

# Kernersville chamber, local businesses support Western NC

October 2, 2024 | High Point Enterprise (NC) Author: Amanda Astillero Staff Reporter | Section: Archives | 431 Words OpenURL Link

In light of Hurricane Helene, local businesses and non-profit organizations have pulled together to help communities in Western North Carolina.

Several organizations and businesses in Kernersville — including Village Family Chiropractic, Sign Resources, Aesthetic Haus, the town of Kernersville, Fire Station 42, Smith Crossing Dental, ModWash in Walkertown, Triad Baptist Church, Emergency Restoration Experts (ERX) at Park Lawn Court, Coldwell Banker Advantage, and more — are hosting collection drives for non-perishable food items that do not require can openers or electricity to eat, baby formula, wipes and diapers, towels, blankets, toilet paper, hygiene products, dog/cat food, feminine products, and medical supplies, said Ashley Sinclair, the marketing director of the Kernersville Chamber of Commerce.

"Supporting Western North Carolina goes beyond immediate relief efforts. In-kind donations, such as non-perishable food, water, clothing, hygiene products, and household essentials, remain valuable, and coordinating with local relief organizations helps ensure these contributions meet the specific needs of the community," she said.

Sinclair underscored the importance of helping other businesses in Western North Carolina.

"From the perspective of the Kernersville chamber and local businesses, supporting communities in need, especially in the wake of a disaster like the hurricane that devastated Western North Carolina, is essential for several reasons. First and foremost, it's about fostering a sense of unity and responsibility. When businesses and organizations come together to provide emergency relief, they demonstrate that they are not only invested in their own success but also in the well-being of the broader community," Sinclair said.

Social media has become a vital platform for keeping the impacted areas connected and raising awareness.

"Raising awareness through social media, events, and community outreach is crucial during this time, as it not only highlights ongoing needs but also encourages long-term support," Sinclair said.

When asked about what other ways businesses can support citizens in the impacted areas, Sinclair replied, "Businesses can also play a key role by investing in partnerships focused on infrastructure rebuilding, housing, and education, which will help ensure the community's sustainable recovery."

"Helping those in crisis not only provides immediate relief but strengthens the bonds between regions, creating lasting partnerships that can make a significant impact in the future. Moreover, businesses have the resources, networks, and capabilities to mobilize quickly, which is critical in disaster situations. For these businesses, it's about leading by example and encouraging local businesses to use their influence to make a positive difference in times of need. When we support one another, we build stronger, more resilient communities for everyone," Sinclair said.

More Information More stories about local efforts to collect relief supplies for Western North Carolina can be found inside today's Kernersville News.

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# Travel to NC mountains sharply restricted

October 2, 2024 | High Point Enterprise (NC)

Author: SHARON MYERS PAXTON MEDIA GROUP Section: News 266 Words

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TRIAD — Anyone who wants to bring relief supplies to the flood-ravaged communities of western North Carolina may not be allowed into the region if they don't check in with state officials before they leave, the N.C. Department of Emergency Management said.

Officials with the department's Business Operations Emergency Center say that most roads west of Hickory remain closed except to emergency vehicles and registered volunteer organizations, and people will not be allowed into the area if they haven't notified officials in advance about what they are bringing and where it is going.

"We must secure these routes for responders and critical partner assets needed for response and recovery efforts," a notice from the center said. "There is a high likelihood that your teams will be turned away at various checkpoints."

Anyone wishing to travel to the area to drop off donations can email requests to BEOC@ncdps.gov with the subject line "Logistics support." The emails should include what is being moved and why special access is needed. It should also include where you are traveling to and from, as well as the expected arrival time.

The N.C. Department of Public Safety said the most-needed donation at this time is money, which can be sent to the North Carolina Disaster Relief Fund at www.nc.gov/disaster-relief-fund-fags.

There are also many churches, businesses and other organizations that are registered Volunteer Organization Active in a Disaster that are collecting donations to be delivered. A list can be found at www.ncvoad.org/members/

Those wishing to volunteer in person can sign up with a Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster at https://www.ncvoad.org/volunteer/.

NCDPS also has a list of resources at www.ncdps.gov/our-organization/emergency-management/hurricane-helene.

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# Baxter IV fluid facility in Marion closed by Helene flooding; bridges to property damaged

October 2, 2024 | McDowell News, The (Marion, NC) Author: RICHARD CRAVER Winston-Salem Journal | Section: Health Care | 534 Words OpenURL Link

The North Cove manufacturing plant of Baxter International Inc. has experienced significant flooding damage from the remnants of Hurricane Helene, the company said Tuesday.

The Marion campus is closed for production. It is Baxter's largest manufacturing facility, with more than 2,500 employees.

Production primarily involves making intravenous and peritoneal dialysis solutions. Baxter is the largest U.S. manufacturer of these solutions.

"Our hearts and thoughts are with all those affected by Hurricane Helene," said José Almeida, Baxter's chair, president and chief executive.

"The safety of our employees, their families and the communities in which we operate remains our utmost concern, and we are committed to helping ensure reliable supply of products to patients."

The company said "it is working around the clock in close coordination with local, state and federal officials to assess the extent of the damage and implement a plan to bring the plant back online as quickly as possible to help mitigate supply disruption to patients.

"Remediation efforts are already underway, and we will spare no resource — human or financial — to resume production and help ensure patients and providers have the products they need," Almeida said.

The damage occurred in spite of Baxter's preparation efforts, which included evacuation plans for workers, moving products to higher ground or secure storage where feasible.

However, the company said the heavy rain and storm surge triggered a levee breach, which led to water permeating the site. The bridges accessing the site have been damaged.

The Baxter International Foundation has committed \$1.5 million in donations to help address recovery needs, including allocating additional funds to its Employee Disaster Relief Fund, and is matching employee donations \$2 for \$1 toward relief efforts.

Baster said the temporary closing of the Baxter plant is expected to "negatively impact the company's financial results."

"Once the company can more fully assess the damage, it will be in a better position to estimate any expected impact and plans to provide an update in its third-quarter earnings announcement."

On Tuesday, the N.C. Division of Employment Security listed McDowell County among 25 counties in northwest and western N.C. whose citizens have been declared eligible for federal disaster unemployment assistance benefits.

The eligibility is a byproduct of the Biden administration's declaration of a state of emergency in North Carolina.

The assistance covers individuals who are unemployed as a direct result of Hurricane Helene. Business owners and self-employed individuals affected by the storm also may qualify for benefits.

Benefits would be made retroactive to Sept. 29 and may last for up to 26 weeks.

The other counties, along with the Cherokee Indians of N.C., are: Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Clay, Cleveland, Gaston, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Lincoln, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Transylvania, Watauga, Wilkes and Yancey.

The division said additional counties may be added at a later date.

Eligible individuals have until Dec. 2 to file an application for disaster unemployment assistance at des.nc.gov or the DUA Hotline at 919-629-3857.

Individuals must first apply for state unemployment benefits. For those determined to be ineligible for or have exhausted regular state benefits, they may be eligible to make a federal disaster unemployment assistance claim.

Eligibility is determined weekly, and individuals must continue to be out of work as a direct result of the disaster each week to get unemployment benefits.

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RICHARD CRAVER Winston-Salem Journal, 'Baxter IV fluid facility in Marion closed by Helene flooding; bridges to property damaged', *McDowell News, The* (online), 2 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/19BF50011639C220>



# Searches underway as Helene deaths pass 165

October 2, 2024 | McDowell News, The (Marion, NC) Author: Staff Writer | Section: News | 136 Words OpenURL Link

SWANNANOA, N.C. — Cadaver dogs and search crews trudged through knee-deep muck and debris Tuesday looking in the mountains of western North Carolina for victims of Hurricane Helene, days after the storm carved a destructive path through the Southeast.

With Helene's death toll passing 165, searchers used helicopters and hiked through wilderness to reach isolated homes. The storm knocked out power and cellular service in some towns and cities, leaving people frustrated, hot and increasingly worried. Some cooked food on charcoal grills or hiked to high ground in the hopes of finding a signal to contact loved ones.

"Communities were wiped off the map," North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper said Tuesday at a news conference. Devastation was especially bad in the Blue Ridge Mountains, where at least 57 people died in and around Asheville, a tourism haven.

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### WANT TO HELP?

October 2, 2024 | McDowell News, The (Marion, NC) Author: SARAH C. JOHNSON Hickory Daily Record | Section: Want To Help | 1095 Words OpenURL Link

### WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA | HELENE AFTERMATH

The remnants of Hurricane Helene hit western North Carolina Friday, bringing significant flooding and damage. The storm left many residents without power, water or cell service.

In the days since, federal, state and local governments have worked to help the area recover. Also helping are numerous private companies and individuals.

Here is information about food, shelter, power and donation sites in McDowell, Burke, Catawba and Iredell counties and surrounding areas.

Meals, shelters for flood victims in western NC

Grace Community Church will be providing hot meals at 5182 U.S. 70 West in Marion. Lunch will be served from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Dinner will be served from 4-5:30 p.m.

Local emergency shelters are listed below:

- Glenwood Baptist Church 155 Glenwood Church Road in Marion
- Marion Senior Center 100 Spauling Road in Marion
- YMCA of Marion 438 Grace Corpening Drive in Marion
- Oak Hill Methodist Church 2239 N.C. 181 in Morganton
- West Caldwell High School 300 West Caldwell Drive in Lenoir

Food, water, supplies in McDowell County

Numerous agencies from all across McDowell County continue to assist McDowell County Emergency Management with points of distribution. These places will operate daily from 10 a.m. to noon and 4-6 p.m., depending on available supplies. The locations are as follows:

- Hicks Chapel Church 6008 U.S. Hwy. 221 N. in Marion
- Former TJ's Discount 8153 U.S. Hwy. 221 N. in Marion
- Old Fort Town Hall 38 Catawba Ave. in Old Fort
- New Manna Baptist Church 225 E. Court St. in Marion
- Solid Rock Free Will Baptist Church 7860 N.C. Hwy. 226 S. in Nebo

Food, water and ice in Burke County

Burke County has set up a donation and distribution location at Foothills Higher Education Center in Morganton. The center is at 2128 S. Sterling St., Morganton.

Donations are being accepted from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day and will be distributing needed items from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. every day.

The county is offering free bags of ice at four locations: "

- •Old Kmart parking lot 110 Bost Road, Morganton "
- ullet Fiddlers Run Shopping Center 160 Fidler Run Blvd., Morganton "
- •Brentwood Water Corporation 1911 Jamestown Road, Morganton "
- Foothills Thrift Store 2886 U.S. Hwy. 17, Morganton

Where to donate for flood relief in western NC

Looking to donate food, clothes or toiletries to flood victims in western North Carolina? Here are donation sites in Catawba, Caldwell, Burke, Iredell and McDowell counties.

Several sites around the Catawba Valley are collecting donations: "

- •N.C. State Highway Patrol station 3265 U.S. Highway 70 SE in Conover
- "• Catawba County United Way office 2760 Tate Blvd. SE in Hickory "
- WHKY office 526 Main Ave. SE in Hickory "
- ullet Conover Fire Department, Station No. 3 1776 Village Square NW in Conover "
- •Hickory Motor Speedway 3130 U.S. Highway 70 SE in Newton "
- •Klingspor Abrasives 2566 Third Ave. NW in Hickory "
- ullet Brookford Police Department lobby 1700 S. Center St. in Hickory "
- •Long View Town Hall 2404 First Ave. SW in Long View (Until Oct. 7) "
- •Adrian L. Shuford Jr. YMCA 1104 Conover Blvd. E. in Conover "
- •Hickory Foundation YMCA 701 First St. NW in Hickory "
- Lincoln County Family YMCA 1402 Gaston St. in Lincolnton "
- •Sally's YMCA 1601 Forney Creek Parkway in Denver "
- Phifer Family YMCA 2165 S. Sterling St. in Morganton "
- •Lower Creek Baptist Church 633 Lower Creek Drive in Lenoir (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.) "
- •Statesville Regional Airport 238 Airport Road in Statesville (8 a.m. to 4 p.m.) "
- ullet Statesville Fire Department Station No. 1 822 Fifth St. in Statesville

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"•Statesville Fire Department Station No. 2 - 110 Security Drive in Statesville
"•Statesville Fire Department Station No. 3 — 779 Eastside Drive in Statesville
ullet Statesville Fire Department Station No. 4 - 115 Martin Lane in Statesville "
•Universal Advanced Manufacturing Center — 634 College Drive in Marion "
ullet Foothills Higher Education Center — 2128 S. Sterling St. in Morganton
Items needed for flood victims
Don't know what to donate? Here is a list of items that local donations sites are requesting. "

    Powdered drink mix packets "

·Bottled water "
•Baby formula/baby food "

 Nonperishable food items "

Plastic utensils "
Paper plates/cups "
·Manual can openers "
Toiletries "
•Toothbrushes/toothpaste "

    Hand sanitizer

·Baby wipes "
•Diapers for adults/children "
•Sanitizing wipes "
•Feminine hygiene products "
•Bug spray "Sunscreen "Dog/cat food "
Cat litter "
•New clothes "
•Unopened socks of all sizes "

    Blankets "

•Heavy-duty work gloves "
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Plastic tarps"Cleaning supplies

"•Trash bags 13-gallon or bigger "

- •Batteries "
- Flashlights
- "• Chain saws (Brookford Police Department only) Statesville Fire Departments are not accepting used clothes, water, fuel or flammable items, most chemicals including bleach, or hazardous materials. Other sites are not accepting glass items.

North Carolina Helene disaster relief funds

Want to donate money to help Hurricane Helene victims? Here are two official relief funds for North Carolina.

Monetary donations can be made to the N.C. Department of Public Safety's disaster relief fund at nc.gov/donate.

The North Carolina United Way is also accepting monetary donations through NC 211 at unitedwaync.org.

Power outages in Catawba Valley

Nearly 65% of McDowell County was without power on Tuesday at 10:45 a.m. There were 19,562 customers out of 30,262 with no power, according to PowerOutages.us.

Half of Burke County residents still had no power as of Tuesday. As of 10:45 a.m., 21,853 out of 43,519 customers were without power, according to PowerOutages.us.

Nearly 40% of Caldwell County remained without power as of 10:45 a.m. on Tuesday. Out of 42,228 customers, 16,134 still did not have power, according to PowerOutages.us.

On Tuesday, 9,836 customers out of 82,391 in Catawba County were still without power, according to PowerOutages.us.

On Tuesday, 1,643 customers out of 19,481 in Alexander County were still without power, according to PowerOutages.us.

Report missing people in McDowell County

If you or someone you know is in need of assistance, call the Helene Hotline at 828-652-3241. The 24/7 volunteer operators are standing by to help. The hotline can be used for the following:

- 1. Report missing or stranded persons
- 2. Request transportation to a shelter
- 3. Report urgent medical equipment needs (oxygen, life-saving medication)
- 4. Any other questions or concerns

How to apply for FEMA assistance

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

To apply, go online to DisasterAssistance.gov, use the FEMA app for mobile devices or call 800621-3362.

Sarah Johnson is the courts and breaking news reporter for the Hickory Daily Record.

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# Western NC courts, including McDowell County, canceled due to Hurricane Helene

October 2, 2024 | McDowell News, The (Marion, NC) Author: Sarah C. Johnson Hickory Daily Record | Section: News | 296 Words OpenURL Link

Courts in at least 22 counties in western North Carolina — including Caldwell, Catawba and McDowell — have canceled court, according to the N.C. Judicial Branch.

Court filing deadlines for 28 counties were extended by N.C. Chief Justice Paul Newby on Sunday. Alexander, Burke, Caldwell. Catawba and McDowell counties were included in the order.

All criminal and civil hearings for Catawba County District Court and Catawba County Superior Court have been canceled through Friday, according to the N.C. Judicial Branch website. The Catawba County Courthouse is at 100 Government Drive, Newton.

Burke County District Court is closed through Friday. Burke County Superior Court was closed Tuesday. Decisions about Superior Court are being made on a day-by-day basis, Assistant District Attorney Mitch Walker said. The Burke County Courthouse is at 201 S. Green St. in Morganton.

Caldwell County District Court is closed through Friday. Caldwell County Superior Court is open for criminal cases, according to the N.C. Judicial Branch website. The Caldwell County Courthouse is at 216 Main St. NW in Lenoir.

The McDowell County Courthouse is closed due to power outages and flooding from Hurricane Helene. The N.C. Judicial Branch website says McDowell County courts are closed through Wednesday. The McDowell County Courthouse is at 21 S. Main St. in Marion.

Filing extension for western NC

Chief Justice Paul Newby ordered that all pleadings, motions, notices and other documents that were due to be filed between Sept. 26 and Oct. 14 shall be deemed timely if filed by the end of business on Oct. 14. The includes documents for civil actions, criminal actions, estates and special proceedings.

The counties included in the order are Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Cherokee, Clay, Cleveland, Gaston, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Lincoln, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Swain, Transylvania, Watauga, Wilkes and Yancey.

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# This Burke County family has lived along the Catawba River since 1948. Helene destroyed their homes.

October 2, 2024 | McDowell News, The (Marion, NC) Author: Chrissy Murphy cmurphy@morganton.com| Section: News| 1171 Words OpenURL Link

With mud caked to the floor and her boots, Libby Morgan shuffled through books scattered along the wood floors of her home alongside the Catawba River in Burke County.

Most of the things she and her husband, Jim, had in their home had already been thrown into a pile outside and declared unsalvageable after torrential rain from the remnants of Hurricane Helene flooded their home. But in the pile of sopping wet books, Libby hoped to find a treasure more than 50 years old.

Their wedding album.

The white photo album was found on the other side of the room, mostly intact, though now covered in dirt and the photos soaking wet. The pictures show the couple in their early 20s, before Jim Morgan would start building their house on Libby's family's land on Powerhouse Road in Morganton.

'Starting life over at 82'

Jim, 81, built the A-frame house on the property when he was 32.

"I never built anything bigger than a picnic table," Jim said, looking at the still-standing home. "And I think I built it about as perfect as you could build a house."

Several additions have been made to the home since the initial A-frame was built. An office, separate from the house, then later a large hallway were added on. Eight years ago, he built a large bedroom with a sunroom on it, where the couple enjoyed a morning cup of coffee.

"It really was just perfect," Jim said.

The couple heard Hurricane Helene was expected to bring some flooding to the area but did not imagine water levels would be like Hurricane Frances in 2004. In the 2004 storm, the water came up to just under the floors of the home, but never got into the house. The couple couldn't get flood insurance after Frances, and had not tried to get it in recent years.

This time, though, the water got as high as the attic. Jim had been out of the country on a trip to Canada. He drove five days to get home.

"I got back, and I started laughing," Jim said. "I thought, 'This can't be true.' I just laughed. I laughed, and this morning I woke up weeping. ... Then I couldn't do anything but weep. I slept in my car again last night, and I can't see when — in six months — how we could sleep on this property.

"I'm turning 82 soon. I'm in good health, but do I want to spend the next three years, from 82 to 85, trying to get this house livable? It doesn't make sense," Jim said.

Jim said his childhood was turbulent. He left home at 14 and has been supporting himself ever since.

"This is really the only place I've ever thought of as home ... This is really gonna be an adventure, for sure," Jim said. "It's like starting life over at 82. ... I just don't know if I'm up to it."

Houses, memories washed away

Up the street, Libby's sister, Hilda White, sat in a lawn chair three days after the storm. Her daughter, Lori Stock, and grandson, Spencer Stock, sorted through picture albums and set photos out to dry.

Another wedding photo, the only one of Hilda with her late husband, Ralph, was among the pictures. A teapot a relative brought from Russia survived without a single chip on it.

But White's house is gone.

The family tried to save some of her belongings by putting them in a moving truck and putting it at the top of the driveway, but even the truck was washed down the road, getting pushed into some trees and stuck in a ditch. Spencer tried to move the truck when they found out how bad the flooding was but was unsuccessful.

"We've been pulling photo album after photo album after photo album out of here," Spencer said. "We moved everything up here to keep it dry and safe."

Ralph's boat was moved to the top of the driveway, too. The boat still hadn't been located, but the trailer was found.

"I burst into tears when I saw my daddy's boat trailer," Lori said. "It's like losing my daddy all over again."

Hilda has moved in with Lori. She canceled her flood insurance in 2021 when it got too expensive to keep.

"Mama won't ever live up here again," Lori said.

Family history on Catawba River

The land has been in the family since 1948 when Rom White bought all the land for farmland. Over the years, the property has been divvied up between descendants.

Cindy and Keith White live in another home on the White family property.

"Devastated, just devastated," Cindy said. "Just no words."

The White family wants to keep the property in the family, passing it down through generations.

"We had gutted our house, so proud of it," Cindy said. "My kids — this was going to them. It goes to each generation."

In Cindy and Keith's home, the chandelier over the dining table was mangled. Furniture is strewn about inside the house. Buildings, roofs and more litter the yard.

But just like with Hilda White and the Morgans, there are some treasures to be found.

A military plaque honoring Keith's dad, World War II Navy Seaman 1st Class Roy Edward White, remains in the ground though coated in sand.

When Keith's dad, Roy White, died, the first military plaque that came for his grave was chipped. The family kept it and just a couple months ago placed it in the ground with some other flat rock to make a cozy spot by the river for a fire pit. The plaque and the fire pit survived the storm.

The family also found a quilt protected by a vacuum-sealed bag. The quilt, handmade by a grandmother, didn't

appear to have any water or stains on it.

"(It's) the place where my kids grew up," Cindy said. "It's just things in life, but it meant so much."

Standing under a sign that reads, "The river restores my soul," Cindy said she didn't know what the family would do. They, too, had just canceled their flood insurance to make sure their home on the coast had full flood coverage.

"We've got to decide," Cindy said. "Are we going to demolish it? Are we going to try to (save it)? It's a lot. It's a lot."

Community gathering center lost

When Rom White bought the land by the river, the first cabin he built was for church and family gatherings.

Through the years, it has been used for birthday parties, church gatherings and civic organization activities. Emergency rescue teams have even used the building as a place to stay during swift water rescue training events.

The building washed away in the flood. Parts of the cabin were strewn around the White family property on Powerhouse Road and down the river.

Some parts of the cabin are still standing, like the kitchen and bathroom. Most of the walls are gone, making it look like a dollhouse with one side open.

It's not the first time the cabin has been washed away. It also was lost during Hurricane Frances in 2004, but the community helped the family recover.

The Whites are hoping to get that same support this time.

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# People in 4 northwest NC counties eligible for federal disaster unemployment benefits

October 2, 2024 | McDowell News, The (Marion, NC) Author: RICHARD CRAVER Winston-Salem Journal | Section: Government Politics | 379 Words OpenURL Link

Residents in four northwest North Carolina counties — Alleghany, Ashe, Watauga and Wilkes — have been declared eligible for federal disaster unemployment assistance benefits, the N.C. Division of Employment Security said Tuesday.

The eligibility is a byproduct of the Biden administration's declaration of a state of emergency in North Carolina from the devastating rainfall and flooding caused by the remnants of Hurricane Helene.

The disaster unemployment assistance covers individuals who are unemployed as a direct result of Hurricane Helene. Business owners and self-employed individuals affected by the storm also may qualify for benefits.

Benefits would be made retroactive to Sept. 29 and may last for up to 26 weeks.

There are 21 other counties, along with the Cherokee Indians of N.C., that have been approved: Alexander, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Clay, Cleveland, Gaston, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Lincoln, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Transylvania and Yancey.

The division said additional counties may be added at a later date.

Eligible individuals have until Dec. 2 to file an application for disaster unemployment assistance at des.nc.gov or the DUA Hotline at 919-629-3857.

Individuals must first apply for state unemployment benefits. For those determined to be ineligible for or have exhausted regular state benefits, they may be eligible to make a federal disaster unemployment assistance claim.

Eligibility is determined weekly, and individuals must continue to be out of work as a direct result of the disaster each week to get unemployment benefits.

#### Those eligible include:

No longer have the job that provided their primary source of income; Are unable to reach their place of unemployment; Cannot work because of an injury caused by the storm; Were unable to begin employment or self-employment due to the storm; and Have become the major supplier of household income due to a storm-related death of the previous major supplier of household income.

Documentation required includes: name and address of all employers you worked with within the last 24 months; county of residence; county of employment; mailing address and ZIP code; valid telephone number; Social Security number or Alien Registration number; proof of employment and income if you're self-employed, a farmer or a commercial fisher.

All required documentation must be submitted within 21 days from the day the application is filed.

DES said it will work with people who cannot provide all documentation to ensure that their unemployment benefits are not delayed.

# • Citation (aglc Style)

RICHARD CRAVER Winston-Salem Journal, 'People in 4 northwest NC counties eligible for federal disaster unemployment benefits', *McDowell News, The* (online), 2 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/19BF6794AB730430>



# 'Compassion in action' - Forsyth Humane Society rescues dozens of animals from Asheville

October 2, 2024 | McDowell News, The (Marion, NC) Author: CONNOR MCNEELY Winston-Salem Journal | Section: Pets | 726 Words OpenURL Link

Julie Long felt relieved when she saw a pack of hounds running down the plane's boarding ramp, barking and wagging their tails.

She had seen the Asheville Humane Society and knew that there was no way any animals could stay in the shelter after the devastation of Hurricane Helene. So the sight of cats and dogs excitedly arriving at a safe place in Forsyth County was a blessing beyond words.

On Monday, the Bissell Pet Foundation delivered 40 dogs and 57 cats from the Asheville Humane Society to the Forsyth Humane Society. Forsyth's Humane Society had also loaded up 1,000 pounds of donated supplies to send for distribution in Asheville.

"Being able to go on the transport last night was really cathartic for me, because having a child there and knowing how bad it is there, it was helpful for me to make a little difference of helping, knowing I can't be there," said Long, a volunteer at the Forsyth Humane Society.

Without electricity and running water, animal shelters in the western part of North Carolina are nearly helpless to care for any dogs, cats, or other small animals.

The flood of water completely swallowed Asheville's Brother Wolf Animal Rescue building after the shelter successfully evacuated its animals into temporary foster homes. At the Asheville Humane Society's headquarters, staff loaded up their animals into crates and sent them to Forsyth County.

The majority of the animals are healthy, but their stress and anxiety are through the roof, said Forsyth Humane Society President Mark Neff. Some of the animals came with a broken leg, hip, or eye infections.

For Neff and his 33-person staff, workdays in the aftermath of Helene now begin early in the morning and end late at night. The Humane Society currently has 210 animals in its care and is expecting hundreds more to arrive by the end of the week.

But despite the heavy workload, Neff believes the Forsyth Humane Society is shouldering the burden of those who have lost everything.

"This is compassion in action. And this isn't just about the animals. It really is about people," Neff said. "The people in these shelters, they're so focused on those animals, all they need to be focused on is themselves and their family and all of their losses."

Residents of Forsyth County have met the Humane Society with their help. The organization has now received over 500 applications for foster care, which helps free up space in the shelter and provide temporary care for animals who have already been flown across the state.

Neff often thinks about the upper limit that his organization can support. He knows that his medical staff can care for about 500 animals, and is thankful for the Forsyth County community, which he says is always ready to embrace animals without homes.

"The thing about animals is they're the innocent victims of this," Neff said. "Animals are completely, 100 percent dependent upon people."

As the animals arrive at the Humane Society, the organization's medical staff check their condition to understand whether they are spayed, neutered, vaccinated and healthy.

After that check, they are ready for adoption and foster care. Neff said that foster care usually entails a 2-4 week period of care for the animal, with variations if it is sick, injured, pregnant or nursing.

While the cats and dogs wait for a new home, volunteers keep them company in their crates and attempt to ease their worries after the chaos of the storm and a bumpy plane ride. Behind the Humane Society building, the organization has a large outdoor garden area with plenty of green space for dogs to run around and play.

Long, who has volunteered with the Humane Society for two years, said that her daughter and son-in-law went back to Asheville so she could work her job at a hospital.

"We had a lot of tears and a lot of 'OK, stop, take a breath,'" Long said.

Long decided to take in her daughters' two dogs, a German shepherd named Kratos, and a Pitbull mix named Luna, after the devastation of the hurricane.

At work, she cares for a number of hounds in the back of the Humane Society building. When she steps into their kennels, a mixed-breed dog named Crouton jumps onto her in a long embrace.

"What a relief," Long said. "We are literally saving that dog or that cat because they can't stay there. There is nowhere for them to stay."

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### • Citation (aglc Style)

CONNOR MCNEELY Winston-Salem Journal, "Compassion in action" — Forsyth Humane Society rescues dozens of animals from Asheville', *McDowell News, The* (online), 2 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/19BFA501B79FA3A8>



# **UNDERWATER - Tropical Storm Helene slams Mitchell County**

October 2, 2024 | Mitchell News-Journal (NC)

Author: Rachel Hoskins rhoskins@thefranklinpress.com | Section: News | 731 Words

Page: A1 OpenURL Link

Seventy-two feet. Seventytwo feet is the distance between where the sidewalk that flanks the businesses along Locust Street in Spruce Pine begins to the edge of Sycamore Alley, which divides buildings between Locust Street and Oak Avenue. Seventy-two feet, at roughly a 45 degree incline, determined whether people were sweeping the leaves from their stoop or shoveling a foot of mud from their floor. A week ago today, Thursday, Sept. 26, residents of Mitchell County were keeping an eye on the constant falling rain. Folks living near Cane Creek or the Toe River, were watching the waters rise. Tropical storm warnings had been issued in the wake of Hurricane Helene making landfall. By Thursday, Mitchell County and state officials were issuing warnings of tropical storm winds, flash flooding and rainfall totaling more than 20 inches. People prepared. But no one was prepared for the devastation that would follow. "We watched the river rising," said Teresa Thomas. Her husband Mike is the minister at The Ark of WNC Locust Street in Spruce Pine and they live on the second floor of the church.

"The water was rising. Some tree limbs and debris floated by. The water continued to rise reaching the train tracks. A truck floated by. Then a house. A nice house. An entire house," said Teresa. When the river flowed over the roadway, Teresa said they watched in disbelief as it washed parked cars into storefronts. "It just continued to rise."

As Friday morning dawned, water filled the first floor of stores along Locust Street while tree branches and power lines littered Oak Avenue.

On Tuesday morning, six days later mud packed Locust Street, as broken widows left once vibrant businesses exposed to the elements and passersby. A hand full of people could be found beginning the clean-up process, salvaging what they could, making a pile of debris and wood for the unsalvageable.

A couple wearing work gloves and boots were feet deep in mud as they carried wet boards and debris from a recently purchased building. The building was meant to be a working studio and gallery. And it still will be they said.

Small business loans available Businesses in Mitchell and Yancey counties, as well as other counties that were part of the N.C. Disaster Declaration related to Tropical Storm Helene may be eligible for a variety of disaster loans. Application filing deadlines are Nov. 27, 2024, for physical damage and June 30, 2025 for economic damage.

Rusty Shoultz, of the Louisiana Incident Management Team, working in Spruce Pine said it's imperative that small businesses get an early start on the process.

"Getting an application started the first week makes all the difference," said Shoultz, who said he will be on hand at the Spruce Pine Fire Department to answer questions and provide information.

Business physical disaster loans: Loans to businesses to repair or replace disasterdamage property owned by the business, including real estate, inventories, supplies, machinery and equipment. Businesses of any size are eligible. Private, non-profit organizations such as charities, churches, private universities, etc. are also eligible. Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL): Working capital loans to help small businesses, small agricultural cooperatives, small businesses engaged in aquaculture, and most private, nonprofit organizations of all sizes meet their ordinary and necessary financial obligations that cannot be met as a direct result of disaster. These loans are intended to assist through the disaster recovery period.

Home Disaster Loans: Loans to homeowners or renters to repair or replace disaster-damaged real estate and

personal property, including automobiles.

Credit requirements and repayment Applicants must have a credit history acceptable to SBA and must show the ability to repay all loans. The law authorizes loan terms up to a maximum of 30 years. However, the law restricts businesses with credit available elsewhere to a maximum 7-year term. SBA sets the installment payment amount and corresponding maturity based upon each borrower's ability to repay. Borrowers may be required to provide collateral.

How to apply Applications for disaster loans may be submitted online using the MySBA Loan Portal at https://lending. sba.gov. Contact the SBA's Customer Service Center by email at disastercustomerservie@sba.gov or by phone at 1-800-659-2955 for further assistance.

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### • Citation (aglc Style)

Rachel Hoskins rhoskins@thefranklinpress.com, 'UNDERWATER - Tropical Storm Helene slams Mitchell County', *Mitchell News-Journal* (online), 2 Oct 2024 A1 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a> p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C19AC518D3B298>



# Free legal assistance for N.C. survivors of Tropical Storm Helene

October 2, 2024 | Mitchell News-Journal (NC)

Section: News 674 Words

Page: A5 OpenURL Link

A toll-free legal aid hotline is now available for survivors of Tropical Storm Helene in North Carolina. Disaster Legal Services, which allows callers to request the assistance of a lawyer, is a partnership between the North Carolina Bar Association and Foundation, Legal Aid of North Carolina, the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Low-income survivors with disaster-related legal questions may call the disaster legal assistance hotline at 866-219-5262. Callers should identify that they are seeking storm-related legal assistance, ask for Disaster Legal Services assistance, and identify the county in which they are located. Survivors who qualify for assistance will be matched with North Carolina lawyers who have volunteered to provide free legal help.

Legal assistance is available for the following issue areas: FEMA appeals Disaster Unemployment Assistance and other disaster benefits Insurance claims Home repair contracts and contractor disputes Contractor fraud and consumer protection matters Replacement of wills and other important legal documents destroyed in the disaster Mortgage-foreclosure Landlord/tenant problems Individuals who qualify for assistance will be matched with North Carolina lawyers who have volunteered to provide free, limited legal help. Survivors should be aware that there are some limitations on disaster legal services. For example, assistance is not available for cases that will produce a fee (i.e., those cases where fees are paid part of the settlement by the court).

Major disaster declaration A total of 26 North Carolina counties and tribes have been approved to receive federal assistance in the wake of Tropical Storm Helene. The counties are: Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Clay, Cleveland, Gaston, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Lincoln, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Transylvania, Watauga, Wilkes and Yancey counties and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (additional counties may be added later).

People who sustained property damage, need immediate emergency assistance for essential items (like food, baby formula, or water), or need immediate housing assistance as a result of Tropical Storm Helene are urged to apply for FEMA assistance, as they may be eligible for federal and state disaster assistance. People can apply online at DisasterAssistance.gov. Applicants may also call the FEMA Helpline (1 800 621 3362). Tropical Storm Helene survivors are also encouraged to review Legal Aid of NC's resource website at www.legalaidnc.org/disaster.

Low-interest disaster loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) are available for eligible applicants. SBA helps businesses of all sizes (including landlords), private nonprofit organizations, homeowners, and renters fund repairs or rebuilding efforts and cover the cost of replacing lost or damaged personal property. Disaster loans cover losses not fully compensated by insurance or other recoveries.

For more information, individuals may contact SBA's Disaster Assistance Customer Service Center by calling 800-659-2955, emailing disastercustomerservice@sba.gov, or visiting SBA's website at https://www.sba.gov/ funding-programs/disaster-assistance/hurricane-helene. Deaf and hard-ofhearing individuals may call 800-877-8339.

For more information on North Carolina's recovery, visit https://www.fema.gov/disaster/4827 and the North Carolina Department of Public Safety website at https://www.ncdps.gov/ourorganization/emergency-management/hurricane-helene.

Beware of Fraud Both FEMA and the North Carolina Attorney General's Office are warning North Carolina residents of the risk of fraud and common scams in the wake of the severe weather. Common postdisaster fraud practices

include phony housing inspectors, fraudulent building contractors, bogus pleas for disaster donations, and fake offers of state or federal aid. North Carolinians are urged to ask questions and require identification when someone claims to represent a government agency.

Survivors should also keep in mind that state and federal workers never ask for or accept money, and always carry identification badges with a photograph. There is no fee required to apply for or to receive disaster assistance from FEMA, the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), or the state. Additionally, no state or federal government disaster assistance agency will call to ask for your financial account information. Unless you place a call to the agency yourself, you should not provide personal information over the phone as it can lead to identity theft.

Those who suspect fraud can call the FEMA Disaster Fraud Hotline at 866-720-5721 (toll-free). Complaints may also be made to the North Carolina Attorney General's Office Consumer Protection Hotline at 877-566-7226.

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### • Citation (aglc Style)

'Free legal assistance for N.C. survivors of Tropical Storm Helene', *Mitchell News-Journal* (online), 2 Oct 2024 A5 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C19AC52AE3E778">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C19AC52AE3E778</a>



# Be a smart giver in the wake of Hurricane Helene

October 2, 2024 | Mitchell News-Journal (NC)

Section: News 392 Words

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OpenURL Link

As rescue and relief efforts continue in Mitchell County residents do their research and give wisely to make sure their generosity is getting to those in need.

"We've all seen heartbreaking scenes of devastation and loss in Western North Carolina. In the face of such immense suffering we all want to reach out and help, but please remember that while natural disasters can bring out the best in many people, they can also bring out the worst - including scam artists. So I encourage everyone to look for organizations that have resources on the ground and an established track record of helping people," said Secretary of State Elaine Marshall.

A few tips for smart giving: • Be wary of high pressure solicitations on social media or via emails or texts.

- · Give to established charities with resources on the ground to help the affected regions. · Watch out for groups mimicking the names of established, respected charities.
- · If you get an unsolicited call, text or email from an organization, research that organization yourself online instead of just clicking on links the organization provides.
- · Also make your donations directly on the charity's official website rather than clicking on a link in a text or email.
- · Never give your credit card or bank account information over the phone or email. Visit the Secretary of State's Charitable Solicitation Licensing Division online at http://www.sosnc.gov/CSL/to research charities registered with the Secretary of State's Office, and download the Secretary of State's Smart Donor Checklist for a handy list of suggested questions you should ask any charity that solicits you for contributions.

If you believe you have been contacted by a scam charity, report it to the Secretary of State's Office at 1-888-830-4989, or call your local authorities. For the latest on Hurricane Helene resources and to donate to the North Carolina Disaster Relief Fund visit www.ncdps.gov.

On the ground in Mitchell County There are several organizations that are on the ground in Mitchell County today providing assistance to our family and neighbors. • Baptist Men's Mobile Food Kitchen • First Baptist Church, Spruce Pine • The Red Cross • JAARS. org (volunteer pilots) • Spruce Pine Fire Department • Parkway Fire Department • Altapass Fire Department • Little Switzerland Fire Department • Ledger Fire Department • Fork Mountain Fire Department • Bakersville Fire Department • Buladean Fire Department • Buladean Community Center

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'Be a smart giver in the wake of Hurricane Helene', *Mitchell News-Journal* (online), 2 Oct 2024 A3 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C19AC520314D70">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C19AC520314D70</a>



# A path of destruction

October 2, 2024 | Mitchell News-Journal (NC)

Section: News | 68 Words

Page: A9 OpenURL Link

Locust Street is caked in mud on Tuesday morning as Spruce Pine residents continue to reel from Tropical Storm Helene. Powerful winds and more than 20 inches of rain wreaked havoc in Mitchell and Yancey counties. Linemen work to restore power along Hwy 19/23. Mitchell County has been without power since Thursday, Sept. 26. Officials say it could be weeks before power is restored county-wide.

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### • Citation (aglc Style)

'A path of destruction', *Mitchell News-Journal* (online), 2 Oct 2024 A9 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a> p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C19AC538E1A928>



# Festival of Frescoes Glendale Springs scheduled for Oct. 12

October 2, 2024 | Mountain Times, The (Boone, NC) Author: JERRY SNOW| Section: Mountaintimes | 282 Words OpenURL Link

ASHE COUNTY — The Festival of Frescoes Glendale Springs is scheduled to be held on Oct. 12 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 120 Glendale School Rd., across the street from the historic Holy Trinity Church.

The Festival is a traditional country fair and will be held on the grounds of the Mission House across the street from the church. There will be homemade arts and crafts, baked goods, a silent auction and an indoor yard sale.

The Festival of the Frescoes is "one of Ashe County's most beloved events," according to ashecountyrealestate.com.

Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Glendale Springs, NC was closed in 1946, according to Ashe High Country Realty; for more than 30 years the church was neglected — windows broken and trash piled inside and out. In the 1970s, Father Hodge spearheaded a restoration of the church. The church has its original pews, Altar and candle stands.

In 1980, Ben Long painted the fresco "The Lord's Supper" behind the Altar at Holy Trinity, according to the report. Long and 20 of his students spent three months completing the fresco while the church was still undergoing renovations.

Some of Ben Long's work is in two antique churches in Ashe County. His first frescoes were done in St. Mary's Episcopal Church in West Jefferson.

Thousands of people visit the frescoes each year, according to ashefrescoes.org. The Ashe County Frescoes Foundation, a non-profit organization, is made of community members and its purpose is to protect and preserve the frescoes.

Like all events planned after the historic flood brought on by Hurricane Helene last weekend, anyone planning to go to the Festival should check the website for the latest updates.

Learn more about the Ashe County Frescoes at ashefrescoes.org

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### • Citation (aglc Style)

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# What you need to know: where things stand, resources and how to get help

October 2, 2024 | Mountaineer, The (Waynesville, NC) Author: Staff Writer | Section: News | 2401 Words OpenURL Link

The following is a running list of important updates on flood recovery in Haywood County — from cell service, power and water, missing person tallies, school status, donation and supply drop points, and more. This list is updated with need-to-know information twice daily online, as well as print editions of The Mountaineer.

If you have something to share in this community bulletin board, stop by The Mountaineer in downtown Waynesville across from the courthouse on Main Street or email bjohnson@themountaineer.com

#### Internet and cell service

Internet service with Spectrum appears to have been restored for at least part of Haywood County as of Wednesday evening. Most of the fiber network in Haywood County has been restored.

For those with Skyrunner, the internet service is now shifting its focus to bringing the wireless infrastructure back online and will begin assessing and addressing drop repairs in the coming days. For those with Zito, Zito is aware of multiple utility poles down, specifically in the Cruso and Canton areas. Zito is working on a temporary solution to get service back to residents until the poles can be replaced.

Haywood County officials are unsure when cell service will be fully functional. Cell customers with Verizon are facing the most trouble with service. Those with AT&T and T-Mobile have service for the most part.

An AT&T mobile tower has been set up in Waynesville, which has helped with service for those on AT&T. A Verizon mobile tower has been requested but due to high demand, none have been procurred yet. Verizon mobile tours from across the country are being brought to flood areas in WNC, and Haywood hopefully in line to get one at some point.

#### School status

Haywood County Schools are closed indefinitely. Advanced notice of 48 hours will be given before school resumes again.

Two schools are still without power — Clyde and Bethel Elementary. Riverbend has no sewer pending a line repair within the next week or so. Busses are unable to traverse their normal routes due to washed out roads, but the school system is planning modified bus routes with community pick-up points where roads aren't navigable by busses.

The biggest obstacle in returning to school is the disruption of communications — along with the server that functions as the central nervous system for the school system being down. This poses a safety concern as schools have no way to notify parents in the event of an emergency.

#### Power

As of Monday, 13,000 homes in Haywood County were still without power. As of early Thursday morning, that number was 6,438 — out of 39,289 tracked power meters. That means 16%) of the county is still without power.

Duke Energy had 3,605 customers without power in Haywood.

Haywood Electric Membership Corporation had 2,830 customers without power.

#### Interstate travel

A landslide in the Pigeon River Gorge on Interstate 40 has prompted an I-40 closure west of Fines Creek exit 15. While there is varying degree of damage along a more than two-mile stretch of I-40, the east bound lanes are completely gone in one spot. The road bed sheered off on the downhill side, collapsing out from under the asphalt and taking the interstate with it.

The damage is so extensive it could take more than a year to rebuild, according to early projections.

To the east, a landslide has blocked I-40 around Old Fort, with only emergency vehicles granted passage. I-40 remains open between Haywood and Asheville.

Meanwhile, I-26 heading north is closed at the Tennessee line due to a washed out a bridge near Unicoi, Tenn.

#### **Fatalities**

As of Monday afternoon, Haywood County officials have reported four known fatalities in the county during the flood.

An effort has been underway across the county since Saturday to visit homes in the path of the flood or landslides, or rendered inaccessible by washed out roads and bridges. The wellness checks have been a joint effort of law enforcement, firefighters, public works crews, first responders and outside agencies that have come in to aid with response and recovery.

The Haywood County Sheriff's Office has been getting a steady stream of inquiries from people worried about the well-being of unreachable friends and family.

"People who can't get ahold of their loved ones and want to make sure they're OK have called, they've come in person to fire departments, they've sent messages through Facebook," said Gina Zachary, public information officer with the sheriff's office. "As those come in, we're sending officers and firefighters out to check on them, and so far they've all had good turnouts."

### Tourism discouraged

Haywood County officials have issued the following notice discouraging tourism.

"It is too dangerous to travel to Haywood County right now. While many of you are excited about the upcoming leaf season, the aftermath of Helene has created unsafe conditions across the region. Flooding, landslides, downed trees, power outages, and poor cell service are making travel unsafe at this time. Additionally, there is no food, water, or fuel in the area, and many places are only accepting cash. We know this is not ideal, and we would love to have visitors in our beautiful region, but now is not the time. State and local officials are urging everyone to postpone any plans to visit."

### Supply distribution for flood victims

Essential supplies will be distributed at Woodland Baptist Church from 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Saturday for those affected by flooding. There will be food, water, baby supplies, dog food, and limited cleaning supplies. Woodland Baptist Church is located at 545 Crabtree Rd (on N.C. 209 across from the Smoky Mountain Event Center).

In addition, water and non-perishable food will be distributed at the following two schools from 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Saturday:

Bethel Elementary School, 4700 Old River Rd, Canton Jonathan Valley Elementary School, 410 Hall Dr, Waynesville

New Covenant Church in Clyde also has supplies for folks who need them.

#### **Donations**

For those looking to help, Woodland Baptist Church is accepting donations of supplies to support families in need.

"Let's come together as a community to ensure everyone has the resources they need to recover," said Dillon Huffman, Haywood County public information officer.

They are accepting non-perishable food items, bottled water, and other essential supplies. For a complete list of needed items and information on volunteer opportunities, visit theorehardne.com/relief.

Mountain Projects in Waynesville is also accepting donations for flood victims, including household supplies.

Mountain Projects is located on the Old Asheville Highway in Waynesville across from Junaluska Elementary School.

The United Way of Haywood County is being established as a centralized flood donation clearinghouse for monetary donations. Donate at www.uwhaywood.org or mail a check to PO Box 1139, Waynesville, NC 28786. Please note "Tropical Storm Helene Relief" in the memo line.

#### Community center resources

The following sites are offering community assistance, from a place to shower to charge cell phones.

Pigeon Community Center in Waynesville is serving as a welcome center from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. daily. Food will be served daily at 2 p.m. The center has water, power, charging stations, shovels, trash bags and pet food available. Located at 450 Pigeon St.

First United Methodist Church in Waynesville is serving as a welcome center to assist community members in need Monday to Friday from 9 a.m.-12 p.m. offering food, clothing and shower access. Located at 566 S Haywood St.

Fines Creek Community Center is available to assist community members in need as a welcome center. Located at 190 Fines Creek Rd.

Free meals and food

Springdale Golf and Country Club in Cruso is offering free lunch from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Located at 190 Golfwatch Rd.

Clyde Central United Methodist Church on Charles Street is offering meals from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Pigeon Community Center in Waynesville is serving food at 2 p.m. daily.

Haywood Christian Ministry is providing free food assistance Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. in downtown Waynesville at 150 Branner Ave.

First United Methodist Church in Waynesville has food to give away Monday to Friday from 9 a.m.-12 p.m. offering food

First aid station

A First Aid Bus is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Jukebox Junction in Bethel at the intersection of N.C. 110 and U.S. 276. Services include first aid for cuts, scrapes, and burns, as well as blood pressure checks, blood sugar monitoring, and basic medical assistance.

#### Curfew

A curfew was imposed across all of Haywood County from 9 p.m. until 7 a.m. while recovery efforts continue. By 9 p.m., no one should be out or on the roads.

This is for multiple reasons. One is because many roads still aren't safe, with crumbling and washed out sections. Another reason is to simply avoid unnecessary risks since most people have no way to call 911 if they need help.

Yet another is to prevent looting, since much of the county is still without power and the public can't call the police. But so far, there have been no reports of looting, according to Sheriff Bill Wilke.

"I would caution anybody who thinks they are going to come up here and take things from the residents of this county, they will find themselves in trouble and probably in my jail. Knowing the residents of this county, it could be very dangerous to their health," Wilke said.

### Water supply

Many in Haywood County are without water — from those on well water without power to run their pump to those on disrupted public water systems. Some stores have been running out water.

A water tanker for folks to fill up their own containers (limited to 1 gallo per person per day) are at the following locations between the hours of 8 a.m. and 6 p.m:

Jukebox Junction at 6306 Pigeon Rd (near the crossroads of N.C. 110 and U.S. 276 in Bethel)Crabtree/Ironduff Fire Department at 99 Susie Noland Rd.

Bottled water is also being distributed at at Woodland Baptist Church on N.C. 209 near the fairgrounds and at Jonathan Valley and Bethel Elementary schools.

# Flood clean-up assistance

If you or someone you know needs help cleaning up damage from Hurricane Helene at your home/residence or house of worship, call Crisis Cleanup at 844-965-1386 to ask for help.

Crisis Cleanup is 100% free service that connects volunteers from local and national relief organizations, community groups, and faith communities who may be able to assist with mucking out after floods, moving debris to curbs, tarping roofs, and chain-sawing downed trees.

### Free legal assistance

Free legal assistance is available to victims of Tropical Storm Helene. Through a partnership among Legal Aid of North Carolina, the North Carolina Bar Association, the American Bar Association, and FEMA, low-income storm survivors can access free legal help via a toll-free hotline: 866-219-5262.

This service connects eligible callers with volunteer lawyers to assist with FEMA appeals, insurance claims, contractor disputes, and more. It's a critical resource for those navigating the aftermath of the storm.

### **FEMA**

People in North Carolina affected by Helene can apply for disaster assistance on DisasterAssistance.gov, on the FEMA App or by calling 1-800-621-3362.

Debris and trash sites

The White Oak Landfill is open again, following a closure due to no power.

The Materials Recovery Facility and Convenience Centers at Jonathan Creek, Beaverdam, Bethel, Hazelwood, Mauney Cove, Jones Cove, and N.C. 110 are also open.

At this time, the county sites can only accept household waste. Storm debris and demolition materials must be taken to the landfill or placed beside public roads for pick up.

"Please ensure that debris is placed beside, not on, the road," Haywood County Information Office Dillon Huffman said. "Debris should be placed next to state maintained roads, not private roads."

Whenever possible, separate tree debris from construction materials. Debris should be photographed for documentation purposes.

Gas, groceries and cash

Conservation efforts are also on-going for fuel. Finding a gas station with open pumps was a scramble at best and caused panic at worst — with lines of vehicles waiting for a turn stretching up to three-quarters of a mile long in the days following the flood.

Gas is now easier to find, with more stations having gas and lines being shorter.

Many stores were only taking cash as of Wednesday, leading to a run on ATM machines. But restoration of internet means more businesses will now be able to process credit card transactions.

The Ingles in Hazelwood exceeded the fire marshal capacity on Sunday, and do to a skeleton work force, the store could not handle the crowd. Ingles instituted a line outside, limiting the number of people who enter the store as others exited.

Landslides and washed out roads

Landslides have washed out roads and bridges countywide — from Cruso to Maggie Valley. Landslides have left many residents stranded and isolated — without power or communications.

"It's different this time because it's not just Cruso. We've seen damage across the entire county," Huffman said.
"Dozens of landslides and probably more than that."

Waynesville Firefighter Luke Palmer was among a team of Waynesville firefighters who hiked through Camp Branch, going door to door to homes cut off by landslides and collapsed roads.

"You have catastrophic mudslides, and the only access to their homes are destroyed," Palmer said.

In Appalachian fashion, neighbors have been pitching in to dig each other out.

"The community came together with their equipment — their dump trucks, dozers, excavators, you name it — and managed to get roads built back to the point people can at least get out."

Water contamination

Those on public water supplies are under a boil water advisory except for the Waynesville water system, which also supplies Lake Junaluska and Junaluska Sanitary District customers. Water should be boiled for one minute before it is consumed. Officials are also asking that water be conserved.

Waynesville initially had a boil water notice due to excess sediment and silt coming in to the water treatment plant. However, lines were never compromised and once the silt dissipated, the boil-water notice was no longer necessary.

### Dams didn't fail

An alarming but false rumor circulated through Haywood County Friday that the Lake Junaluska dam had failed. Dispelling the rumor in a county with spotty cell, phone and internet service was a challenge.

The following public alert was sent out by the Haywood County Sheriff's Office: "Lake Junaluska dam has NOT collapsed. It is functioning as designed — serving as a spillway to manage excess water. The dam is being closely monitored by officials to monitor safety and proper operation."

Meanwhile, a rumor began circulating in Cocke County, Tennessee, that the Waterville Dam on the Pigeon River in Haywood County at the state line had collapsed. Also not true.

#### Shelter

The shelter at the old armory in Clyde beside Haywood Community College is still open. Located at 235 Armory Drive, Clyde. If you need oxygen, you can go to the emergency shelter. Just bring your concentrator.

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### • Citation (aglc Style)

Staff Writer, 'What you need to know: where things stand, resources and how to get help', *Mountaineer, The* (online), 2 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BF9F89844BF9C0">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BF9F89844BF9C0</a>



# Businesses pick up the pieces in Frog Level, Hazelwood

October 2, 2024 | Mountaineer, The (Waynesville, NC) Author: Aarik Long | Section: News | 2118 Words OpenURL Link

Business owners in Waynesville, particularly in hard hit areas of Frog Level and Hazelwood, returned to their shops after Helene to find devastation in the form of mud and standing water. But facing damages down the spectrum from minor to near-total loss, they aren't willing to give up.

"It's really devastating for the whole community and really sad for everybody, especially our friends over here that have a total loss," said Kristyn lodice, co-owner of the Funky Fern Emporium in Frog Level. "We're going to evaluate what we have, see how we can fundraise and open back up at some point. We need to check what's going on structurally."

Helene's flooding failed to undermine the strong communities these businesses have formed. Some don't have a lot beyond that support and their own determination.

"We're a total loss. Our business, there's nothing salvageable," said Chelsea Ramsey, co-owner of Soul Sisters. "I'm telling people that maybe 5% of our inventory (is salvageable), but probably not even that much. It was stuff that we had in totes in the back that was up high enough, but everything on the show floor is gone."

But they still have the support of other businesses.

"Our heart goes out to the community," said Theresa Pierce, one of the owners of Panacea Coffee in Frog Level. "It's heartbreaking. Everyone has put so much into these businesses. They've worked so hard and given so much effort. It's really sad."

Upstream in Hazelwood

A sense of community is also helping Hazelwood businesses hold it together

"We're like a family here in Hazelwood. We're Hazelwood Village. We're all helping each other get the mud out," said Mandy Wildman, owner of UpLove Bridal and More. "I just love this little community."

Hazelwood resident Corey Moran was helping business owners clean up. Originally from Queens, Moran has lived in Waynesville for eight years and said he wanted to live in a small town.

"That's why I live here. I chose to live in a small town over a big city. Being part of a small town is actually digging in and getting dirty and helping people when they need help," Moran said. "People need help right now. I could be in bed with no electric or helping people in need."

Between the two business districts, staff and volunteers with KARE, a child advocacy group, had been working on a new location. KARE's director, Savannah Anders, lives in Canton and got a firsthand view of the impact of the flood on her way to assess the flood damage on Killian Street.

"I, unfortunately, got to see the devastation coming from there to here," Anders said. "It's gut-wrenching. Lucky for us, this is just a building. People's whole lives are destroyed. We're a resilient community. We'll come together and make it happen again."

The businesses that escaped the worst damage along Richland Creek were reaching out. Frog Level Brewing, which suffered only minor damage, was open on Monday and serving food.

"We wanted to open this for the community — for a gathering place for Waynesville to come and hang out and temporarily get away from how awful everything is," said Monte Bumbernick, the brewery's tap room manager.

Flooding through Frog Level and Hazelwood at this level is unprecedented. Many businesses don't have flood insurance.

"I know people are saying, 'Oh, it's Frog Level. It's supposed to flood. It's what it's known for.' But this is still extremely unprecedented," lodice said. "We accounted for a couple of inches. We pulled everything up off the bottom, but nothing could have prepared us for as much water as we got in here."

Others who did have insurance don't think it's going to help. Wildman's business had mud and water in the store but no major damage.

"I've got business insurance. It's worse than useless," Wildman said. "It's got a \$1,000 deductible and then fighting with an insurance for months over the value of a wedding dress or a pre-loved wedding dress. It's not designed to help the micro-businesses."

#### Facing the devastation

Many business owners returned back to their businesses to find massive damage. Some, however, saw it unfold live.

Shannon Roberts, who owns Roberts Electric between Frog Level and Hazelwood, was at his shop on Friday when the storm rolled through.

"I came in to change clothes from working out," Roberts said. "I looked outside to see what the rain was doing, and I had a foot (of water) back here. I had to move six vehicles. I had to call the wife. It took her 30 minutes to get here. It was scary."

Anders arrived at the new KARE House to find water rushing by the building. As she pulled up, the water was still swirling in the parking lot.

"I was able to get in the building," Anders said. "There was still water running down Killian Street pretty bad. The water line outside was actually higher than what it was on the inside. We only got a couple of inches inside, but a lot of the stuff and everything that was in there is ruined."

When lodice returned to the Funky Fern Emporium on Friday afternoon, much of the Frog Level community gathering to assess the damage.

"A lot of crying," she said. "Furniture was flipped over. It was extremely emotional and hard. All of this was just pure mud. We were sliding through, trying to get to people. All of the business owners were holding each other and trying to reassure each other in the face of all of the tragedy. It was extremely overwhelming, not knowing what to do or what the first step was. We were all in a state of shock."

It was the same in Hazelwood. Business owners returned to find mud and water inside their shops.

"There was 5 inches of sludge in there," said Mary Skelton, manager at Blue Ridge Books. "You could barely get the doors open. It had migrated open."

Allison Lee, one of the co-owners of Blue Ridge Books, said other businesses in Hazelwood had taken in water in the past, but their store never had.

Lee couldn't get in touch with Skelton following the flood, so she drove to her house and made a plan to meet at

the shop on Sunday.

"It has to come up just a tiny bit to get in here, so we were a little bit better off than some of the folks," Lee said.

Next door, Wildman wasn't able to return to her shop until Saturday.

"Friday, I didn't feel safe. It probably wouldn't have been safe," she said.

### Assessing the damage

In Frog Level, Soul Sisters sat directly in the path of the raging flood waters as they rolled downstream. The water pushed straight through the building, lifting inventory and pushing it through the back doors. Those back doors had been reinforced with two-by-fours, but the doors ended up against HT Hackney's building.

A railroad tie went clean through the building, causing additional damage during the storm.

"It pushed everything towards the back and back out our side doors," said business co-owner Haley Ramey.

"We have inventory from here down to the river," Ramsey added.

On top of losing almost all of their inventory, the sisters face another challenge. The building they worked out of, and which they lease, has serious damage.

"This whole floored had caved, and it was probably 18 inches, maybe 2 feet lower and just full of mud and water in the center," Ramsey said. "Structurally, this building is in bad shape."

lodice, who also leases her space, had not been able to make it to the Funky Fern Emporium immediately after the storm due to flooding near her home off Jonathan Creek. She also couldn't communicate with her co-owner Carrie Peeler.

When she made it to Frog Level, she found 3 1/2 to 4 feet of water in the shop.

"t was worse in the back because it down-slopes. We lost a good bit," lodice said. "We have to get new fixtures, new things. It's going to be kind of bootstrap for a while."

Panacea faced a lot of mud, but minimal damage. Similarly, Frog Level Brewing took on a lot of mud, but escaped serious damage. Though slope in the front of the taproom helped protect portions of the business, 6 to 8 inches of mud and an inch of water filled the taproom itself.

"All the brewing equipment is fine," Bumbernick said. "All the kitchen equipment is fine. We're so lucky and grateful that that's all still functioning. We can continue to make beer and continue to cook for people."

The biggest damage for Frog Level Brewing came in the creekside seating area. While tables had been moved closer to the patio, they still washed away. The gravel area is now covered in sediment. The area also suffered severe damage to the outside stage.

"We can't salvage any of that at all. It's going to have to be ripped up, shipped out and rebuilt," Bumbernick said about the stage. "That's a huge part. We want to get that up and going."

Roberts' shop wasn't washed away, but it suffered damage. In addition, nine loads of dirt which had cost the small business owner \$1,500, washed downstream.

"It tore my fence off," Roberts said. "It knocked all the underpinning off my trailer right there. We got about a foot or two in here. It ruined the floors and swelled the door up. It's a lot more than you think."

Upstream at the future KARE House, everything inside was destroyed. Furniture lined the side of the street Monday afternoon as volunteers helped clean out the building.

"This is the building we were about to start raising money to outfit. We're very thankful that construction hadn't started yet," Anders said. "When you've not experienced this side of it before, it's definitely gut-wrenching."

In Hazelwood, many of the businesses are dealing more with mud than severe structural damage.

Wildman found an inch and a half of mud and water in her business when she made it there on Saturday.

"For a bridal shop, it's really terrifying," Wildman said.

The mud made its way all the way through the store, even creeping up on a handful of dresses. Wildman planned to take them home for cleaning.

"I have a few total losses, but nothing I'm going to cry over," Wildman said. "People are losing their homes. I can get more dresses."

Blue Ridge Books next door managed to avoid any product damage.

"The water didn't reach any product," Skelton said. "We just need to get in here and clean."

The basement was flooded, however, and Skelton and Lee have concerns that the HVAC system may be damaged.

The road forward

Now the businesses are challenged with figuring out their next steps.

In Hazelwood, business owners faced a lot of cleaning up. The partners at Blue Ridge Books discussed opening on Monday, but weren't sure it was possible given the fact that there's no internet.

"Our register doesn't work. Our phone doesn't work," Skelton said. "I'd love to open tomorrow, but I don't know how productive that would be if we can't conduct business."

"We're going to get as much of this out as we can," Lee said. "We're so much better off than some people. It's just a mess."

Next door at the bridal shop, cleaning was also at the top of the priority list. Wildman said it's a relief that cleaning is the extent of the work needed.

"I'm not in a worse position than anyone else," Wildman said. "I feel lucky. Other people have it worse."

Roberts contacted his employees and ensured they were safe. Then he got to work.

"We're cleaning up, getting our fence back up, and then we start again," he said.

In Frog Level, the Soul Sisters are trying to find their next steps.

"We don't really know," Ramsey said. "We're taking out everything we can. We're pressure washing some of our clothing racks and display pieces hoping to salvage them and then finding a storage place to put them. Hopefully, the building owner will be able to rebuild this, but it'll be months."

The store represents the livelihood for both sisters.

"It's terrifying to us," Ramsey said. "This is our only source of income. We don't have a plan really."

Funky Fern Emporium's owners hope to rebuild their business.

"We're trying to clean any inventory that is salvageable and then we'll try to reopen, but it's probably not going to be for a few weeks to a month or so," lodice said.

Panacea is planning on reopening this week with coffee and pastries, but its owners aren't sure when the full menu will return.

"There is still a lot of work that needs to be done, especially down the road with our neighbors that really got hit hard," Pierce said.

Frog Level Brewing has a decent amount of cleanup to do in the creekside seating area, but it's manageable.

"We have no definitive answers for anything, but we're open," Bumbernick said. "We're going to be positive and try to do our best."

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# Picking up the pieces after flooding swamps livelihoods in Frog Level and Hazelwood

October 2, 2024 | Mountaineer, The (Waynesville, NC) Author: Aarik Long | Section: On Premise | 34 Words OpenURL Link

Business owners in Waynesville returned to their shops after Helene to find devastation — mud caked on everything, furniture in shambles, standing water, warped floors, damaged inventory. But they aren't willing to give up.

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# Campground residents return to learn of neighbor's death

October 2, 2024 | Mountaineer, The (Waynesville, NC) Author: Brionna Dallara| Section: News| 935 Words OpenURL Link

Camper trailers slashed by Helene — some with sides completely blown out by the force of water after the waters of Jonathan Creek gushed over the banks — sat amidst furniture and other debris sunken into the mud of the campgrounds along Jonathan Creek, where at least one life was lost.

In the midst of the scene at Somers Dream campground stood Darrin Printz and Katy Fanning, cleaning up rubble at the place they called home just four days prior.

"I left Thursday night and there were still four people here — and one gentleman lost his life," Fanning said.

Printz and Fanning were some of the first at the park to leave, though they didn't go without warning neighbors.

"Everybody else thought it was just going to be a little rise in the water and that's it," Printz said. "We tried to get a hold of everybody, but you can't really force them to leave."

After Printz received the warning from his daughter that it was going to flood, and to not take it lightly, he started to get as much stuff out of his camper as possible.

"A lot of people, this is all we have, but a lot of them are older and they thought it would just go down because they've been here and it didn't (flood)," Fanning said.

That was the case Thursday morning. Before Printz left he knocked on the door of his neighbor, Ray, an older Vietnam vet, offering a hand to help him get out, but his neighbor seemed unworried. He recalled the conversations.

"I've lived here eight years and the waters never come up over the banks," Ray told Printz. "I think I'm just going to sit here and ride it out."

Printz called Ray back at 8:30 p.m. Thursday and asked about conditions.

"Well, the water's gone down and stuff. I think it will be alright," he recalled Ray saying.

Friday, Printz remotely turned on the camera on his camper porch at 7:32 a.m. to see that the park was beginning to be engulfed in water. By 9 a.m. the sensor started pinging vehicles, except they weren't driving; they were floating past.

At that point, Printz and Fanning were trying to get ahold of their neighbors trapped by the water. Fanning got an incoming text from an elderly neighbor asking Fanning to call 911. No one had realized she was still in her camper since her car had been parked elsewhere.

"She said her steps got washed away," Printz said. "She took her service dog and jumped out of the camper and walked around the camper, and said she went up the bank over here so she could get to higher ground. She basically self-rescued."

Their neighbor Ray was rescued outside his back window by a swift water rescue team.

One neighbor had gotten into his green jeep to escape the waters. That man died, Printz said.

"I've had four people since Friday stop and ask about that man, ... then I heard today that he was in his jeep when it washed away," Printz said.

Fanning heard from a fellow neighbor about the fatality.

"The neighbors said they couldn't do anything, that they watched it happen. But they couldn't — they could only do so much. You can tell somebody, but you have to take into consideration your life too. And I'm downplaying it," Fanning said. "But they said they could see his brake lights, and he couldn't stop."

The man's dog, however, was left at his camper and rescued by a swift water rescue team.

"After one side of the camper blew out, there was a platform for the slide-out and the dog was on it," Fanning said.

The dog remained with a fellow neighbor until picked up by the man's family member.

Printz returned to the campgrounds Friday morning to look at the damage to this home.

"They were rescuing people, and there was still too much water in here to get to my spot," Printz said." I stood up there at the road and looked down here in it. They had this whole side of J Creek Road blocked off when they were sending in the boats and everything."

He said that he suspects there will be more fatalities found in Jonathan Creek.

"They're probably going to be finding bodies alongside this creek," Printz said. "Somebody said they were pulling bodies out of trees in Swannanoa. There's supposed to be a lot of people missing."

Once Fanning was able to get gas, she returned to the campgrounds last night and was up until 2 a.m. hoping to salvage anything before any more looters came to rummage and vandalize the site.

"When I was here last night there was a four-wheeler on the other side, and I could hear voices and flashlights this way and I was thinking 'do they think I'm looting or are they going to loot?' I didn't know," Fanning said.

An inspector from the Federal Emergency Management Agency visited the grounds on Tuesday, but due to issues with the landlord, it's up in the air whether the campground residents will receive help.

"He never signed any of our leases, and FEMA was just here to help me and they told me that I would get denied if I didn't have a signed lease. And they tried calling him and he's not answering," Fanning said.

Despite the hardship of losing their homes, the two are both counting their blessings.

"I lost quite a bit, but you know, people lost their lives and people lost a lot more than we did, so it could have always been worse. I mean I got my dog out, and quite a bit of my stuff. Some other people weren't so lucky," Printz said.

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# Horror on J-Creek: flooding hits campground, sweeps man to his death

October 2, 2024 | Mountaineer, The (Waynesville, NC) Author: Brionna Dallara| Section: News| 938 Words OpenURL Link

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# Post-flood status report: daily updates and useful things to know

October 2, 2024 | Mountaineer, The (Waynesville, NC) Author: Staff Writer | Section: News | 1402 Words OpenURL Link

The following is a running list of important updates on flood recovery in Haywood County — from cell service, mail routes, power, water, missing persons, school status, travel advisories and more. This list is updated with need-to-know information daily online, as well as print editions of The Mountaineer.

If you have something to share in this community bulletin board, email bjohnson@themountaineer.com.

For a list of assistance and resources, as well as volunteer and donation opportunities, visit the link below.

Internet and cell service

Internet service with Spectrum appears to have been restored for at least part of Haywood County as of Wednesday evening. Most of the fiber network in Haywood County has been restored.

For those with Skyrunner, the internet service is now shifting its focus to bringing the wireless infrastructure back online and will begin assessing and addressing drop repairs in the coming days. For those with Zito, Zito is aware of multiple utility poles down, specifically in the Cruso and Canton areas. Zito is working on a temporary solution to get service back to residents until the poles can be replaced.

Haywood County officials are unsure when cell service will be fully functional. Cell customers with Verizon are facing the most trouble with service. Those with AT&T and T-Mobile have service for the most part.

An AT&T mobile tower has been set up in Waynesville, which has helped with service for those on AT&T. A Verizon mobile tower has been requested but due to high demand, none have been procurred yet. Verizon mobile tours from across the country are being brought to flood areas in WNC, and Haywood hopefully in line to get one at some point.

### School status

Haywood County Schools are closed indefinitely. Advanced notice of 48 hours will be given before school resumes again.

Two schools are still without power — Clyde and Bethel Elementary. Riverbend has no sewer pending a line repair within the next week or so. Busses are unable to traverse their normal routes due to washed out roads, but the school system is planning modified bus routes with community pick-up points where roads aren't navigable by busses.

The biggest obstacle in returning to school is the disruption of communications — along with the server that functions as the central nervous system for the school system being down. This poses a safety concern as schools have no way to notify parents in the event of an emergency.

#### Power

As of Monday, 13,000 homes in Haywood County were still without power. As of early Thursday morning, that number was 6,438 — out of 39,289 tracked power meters. That means 16%) of the county is still without power.

Duke Energy had 3,605 customers without power in Haywood.

Haywood Electric Membership Corporation had 2,830 customers without power.

Interstate travel

A landslide in the Pigeon River Gorge on Interstate 40 has prompted an I-40 closure west of Fines Creek exit 15. While there is varying degree of damage along a more than two-mile stretch of I-40, the east bound lanes are completely gone in one spot. The road bed sheered off on the downhill side, collapsing out from under the asphalt and taking the interstate with it.

The damage is so extensive it could 3-4 years to rebuild, according to early projections.

To the east, a landslide has blocked I-40 around Old Fort, with only emergency vehicles granted passage. I-40 remains open between Haywood and Asheville.

Meanwhile, I-26 heading north is closed at the Tennessee line due to a washed out a bridge near Unicoi, Tenn.

Mail

The USPS is delivering mail wherever possible. If they are unable to reach you due to washed out roads or debris, your mail will be held for pickup at your local post office.

Amazon deliveries are suspended, but an update is expected next week.

Court Schedule

All Haywood County courts were canceled this week. On Monday, Oct. 7, Haywood County courts will be open to handle emergency hearings and statutorily required hearings.

**Fatalities** 

As of Monday afternoon, Haywood County officials have reported four known fatalities in the county during the flood.

An effort has been underway across the county since Saturday to visit homes in the path of the flood or landslides, or rendered inaccessible by washed out roads and bridges. The wellness checks have been a joint effort of law enforcement, firefighters, public works crews, first responders and outside agencies that have come in to aid with response and recovery.

Tourism discouraged

Haywood County officials have issued the following notice discouraging tourism.

"It is too dangerous to travel to Haywood County right now. While many of you are excited about the upcoming leaf season, the aftermath of Helene has created unsafe conditions across the region. Flooding, landslides, downed trees, power outages, and poor cell service are making travel unsafe at this time. Additionally, there is no food, water, or fuel in the area, and many places are only accepting cash. We know this is not ideal, and we would love to have visitors in our beautiful region, but now is not the time. State and local officials are urging everyone to postpone any plans to visit."

Curfew

A curfew was imposed across all of Haywood County from 9 p.m. until 7 a.m. while recovery efforts continue. By 9 p.m., no one should be out or on the roads.

Debris and trash sites

The White Oak Landfill is open again, following a closure due to no power.

The Materials Recovery Facility and Convenience Centers at Jonathan Creek, Beaverdam, Bethel, Hazelwood, Mauney Cove, Jones Cove, and N.C. 110 are also open.

At this time, the county sites can only accept household waste. Storm debris and demolition materials must be taken to the landfill or placed beside public roads for pick up.

"Please ensure that debris is placed beside, not on, the road," Haywood County Information Office Dillon Huffman said. "Debris should be placed next to state maintained roads, not private roads."

Whenever possible, separate tree debris from construction materials. Debris should be photographed for documentation purposes.

Gas, groceries and cash

Gas is now easier to find, with more stations having gas and lines being shorter. In fact, by Thursday morning, lines had almost dissipated.

Many stores were only taking cash as of Wednesday, leading to a run on ATM machines. But restoration of internet overnight Wednesday means most businesses are now able to process credit card transactions.

Grocery store shelves are still empty in some aisles. In the days after the storm, some grocery stores implemented lines outside to limit the number of people inside at any one time, in part due to skeleton crews coupled with high demands.

Landslides and washed out roads

Landslides have washed out roads and bridges countywide — from Cruso to Maggie Valley. Landslides have left many residents stranded and isolated — without power or communications.

"It's different this time because it's not just Cruso. We've seen damage across the entire county," Huffman said. "Dozens of landslides and probably more than that."

Waynesville Firefighter Luke Palmer was among a team of Waynesville firefighters who hiked through Camp Branch, going door to door to homes cut off by landslides and collapsed roads.

"You have catastrophic mudslides, and the only access to their homes are destroyed," Palmer said.

In Appalachian fashion, neighbors have been pitching in to dig each other out.

"The community came together with their equipment — their dump trucks, dozers, excavators, you name it — and managed to get roads built back to the point people can at least get out."

Water contamination

Those on public water supplies are under a boil water advisory except for the Waynesville water system, which also supplies Lake Junaluska and Junaluska Sanitary District customers. Water should be boiled for one minute before it is consumed. Officials are also asking that water be conserved.

Waynesville initially had a boil water notice due to excess sediment and silt coming in to the water treatment plant.

However, lines were never compromised and once the silt dissipated, the boil-water notice was no longer necessary.

Dams didn't fail

An alarming but false rumor circulated through Haywood County Friday that the Lake Junaluska dam had failed. Dispelling the rumor in a county with spotty cell, phone and internet service was a challenge.

The following public alert was sent out by the Haywood County Sheriff's Office: "Lake Junaluska dam has NOT collapsed. It is functioning as designed — serving as a spillway to manage excess water. The dam is being closely monitored by officials to monitor safety and proper operation."

Meanwhile, a rumor began circulating in Cocke County, Tennessee, that the Waterville Dam on the Pigeon River in Haywood County at the state line had collapsed. Also not true.

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