

## Henderson County collecting information on private road damage

October 23, 2024 | Times-News, The (Hendersonville, NC) Author: Staff reports; Hendersonville Times-News| Section: News| 187 Words Page: A5 OpenURL Link

Henderson County is collecting information from residents on private road damage caused by Tropical Storm Helene. Data collected will be shared with N.C. Emergency Management and FEMA as they continue to evaluate the need to assist with repairs to private bridges and roads.

The County has created an online form for residents on privately maintained roads to submit, available at www.hendersoncountync.gov/helene. This form is only to gather information. It does not constitute a guarantee of repair or financial assistance.

This form is only for damage to privately maintained roads. The number to report damage on roads maintained by the N.C. Department of Transportation is (828) 694-7971.

In the form, residents can pinpoint the location of the private road damage on the map. Green roads indicate roads not maintained by NCDOT. Red roads are NCDOT-maintained roads. U.S. Highways and Interstate 26 are listed green on this map.

Residents can also upload pictures of the damage through the online form.

To fill out the form, visit www.hendersoncountync.gov/helene.

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#### • Citation (aglc Style)

Staff reports, Hendersonville Times-News, 'Henderson County collecting information on private road damage', *Times-News, The* (online), 23 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/19C6314FE6A737C8>



## Carl Sandburg Home remains closed due to Helene

October 23, 2024 | Times-News, The (Hendersonville, NC) Author: Staff reports; Hendersonville Times-News| Section: News| 259 Words Page: A5 OpenURL Link

Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site in Flat Rock remains closed for now due to impacts from Tropical Storm Helene. The closure includes all trails, park grounds and facilities. The park will re-open once damage assessments have been made and the park is deemed safe for visitation.

"The hurricane has had an impact on all of us here at Carl Sandburg Home and in the broader community," said Park Superintendent Polly Angelakis. "We are grateful that park staff, volunteers, partners and the rest of our community made it safely through the storm. The goats and other livestock fared well also."

Impacts include numerous downed trees and washouts, which make park trails and grounds inaccessible. The historic buildings appear undamaged. However, the Front Lake Dam sustained substantial damage. NPS teams are assessing the extent of the damage to determine what work needs to be accomplished to make the park safe for visitors to

return.

"We know how important the Carl Sandburg Home is to the community for recreation, exercise, and as an escape from the everyday chaos," said Angelakis. "However, there are still dangerous conditions present. Crews are working with chainsaws to remove trees. We ask for everyone's patience while we work to get Carl Sandburg Home safely open for everyone to enjoy."

Park updates will be posted on the Carl Sandburg Home website at nps.gov/carl and on the park's social media platforms at @CarlSandburgHomeNHS (Facebook, X and Instagram).

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## Gov. Cooper describes relief efforts from FEMA

October 23, 2024 | Times-News, The (Hendersonville, NC) Author: Houston Harwood; USA TODAY NETWORK | Section: News | 855 Words Page: A1 OpenURL Link

ASHEVILLE — Standing at an aid distribution site, Gov. Roy Cooper told reporters former President Donald Trump should not come to the region to tell "lies," while also saying bipartisanship was critical to recovery from Tropical Storm Helene.

Cooper made the remarks during a news conference Oct. 21, the same day the Republican candidate for president spoke in nearby Swannanoa.

Cooper toured the city-run Community Care Station, a pop-up facility along Tunnel Road that affords victims of Helene's wrath temporary housing and access to clean water, food and other aid.

"Helene has been the deadliest and most devastating storm in North Carolina history," Cooper said. "Because of the heroic rescue work of first responders, soldiers, search and rescue teams and even neighbors, thousands of lives have been saved."

The Democratic governor, who cannot seek reelection in November due to term limits, said local cooperation with the federal government was continuing apace, adding that President Joe Biden's administration had responded "quickly" and "positively" to the state's requests for assistance in the aftermath of Helene.

The storm exacted a crushing toll when it moved across Western North Carolina in late September. As of Oct. 21, state officials had tallied 95 storm-related deaths, the majority of which were attributed to drowning and landslides. Buncombe County lost 42 of its residents to Helene, according to the Hurricane Helene Storm-Related Fatalities Report.

Cooper said the number of North Carolina residents who still lacked power had dropped to 5,400 from a height of more than a million. The North Carolina Department of Transportation had reopened more than 750 roads, Cooper said, and only seven school districts remained closed.

Deanne Criswell, the Federal Emergency Management Agency administrator, visited Asheville alongside Cooper and provided an update on FEMA's assistance efforts, which so far have entailed temporarily rehousing more than 5,300 people. Criswell touted a newly bolstered program to hire North Carolina residents to work on behalf of FEMA as the agency's assistance begins to center on WNC's long-term recovery.

"We've always been able to hire people from the local community to come help and support the work that we're doing," Criswell told the Citizen Times as she toured the Community Care Station. "We're really expanding that because we know that there's so much need here and so many small communities that people perhaps aren't going to be able to go back to work for a while."

FEMA has more than 1,400 staff on the ground in North Carolina and has registered more than 200,000 residents for individual financial assistance, according to Criswell. She said the federal government had provided more than \$124 million directly to disaster victims in the state thus far.

FEMA personnel are not alone in the recovery effort. More than 3,100 soldiers and airmen from 12 states were working alongside the North Carolina National Guard, local law enforcement and a slew of contractors as the state works to rebuild hundreds of washed-out bridges and roads, Cooper said.

When asked what North Carolina's next governor — and the next president — must do to ensure WNC receives long-term assistance, Cooper said state officials were working to build a "blueprint" that would net the state "commitments of every stream of funding that we can."

"We're going to work on making sure that everything is rebuilt, while also keeping in mind resiliency," Cooper said.
"We know where this water can go now, so bridges have to be rebuilt in a stronger way."

Cooper and Criswell's visit to Asheville came as Trump visited the area to "see the devastation of Hurricane Helene first-hand and deliver remarks to the press," Trump's campaign stated. The Republican presidential nominee has drawn the ire of Cooper and the Biden administration, saying he is spreading misinformation about the federal government's role in Helene-related disaster recovery efforts.

Cooper told reporters that he had asked the former president's campaign not to spread "lies" and mistruths about the storm during Trump's visit here. Misinformation hurts "the very people we are trying to help," Cooper said, adding that it "discourages people and makes people fearful of signing up for help."

"It enables scam artists, and it hurts the morale of government officials, first responders and soldiers who are on the ground trying to help," Cooper said.

During his visit to Asheville, Trump called FEMA's response to Helene a "disgrace" and claimed, without evidence, that the agency had neglected to direct assistance funds to North Carolina residents because the federal government was "bringing in illegal migrants."

Sala Menaya-Merritt, who leads the Community Care Station that Cooper toured, said that at least locally, the storm and its aftermath had ratcheted down tensions between governments and the people they serve. The care station Merritt leads hosts laundry machines, portable restrooms, heated tents, running water and a stockpile of other necessities.

"I keep hearing people saying, 'I just can't believe how the community has come together," Merritt said. "They understand that these are trying times. Everyone's kind of banding together and we're making it happen... Doesn't matter what your race is, doesn't matter what socioeconomic status you have, everyone's coming out and they're pitching in."

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## • Citation (aglc Style)

Houston Harwood, USA TODAY NETWORK, 'Gov. Cooper describes relief efforts from FEMA', *Times-News, The* (online), 23 Oct 2024 A1 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C6314FDA151408">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C6314FDA151408</a>



## Asheville School, Christ School set date for 'The Game'

October 23, 2024 | Times-News, The (Hendersonville, NC) Author: Evan Gerike; Asheville Citizen Times | Section: Sports | 322 Words Page: B1 OpenURL Link

Western North Carolina's final two football teams will return to action this week for the first time since Tropical Storm Helene devastated the area.

Asheville School and Christ School will both play their final regular season games on Friday before NCISAA playoffs start on Nov. 1. The week after the playoffs are slated to end on Nov. 22, the schools will face off in the 98th edition of The Game, the oldest high school football rivalry in the Carolinas.

Asheville School will play at Hickory Grove on Friday, while Christ School will kick off at home against Metrolina Christian Academy at home at 7 p.m. for senior night. The Blues are two-time defending state champions at the NCISAA Division II level. Christ School last won a state championship in 2020 in DII but are now competing at the Division I level.

The Asheville School-Christ School rivalry dates back to 1911 and has been played every season since 1933. While the Blues hold the all-time advantage of 50-43-4, the Greenies have won 20 of 24 games since the turn of the century, including 12 in a row. This will be the first time since 2014 the game has been played in November and the latest it has been played in at least 20 years.

WNC's other private football team, Asheville Christian Academy, located in one of the Buncombe County's hardesthit areas in Swannanoa, made its return on Oct. 18 after nearly a month off. Though the Lions' athletic facilities were destroyed by flooding, they have been able to play on the road.

Evan Gerike is the high school sports reporter for the Asheville Citizen Times. Email him at egerike@citizentimes.com or follow him on X, formerly Twitter, @EvanGerike. Please support this type of journalism with a subscription to the Citizen Times.

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#### • Citation (aglc Style)

Evan Gerike, Asheville Citizen Times, 'Asheville School, Christ School set date for 'The Game'', *Times-News, The* (online), 23 Oct 2024 B1 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C6314FF51E4440">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C6314FF51E4440</a>



## high school football - Mountain Heritage leads WNC football rankings

October 23, 2024 | Times-News, The (Hendersonville, NC)
Author: Evan Gerike and Zachary Huber; Asheville Citizen Times | Section: Sports | 773 Words
Page: B1
OpenURL Link

After nearly a month off in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Helene, the Citizen Times and Times-News Western North Carolina football power rankings are making a return.

Teams out west in the Smoky Mountain Conference have played as many as eight games, while Asheville High will kick off its fifth this week. The Mountain 7 Conference is playing games on Tuesdays to catch up before the playoffs, and Asheville School and Christ School will become the final two teams to return to action this week.

Here are the top 10 rankings for this week.

1. Mountain Heritage (5-0, 1-0 Western Highlands)

The Cougars returned to the field with a 44-7 neutral site win over Avery County. Coach Joey Robinson said Mountain Heritage still has work to do to get back to playing like it was. The Cougars play Madison before facing Mitchell in a WHC rivalry game.

Previous ranking: No. 1. This week: at Madison (1-4), Saturday

2. Erwin (5-1, 2-0 Mountain Athletic)

Erwin continues to grind out wins after holding off Roberson 26-21 in its first game since Helene, and its lone loss came against No. 1 Mountain Heritage. Sophomore Caden Ingle is up to 1,675 passing yards in six games to lead Western North Carolina.

Previous ranking: No. 3. This week: vs. McDowell (1-5)

3. Franklin (6-0, 3-0 Mountain 7)

Tuscola may have laid the blueprint to slow down star Franklin running back Braydon Hervey. It held him to 25 rushing yards after he averaged 92. 6 yards through five games. The Panthers still emerged with a 35-21 victory, thanks to quarterback Anderson Terrell and fullback Addix Sutton.

Previous ranking: No. 2. This week: vs. No. 8 West Henderson (5-2)

4. Murphy (7-1, 3-0 Smoky Mountain)

Murphy's lone loss, a 33-13 defeat against Franklin in Week 1, looks better every week. Since Helene, the Bulldogs have gone 3-0 in Smoky Mountain play, including a 14-7 win over Robbinsville keyed by Camden Breazeale's fourth-quarter interception return for a touchdown. Murphy appears set to win the SMC for the first time since 2018.

Previous ranking: No. 9. This week: vs. Andrews (4-3)

5. Brevard (4-2, 2-0 Mountain Foothills)

The Blue Devils defense shook off the rust quickly after a 23-day break between games. They held Chase to 75 total yards in a 54-0 win. Defensive back Tristan Thompson-Wynn recorded an interception, and defensive back

Wyatt Ballenger blocked two punts.

Previous ranking: No. 5. This week: at Hendersonville (3-3)

6. Asheville High (3-1, 1-0 Mountain Athletic)

It's Week 10, and we still don't know just how good Asheville High is. The Cougars have a big win over a scrappy Tuscola team and beat a strong Dobyns-Bennett (Tenn.) squad. Their fourth game of the season was a 56-14 dismantling of McDowell, including quarterback Meek Slydell's best performance of the year with 121 pass yards and four touchdowns.

Previous ranking: No. 4. This week: vs. North Buncombe (2-3)

7. Mitchell (5-1, 2-0 Western Highlands)

The Mountaineers have all but secured a top-two finish in the WHC for the ninth time in 10 years. The Mountaineers are slated to return home this week for the first time since Sept. 12.

Previous ranking: No. 10. This week: vs. Owen (0-6), Saturday

8. West Henderson (5-2, 3-0 Mountain 7)

The Falcons broke out the Philly Special to knock off Tuscola in a 20-17 win in overtime last week. Quarterback Cade Young tossed the ball to running back Zane McCraw, who ran a few steps right then stopped and threw a pass back to Young for the game-winning touchdown.

Previous ranking: Unranked. This week: at No. 3 Franklin (6-0)

9. Reynolds (3-3, 2-0 Mountain Athletic)

Virginia commit quarterback Ely Hamrick transferred to Crest after Helene, leaving the Rockets questioning who would play there the rest of the season. In a 48-0 win against Enka, the answer was running back Max Guest, who threw for 218 yards and a touchdown on 9-for-15 passing while rushing for 99 yards and three touchdowns.

Previous ranking: No. 8. This week: vs. Roberson (3-2)

10. Pisgah (5-2, 2-1 Mountain 7)

The Bears recovered well from a close loss to West Henderson in Week 9 to defeat North Henderson 28-6 last week. Quarterback Aaron Clark completed 16 of 26 passes for 156 yards with two touchdowns and rushed 11 times for 54 yards with a touchdown.

Previous ranking: No. 6. This week: at East Henderson (3-4), Tuesday

Evan Gerike is the high school sports reporter for the Asheville Citizen Times. Email him at egerike@citizentimes.com or follow him on X, formerly Twitter, @EvanGerike. Zachary Huber is a high school sports reporter for the Asheville Citizen Times and Hendersonville Times-News. Email him at zhuber@gannett.com or follow him on X @zacharyahuber.

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## Citation (aglc Style)

Evan Gerike and Zachary Huber, Asheville Citizen Times, 'high school football - Mountain Heritage leads WNC football rankings', *Times-News, The* (online), 23 Oct 2024 B1 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a> p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C6314FF92D2948>



## Volleyball rankings as playoffs to begin

October 23, 2024 | Times-News, The (Hendersonville, NC) Author: Zachary Huber; Asheville Citizen Times | Section: Sports | 626 Words Page: B1 OpenURL Link

The playoffs begin for the North Carolina High School Athletic Association high school volleyball teams this week, and the North Carolina Independent Schools Athletic Association wraps up its playoffs this weekend.

Western North Carolina has 20 teams competing in the NCHSAA playoffs, while Asheville Christian Academy is still alive in the NCISAA playoffs.

Ahead of the postseason, the Citizen Times and Times-News weekly high school volleyball power rankings are returning.

Here are the top 10 teams this week.

1. Asheville Christian

Academy (14-0)

The Lions earned the top seed in the NCISAA playoffs despite missing a month of the season because of Tropical Storm Helene. As top seed, ACA would host its playoff games until the state championship. However, Helene ravaged its gym, leaving it unavailable. The Lions played their quarterfinal match at Carolina Day, defeating Grace Christian 3-1. Junior outside hitter Caroline Peterson racked up 18 kills.

Previous ranking: No. 1. This week: vs. Wake Christian Academy (Tuesday at Asheville School)

2. West Henderson (20-2)

The Falcons capped off a 12-0 season in Mountain 7 Conference play by sweeping Franklin 3-0. Middle blocker and Georgia commit Emma Bryson tallied 14 kills, five digs and three blocks. West Henderson is the top seed in the 3A West playoffs.

Previous ranking: No. 2. This week: vs. West Charlotte (Tuesday)

3. Cherokee (21-1)

The Braves won the Smoky Mountain Conference regular-season and tournament championships. Middle blocker Joscelyn Stamper collected 23 kills, nine digs and three blocks in Cherokee's final regular-season game against Robbinsville. Cherokee is the top seed in the 1A West.

Previous ranking: No. 3. This week: vs. South Davidson (Tuesday)

4. Polk County (16-3, 11-1)

Outside hitter and USC Upstate commit Sophia Overholt helped the Wolverines clinch a share of the Mountain Foothills 7 Conference regular-season title by accumulating 14 kills, 25 digs and three blocks in a 3-2 win vs. Brevard. Polk County earned the No. 3 seed in the 1A West.

Previous ranking: No. 6. This week: vs. Highlands (Tuesday)

#### 5. Brevard (16-4)

The Blue Devils shared the conference title with No. 4 Polk County after it defeated them 3-2 in the final match of the regular season. Brevard is the No. 2 seed in the 2A West as it tries to win its second consecutive state championship.

Previous ranking: No. 5. This week: vs. Burns (Tuesday)

6. Roberson (17-6)

A demanding nonconference schedule paid dividends for the Rams again in the Mountain Athletic Conference as they won their sixth consecutive regular-season title. Roberson earned the No. 6 seed in the 4A West.

Previous ranking: No. 7. This week: vs. East Forsyth (Tuesday)

7. Enka (16-5)

The Jets are peaking at the right time. They won their past five matches, which included a 3-1 win vs. No. 6 Roberson. Enka is the No. 7 seed in the 3A West.

Previous ranking: No. 9. This week: vs. Dudley (Tuesday)

8. Franklin (18-3, 10-2)

The Panthers enter the postseason, losing their final two games of the regular season to No. 2 West Henderson and Rabun Gap-Nacoochee. Franklin is seeded No. 11 in the 3A West.

Previous ranking: No. 4. This week: vs. Foard (Tuesday)

9. Owen (9-5, 6-2)

Outside hitter Mia Roland recorded 113 kills, 186 digs and 20 blocks to help the Warhorses earn the No. 11 seed in the 2A West.

Previous ranking: No. 10. This week: vs. North Surry (Tuesday)

10. Swain County (18-6, 6-4)

The Maroon Devils are also hitting their stride at the right time. They upset Hayesville in the Smoky Mountain Conference tournament semifinals and pushed Cherokee to a fifth set in the championship game. Swain County is the No. 13 seed in the 1A West.

Previous ranking: Unranked. This week: vs. Alleghany (Tuesday)

Zachary Huber is a high school sports reporter for the Asheville Citizen Times and Hendersonville Times-News. Email him at zhuber@gannett.com or follow him on X @zacharyahuber.

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## Boys & Girls Club lets local school use its facilities

October 23, 2024 | Times-News, The (Hendersonville, NC) Author: Deirdra Funcheon; Hendersonville Times-News | Section: News | 794 Words Page: A1 OpenURL Link

HENDERSONVILLE – Inside a first-grade classroom the morning of Oct. 18, approximately 20 kids stood up to stretch their arms and their wrists.

"We forgot our thumbs!" one child offered helpfully.

"We have to wake our brains up," said the teacher, Mrs. Stepp.

A spelling test, then music class were on the agenda for the day. The setting looked like a regular elementary school classroom, filled with desks, books, and a sign saying, "We will be kind and treat each other nicely."

But it wasn't a typical classroom. The students were on site of the Boys & Girls Club of Henderson County, a child development center in Hendersonville that normally serves kids during after-school hours.

For about two months, the club is allowing Atkinson Elementary School to operate on its premises. The public school's floors were damaged during Tropical Storm Helene, when nearby Perry Creek overflowed.

When it became evident that the school would need significant repairs before kids could return, administrators thought they'd have to break up classes, dispersing about 285 students to other schools that could each temporarily accommodate a few more children.

Boys & Girls Club CEO Kent Parent, who had previously worked as an administrator at Henderson County Public Schools, heard of the conundrum, and reached out.

"We have space available during the day if you need, like a gym or something like that," he remembered offering. He was already offering childcare to first responders and healthcare workers who needed it so they could work following the storm.

Once cell phones started working and decision-makers agreed that the club's facility could be a great solution, staff jumped into action to handle details such as adjusting transportation routes, making copies of keys, and tweaking the wi-fi to comply with school policy. Teachers packed up boxes, and maintenance workers moved equipment.

Keeping the kids and staff together "eliminated a lot of angst," Superintendent Mark Garrett said.

The facility is big enough that library, music, and STEM classes can each have their own designated spaces. One gym is being used for recess, while the other is dedicated to PE classes. Each first through fifth grade class has its own classroom, and kindergarten classes have been creatively arranged into two larger areas, with teachers collaborating together. The child nutrition staff prepares breakfast and lunch at Hendersonville High School and brings meals to the club each day.

Atkinson Elementary kids began arriving Tuesday, Oct. 15. Principal Mark Page led a pep rally, in which he spun a tall tale about having to kayak through the school's hallways to make a heroic whitewater rescue of the guidance counselor's stuffed sloth.

"All the kids were cheering when we brought the sloth out," he recalled. "And then the sloth whispered into the guidance counselor's ear and said, 'You know, Mr. Page, I think the story is a little bit different. Only the carpet got

wet.'"

Except for a few glitches, operations have gone smoothly. Parent jumped in to help drive a bus.

"I still have my bus driver license," he said.

The club's regular members, nearly 300 kids, still come for regular programming after school until 6 p.m.

Media specialist Makayla Luther said teachers are "really happy that we get to stay together and teach, like all one school and not be split up." She said kids love the couches in the library and a book vending machine in the club's lobby.

"They can earn tokens for good behavior or for birthdays, and they just put their token in, they get to press the number and the book just comes out. They get to keep that book."

Shelley Jones, a mom who also serves as president of the parent-teacher organizaton, said her son was excited about the club's three basketball courts and being able to attend school with his friends. She said people living near the club, who've had their own homes destroyed, have been kind and understanding about the extra traffic from pickup and drop-off lines.

"It's really heartwarming," she said.

Tom Fazio, a renowned golf course designer who with his wife Sue founded the Hendersonville Boys & Girls Club in 1993, remembered the early days, when the organization didn't even have a building and operated programs out of a city-owned facility.

Now it operates entirely on donations and grants, but completely free to families. While kids sang in a music room and skipped along the hallways, Fazio beamed. "Every time I come in here," he said, "I get a lump in my throat."

Donations are being collected for Boys & Girls Club staff and families who still need power, water, supplies and coldweather items due to Tropical Storm Helene. For public school students and schools needing help, donations are being collected via the Henderson County Education Foundation.

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Deirdra Funcheon, Hendersonville Times-News, 'Boys & Girls Club lets local school use its facilities', *Times-News, The* (online), 23 Oct 2024 A1 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C6314FD5C5EDC8">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C6314FD5C5EDC8</a>



## Pearson's Falls and Glen sustains severe damage due to Helene

October 23, 2024 | Tryon Daily Bulletin, The (NC) Author: Staff Reports | Section: Community | 446 Words OpenURL Link

Tryon Garden Club says restoration team in place

TRYON—After assessing storm damage, the Tryon Garden Club says that Pearson's Falls and Glen were not spared Hurricane Helene's fury.

Pearson's Falls and Glen, a botanical preserve on Highway 176 between Tryon and Saluda, is a unique habitat along Colt Creek protected by steep sides of the river cove forest up to the 90-foot upper waterfall.

The storm has forced a temporary closure of the preserve, and there is no public access.

"We are grateful for the rescue teams and road crews that helped people along Pearson's Falls Road," said Tryon Garden Club President Beth Rounds. "Operations Director Andy Ruff and his wife were able to walk out to safety with the help of a team on Monday, September 30. The road is now cleared and open to local traffic. Ruff and wife Melissa moved back into their home at Pearson's Falls on October 21."

Rounds provided an overview of the damage.

"The good news is that the buildings near the entrance and parking areas are not damaged," she said. "The Webster Way trail is mostly intact and is repairable up to the lower picnic area. However, the main trail to the falls is severely damaged and impassable from the lower picnic area, past Lightner's Ledge, over the stone Chase Bridge, and up to the upper falls.

"The Upper Falls picnic area is also a mess. Logs and debris fell over the falls, trees fell, and there were two sizable landslides to the right of the falls. Fortunately, both the lower and upper falls themselves are clear of logs."

Rounds has established a restoration team led by Vice-President John James to assess the damage and repairs needed. Key members of the team include Andy Ruff, Pearson's Falls Chair and professional botanist Rae Ann Wessel, and former Pearson's Falls Chair Bob Tobey. Rounds is handling outreach and communications.

The team is investigating multiple courses of action, speaking with experts, and contacting people with technical knowledge of cleaning up and repairing severe storm damage. They plan to take time, consult professionals, and develop a plan of action, knowing it is a valuable botanical preserve and must be protected. Inspections are already in progress.

Once restoration cost estimates are established, a fundraising committee will be established.

"Fortunately, due to prudent planning, Tryon Garden Club has an operations fund that will carry us for a year," Rounds said. "The restoration team hopes to have an initial report by mid-November."

Pearson's Falls and Glen is a 501(c)(3) organization owned and operated by the Tryon Garden Club since 1931. For more information, contact pearsonfallsinfo@gmail.com or visit pearsonsfalls.org.

The post Pearson's Falls and Glen sustains severe damage due to Helene appeared first on The Tryon Daily Bulletin.

# • Citation (aglc Style)

Staff Reports, 'Pearson's Falls and Glen sustains severe damage due to Helene', *Tryon Daily Bulletin, The* (online), 23 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C681CA5FFA89E8">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C681CA5FFA89E8</a>



# Community outreach concert to take place at Landrum Farmers Market

October 23, 2024 | Tryon Daily Bulletin, The (NC) Author: Jamie Lewis | Section: Arts | 225 Words OpenURL Link

Event to benefit those affected by Tropical Storm Helene

LANDRUM—On Sunday, October 27, a community outreach concert will be held at the Joe Cunningham Market Pavillion in Landrum from 5 to 7 p.m. to benefit individuals affected by Tropical Storm Helene. Set to take the stage is Christian artist Warren Peay, who will entertain attendees while sharing his love for music and God.

Peay is known for his time competing on the twenty-first season of American Idol, where he finished in the Top 8 final contestants. During his time on American Idol, Peay showcased his ability to perform in a variety of genres, covering songs by Zach Williams, Whiskey Myers, Tim McGraw, The Allman Brothers Band, Adele, 3 Doors Down, The Animals. Alanis Morissette. and Ed Sheeran.

Peay's talents inspired him to continue his musical career after American Idol. He introduced his fans to original songs that combine praise and harmony for a one-of-a-kind worship experience.

Admission to the event will be free with a donation of one item to aid in storm disaster relief. Qualifying items include canned food, toilet paper, diapers, formula, toothpaste, household cleaners, and other non-perishable items. All donations will be sent to Operation Hope.

Landrum Farmers Market is located at 221 W. Rutherford St. in Landrum.

The post Community outreach concert to take place at Landrum Farmers Market appeared first on The Tryon Daily Bulletin.

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#### • Citation (aglc Style)

Jamie Lewis, 'Community outreach concert to take place at Landrum Farmers Market', *Tryon Daily Bulletin, The*(online), 23 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C681CA53E0E9B8">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C681CA53E0E9B8</a>>



# BRP reopens 20 miles near Blowing Rock, first section to reopen in North Carolina since Hurricane Helene

October 23, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Staff Report news@wataugademocrat.com| Section: Local | 495 Words OpenURL Link

BLOWING ROCK — The Blue Ridge Parkway has opened to traffic from milepost 285.5, at Bamboo Gap, to milepost 305, near Beacon Heights, in the Blowing Rock area.

This is the first section of roadway to open — effective Oct. 23 — in North Carolina since Hurricane Helene. Opening this section of the park provides improved transportation links while communities address ongoing storm recovery on other local routes.

"We realize how critical the Parkway is for our region," said Blue Ridge Parkway Superintendent Tracy Swartout.
"While much work remains, we are prioritizing our efforts in less-damaged areas that have the most impact for community connectivity, and that we are able to reopen safely. We are anticipating opening additional sections of the Parkway that support adjoining communities, soon."

Because the Parkway is a narrow, two-lane road with shifting grades, curves, and limited sight distances, commercial vehicles are prohibited on the Blue Ridge Parkway for the safety of all drivers. There are no truck lanes, runaway truck ramps or places for a large commercial vehicle to slow down and pull over. Violators will be subject to a citation as well as a fine of up to \$5,000.

Park visitors are also urged to use extra caution when visiting the parkway areas that are open. Visitors should anticipate closed facilities and trails in this approximately 20-mile section of the park and follow directions on local signage regarding facility or trail closures.

Sites CLOSED for ongoing assessment and repair within the specified corridor include:

Interior of the Moses Cone Manor House and Carriage Barn restrooms, milepost 294.0Boone Fork Trail, milepost 296.5Price Park Campground, milepost 296.9

Areas that will be OPEN to visitors within the specified corridor include:

Bass Lake (restrooms available), milepost 294Moses Cone Manor House parking and carriage trails (no restrooms available), in and around milepost 294Price Lake Picnic Area (expect portable toilets), milepost 296.4Other trails between milepost 285.5 and 305 (use with extreme caution)

Visitors should be aware that trail assessments have not been completed and caution should be exercised when hiking. Visitors may encounter hazards on trails such as landslides, tree debris, and washed-out sections or bridges. For safety reasons, the park asks that people continue to be patient and respect remaining closures. Multiple seen and unseen hazards exist in closed areas and crews and heavy equipment will be working to make areas safe for reentry.

The hurricane left tens of thousands of downed trees across the roadway and caused nearly three dozen rock and mud slides. The slides have occurred above and below the road and have also severely damaged or swept away the roadbed in numerous places. To date, crews have reopened over 200 miles of road.

Since Sept. 30, more than 100 Blue Ridge Parkway employees, along with over 275 employees from 37 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, representing 64 parks and offices across the NPS, have been on the Parkway assisting with recovery efforts. Their expertise spans a wide variety of roles including sawyers, carpenters,

# arborists, and equipment operators.

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# • Citation (aglc Style)

Staff Report news@wataugademocrat.com, 'BRP reopens 20 miles near Blowing Rock, first section to reopen in North Carolina since Hurricane Helene', *Watauga Democrat, The*(online), 23 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C6536EDBE0A860">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C6536EDBE0A860</a>



# Devastation from hurricane compelled musician with High Country ties to spring into action

October 23, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Derek Halsey| Section: Community | 1571 Words OpenURL Link

HIGH COUNTRY — For some, the connection to the mountains of Western North Carolina came roaring back when early reports of the damage done by Hurricane Helene began to come in from the storm zone.

For people who have gone to college in the High Country, skied or worked these slopes, hiked or rock-climbed in these mountains, hunted or fished in these creeks, rivers, or lakes, or played music in this area, the news of the high winds and historic flooding tugged at their hearts.

Chris Lovejoy, who lived in the High Country two decades ago, was one of the many glued to the news stories and first-hand social media accounts that appeared after Hurricane Helene dumped 40 trillion gallons of water on much of Western North Carolina, Eastern Tennessee and South Virginia.

When Lovejoy was younger in the early 2000s, he lived in Boone and spent a lot of time in Asheville. Now, he, his wife, Jamie, and their son live in Randolph County, W.Va., in the small town of Beverly, near Elkins. On the Wednesday after the storm hit, Chris and Jamie knew they could no longer watch from afar.

"By Wednesday morning, after days of getting the information about how hard North Carolina got hit and seeing videos of the destruction, we thought, 'Hey, this happened in Appalachia, which is our home, and this could have easily happened up here in north-central West Virginia,'" Chris said. "Because I had lived in Boone and spent a lot of time in Asheville, and because I still have about eight friends of mine who grew up with me in Hurricane, W. Va., that moved to Western North Carolina, all of that pulled at me. At that time, I had only heard from three of the guys there that I had grown up with. That was the day when my wife Jamie said, 'I feel like we've got to go. I am feeling called to go down there.' I said, 'I am, too. Let's do it.'"

Chris owns an electrical business, and Jamie's employer said if she signed up with a non-profit organization, she could also take days off and head south. Some of Jamie's co-workers donated some of their paid time off.

The Lovejoys contacted Samaritan's Purse, which told them they had a place for them to volunteer in Asheville — one of the hardest hit areas. With Samaritan's Purse, you have to be at least 14 years old to volunteer, so they dropped their 11-year-old son off at Grandma's house.

When the Lovejoys' church in Beverly heard the news of their impending trip to the disaster zone, the Elkins Family Worship Center filled their vehicle with supplies and gave them gas money for the journey.

After work on Wednesday, the Lovejoys headed south and got a hotel room in Bristol so as to not drive into the swath of hard-hit areas at night in the dark. To their amazement, there were hundreds of electric line workers as far as the eye can see, who had filled up nearly every hotel room in town.

By the next sunrise, they were in the town of Marshall, and the light of the morning is when they began to see the extent of the storm damage in person.

"I moved to Boone around 2002 or 2003," Lovejoy said. "Fairly soon, I found myself in one of the first versions of the Boone-based band Boss Hawg with myself on the guitar along with Jon Jon Davis, John Hill on the mandolin, Josh Williams on bass and Brian Swenk on the banjo. I was also in the band The Crookneck Squashers with Mark Freed, now running the Jones House, Robert Evans, Ryan Crider and Darin Gentry. For a while, I lived in that musician's hangout above the store in Sugar Grove where other pickers like Mark Schimick, Brett Morris and many others used to jam. Brett now runs the Junior Appalachian Musicians program.

"I also lived on Oak Street in Boone with Ben McPherron, Tim Marsh and Brian Swenk, and spent a lot of time playing music in Ben Smith's downtown basement room," continued Lovejoy. "The last place I lived at while in WNC was on Wildcat Road in Deep Gap. As for Asheville, I spent a lot of weekends there playing music with my long-time friend Bryan Clendenin, who went on to be in the band Dehlia Low. Bryan and I learned how to play bluegrass music together, and we would busk in the morning on the street in Pack Square, playing for enough money to get lunch and dinner, and then we'd jam at the Jack of the Woods pub at night. Those were some of the best times of my life."

Those experiences contributed to Lovejoy's heartfelt desire to help so many of those suffering in North Carolina.

Once they reached post-Helene Asheville, Chris and Jamie went through an hour-long orientation meeting at the Samaritan's Purse headquarters before setting out to help folks in need.

"When we got in the conference room for orientation, people were just getting to the mountains for the first time and our team had about 30 people in it and we were one of nine teams," said Lovejoy. "Our team featured people who had travelled in from Atlanta, Memphis, Chicago, Florida, and us from West Virginia. In the parking lot, I saw license plates from all over the region as well as from Missouri, Michigan and more places."

Soon, the Lovejoys and their Samaritan's Purse volunteer teammates went to the first home on their list. They hiked for about a half mile on the tree-blocked driveway with provisions.

"A big oak tree, about four feet in diameter, had uprooted and fallen through the top of the house and basically split the home in half," said Lovejoy. "A 15-year-old son lived in the house with his parents, and all three of them told us the story of what happened that night. The teenage son was out on the porch listening to the intensity of the storm and he heard tree after tree starting to fall. So, he went straight into his Mom and Dad's bedroom and woke them up and said, 'Hey, we have to go downstairs to the basement because the trees are falling everywhere.' Just 20 minutes or so later, they heard the tree hit their house, which sliced through the roof and landed literally on the master bedroom bed where his parents were sleeping just a little bit earlier. They narrowly escaped."

Lovejoy's team then set about "drying in" the house, which now had an oak tree inside of it — with a 20-by-8-foot gash in their roof above.

"When I got up on top to begin tarping the roof, you could look down and see their whole house," said Lovejoy. "I think our work on their home gave them a sense of not being alone, because a bunch of us worked together to do a job that may have taken them a month to do by themselves. The damage was there, but the tarps were up and their house was at least cleaned up and dry now. When we were done, they were in tears, and they were so grateful.

"Before we left, the Team Leader gathered everyone in a circle with the family and a prayer was said, and then he gave them a Bible that was signed by every worker that was there that day. Then, we found our way into Swannanoa next, and it truly looked like a war zone, with massive flood damage and helicopters everywhere and sirens going off all over the place."

By the following Saturday, after hundreds of volunteers had shown up to the Samaritan's Purse headquarters, the Lovejoys decided to go help a friend who had a business in the area.

"We decided to go and help my buddy Casey Conner, who had a pizza place that he opened up just six weeks earlier with his brother in Swannanoa called Good Company Pizza," said Lovejoy. "Luckily, most of his equipment was sitting up off the ground, even though they got about four inches of flood water in the restaurant. You could see where the flood water line was, and yet, his commercial equipment was high enough off the ground that none of the internal components got wet. Still, there was a lot of mud that we cleaned out of the place."

The Lovejoys also took the time to look up other friends in Asheville before they drove home to West Virginia on

Sunday. They were especially appreciative of friend Jask Carrier and his family who put them up in an Airbnb while in town. And the previously-mentioned Bryan Clendenin, helped them safely navigate the disaster zone; he gave them some fresh, home-roasted coffee to sip on as they drove home to Beverly, W. Va., back to the serenity of home.

"On the way out, we finally saw the town of Erwin, Tenn., in the daylight," said Lovejoy. "It looked like a war zone there as well, with the Nolichucky River taking out the interstate highway and making the whole valley look like a river bottom filled with big debris burns. You could also see where huge landslides happened as well. We got home later that day and were happy to have our running water, which is something we all take for granted at times."

Chris said they felt guilty about leaving with so much work still to be done, "so we are going to try and go back in November."

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## • Citation (aglc Style)

Derek Halsey, 'Devastation from hurricane compelled musician with High Country ties to spring into action', *Watauga Democrat, The* (online), 23 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a>
p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C6E17953C806A0>



## BOE hears various updates, recognitions

October 23, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Moss Brennan moss.brennan@wataugademocrat.com| Section: Local | 652 Words OpenURL Link

BOONE — The Watauga County Board of Education discussed a multitude of topics during its most recent meeting.

Along with approving the Valle Crucis student relocation plan, the district was named an AIG Promising District and all Watauga County Schools principals were recognized.

The Oct. 14 BOE meeting was the first after Hurricane Helene devastated the High Country.

"Hurricane Helene brought unprecedented devastation to our community. It also brought compassion, love, and hearts to serve. I can't say enough about the efforts our administrators, central office staff, and teachers have made to locate and care for our students and families," WCS Superintendent Leslie Alexander said during her report. "Our hearts go out to the members of our community who have lost loved ones, and many who lost their homes. As you know, we have had much media coverage in our county over the past few weeks. Of course, part of that is due to the devastation that has occurred. However, as you have witnessed, the vast majority of that coverage has focused on how our community has come together to support one another and our community's strength. From rescue efforts, supply distribution, to feeding sites. The unbelievable amount of love and support is everywhere you look. It is truly hard to imagine living in a place where people show up more for one another. I am very grateful to live here."

Alexander also told the Board they would shift to returning students to school. WCS teachers headed back to the classroom on Oct. 21, and students will return on Oct. 24.

She also pointed out upcoming recognition dates, including National School Bus Safety Week from Oct. 21-25.

BOE student representatives Athena Elliott and Mia Llibre discussed welcoming a new generation of voters during their student report. They said those who turn 18 before the Nov. 5 General Election have already registered to vote.

The Political Pioneers, a student organization at Watauga High School, is leading several initiatives to help students become more informed about the political landscape. Elliott and Llibre said teachers, along with the Powderhorn, the school newspaper, have also provided resources for students to learn more about registering and the candidates.

They also talked about the work the high school did to support the community while schools were closed.

"Directly after the hurricane, the high school became a distribution site for water, and then it quickly became much more," Elliott and Llibre said during their report. "Providing everything from food to toiletries and baby products to all members of the community in need for free. The Athletes for Good club also opened up the "care closet" which was a whole clothing store set up in the high school library that anyone could get items from for free. This has been so impactful for our community and students by providing so many free resources for those in need, but also by giving students the opportunity to volunteer and be involved within the community."

They also thanked all of their principals for "the tremendous amount of work they put in for their students to provide them with the best education and learning experience possible" since October is National Principals Month.

After the AIG Promising District and National Principals Month recognitions, Alexander gave her Valle Crucis School update before hearing from four public commenters.

The majority of the comments focused on the plan for Valle CUrcis School as well as getting students back to the classroom.

After approving the Valle Crucis relocation plan, the Board approved its consent agenda, which included the following:

Approval of the Minutes for Sept. 17Field Trip Request FormDeclaration of SurplusApproval to Purchase New School Bus RadiosPersonnel Report

The Board then heard a budget report from Assistant Superintendent Chris Blanton and an Audit Report from Shannon Dennison of Anderson Smith and Wike PLLC. The school system received an unmodified opinion, which is the best opinion.

The Board approved the 2024 NCSBA voting delegates before adjourning. The next scheduled meeting is set for Nov. 12.

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#### • Citation (aglc Style)

Moss Brennan moss.brennan@wataugademocrat.com, 'BOE hears various updates, recognitions', *Watauga Democrat, The* (online), 23 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a>
p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C68FFEB415EC60>



## RiverGirl helping to lead recovery efforts in Todd community

October 23, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Luke Barber luke.barber@wataugademocrat.com| Section: Local | 757 Words OpenURL Link

TODD—Like many businesses in the area, RiverGirl Fishing Co. is dealing with Hurricane Helene's impacts on its operations as the popular fishing, boating, and biking destination works to recover from the storm.

Despite these challenges, RiverGirl has become a central hub for community restoration efforts in the small, unincorporated town of Todd. RiverGirl co-owner Renata Dos Santos and her team at the outpost have led the charge by organizing hundreds of volunteers in the community of less than 3,000.

On Saturday, Oct. 19, volunteers arrived to help clear debris in the Green Valley and Todd Island community parks, as well as other areas around the Todd and Fleetwood communities.

Like many in the area, Santos said the clean-up efforts began in the immediate aftermath of the storm, during which Santos and co-owner Kelly McCoy began picking up litter and debris upon seeing for the first time the storm's destruction on the business.

"When we pulled in, we saw that the warehouse had been demolished, and everything we had stored in there. It was the safest place, or so we thought. But the whole creek in the back had literally become a river," Santos said. "Kelly was actually in the back in one of the boats kayaking down what should have been the parking lot to help retrieve stuff and bring it back up. So we just took it section by section to try and help clean up the stuff because some of our equipment's probably all the way to Virginia by now."

The now-demolished warehouse was home to the business's kayaks, inner tubes, mountain bikes, and appliances such as generators, air compressors, and other equipment.

Santos said much of the equipment they did find was mangled or severely damaged. She called the situation "insane" as paddles and other equipment were discovered in a tree 20 feet in the air.

"We were all pretty much in shock, and there was an overwhelming amount of things in front of you. So you just start with what's directly from you," Santos said.

The clean-up effort then grew to encompass the community's local churches and fire departments as volunteers began to show up in increasing numbers over a three week period to clear roadways, cut fallen trees, repair homes and supply generators, propane tanks, food, water and other supplies to those in the community most affected.

"That first week, everybody was still in shock. The second week it started to dawn on everybody as to just the volume of what is in front of them, and again, divine intervention. We've had the right people at the right time to address these needs," Santos said. "And what has surprised me is the speed at which we've been able to accomplish things, things that normally would have taken weeks or months have been happening in days or hours."

Santos recalled multiple instances of good samaritan's stepping in to help in the recovery efforts, often coming through at the last minute or when least expected.

Due to the amount of trash and debris produced by the storm, they worked with Republic Services to provide dumpsters on-site to make disposing of the flooded material easier. However, when she was presented with a \$4,000 bill for the services, Santos was faced with a dilemma.

She wanted to help continue providing the services but did not want to use money from the community relief fund

to pay for the dumpsters. She said she stayed up until 6 a.m. one morning working on a solution to the problem when a local reached out and offered to pay for the dumpsters.

Relationships formed over the years at RiverGirl also became advantageous, as news spread across the country about what had happened in western North Carolina, past customers also traveled in to help with relief efforts.

Santos said one man is coming in from Illinois with a crew to help rebuild a building, while another group, Charlie Mike, made up of retired special forces veterans, has also been assisting the clean-up efforts. Others, such as arborists, landscapers, and construction crews, have also pitched in to help the community recover.

After three weeks of intense effort, Santos said that they have enough resources to point people to as long-term efforts continue.

"The thing that's hit me has been the emotional side of it. The folks that come together — that overwhelming show of love and support and compassion for each other. I've experienced something like that once in my life, but not to this extent, and it's very humbling," Santos said.

To learn more about RiverGirl Fishing Co and to contribute to community restoration efforts, visit rivergirlfishing.com.

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#### • Citation (aglc Style)

Luke Barber luke.barber@wataugademocrat.com, 'RiverGirl helping to lead recovery efforts in Todd community', *Watauga Democrat, The* (online), 23 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a> p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C6536ED68F3138>



## High Country chefs raise money for storm relief

October 23, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Nick Fogleman| Section: Community | 336 Words OpenURL Link

BLOWING ROCK — After Hurricane Helene, Burt Myers and Jessica Clearwater continued to do what they do best: cook food.

On Oct. 21 Clearwater and Myers hosted a High Country Boil to raise money for The North Carolina Community Foundation Disaster Relief Fund at Myers Kitchen & Pantry.

"We live here, and this area means a lot to both of us," Myers said.

Soon after the storm, Clearwater, who owns Moondance Catering, went to the Cove Creek area to serve hot meals to emergency personnel and those impacted by the storm.

"People were cleaning mud out of their houses and we stopped and asked if they wanted food," Clearwater said. "And they'd say, 'this neighbor had a mudslide, I'm sure they'd want some food.'"

Myers began serving first responders who came in looking for a hot meal.

"That's what we started doing first, so they didn't have to worry about food and could get out and do their jobs," Myers said.

The two High Country chefs came together to raise money for the North Carolina Community Foundation Disaster Relief Fund, which is a philanthropic grant organization that focuses on rural communities in North Carolina.

"So many people were coming to us asking how they could help. There was so much food already distributed we figured they needed money," Myers said.

The menu included butter poached tiger shrimp, chili rubbed salmon, corn on the cob, kielbasa sausage, new potatoes and garlic cheddar biscuits.

"It's comfort food, and people need a little bit of comfort," Myers said.

The team of chefs prepared around 200 meals and sold them for \$16 a meal.

"This is a way for us to get funds to people rather than another meal," Myers said.

Some customers went above and beyond, paying extra for meals and purchasing more meals than they wanted to receive.

"I had somebody contact me, and she wants two meals, and she's going to pay \$100," Clearwater said.

"Somebody came in and bought 10 meals and didn't want any of them," Myers said. "It gives the people who weren't affected a way to help."

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## Local business come out to support Hospitality House fundraiser

October 23, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Nick Fogleman | Section: Local | 407 Words OpenURL Link

BLOWING ROCK — Since Helene, the Hospitality House of Northwest N.C. has been providing much-needed services and resources to those impacted by the storm.

"We are just starting to understand the actual true numbers of people who find themselves homeless," Chief Development Director Todd Carter said.

On Oct. 20, Hospitality House held a fundraiser at The Embers Hotel to continue its efforts to provide resources and support to the hardest-hit communities.

"A lot of work is being done, and a lot of work is ahead of us as we start to help people put things back together," Carter said.

The event featured a raffle where contestants could win prizes donated by local businesses. All proceeds went to the Hospitality House, along with a portion of beverage and food sales.

The Embers Hotel is also donating \$5 for every room sold in October. Items included gift baskets prepared by local businesses, App State football tickets and dinner packages to local restaurants.

"They have been a tremendous partner," Carter said. "This has been more than we could have expected."

This money will help fund Hospitality House projects like their Watauga Housing Outreach Center, which has been turned into a supply distribution center for the seven regions Hospitality House serves, and other services that help people find and pay for housing.

"This will go to helping us find housing for people who have suddenly found themselves homeless," Carter said.

It will also help Hospitality House repair their Boone location which houses five different programs.

"We didn't flood from the bottom, we flooded from the top," Carter said.

Hospitality House celebrated its 40th anniversary this year and had planned a golf tournament that was canceled due to the storm. They had already secured some of the items for a silent auction and when The Embers Hotel reached out to plan this event, other local businesses chipped in.

"It's great to see the spirit of people who want to give back and be involved," Embers General Manager Ben McKethan said. "We've seen some amazing stories of people coming together."

The Hospitality House is a regional nonprofit agency that works in seven counties (Watauga, Wilkes, Ashe, Avery, Alleghany, Mitchell, Yancey). They provide housing, shelter, food access, homeless prevention, street outreach, counseling, medical care, and crisis assistance.

"All seven of the counties that we provide services and housing for were affected by this hurricane," Executive Director of Hospitality House, Tina Krause said. "It's a new thing for us. Forty years and we're dealing with something completely different."

# • Citation (aglc Style)

Nick Fogleman, 'Local business come out to support Hospitality House fundraiser', *Watauga Democrat, The*(online), 23 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C6536ECA7640D0">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C6536ECA7640D0</a>



## App State Sports In Brief: Oct. 23

October 23, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Compiled By Moss Brennan sports@wataugademocrat.com| Section: Asu Sports | 1705 Words OpenURL Link

The following are recaps from App State athletic teams for the week of Oct. 15 to Oct. 21.

Oct. 15

BURLINGTON, N.C. — Led by Ben Read, who tied for 21st overall with a 1-over total, App State Men's Golf placed 14th among 18 teams at the Elon Phoenix Invitational.

Read opened and closed the 54-hole event with 1-under rounds as part of his 70-74-70—214 total on the par-71 layout. He has posted top-25 finishes in all three of his fall starts, with under-par scores in four of his five rounds over his last two events.

The Mountaineers posted a 23-over total as a team (297-288-290—875) at the Alamance Country Club on Monday and Tuesday. Charlie O'Shea had the team's other under-par round with a second-round 70, while there were even-par scores of 71 from Herman Huus (final round), Alex Martin (second round) and James Gradisek (final round as an individual).

Huus tied for 37th at 5 over (74-73-71—218), and Martin tied for 62nd at 9 over (77-71-74—222). Playing as an individual, Colin Browning had a pair of 74s on Monday, and Aidan Browning closed the event with a 75.

UNCG won the team title at 19 under, seven strokes ahead of runner-up East Carolina, and Longwood's Justin LaRue was the medalist at 12 under.

EDISTO ISLAND, S.C. — With Layla Meric leading the way in all three rounds and tying for 34th place, App State Women's Golf placed 14th among 16 teams as it closed its fall schedule at the Edisto Island Invitational.

Meric opened the 54-hole event with a 3-over 74 en route to a 14-over total (74-78-75—227), while Jacquelyn Taylor tied for 51st place at 19 over (75-80-77—232). The Mountaineers finished at 98 over (313-324-313—950).

Playing as an individual, Salem Lee had App State's next-best tournament total with help from a second-round 78, and Ona Lukes shot a 78 in the final round. Mary-Sears Brown and Makena Dubois also competed for the Mountaineers.

Tournament host Charleston won the event with an 11-over total, five shots better than runner-up Northern Arizona, and Pariya Sanpanawat was the medalist at 5 under from third-place Georgia State.

Oct. 16

ASHEVILLE, N.C. – The App State men's basketball contest scheduled for Nov. 14, 2024, at the Harrah's Cherokee Center against the UNC Asheville Bulldogs, has been postponed to the 2025-26 season as the Western North Carolina region continues to recover following Hurricane Helene.

A new game date for the 2025-26 season will be announced at a later date.

To make a donation toward Hurricane Helene recovery, visit the NC.GOV Disaster Relief site. To make a donation to the App State Disaster Relief Fund, click here.

App State will open the 2024-25 campaign on Nov. 4 against the Miami (Ohio) RedHawks at the Holmes Convocation Center. Tipoff is slated for 6:30 p.m. and can be streamed on ESPN+.

Oct. 17

HARRISONBURG, Va. – In a battle of the two remaining unbeaten teams in the Sun Belt East Division, App State fell on the road to James Madison 3-0 at Sentara Park on Thursday.

The loss is the Mountaineers' (5-4-5, 2-1-3) first setback since Sept. 8, snapping a six-game unbeaten streak, the program's longest since 2012. It also marks the first time the Mountaineers have been shut out since Sept. 1 at No. 13 Auburn.

Amanda Attanasi scored a pair of first half goals for the Dukes (8-3-3, 6-0-1), who took a 2-0 lead into halftime. Sun Belt scoring leader Ginny Lackey delivered the final blow with a goal in the 82nd minute of play.

App State was held to just one shot in the contest. Redshirt freshman goalkeeper Sarah Wommack registered a career-high nine saves, facing a career-high 27 shots in the contest.

Oct. 18

BOONE— The App State field hockey team defeated the Ball State Cardinals by a score of 3-1.

The Mountaineers (8-6, 5-1 MAC) came into today's matchup after previously falling to North Carolina, and with today's win against Ball State (3-9, 2-3 MAC), the Mountaineers have clinched a spot in the 2024 MAC Field Hockey Tournament.

Henriette Stegen, Kassie Paul and Bridget Donovan all found the back of the cage in the matchup, helping improve the home record to 5-2.

ROCK HILL, S.C. - The App State women's cross country team clinched first with 15 points at the Adidas Winthrop Invitational on Friday. The meet served as a preview to the NCAA Southeast Regional course, which will be held at Winthrop Farm on Nov. 15.

"We had a perfect score for the women today with App State taking all top-eight places. Senior Lauren Johnston ran well today to lead the way for the group, and the women packed up and worked really well together," said women's distance coach Annie Richards. "Today sets us up for our championship season with a preview of our regional course. We feel very prepared for our conference championships up next and are ready put our final workouts in the books and get ready to get fresh before heading to Foley."

The Mountaineers took the top-eight spots, led by Johnston, who clocked a time of 21:43.1 to finish first. Following Johnston was fellow senior Emma Russum (22:02.9, second) and senior Jasmine Donohue (22:14.8, third). Clocking a 6K personal best and fourth-place finish was senior Karsyn Kane, who stopped the clock at 22:16.8. Senior Lana Farris rounded out the top-five, crossing the finish line with a time of 22:19.4.

Freshman Bre Budzinski recorded a time of 22:33.6 to finish sixth. Budzinski was followed by sophomore Rhys Ammon (22:51.7, seventh) and senior Catherine Breault (23:20.7, eighth).

BOONE — The App State volleyball team clinched a five-set victory (16-25, 25-23, 20-25, 25-15, 15-11) over Georgia Southern in Boone on Friday. The Mountaineers rise to 10-6 on the season and 4-1 in SBC action. The victory for App State marked Georgia Southern's first conference loss this season and first loss since Aug. 30.

"I am so proud. We fought and battled and would not be denied," said head coach Sarah Rumely Noble. "We executed our game plan at a really high level. Senior Lulu Ambrose was incredible with 21 kills. I'm excited to get back at it again tomorrow."

The Mountaineers return to the court at 1 p.m. on Saturday for their Pink Day match against the Eagles. Fans are encouraged to wear pink and "I fight for" signs will be available to fill out. There will also be a pink wagon race between the second and third sets. Sophomore Caroline Farthing's mother, Angie Farthing, will make the honorary first serve of the match.

Oct. 19

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. – The App State men's cross country team capped competition at the Panorama Farms Invitational early Saturday morning, finishing eighth in the team standings with 235 points.

"Junior Ethan Lipham and graduate student Ethan Turner both raced really well. I was excited to see them compete up front in a solid field," said men's distance coach Brad Herbster. "We need to work on sliding our third, fourth, and fifth runners up, as they were too far back today to be as successful as we would have liked in the team standings. This is the last race before conference, so it is important we learn and move forward."

Lipham was the first Mountaineer to cross the finish line, stopping the clock at 23:43.6 for an 8K personal best. Lipham finished 15th overall. With a time of 23:59.3, Turner finished 28th overall. Redshirt junior Chase Burrell rounded out the top-75 with a time of 24:46.1. Freshmen Thomas Wlazlowski and Aaron Kidd finished with times of 25:09.7 and 25:12.1, respectively.

BOONE — The App State volleyball team split its weekend against Georgia Southern, falling short in four sets (25-23, 23-25, 21-25, 18-25) in Saturday's Pink Day match after edging past the Eagles in five sets on Friday.

"I am glad we walked away with the weekend split. Georgia Southern is a great team and we battled hard," said head coach Sarah Rumely Noble. "We are walking away from the weekend confident and hungry."

Oct. 20

Izzi Wood registered her third brace of the season and Sarah Wommack made a clutch second-half save to lift App State over Arkansas State 2-1 on Sunday.

With the Mountaineers (6-4-5, 3-1-2) leading 1-0 in the 74th minute of play, an Arkansas State (3-5-5, 0-4-3) player was fouled in the box, resulting in a penalty kick opportunity to potentially tie the score. Wommack rose to the occasion, diving to her right to block the shot, and three minutes later Wood scored her second goal of the match to help App State secure the win.

Wood's first tally came in the 28th minute of play. After pickpocketing a Red Wolves defender, Wood dribbled to the center of the box, cut to her right to shed a helping defender and fired a shot into the top-right corner of the net to give the Mountaineers a 1-0 advantage.

The graduate student scored her second goal in the 77th minute of play. Stephanie Barbosa crossed a ball into the middle of the box and Red Wolves goalkeeper Taylor Sweat deflected the pass straight into the air. An Arkansas State defender attempted to make the clear but headed it right to Wood for the finish.

Wood moves into a tie for the league lead with ten goals on the season, and her 25th career goal ties her for third-most in program history with Jennifer Rudy (2001-2004) and Sam Childress (2012-2015), and just five goals shy of Casey Cleary's program-record.

App State conceded its lone goal in the 81st minute of play as McKenzie Robinson banged a shot off the far post and into the back of the net to break up the shutout.

The victory marks the Mountaineers' first home win in conference play this season and snaps a four-match winless streak dating back to Sept. 26.

LENOIR — Josh Buxbaum led four App State men's golfers by placing seventh at the App State Individual event hosted by the Mountaineers at Cedar Rock Country Club.

In App State's last fall event of this year, Buxbaum finished at 5 over (75-74—149) on the par-72 layout. Western Carolina's Dalton Payne won the tournament with a 1-over total after following a 75 on Saturday with a 2-under 70 on Sunday.

Jack Seward placed 12th at 9 over, Ben Locker finished 17th at 14 over and Rob Bergevin tied for 18th at 15 over. ©2024 Watauga Democrat - Mountain Times Publications, All rights reserved.

# • Citation (aglc Style)

Compiled By Moss Brennan sports@wataugademocrat.com, 'App State Sports In Brief: Oct. 23', *Watauga Democrat, The*(online), 23 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C63DD5ABE5E658">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C63DD5ABE5E658</a>



## Airborne soldiers helping with recovery efforts even as disaster hits close to home

October 23, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Moss Brennan moss.brennan@wataugademocrat.com| Section: Local | 499 Words OpenURL Link

HIGH COUNTRY — Throughout the recovery process in the High Country, members of the military and the National Guard have helped where needed, be it with search and rescue or moving supplies from one location to the other.

The active-duty soldiers are part of an Infantry Battalion Task Force, formed from the XVII Airborne Corps to include members of the 82nd Airborne and other units stationed at Fort Liberty.

161st Engineer Support Company 1st Sgt. Dustin Ferguson said it's great that they can help in Western North Carolina.

"They're fighting for their livelihood out here, and we're here to ensure that they win that fight," Ferguson said as he paused from loading supplies from a distribution center to take to smaller communities.

For some, the deployment means more than just helping strangers. Spc. Robert Arndt of the 20th Engineer Brigade is from Western North Carolina, specifically Sylva.

He witnessed Hurricane Helene's destruction in his hometown from Fort Liberty in Fayetteville. He said he wasn't able to contact his family for a long time because his cell service and power were out.

Now, he has deployed to his hometown area as part of the Army.

"It feels good," Arndt said while pausing from moving water bottles at a school in Mitchell County. "Something I can actually do and help support the locals around here because I understand it's something you don't expect, and some people need help, and I'm glad to help any way I can."

He said seeing his community come together and help one another.

"I'm really glad to see all these small towns come together and help each other out in time of need like this," Arndt said.

Cpl. Keysha Garcia of the 20th Engineer Brigade has a different outlook on helping. Garcia is from Puerto Rico and has seen her share of hurricanes, including Hurricane Maria in 2017.

"Helping here means a lot to me because I already went through it, so I know how it feels, and I know what people are missing and what they've lost and what they need," Garcia said.

She said when she saw how bad the damage was, she knew she needed to go there to help the people because she knew what it was like.

Spc. Lorna Nieves-Sevillano is also from Puerto Rico and had similar experiences going through hurricanes.

She said seeing the community coming together has "restored my faith"in humanity.

"I know that it took a lot from people, you know, and that's always something that's, you know, gonna hurt — like losing your house, losing your cars, all these material things — but at the end of the day, you gained a community back," Nieves-Sevillano said. "One that you probably lost along the way because life happens, right?"

Approximately 1,500 soldiers deployed to western North Carolina from Fort Liberty and Fort Campbell. Many of the soldiers were stationed at a Camping World in Marion.

National Guard and military personnel from North Carolina and other states have used more than 50 helicopters and more than 716 specialized vehicles to help those in need.

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## • Citation (aglc Style)

Moss Brennan moss.brennan@wataugademocrat.com, 'Airborne soldiers helping with recovery efforts even as disaster hits close to home', *Watauga Democrat, The*(online), 23 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a> p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C6536ECF677F28>



# Watauga Community Band hosting free concert on Oct. 27

October 23, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Staff Report news@wataugademocrat.com| Section: Community | 138 Words OpenURL Link

BOONE — The Watauga Community Band and its director, Billy Ralph Winkler, is inviting the community to a free Fall Concert on Sunday, Oct. 27, at 3 p.m. at the Watauga High School Auditorium.

"Hurricane Helene has greatly affected our rehearsals, but we've been able to put together a program we think you will enjoy," the band stated in a press release.

The program will range from lyrical arrangements of a folk song and a well-known hymn to rousing marches, selections from the musicals "Jersey Boys" and "Man of La Mancha," and the evocative beat of the popular piece "Africa."

The Watauga Community Band includes 50 members ranging from high school students to seniors, from those just learning their craft to professional musicians, music teachers, professors, and band directors —all of whom rejoice in making music together for the community.

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#### • Citation (aglc Style)

Staff Report news@wataugademocrat.com, 'Watauga Community Band hosting free concert on Oct. 27', *Watauga Democrat, The* (online), 23 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a>? p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C68FFEAD87F1E0>



## Pioneer volleyball overcomes early struggles to advance past Mooresville

October 23, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Zach Colburn | Section: Sports | 699 Words OpenURL Link

BOONE — In what's been an up-and-down season for the Watauga volleyball team, head coach Kim Pryor feels that her players are peaking at the right time.

And if Tuesday's 3-0 win against Mooresville is any indication, the Lady Pioneers could make some serious noise in the North Carolina High School Athletic Association 4A playoffs.

"There's nothing like peaking at the end of the season and finding our groove even in the adversity that we had to go through — it may be just what we need to spur us on," said Pryor. "I feel like our team on any given night could beat any other team in the state. I just hope we continue to roll like that."

Watauga had its season postponed for three weeks at the halfway mark of the Northwestern 4A/3A Conference schedule following the effects of Hurricane Helene.

The seventh-seeded Lady Pioneers (10-8), who will host No. 10 Lake Norman (18-3) in the second round on Thursday at 6 p.m., won by scores of 25-18, 25-21 and 25-14 and did so in several different ways.

In the third set, Watauga led from start to finish as kills from Grace Tillery and Emma Pastusic helped the hosts jump out to a 5-1 lead.

The lead continued to grow and was up to as much as seven (18-11) before the Lady Blue Devils burned a timeout.

Out of the pause, the Lady Pioneers extended the lead to double-digits to close out the set behind back-to-back kills from Tillery, who finished with seven.

Pastusic led the way with a double-double, collecting 15 kills and 15 digs.

"I just think that we started getting our passes to the center and attacking. When we're in attack mode, we're hard to stop; we just needed to get to the groove," said Pryor. "All the way across the board, we've been working and working on different combinations, trying to mix it up a little bit. All our hitters were ready to go, and they all did a great job."

In addition to Pastusic and Tillery, another player in particular that Pryor mentioned for her work on offense was Ashlyn Smith.

The sophomore finished with six kills, but they came at some crucial times in the second set.

Watauga trailed by as many as six in the second set at 12-6 but rallied to cut it in half (13-10) with a kill from Smith.

She also closed out the set with the clinching kill.

"She's hitting smart. You don't always have to hit it straight down in the 10-foot line; she's hitting it into the spots where the defense struggles or the defense isn't, so she's definitely playing smart," said Pryor.

Mooresville, which concluded its season at 8-12, jumped out in front early in both of the first two sets and led 13-9 in the opening set.

But the Lady Pioneers battled back and scored the next six points to brag the lead and stretched it to as many as seven.

In the second set, Watauga tied the set at 14-14 before strong serving from Caroline Childers and kills from Kora Knight and Pastusic helped them run off the next seven points and create a little separation.

Childers finished with six aces and 15 digs — both team highs.

"I felt we needed to go on a little run in the second set because we were a little behind," said Childers. "But I knew our team was good and we could get back up; we just needed a little bit more energy, and I think we really brought that in the second set, especially, and I think we worked really hard to get back up and on top of it."

Lainey Gragg finished with a team-best 27 assists; Lilli Combs and Kaitlyn Darner finished with eight and seven digs, respectively.

Watauga Player Stats vs. Mooresville

Lilli Combs (Jr.) — 8 digs

Hadleigh Windish (Sr.) — 4 digs

Kora Knight (Jr.) — 3 kills, 1 block

Kaitlyn Darner (Sr.) — 7 digs

Lainey Gragg (So.) — 27 assists, 1 block, 1 ace, 5 digs

Addison Parker (Sr.) — 1 dig

Grace Tillery (Sr.) — 7 kills, 1 block

Emma Pastusic (Jr.) — 15 kills, 1 assist, 3 aces, 4 digs

Bella Wade (Jr.) — 1 dig

Caroline Childers (Fr.) — 1 assist, 6 aces, 15 digs

Ashlyn Smith (So.) — 6 kills, 2 digs

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## • Citation (aglc Style)

Zach Colburn, 'Pioneer volleyball overcomes early struggles to advance past Mooresville', *Watauga Democrat, The*(online), 23 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C6536EE21D2F50">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C6536EE21D2F50</a>



## More than 12K Watauga voters have cast their ballot so far

October 23, 2024 | Watauga Democrat, The (Boone, NC) Author: Moss Brennan moss.brennan@wataugademocrat.com| Section: Local | 499 Words OpenURL Link

WATAUGA — More than 12,000 people have cast their ballot so far in Watauga County.

According to Watauga County Director of Elections Matt Snyder, 12,050 people voted have voted as of the close of polls on Oct. 23. In Watauga County, 45,608 people are registered to vote, according to the North Carolina Board of Elections.

On the first day of early voting Oct. 17, more than 2,500 people voted.

"We were very pleased that our Day 1 early voting numbers. (They) were very comparable to Day 1 in 2020, even with a few hours less of operation," Snyder said.

As of end of day Oct. 23, the App State location has had the most votes, 4,201, while the Meat Camp location has had the fewest, 710.

The other sites saw the following number of voters at the end of Day 7 of early voting:

Watauga County Administration Building: 3,043Blowing Rock: 1,478Deep Gap: 1,446Western Watauga Community Center: 1,172

In the 2020 presidential election, 32,346 Watauga County voters cast their ballot — a 71.62% turnout.

On Oct. 20, the fourth day of early voting, more than 1 million voters had cast their ballot across the state, which is 13% of the total registered voters in the state.

Early voting times are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays and Saturdays and 1 to 5 p.m. on Sundays between Oct. 17 and Nov. 2. The last day of early voting, Nov. 2, will be from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. The Watauga County Board of Elections approved the new early voting hours on Oct. 10.

Early voting polling sites are located at:

Watauga County Administration Building (Commissioners' Board Room 814 W. King Street, Boone)Blowing Rock American Legion Building (333 Wallingford Street, Blowing Rock)Deep Gap Fire Department (6583 Old 421 S, Deep Gap)Meat Camp Fire Department (4797 NC Hwy 194 N, Boone)Plemmons Student Union Blue Ridge Ballroom (263 Locust Street, Boone with parking available at 644 Howard Street)Western Watauga Community Center (1081 Old US Hwy 421, Sugar Grove)

If you are registered to vote in Watauga County, you may vote at any early voting site you choose. Same Day Registration is available at every early voting site, but voters must provide proof of residence in Watauga County.

A photo ID is required to vote. Voters who may have lost their ID due to Hurricane Helene have the following options:

Fill out a Photo ID Exception Form at your voting site or send the form back with your absentee ballot. (A blank Exception Form will arrive with your absentee packet.) Check the box for "Exception 3: Victim of a Natural Disaster." Make sure to sign the form.Go to your county board of elections office. If you are a registered voter, they can take your photo and print an acceptable ID on the spot. For details, go to Get a Free Voter Photo ID.Get a free ID from an

NCDMV office in your area. For details, see State IDs | NCDMV.

For details about North Carolina's photo ID requirement, including a list of all acceptable IDs, go to BringltNC.gov.

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Moss Brennan moss.brennan@wataugademocrat.com, 'More than 12K Watauga voters have cast their ballot so far', *Watauga Democrat, The* (online), 23 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a> p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C68FFEB8FE02F8>