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## Businesses

From A1

on is Ekornes, which had around 2 feet of water inside. Ekornes is a furniture producer off N.C. Highway 181 and N.C. Highway 126.

"There's just so many places, so many places that you wouldn't think would flood," Hipple said.

Hipple said while all of the businesses he's working with won't need to be gutted, many need 3 to 4 feet up the walls to be pulled out and redone.

"I've never seen a storm like this before," Hipple said. "Nothing in my whole life."

The restaurant was one of many businesses in the city on Friday that had a yellow sticker either on the door or window.

The city of Morganton has inspected most of the businesses that were impacted by flooding from the storm and tagged them with either a yellow or red tag, city officials said.

Businesses that have a yellow tag on the door are not open to the public. The yellow tag says the structure is unsafe and unfit for human habitation.

Businesses that have a red tag on the door are not safe for anyone to enter at all, according to the city.

There have been no businesses that have been given a red tag, city officials said.

Across the street from Silver Creek sits Mimosa Hills Shopping Center. It is home to Kimbrell's Furniture, Ollie's, Planet Fitness and Dollar General, among others. All of the businesses in the shopping center had yellow tags on the doors and all appeared to be cleaning up from the flooding on Friday. Nearby KFC also appeared to be cleaning up.

Meanwhile, for McDonald's at the top of the shopping center parking lot it appeared to be business as usual on Friday.

A little farther down the road, Ingles Markets grocery store had a yellow tag on its door. Work crews were inside on Friday and some workers were throwing items away in a dumpster sitting between the parking lot and one of the entrances.

Even businesses that didn't suffer flooding and destruction lost thousands of dollars in product.

Dara Phrakousonh, owner of Pho Lao restaurant in the Magnolia Plaza shopping center on Burkemont Avenue, lost power and water to the business. She got power back to the restaurant on Sunday and spent Monday throwing out food due to the power loss.

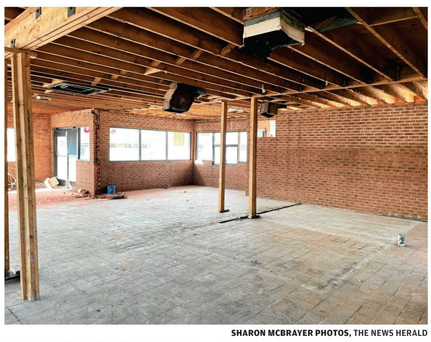
She opened back up Tuesday but saw few customers, Phrakousonh said. She spent several days searching for and buying food she needs for her business.

Phrakousonh said she hasn't been able to get some items she regularly uses in her dishes.

"The customers, they're very nice," Phrakousonh said. "They understand."

While keeping her restaurant going, Phrakousonh still didn't have power at her home on Friday. She's been boiling water on a small propane stove to bathe and carries water to flush the toilet at home. She said it's made her reflect on how her grandmother lived. And it has taught her patience, she said.

"So I bet it's a lot of people it's going to have to learn, this one is going to be a very expensive lesson for everybody to learn how to survive without all this internet and modern conveniences," Phrakousonh said. "Because you kind of get used to the modern (conveniences) and you forget what you're supposed to do, which is going to be a lesson for some from now on. That something like this happen, we'll be OK."



SHARON MCBRAYER PHOTOS, THE NEWS HERALD

The inside of Silver Creek Restaurant has been gutted down to the brick, ready to rebuild. The hope is the eatery will be back open in 60 to 90 days, according to people onsite Friday.

A coating of dried mud blanketed the parking lot of Ingles Market on Carbon City Road in Morganton on Friday. Workers were inside cleaning up the store from damage it received from Hurricane Helene.

A yellow tag tag from the city of Morganton adorned many of the businesses in the city that suffered flooding or damage from Hurricane Helene. The yellow tag lets people know the buildings are not open and are unsafe for the public.

Planet Fitness in Morganton was just one of the businesses in the Mimosa Hills Shopping Center cleaning up from storm damage on Friday.

Ollie's in Morganton had cleanup crews at the store on Friday, while a thick layer of dried mud still coats the parking lot.

## Hospital

From A1

Initially, after the storm, the hospital had to postpone non-emergency surgeries. But after it got back to using regular water and power, the hospital has returned to its normal operations.

Paxson said initially after the storm there were several employees who the hospital could not get in contact with, but as of Wednesday all employees but one have been accounted for.

"And we will continue to strive to find that last one as well," Paxson said.

He said the hospital is using every resource available to make sure all staff members are accounted for and safe.

As the hospital system was dealing with the storm and its aftermath, multiple staff members slept at the hospital because they either could not get home, didn't have power at home or just needed a safe place to sleep, Paxson said.

"And so we're housing a lot of those," he said.

Through it all, Paxson said the hospital has had support from UNC Health out of Chapel Hill. Some staff drove in from Chapel Hill and Lenoir to help.

"We've gotten physicians, nurses and other type of staff that have come in voluntarily to help us. We've had increased volumes in our emergency room and patients in-house, and so we've gotten amazing support from across the state to serve those extra needs," Paxson said. "That outpouring of assistance has been truly impressive and greatly appreciated."

He said the average number of patients in their emergency room is 80 to 90 people. Monday night the hospital saw 180 patients and Tuesday night another 125 patients, he said.

Some of those additional patients have been people in need of help to power oxygen equipment, he said. The hospital is working with the local Red Cross shelter to educate the community on the appropriate places to go so that the hospital can make sure the emergency room is prepared for emergencies. The Red Cross is operating a shelter at Oak Hill Methodist Church, located at 2239 N.C. Hwy 181, Morganton.

Paxson said the Red Cross has a generator that can power oxygen equipment at the shelter.

Paxson said the hospital has seen an increase in trauma incidents as people clear trees and debris, as well as from car wrecks.

"We need to make sure that our emergency room is preserved to care for those true emergencies," Paxson said.

For instance, on Tuesday, Paxson said a man who was involved in a mud slide was brought in to the Morganton hospital. He survived.

"I believe, tragically, over the next several days, and even weeks, that we don't know the extent of the damage in our surrounding region, and we're going to have to be prepared for a lot of different events, including loss of life, loss of homes, loss of property, for sure," Paxson said. "So I don't think we know the depth of that yet. As power comes on and resources continue to come into the area, I think those will become more evident, and we will just have to take it a day at a time and process accordingly."

Paxson said a special thanks to emergency responders, linemen, power companies, internet companies and others who have worked to help the community through the storm.

"The communities have come together. The state has come together in amazing ways," Paxson said. "I'm proud to be part of this community."

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