

Long View teams up with Burke church to aid hurricane victims

October 12, 2024 | News Herald, The (Morganton, NC) Author: SARAH C. JOHNSON sjohnson@hickoryrecord.com| Section: News | 646 Words OpenURL Link

Hurricane Helene has given Christians a chance "to be the hands and feet of Jesus," a Burke County youth pastor said on Tuesday.

Amherst Baptist Church Youth Pastor Braxton Ervin was speaking about continuing efforts to help western North Carolina. He said the heavily impacted communities will need help for months.

"Missions is not only across seas," Ervin said. "It's right here at home, as well."

The Long View Police Department took a utility trailer full of canned foods, toiletries and clothes to Burke County to help victims of Hurricane Helene.

The Long View donations were taken to Amherst Baptist Church in Morganton on Tuesday. Amherst has been distributing hot meals in Morganton and taking donations to western North Carolina. The church is located at 1024 Amherst Road in Morganton.

The donations are going to Columbus, a town in Polk County, Ervin said. Columbus is roughly 30 minutes south of Lake Lure. Amherst Baptist Church is partnering with a church in Columbus which has a pastor who is originally from Burke County, Ervin added.

Long View Public Information Officer Heather Minor said 13% of the town of Long View is in Burke County. She said most of the donations have come from citizens and businesses in Long View, along with some donations from Granite Falls.

"Through all of this I have felt really blessed and lucky," Minor said. "And then there's a sense of guilt with it, too, because we did come out so unscathed and 30-45 minutes up the road, it's just like total devastation."

Two churches in Long View donated a total of \$1,460, which was used to buy supplies. The Word of Life Church donated \$960, Minor said. Another church gave \$500 on Monday, Long View Town Manager James Cozart said.

"What we are understanding is the need is changing to stuff to keep warm like blankets, gloves, hats," Cozart said. "We took that (\$500), and our deputy finance director went shopping with it. She just piled her cart full of throws, blankets, all that stuff. She got to the register at Walmart in Hickory. The cashier was checking her out and she said 'Now, when I get to \$500 or close to \$500 stop.' Everything in that buggy went through except for one little throw. She hit the total button. It was exactly 500 bucks."

Minor said the town of Long View will continue to accept donations at their town hall. Ervin said Amherst Baptist Church will continue accepting donations, too. Donations can be taken to Amherst Baptist Church at 1024 Amherst Road in Morganton from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. each day, Ervin said.

"(The donations) are very much appreciated," Long View Mayor Marla Thompson said. "We're hoping that they get to the people that need them. If anybody wants to donate, please feel free to drop off at any time."

Long View plans to bring another load of donations later in the week. Minor said a local manufacturing company is donating a 53-foot trailer filled with supplies.

"(A man) just called us and said, 'I live in Burke County. I work in Conover and my company wants to help,'" Minor

said. "We were like, 'Yes, send it.'"

Minor said it has been incredible seeing her small town pouring out support for their neighbors. She said Long View has a significantly smaller tax base than Hickory. Long View had an estimated population of 5,207 in 2023 and Hickory had an estimated population of 44,415 people, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

"We had a mom, and her several young children come by, and each child got to donate an item," Minor said. "And then our town manager got the opportunity to explain to them why they were needing to donate these items. It was incredible to see them come together."

Long View Town Hall is located at 2404 First Ave. SW in Hickory.

Sarah Johnson is the courts and breaking news reporter for the Hickory daily record.

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HURRICANE MILTON POUNDS FLORIDA; AT LEAST 8 KILLED

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Hurricane Milton made landfall Wednesday night in Siesta Key near Sarasota, about 70 miles south of Tampa, as a Category 3 storm, bringing misery to a coast still ravaged by Helene. The storm pounded cities with winds of over 100 mph after producing a barrage of tornadoes, but it spared Tampa a direct hit. St. Petersburg recorded over 16 inches of rain. Milton then barreled into the Atlantic Ocean on Thursday, leaving at least eight people dead and over 3 million without power. Above, a crane lays across 1st Avenue South on Thursday in St. Petersburg.

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Key numbers from Freedom's NWC-opening loss to Alexander Central

October 12, 2024 | News Herald, The (Morganton, NC) Author: JUSTIN EPLEY Sports editor | Section: Football | 566 Words OpenURL Link

The schedule was scrambled and the venue unexpected, but the Freedom and Alexander Central football teams emerged from a three-week hiatus forced by damage from Hurricane Helene to finally play their Northwestern 3A/4A Conference-opener.

The return to action after the extended layoff went in the Cougars' favor as they earned a 30-20 victory on Friday night in a game played at Patton High School following severe flooding at the FHS football stadium.

Here are some key numbers from the Week 8 loss for the Patriots (3-3, 0-1 NWC) in Morganton:

- 0 Completed passes for Alexander Central. The Cougars won the game despite going 0 for 3 through the air. The visitors racked up 346 yards and four touchdowns on 61 rushing attempts for the night. Quarterback Wade Queen did run for 39 yards on nine carries.
- 1- Varsity football games played at Patton's stadium so far this season. With the Panthers inactive due to low participation numbers this fall, Friday night's game was the first varsity football contest played on Enola Road this year. The Patriots will host a second and final home game at PHS this coming Friday, taking on South Caldwell in their last home contest of the regular season.
- 2 Wins in a row for Alexander Central over Freedom, whose all-time lead in the series was trimmed to 29-9 with Friday's loss. It's the first time in at least 20 years that the Patriots have lost back-to-back games to the Cougars. FHS won three straight over ACHS from 2004-06 and 2008-12 and two straight from 2018-19 and 2021-22.
- 3 Rushing touchdowns for Freedom. Normally potent through the air, all three of the Patriots' trips to the end zone on Friday came on the ground, including a 10-yard reverse by Justice Dominguez in the first quarter to make it 14-6, a 38-yard keeper by quarterback Kaden Davis in the third period to make it 20-13 and a 1-yard dive by Jaiden Belin in the fourth frame to bring the score to 27-20 with 8:36 to play.
- 24 Distance in yards on Elijah Bolick's game-winning field goal for the Cougars. Bolick booted the sealing kick through the uprights with just 1:12 left in the contest.
- 35:26 Game-leading time of possession from Alexander Central. Led by countless chain-moving runs by the Cougars' offense, the visitors were stingy with the ball, allowing the Patriots' offense to possess it for just 12:34. ACHS was 7 of 13 of third down while Freedom was just 1 of 6.
- 73 Yardage on Jeremiah Whitaker's game-breaking rushing touchdown for Alexander Central in the third quarter. The running back ripped off the game's longest play just after Freedom had closed within 20-13 to start the second half. Whitaker finished with 95 yards on 12 carries, also scoring on a 3-yard run in the first quarter to make it 14-0.
- 133 Passing yards for Freedom's Davis. Though the hosts didn't have a touchdown through the air, Davis was 12 of 20, connecting with receivers Dominguez (5-49), Tiras Walker (2-44), Kobe Johnson (3-20) and Kaleb Pearson (2-20). Davis also threw two interceptions, including one on the Patriots' last-gasp drive with just seconds to play.
- 162 Game-high rushing yards for the Cougars' Sawyer Chapman-Mays, who did it on 30 carries and scored touchdowns of 1 yard in the first quarter and 2 yards in the second period to put Alexander Central ahead 7-0 and 20-6, respectively.

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H.S. ROUNDUP: East Burke football falls to Bunker Hill in 1st game back

October 12, 2024 | News Herald, The (Morganton, NC) Author: From staff reports | Section: High School | 685 Words OpenURL Link

CLAREMONT — The East Burke football team dropped a Catawba Valley 2A Conference road game in its return following a three-week period of inactivity due to Hurricane Helene, falling 34-12 at Bunker Hill on Friday night.

The Cavaliers (1-4, 0-2 CVAC) were led on the ground by running backs Caden Buff (8-42-1) and Zayne Newman (11-24). Quarterback Carter Bennett completed 8 of 16 passes for 93 yards and a touchdown with one interception, hitting targets Barger Shook (3-86-1) and Nathan Rees (3-15).

The EBHS defense was led by Cannon Morrison (11 tackles, one for loss), Jordan Fox (six tackles, one for loss), Ossie Burkeen (five tackles, one for loss) and Zac Bennett (four tackles, interception, two pass breakups).

VOLLEYBALL

East Burke 3, West Caldwell 0: The Lady Cavaliers (11-9, 7-6 CVAC) earned a conference sweep at home in Icard on Thursday, winning 25-10, 25-20, 25-5.

Offensively, EBHS was led by Karlie Chester (nine kills, ace), Addy Fortenberry (five kills, two aces, 20 assists), Kyndal Morrison (five kills), Raegan Carter (three kills), Amanda McLean (two kills), Ashaunah Reinhardt-Phillips (two kills, ace, assist), Ella Beth Oxentine (two kills, assist) and Sarah Angel (assist).

EB's defensive leaders were Hermione Garro (10 digs, 10 receptions), Fortenberry (six digs, two blocks), Bree Winkler (five digs, five receptions), Angel (four digs, reception), Morrison (three digs, two blocks, reception), Reinhardt-Phillips (three digs, two receptions), Oxentine (three digs), Giselle Martinez (three digs, reception), McLean (two digs), Chester (two digs, two receptions), Carissa Towery (two digs, three receptions), Hayden Lowman (two digs), Carter (dig, two receptions) and Lindsay Erskine (two receptions).

South Caldwell 3, Freedom 0: The Lady Patriots (3-16, 0-7 NWC) fell in straight sets in conference play on the road in Sawmills on Thursday, losing 25-16, 25-21, 25-12.

Offensive leaders for FHS included Kaitlyn Hagmann (six kills, two aces), Ava Whitaker (six kills), Mia Furches (kill, ace), Kaitlyn Taylor (ace, assist) and Kennedy Denton (nine assists).

On the defensive side, Freedom was led by Hagmann (six digs, block), Emma Buchanan (three digs), Denton (two digs), Cassidy Taylor (two digs), Whitaker (dig, two blocks), Kaitlyn Taylor (dig), Madelyn LeMaster (four blocks) and Furches (three blocks).

Hendersonville 3, Patton 1: The Lady Panthers (14-6, 4-5 Mountain Foothills 7 1A/2A Conf.) fell below .500 in league play with a four-set loss on the road in Hendersonville on Thursday, falling 12-25, 23-25, 26-24, 24-26.

No more details were available at press time.

St. Stephens 3, Draughn 0: The Lady Wildcats (13-5) were swept in nonconference play on the road in Hickory on Thursday, falling 25-12, 25-23, 25-14.

No more details were available at press time.

BOYS SOCCER

Patton 6, Chase 0: The Panthers (11-3-1, 4-0 MF7) remained undefeated in league play with a shutout victory at home in Morganton on Thursday.

Each PHS goal was scored by a different player as Gabino Vasquez, Jimmy Monzon, Noah Krogel, Tony Vicente, Jacob Batz and Trevin Lavoie all found paydirt. Vicente, Vasquez and David Bernabe recorded assists for the hosts, who outshot the Trojans 28-2.

Isai Jimenez recorded his fourth straight clean sheet in goal to start conference play.

Alexander Central 8, Freedom 0: The Patriots (4-9, 0-3) lost a conference game on the road in Taylorsville for the second straight day on Thursday, getting blanked both times.

No more details were available at press time.

JV FOOTBALL

Bunker Hill 14, East Burke 6 (OT): The JV Cavaliers (1-4, 0-2 CVAC) were denied their first league victory with an overtime loss at home in lcard on Thursday.

The EBHS rushing attack was led by Jesiah Rees (17-61-1), Leelan Pyatte (4-25) and Cash Wittenberg (7-22). Quarterback Nathan Martin completed 9 of 12 passes for 55 yards, finding receivers Rees (6-20), R.J. Williams (1-23) and Pyatte (2-12).

Defensively, EB was led by Martin (five tackles), Gabe Metcalf (five tackles), Easton Wilson (four tackles, interception) and Jaxson Wiley (three tackles, blocked punt).

Alexander Central 41, Freedom 6: The JV Patriots (4-2, 0-1 NWC) lost their conference-opener on the road in Taylorsville on Thursday.

Leading the offense were rushers Izaiah Thomas (2-50-1), Noah Francis (1-18), Christian Chapman (2-14) and Trent Davis (2-9). Additionally, quarterback Joe Tate completed a 45-yard pass to Francis.

Davis (eight tackles), Hayden Laws (eight), Francis (seven) and Rico Gonzalez (seven) led the Freedom defense. © Copyright 2024, The News Herald, Morganton, NC

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TIME TO REGROUP

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H.S. FOOTBALL

After two-plus weeks of chaos caused by a stoppage in place due to the effects of Hurricane Helene, all three of Burke County's active varsity high school football teams either have resumed play or now know when they will, and schedules slowly are coming together.

While Freedom (in a home Northwestern 3A/4A Conference game versus Alexander Central at Patton late Friday in Morganton) and East Burke (in a road Catawba Valley 2A Conference game at Bunker Hill late Friday in Claremont) resumed play in Week 8 to end three-week layoffs, Draughn finally set its first game back from what will be a fourweeks-and-change hiatus by announcing on Thursday that it will host Western Highlands 1A/2A Conference opponent Mitchell at 2 p.m. this coming Saturday, Oct. 19, for Week 9.

The game is being played on a Saturday due to special provisions put into place by the WHC, whose communities mostly are in the mountains and were hit particularly hard by the storm on Sept. 27.

"Most of our conference teams are starting back next week with athletics, but face nighttime travel restrictions," wrote DHS coach Chris Powell on the team's Facebook page. "We will work on the following weeks schedules next week." These decisions and a wholesale resumption of play came after the NCHSAA extended the fall season by a week with a Wednesday decision. For football, this comes with a stipulation that a minimum of three calendar days must occur between contests as teams seek to make up for lost time. Sunday practices and games remain disallowed.

"Changes to the fall calendar are difficult as well as complex but necessary," said NCHSAA President Stephen Gainey and NCHSAA Commissioner Que Tucker in a joint statement. "Keeping our student-athletes safe as we try to minimize risk of injury was central to any decisions made. We commend the work of the NCHSAA staff in its research, the Board of Directors in making time to consider these changes, and the willingness of our host partners to accommodate any changes and make their venues available."

The Cavaliers will follow up their road trip to Bunker Hill by hosting Lincolnton this Friday, visiting West Lincoln on Oct. 25, hosting West Caldwell on Nov. 1, visiting Newton-Conover on Nov. 5 and hosting Bandys at 2 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 9.

The Patriots' home game versus the Cougars at PHS will be followed by another crosstown home game against South Caldwell at Patton this Friday, along with road games at Ashe County on Oct. 25, Watauga on Nov. 1 and Hibriten on Nov. 8.

Additionally after the NCHSAA changes, the reporting deadline has been moved from Nov. 1 to 11:59 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 9, and seeding will follow after 1 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 10.

The new playoff schedule includes the first round on Nov. 15, the second round on Nov. 22, the third round on Nov. 29, regional semifinals on Dec. 6, regional finals on Dec. 13 and state championships from Dec. 20-21.

Here are the changes made by the NCHSAA as they apply to other fall sports:

The weekly contest limit has been extended to four to allow teams to make up multiple postponed games.

The reporting deadline has been moved from Oct. 31 to 11:59 p.m. on Nov. 6. Seeding will take place on Nov. 7.

The revised playoff schedule includes the first round on Nov. 9, second round on Nov. 12, third round on Nov. 14, regional semifinals on Nov. 16, regional finals on Nov. 19 and state championships from Nov. 22-23.

CROSS COUNTRY

The reporting deadline has been moved from this coming Saturday to 11:59 p.m. on Oct. 22.

Regionals now will be held on Oct. 26 and state championships are scheduled for Nov. 2.

GIRLS GOLF

The minimum number of matches to qualify for regionals has been reduced from five to three.

GIRLS TENNIS

The individual reporting deadline has been moved from 3 p.m. to 11:59 p.m. on Monday to allow for another day of competition. Individual regionals will be held this Friday through Saturday. Individual state championships will be held from Oct. 25-26.

The dual-team reporting deadline has been moved from Oct. 10 to 11:59 p.m. this Thursday. Seeding will take place this Friday. The first round will be held Oct. 21, followed by the second round on Oct. 23, third round on Oct. 28, regional semifinals on Oct. 30, regional finals on Nov. 5 and state championships on Nov. 9.

VOLLEYBALL

The weekly contest limit has been extended to eight to allow teams to make up multiple postponed matches.

The reporting deadline has been moved from this Wednesday to 11:59 p.m. this coming Saturday, with seeding to take place after 1 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 20. The revised playoff schedule starts with the first round on Oct. 22, followed by the second round on Oct. 24, third round on Oct. 26, regional semifinals on Oct. 29, regional finals on Oct. 31 and state championships on Nov. 2.

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FEMA WORKERS GOING DOOR-TO-DOOR IN NC

October 12, 2024 | News Herald, The (Morganton, NC) Author: BILLY CHAPMAN wchapman@hickoryrecord.com | Section: News | 1262 Words OpenURL Link

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is FEMA doing in western North Carolina?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

How can people apply for assistance?

Custer said people can apply for assistance by calling 800621-3362. Those able to access the internet can also apply for assistance by going to disasterassistance.gov.

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

Custer said FEMA will soon open disaster recovery centers.

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

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

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

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

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

What do you need to apply for assistance?

- "• Proof of ownership of a residence "
- A list of people permanently living at a location
- " Social Security number
- " Estimated annual income
- " Insurance information, if available

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

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

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

Who can apply for FEMA assistance?

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

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

What happens after applying for assistance?

Custer said the time to process an application varies.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Does FEMA help with unemployment?

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

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

What does FEMA pay for?

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

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

FEMA also pays for temporary housing.

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

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

Does FEMA assistance have to be paid back?

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

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

People can apply for FEMA grants and SBA loans.

Are conspiracy theories hurting FEMA?

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

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

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

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

Can people apply to work for FEMA?

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

Billy Chapman is a reporter with the Hickory Daily Record. wchapman@hickoryrecord.com

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We've shifted gears to help western N.C. with recovery efforts

October 12, 2024 | News-Topic, The (Lenoir, NC) Author: Mike Causey | Section: Archives | 414 Words OpenURL Link

I continue to be shocked and heartbroken by the destruction I've seen from Hurricane Helene in the western part of our state. I hope we will all do what we can to help our fellow North Carolinians who have lost their homes, their possessions and, in some cases, their loved ones to this tragedy.

We at the Department of Insurance are doing what we can to assist those in need. Two of the more visible things we're doing are setting up victim assistance centers and insurance camps. Both are aimed at helping residents who've been impacted by Hurricane Helene. But the two have distinct missions.

Victim assistance centers provide in-person and on-the-ground recovery assistance and insurance-related support to those directly impacted by Hurricane Helene. If a victim does not have insurance, we will provide information about other organizations that may be able to assist residents.

We are setting up victim assistance centers in various communities in western North Carolina. So far, we've established them in North Wilkesboro, Gastonia and Boone. We have others scheduled in Spindale and Arden. We're working on setting up other victim assistance centers.

At insurance camps, the Department of Insurance staff coordinates with insurance companies to set up camps where victims of Hurricane Helene can come in and speak with their insurance company representatives. The insurance company representatives can even help their clients file their claims.

So far, we've established an insurance camp in Banner Elk. Insurance camps are planned for Oct. 23-24 in Arden in Buncombe County.

We'll continue to work with insurance companies to set up more insurance camps and find ways of helping victims file their claims.

You can go to our special Hurricane Helene web page, www.ncdoi.gov/helene, to check the schedule for future victim assistance centers and insurance camps. You can find other useful resources on the web page, such as bulletins, press releases and ways you can donate and help those in need.

This special web page includes a link to insurance company phone numbers, information on how to be on the lookout for scammers and fraudsters who may want to rip you off and information on a Special Enrollment Period for Medicare beneficiaries who've been affected by Helene.

We also have consumer specialists ready to assist you. You may reach them by calling 855-408-1212 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

My heart and prayers continue to go out to everyone in western North Carolina impacted by Hurricane Helene. We will continue to work with hurricane victims during this recovery period.

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Fall will be back — just not this year

October 12, 2024 | News-Topic, The (Lenoir, NC) Author: DEANNA CHESTER Spunk & Spice | Section: Archives | 606 Words OpenURL Link

For the last 22 years, I have made the near daily trek to the mountains for work. In miles, Boone is not that far from my Lenoir home. In other ways, it's a whole other world.

Once you pass Saint Mark's Lutheran Church and head into the serious switchbacks that wind you around to Blowing Rock, the air changes. It is quieter. It is crisper. It is what I like to call deep-breath territory. It is the spot on my commute where I clear my mind and free my thoughts before starting my workday. On my way down in the evening, I have the same sort of ritual once I pass Green Park Inn. That is where I begin to leave work in my mind, begin planning supper, begin a big exhale.

Working on the mountain has given me a deeper understanding of the power of place, an appreciation for nature's beauty that surrounds us here in the Blue Ridge foothills. It is easy to take these vistas for granted as commonplace, to almost not see them. But, in the fall, oh, in the fall, you cannot miss the majesty of the mountains. They are alive in color, made all the more captivating by the sounds the leaves make when a strong breeze catches them. And, as the leaves wither, drop and blow away, they emit a familiar, comforting smell that we have all come to know as fall.

Except this year. This October is different, and it is hard to imagine things will ever be same again in these mountains so many of us love. Those in small towns and villages we natives know simply as "the mountains" will mark time as before Helene and after Helene.

My husband and I are day-trippers and weekenders.

The mountains are our spot. We often take off to spend the day in Black Mountain, to peruse the downtown, enjoy eclectic coffee shops and experience the old and new together at spots like Blue Ridge Biscuit Company, which thankfully, survived the storm. We like the farmer's market in Asheville and breakfast at the Moose Café.

Just this summer, we spent a day at Chimney Rock State Park, picnicked after a hike from the top, looked the gift shops along the strip and took in the tranquility of Lake Lure.

So glad we have a recent memory of what was, and to be sure, we will be back for what will be when the time comes.

And, then, there is our dear sweet Flat Rock, a little town where we spent our first wedding anniversary, rang in the new millennia and just two weeks ago visited a pick-your-own orchard for some Jonagold apples and spent an hour in my favorite roadside store (Bloomfield's) that seems to have every kitchen gadget that has ever been invented.

On my first trip back to Boone since the storm, I wanted to cry. Life was getting "back to normal" somewhat, but just like with the pandemic, nobody seems sure what "normal" is right now, and once again, re-entry is going to be a harder adjustment than we may have thought.

This week after I had watched as much of the storm coverage as my heart could handle, I peeled a whole peck of those apples we got in Flat Rock, and I canned apple butter. It just seemed like the thing to do, my own little nod to normal.

The storm will change the landmarks, the people, the way of life for many, but the mountains in their grand majesty will stand, and fall with all the meaning that can only be felt, but not spoken, will come again — just not this year.

• Citation (aglc Style)

DEANNA CHESTER Spunk & Spice, 'Fall will be back — just not this year', *News-Topic, The* (online), 12 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C2A01A27E86A58



A national effort at the Caldwell County fairgrounds

October 12, 2024 | News-Topic, The (Lenoir, NC) Author: GABBY WHORLEY Caldwell County Cooperative Extension | Section: Archives | 389 Words OpenURL Link

Over the past week, with the support of numerous partners, the Caldwell County Fairgrounds has officially become a redistribution site for the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to aid victims of Hurricane Helene. This effort is helping not only our own county but also those farther west. Unfortunately, the fairgrounds sustained significant damage during the hurricane, and while cleanup and repairs are underway, the site continues to serve as a vital hub for relief efforts.

Neil Taylor, with the help of Ideal Transport INC, was able to provide two transfer trucks to store and transport donations. Crystal Taylor, from Ag South, has been instrumental in organizing donations and coordinating the distribution of supplies to those in need. We owe immense gratitude to countless local families and churches who have contributed to this effort — though we cannot thank each individual by name, know that your support has been felt and appreciated by our farming communities and those further west.

One remarkable story comes from the Lowe and LaRue families from Jefferson County, Pennsylvania, who drove nine hours with over \$12,000 worth of supplies from their local Southern States Cooperative Store to donate to Western North Carolina.

In partnership with the National Guard, the NC State Extension Caldwell County Center successfully completed several airdrops yesterday October 7th, delivering essential agriculture supplies to communities in need, this was all made possible by County Extension Director Seth Nagy. A special thanks goes to visiting extension agents Alex Kissinger, Area Livestock, Forage, and Agriculture Agent from Orange County, and Adreanna White, 4-H Agent from Iredell County, who assisted in this effort. We distributed fencing materials, livestock feed, non-perishable food items, and warm clothing from the Caldwell County Fairgrounds lower parking lot to communities such as Marshall, NC, and Green Mountain, NC. We were also able to assist an elderly farmer whose cattle had become trapped by flooding.

This relief effort is ongoing and will continue for some time. Many farmers to the west have lost their feed storage, and their fences and pastures have been severely damaged. In the coming days, there will be a significant need for fencing materials, work gloves, livestock feed (especially chicken feed), and cold-weather supplies such as heavy jackets, bibs, blankets, gloves, toboggans, and non-perishable food items. Numerous donation sites throughout the county will be available for contributions.

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• Citation (aglc Style)

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p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C2A01A53F1E948>



Letter to the editor

October 12, 2024 | News-Topic, The (Lenoir, NC) Author: Staff Writer | Section: Archives | 471 Words OpenURL Link

Nothing that's going on with the Presidential campaigns makes any sense. Donald Trump's campaign ads that present VP Harris saying what her political agenda is in recent memory, ending with a recording of Trump saying "I'm Donald Trump, and I approve this message", and nothing else seems insane, except that Harris's political desires are indeed insane. As such, these ads are brilliant. I never thought I'd ever see the day that campaign ads for high office would be quotes from the opponent's affirmative political proposals, and using those direct quotes to appeal to voters.

I mean, today Harris claims to be "a gun owner", but as early as her last presidential campaign she was promoting a "Federal Gun-Buy-Back Program" that would force American citizens to "sell" their guns "back", rather than just taking them away (which, I'm supposing, they feel is less oppressive). Or, how about when she proposed tax-payer-funded "gender reassignment surgery" to convicted violent felons in California prisons?

The strangest thing about this election cycle is how the people who claim to be "protecting and saving democracy" want to gag speech that doesn't conform to Democrat Party talking points. In the recent past and the here and now, examples of Democrats' "telling the truth" have included "Trump proposed injecting bleach in the arms of COVID-19 patients", "The Hunter Biden laptop is a 'Russian Ploy'", and that "Trump stole the 2016 election colluding with Vladimir Putin", all things that have even been debunked via "Snopes", a long-trusted source of truth by Democrats.

Yet, high-ranked Democrat influencers like former Secretary of State John Kerry, who said last month, "Our First Amendment stands as a major block to be able to just, you know, hammer (disinformation) out of existence" want you to believe that they ought to be our sole source for "truthful information" despite all of the serious lies and distortions they've spewed in the past eight, going on nine years. People seriously believe that Donald Trump is a dangerous madman, a dictator wannabe when that is all they've been told over the past nine years, with clips of out-of-context, debunked utterances as "proof".

In a time when "in our neck of the woods" has experienced devastation and tragedy beyond imagination because of Hurricane Helene, anything coming from those ruined areas that don't conform with what Harris says is true about "the Federal Government response" to the disaster is being propagated as "dangerous disinformation" and "playing with politics". Is it? Are the people who say that "Trump is an existential threat to democracy", who are in control of agencies that refuse to get to the bottom of the attempted assassination on the GOP nominee, folks who can be trusted, or should private citizens who can report what is going on with our devastated Western NC neighbors be believed? I'd truly like to know,

John Beam

Lenoir

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Staff Writer, 'Letter to the editor', *News-Topic, The* (online), 12 Oct 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C2A01A4F0CA940



NC Fast Facts: Baxter plant in North Cove damaged by Helene

October 12, 2024 | North State Journal (NC)
Author: Dan Reeves | Section: Article | 432 Words

OpenURL Link

Flooding triggered by Hurricane Helene hit a Baxter International plant in North Cove that makes much of the country's supply of sterile intravenous, or IV, fluids, which are also used by some patients on home kidney dialysis.

Baxter had to close the factory, which it says is its largest manufacturing facility, employing more than 2,500 people. The company also started limiting the amount of supply customers could order, a restriction designed to prevent stockpiling and keep access equal.

Dr. Paul Biddinger of Mass General Brigham said this week that Baxter told the Massachusetts health system it would get about 40% of the supply it normally receives.

Hospitals may start making small changes for now to stretch supplies of IV fluids, which are used to keep patients hydrated and also to deliver medicine.

Biddinger said Mass General Brigham, which includes 12 hospitals, is giving some patients water or Gatorade instead of starting an IV. He added that anyone needing an IV can still get one, and the system's clinical services are operating normally.

Hospitals may reschedule elective surgeries to conserve IV fluids, said Mike Ganio, who studies drug shortages at the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists. He added that they may also have nurses inject some medicines, like antibiotics, into patients with a syringe instead of using an IV. For those patients, Baxter is recommending that care providers review prescriptions to determine whether they can get by with less. The company also says delays to the start of dialysis should be considered.

As of Friday, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration had not declared any new shortages related to products made at Baxter's plant.

However, experts see vulnerability in the supply chain. Bags of IV solutions take up a lot of space, and it's expensive for hospitals to keep large stockpiles.

IV solutions also must be kept sterile and don't have long shelf lives, Biddinger noted.

"Maintaining a large supply of things that expire quickly is actually pretty tricky," he said.

Smaller hospitals may only have a few days of supply on hand, Ganio noted.

Baxter is looking at using other factories around the world to fill some of the supply gap.

The company also has some stored finished products that were not affected by the storm. However, access to their plant is limited because bridges to the site were damaged.

Ganio said other manufacturers also may be able to increase production. Baxter said last Thursday that damage was still being assessed and that there was no timeline yet for when the plant would resume operations.

The post NC Fast Facts: Baxter plant in North Cove damaged by Helene first appeared on The North State Journal.

• Citation (aglc Style)

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Letter: Support Better Building

October 12, 2024 | Pilot, The (Southern Pines, NC) Author: Staff Writer | Section: Opinion | 222 Words OpenURL Link

Are you shocked, like me, at how quickly housing developments are sprouting up around here? In the wake of Helene, an Oct. 4 New York Times article exposed how N.C. Republican lawmakers for the past 15 years have rejected and weakened safety standards for builders meant to protect against natural disasters.

"Efforts to weaken building standards in North Carolina picked up steam after Republicans won both houses of state legislature in 2010," the Times reported, and in 2014, lawmakers weakened protection from wetlands and made it easier for developers to pave green spaces.

The home builders association has contributed \$4.3 million to N.C. politicians over the past three decades, with Republicans receiving nearly double the Democratic contributions.

Better building codes and developer impact fees, currently illegal in the state, would help slow the rampant overdevelopment of the Sandhills, but to do that we have to vote blue on Nov. 5.

Sue Smithson

Southern Pines

Publisher's Note: This is a letter to the editor, submitted by a reader, and reflects the opinion of the author. The Pilot welcomes letters from readers on its Opinion page, which serves as a public forum. The Pilot is not in the business of suppressing public opinion. We are a forum for community debate, and publish almost every letter we receive. For information on how to make a submission, visit this page:

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Column: Finding the Reward in Aiding in the Recovery

October 12, 2024 | Pilot, The (Southern Pines, NC) Author: JONATHAN BYM Staff Writer | Section: Opinion | 740 Words OpenURL Link

Two massive waves crashed down on western North Carolina in the past few weeks.

The first came with wind and rain, bringing destruction and despair to one of the most picturesque corners of our great state. The second is the tidal wave of support traveling to the region with truckloads of supplies and aid like pallets of water and other essential needs; heavy equipment to repair infrastructure; and caravans loaded with people ready to help.

Before Helene boiled up in the Gulf of Mexico, my wife and I were set for a four-day weekend around a country music festival in South Carolina. The storm's path destroyed the festival site, canceling our weekend plans, or at least those original plans.

Instead, we felt the need to focus not on ourselves with the time off, but to go to the mountains to help those suffering.

Based on the traffic on Interstate 40 west, we weren't the only ones. Monstrous National Guard trucks, utility bucket trucks and trailers hauling off-road vehicles traveled like a caravan of caring.

I've volunteered in hurricane-stricken areas in the past, where tree limb removal was basically the extent of the work. What I encountered looked more like how war zones are depicted than quaint towns of Appalachia.

My wife and I never made it farther west than Black Mountain, volunteering with the group Baptists on Mission, but the dismantled landscape of Old Fort was sobering enough that I didn't want to go deeper into the hills to see the extent of the damage.

The serenity of the mountains was interrupted when flood waters left mounds of mud in the streets that needed heavy equipment for removal. Military helicopters thrummed constantly overhead as a new western North Carolina soundtrack.

On the ground, the most obvious signs of support weren't from a state or national organization, but rather poster board signs in nearly every corner of towns we rode through. From Black Mountain, Old Fort and Marion, it was hard not to find locations to drop off the influx of supplies coming from the East for those in dire need of the items to come pick up.

Those locations have been direct benefactors of the substantial donations coming from places like Moore County's outpouring of support through giving.

Our volunteer leaders told the crew of nearly 200 volunteers before we left that the response with recovery supplies coming by the truckload had inundated Baptists on Mission, as well as other collection areas across the mountains. The real need now was distribution, not physical donations.

Fall has often been the chance for most of us in the Piedmont and the coastal plains of North Carolina to take in the fireworks of foliage. Around Christmas, perhaps we'd trek up to cut down a Fraser fir.

I traded hiking books strolling down a trail along the Blue Ridge Parkway for muck boots to handle the ankle-deep mud for a basement cleanout in Old Fort. The latter was one of the more rewarding experiences of my life. The first phase of disaster recovery is giving, and while that is still needed to a degree, now we are in an action phase. Even for a day or a week, any effort made by fellow North Carolinians to assist in cleaning up and rebuilding will make a difference in western North Carolina.

The volunteer schedule kept me out of tune with the outside world for the most part. It wasn't until recouping Monday at home that I saw the links out to debunk rumors being circulated on social media questioning relief efforts. I only saw a fraction of what was going on, but these "reports" were fiction in McDowell County.

If there was any concern over a response to help McDowell County, one wouldn't have to look further than the hundreds of volunteers from the group I served with cleaning up around homes and feeding weary residents who were still without necessities for basic life. That's not even including the public safety departments from across the state — including several from Moore County — lending a hand to help local departments alleviate the call volume pressure.

Each step, no matter how small, is a step closer to normalcy for someone in need.

Stepping back from the events in past weeks, I have come to realize that the most powerful force to hit the mountain wasn't weather or the heavy machinery moving dirt, but neighbors helping neighbors.

Jonathan Bym covers sports and northern Moore for The Pilot. Contact him at (910) 693-2470 or jonathan@thepilot.com.

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Editorial: Misinformation muddies political response to Helene

October 12, 2024 | Rocky Mount Telegram: Web Edition Articles (NC) Author: Staff Writer | Section: Editorials | 718 Words OpenURL Link

An underwater arts district. Health care workers and patients stranded on hospital rooftops. Isolated residents pointing mirrors at the sky to catch rescue helicopters' attention. The tragic scenes from Hurricane Helene's path of destruction are nothing short of heartbreaking. In the week and a half since it made landfall, subjecting coastlines across the Southeast to storm surges and downpours, the tempest struck forcefully where few expect such events: inland, high in the Blue Ridge mountains. Consequently, even "climate haven" cities such as Asheville felt the impact.

Dubbed the deadliest hurricane to hit the United States since Maria in 2017, Helene has already claimed 232 lives, with many more still unaccounted for. Making matters worse, only a small fraction of households in the hardest-hit counties had flood insurance. Policies are not cheap, and many living on high ground might have thought the risks were too minor to warrant the expense. As Helene makes clear, tropical storms are no longer an exclusively coastal threat. Heavy rains can rapidly flood hill-country streams and ravines, and there is only so much federal aid can do to compensate for homeowners' and businesses' losses. This disaster should spur long-overdue reforms in the federal government's troubled flood insurance programs.

According to some early analyses, the storm could have caused \$15 billion to \$26 billion in property damage across the Southeast, along with \$5 billion to \$8 billion in lost economic output. The storm's impact on human life could be magnified by the supply chain disruptions it is causing: Hospitals across the country are already experiencing a shortage of intravenous solutions after flooding from Helene caused a Marion plant to shut down.

Affected communities remain in the early stages of recuperation, in many cases still lacking access to water, power, food and other necessities. Even as search and recovery efforts continue, officials in the coming weeks need to treat this humanitarian crisis with the urgency that phrase implies. We have no doubt they intend to do so, but as the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the National Guard and other aid organizations navigate downed trees and mud-choked roads to reach affected residents, they face yet another challenge: rampant misinformation.

Because it plowed through two swing states just over a month before Election Day, politicians were bound to pay extra attention to this disaster. Both presidential candidates rerouted their campaign trails to visit Georgia and North Carolina. This is par for the course in a democracy. What is neither normal nor acceptable is for former president Donald Trump to exploit the situation with inflammatory falsehoods. He claimed that his Democratic opponent, Vice President Kamala Harris, diverted FEMA funding to house illegal immigrants; and he accused North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper, also a Democrat, of withholding aid from Republican-leaning counties. Misinformation about FEMA's actions has become so widespread that the agency created a webpage dedicated to "rumor response." The agency should not have to spend scarce resources dispelling misinformation spread in part by someone running for our highest office.

No doubt, FEMA has its limitations. The Post spent a year chronicling how the agency is struggling to keep up with the demands of disasters intensified, in part, by a changing climate. Destructive storms always spotlight both the strengths and weaknesses of government's disaster-response capabilities. Even as Helene provides lessons for policymakers, though, it highlights the country's profound capacity for spontaneous, empathetic, often heroic actions by individuals and communities. Tying political accusations to disaster response is doubly unseemly in light of so much selflessness by ordinary people.

For now, affected communities from the Gulf Coast to the Carolinas deserve swift and generous support from government and the private sector alike. Indeed, new research shows that the lingering effects can indirectly lead to excess deaths in the months and years after storms occur. A consistent flow of resources even after immediate

relief efforts could help stem those impacts.

Experts might not be able to predict which storms become the next Katrina or Helene. But one thing we do know is that they will happen, possibly with greater intensity because of climate change. Indeed, the current Atlantic hurricane season, which had been relatively mild until recent weeks, is not yet over — and indeed coincides with the stretch run of the presidential campaign. Effective government will help everyone in the storms' paths get through them. Demagoguery will not.

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Jim Buchanan: Mountain folks' stubbornness on display after Helene

October 12, 2024 \mid Rocky Mount Telegram: Web Edition Articles (NC) Author: Staff Writer \mid Section: News \mid 835 Words

OpenURL Link

There's a lot of cliches about mountain folk: resilience, determination, resourcefulness and, yes, stubbornness.

These were all on display when Helene visited horror and devastation on our beloved slice of the world, and they were all welcome. People here tend toward self-dependence, and as such a lot of folks had the tools needed to ride through the storm — foodstocks, fuel supplies, chainsaws, generators, etc. — and had access to heavier equipment to help clear impassable roads.

There's no overstating how terrifying and devastating Helene was in terms of death and sheer destruction. Some WNC towns have literally been wiped off the map and all of us were knocked back to the Stone Age to some degree, with communications knocked out. A lot of us had to sit in the dark, conjuring up the worst fears of the fate of our neighbors.

But a lot of us also took it upon ourselves to venture out to see what we could do to help. A lot of those efforts helped save lives or provide whatever aid could be given to those in need. In fact, so many people were out checking on neighbors, trying to round up water and supplies, attempting to clear roads, etc. that it was a bit of a problem in that people were stepping all over each other.

That was alleviated in large part by a competent response on the ground from volunteer organizations, first responders and local and state government. That the response was as quick and effective as it was was nothing short of astounding, especially given the fact that everyone was pretty much in a communications blackout thanks to the loss of internet and phone services.

Sadly, part of the effectiveness of the response is that a great many local officials, from here to Canton to Asheville, have been through versions of this before. In a very real sense, Hurricane Alley now runs through Western North Carolina.

As to the communications collapse, therein lies two of the immediate pressing questions of this event: How did we get so blind and deaf so fast across such a wide area?

And what needs to be done so it doesn't happen again? Previously effective 911 systems became useless when no one could get on either end of the line.

When communications did begin working in stops and starts, a sad chapter of this saga began when charlatans, clowns, pot-stirrers and, yes, foreign actors flooded the zone with stories meant to outrage and confuse. This secondary deluge got so bad that local, state and federal officials had to devote resources to debunking misinformation. Those folks pulled away to flush the junk, with their hands already full, certainly had better things they could have done with their time.

But the happy problem we faced in this region was something of an overload of people wanting to help. In the short run it appears to be that a lot of folks stepped up, both in official and volunteer capacities, and a lot of good calls were made

Some of those calls were tough. Western Carolina University was forced to cancel Mountain Heritage Day due to Helene, and in an unprecedented move a week later held a home football game with no fans. We feel both were the right call, the first due to the obvious dangers to life and limb and the second due to the fact that road traffic to ravaged areas remained the top priority (and also due to the fact a large part of the WCU community itself was in

the middle of relief efforts). Considering the fact a home football game generates a million bucks in economic activity ... well, it was the right call.

We won, by the way.

Also on the economic front, leaf season is gone. And that means the season when local businesses build up enough fodder to last through the winter is gone with it. Keep your dollars local to help keep them keeping on.

Beyond the loss of life and income, we all need to be cognizant of Helene's damage to the spirit. This storm came as some areas were still rebuilding from Tropical Storm Fred and other localized disasters, laid atop the economic, physical and mental trauma of a pandemic that put the whole country on its back. With Milton bearing down on Florida, the hits from the Age of Chaos just keep a-comin'.

With Milton and the upcoming election, the focus on WNC will soon be cast to other places and issues, and that's when we need to keep our focus. As so many have said, this recovery will not be a sprint but a marathon lasting months and years. Helene didn't just knock down trees; it has changed the geography of much of the area.

So, it's important to keep checking back to see what folks need when the national focus has shifted. Mountain natives and the new mountain folk who have sown their own roots here will still be at the rebuilding.

They, and we, will keep swinging. There's a lot to be said for stubbornness.

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Froma Harrop: Climate change is coming for Florida's economy

October 12, 2024 | Rocky Mount Telegram: Web Edition Articles (NC) Author: Staff Writer | Section: News | 601 Words OpenURL Link

Florida was the future. The weather's balmy in winter, the beaches are divine and there's no personal income tax. All that and a lower cost of living had set off a sizable migration of companies from New York, Chicago and California. Between 2021 and 2023, Florida was the fastest-growing state.

Now as a second monster hurricane in two weeks smashes the western coast, many Floridians have been turned into serial refugees. Florida is no stranger to the occasional big "blow," but climate change may have completely rewritten the meteorological future, and it's not sunny.

We can't say no one expected this. Nor is the western coast the only area under threat. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration projects that by 2100, more than 30% of Southeast Florida could be underwater, including much of Miami and Fort Lauderdale. Other more extreme scenarios put that figure closer to 70%.

Yet the extent of the threat has been kept under wraps by politicians unwilling to do the hard work.

Former Florida Gov. Rick Scott was said to have banned the use of "climate change" by the state's government agencies. He denies doing that, but employees report being pressured not to use the term, especially in documents related to environmental and coastal policies.

Donald Trump issued a tweet in 2016 that called climate change a "hoax" created by China.

Project 2025, the blueprint for another Trump term, criticizes Joe Biden's climate initiatives as "radical" and "extreme." (Trump called it "the Green New Scam.") The Project says, "The Biden Administration's climate fanaticism will need a whole-of-government unwinding."

The document totally lost it over the Biden administration's promotion of "international partnerships" to address the crisis. The transition to a low-carbon economy must be worldwide.

Project 2025 went so histrionic over Biden's climate law that even Big Oil has been urging Trump not to gut it. The likes of Exxon Mobil, Occidental Petroleum and Phillips 66 oppose the Project's call "to fully repeal recently passed subsidies in the tax code, including the dozens of credits and tax breaks for green energy companies."

Major oil companies have themselves become part green-energy enterprises. They're using the Inflation Reduction Act tax credits to invest in renewable fuel, carbon capture and hydrogen. These are expensive ventures that need government support to get off the ground.

Back in Florida, fierce weather has raised insurance premiums by as much as 400% over five years. As a result, Floridians are having an extra-hard time selling their properties. And those rebuilding homes smashed up by storms are finding that the policies have become a lot tougher, with higher deductibles and stricter limits on what's covered. Few cover flood damage. (Few homeowners have separate flood insurance issued by FEMA.)

Personal wealth goes only so far in protecting people from dislocation. Dynasty Financial Partners was one of the companies that left New York City in 2019 for St. Petersburg, Florida. Its chief executive lost his home in Hurricane Helene. The family moved into a cramped condo downtown. As Hurricane Milton barreled their way, they had to evacuate again.

First Street foundation reports that 3 million Americans became climate migrants between 2000 and 2020 — many

of whom lived far from coastlines. Texas Hill Country, for one, is known as Flash Flood Alley. Entire blocks have been hollowed out of residents. Meanwhile, Progressive says it will join others no longer writing home insurance policies in Texas.

And the world saw how Hurricane Helene visited devastation on lovely Asheville, North Carolina, up there in the mountains, far from landfall in Florida's Big Bend area.

Climate change is coming for Florida and elsewhere. Americans can confront the crisis or not. The weather doesn't care.

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D.G. Martin: Great floods of 1916 and 2024 won't be forgotten

October 12, 2024 | Rocky Mount Telegram: Web Edition Articles (NC) Author: Staff Writer | Section: News | 722 Words OpenURL Link

One of Miss Letitia Currie's favorite topics from her history class in the 1950s at Davidson Junior High School was the Great Flood of 1916.

Miss Currie was the daughter of a Davidson College professor.

Many of her students also knew what she was talking about because their parents had experienced that 1916 flood and talked about it whenever rain poured down hard.

Today, many of Miss Currie's students, their parents and grandparents, great-grandparents and their children and grandchildren are having a similar experience dealing with the flooding that followed Hurricane Helene. And they will be talking about it for the rest of their lives, calling it "the Great Flood of 2024."

"News of Davidson," the news outlet in my hometown, published the following account by Gatewood Payne Campbell, granddaughter of Davidson Professor Gatey Workman and niece of the late, great opera singer William Workman. Gatewood and her husband Johnny live near Black Mountain.

"Life has stopped. We don't know dates or times. Sirens are 24 hours a day. It's relentless. Helicopters invade our sky. Chainsaws sound nonstop and we run outside in hopes it's in our neighborhood. ...

"Let me back up. We awoke around 6 Friday morning without power. The storm was loud and pounding but we didn't know where we were in the storm. We could not get updates. Around 8:30 we lost internet across cell lines. I called a friend and got her to look at radar and let me know an ETA on rain ending. That was the last call I was able to make. By 9:30 ALL cell signal was completely lost. The rain was increasing. We could see the creek rising. Johnny stepped outside under the porch and was soaked from head to toe after 30 seconds.

"Around 11 we felt like we could go out and survey the neighborhood. We began to feel the weight of the destruction, yet we had NO clue. The creek had turned into a river greater than 50 yards wide. The noise of water heaters, propane tanks, bikes, grills, construction supplies and yard equipment banging on the rails of our bridge to Black Mountain was deafening. We saw two neighbors with trees on their homes and knew they were taking on water."

Meanwhile in Asheville, Bryan King and his wife Angela Koh are assessing the damage to their 12 Bones Smokehouse on Foundry Street in the River Arts District. As I wrote in my book, "North Carolina's Eateries," "Even if 12 Bones had not been made famous by Barack Obama's visits there, it would be a 'must-do' in Asheville." When I first visited 12 Bones several years ago, it was located closer to the French Broad River. Had Bryan and Angela not moved the restaurant a few blocks up the hill it would have been completely washed away. At its current location they may be able to repair and survive.

Angela's sister wrote, "As the floodwaters recede, we see catastrophic damage to homes and businesses, including the River Arts District, where 12 Bones was founded. Entire livelihoods have been lost. In nearly every direction you look, everything is caked in mud and scattered debris. Broken wood and mangled wiring now stand where intersections once existed."

Coincidentally, on Oct. 15, the publisher Blair is releasing "River Road," a book of poems by mountain author Wayne Caldwell. His fine poetry describes the power of the flooding waters on the French Broad as shown in the following excerpt:

"The French Broad, being a river, floods.

"How many times over the millennia has it left its banks

"and moved whatever was swept up in it

"To some far away (and sometimes ridiculous) place?

"Perhaps thousands. And each time it returned to its placid face.

"The worst (in the last century) was in July 1916.

"Asheville's Riverside Park was washed away.

"Parts of which one could have seen rushing by my house

"Had it been there then. (Even this relatively high ground

"Would have been inundated for several days.)

"Only a half dozen people died in Asheville,

"Which I'd consider a small miracle. Thanks to the telephone,

"Warning came to Marshall, and only two or three drowned,

"Even though the courthouse was about the only thing left

"On Main Street. Fifty-Three houses disappeared.

"From high ground one could have seen rushing by

"Bales of cotton, houses, mules, gas tanks,

"Vehicles, sheds, chickens, roosting on pieces of roof,

"Tires, fences, trees, pigs, dogs, cats,

"Anything not tied down — and many things that were."

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Granite Quarry fundraiser shares funds with Bat Cave, NC

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Granite Quarry fundraiser shares funds with Bat Cave, NC

Published 12:05 am Saturday, October 12, 2024

By Elisabeth Strillacci

1 of 2

GRANITE QUARRY — Each year the Granite Quarry Fire Department Auxiliary holds one large fundraiser, a Port-o-Pit smoked chicken dinner, which funds the group's actions for the year.

According to Brittany Barnhardt, Granite Quarry mayor and auxiliary board member, the event usually raises between \$7,000 and \$10,000.

"We use the money to support the department in ways outside of what their budget allows," she said. "If someone gets sick, or if God forbid a department has a line-of-duty death, anything like that, we provide meals, gift cards, anything that family might need." She said they have also purchased items for the department that contribute to the camaraderie, such as a grill for outdoor cooking, of the team that spends 24 hours together at a time.

The auxiliary is made up of spouses and partners of firefighters, and the six-member board does the planning and much of the work. They help with a number of events, including the annual banquet, the Trunk or Treat, coming up Oct. 31, the yearly Granite Fest, Arts in the Park, and other events. They also provide food for staff meetings and Christmas gifts for the department.

They started this particular fundraiser in 2020, "when COVID hit," Barnhardt said. "It was great, because so many places ran out of food and we were here. We started it with the drive-thru, which was go great that we never did anything else."

Tickets are always available in advance, but she said there are also always enough to sell to people who come the day of. But when they are sold out, they are sold out.

This year was not expected to be any different than years past, until Hurricane Helene hit. A number of Granite Quarry Fire Department's volunteers are also Kannapolis firefighters, who were deployed to assist with search and rescue and welfare checks in the small town of Bat Cave in western North Carolina.

They came home this past weekend and decided, with the members of the auxiliary, that they wanted to donate half of whatever funds they raise to the small town's fire department.

"They have lost so much, and they can't fundraise," said Jake Chambers, who serves both Granite Quarry and Kannapolis. "We are two and a half hours away, but when we came home, we came home to homes and families and electricity and our lives as usual. For them, it's going to be a long time before things are back to normal."

"We are absolutely glad to be sharing with them, because they have almost nothing left," added Travis Barnhardt.

"And we can sent them funds, or if there is equipment they need, we can order it from here, where we have electricity and internet and a reachable place, and we can deliver it to them."

Both men said they were stunned by what they saw, noting that "pictures don't do it justice." They said it will be years before life is back to normal, if it ever is in some spots.

Captain Kevin Strobel, who has volunteered with Granite Quarry for 24 years, was helping pack box meals of chicken, beans, slaw, bread and a dessert, said "fire departments are a close family, so it's natural that we would want to help them."

"Most of us started out as volunteers on small departments," said Captain Brian Peeples, a full-time firefighter in Granite Quarry. "I started out when I was 13. Most of us got into this because we want to help. And this is a family — a firefighter is a firefighter, whatever the department — so it's very important for us to donate to them."

Bat Cave is an unincorporated community in Henderson County along the banks of the Broad River, within the Hickory Nut Gorge. A bridge that connected the Bat Cave community to the outside world was so damaged during Helene that people have used a makeshift ladder and makeshift bridge to get in and out of the area on foot, and repairs to that are still underway. That made it all the more difficult for first responders to actually reach Bat Cave, but Granite Quarry and Kannapolis crews managed to get to the community and help with both search and rescue and going door to door to check on those who were cut off for days.

"I think we'll always have a connection with them," said Chambers.

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Ester Marsh: Love and compassion

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Ester Marsh: Love and compassion

Published 12:00 am Saturday, October 12, 2024

By Ester Marsh

I am humbled with the outpour of our support for western North Carolinians who have suffered great losses due to Hurricane Helene.

The N.C. Emergency Center has activated the J.F. Hurley Family YMCA as an active emergency shelter for those displaced in western N.C. from Hurricane Helene. These residents have been airlifted from WNC with very few belongings. I am proud to say that we were a pet-friendly shelter so people could take in their beloved pets when they will sheltered at our YMCA branch.

As soon as it was posted to social media, the outpour was humbling. My dear friend Rebekah Julian, owner and veterinarian of Lazy 5 Vets, immediately contacted us that she would donate her services for the pets coming to the shelter. Tim Steinman from Animal Care Center of Salisbury has also donated his services. Pastor Brad from His Table Church, who worships at our YMCA on Sunday mornings, did a live video. I am so proud of our community. The outpour was truly overwhelming.

As Pastor Brad said in the live video, "my hope in humanity is increasing by what I have witnessed today." We received so many donations and thousands of dollars in gift cards. Pastor Brad asked for Walmart gift cards as they can buy anything they need there, and I believe all of them were bought by the gracious people of Rowan County because last week, no Walmart gift card was to be found. Huge loads of donations have been send to western North Carolina as the need is still tremendous. We are still taking donations at all six of our Rowan Cabarrus YMCA branches (J.F. Hurley, Fred Corriher, Saleeby/Fisher, Kannapolis, West Cabarrus and Harrisburg.)

The shelter at the J.F. Hurley YMCA was set up for immediate, short-term relief. The shelter has now moved to Hudson where they have a bigger space and where the relief is long term and closer to their actual homes so they can start the rebuilding process. What I am most proud of — we stepped up when needed, we didn't care what religion, political views, thoughts or ideas people have. We stepped up and helped each other. You would think it's a no brainer, right?

I believe in God, and I love people of all races, whatever religion or political views. With this overwhelming support of our community, not once was there a question asked if the donations were going to a particular faith, religion or people, and it never should. Humanity is demonstrated through love, generosity, empathy, respect and caring. And Salisbury and Rowan County, you did it! I am so proud how we as a whole can truly move mountains with love, respect and caring for all. Western North Carolina still needs us, especially in the coming months, we must continue our assistance to those in need. And we also must remember, it could have easily been us.

Ester H. Marsh is associate executive director and director of healthy living at the J.F. Hurley Family YMCA and proud resident of Rowan County.

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Ashlie Miller: Songs from the storm

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Ashlie Miller: Songs from the storm

Published 12:00 am Saturday, October 12, 2024

By Post Lifestyles

By Ashlie Miller

By now, you have heard of many creative ways to support Hurricane Helene victims in our state. Many artists have joined together to hold concerts or create an album to raise money for them. The devastation has inspired musicians and singers to write songs based on their sorrow and care for a place they call "home." No doubt those who have or had a home in that tragically hit area have written the most touching songs.

I think the song that has touched me most is from a video shared on social media of an anonymous man in the Asheville area dressed in a dingy T-shirt, sweatpants and a pair of slides covering his feet. After a relief worker brings the residents immediate aid, one recipient regrets that he cannot offer something to express his gratitude. Then he remembers what he does have — a gift of song. Grabbing his fiddle, he breaks into melody — perhaps a mixture of lament and overwhelming gratitude.

Thanks to autotuning and big collaborations with well-known writers, almost anyone can write or play a good song. The music from the heart, often a hurt heart, is most meaningful. This is not a new thing. One can open 1-2 Samuel in the Bible and read selected chapters in the Psalms to see the stories that prompted the greatest songwriter (King David) to write some of the most celebrated and sung songs. As I read the Psalms, I often skip past the chapter's introduction (or song) to get straight to the poetry, but there is so much life in the simple notations (if your Bible has them). I am amazed at how many psalms David wrote while escaping the hand of Saul or other enemies, trapped in a cave or even struggling with his own sinfulness.

David often uses his personal stories of God's goodness in tragedy to set a pattern of praise that others can follow to write songs of gratitude and praise. It reminds me of 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 where Paul says that because of God's great love and comfort for us as believers in our afflictions, we are able to comfort others in any affliction — even messy, catastrophic ones.

We are already witnessing this in so much of our Appalachia family — stories (and songs) of grace and courage, sadness and woe, and hope and rebuilding. Many of them are still waiting to hear the music.

Do you have a song birthed from a storm in your life? It may be time to share it with someone currently in a storm or just coming out of one (literally or figuratively). Help them to find their song through your encouragement, even if you survived a very different storm.

Ashlie Miller and her family reside in Concord but have many friends and family in western NC. Our prayers and support are for them now and down the road.

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