

# Gotta' Run: United Way's Run for the Mountains and more

October 10, 2024 | Salisbury Post (NC) Author: David Freeze | Section: Lifestyle | 652 Words OpenURL Link

Gotta' Run: United Way's Run for the Mountains and more

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By David Freeze

Due to finishing up my tour of the North Carolina state parks, I'm a little late on sharing information about the October races. The wonderful temperatures of the past week beckon runners and walkers while the charities that organize the races need your help.

Saturday's Dolphin Dash 5K and Fun Run takes place at Sacred Heart Catholic School with the county's only cross-country course used for an open (any age) race. It's all grass and dirt with no pavement at all, starting and finishing on the school's soccer field. An extra bonus is that the fourth annual race is part of the school's Octoberfest.

Sunday has the brand-new Run for the Mountains 5K, benefiting the United Way's western North Carolina disaster relief programs. A fun run for kids starts at 1:45 p.m. and is followed by the 5K race at Salisbury Community Park on Hurley School Road. Plenty of parking is available, and the forecast looks great for runners and walkers of any ability to enjoy the park setting. Some of the course is on pavement and some of it is on gravel. No awards will be given so that 100 percent of the proceeds will benefit those in distress. All participants will get an official time and a certificate to pick up a commemorative short sleeve dri-fit shirt 10 days later at the United Way office. Novant Health will donate the refreshments.

Here is a statement from United Way Executive Director Jenny Lee concerning how her organization is helping those western N.C. residents. Lee said, "While most of Helene's physical damage occurred in western North Carolina, the impact of this devastation is being felt far and wide. The Salvation Army of Rowan County, for example, has been deployed to the western part of the state and has served a total of 21,900 mass feedings, with an additional 12,150 served via mass drops. As those impacted by the storm relocate, other local nonprofits, such as Rowan Helping Ministries and One Love Community Services, will also face additional challenges. Rowan County United Way is committed to supporting our local nonprofits by surveying our community partners to gain a better understanding of their emerging needs. We are also monitoring N.C. 211 disaster response calls to collect more data. This information will help us better assess and understand the needs of Rowan County, our local nonprofits, and our neighbors from the West who are relocating here.

Additionally, the United Way will be at the event continuing their effort to find cold weather clothing, either new or gently used, to send toward the mountains. Items needed include coats of any kind, sweaters or sweatshirts, winter socks and gloves. United Way's Ali Edwards said, "Just about anything warm will help. I will be there to collect any donated items."

Then we move on to the St. Matthews 5K at the church located at 9275 Bringle Ferry Road on Saturday, Oct. 26. This rural course uses country roads while the race benefits several community and church members with severe medical issues.

The next day, Sunday, Oct. 27, brings Halloween fun at the long-running Spooky Sprint 5K and Fun Run. Held at Catawba College's Shuford Stadium, the 5K will use a new course that includes the soccer/softball complex and the greenway out to the Crescent area and back. Runners, walkers and fun runners can all compete in a festive costume contest following the race and just ahead of the awards ceremony. This race benefits Rowan Rotary

community projects with an emphasis on youth.

November races include the Clean Water 5K on Nov. 9 at Grace Lutheran Church, then the Girls on the Run 5K at Salisbury Community Park on Nov. 16. We close out the month with the fast-growing Butterball 5K at The Forum on Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 28.

Look for more information on all these races at www.salisburyrowanrunners.org.

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# Stop the lies

October 10, 2024 | Sampson Independent, The (Clinton, NC) Section: columns editorial opinion | 659 Words
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We almost turned a corner these past two weeks, as the devastation from Hurricane Helene, particularly in the western part of our state, tugged at our heart strings, allowing our kinder, gentler selves to burst through the cynical facade many of us have obtained over the last few years.

### Almost.

While we haven't returned to the flag flying nation we were some 23 years ago in the weeks after the most horrific of terrorist attacks struck our nation, we were, at least, letting our guard down enough to show compassion for our brothers and sisters to the west. As the destruction replayed in our newspapers and on our televisions and social media feeds, we simply didn't care about politics or which candidate a person was planning to vote for come November. All our concern was focused on people who were struggling, looking for family members and trying to survive what seemed insurmountable.

Here in Sampson, all the stops were pulled out within hours of learning of Helene's massive damage, as collections sites went up and donations poured in. And teams of people, both professional responders and volunteers from area churches, grabbed chainsaws and fired up trucks, all ready to answer the call and meet the needs, wherever they were asked to serve.

We have been touched and appreciative of Sampsonians showing the resolve and heart we have witnessed time and again for neighbors in need, and we have touted as many of those efforts as possible within these pages, giving hearty and thankful applause to everyone who has been so willing to help.

We could see the bend, the turn was about to happen. And we were so thankful.

Then nasty had to rear its head. Using social media as the platform of choice, a select few decided to take an extremely tragic situation and try to make it political, campaign fodder to sway opinions with half-truths and down right lies. That was all it took to light the fires of discord again as the posts, shares, re-posts and shares became more vile, more untrue and more damaging.

We won't give air to the untruths by renaming them, but suffice it to say that government agencies with boots on the ground across our mountains were being taunted by regular citizens, fueled by political rhetoric, as uncaring and not doing anything to help those in need. Words from FEMA applications were, much like Biblical scriptures, lifted and shared in a way that would best suit the untruth being spread.

It has become so bad, in fact, that mayors of devastated towns like Chimney Rock, Marshall and others have tried to rebutt the lies, urging people on social media not to buy into the posts, not to reshare them and, instead, to share all the good that is trying to be done.

Our own EMS director Rick Sauer told commissioners at Monday night's meeting (see story on A1) that there was a lot of miscommunication going on, and he stressed that FEMA was there and was helping at every turn. We appreciate his willingness to clear up at least one untruth being spoken over and over again.

But we doubt his words get shared a lot, because that doesn't play into the anger and mistrust some people are trying to spread.

We don't care which side of the political fence one sits, what is happening in the western North Carolina mountains

and beyond should not be used as the scapegoat for political gain.

And, if we aren't boots on the ground in those mountains, observing (and, we hope helping) what is actually taking place, then we should keep our unchecked opinions portrayed as facts off social media.

Spreading untruths and stirring hate does nothing to help those suffering so much.

If for no other reason than to show them respect, let's try to get around that bend, or, at the very least, stop short of returning to the hate-speak so many of us have come to use, hiding behind social media, as we go.

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# Search for missing Sanford teacher ends in NC, turns to Tennessee

October 10, 2024 | Sanford Herald, The (NC)
Author: NANCY MCCLEARY NMCCLEARY@SANFORDHERALD.COM| Section: News | 476 Words
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The search for Kim Ashby, a Sanford woman who was swept away in a swollen Elk River during the torrential rains of Hurricane Helene last week, has been suspended in North Carolina.

The search is now in the hands of Carter County, Tennessee, authorities, according to her daughter Jessica Meidinger. The Elk River flows across the state line to Watauga Lake.

Ashby, 58, a seventh-grade math teacher at SanLee Middle School, went missing Sept. 27 as she and her husband, Ron, 57, were checking on their recently completed dream home in the Elk Park community of Avery County.

The couple and their three dogs were inside when a bridge failed, sending a wall of water down the river. A piece of the bridge "acted as a battering ram" as it hit a corner of the house, causing it to partially collapse.

Rod hung onto a post from a nearby house while Kim and their three dogs used a mattress as a float but hit an embankment. They were floating on debris when they hit a tree standing in water and were separated.

Rod managed to get to safety and searched for Kim, but to no avail.

It's been a roller coaster of emotion since then, trying to hold onto hope that Kim will be found.

"We're doing the best we can," her daughter, Meidinger, said in an interview this week. "We're continuing to gather as a family and lean on each other."

That Rod, her stepfather, made it out alive is "almost a miracle he's still here," Meidinger said. "He shouldn't be here.

"I think we're in a weird place," she said. "We need to find her to have peace and closure. But it's tortuous. I don't know how to feel. Sometimes it hurts to have hope."

Now, the search is in the hands of Tennessee authorities including a swift-water rescue team familiar with the river that crosses the Appalachian Trail, Meidinger said.

Pieces of the house as well as the remains of one of the dogs were found in the river across the state line, she said.

Meanwhile, Rod is staying with Meidinger and her family in Pittsboro as recovers from the injuries he sustained.

"His feet had a ton of splinters, and he went to a hospital. He hurt his shoulder pretty badly," Meidinger said.

The support of the Sanford community and SanLee students has helped.

"We've had an outpouring of love from the school and residents from the Sanford area, especially her neighbors," Meidinger said. "We're grateful for the community."

A GoFundMe page has been set up to help with financial assistance for Rod. Go to https://gofund.me/6758d08b to help.

"We know that no monetary value could ever take away the pain he will feel for the rest of his life, but we want to

ensure that he doesn't have to endure the additional distress of figuring out how to begin to rebuild a life," Meidinger wrote on the page.

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# Extending neighborly love - Disaster relief comes from Caldwell County

October 10, 2024 | Smoky Mountain Times (Bryson City, NC) Author: Jessica Webb editor@thesmokymountaintimes.com | Section: News | 384 Words

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The parking lot of the ball fields at Swain Recreation Park were abuzz with activity on Tuesday morning, Oct. 8. Volunteers were quickly going through stacks of bottled water, diapers, dog food, Pop-tarts, sports drinks and more and handing them out to people impacted by Hurricane Helene and others in need in Swain County.

It was truly a community effort, as donations collected in Caswell County, North Carolina, made their way to people locally. Andae Vernon, who considers Swain County her hometown, led the effort with Caldwell County Farm Bureau Women's Committee and Farm Bureau Federation.

"We wanted to do something for western North Carolina because we know people here, and it broke our hearts" to see the devastation caused by Hurricane Helene, she said.

The donations collected filled two tractor trailers and the truck bed of an F-150. Plus, they are bringing a semi-truck full of water on Friday.

Meredith Bernard, also helping in the effort, reached out to her online community through her blog and Youtube page, "This Farm Wife," that has more than 200, 000 followers. She was blown away by the response.

I put out a plea to use my farm as a drop-off location," she said, adding that since she has followers worldwide, she also took in donations through Venmo and Paypal.

"I had no idea the donations we'd have coming in. So far, we've raised \$50, 000," she said. "It has really restored my faith in humanity."

Being able to help in this way, Bernard said, also helps address the feeling of helplessness.

To reach those in need, Vernon connected with her father Bill Loucks, pastor of Jackson Line Baptist Church in Bryson City.

"We've got so many nice people helping," said his wife, Kathy Loucks, of all the volunteers. Local volunteers also came from American Legion in Sylva, Victory Baptist Church, Alarka Baptist Church, Tennessee Valley Baptist Association, Bobby Hayes and his staff at Grumpy Old Men's Trading Post, Swain County Sheriff 's Department and more. "This is people helping people," said Swain County Sheriff Curtis Cochran.

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# Swain County added to FEMA disaster assistance list

October 10, 2024 | Smoky Mountain Times (Bryson City, NC)

Section: News 317 Words

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Homeowners and renters in Mecklenburg and Swain counties who had uninsured damage or losses caused by Tropical Storm Helene are now eligible to apply for FEMA disaster assistance.

FEMA may be able to help with serious needs, displacement, temporary lodging, basic home repair costs, personal property loss or other disaster-caused needs. Previously, Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Clay, Cleveland, Gaston, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Lincoln, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Transylvania, Watauga, Wilkes and Yancey counties and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians were authorized for assistance to households.

The quickest way to apply is to go online to DisasterAssistance.gov. You can also apply using the FEMA App for mobile devices or calling toll-free 800-621-3362. The telephone line is open every day and help is available in most languages. If you use a relay service, such as Video Relay Service (VRS), captioned telephone or other service, give FEMA your number for that service. To view an accessible video on how to apply visit Three Ways to Apply for FEMA Disaster Assistance -YouTube.

What You'll Need When You Apply A current phone number where you can be contacted. Your address at the time of the disaster and the address where you are now staying.

Your Social Security number. A general list of damage and losses.

Banking information if you choose direct deposit.

If insured, the policy number or the agent and/or the company name.

If you have homeowners, renters' or flood insurance, you should file a claim as soon as possible. FEMA cannot duplicate benefits for losses covered by insurance. If your policy does not cover all your disaster expenses, you may be eligible for federal assistance. For the latest information about North Carolina's recovery, visit fema. gov/disaster/4827. Follow FEMA on X at x.com/femaregion4 or on Facebook at facebook.com/fema. For North Carolinians seeking general information, please visit ncdps. gov/helene.

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# Coming together

October 10, 2024 | Smoky Mountain Times (Bryson City, NC) Author: Jessica Webb; Publisher/Editor| Section: Opinions | 364 Words Page: 5A OpenURL Link

Survivor's guilt is a phrase I heard and felt a lot this past week. For most Swain County residents, the worst direct experience that Hurricane Helene brought with it was shortlived power outages and internet and cell service outages that lasted just shy of four days. It was being left in the communications darkness, not knowing what was going on, or the extend of the damage and being disconnected from family and friends who were trying to reach us.

When we learned just how devastating the destruction was in other parts of western North Carolina it became something else, a sense of loss and heartbreak for our neighboring mountain communities. Through the challenges and despite the far-fetched conspiracy theories, recovery has been happening in a big way.

Some might have experienced a tinge of how they felt during another traumatic historical event in recent history, the Covid-19 pandemic, with schools closed, hearing updates from the governor and a general sense of helplessness. One important difference, though, is the fact that people have been able to come together in response to this disaster- and what a difference it is.

We can all take encouragement from people helping, from the professional linemen and members of the National Guard to church members and students helping in the recovery effort.

In this week's paper, we have two stories about such generous efforts. First, people from Caldwell County, N.C., who brought disaster relief here to our county. Second, people who have been volunteering to clean up the enormous amount of trash and debris from the storm at Monteith Park.

In addition, we've seen local organizations like Restoration House stepping in to provide hot meal to the local community, Darnell Farms and others who are collecting donations and delivering them to other communities badly damaged by the storm.

The work will continue, and there are lots of ways to get involved. Such opportunities help offset feelings of helplessness and survivor's guilt. These connections also help build hope. There are countless ways to help in this effort. One unique organization is dedicated specifically to the relief effort and connecting volunteers and those in need, Helene Rebuild Collaborative. You can find out more by visiting hurricane helenewnc.com/.

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Jessica Webb, Publisher/Editor, 'Coming together', *Smoky Mountain Times* (online), 10 Oct 2024 5A <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C1DAB015E0F3C0">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C1DAB015E0F3C0</a>



# Ela Campground residents told to leave after hurricane

October 10, 2024  $\mid$  Smoky Mountain Times (Bryson City, NC) Author: Jessica Webb editor@thesmokymountaintimes.com $\mid$  Section: News $\mid$  1517 Words

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Ela Campground is located along the Tuckasegee River, and like other RV parks in Swain County, its residents experienced damage due to floodwaters on Sept. 27 during Hurricane Helene. By Tuesday, Oct. 1, mud and debris still littered the area and a few households remained in local motels or other locations due to flood damage. Residents thought the worst was behind them until receiving the note that starts in red, all-caps letters reading "Notice to Vacate/Closure to Public."

Just on the other side of a natural disaster, they found themselves now facing 30-day eviction notices and no access to water or electricity. The letter states the campground has been "officially closed for an indefinite period and that residents must vacate immediately." Kituwah LLC, a private subsidiary of Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, owns the property and has for the past 4 or 5 years.

Although Ela is called a campground and is an RV park, many of the homes within the park can't be easily relocated. For decades, structures have been built onto the RVs. Many residents own the structures and rent the lots and pay the park for utilities. They have been told they must remove all property by Nov. 1. One resident is Lynn Stambaugh, 91, one of the oldest if not the oldest living veteran in the county. He served in the Korean War and has been a resident at the campground on and off for about 15 years. He now lives with his one-time neighbor, Donald Gaucher, 73, who says he's the longest resident and has been there for 25 years. He's a Vietnam veteran.

Stambaugh said he doesn't want to have to relocate to Florida with his granddaughter. Gaucher describes the damage after Helene.

"The storm water was almost to the line of the porch; it receded the next day," he said. "The only thing I got damaged was insulation under the house. Most did not have any problem with the flood water. They are high enough that it did not come inside."

Then, he said, they got the notice of the place being condemned.

"I plan on fighting it," Gaucher said. This week, several residents, including Gaucher, have been communicating with legal counsel and are planning civil suit action.

Conflicting information on utilities "They're making it very hard for us, and there's no need for it," Gaucher said, of the lack of water and power.

The eviction letter states there was catastrophic damage to utilities due to the flooding and that "Duke Energy has disconnected power to the campground due to the safety hazards."

This is counter to what Swain County officials found.

Swain County Commission Chairman Kevin Seagle said the county communicated with Duke Energy, who checked everything on their end and said everything was fine. Also, the county environmental health and inspections officers visited the campground and found no issues with continuing water service.

Kituwah says environmental health "did not adequately assess the damage to water septic and electrical and ignored staff concerns and did not perform proper inspections."

"The stance we are taking is about life safety," said Chris McCoy, Kituwah LLC President Marketing and Brand Development.

Kituwah's concerns Prior to the storm on Thursday, Sept. 26, the tribe issued voluntary evacuation notices for local campgrounds, including Ela Campground. The notice provided contact information for assistance.

According to a time line provided by Kituwah LLC, floodwaters of 36-45 inches caused damage to equipment such as electrical pedestals, and the septic and water wells.

Some residents also allegedly "returned overnight and cut the locks off the master power box, and restored power, creating further hazards."

On Sunday, there was a "strong sewage odor detected, suggesting damage to the septic system" and Kituwah officially closed the campground. Kituwah says Swain officials' assessment was not adequate. The company hired its owns electrical inspector-who remains anonymous- to conduct an analysis on Wednesday, Oct. 2. His analysis found: "The electrical system was submerged under water for more than 24 hours. According to National Electrical Code (NFPA-70), all the components must be replaced due to water and sediment damage, as corrosion and failure are now inevitable."

In a press release issued by Kituwah LLC, it says, "the water wells were contaminated by silt and debris, rendering them unsafe for use" and "the septic system was overwhelmed, making it non-functional and requiring repairs."

In addition to the eviction notice, park management provided information directing them to Restoration House WNC, HERE in Jackson County and HUD as well as a link to FEMA to apply for assistance.

In the statement provided from the unnamed electrician, his/her conclusion was: "Life safety is my biggest concern at this time due to the amount of sediment and water damage, corrosion will happen, failure will happen to some point it is just a matter of time."

Landlord tenant issue Essentially, it comes down to a landlord-tenant issue, Seagle said.

Although the property is owned by a tribal company, it is still in Swain County and falls under Swain's agencies for regulation.

Swain County Interim Manager Lottie Barker also described it as a landlord and tenant matter. Barker said the county is "attempting to help these people. Some are at Camp Living Water and other areas. It is more of a legal matter."

Barker confirmed county environmental health and inspections officers visited all the campgrounds in Swain County that experienced flooding following Hurricane Helene. She said while things were noted, all the campgrounds met the requirements to reopen to residents.

Over the weekend, N.C. Rep. Mike Clampitt (119-R) pitched in with some assistance to residents as needed, bringing his own generator on site, and providing vouchers to residents to wash their clothes at the laundromat in town.

No easy alternatives During the storm and in the following days, some residents opted to stay in a local Cherokee hotel at a discounted rate and others were aided by Swain County to stay in other hotels. Since the closure notice, some are staying at other locations, such as Camp Living Waters. Others have remained at the campground.

"There's a lot of hardship here," Stambaugh said.

Residents are on fixed income. Some are retirees, several are veterans. There are also children who reside there. Many say they have nowhere else to go. Others are out searching for rentals, but the market in the area is limited.

Gaucher's house was a park model that has been added onto. "I can't move it," he said.

Stambaugh said focusing on cleaning the debris that isn't conducive to people's health would better serve the community than shutting them off to water and power.

"It's been 4 days since the water receded," Stambaugh said Wednesday, Oct. 2. "There lays some of the junk; that's the inefficiency that's here. Nobody can tell me that junk can't be moved."

Gaucher is among the lucky ones who still has power because he has his own generator. "We shouldn't have to be going through this," Gaucher said. "We just need to back off and let us live a happy life here."

Differences Some residents fighting the closure believe the company has plans to tear everything down and put in tiny homes or condominiums to make more money. They suspect the flooding presented the company with an opportunity to move on those plans.

In a recap of the meeting at Ela Campground on file with Swain County Environmental Health, there is some indication that Kituwah LLC and EBCI were pushing for closure of the campground.

The recap reads that a representative from the tribe immediately approached county staff with a repair application on the wastewater system and asked that the county deny such a request. Finding no evidence of failing system, evidence of sewage on the ground or lines/tanks being filled with sediment, the county advised them they did not qualify for a repair.

According to the report, a representative with Kituwah asked county staff if they could give them a reason to close the campground.

It also records a disagreement over whether the campground could access power. Regarding the water wells, the county explained wells should have been regulated under public water supply due to exceeding 14 connections and 24 people each and that they should chlorinate the wells before putting them to use.

Complying with orders On Tuesday, Oct. 8, McCoy shared that Ela Campgrounds is in the process of complying with Swain County's Building Inspections, that in a letter issued Oct. 2, found the campground not to be in compliance with the Swain County Flood Ordinance.

The letter states as per the ordinance, they are required to move any temporary structures out of the floodway before landfall of a flooding event, such as the recent hurricane. The letter states that residents have been allowed to build decks and other structures that could be swept away, and cause hazards and that the campground owner has the responsibility to ensure that all RVS and other structures are moved to higher ground. In closing, the letter says Ela Campground needs to have a plan for future weather events.

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# FEMA dedicates more than \$27 million to WNC recovery

October 10, 2024 | Smoky Mountain Times (Bryson City, NC) Author: Christine Zhu; NC Newsline | Section: News | 333 Words Page: 2A

FEMA has paid more than \$27 million to disaster survivors who have applied for individual assistance funds as of Saturday. The federal government has provided temporary housing and hotel rooms for thousands of affected individuals.

Western North Carolina typically brings in around \$7.7 billion in visitor dollars each year. Its peak tourist season is in the fall, with travelers eager to see changing colors in the mountains. The destruction from Hurricane Helene is hampering the tourism industry and causing economic loss.

"We still don't want tourists coming to western North Carolina right now," Cooper said during a press conference on Monday.

The priority remains on allowing recovery efforts and medical supplies to access the western portion of the state.

Hurricane Helene devastated communities in western North Carolina and destroyed several roads in the area. Although some parts of interstate 40 have reopened, it will take time to rebuild all of the roads in the mountains.

FEMA administrator Deanne Criswell encouraged people to apply for funding, which can be used for medicine, temporary housing, repairing their homes, and other purposes.

"We will be able to help them with any costs they incur," Criswell said.

Personnel from the National Guard and soldiers headquartered at Fort Liberty are partnering with the North Carolina Department of Transit to clear roads, distribute supplies, manage air traffic, and help with search and rescue. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is assisting with evaluating water quality and wastewater in the area.

The number of people who are unaccounted for is "rapidly dwindling," according to Cooper. This is due to more people gaining access to phones, internet, and cell service. The governor was unable to provide an exact number of people who are still missing, but expects to have an update on Tuesday. "We know a lot of reunifications have occurred that have not been reported back," Cooper said.

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# Correction

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Swain County Rescue Squad rescued residents from Country Girl's RV Park during Storm Helene on Friday, Sept. 27.

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# Finding a way to the surface: Swain Clean leads lake clean up

October 10, 2024 | Smoky Mountain Times (Bryson City, NC)

Author: Jessica Webb editor@thesmokymountaintimes.com| Section: News| 677 Words

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If you drive to the end of Old 288 to Monteith Park in Bryson City today, you'll find a clear path to load a boat into the evergreen, lapping water where the Tuckasegee meets Lake Fontana. You're also sure to notice a huge pile of curious garbage in front of the public restrooms- from rocking chairs to tree stumps and mangled refrigerators. If it wasn't for Swain Clean and a slew of local volunteers, all that debris would still be in the water.

Following two days of nonstop rain in western North Carolina, Hurricane Helene arrived on Friday, Sept. 27 further soaking the area, with between 10-15 inches of rain falling in Swain County. As waters swelled, they breached their banks. Downed trees and any loose items in the water's wake rushed downstream.

By Saturday, the river mouth at Fontana was covered from edge to edge with logs and other debris.

On his first impression of seeing all the debris, Nick Nichols with Swain Clean described a feeling of overwhelm with the enormity of work ahead.

"I was just thinking how in the world could we ever attack and remove this?" Clean-up began on Monday, Sept. 30, with four Swain Clean volunteers who began removing large and potentially hazardous items from the river by canoe and kayak. The work of clearing the debris field was slow.

"It's picking up a piece of trash one piece at a time, and transporting it across water, land and to a dumpster. It's a dirty, wet and slow process; there's nothing appealing about it," Nichols said.

Such work following a weather event with extreme flooding presents its own emotional challenge, too.

"You're finding personal stuff and knowing when we started that a lot of the stuff you were grabbing was part of people's houses a few days before that," Nichols said.

On Thursday, about 18-20 pitched in and by Saturday, 30 people showed up to help. In all, Nichols estimated about 125 people have volunteered over the past nine days. People got in their kayaks, canoes and other boats to start clean trash from the water's surface.

Watershed Association of the Tuckasegee River (WATR) and executive director Katie Price helped organize volunteers. Wildwater Nantahala Rafting put a couple of rafts in, and individuals brought their tractors and a Bobcat skid skeer to help in the effort. Great Smoky Mountains Railroad provided lunch Sunday. Stephanie Reddick was also helpful in getting volunteers and equipment.

"Everybody has put in their equipment and time. It's all been a volunteer effort," Nichols said.

In a post to Swain Clean members on Monday, Oct. 7, Nichols wrote, "The debris field had shifted considerably to the west, so we did also. We would not have been able to do that without the invaluable assistance from tractors, skid steer, side by sides and volunteers willing to do what they needed to do."

"The equipment opened up about 2, 000 linear feet of road for us to access and work where it was needed. We have filled six+ dumpsters, with enough in the parking lot to fill a metal only dumpster."

Conditions change on a daily basis, and they adjust as needed. Tennessee Valley Authority has been lowering the

water level of Lake Fontana about two feet a day.

"It seems like we've made, in my mind, a 75% dent in it, so far," Nichols said. "A lot of stuff will be on the ground and be mucky." They will have to wait for the ground that was under the lake bed to dry before they can get the trash out.

"We'll eventually get the trash, then the question is all the tree debris and what do you do with that," he said, committed to continuing the work. Swain Clean will also plan to take part in the annual Fontana Lakeshore Trash Cleanup next weekend, Oct. 18-20. To register for that event, contact Brandon Jones at (8280498-2017 or email brandon.jones@fontanavillage. com. To become a Swain Clean volunteer or learn more, contact Nick Nichols at 678-612-5362 or nicknicholsproperties@gmail.com.

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Jessica Webb editor@thesmokymountaintimes.com, 'Finding a way to the surface: Swain Clean leads lake clean up', *Smoky Mountain Times* (online), 10 Oct 2024 1A <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a> p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C1DAB0084F4DD8>



### The news from Whittier

October 10, 2024 | Smoky Mountain Times (Bryson City, NC) Author: Cathy Dunlap whittiernews@yahoo.com| Section: Opinions | 184 Words Page: 5A OpenURL Link

Ela Baptist Church is having their 104th homecoming on Sunday, Oct. 13 at 11 a.m. Justin Hunt is their preacher. Everyone is welcome to attend. Peggy Carter celebrated her 93rd birthday a few times last week. I know she had at least two steak meals (one restaurant cooked, one home cooked). She certainly enjoyed her birthday this year!

The amount of love and generosity given to the people of Western North Carolina has been overwhelming to see. People can really pull together when needed. Thank you to all the public servants (police, firefighters, first responders, EMS, etc.) and the utility workers. Thanks to all the helpers!

Continue praying for those affected by Hurricane Helene and pray for those in the path of Hurricane Milton. I finally have suffered enough. I broke down and turned my heat on at night. The low temperatures in the 50's was difficult but 40's and 30's are more than I can bear. I hope y'all are warm. Halloween is fast approaching. Do you have your costume yet? I'm undecided. It's either King Kong or Godzilla. Everyone, have a blessed week.

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Cathy Dunlap whittiernews@yahoo.com, 'The news from Whittier', *Smoky Mountain Times* (online), 10 Oct 2024 5A <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C1DAB01CA720F8">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C1DAB01CA720F8</a>



# After Helene, 'everyone is here to pitch in' - Tennessee general store illustrates what's needed, what's next in recovery

October 10, 2024  $\mid$  Star, The (Shelby, NC)

Author: Hayden Dunbar; Knoxville News Sentinel | Section: News | 1001 Words

Page: A3
OpenURL Link

ELK MILLS, Tenn. - The Sugar Hollow General Store and Café — which locals in Elk Mills, Tennessee, still call its former name, the Elk Mills General Store — has become a hub of activity in Carter County following floods caused by Hurricane Helene.

Before, it was a gathering spot for Tennessee residents of Bob's Island, Poga and Elk Mills to pick up odds and ends, whether that be food or household products. Local resident Kelley Carter called it "the center of the community."

Now, the store is more like a base for collecting and distributing supplies that have become necessary since the Sept.27 flooding. Surrounding the store are trailers of canned goods, camp stoves, medical supplies, baby products, camp stoves, gas, propane, and food for pets and livestock. The site also is equipped with shower trailers, hot meals and Starlink internet.

The National Guard, using Black Hawk helicopters, has regularly dropped supplies outside the store, near where the Elk Mills-Poga Volunteer Fire Department used to stand before being destroyed by flooding.

Parts of the area are best reached with an ATV or UTV, unless you're willing to travel on long, out-of-the-way routes. Most families are still without power in these communities.

In Carter County, eight cell towers were destroyed, and about 14 bridges were lost. Although there were no flood-related deaths in the county, more than 650 homes in Carter County had been assessed and declared damaged by flooding caused by Hurricane Helene.

It's not just local volunteers. People from nearby areas, distant Tennessee cities — even from as far away as Florida, Kentucky and Virginia — have made their way to the store to offer help, said Carter, who is helping to coordinate volunteer efforts.

Volunteers first arrived Sept.27, and some people have returned day after day to lend a hand.

"We've all come together as one, no matter where we're from or financial situation or anything, everyone is here to pitch in," Carter said. "In this day and time, people are so caught up in their own lives. But when something like this happens, it hits their heartstrings and they just really want to help."

Carter County Mayor Patty Woodby, who grew up in the area, traveled on Black Hawk helicopter drops and helped guide the National Guard to what she calls the communities' "nooks and crannies." She knows her people are resilient and has been reminded "just how resourceful our mountain people are."

"As long as we're getting supplies in there, they will be very resourceful," she said. "I'm super proud of Carter County. ... I really think this is gonna bring our community closer."

Mike Rice lives nearby and works remotely for Microsoft. He was essential in providing the area with Starlink internet access, which residents have relied on for communication. Rice collected six of the Starlinks that have been used in these communities and drove them down from the Washington, D.C., area, he said.

It's not just the closest communities that are receiving support from the general store base.

"We're trying to reach everybody we can reach. Doesn't matter what county you're in," said Doug Carter, Kelley's husband, who's also helping coordinate volunteer efforts.

Some volunteers have formed their own teams, leaving together from the general store on ATVs and UTVs, the primary mode of transportation in the area for both residents and those who have traveled there to help.

Chris Wiley said he and Austin Droit came from Illinois to Carter County after seeing the extent of damage on Twitter and TikTok. They met Rogersville natives Melanie Range and her 12-year-old daughter, Kynzlee Tester, at Walmart while buying supplies to donate.

The group of four combined forces with Dallas Townsend, of Jonesborough, along with his dog Lady May. Kyle Mahoney, of Oliver Springs, also joined the group after striking up a conversation at the local Tractor Supply.

"Everybody's pitched in and bought stuff," Townsend said.

They departed the general store Oct.4 on a mission to find a man in Beech Mountain, North Carolina, who needed supplies, particularly for his wounded hand. The group had only the name of his street to go on.

Dark Ridge Road, about a 30-minute UTV drive from the general store, has been damaged by flooding. There are several houses, and the crew drove by each one to look for the wounded man.

They heard he had children, which made a wood-sided home with kids' toys in the yard a strong contender. But when Mahoney knocked on the door, no one answered.

It wasn't until the convoy knocked on the door of a house up the road that they confirmed their original suspicions. The wood-sided house was the right one, but the man wasn't home, likely having traveled to a nearby community center for a hot meal.

Townsend and Droit drove the UTVs back, and the crew deposited supplies on the doorstep, including a camp stove, propane, food, paper products, socks, wound care items, backpacks and plush stuffed animals for the children.

Back in Tennessee, Mahoney reflected on the day. "You'll never get everything everywhere. We're just doing our best."

More than a week into relief efforts, people in hard-to-reach areas had received many of the supplies they needed. Some things, such as food and fuel, will need to be restocked. But the urgency has started to dissipate.

As of Oct.5, some supplies that are no longer needed were slated to be sent from the general store to Bristol Motor Speedway in Bristol, Tennessee. The speedway is the Northeast Tennessee Disaster Relief Center, a designation coordinated alongside TEMA.

Fire chief Mike Walsh is proud of the self-reliance of his community, from beginning operations at the general store base to rebuilding roads. He's also grateful for volunteers who have traveled in to offer help, but he believes it's time for a new phase of recovery to begin.

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### • Citation (aglc Style)

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# Virginia commit Hamrick returning to Crest High roots

October 10, 2024 | Star, The (Shelby, NC) Author: Joe L Hughes II; Shelby Star | Section: Sports | 344 Words Page: B1 OpenURL Link

University of Virginia recruit and A.C. Reynolds quarterback Ely Hamrick has transferred to Crest, he confirmed via his X, formerly Twitter, account on Wednesday.

"Due to Hurricane Helene, I have transferred to Crest High School," he said. "I want to thank (A.C. Reynolds coach) Shane Laws for everything that he has done for me; it made a huge difference. I also want to thank (Crest football coach Greg Lloyd) and the entire coaching staff for this opportunity."

Hurricane Helene took a toll on the Asheville area, putting the football season at A.C. Reynolds and other mountain schools in question. It is unknown when Buncombe County Schools will reopen.

Through five games this season, Hamrick has completed almost 54% of his passes for seven touchdowns and an interception. He also has 141 rushing yards and two TDs.

Hamrick transferred to A.C. Reynolds this fall after spending the past two years as part of IMG Academy's "White Varsity" team, playing against teams ranked among the nation's top 250, in addition to occasionally traveling out of state.

As a sophomore, he led IMG White to a 9-1 record and the Sunshine State Independent Association state title, completing 59% of passes for 1,244 yards and 18 touchdowns.

"I really just progressed," Hamrick told the Asheville Citizen-Times earlier this year. "It was all growing and developing. I really think it was a great fit for me for the first two years of high school, having the mentorship of all these guys that have done it."

He joins a Crest team which is 4-1 overall (1-1 Big South 3A), though on the heels of a gut-wrenching 27-26 loss at South Point last Friday night.

By no means is the Hamrick name new to Crest, either. His father, Ryan, played quarterback as part of Crest's first NCHSAA state championship team in 1994. He went on to play wide receiver at NC State, catching 33 passes for 540 yards and two touchdowns from 1998-2000.

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### • Citation (aglc Style)

Joe L Hughes II, Shelby Star, 'Virginia commit Hamrick returning to Crest High roots', *Star, The* (online), 10 Oct 2024 B1 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C1E98A2379C1B0">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C1E98A2379C1B0</a>



# Kings Mountain man escapes floodwaters

October 10, 2024 | Star, The (Shelby, NC) Author: Rebecca Sitzes; Shelby Star | Section: News | 1226 Words Page: A1 OpenURL Link

For two interminable hours, Josh Tippel perched on the roof of his car waiting for rescue, while a raging river flowed around his tires precariously perched on the edge of the asphalt, just inches from dropping off a steep mountain ridge and into a raging river below.

"Last Friday, I was so close to losing my life that I texted loved ones my goodbyes, just in case I never got another chance to," the Kings Mountain native wrote in a Facebook post, describing his ordeal following Hurricane Helene.

Tippel, who moved to Boone to attend college, ended up making the mountain town his home.

"I moved to Kings Mountain when I was 2 from Florida and lived there all the way up until I was 17 and then moved up here for college. I loved it up here and stayed," he said in a phone interview.

He said after graduating, he got a job working in operations at a chemical manufacturer.

He never anticipated nearly losing his life to the strength and fury of Helene.

"We definitely knew it was coming, but the severity was what shocked us," Tippel said. "I was fully expecting going into to work that morning and there would be a lot of rain and one or two trees down but nothing like what actually happened."

He said that Friday, he went into the work like usual, but the power ended up going out around 9:30 a.m. The wind and rain were so severe, he decided to wait until it calmed down before attempting to go home.

"I left the office at 12, and it was not even 5 minutes down the road that I got stuck," he said. "The drive home was awful. It was pretty much fallen tree after fallen tree. There wasn't really a time you could stay in your lane you were just bobbing and weaving and whatever space was available you were taking it."

He said he came to a place in the road where there was normally a small creek, but it had risen around five feet and was flowing over the top of the pavement. The road was on a ridge and below the hill, a river had formed.

"I stopped at that point until it looked like it was calm enough to where I could get over because my car is usually able to handle that kind of thing, but I misjudged and I got stuck there," he said.

In his Facebook post, he wrote that the water had already eroded the side of the road which led to a steep mountain ridge, now filled with fatal rapids of rushing water.

"I was able to get stopped about eight feet from the ledge but the ever-flowing water, and the rocks that traveled down with it, kept slamming into my car and pushing me closer to going over," he said. "Then, the asphalt on the edge started breaking off chunk by chunk until I was barely two feet from never making it home again. One more large rock, one more chunk of asphalt, one more strong gust of wind could have sealed my fate."

He slammed on the brakes trying to prevent his car from being washed over the hill and into the raging river below but the force of the water turned his car sideways and began to pile up rocks and debris around his tires, pushing him closer and closer to the edge. In a panic, he set the emergency brake and called 911. He said some people walking down the street saw him and also called 911 multiple times, trying to get help to arrive before it was too late.

At their urging, he climbed out of his car and onto the roof as the water rose around him.

"The rain picked back up and wind was still crazy in its bursts," he said. "I sat up there for about two hours."

Time passed by in slow motion as he waited to be rescued. While he waited, he made calls and sent messages to friends and family, telling them he was stuck in a river and if he didn't see them again, he loved them and thanked them for being in his life.

The onlookers waited on the other side of the river, plotting a plan of action if he did fall into the water and keeping him calm until firefighters arrived from the fire department. Tippel said one of the men was also named Josh.

"We screamed our names at each other over the wind," he said. "If it were not for him specifically I wouldn't be able to keep my cool."

Tippel said Josh kept him calm and collected, even climbing onto the roof of a nearby house to keep watch for the fire department. He said when rescuers finally arrived, it took another hour to decide the best course of action to get him to safety, and his rescuers ended up wrapping a rope around a large tree and throwing a harness attached to the rope to Tippel. It took several throws before it landed where he could reach it, and after getting the harness on, he waded through the water to the other side. At one point, the power of the water caused him to lose his footing and he fell and had to be pulled to land.

"It was so powerful," he said. "As soon as that happened, I heard and felt them pull and thought if they accidentally let go of the rope, this is the end of me."

He said he felt shell-shocked when he finally reached land and saw how close to the edge he had been. It wasn't until later, after he was taken back to his office, that the adrenaline wore off he felt all the emotions.

Tippel said he hasn't seen Josh or his other helpers since it happened.

"They were on the side of the river that was uncrossable so I never even got to say thank you," he said.

Since his near death experience, he's had to pass by the location every day on his way to work. He said the road has already been repaved, but you can see where the river bed was carved out and how high the water rose, a visual reminder of that dangerous day. He said he has been filled with feelings of gratitude that he survived, and he has a new appreciation for life.

"This could disappear at any given moment so while I have it, I'm going to hold onto it as best as I can," he said.

Tippel said his car was a total loss and when it got towed, the driver said he didn't know how his car hadn't gone over the edge, as there was nothing holding it up but the emergency brake.

Since last week, he said much of the town has been cleaned up, roads are being repaved and internet and power restored, and he has seen an outpouring of assistance for his town and others.

He said his power and internet are still out, and he is trying to find a new car. Friends started a Gofundme to help Tippel. His employer serves as a hub and has been assisting with storing donations and helping with relief efforts.

He said no one in the mountains expected to get hit with a hurricane, but he has seen people come together and help each other following the disaster.

"It's keeping faith in humanity really," he said.

# • Citation (aglc Style)

Rebecca Sitzes, Shelby Star, 'Kings Mountain man escapes floodwaters', *Star, The* (online), 10 Oct 2024 A1 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C1E98A447D71D0">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C1E98A447D71D0</a>



# Harris criticizes Trump on 'The View' - VP refuses to distance herself from Biden

October 10, 2024 | Star, The (Shelby, NC)
Author: Francesca Chambers , and Michael Collins; USA TODAY Section: News | 1008 Words
Page: A5
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WASHINGTON – Vice President Kamala Harris declined on Tuesday to distance herself from President Joe Biden's record during an appearance on "The View" – and she hit back at former President Donald Trump's claims about the White House's handling of the southern border and hurricane relief.

It was one of several interviews that Harris, the Democratic nominee for president, has done this week as her campaign tries to reach less-politically engaged voters with the election less than a month out and early voting beginning in some states.

Harris has repeatedly opted for platforms such as the popular podcast "Call Her Daddy," instead of political news shows. She also sat down with radio show host Howard Stern and appeared on "The Late Show with Stephen Colbert" during a media blitz in New York.

In her first of three appearances on Tuesday, Harris was asked on "The View" whether she would have done something differently than Biden over the past four years.

"There is not a thing that comes to mind," Harris said, noting that she has been "a part of most of the decisions that have had impact" in the Biden administration.

She pointed to legislation that capped the cost of insulin at \$35 a month for seniors, as well as other efforts to lower prescription drug prices.

"Those were all a shared priority," she told the talk show. Harris has said she would seek to expand the health care benefits to all Americans, regardless of age.

Hammering her Republican opponent, she accused him of being the reason that bipartisan immigration reform legislation had not passed in Congress, an allegation she's frequently raised.

"Donald Trump prefers to run on problems, instead of fixing problems. He is not solution-oriented," she said.

A bipartisan group of senators spent months last year crafting a border bill, but it quickly lost steam on Capitol Hill after Trump publicly opposed the push.

Harris also hit Trump for unsubstantiated claims that the Biden administration is intentionally withholding disaster aid from Republican areas and diverting relief funds to housing for undocumented immigrants. It's a charge that the FEMA administrator has refuted as "frankly ridiculous and just plain false" while back-to-back hurricanes have lashed over the Southeast.

"It's profound, and it is the height of irresponsibility and, frankly, callousness," Harris said on "The View" in response to a question about Trump's comments.

"People are losing their homes with no hope of ever being able to reconstruct or return," Harris said as she discussed trips she made to storm-ravaged areas in Georgia and North Carolina. "The idea that somebody would be playing political games for the sake of himself, but this is so consistent about Donald Trump, he puts himself before the needs of others."

In the appearance, Harris urged Floridians in the path of Hurricane Milton to listen to their local officials. Harris said there may be a tendency by Florida residents who have weathered previous events to write the hurricane off.

"This one is going to be different," she warned.

The vice president said the severity of the storm is the reason why she has been trying to reach Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis. Her comments were the latest volley in a dispute with Florida's top official over the storm response.

"We have to have an agreement that at some point, we all need to work together to combine resources, especially federal, state and local resources, around these kinds of disasters. And I think it's a shame that that hasn't happened," she said.

DeSantis said in a Monday evening interview on Fox News' "Hannity" that Harris had never called him until Hurricane Helene hit. He said he'd been in touch with Biden and FEMA about coordinating resources.

"She has no role in this. In fact, she's been vice president for three and a half years. I've dealt with a number of storms under this administration. She has never contributed anything to any of these efforts," he said.

Harris had told reporters, in response to a question about a report that DeSantis was ducking her calls, that "playing politics" during an emergency "is just utterly irresponsible, and it is selfish, and it is about political gamesmanship, instead of doing the job that you took an oath to do, which is to put the people first."

Later on Tuesday, during Harris' appearance on "The Howard Stern Show," the radio host asked her about a revelation in a new book by journalist Bob Woodward, who reported that Trump secretly sent COVID test kits to Russian President Vladimir Putin for his own personal use.

Harris called it "the most recent stark example of who Donald Trump is," that he would secretly send kits to Putin, "an adversary to the United States," at a time when they were in short supply.

"People were dying by the hundreds, everybody was scrambling to get these kits," she said. "... And this guy, who is president of the United States, is sending them to Russia to a murderous dictator for his personal use."

Trump's campaign immediately denied the reporting. Spokesperson Steven Cheung rejected Woodward's reporting in a statement, calling it "made up stories" from a "truly demented and deranged man."

DeSantis and Trump weren't the only Republicans Harris talked about on Tuesday. Asked whether she would appoint former Rep. Liz Cheney, R-Wyo., to her Cabinet, Harris dodged by pointing out that she has to win the election first.

But she described Cheney, a Trump critic who has endorsed Harris for president, as "remarkable" person who put her country before her party.

On a lighter note, Harris also described, during the interview, working at McDonald's when she was a college student.

"It's an experience," she said. "I was doing the fries, and you got to watch the timer, and it's hard work."

But Harris said she recognized that, as a college student, her McDonald's pay was spending money. For others working there, it was the source of their family income.

"We've still got a lot of work to do to make sure that folks cannot just get by, but get ahead," she said. Copyright, 2024, The Star, All Rights Reserved.

Francesca Chambers , and Michael Collins, USA TODAY, 'Harris criticizes Trump on 'The View' - VP refuses to distance herself from Biden', *Star, The* (online), 10 Oct 2024 A5 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a> p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C1E98A20BE5AD0>



# NFL Week 6 power rankings - Heisman winner pushes his team up to No. 7

October 10, 2024 | Star, The (Shelby, NC) Author: Nate Davis; USA TODAY | Section: Sports | 1475 Words Page: B3 OpenURL Link

NFL power rankings entering Week 6 of the 2024 season (previous rank in parentheses):

- 1. Kansas City Chiefs (1): With their first double-digit win of the season on Monday night, K.C. became the 10th reigning champion of the Super Bowl era (since 1966) to start 5-0 and the first in five years. Now, they get a week off before their Super Bowl 54/58 rematch with San Francisco.
- 2. Minnesota Vikings (2): They wobbled out of London with a close-shave victory. However QB Sam Darnold looked like ... Sam Darnold. And RB Aaron Jones' hip injury further hindered the offense. Good thing there's more to this team like a ferocious defense and OLB Andrew Van Ginkel, the first player in league history to record at least three sacks and multiple pick-sixes in the first five weeks of a season.
- 3. Baltimore Ravens (3): What do you know? They actually overcame a double-digit fourth-quarter deficit Sunday in Cincinnati. But in all seriousness, if any club is going to emerge as a dominant force in 2024, it might well be this one the first in 18 seasons to rush for 1,000 yards through Week 5. Still, amazing as the Lamar Jackson-Derrick Henry duo is shaping up, the league's 31st-ranked pass defense needs to shape up.
- 4. Detroit Lions (4): Hope you fellas got your rest during the bye. Next up? A brutal five-stretch with road games at Dallas, Minnesota, Green Bay and Houston.
- 5. Atlanta Falcons (10): QB Kirk Cousins might be one questionable non-call against K.C. from being 3-0 in prime time with ATL. However, barring a flex Week 14 at Minnesota, anyone? "Kirko Chainz" is only scheduled to play one more night game this season. Thursday, he joined Tom Brady as the only players to pass for 500 yards and at least four TDs under the network lights.
- 6. Tampa Bay Buccaneers (6): After dealing with the wrath of Hurricane Helene, the Bucs are about to flee early to New Orleans as a storm that's apparently far more fierce (Hurricane Milton) takes direct aim at Tampa. Let's hope a good football team and its fans get a good outcome this week, despite current prognostications.
- 7. Washington Commanders (9): Lotta firsts here. First place. First team with 13 rushing TDs through five weeks since Gerald Ford was president. First rookie (Jayden Daniels) to start his career with 1,000 passing yards and 250 rushing yards five games in. Pretty soon, their supporters will be musing about the possibility of their first Super Bowl trip post-Joe Gibbs.
- 8. Houston Texans (13): Their record (4-1) is impressive. But the only division leader to be outscored by more than 10 points is probably a few breaks from being 1-4, and the injury concerns are only mounting with WR Nico Collins about to miss time with a bum hamstring.
- 9. Philadelphia Eagles (11): They should be rested coming off the bye, WRs A.J. Brown (hamstring) and DeVonta Smith (concussion) due back Sunday. And for a team that also figuratively needs to get healthy, a date with Cleveland is made to order.
- 10. Green Bay Packers (12): They only have to leave Wisconsin once (for Duval County) in the next six weeks. Green and golden opportunity to cement themselves anew as bona fide Super Bowl threats.
- 11. Buffalo Bills (5): Two weeks ago, QB Josh Allen was just about everyone's (very premature) MVP pick. Since

then? He's completed 42.4% of his passes, compiled a 65.0 QB rating and accounted for one TD and zero victories.

- 12. Arizona Cardinals (23): They're 2-0 against NFC West foes and feature the best QB-RB rushing tandem (Kyler Murray, James Conner) west of Baltimore.
- 13. San Francisco 49ers (7): They're 2-0 against AFC East competition, which is far less helpful when it's time to invoke tiebreakers especially given the Niners are off to an 0-2 start in their own division. Their 38-game winning streak under HC Kyle Shanahan in games with a double-digit fourth-quarter lead ended Sunday.
- 14. Dallas Cowboys (22): Maybe they've found something with RB Rico Dowdle. Maybe a defense fielding so many backups found a rallying cry. Maybe we'll know more in a week after they try to win their first home game of 2024 against a Detroit squad that lost at AT&T Stadium under dubious circumstances late last season.
- 15. Indianapolis Colts (15): Going back to last season in Cleveland, Joe Flacco has thrown for at least 300 yards and two TDs in his past five starts. At 39, he's the oldest quarterback in league history with such a string of games.
- 16. Pittsburgh Steelers (8): Not a great sign that QB Justin Fields was hit on about a quarter of his dropbacks Sunday night despite playing a defense missing its two top pass rushers maybe even more reason not to switch to QB Russell Wilson given the sad state of Pittsburgh's O-line.
- 17. Denver Broncos (18): Only the Chargers are allowing fewer points per game than the 14.6 of the Broncos, who also have 19 sacks and eight takeaways.
- 18. Los Angeles Chargers (17): Don't know how rejuvenated a battered group will be coming out the bye. We do know Denver has been a house of horrors for the Bolts, who have dropped 10 of 11 in the Mile High City.
- 19. Chicago Bears (21): A huge reason they've won a league-best eight in a row at Soldier Field? The defense has generated 18 turnovers in those games.
- 20. New York Jets (19): The speculation around potentially acquiring WR Davante Adams is all fine and good sensible even. But there's zero reason a team with RBs Breece Hall and Braelon Allen should rank last in the league in rushing (80.4 ypg).
- 21. Cincinnati Bengals (20): A highly competitive 1-4 team has basically exhausted its margin for error but isn't scheduled to face an opponent with a winning record until its Week 10 rematch with the Ravens.
- 22. New York Giants (27): Since his disastrous Week 1 return to the lineup, QB Daniel Jones has accounted for four TDs, one turnover and a 95.8 passer rating including Sunday's win at Seattle, when WR Malik Nabers and RB Devin Singletary were sidelined. Maybe paying Jones \$40 million per is reasonable after all.
- 23. Seattle Seahawks (14): A weak schedule has masked some issues here, including the NFC's second-worst turnover differential (-3). But most concerning is an offense that's entirely unbalanced, throwing the most passes in the league and running the ball the fewest times.
- 24. Los Angeles Rams (24): Think they've become a little too reliant on RB Kyren Williams? He has a team-high 109 offensive touches ... 89 more than anyone else on the team.
- 25. New Orleans Saints (16): A three-game slide marked by plummeting offensive production seemed quite likely Monday night to be exacerbated by QB Derek Carr's injury, one that apparently left him unable to effectively throw the ball. Now a league-worst 1-6 in prime-time games over the past three seasons, the Saints also suddenly don't seem like a prime-time option for Adams, either, particularly if Carr can't play.
- 26. Carolina Panthers (25): For all the focus on their quarterback issue, they've allowed a league-high 20 offensive touchdowns four more than any other team.

- 27. Las Vegas Raiders (26): For all the focus on their quarterback issue, they've committed a league-high nine turnovers which, admittedly, gets back to their quarterback issue, one that may be in flux.
- 28. Tennessee Titans (29): For all the focus on their quarterback issue, they've committed a league-high nine turnovers (in just four games) which, admittedly, gets back to their quarterback issue, one that may be in flux depending on Will Levis' injured shoulder.
- 29. Miami Dolphins (30): For all the focus on their quarterback issue, they've scored a league-low 60 points (after scoring 70 in one game last season) which, admittedly, gets back to their quarterback issue, one that may be temporarily stabilizing with Tyler Huntley.
- 30. Jacksonville Jaguars (32): With former LSU teammate Nabers concussed, WR Brian Thomas Jr. now leads all rookies with 397 receiving yards and all AFC players (minimum 20 receptions) with 18.0 yards per catch.
- 31. New England Patriots (28): For all the focus on their quarterback issue ... well, it's only going to intensify for a team averaging a league-low 119.4 passing yards per game and seemingly nearing a switch to rookie first-rounder Drake Maye.
- 32. Cleveland Browns (31): For all the focus on their quarterback issue ... well, theirs has been sacked a league-most 26 times. But Deshaun Watson almost surely isn't going to get sacked by upper management any time soon as he'd still incur a nearly \$173 million cap hit if cut next spring.

Follow USA TODAY Sports' Nate Davis on X, formerly Twitter, @ByNateDavis.

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Nate Davis, USA TODAY, 'NFL Week 6 power rankings - Heisman winner pushes his team up to No. 7', *Star, The* (online), 10 Oct 2024 B3 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C1E98A37F56C98">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C1E98A37F56C98</a>



# Hurricane Milton offers a catastrophic reminder

October 10, 2024 | Statesville Record & Landmark (NC) Author: Staff Writer | Section: Mapping | 618 Words OpenURL Link

Less than two weeks ago, Hurricane Helene ravaged southern Appalachia with unprecedented floods and claimed hundreds of lives. Now Hurricane Milton has targeted the west coast of Florida, which is still cleaning up from Helene's glancing blow. And less than a month from now, voters will choose between Democrats who accept the reality of climate change and Republicans who do not.

These are not the "normal" hurricanes of the past. Hurricanes are not supposed to retain catastrophic power as they race far inland from the Gulf of Mexico, dumping a Noah's flood of rainfall all the way to Tennessee, the way Helene did. Hurricanes are not supposed to grow from newly formed tropical storm to Category 5 monster in less than two days, the way Milton did — intensification so lightning-fast that it stunned experts.

"I can't even find the right adjective," University of Pennsylvania climate scientist Michael Mann said Monday about Milton. And Mann — author of the famous "hockey stick" graph showing the human-induced rise in global temperatures — pointed me to a Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory study reporting that rainfall from Helene was boosted 50% by climate change.

Understanding why hurricanes now behave differently is a matter of "basic physics," Mann said. Warmer temperatures provide more energy and moisture to serve as fuel for hurricanes, making them bigger and wetter. It's not that there are more hurricanes. Rather, the ones that do form tend to be stronger and release much more rain. Counting Helene, the United States has seen eight Category 4 or Category 5 landfalls since 2017 — the same number as during the previous 57 years.

Milton could make it nine, though forecasters expected the storm to diminish slightly in wind speed before it lands. Another impact of climate change — roughly half a foot of sea level rise in the Gulf since 2010 — makes storm surge and coastal flooding much worse. Residents of low-lying areas in the Tampa Bay area have been told to leave their homes, and Tampa Mayor Jane Castor announced bluntly: "If you choose to stay in one of those evacuation areas, you're going to die."

Many Republicans are reluctant even to acknowledge climate change, much less do anything about it, because of politics, not physics.

Four of the states that suffered fatalities and major damage from Helene — Florida, Georgia, South Carolina and Tennessee — have Republican governors and legislative majorities. Given all the death and destruction, you might think those officials would be clamoring for urgent action.

But the GOP's unchallenged leader, Donald Trump, has famously called climate change a "hoax" and frequently rails against clean-energy power sources such as solar and wind. He says he would dismantle the tax credits and incentives that encourage moving away from fossil fuels, vowing that his energy policy would be "drill, baby, drill."

In a July 2023 poll, The Washington Post found that 55% of Republicans and GOP-leaning independents believed that human activity is "causing changes to the world's climate, including an increase in average temperature." That is far less than the 93% of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents who believe in climate change, but it's still a majority.

Those numbers suggest that Republican voters might be prepared to support policies to mitigate and adapt to climate change if the party's leaders proposed them. But GOP elected officials must take their cues from Trump, lest he turn on them.

Meanwhile, Helene and Milton and the supercharged hurricanes that will follow do not care whether the states they plow through are red or blue. Nor do the droughts, the wildfires or the punishing heat waves. Whether we like it or not, climate change is an area of common ground: We're all in this together.

Robinson writes for The Washington Post: eugenerobinson@washpost.com.

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# Iredell blood drives set, aim to help critical need

October 10, 2024 | Statesville Record & Landmark (NC) Author: SPECIAL TO THE RECORD & LANDMARK | Section: Mapping | 400 Words OpenURL Link

The American Red Cross continues to work to restock critically needed blood products uncollected due to the ongoing impact of Hurricane Helene's devastation in the Southeast. Donors outside of affected areas are encouraged to make an appointment to give now and help keep the blood supply stable in the weeks to come.

Since making landfall, the storm and its aftermath have led to the cancellation of more than 100 blood drives, causing thousands of blood and platelet donations to go uncollected. For so many people living with urgent medical care needs, blood transfusions are essential, and donations in the Southeast are key to keeping our nationwide network stocked. The Red Cross operates through a national inventory with the ability to move blood wherever and whenever it is needed most.

The time to give blood or platelets is now. Bring hope to those in need by visiting RedCrossBlood.org, calling 1-800-RED CROSS or by using the Red Cross Blood Donor App. As the Red Cross continues to urge people to give blood or platelets now, our teams are also on the ground providing vital relief — like food, water, shelter and support — in communities devastated by Hurricane He-lene. Anyone able to help those impacted by disasters big and small across the country, like Helene, consider making a gift of any amount.

All who come to give blood, platelets or plasma Oct. 1-31 will receive a \$10 Amazon.com gift card by email, plus be automatically entered for a chance to win one of three \$5,000 gift cards. For full details, visit RedCrossBlood.org/Treat.

### Mooresville

- Oct. 16: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Michael Weinig, Inc., 124 Crosslake Park Drive
- Oct. 17: 2-6:30 p.m., Good Soul Yoga, 236 Raceway Drive, No. 1
- Oct. 21: 3-7:30 p.m., Rocky Mount Church, 1739 Perth Road
- Oct. 22: 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Victory Lanes Entertainment and Events Center, 125 Morlake Drive

### Statesville

- Oct. 16: 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Statesville Family YMCA, 828 Wesley Dr
- Oct. 16: 1-5:30 p.m., First Baptist Church, 815 Davie Ave.
- Oct. 23:1-6 p.m., Rose Chapel Methodist Church, 813 Turner sburg Highway
- Oct. 29: 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., Statesville High School-Aux. Gym, 474 N. Center St.

### **Troutman**

- Oct. 14: 2-6:30 p.m., Holy Trinity Lutheran, 225 Morgan St.
- Oct. 14: 2:30-7 p.m., Watermark Church, 321 Clontz HiU Road Taylorsville

- Oct. 13: 12:30-5 p.m., Friendship Lutheran Church, 5300 Church Road
- Oct. 15: 2-7 p.m., Salem Lutheran Church, 4005 NC-16 (North)

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SPECIAL TO THE RECORD & LANDMARK, 'Iredell blood drives set, aim to help critical need', *Statesville Record & Landmark* (online), 10 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C1F15B51033D68">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C1F15B51033D68</a>



# FEMA workers going door-to-door in NC hurricane-damaged spots

October 10, 2024 | Statesville Record & Landmark (NC) Author: Billy Chapman wchapman@hickoryrecord.com| Section: Government Politics| 1256 Words OpenURL Link

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) teams are providing resources to western North Carolina.

FEMA teams are going door-to-door to make sure people and structures are safe and to sign people up for federal assistance after the remnants of Hurricane Helene devastated the area.

FEMA Media Relations Specialist Nate Custer said the teams are marked with official FEMA identification badges and carrying tablets to sign people up on the spot.

FEMA spokesperson Jann Tracey added that agents are accompanied by local officials.

Custer said the agency is currently in response mode. During this stage, the agency is conducting search-and-rescue operations, getting utilities up and running and getting roads passable.

Custer is assigned to provide information for Catawba, Burke, McDowell and other western North Carolina counties.

Tracey is providing information about Alexander, Caldwell and northwestern North Carolina counties.

"We work closely with faith-based organizations, community partners," Custer said. "FEMA administers and is in charge of the various federal agencies, but we're only part of the equation. We don't come in and, so to speak, run the show. We're invited in and requested in by the governor.

"We work closely with state emergency management and local emergency management. We have an element that works with voluntary organizations. Often there are partnerships and task forces created to solve some of these long-range housing problems.

"There's going to be an awful volume of these this time around," Custer said.

What is FEMA doing in western North Carolina?

Tracey said FEMA comes in when local and state officials need assistance.

If a need cannot be met by local and state officials, FEMA jumps in to meet the need, using resources from all over the country.

"FEMA and the state work hand in glove," Tracey said. "Even before a disaster hits, we're trying to anticipate needs and get resources where they are needed."

Custer said FEMA is in all of the 27 federally declared disaster counties and in lands of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians in North Carolina in some capacity.

Custer said the teams going door-to-door are essential for making people aware of resources available to them.

"In a typical disaster, communications are an issue, and it's worse in this one," Custer said. "Usually there are some cell phone outages, but nothing like this in how we're (having difficulty) getting the word out to people."

Custer continued, "A lot of people are in a state of shock. They don't know what's going to happen the next day.

They might not be aware they need to register with FEMA. If they register with their local emergency management or Red Cross, that does not get them into the FEMA system."

A release from Oct. 6 from the White House said there are more than 1,000 FEMA staff in North Carolina with more arriving daily. The release said there are 1,500 military personnel in the state assisting with disaster response.

Over 1,200 search and rescue personnel are in the area. Teams have rescued more than 3,200 people as of Oct. 6.

Tracey said FEMA has contributed over 5 million liters of water and 7 million meals since the disaster began.

"When people don't see someone in a FEMA shirt distributing, that doesn't mean it wasn't contributed by FEMA," Tracey said.

How can people apply for assistance?

Custer said people can apply for assistance by calling 800-621-3362. Those able to access the internet can also apply for assistance by going to disasterassistance.gov.

FEMA also has an app that can be downloaded and used to apply for assistance.

Custer said FEMA will soon open disaster recovery centers.

Tracey said recovery centers would likely be in every county included in the federal disaster declaration.

Custer said individuals do not have to live in a county where a disaster center is located to use a center.

Staff members at disaster recovery centers will be able to help people who have previously applied for assistance and sign people up for aid.

One disaster center is currently open in North Carolina. The center is located at A.C. Reynolds High School in Asheville.

FEMA's website said the deadline to apply for assistance in North Carolina is Nov. 27.

What do you need to apply for assistance?

Proof of ownership of a residence

A list of people permanently living at a location

Social Security number

Estimated annual income

Insurance information, if available

Custer said it takes about 10 minutes to provide this information over the phone.

More information is coming for people who have lost a driver's license and other documents, Custer said.

"That happens in virtually all these situations. Key documents get swept away," Custer said. "There's avenues people can use to recover documents."

Who can apply for FEMA assistance?

U.S. citizens, non-citizen nationals and qualified non-citizens are eligible to receive assistance according to FEMA's website.

Applicants will also need to provide a Social Security number to prove their identity.

What happens after applying for assistance?

Custer said the time to process an application varies.

"We have already approved more than \$37 million in housing and other types of assistance for over 28,000 North Carolina households," Custer said on Oct. 8.

On Oct. 9, FEMA's website said nearly \$60 million in housing and other assistance had been approved for almost 52,000 North Carolinians.

After applying for FEMA assistance, applicants will receive a letter explaining what type of grant they have been awarded or advising them their application is incomplete and more information is needed.

If someone is not satisfied with the grant they received, an appeals process exists. Custer said specialists at disaster recovery centers can assist applicants with the appeals process.

FEMA's website also says appeals can be made online through accounts registered with disasterassistance.gov.

Custer said FEMA may call applicants from any number, so if someone has applied for assistance they need to answer their phone even if it is from an unknown number.

Does FEMA help with unemployment?

Custer said those out of work due to the disaster may apply for disaster unemployment.

"There is disaster unemployment," Custer said. "It is mostly funded by FEMA. but it is run by the state unemployment office."

What does FEMA pay for?

Custer said the \$750 many applicants have received is for food, medicine, diapers and other essential needs.

FEMA can also pay for emergency home repair if a home is repairable.

FEMA also pays for temporary housing.

We've got about 1,400 people in 125 hotels in North Carolina, Custer said.

FEMA may also assist with providing funds for equipment used for work or school, such as tools or computers, on a case-by-case basis.

Does FEMA assistance have to be paid back?

Custer said FEMA assistance does not have to be paid back because they are grants.

Custer said FEMA aids individuals. The Small Business Administration (SBA) provides loans to businesses, homeowners and renters to deal with home and personal property losses.

People can apply for FEMA grants and SBA loans.

Are conspiracy theories hurting FEMA?

"There's things out there like FEMA is confiscating items or supplies, there's no truth at all to that," Custer said, referring to a rumor that FEMA is taking donated items and not disbursing them to affected communities. "We always say, particularly for people outside the affected area, a cash contribution is the most effective way (to help)."

Custer said people should give to the Red Cross or other established organizations.

Custer also said well-intentioned deeds may not be helpful.

"People get a pick-up, get a few neighbors, get a few supplies in a truck and head on down to western North Carolina," Custer said. "That's difficult with the roads, they're not sure where to go, there's a problem in not knowing exactly where to drop those (donations off)."

Can people apply to work for FEMA?

Custer said people can apply, but FEMA is not at the point where they have requested additional aid workers.

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# **Dolores Fones Jacques**

October 10, 2024 | Sun Journal (New Bern, NC) Author: Staff Writer | Section: Obituaries | 311 Words OpenURL Link

Dolores Fones Jacques, 88, of Havelock, died peacefully surrounded by her loving family at the Service League of Greenville Inpatient Hospice House on October 6th, 2024. This wonderful mom and wife is survived by her daughter, Tracy Jacques Derby (Robert) of New Bern; and her two sons, Patrick Jacques (Paula) of Greenville, N.C. and Christopher Jacques (Debbie) of Wendell, N.C.; grandchildren, Brandon Derby of New Bern, Lauren Derby Diez of Alexandria, Va., Cameron Jacques of Fort Collins, Colo., Hunter Jacques of Greenville, N.C., Morgan Jacques of Orlando, Fla., Alexandra Medeiros (John) of Temple, Texas and Dylan Reyes of Raleigh, N.C.; and greatgrandchildren, Liam Diez, Elias Jacques, Luke Derby, and Eva Medeiros. She is also survived by her sister, Frances Panos (Charles) of Jasper, Ala. Some of you might fondly remember her from her cake business "Cakes by Jacques", working at Graham A. Barden Elementary School, or from New Bern High School as 'sweetie pie'. The three of us children remember her as a great mom who would not allow us to get away with much! Thanks mom, for keeping us out of trouble; even though we did not appreciate it at the time! The family will receive visitors on Saturday, October 12th at Annunciation Catholic Church from 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall for a time of remembrance and celebrating Dolores' life. Dolores Fones Jacques will be laid to rest at Greenleaf Memorial Park for a private graveside service at the same location as her loving husband of 67 years, Ret. SgtMaj Edward Jacques who proceeded her. Cotten Funeral Home is handing burial services for the family. Fond memories and expressions of sympathy may be placed on their website at www.cottenfuneralhome.com for the Jacques family. In lieu of flowers the family asks that memorial donations in Dolores Fones Jacques name be made directly to Samaritans Purse for Helene assistance (samaritanspurse.org)."

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### • Citation (aglc Style)

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