Great Flood of 1916, which the city says crested at 21 feet and killed 80 people.

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