

FROM PAGE 1C

FREE MEALS

million under a boil advisory.

As a result, many people are still relying primarily on nonperishable items and donated meals. And for people like Sprinkle with dietary restrictions like celiac disease or diabetes, or even people who are vegan or keto for health or ethical reasons, many of those items are off limits.

For instance, a member of the Asheville Foodies Facebook group posted asking where a friend could find vegan and gluten-free options so that she could focus on helping with recovery efforts.

Commenters quickly suggested vegan and vegetarian restaurant Rosetta's Kitchen in downtown Asheville currently serving free meals from 12-4 p.m. daily. The Ayurvedic Institute and Plant have also teamed up to provide vegan meals this week, alternating sites.

In times like these, bakers like Hendersonville's Diana Casteel, owner of Pies by Di who specializes in gluten free

goods, are a lifeline. Casteel has severe celiac disease, her husband is diabetic and her daughter does not eat dairy. So she understands the importance of having food that doesn't make you sick.

Since the storm, a number of Casteel's customers have reached out for assistance. One woman wanted gluten-free goods for her daughter, a police officer.

"Her daughter's been having headaches and, you know, stomach upset, and she just can't really focus on the job," Casteel said. "Everybody's offering food, but when you have celiac disease, that's a tough one."

Casteel provided bread, as well as cornbread, French toast and some apple cider donuts.

Other customers are in need of pantry staples like gluten-free pasta and soups, which Casteel has in stock because she buys in bulk. Getting supplies like almond, sunflower seed and chickpea flour is not a problem, she said, though she had to meet her assistant, who lives in



Sarah Smith, a neighbor of Pies by Di owner Diana Cassel in Hendersonville, prepares to celebrate with a birthday cake Cassel baked for her in a toaster oven.

BRYAN GRIESEMER

Georgia, in Greenville to pick them up.

She also helped out India Aroma Bistro in Hendersonville, whose lunch buffet is primarily gluten free. After donating meals in the first week of the disaster, they have reopened for customers at new lower prices with free meals for first responders and people without power.

But they had no to-go containers, so Casteel bought some for them from a restaurant depot in Charlotte. Casteel's next step is to

search for a new kitchen, since the one she was using in Hendersonville has minor damage and no power.

Casteel needs a pristine kitchen to prevent cross-contamination, because people like her with severe celiac disease will react to even the smallest amount of grains and wheat. "You can't just vacuum out the flour from the air," she said. She has a potential lead in Bryson City, a kitchen that has not been in use for a while.

As for Sprinkle, she

plans to take it day by day. She's grateful for the Western North Carolina Farmers Market. "They've got everything down there," she said.

In the meantime, her focus is on helping a family member who lost everything finding housing, clothing and — yes — food. Food has such power. A hot meal made with love can nourish both our physical and emotional needs, while a dingy cup of broth or sad, soggy Jell-O can sink our spirits.

Earlier this week, another

Asheville Foodie member posted asking where they could find a good burger and support a small business. People chimed in with recommendations, from Blue Sky Cafe in Fletcher, Waynesville's Church Street Depot and Main Street Grill in Weaverville.

In normal times, satisfying such a simple craving isn't so hard. But for people like Sprinkle and Casteel with dietary needs, the search for nourishing and safe comfort food can be far more challenging.

Especially as in the case of Casteel's neighbor, when your birthday falls on the day a hurricane arrives. When Casteel heard about it, she knew she had to help. So she plugged her toaster oven in the generator and baked a birthday cake: three layers — two chocolate, one vanilla — with chocolate ganache. The neighbor was over the moon.

"Just to be able to have some bit of normalcy, you know, with everything going on, is a big thing," Casteel said.

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FROM PAGE 1C

BUSINESSES

County was hit especially hard by Helene and needs all the support it can get. "Please let people know about the Ashe County Cheese factory as an alternative," a reader emailed me on Tuesday, "when it comes to shipping cheese, wine and other regional treats such as jams, jellies, apple butter and more." I think that is a wonderful idea: With the holidays coming up, cheese is always a great gift.

BLACK MOUNTAIN CIDER & MEAD

Location: 104 Eastside Drive, #307, Black Mountain, NC 28711
Black Mountain Cider & Mead's building was flooded and damaged, and the cidery lost equipment, supplies and product. "The timing couldn't be worse. October is usually our busiest month, when tourists flock to the area for leaf-peeping season," the meadery posted on Instagram. Additionally, local apple and bee suppliers were also damaged. As it tries to figure out how to stay afloat, you can donate to this business via Venmo or its Go Fund Me. "Without running water anywhere in Black Mountain/Asheville, our hands are tied," Black Mountain Cider stated. "Running a fermentation business depends on clean, reliable water, and we've been told it could be months before it's restored."

BURNSVILLE CANDLE COMPANY

Location: 132 W Main St., Burnsville, NC 28714
Burnsville was devastated by Hurricane Helene, with many roads and businesses completely gone. Burnsville Candle Company's physical location is closed, but you can still order candles online. "In a time when, at least for those of us in WNC, things have gotten pretty dark, we all need a little love and light in our lives," wrote owner Kem Muller on Facebook.

CEDAR MOUNTAIN SMALL BUSINESSES

Location: Greenville Hwy, Cedar Mountain, NC 28718
Cedar Mountain is personal to me (family has a house near Caesar's Head State Park), so to see the businesses suffering that I've visited over the past couple of decades has been difficult. Many of the businesses here along Little River were flooded, some with up to four feet of water. In the meantime,

Old Fort, NC 28762

Euda Wine's winery and inventory suffered major damage when the hurricane came through Old Fort. A home washed up to the winery from across the street. Euda asks that your donations first go to help the town, region or wider area. "And after that if you still want to support Euda then you can buy wine online or join our wine club," the winery posted on Instagram. "We have been able to salvage some bottles and are continuing to examine the rest of our inventory. We don't know exactly when it will be shipped, but if you buy it, we will ship it to you once we are able." You can also purchase a gift card.

CHIMNEY ROCK BREWING COMPANY

Location: 461 Main St., Chimney Rock, NC 28720

Mars Hill-based Mars

Theatre Brew Co.'s sister brewery, Chimney Rock Brewing Company, is gone after Hurricane Helene. There is nothing left where the brewery once stood. Owner Scott Spruill has posted a Go Fund Me, with hopes of setting up a new model that could help save the company. Mars Theatre has reopened, but "without them (Chimney Rock Brewing) it will be difficult to continue without your help," he wrote.

CHIMNEY ROCK GEMSTONE MINE

Location: 397 Main St., Chimney Rock, NC 28720

Chimney Rock Gemstone Mine has been a fixture in Chimney Rock for the past 21 years. The damage from Hurricane Helene was catastrophic to the gemstone mining attraction and jewelry store. Owners Matt and Michelle Banz also own RiverWatch Grill, which was also damaged by the storm (details below).

[WHAT'S NEXT? After Helene, can NC businesses and tourist sites restore 'the magic of Asheville'?]

FOLKWEAR PATTERNS

Location: 1185 Charlotte Hwy, Fairview, NC 28730

Folkwear Patterns has a studio in Asheville's River Arts District that managed to stay dry and with power during Hurricane Helene. The staff is all safe, but many at home are without water, power or internet.

The team is unable to get back to the studio to fulfill orders, but in the meantime, you can purchase digital pdf patterns from Folkwear's online store.

HEADWATERS OUTFITTERS

Location: 25 Parkway Road, Rosman, NC 28772

Headwater Outfitters kept people in the Rosman area informed leading up to the storm, including regular monitoring of the Upper French Broad's water levels. Then the shop and Forks of the River Taproom were affected by flooding and damage to the retailer's compound. The store is closed, paddling trips have been canceled and its campground is closed for

the rest of the year. Team members have pivoted to helping those in the community, including with free hot meals. In the meantime, you can shop the outdoor shop's online store (send a note saying "Ship when the time is right", Headwater recommends) or purchase a gift card for a future trip.

LIVE OAK GASTRO PUB

Location: 69 Locust St., Spruce Pine, NC 28773

Live Oak Gastropub was flooded in the hurricane along with much of the rest of Spruce Pine. "We are trying to save any equipment we have so we can maybe someday get back to doing what we love providing a great place for fellowship, good times and amazing great and good looking food," co-owner Deanna Buchanan, who is a native of the Western North Carolina mountains, wrote on Facebook. "Still in shock at what this area and surrounding counties are experiencing." A Go Fund Me has been started to help the restaurant recover.

OLD MARSHALL JAIL HOTEL + ZADIE'S RESTAURANT

Location: 33 Baileys Branch Road, Marshall, NC 28753

Downtown Marshall was devastated during Hurricane Helene, and the Old Marshall Jail Hotel and Zadie's Restaurant were both affected. Zadie's was completely destroyed, owner Josh Copus wrote in a Go Fund Me for both places. "Both businesses will be closed for the months ahead while we rebuild. It will be a long and expensive road to recovery, but we feel it is worth doing and will be possible with your help," he wrote.

PAPERTOWN COFFEE

Location: 119 Main St., Canton, NC 28716

Papertown Coffee's building was unharmed during the storm, and it was closed for a few days after the storm as it did not have power. Closing was tough on the business that was already having a tough year, so it has

launched a Go Fund Me to help pay staff and order supplies. In the meantime, the shop has reopened with limited hours and is inviting community members in to "charge their phones, get a change of scenery or just connect with another human for a while."

PISGAH COFFEE ROASTERS

Location: 6283 Asheville Hwy, Pisgah Forest, NC 28768

Pisgah Coffee Roasters has been a staple in downtown Chimney Rock since 1998. After Helene, the building

Pisgah Coffee Roasters was undamaged from Hurricane Helene, but it closed as it was unable to process transactions. It did have limited cell service in the parking lot, so it has invited community members to use it for any calls and texts they need to make. There may be some shipping delays, but you can purchase its coffee online.

THE PURPLE ONION

Location: 16 E Main St., Saluda, NC 28773

The Purple Onion in Saluda is "closed until further notice" after Hurricane Helene. "Here in Saluda, we have many places that were hit hard by unforgiving water and we are still reeling from the disaster going on around us," the restaurant posted on Instagram. "In downtown, mudslides, flooding, and trees taking out our infrastructures have effected many of our businesses and by extension their employees and our community." The Saluda Downtown Foundation has launched a Saluda Disaster Recovery Grant for downtown Saluda businesses. Your donation will help the recovery of The Purple Onion and other places.

THE ORANGE PEEL + RABBIT RABBIT

Location: The Orange Peel, 101 Biltmore Ave., Asheville, NC 28801

Location: Rabbit Rabbit, 75 Coxe Ave., Asheville, NC 28801

Asheville's live music scene took a hit during the storm, and The Orange Peel and Rabbit Rabbit have needed to cancel shows as they will be closed for awhile. The Orange Peel, in the meantime, has set up portable toilets and rinse stations, including an ADA unit, for the community in its parking lot. The Orange Peel manager Lauren Davis is hosting a Go Fund Me for the two venues to help take care of the 100-person staff that is unable to work for the foreseeable future. Many of the team members have suffered personal losses. "These are the people who make the magic of live music and unforgettable nights possible, and now they need your help," Davis wrote.

SWITZERLAND CAFE AND GENERAL STORE

Location: 9440 NC-226A, Marion, NC 28752

Switzerland Cafe and General Store has been feeding its neighbors with any of its remaining inventory that was after the hurricane. Any donations made to the restaurant's owner's personal venmo (@Lora-Lanier-1) will go toward rebuilding the business and town.

WILLOW HILL SOAP COMPANY

Location: 429 N Main St., Hendersonville, NC 28792

Location: 80 Park St., Canton, NC 28716

Both of Willow Hill Soap Company locations (in Hendersonville and Canton) are closed after Hurricane Helene. "We will be able to check on orders whenever our internet is restored," the store wrote on Instagram. In the meantime, you can make online purchases of candles, soaps, bath bombs, beard care and more. Its products are made without harmful ingredients, so you can feel good about gifting them!

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some with up to four feet of water. In the meantime,

we've been told it could be months before it's restored."

DT'S BLUE RIDGE JAVA

Location: 169 Locust St., Spruce Pine, NC 28773

DT's Blue Ridge Java was completely ruined when Hurricane Helene made its way to Spruce Pine. The coffee shop was faced with 10 feet of rushing water, and the space for community gathering was destroyed in an instant. The coffee shop owner's daughter has launched a Go Fund Me to help rebuild the space.

Any additional funds will be given to the local community, others on Lower Street and in downtown Spruce Pine.

EUDA WINE

Location: 164 Commerce St., Suite 10, Rosman, NC 28772

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was completely destroyed by Hurricane Helene.

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