

Center

From A1

drop-offs to distribution for those in need.

Epley said donations are coming from across the country. He said donations are being accepted from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day and will be distributing needed items from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. every day.

“We are deeply appreciative of the continued generosity and support from our community as we work together in the recovery from Hurricane Helene,” a release from the county said.

One tractor-trailer was dropped off by Person County Sheriff Jason Wilborn and several volunteers on Monday.

Wilborn started taking supplies to areas damaged by hurricanes in 2016, and the community in Person County, in eastern North Carolina, threw its support into the mission, he said.

“I know they would return the favor if I ever needed help,” Wilborn said.

The supplies were carried over in a trailer owned by Dewey Jones, a retired sheriff of Person County.

“I’ve done 35 years in law enforcement, been a fireman for 43 years,” Jones said. “It’s just in my blood to help people when they need help. That’s what it’s all about, is helping one another, helping your neighbors. We don’t get in the job for money, we get in it to help people.”

Wilborn first contacted Burke County Sheriff Banks Hinceman shortly after the storm hit on Friday.

“We’ve seen damage that we’ve never seen before,” Hinceman said. “Both flooding and just damage to structures, infrastructure, highways, bridges. We’ve just never seen this.”

For any questions or to reach the Donation Team, call 828-764-3204.

If you are in need of volunteer services or would like to volunteer to assist, contact the volunteer hotline at 828-764-7068. Phone lines will be open from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily to ensure timely support for those requesting or offering help, the release from the county said.

Volunteer services include property cleanup, animal care and food assistance for those affected by the hurricane.

Storm debris cleanup

Burke County asked residents to not take storm debris to the county landfill. The county has contracted with a hauler to manage debris collection directly from residential areas. The county said in a release that the contracted hauler will make two to three passes through affected areas throughout the county to ensure all debris is collected. Residents do not need to be present for pickup.

Residents are asked to separate the debris into three categories, which are:

- Vegetation
- White goods (appliances such as refrigerators, washers, dryers, etc.)
- Building materials (construction debris, wood, drywall)

That debris should be moved to the right-of-way on the road. For help moving debris to the right-of-way, call 828-764-7068.



XAVIER MARTIN PHOTOS, HICKORY DAILY RECORD

Burke County Department of Social Services worker Christie Carrol pushes a cart of supplies through Foothills Higher Education Center in Morganton on Monday.

“Please be patient as the county works to manage the cleanup,” a release from the county said. “While we are making every effort to remove debris as quickly as possible, the large volume of material may cause some delays.”

Meeting, event canceled

The Burke County Board of Commissioners announced Monday that its pre-agenda meeting originally set for Tuesday has been canceled, along with the groundbreaking ceremonies for the EMS base headquarters and the animal shelter on Friday.

The commissioners regular meeting on Oct. 15 will go ahead as planned.

The Valdese Town Council also canceled its pre-agenda meeting that was set for Monday. Town officials said the council will hold its regular meeting on Oct. 7.

Town of Valdese

Valdese Mayor Charlie Watts said the water plant is back up running, and the boil advisory for Valdese customers remained in place Monday. Watts said that advisory should end Tuesday. The boil advisory remains in place for the rest of Burke County, according to alerts from the county on Monday.

Watts said people still need to be conservative with their water use because there is only one pump working at the water plant.

Watts is asking residents to be patient in getting their power restored. He said Valdese Public Works and Duke Energy are working to get power restored to the town.

Watts said he saw at least 15 power trucks in the town on Monday morning.

“They’re working all over town trying to clear debris out of the lines and restore power,” Watts said. “I’m just asking people to be patient because them guys and our town employees are all working as fast and as hard as they can.”

Watts said when he saw the trucks, they were awaiting orders from Duke Energy.

The town recreation center and the Old Rock School are closed because of a lack of power. Valdese Town Hall is open after power was restored on Monday. Lakeside Park is closed until further notice due to downed trees, Watts said.



Song Hang organizes donated shower supplies inside of the Foothills Adult Education Center in Morganton on Monday. Donations of nonperishable food items, water, clothing, toiletries, pet food and other items are being accepted at the site.



Burke and Person County Sheriffs department workers, city employees and volunteers unload a truck full of donated supplies at the Foothills Adult Education Center in Morganton on Monday.



Pet food is among the supplies donated at the distribution center at the Foothills Higher Education Center in Morganton.

The Old Rock School was set up Monday as a landing point for federal helicopters to get supplies further west.

It is not, however, a drop-point for donations from the

community, Watts said.

Hospitals in Burke

Danette Brackett, a spokesperson and executive director of business development for

UNC Health Blue Ridge, said the health system wants to reassure the community that the hospital remains fully operational and well-prepared to care for patients.

To address the impacts of Hurricane Helene, UNC Health Blue Ridge has established an incident command center at the Morganton hospital campus, Brackett said.

“Although we initially lost power at both our Morganton and Valdese campuses, our generators immediately took over, and power has since been restored,” Brackett said. “We also experienced a temporary water outage at Morganton, but thanks to a contractual agreement, we are transporting potable water from Catawba County until the city of Morganton fully restores service. Importantly, this has not affected patient care.”

For the safety of the community, Brackett said the hospital system has temporarily canceled non-emergency surgeries until it’s safe to resume normal operations and staff can safely return to work.

She said the hospital is also assessing outpatient clinics for any damage or utility outages. The clinics will reopen as soon as possible.

On Monday, Valdese Express Care, Cajun Mountain Express Care and McDowell Express Care reopened.

“Thanks to the support of UNC Health, which has provided additional personnel and resources, our staffing has remained stable despite some team members being unable to work due to damage to their homes,” Brackett said.

“We have not encountered any shortages of food or supplies. We are incredibly grateful for the way our community has come together during this challenging time. Please continue to check our website and social media for regular updates if you have internet access.”

The hospital system also says adult residents 18 years old and older of western North Carolina can see a UNC Health primary care provider for mild symptoms without an appointment through UNC Health Virtual Care Now free of charge for those impacted by Hurricane Helene.

You can get in line for Virtual Care Now through My UNC Chart. Virtual services are available 6 a.m. – 10 p.m. seven days a week.

How to apply for FEMA assistance

Did you experience damage from Tropical Storm Helene? If you live in Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Clay, Cleveland, Gaston, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Lincoln, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Transylvania, Watauga, Wilkes or Yancey counties or are a tribal member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, FEMA may be able to help with serious needs, displacement, home repair or other expenses.

To apply, go online to DisasterAssistance.gov, use the FEMA app for mobile devices or call 800-621-3362.

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“Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.”
~ Psalm 51:10 KJV

“Be happy in your hope, stand your ground
when you’re in trouble, and devote
yourselves to prayer.”
Romans 12:12

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares
the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to
harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”
Jeremiah 29:11



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