

Polk County Farmers Markets closed for October

October 11, 2024 | Tryon Daily Bulletin, The (NC) Author: Storme Smith| Section: Community | 263 Words OpenURL Link

POLK COUNTY—In the wake of ongoing disaster relief efforts, the Polk County Farmers Markets have decided to remain closed for the rest of October. This closure period will allow everyone involved to focus on their families and the recovery process. However, plans are in place for upcoming events and markets to support the community as it rebuilds.

The Columbus Winter Market will begin on November 2 and continue through April. It will be located behind Iron Key Brewing at 135 Locust St. and run from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. The market will be held every first and third Friday of each month. Unfortunately, there will be no Saluda Winter Market this year. However, the community can look forward to the Saluda Holiday Market on November 30.

The next Friends of Ag Breakfast is scheduled for November 20 from 7 a.m. to 8 a.m. at the Green Creek Community Center. This event aims to bring together agricultural community members to provide support and discuss the path forward after the recent challenges faced by rural areas due to Hurricane Helene.

The impact of this hurricane has been particularly severe in rural communities, where agriculture serves as the region's lifeblood. Farmers have suffered significant losses in terms of crops, livestock, and essential infrastructure.

While it is still too early to estimate the total agricultural losses incurred, understanding the region's agrarian profile can provide insight into the recovery process. For more information on agricultural disaster resources, visit the NC Co-Op Extension's website at https://ncdisaster.ces.ncsu.edu/.

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Harmon Field to partially reopen next week

October 11, 2024 | Tryon Daily Bulletin, The (NC) Author: Storme Smith| Section: Community | 412 Words OpenURL Link

Progress made on cleanup efforts

TRYON—The Town of Tryon is making significant progress in restoring Harmon Field, with plans to partially reopen the park next week.

As the town prepares for the reopening, officials are urging the public to adhere to specified boundaries and only utilize designated areas, including the oval track, which will now be open to dogs, the dog park, baseball field, open-air gym, and tennis courts.

The town has retained Servpro Clean Restoration to clean and restore key park facilities, including the cabin, ballfield restrooms, field house restrooms, and concession stand. Restoration work commenced earlier this week.

Brad Gordon, Tryon Parks Superintendent, expressed the town's dedication to reopening Harmon Field.

"We want the town and everyone to know we've been working hard to reopen Harmon Field," said Gordon. "We had hoped to do it this week, but we wanted to give Servpro a chance to get at least one of the bathrooms ready."

Once finalized, the partial reopening will encompass the dog park, baseball field, oval walking track, tennis courts, restrooms, and an open-air gym.

Gordon also wanted citizens who volunteered to participate in cleanup efforts to know that they would be contacted once the mud and dirt were removed and the next cleanup stage began.

In addition to the restoration efforts, the Tryon Board of Commissioners is set to deliberate on a Resolution Authorizing the Acceptance of Donations for Harmon Field at their meeting on Tuesday, October 15. The board will consider the approval of Project Ordinances to cover all storm costs for the Water and Sewer System and General Fund, including Harmon Field, to facilitate the reimbursement of storm costs.

The town has been actively seeking financial assistance for Harmon Field, engaging with its insurance carrier and FEMA. An insurance adjuster is scheduled to visit the site during the week of October 21 to assess damages. The town must secure funding from the insurance carrier before seeking FEMA assistance.

A comprehensive "Harmon Field Damage Assessment from Tropical Storm Helene" notebook, complete with visual documentation and repair quotes for each affected park area, has been prepared.

Town officials have been actively participating in daily emergency briefings conducted by the County and FEMA to stay abreast of the latest developments. The efforts of the Harmon Field Board of Supervisors have also been acknowledged to get the park back open, with their recent meeting being instrumental in providing support and direction for the restoration initiatives.

The post Harmon Field to partially reopen next week appeared first on The Tryon Daily Bulletin.

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Big Brothers Big Sisters of Polk County Fall Fundraiser postponed

October 11, 2024 | Tryon Daily Bulletin, The (NC) Author: Storme Smith | Section: Community | 182 Words OpenURL Link

POLK COUNTY—Big Brothers Big Sisters of Polk County has announced that its fall fundraiser, originally scheduled at the Mimosa Inn on October 17, has been postponed until early November. The final date for the event is yet to be decided and will be announced next week.

In light of Hurricane Helene's impact, the organization's big brothers and big sisters have been actively involved in delivering services and support to families in need and assisting other organizations in the community with recovery efforts.

The organization expressed enthusiasm for rescheduling the fundraising event, emphasizing that the proceeds will benefit BBBS and other individuals and organizations involved in the recovery efforts. They aim to positively impact morale and provide support to the entire community.

Bill Smith, council chairman, expressed gratitude for Big Brothers Big Sisters' contributions and continuing support as they celebrate 25 years of serving underserved youth in Polk County.

For further information or to purchase a ticket for the rescheduled fundraiser, please contact Wdsclemson68@gmail.com or call (864) 608-9807.

The post Big Brothers Big Sisters of Polk County Fall Fundraiser postponed appeared first on The Tryon Daily Bulletin.

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Fall high school sports season extended one week due to Hurricane Helene

October 11, 2024 | Washington Daily News (NC) Author: Jason O. Boyd | Section: Northside Panthers | 677 Words OpenURL Link

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. - The N.C. High School Athletic Association Board of Directors is extending the fall sports season by a week after the devastation created in the western part of our state due to Hurricane Helene.

The move is similar to one that was done after Hurricane Florence created extensive damage to many parts of Eastern North Carolina in September of 2018.

"Changes to the fall calendar are difficult as well as complex but necessary," said NCHSAA President Dr. Stephen Gainey and NCHSAA Commissioner Que Tucker in a joint statement. "Keeping our student-athletes safe as we try to minimize risk of injury was central to any decisions made.

"We commend the work of the NCHSAA staff in its research, the Board of Directors in making time to consider these changes, and the willingness of our host partners to accommodate any changes and make their venues available."

So, for example, instead of women's tennis starting individual postseason play next week, they will begin the tra ıg

following week. Other fall sports also follow suit, including football. In many cases, schools will just have some ex time off before the postseason while others are trying to schedule additional games to keep their teams in playin shape.
The breakdown is as follows (from the NCHSAA):
Women's Tennis
Individual
Dual Team
Volleyball
Effective immediately, the weekly limitation is modified to allow affected schools to make up multiple postponed matches, not to exceed eight in a week. No change was made to the daily limitation.

Cross Country

Men's Soccer

Effective immediately, the weekly limitation is modified to allow affected schools to make up multiple postponed matches, not to exceed four in a week. No change was made to the daily limitation.

Women's Golf

The minimum number of nine-hole scores required to qualify for the Regional Championships was revised from five to three.

Cheerleading

Football

Effective immediately, a minimum of three calendar days (72 hours) must occur in between contests.

The move has been met mostly with positive responses from many coaches in the WDN coverage area.

"If we're jumping over trees, we can jump over trees," Northside cross country coach Casey Schulte said. "Honestly, I think more time ... we have a couple of kids that are fighting a little bit of injury and a little bit of sickness, so I think more time is helpful. And you know what, I really think that's what should be done for our western athletes.

"I have a lot of good friends, Ian Roper from Swain County, who's one of the cross country coaches up there. His athletes a week ago were helping cut down trees and participating with their community. So honestly, I think that's nothing but fair for them."

Washington tennis coach Beth Pippin and assistant Michele Mayo also are in favor of the idea.

"I mean, I feel like we need to do that for the western part of the state to be fair to them," Mayo said. "So I think it will benefit us. But I hope it makes it OK for everyone in the western part of the state to catch their breath and be able to finish their seasons and do what they can so they can be there too."

"We want them to do that for us," Pippin said. "And so I think even though we'd like to carry our momentum into Monday, we certainly appreciate that that's what needs to be done.

Washington soccer coach Jim Kozuch said he's been trying to take advantage and schedule more games to keep his team in playing form.

"I understand why we're doing it," Kozuch said. "No, I don't love the idea of adding games, but we've reached out to Southside, tried to get a game with them. I don't think that one's going to work out, but we're going to reach out and we're going to try to play somebody really good and see if we can get a tune-up in because at least as far as our team goes, we're a momentum team and I feel like we are going to finish the season strong."

The post Fall high school sports season extended one week due to Hurricane Helene appeared first on Washington Daily News.

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App State Disaster Relief Fund helping students, faculty and staff as \$1.1 million distributed

October 11, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Staff Report news@wataugademocrat.com| Section: Asu News| 782 Words OpenURL Link

BOONE — In the aftermath of Hurricane Helene, a harsh reality faces many students, faculty and staff of Appalachian State University. Some have lost everything — their homes, their vehicles, their driveways and bridges, and family heirlooms that can never be replaced.

To assist community members during this difficult time, the university has established the App State Disaster Relief Fund, which is providing unrestricted funds to Mountaineers in need.

As of Oct. 10, approximately \$1,128,945 has been distributed to Mountaineers in need, according to the university.

Contributions to this fund are directly helping App State students, faculty and staff who have been impacted by the devastating effects of Hurricane Helene:

Homes destroyed: Students, faculty, and staff members have been displaced from their homes across the High Country. In Boone alone, around 140 residential and commercial units have been condemned due to storm damages, with assessments still underway across the town and county. Transportation disrupted: Floodwaters and fallen trees have damaged or totaled vehicles, leaving many without reliable transportation. Road closures have worsened commutes, increasing travel times and fuel expenses. Repairs and replacements: Students and employees are burdened with the unexpected costs of replacing storm-damaged belongings, including computers, and purchasing essential equipment such as generators. Lost income: Students with jobs have missed work due to local business closures, transportation challenges, or the need to assist family, friends and neighbors with storm recovery efforts.

"In the last few days, amidst terrible devastation, we have seen tremendous acts of kindness and humanity. Neighbor helping neighbor, strangers helping strangers," said App State Interim Chancellor Heather Norris. "We greatly appreciate those who have contributed to the App State Disaster Relief Fund. This remains the best way to assist those in the Mountaineer community at this time."

Already, more than 4,000 people across the state, nation and world have given to the relief fund, which has provided assistance to nearly 1,300 App State students, faculty and staff members impacted by Hurricane Helene — a figure that continues to grow by the day. With many students still not having returned to the Boone area, the projected need for this financial assistance is estimated to be considerable.

"Despite the great progress in our area, we are keenly aware that when we reopen the university later today, we won't be returning to "normal." For many members of our university community, life won't be normal for quite some time," Norris said in her weekly update. "The scars left on our beloved landscape by Hurricane Helene remind us that the impacts of this storm have left scars on each of us as well. Some are deeper and more visible; others are minor and already healing. In a community of 24,000 people on two campuses and online, whose members live, work and learn in communities that were hard hit and some that were less so, the consequences for each of us have been different, and recovery for each of us will be different."

Students, faculty and staff in need of assistance through the App State Disaster Relief Fund are encouraged to visit the university's Disaster Relief Hub, located in Plemmons Student Union. Hours are 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday through Friday. For those who cannot access the hub in person, virtual access is available. Please reach out to the Dean of Students Office at dos@appstate.edu and a Zoom link will be provided. Learn more at appstate.edu/disaster-relief.

App State Dean of Students Judy Haas has been assisting students, faculty and staff at App State's Disaster Relief Hub, which opened Oct. 1.

The hub offers resources and support for faculty, staff and students with representatives from Counseling and Psychological Services, Case Management, Emergency Management, Financial Aid, Off-Campus Student Services, the Student Legal Clinic and the App State Disaster Relief Fund.

Through her work at the hub, Haas has heard firsthand accounts from App State students, faculty and staff who have lost their homes, their means of transportation, as well as essential items due to the hurricane — including one individual who "walked out of their residence with the clothes on their back, and that's it," she said.

The need among the Mountaineer Community is profound, according to Haas.

"One student needed to replace his glasses," Haas said. "Others need help finding temporary housing or putting money down to rent a new apartment. Many students do not have rental insurance, or it does not cover floods. I met with a faculty member who lost all of her shoes, her appliances and all of her children's toys because they were kept on the first floor. The list can go on, and the stories are real."

To give to the App State Disaster Relief Fund, visit the university's homepage — appstate.edu — and please share the appstate.edu homepage with others who wish to help.

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Blowing Rock hotels provide housing for locals, emergency personnel

October 11, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Nick Fogleman | Section: Local | 423 Words OpenURL Link

BLOWING ROCK — The town of Blowing Rock avoided the worst of Hurricane Helene, and hotels have since become a hub for housing those impacted by the storm and the emergency personnel who have poured into the area.

Many hotels hope this will reduce Hurricane Helene's impact on travel during what is typically the busiest time of the year in Blowing Rock.

"This is going to make a difference for us for the remainder of the year," General Manager of Meadowbrook Inn, Ali Borchardt said. "Our hotel is mostly occupied by energy workers right now."

As cancellations struck hotels over the weekend of Helene, bookings began to come in from those impacted by the storm as they sought housing and resources.

"We've seen a real fluctuation of customers here," Chris Valet, whose family owns the Homestead Inn, said. "We were slammed this weekend with people just trying to get hot water and electricity."

Many of the hotels have reduced their rates to allow locals who were impacted by the storm to stay there.

"This is usually the busiest and most expensive time," owner of the Hemlock Inn Bryan Summers said. "You can't get them in on your tourist rates because some people lost everything."

After power and water returned to the area and people began to make their way home, hotels found themselves filled with a different group of people. The town became a vital source of housing for the medical professionals, disaster staff, and linemen who had poured into the region.

"If it wasn't for hospital staff and emergency crew, we would have lost a lot of customers right now." Valet said.

"This time of the year, our rates are the highest, and right now, we've dropped the rates to the same as off-season."

Hotels have reported that most of the cancellations so far have been in the first half of October, but with many of the major fall events being canceled, they hope the storm won't impact their business for much longer.

"Getting into the middle of the month, we're still pretty good," Summers said. "But there's not going to be a Valle Crucis Fair, there's not going to be an Art in the Park. It's gonna be tough. This is how we make it through the winter."

Other hotels face similar challenges as October events and attractions are big business in Blowing Rock.

"I'm hoping the second half of October is good. I'm hoping some of the events will get going.'" Valet said. "Something like this has never really happened, and it's great to see a small town really come together."
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Boone Chamber Foundation receives \$35K challenge match for relief efforts

October 11, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Staff Report news@wataugademocrat.com | Section: Local | 275 Words OpenURL Link

BOONE — The Boone Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation has announced an opportunity for the community to double its impact thanks to a generous \$35,000 challenge match from two local anonymous donors. This matching gift aims to support the Foundation's continued efforts in storm relief throughout the High Country brought on by Hurricane Helene.

For every dollar donated up to \$35,000, the anonymous donors will match it, effectively doubling contributions and amplifying the impact of each gift. The funds raised will go toward supporting short-, medium-, and long-term strategies for business recovery in Boone and the surrounding High Country.

"We are incredibly grateful for the support of these generous donors during this critical time for our community," said David Jackson, President and CEO of the Boone Area Chamber of Commerce. "We've been fortunate that donor support thus far has helped the foundation take care of some immediate community needs. This matching challenge gives us an opportunity to raise more local dollars for relief efforts and to support the business community that has given so much to locals and visitors over the years."

The challenge match is active now, and donations can be made online through the Foundation's website or by contacting the Boone Area Chamber of Commerce directly.

The Boone Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation is focused on helping with community and business relief in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene's impact on the High Country. The Chamber will distribute funds locally to businesses and community efforts as needs are further assessed throughout Watauga County over the days and weeks ahead.

For more information on the challenge match or to donate, please visit www.boonechamber.com/foundation or contact Ethan Dodson at ethan@boonechamber.com.

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Blowing Rock couple has two houses in the path of hurricanes. They've spent their time helping others.

October 11, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Nick Fogleman nick.fogleman@wataugademocrat.com| Section: Local | 432 Words OpenURL Link

BLOWING ROCK — Jerry Traudt and his wife, Lynda Lasseter, always knew their house in Daytona Beach, Florida, was in the path of hurricanes. What they never expected was their house in Blowing Rock to be in the path of a storm like Hurricane Helene.

"I've never seen anything like this up here," Traudt said.

Their house in Blowing Rock had minimal damage, but they did stay at a neighboring condo while their power was out for three days.

"Our home got spared, but there are people who lost everything," Traudt said. "We're very, very thankful."

Instead of heading back to Florida to prepare their house for potential damage from Hurricane Milton, the couple has stayed in Blowing Rock and spent their time volunteering at the American Legion building, which has become an intake hub for donations that travel to other counties.

"We are always looking to help people; it's just the way we are," Traudt said. "We enjoy doing it. We wear ourselves out. but we don't mind."

"There's no feeling like being a helper. When we see a need, we fill it," Lasseter said.

Traudt is a member of the service group Lions Clubs International and has spent time volunteering for Habitat for Humanity. Lasseter has trained with the Red Cross and has always found ways to help the community.

"If I see a branch blocking a stop sign, I'll go out and clip it. If I see a tire in the road, I always call to make sure someone goes and gets it," Lasseter said. "The tiniest bit of taking control of the situation is so much more rewarding than shopping."

Their house in Daytona hasn't had damage in recent storms, but last year flood water came within two inches of their house.

"Everybody is really worried. If the canal next to our house comes up like it did again, we believe our house will get wet," Traudt said.

"We got someone to come over to prepare the house, remove some files, take things inside and board up the windows," Lasseter said.

The couple hopes Milton's path remains south of Daytona but have a very positive attitude toward the situation.

"We're convinced our house will flood, but you can't take it with you," Lasseter said of any potential damage.

"Whatever happens, happens," Traudt said. "Thank the lord we don't have carpets."

With Milton headed towards Florida, the couple is still focused on helping others who were impacted by the storm in North Carolina.

"We have been so busy here. It's been a mad dash for hours," Lasseter said.

"The more we can do to help them, the more we're happy to do it," Traudt said.

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The Timely Truth for this week is ... WHY?

October 11, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Jamie Shell editor@averyjournal.com| Section: Columns | 644 Words OpenURL Link

Since the arrival of Hurricane Helene sent waves of water and destruction to so many portions of Avery County and Western North Carolina, many people have logged in countless hours looking after and tending to the welfare of those who were significantly affected by the storm, whether through hands-on search and rescue, or debris removal, or volunteering to just lend a hand somewhere to do good.

As a pastor and believer, being able to bring comfort and encouragement to others is an expectation and hopefully a salve that brings healing. Sometimes, however, that discharge of ministry can be more difficult than others.

Given the magnanimous scale of the recent natural disaster, a question at least considered, if now outright verbalized, is "Why?' Why would a gracious God allow for a tragedy of this level decimate our area.

I can't remember a time when so many neighbors and loved ones have experienced such physical, mental and/or spiritual attack. Perhaps it's a sign of my age, or maybe it's the result of the chaos in our sin-filled world. I'm not sure. But I do know and see that there are many people suffering and being challenged.

The Psalmist cried out, "Why, Lord, do you stand far off? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?" (Psalm 10:1) For you and I, it's only natural to ask, "Why, Lord? Why is this happening to me?" In George MacDonald's book Donal Grant, the character Arctura says to Donal, "You speak always like someone who has suffered." To which Donal replies, "Who has not suffered that lives at all?"

I read a quote this week that stated "Indeed, life is suffering: contradiction, misfortune, disappointment, and heartbreak surround us." In the New Testament, Paul and Barnabas strengthened and encouraged new followers of Jesus by telling them, "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," (Acts 14:22). But why?

I used to believe I knew the answers to those questions, but life — now that I'm a good bit older and hopefully at least a little wiser — has knocked most of them right out of my head. God rebuked Job and his friends, as Jesus did when His disciples drew unwarranted conclusions from suffering. In the face of affliction, I'm learning now to be more silent. When my friends tell me their lives are difficult, I answer, "I understand and will pray for you." When they ask me why they're suffering, I tell them, "I really don't know, but my God knows your suffering intimately and loves you dearly."

Why are our lives in the place or season they are currently in? I cannot say. However, I do know this: It will not always be this way. There will be an end. Eternal glory lies ahead, as Peter promised, "The God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, will perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you." (1 Peter 5:10) And Paul adds, "For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal," (2 Corinthians 4:17-18).

This side of Heaven, we may not understand the hows and whys of the reasons things occur. Even when we arrive there. however, I kind of doubt we will care then. Instead, we will bask in the awesome flood of His presence.

"He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain." (Revelation 21:4)

This week, and every week, know that you are loved and that you are in my prayers. Life is a matter of perspective; God's perspective, and I pray that He provides for your needs through each day moving forward.

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Less than 700 without power in Watauga as BRE continues to work for full restoration

October 11, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Staff Report news@wataugademocrat.com| Section: News| 473 Words OpenURL Link

WATAUGA — Line technicians, tree specialists and grading contractors will continue restoration Friday night and over the weekend until the final 1,140 members impacted by Hurricane Helene are restored with power.

As of 4:30 p.m. Friday, crews are working to restore power to 678 members in Watauga County, 425 in Ashe County, 28 in Wilkes County and nine in Caldwell County.

Line crews came from across the state and eastern United States to assist Blue Ridge Energy in restoring power to 63,000 members without electricity at the height of the outages. Crews have worked around the clock since the outages began in the late evening hours of September 26. A significant portion of the cooperative's electric system across all the counties it serves was damaged or destroyed: substations flooded, hundreds of poles broken or taken down by mudslides or swift water, and miles of mangled power lines wrapped in debris, fallen trees and power poles.

The cooperative has dispersed teams of service crews responsible for repairing and energizing tap lines as well as construction crews responsible for replacing broken power poles.

"Crews are keeping their spirit and are determined to restore the remaining outages as quickly and safely possible this weekend," said Renee Walker, director of public relations for Blue Ridge Energy.

Safety for workers and the public is paramount. The cooperative provides the following safety guidelines:

Downed Power Line Safety:

Downed power lines can still be energized and therefore dangerous, or even deadly, so stay far away. Downed lines can be hidden underneath fallen trees, water and other affected structures so stay alert and use caution. Only a trained line technician should ever go near a downed power line. Report downed lines by calling 1-800-451-5474.

Protect Line Workers:

Move over and slow down if you see line technicians or trucks working on roadsides.Be alert for flaggers and other traffic directions and indications of work under way.Don't drive distracted.

Generator Safety:

Never use a generator inside your home or garage. Install a carbon monoxide detector for added safety. Keep generators away from water. Always turn off a generator and let it cool down before refueling. The only safe way to connect a portable generator to your home's wiring is to have a licensed electrical contractor install a transfer switch. Never connect a generator to your home's electrical system. It can "back feed" and potentially harm or kill line technicians working on power lines.

To check outage status:

Call 1-800-451-5474 to speak with a member service representativeLink to live outage map: https://bremco.maps.sienatech.com/Refer to general restoration estimates at www.BlueRidgeEnergy.comReport new outages by calling 1-800-448-2383 orUse our Blue Ridge Energy mobile app orText "OUT" to 70216 if your mobile number is on your account

Blue Ridge Energy serves some 80,000 members in Caldwell, Watauga, Ashe, and Alleghany counties as well as parts of Avery, Alexander and Wilkes counties. Learn more at www.BlueRidgeEnergy.com or on the cooperative's social media on Facebook, X and Instagram.

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Local children sharing concern for other children

October 11, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Staff Report news@wataugademocrat.com| Section: Community | 111 Words OpenURL Link

BOONE — In response to Hurricane Helene's disruption to school programming around the High Country, children from Boone United Methodist Church packed Care Bags for their local peers.

These Care Bags — made possible by Boone UMC's Children Ministry — were distributed throughout the week to 400 children attending preschools and emergency childcare programs at Boone United Methodist Church, Hardin Park School, and Banner Elk Presbyterian Preschool.

The bags, which were filled with teddy bears, board games, coloring books, snacks, and other small toys and activities, are a gesture to let children know that while their homes and routines have been flooded and muddied, their community cares about them and their well-being.

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Staff Report news@wataugademocrat.com, 'Local children sharing concern for other children', *Watauga Democrat, The*(online), 11 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C2A571CD4ED858



Watauga County Farmers Market to take place at new location for the rest of the season

October 11, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Moss Brennan moss.brennan@wataugademocrat.com| Section: Community | 295 Words OpenURL Link

BOONE — The Watauga County Farmers Market will have a new location for the remainder of the season.

Due to ongoing recovery efforts and space limitations at the current site, the market will take place at Leon Levine Hall, 1179 State Farm Road in Boone, starting on Oct. 12.

The new spot is just five minutes away from the original site, which will help with the transition for the community and vendors. The market will continue its regular hours of 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. on Saturdays, providing the same fresh, local goods.

Beginning in November, the market will operate with limited hours from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

App State worked with the farmers market to secure that location and is letting them use it free of charge, according to the university.

For more information, visit wataugacountyfarmersmarket.org or contact wataugacountyfarmersmarket@gmail.com.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has established its operations center at the Horn in the West parking area in Boone to assess damage and assist Hurricane Helene victims throughout the area.

According to information presented by Mayor Tim Futrelle at an emergency meeting of the Boone Town Council, the site will be a temporary home to approximately 50 active FEMA personnel who will go out into the broader community to assist folks by conducting site assessments and helping people fill out applications.

Futrelle said the agency is looking at other sites to establish about 30 trailers, which FEMA workers will use for recreation, communication, food, housing and other purposes.

The town has entered into a short-term lease agreement with FEMA to use the site. Futrelle said FEMA intends to stay no longer than 21 to 30 days, although the town council approved a motion that provides stipulations in case the agency needs to use the site for a longer period of time.

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Moss Brennan moss.brennan@wataugademocrat.com, 'Watauga County Farmers Market to take place at new location for the rest of the season', *Watauga Democrat, The*(online), 11 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view? p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C25F0E8807E498>



Raccoon Theology: Lessons from a Dark and Stormy Night

October 11, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Earl Davis | Section: Columns | 650 Words OpenURL Link

"'Twas a dark and stormy night. Somewhere in the distance a dog barked." Snoopy had it right, except I couldn't hear a dog barking. I was too busy hearing the wind rage and the rain lashing our windows and trying to find a flashlight to worry about Snoopy's dog reference. We're still without power on Huckleberry Knob at this writing on Monday morning — day 11— but we know how blessed we are. So many folks are worse off, and will be for weeks at least.

Events like this raise all kinds of questions, especially theological ones for many folks. Why does God allow hurricanes at all? Why me? Are we — am I — being punished? Well, there's no easy answer for a lot of this kind of questions if we are honest. But there are several truths that we need to hold onto in the midst of the hurricane.

First, as to why God allows hurricanes, to ask this does mean that you acknowledge the reality and power of God. Of course, concepts of God differ, and how you think of God determines your view on tragedy as well as joy. As a Christian I think of God in terms of Jesus; I think God in eternity is like Jesus was in his thirty and three years among us. As to why God would allow hurricanes, I do not pretend to understand all that God allows. I know he set up the universe with scientific laws and I know that he is smarter than any of us; it is not helpful to try to second-guess God. I rather like the attitude of a minister friend of mine who suffered a paralyzing disease. He learned to say, Why not me?

As for asking why me? I read in the Sermon on the Mount that God lets it rain on the just and the unjust. If we are saying we are in a special group and should be protected, let us remember that Christians are not exempt from the calamities of life. The more important question is not why me but as a believer we ask is God with me in this tragedy, this calamity. And we have the assurance from the Bible and from the presence of the Holy Spirit that God is with us, and that there is no calamity that can happen to us that is beyond God's presence and his strength to endure. "All things are worked together for good to those who love God" means that we are not special as Christians in terms of being exempt from tragedy, but we are special in that we have God's presence and his molding of the situation to bring some good from it.

So rest assured that this calamity we call Helene is not a punishment; but it can be a tool to bring us all closer to God. Strangely, good times do not seem to draw the world, the nation, the community closer to God. Perhaps it is only in the darkness that we experience the love and presence of God. The cross shows us that he is not absent in our need. I often remind folks in their darkest times: do not doubt in the dark that which you have believed in the light.

This past Sunday Pegeen and I worshipped at St. Mark's Lutheran Church just outside of Blowing Rock at the junction of US 321 and BlackBerry Road. The good pastor, Jonathan Weant, pointed out that Jesus is Lord in both the awesome and the awful times. So he is. You can probably get to a church next Sunday; make it a point to do so. God will be there, as he is with you now.

Earl Davis' column "Raccoon Theology" appears biweekly in the Watauga Democrat and the Blowing Rocket. Dr. Davis is a minister, an author, and an artist, earldavisfineart.com. He can be contacted at earlcdavis@bellsouth.net

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Helene-idled plant threatens IV supply - Following Hurricane Helene, Baxter doesn't expect to return to normal supply of IV fluids until end of 2024

October 11, 2024 | Winston-Salem Journal (NC) Author: LISA SCHENCKER Chicago Tribune | Section: A | 411 Words Page: 3 OpenURL Link

It could be months before a Baxter International is able to fully ramp up production of its IV fluids, after Hurricane Helene damaged its largest manufacturing plant, the Deerfield, Illinois-based company said Wednesday - something that could have serious implications for hospitals.

The hurricane last month led to flooding at Baxter's plant in Marion, North Carolina., forcing the company to temporarily shut down the facility. That plant was the largest manufacturer of intravenous and peritoneal dialysis solutions in the U.S. Intravenous solutions are used in hospitals and other care settings to deliver medication, keep patients hydrated and address electrolyte imbalances.

Baxter said Wednesday that its goal is to return to 90% to 100% allocation of certain IV solutions by the end of 2024 by restarting the plant in phases and by importing products from other Baxter facilities.

For now, Baxter is limiting how much customers can order based on their past purchases, medical necessity and inventory, allowing them 60% of what they normally get. Baxter also is increasing production of the products at its plants outside of the U.S. to help fill the need.

"We will spare no resource - human or financial - to restart operations and help ensure patients and providers have the products they need," Baxter CEO Joe Almeida said in a statement Wednesday.

The plant's closure has sparked concern from hospital and health care leaders across the country, though the U.S. Food and Drug Administration had not declared an official shortage of the solutions as of Wednesday morning.

Richard Pollack, president and CEO of the American Hospital Association, wrote a letter to President Joe Biden on Monday asking him to direct the FDA to declare a shortage of sterile IV solutions, which would give health care providers more flexibility. He also asked the administration to declare a national emergency and invoke the Defense Production Act to help spur more production of IV solutions.

"Our members are already reporting substantial shortages of these lifesaving and life-supporting products," Pollack wrote. "Patients across America are already feeling this impact, which will only deepen in the coming days and weeks unless much more is done to alleviate the situation and minimize the impact on patient care."

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LISA SCHENCKER; Chicago Tribune, 'Helene-idled plant threatens IV supply Following Hurricane Helene, Baxter doesn't expect to return to normal supply of IV fluids until end of 2024', *Winston-Salem Journal* (online), 11 Oct 2024 3 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C23CD991D1E3C0



Helene-related new weekly unemployment claims surge - Helene-related new weekly unemployment claims surge 290% in NC

October 11, 2024 | Winston-Salem Journal (NC) Author: RICHARD CRAVER Staff Reporter | Section: A | 695 Words Page: 5 OpenURL Link

North Carolina experienced last week the first phase of an expected Hurricane Helene-related surge in new weekly state unemployment claims.

The U.S. Labor Department reported Thursday a total of 11,474 new claims were filed for the week that ended Oct. 5. That's up from 2,941 in the previous report, or by 290%.

The Labor report doesn't provide a regional breakdown by state, but it's highly likely the bulk of the new claims are from North Carolinians whose employment was directly or indirectly affected by Helene-related damage.

The new filings are likely to push the number of North Carolinians receiving state unemployment benefits to more than 30,000. There were 18,333 North Carolinians receiving benefits for the week that ended Sept. 28.

North Carolina was fifth in the nation in the number of new unemployment claim filings, up significantly from the 15th to 18th range since the COVID-19 pandemic was declared over in March 2023.

Other states with severe Helene-related damage did not experience a similar uptick in new claims as North Carolina, although sharply higher.

Florida's new claims jumped 69.4% to 9,377, while Georgia's was by 17.4% to 4,675, South Carolina's was by 83% to 2,504 and Tennessee's was by 72.5% to 4,367.

State of emergency programs

Residents in four northwest N.C. counties - Alleghany, Ashe, Watauga and Wilkes - have been declared eligible for federal disaster unemployment assistance benefits.

The eligibility is a byproduct of the Biden administration's declaration of a state of emergency in N.C. from the devastating rainfall and flooding caused by the remnants of Helene.

The disaster unemployment assistance covers individuals who are unemployed as a direct result of Helene. Business owners and self-employed individuals affected by the storm also may qualify for benefits.

Benefits have been made retroactive to Sept. 29 and may last for up to 26 weeks.

There are 23 other counties, along with the Cherokee Indians of N.C., that have been approved: Alexander, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Clay, Cleveland, Gaston, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Lincoln, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mecklenburg, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Swaim, Transylvania and Yancey.

Eligible individuals have until Dec. 2 to file an application for disaster unemployment assistance at des.nc.gov or the DUA Hotline at 919-629-3857.

Individuals must first apply for state unemployment benefits. For those determined to be ineligible for or have exhausted regular state benefits, they may be eligible to make a federal disaster unemployment assistance claim.

Eligibility is determined weekly, and individuals must continue to be out of work as a direct result of the disaster each week to get unemployment benefits.

Those eligible include:

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

Documentation required includes: name and address of all employers you worked with within the last 24 months; county of residence; county of employment; mailing address and ZIP code; valid telephone number; Social Security number or Alien Registration number; proof of employment and income if you're self-employed, a farmer or a commercial fisher.

All required documentation must be submitted within 21 days from the day the application is filed.

DES said it will work with people who cannot provide all documentation to ensure that their unemployment benefits are not delayed.

Also on Thursday, U.S. Labor announced the approval of up to \$10 million in initial emergency grant funding to North Carolina to support disaster-relief jobs and training services in the 25 counties.

The National Dislocated Worker Grant - supported by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 - allows the N.C. Division of Workforce Solutions to provide people with temporary disaster-relief jobs for cleanup and the delivery of humanitarian assistance to address immediate, basic needs for those displaced by Helene.

The funding also enables the state to provide training and services to individuals in the affected communities.

The N.C. Commerce Department's Employment and Training Administration oversees National Dislocated Worker Grants, which expand the service capacity of dislocated worker programs at the state and local levels by providing funding assistance in response to large, unexpected economic events that lead to significant job losses.

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Cooper signs \$273M Helene relief measure - Repairing roads, water and sewer infrastructure top relief priorities in NC

October 11, 2024 | Winston-Salem Journal (NC)

Author: RICHARD CRAVER Staff Reporter | Section: A | 1193 Words

Page: 1 OpenURL Link

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Next legislative session

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Non-financial details

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Other elements include:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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For accurate storm forecast, check Waffle House - How Waffle House helps Southerners - and FEMA - judge a storm's severity

October 11, 2024 | Winston-Salem Journal (NC)

Author: HANNAH SCHOENBAUM Associated Press | Section: A | 1015 Words

Page: 2 OpenURL Link

Golden hashbrowns, gravy-smothered biscuits and crispy waffles with a hearty helping of maple syrup are among the classic Southern comfort foods. But when hurricanes tear through Southeastern towns, the hot meals and bold yellow signs of the local Waffle House provide another kind of comfort.

If a Waffle House stays open in town, even in a limited capacity, neighbors are reassured that the coming storm is unlikely to cause devastation. A closed location of the dependable diner chain has come to indicate impending disaster. The metric is known as the Waffle House Index.

What might sound like silly logic has become one of the most reliable ways for Southerners - and even federal officials - to gauge a storm's severity and identify communities most in need of immediate aid.

About two dozen Waffle House locations were closed in the Carolinas and the chain's home state of Georgia on Tuesday, nearly two weeks after the states were among those battered by Hurricane Helene. Several other locations were open but serving a limited menu.

What is the Waffle House Index?

The South's favorite disaster authority provides an informal measure of how significantly a storm will affect or has affected a community.

A map of the chain's over 1,900 locations, concentrated in the Southeast and mid-Atlantic, helps residents of stormprone states assess whether they're likely to lose power, experience severe flooding or endure other extreme conditions that might cause a resilient restaurant to close its doors. For some, it's a telltale sign of whether they need to evacuate.

Waffle House is known not just for serving breakfast 24/7, 365 days a year, but also for its disaster preparedness. For decades, people across the South have noticed that the local Waffle House seemed to be the only business still open during a storm or the first to reopen after it passed.

The restaurant chain's reputation for remaining open when people desperately needed a place to warm up, charge devices and grab a hot meal became a fairly reliable - albeit amusing - resource to help track recovery efforts. The company even operates its own storm center, which Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp visited Tuesday as he continued to assess damage from Helene and prepare for Milton.

How does the index work?

Waffle House's social media shares color-coded maps of its restaurant locations in certain regions that will soon be hit or are recovering from storm damage. The Federal Emergency Management Agency also offers some live tracking.

Green means the location is serving a full menu, indicating minimal damage in the surrounding area. The lights are on and the syrup is flowing.

Yellow means the restaurant is serving a limited menu, a signal that it's pulling power from a generator and might

have a low food supply. The area might not have running water or electricity, but there's enough gas to fry up bacon for hungry customers.

Red means the location is closed, a sign of unsafe operating conditions and severe destruction to the restaurant or nearby communities.

How did the index start?

Former FEMA administrator Craig Fugate said he thought up the Waffle House Index while leading Florida's emergency management efforts in 2004. He was searching for something to eat while surveying the devastation left by Hurricane Charley and was only able to find a Waffle House serving a limited menu.

His team began to notice other open Waffle Houses in communities without power or running water. The restaurants eventually became a key feature on a color-coded map that his team provided to help the public and local officials identify where storm damage was most severe.

Fugate continued to use his color-coded map when he joined FEMA under President Barack Obama. He was the agency's administrator in 2011 when a deadly tornado tore through the town of Joplin, Missouri. Both of the town's Waffle Houses reportedly stayed open.

The restaurant chain's disaster readiness is no coincidence. Seven locations were destroyed and 100 more shut down in 2005 during Hurricane Katrina, but company executives saw business skyrocket at restaurants that reopened quickly.

They soon embraced a business strategy centered around keeping their restaurants operable during and after a disaster, according to the company's website. The chain said it invested in portable generators, bought a mobile command center and trained employees on what they can still serve if they lose electricity.

What does the index say about Hurricane Milton?

Waffle House closed many Florida locations before Hurricane Milton made landfall, indicating damage to the area would likely be severe.

Milton knocked out power to more than 3 million customers and whipped up a barrage of tornadoes. Milton caused at least four deaths and compounded the misery wrought by Helene while sparing Tampa a direct hit. The storm made landfall late Wednesday as a Category 3 storm in Siesta Key, about 70 miles south of Tampa.

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WS/FCS to take in displaced students - WS/FCS makes plans to take in students displaced by Helene

October 11, 2024 | Winston-Salem Journal (NC)

Author: LISA O'DONNELL Staff Reporter | Section: A | 327 Words

Page: 1 OpenURL Link

Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools is making preparations to take in students who have been displaced by Tropical Storm Helene, Superintendent Tricia McManus told the school board on Tuesday.

"We are embracing students into our school district if they come live with family members. There are ways that we are going to make sure that is a painless process for them. We want to make sure we welcome them with open arms," she said.

The school district planned to share information on enrolling displaced students with principals on Wednesday.

Displaced students who choose to go to a temporary school in the school district do not have to provide records normally required for enrollment, according to the N.C. Department of Instruction.

"Our goal, essentially, is to ensure there are no barriers in the way of families to enroll if they are fleeing the devastation," said Amanda Lehmert, a district spokeswoman. "We know some children could be coming from schools that are destroyed or currently not open, which might make the paperwork part of transferring difficult. We don't want them to miss out on class because of this. They have been through enough already."

Once students arrive - and so far, none have been enrolled - they may also be provided with information on counseling services, food assistance and housing support.

While most of the schools impacted by the storm have a plan to reopen within the next week or so, five school districts - Asheville City Schools, Buncombe County Schools, Avery County Schools, Mitchell County Schools and Madison County Schools - do not.

Of these districts, Buncombe is by the far the largest with about 22,000 students.

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Taylor Swift donates \$5M to storm relief - Taylor Swift donates \$5 million toward hurricane relief efforts

October 11, 2024 | Winston-Salem Journal (NC) Author: KAITLYN HUAMANI Associated Press | Section: A | 288 Words Page: 5 OpenURL Link

Taylor Swift donated \$5 million to Feeding America to support relief efforts in the aftermath of Hurricanes Helene and Milton.

The nonprofit announced the pop star's donation Wednesday with a "Thank You" graphic resembling a friendship bracelet, a favorite accessory Swift's fans trade at her concerts.

Feeding America is "incredibly grateful" for the donation, CEO Claire Babineaux-Fontenot said in a statement.

"This contribution will help communities rebuild and recover, providing essential food, clean water, and supplies to people affected by these devastating storms," the statement continued. "Together, we can make a real impact in supporting families as they navigate the challenges ahead."

The organization also encouraged fans and supporters to "join Taylor" in contributing to relief efforts.

Swift's longtime friends, actors Blake Lively and Ryan Reynolds, also donated \$1 million to Feeding America to support the hurricane relief efforts. Babineaux-Fontenot said the couple's "longtime support of Feeding America in times of crisis" helped provide basic needs for several past natural disasters.

Swift has a long history of donating to nonprofits in the wake of natural disasters or tragic events, including a tornado that hit Tennessee in 2020 and a shooting in February 2024 at the Kansas City Chiefs' Super Bowl victory parade.

Her philanthropic relationship with food banks became a quiet hallmark of her record-breaking Eras Tour, with the singer donating the equivalent of hundreds of thousands of meals to different food banks across cities she played in

Milton made landfall in Florida as a Category 3 storm Wednesday, bringing misery to a coast still ravaged by Helene.

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KAITLYN HUAMANI; Associated Press, 'Taylor Swift donates \$5M to storm relief Taylor Swift donates \$5 million toward hurricane relief efforts', *Winston-Salem Journal* (online), 11 Oct 2024 5 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view? p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C23CD9D28FF018>



Recent storms that slammed the South - Recent storms that slammed the South

October 11, 2024 | Winston-Salem Journal (NC)

Author: MARTHA BELLISLE | Associated Press MARTHA B

OpenURL Link

SEVERE WEATHER

While Hurricane Milton is garnering a lot of attention in Florida and other states in the southeastern U.S., other major hurricanes in recent memory have left hundreds of people dead and caused billions of dollars worth of damage across the South. SEPTEMBER 2024

Hurricane Helene

Hurricane Helene made landfall on Florida's Panhandle on Sept. 26 and churned its way across five other states, leaving at least 236 dead and an unknown number of people still missing. The Category 4 storm brought torrential floodwaters that ripped homes off their foundations and uprooted trees, leaving thousands without power and water for days. Falling trees killed many, including grandparents in South Carolina and a mother and her two infants in Georgia. First responders were among those killed, including a nurse in Tennessee who tried to save a man stranded by rushing waters, only to have his boat flip over. Homeowners trying to rebuild face a daunting task without flood insurance. JULY 2024

Hurricane Beryl

Hurricane Beryl was the first of the 2024 Atlantic hurricane season, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Exceptionally warm ocean temperatures caused it to strengthen into a Category 5 storm rapidly in early July. Its winds peaked at 165 mph before weakening to a still-destructive Category 4. By the time Beryl hit Texas, it had dropped to a Category 1 storm. Beryl has been blamed for at least 36 deaths. The storm caused an estimated \$28 billion to \$32 billion in damages, according to AccuWeather's preliminary estimates. AUGUST 2023

Hurricane Idalia

Hurricane Idalia slammed into Florida on Aug. 30, 2023, with 125-mph winds that split trees in half, ripped roofs off hotels and turned small cars into boats before sweeping into Georgia and South Carolina, where it flooded roadways and sent residents running for higher ground. The Category 4 hurricane was the largest to hit Florida's Big Bend region in more than 125 years. The storm left 12 dead and produced 5 to 10 inches of rain across Florida, Georgia and the Carolinas, leaving damages topping \$3.6 billion, according to the U.S. National Hurricane Center. SEPTEMBER 2022

Hurricane Ian

Hurricane Ian briefly reached maximum Category 5 status before weakening to a Category 4 storm as it blasted ashore in September 2022 in southwest Florida. The storm caused more than \$112 billion in damage in the U.S. and more than 150 deaths directly or indirectly, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The agency reported that Ian was the costliest hurricane in Florida history and the third-costliest ever in the U.S. as a whole. In addition to Florida, Ian impacted Georgia, Virginia, the Carolinas and Cuba before it fell apart Oct. 1, 2022. AUGUST 2021

Hurricane Ida

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AUGUST 2021

Hurricane Ida

Hurricane Ida roared ashore in Louisiana as a Category 4 storm with 150mph winds in late August 2021, knocking out power to New Orleans, blowing roofs off buildings and reversing the flow of the Mississippi River as it rushed from the Louisiana coast into one of the nation's most important industrial corridors.

At the time it was tied for the fifth-strongest hurricane ever to hit the mainland. At least 91 deaths across nine states were attributed to the storm - most from drowning, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Damages from the storm were estimated to be about \$36 billion.

OCTOBER 2020

Hurricane Zeta

Hurricane Zeta left millions without power when it hit southeastern Louisiana on Oct. 29, 2020. It had weakened to a tropical storm after leaving the Yucatan Peninsula but intensified to a Category 3 storm before making landfall.

The hurricane caused five direct fatalities and about \$4.4 billion in damage in the United States, according to the National Hurricane Center.

Hurricane Delta

When Hurricane Delta slammed into Louisiana on Oct. 9, 2020, residents were still cleaning up from Hurricane Laura, which had taken a similar path just six weeks earlier. Delta was a Category 4 storm before it made two landfalls - both at Category 2 intensity, according to the National Hurricane Center.

It first hit the Yucatan Peninsula before coming ashore in southwestern Louisiana. Delta cost \$2.9 billion in the United States and was linked to six deaths in the U.S. and Mexico, according to a report from the hurricane center.

AUGUST 2020

Hurricane Laura

Hurricane Laura, a Category 4 storm, roared ashore in southwest Louisiana on Aug. 27, 2020, packing 150mph winds and a storm surge as high as 15 feet in some areas. Laura was responsible for 47 direct deaths in the United States and Hispaniola, and caused about \$19 billion in damage in the U.S., according to the National Hurricane Center.

The deaths included five people killed by fallen trees and one person who drowned in a boat. Eight people died from carbon monoxide poisoning due to unsafe operation of generators.

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