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# The Fayetteville Observer

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2024 | FAYOBSERVER.COM

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

German shepherd Onna leans over the edge of a raft during a search operation on the French Broad River on Friday.  
PHOTOS BY GABY VELASQUEZ/EL PASO TIMES

## Recovering the lost a grim task in NC

Teams scour difficult  
terrain for Helene victims

Rick Jervis  
USA TODAY

WALNUT ISLAND RIVER PARK, N.C. — For three decades, Mitch Hampton has led tourists on whitewater rafting adventures along the French Broad River north of Asheville, North Carolina.

On a recent afternoon, his raft held a grimmer crew: two volunteers, a North Carolina State Bureau of Investigations

agent and Onna, a 6-year-old black German shepherd trained to detect human remains.

They were looking for bodies. When the raft slid by a fallen tree, Onna's ears perked up and put her black paws on the raft's bow. Hampton and the others paddled to the shoreline and let Onna jump out, her nose to the ground.

Hampton, a volunteer at the local fire department, has lent his skills — and rafts and employees — to the grisly effort

See HELENE, Page 3A

Alex Briggs-Allison clips a life vest on Leila, a cadaver dog, as they prepare for a search and rescue operation on the French Broad River on Friday.

## Hurricane strengthens to Category 4

John Bacon  
USA TODAY

Hurricane Milton strengthened to a major Category 4 storm early Monday, driving sustained winds of 150 mph as it rolled across the Gulf of Mexico bound for what could be a devastating crash along Florida's already storm-battered western coast.

The storm rapidly intensified, strengthening from a Category 2 storm in a couple of hours. The National Hurricane Center has issued hurricane watches across portions of Florida and warned that parts of the state could be overwhelmed by life-threatening storm surge, flooding rain and damaging winds.

Milton is forecast to remain an “extremely dangerous” hurricane of at least Category 4 strength for the next couple of days. A Category 4 hurricane features sustained winds of 130-156 mph.

Mexico has issued a Hurricane Warning for the coast of the Yucatan Peninsula from Celestun to Rio Lagartos. Some weakening is then forecast before the hurricane reaches the coast, but Milton “is still likely to be a large and powerful hurricane at landfall in Florida,” National Hurricane Center specialist Jack Beven wrote in an advisory.

Rainfall is expected to total 5-10 inches in some areas of the state that were saturated even before Hurricane Helene smashed ashore less than two weeks ago. Isolated communities could see 15 inches, the hurricane center said. What could be a deadly storm surge of 8-12 feet is possible for more than 200 miles of coastline — with Tampa in the middle.

See HURRICANE, Page 2A

## Everything to know about use of Real IDs in North Carolina

Joseph Pierre  
Fayetteville Observer  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Beginning May 7, 2025, you'll be required to have a Real ID-compliant driver's license or ID card or other federally approved form of identification to fly domestically in the United States.

According to the Real ID Act of 2005, Real IDs are being implemented to strengthen Homeland Security and protect the authentication and issuance procedure standards of identification documents.

Here's what you need to know about

See REAL ID, Page 2A

A sample Real ID version of a North Carolina driver license.

PROVIDED BY NC DIVISION OF MOTOR VEHICLES

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