

Gov. Cooper declares state of emergency ahead of Hurricane Helene, Ed Sheeran concert to go on 'rain or shine'

September 25, 2024 | Chronicle, The (Duke University) (Durham, NC) Author: Zoe Kolenovsky| Section: News| 480 Words OpenURL Link

Gov. Roy Cooper declared a state of emergency Wednesday afternoon as North Carolina braces for the arrival of Hurricane Helene ahead of Duke's Centennial Founders' Day and Homecoming Celebration Weekend.

Rain is expected to clear by Friday afternoon in time for Duke's concert featuring Ed Sheeran at 7:30 p.m. in Wallace Wade Stadium. The University said the event would go on "rain or shine" in a Tuesday morning email to ticket holders, noting that free ponchos will be available in the stadium.

Helene, which was still spinning in the Gulf of Mexico Wednesday evening, strengthened into a Category 1 storm that morning. The National Hurricane Center is projecting the storm to rapidly intensify into a Category 4 hurricane before making landfall in Florida Thursday.

North Carolina likely won't see significant effects from Helene until Friday, when the storm's outer edges are projected to pass over western and central areas of the state. Cooper cautioned residents to prepare for "flash flooding, numerous landslides, damaging debris flows, slope failures across steep terrain and riverine flooding" in portions of the state.

"Now is the time for North Carolinians to prepare, make sure emergency kits are up to date and pay attention to the weather alerts in your area," he said.

The Raleigh area will likely see around 1.5 inches of rain Friday and could also face flash flooding and isolated tornadoes.

Some county school systems and community colleges across the state have announced closures in advance of the storm.

Duke's Emergency Management website lists a number of resources in the event of extreme weather and advises community members to monitor local news and the DukeALERT website for the most updated information. Additional resources can be found on the National Weather Service's Hurricane Preparedness website and Ready.gov's Hurricanes page.

Florida is expected to bear the brunt of Helene's impact, with potentially "catastrophic and deadly" storm surges across the state's west coast that could reach up to 20 feet and wind gusts of up to 130 mph in some places.

The hurricane is forecasted to be one of the largest storms to hit the region in recent history, with only three other hurricanes since 1988 measuring larger than Helene's greatest projected breadth. The governors of Florida, Georgia and South Carolina declared states of emergency alongside Cooper.

Helene is the eighth named storm of the Atlantic hurricane season, which the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration had predicted in May to be one of the busiest on record. It follows Hurricane Debby in August, which was downgraded to a tropical storm by the time it reached North Carolina but caused over 100,000 power outages, significant property damage and four deaths in the state.

Zoe Kolenovsky is a Trinity junior and news editor of The Chronicle's 120th volume.

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Shearin' for Sheeran: A groundbreaking groundskeeping challenge in Wallace Wade Stadium

September 25, 2024 | Chronicle, The (Duke University) (Durham, NC) Author: Abby DiSalvo | Section: News | 656 Words OpenURL Link

For two nights in a row, Brooks Field will look as "perfect" as Ed Sheeran's No. 1 single.

At least, that's the plan. With less than 24 hours between the concert and football game against North Carolina, Duke's groundskeeping and athletic operations teams face a remarkable challenge: preserving a playing surface and fan experience across two blockbuster events.

"Our number one priority is to make sure that when our team hits the field on Saturday, they do not have any idea [that] something other than a football game has taken place," wrote Ian Christie, Duke's senior superintendent for landscape services, in an email to The Chronicle.

That means Sheeran won't perform from Wallace Wade's playing surface itself. He and other artists will instead entertain concert-goers atop the strip of synthetic turf lining the home sideline of the stadium. Unlike the live grass that makes up the field, this area won't die when covered with a stage.

"Everything is built out and designed to maximize or minimize impact to the actual planting surface," said Bob Weiseman, Duke's deputy director of athletics/operations and capital projects.

But though the location choice minimizes potential damages, hosting the concert still places a heavy workload on Duke's groundskeepers and athletic operations teams. Under the light of a thousand stars, they'll need to quickly transform the pop arena back into a stadium fit for a rivalry football game.

First, they'll break down the stage — a logistical nightmare, given that it involves driving a multi-thousand-pound tractor trailer across Brooks Field's delicate bermudagrass. Protecting the playing surface requires laying down a three-quarter-inch layer of plywood by hand, then topping it with a material called SignaRoad that allows forklifts and trucks to traverse the field.

Limiting the duration of this ground coverage proves key: If it's left in place for too long, the grass won't survive. During stage set-up, the materials were limited to five hours on the field. A three-hour timeline is projected for removal early Saturday morning.

But even once the stage is gone, Duke's groundskeepers will have a long to-do list: replacing benches, mowing and re-painting the field as necessary. The kicker?

"All of this needs to be done before about 9 a.m. ... for the football teams to have access to set up their equipment," Christie wrote.

And though time is of the essence, it's not the only concern.

"We add weather to this week, and it greatly adds stress for both events," Christie wrote, alluding to the week's previous storms and Friday's uncertain precipitation forecasts.

Though athletic operations teams plan to monitor Tropical Storm Helene as it rolls in, the tight schedule means only high winds or electrical activity could prompt a change of plans.

"Timing is important," Weiseman said. "We couldn't do any type of long delay or pushback and still be ready for the football game."

The groundskeeping team has overcome challenges before. Last year, they dealt with a field storming, sporadic storms and three home games within 13 days. Their excellence and innovation in the face of these obstacles won Duke its first SFMA College and University Football Field of the Year Award.

That being said, the demands of Duke's Centennial Founders' Day and Homecoming Weekend celebrations surpass anything the field team has experienced. By Weiseman's estimations, between 100 and 150 staff members will be involved in the overnight tear-down of the concert and rebuilding of the football field.

"This is completely new," Christie writes. "I personally like the challenge ... Many things can be accomplished when you put together a great team and invest in greatness."

Brooks Field rests in capable hands this weekend. But while Ed Sheeran fans can sing about dancing "barefoot in the grass" in Wallace Wade, they'll have to live out the lyrics some other time.

Abby DiSalvo

Abby DiSalvo is a Trinity sophomore and assistant Blue Zone editor of The Chronicle's 120th volume.

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Florida girds for arrival of Helene as powerful hurricane

September 25, 2024 | Courier-Times, The (Roxboro, NC) Author: Gianrigo MARLETTA| Section: National | 524 Words OpenURL Link

Thousands of residents on Wednesday began evacuating parts of coastal Florida as the US state braces for Hurricane Helene, forecast to barrel ashore as a powerful, potentially deadly storm.

Helene strengthened into a hurricane mid-morning in the Gulf of Mexico and is "expected to bring life-threatening storm surge, damaging winds, and flooding rains to a large portion of Florida and the Southeastern United States," the National Hurricane Center in Miami said in its latest bulletin.

Maximum sustained winds have increased to near 80 miles (130 kilometers) per hour with higher gusts. "Additional strengthening is forecast, and Helene is expected to be a major hurricane when it reaches the Florida Big Bend coast Thursday evening," the NHC added.

Governor Ron DeSantis has issued a state of emergency for nearly all of Florida's 67 counties, mobilized the National Guard and positioned thousands of personnel ahead of possible search and rescue, power restoration and road clearing operations.

After brushing Mexico's Yucatan peninsula, home to multiple tourist hotspots including Cancun, Helene could roar ashore as a major Category 3 or even more powerful Category 4 hurricane, on the five-level Saffir-Simpson scale, the Florida Division of Emergency Management warned.

Ten Florida counties have announced mandatory partial evacuation orders, while two have ordered the evacuation of all residents. DeSantis said at least 12 health care facilities, from hospitals to nursing homes, have already begun evacuations and more are expected to follow.

- Whole state bracing -

"You're going to have impacts of this storm... really all across the Florida peninsula," DeSantis told a press conference in Tampa.

While he said a "direct impact" was likely in the Tallahassee region, communities across a wide swath of northwest Florida -- including Tampa Bay, an area of more than three million residents -- faced the dangerous threats of storm surge, heavy rain and fierce winds.

In St. Petersburg, adjacent to Tampa, long lines of cars were seen at multiple centers where sand was being distributed for people to fill sandbags.

Teacher Lorraine Major, seen making her own preparations, has lived in Florida her whole life. "You get used to it," she said of the multiple storms and hurricanes that batter her state every year.

"But these last couple of years, the hurricanes are getting really, really bad," the 44-year-old told AFP.

Hurricane warnings have already been announced for a 250-mile stretch of coastline, essentially from just north of Tampa to just shy of Panama City, on the Florida panhandle.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has warned storm surges could reach as high as 10 to 15 feet (three to 4.5 meters).

If forecasts are confirmed, Helene could bring sustained winds of more than 110 miles per hour -- making it potentially the most powerful hurricane to hit the United States in more than a year.

Hurricane Idalia, a Category 3 storm, hit northwestern Florida in August 2023.

"This does have the potential to exceed that," DeSantis said of Helene.

The 2024 Atlantic hurricane season, which began on June 1 and will end on November 30, has been less busy than expected.

Researchers say climate change likely plays a role in the rapid intensification of storms, because there is more energy in a warmer ocean for them to feed on.

bur-mlm/nro

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Florida State, Florida, Georgia on high alert as Hurricane Helene nears landfall

September 25, 2024 | Courier-Times, The (Roxboro, NC) Author: Field Level Media| Section: National | 483 Words OpenURL Link

Hurricane Helene began building speed Wednesday with Tallahassee, Fla., and the campus of Florida State University projected to feel the full force of the storm late Thursday night. Head coach Mike Norvell and the Seminoles are scheduled to play in Dallas at SMU on Saturday night and could change travel plans from the current itinerary, which calls for the FSU team charter to leave Florida on Friday morning. The team marching band bus to SMU was canceled earlier in the week. "We are still monitoring all things with the storm," Norvell said. "We have tentative plans in place, and we have A, B and C (contingency plans). If anything needs to be adjusted we will go from there." Florida A&M, also in Tallahassee, postponed its scheduled home football game this weekend with Alabama A&M to Nov. 29. Norvell didn't indicate Florida State could reschedule its road trip to SMU, but said Tuesday there was only one priority. "The No. 1 thing is the health and the well-being of this team and the staff and everyone that's involved. We have our plans if we need to adapt and adjust," Norvell said. FSU closed its campus on Wednesday. The University of Florida announced it will close its Gainesville campus starting Thursday, postponed a soccer match scheduled for Thursday against Tennessee and canceled Friday's swim meet against Nova Southeastern. While the Gators' football team is on a bye week, other college football games could be impacted. Parts of South Carolina could see "10-15 inches of rain" according to the National Weather Service. No. 2-ranked Georgia visits Alabama on Saturday night in Tuscaloosa, which is about 320 miles northwest of Tallahassee. But Bulldogs head coach Kirby Smart said this week the Southeastern Conference and weather authorities are heavily involved in monitoring Helene in the event changes to pregame events and travel out of Athens would become necessary. Some models projecting the path of the hurricane place Atlanta and Athens in front of Helene. While the University of Georgia is 275 miles from Tallahassee, the Weather Channel indicated Helene could become a Category 3 hurricane with significant risk from sustained winds inland to Atlanta gusting over 80 mph and potentially record rainfall. Georgia Tech said its Atlanta campus was open on Wednesday and any changes would be communicated via the school website and social media channels. The Yellow Jackets are off this week. Further north, warnings are already active in Knoxville, Tenn., where the Volunteers are also on a bye week. "We've been following it and watching it with the SEC office and our in-house people at Delta," Smart said. "It looks like it's trending more and more eastward which may affect us, but less and less affect towards the game. My biggest concern is the travel and our travel arrangements. Being able to get there in a convenient way is my concern right now." --Field Level Media

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Florida girds for arrival of 'catastrophic' Hurricane Helene

September 25, 2024 | Courier-Times, The (Roxboro, NC) Author: Gianrigo Marletta, with Chandan Khanna in Crawfordville Section: National | 682 Words OpenURL Link

An increasingly powerful hurricane threatening "catastrophic," dangerous storm surges and flooding was forecast to smash into Florida's Gulf coast on Thursday, as thousands of residents evacuated towns along the US state's shoreline.

Helene strengthened into a hurricane mid-morning Wednesday in the Gulf of Mexico and is "expected to bring life-threatening storm surge, damaging winds, and flooding rains to a large portion of Florida and the Southeastern United States," the National Hurricane Center in Miami said in its latest bulletin.

Maximum sustained winds have increased to 85 miles (137 kilometers) per hour with higher gusts, as the storm moves north at 12 mph.

"Strengthening is forecast, and Helene is expected to be a major hurricane when it reaches the Florida Big Bend coast Thursday evening," the NHC added.

The storm now has the potential to roar ashore as an intensely powerful Category 4 hurricane, on the five-level Saffir-Simpson scale, potentially with sustained winds of 130 miles per hour, the center said.

"A catastrophic and deadly storm surge is likely along portions of the Florida Big Bend coast, where inundation could reach as high as 20 feet (six meters) above ground level, along with destructive waves," according to the NHC.

The storm also has potential to "penetrate well inland," it added. Several states are in the warning cone, and Atlanta, a Georgia metropolis hundreds of miles from the Gulf Coast and whose region is home to five million people, is forecast to experience close to tropical storm-force winds and heavy rain into Friday.

President Joe Biden was briefed on the storm Wednesday.

"The entire Biden-Harris Administration stands ready to provide further assistance to Florida, and other states in the path of the storm, as needed," the White House said in a statement.

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis has issued a state of emergency for nearly all of Florida's 67 counties, including Miami-Dade. He has mobilized the National Guard and positioned thousands of personnel to prepare for possible search and rescue operations and power restoration.

"The impacts are going to be far beyond the eye of the storm," DeSantis said as he urged Floridians to rush preparations to completion and evacuate if ordered.

Helene earlier lashed Mexico's Yucatan peninsula, home to multiple tourist hotspots, including Cancun.

By Wednesday afternoon, the storm's outer bands were buffeting the southern Florida Keys.

Sixteen Florida counties have announced mandatory partial evacuation orders, while two have ordered the evacuation of all residents.

DeSantis said at least 62 health care facilities, from hospitals to nursing homes, have already begun evacuations.

- Whole state bracing -

A "direct impact" was likely in the Tallahassee region, where coastal communities already looked like ghost towns by Wednesday afternoon.

In Crawfordville, potentially in the storm's direct path, wheelchair-bound residents of the Eden Springs Nursing and Rehab Center were being placed on coach buses for evacuation.

Other locals were seen loading up on gas and supplies, filling sandbags and boarding up homes and businesses.

Communities across a wide swath of northwest Florida -- including Tampa Bay, an area of more than three million residents -- faced the dangerous threats of storm surge, heavy rain and fierce winds.

In St. Petersburg, adjacent to Tampa, cars lined up at supply donation or distribution centers while people filled sandbags.

Teacher Lorraine Major, seen making her own preparations, has lived in Florida her whole life. "You get used to it," she said of the multiple storms and hurricanes that batter her state every year.

"But these last couple of years, the hurricanes are getting really, really bad," the 44-year-old told AFP in St. Petersburg.

In nearby Clearwater, resident Jasper MacFarland laid sand bags at his house entrance.

"I expect the water to come up and I just don't want it to get in the house," he said.

A 250-mile stretch of coastline, essentially from Tampa Bay to just shy of Panama City, on the Florida panhandle is under hurricane warning.

If forecasts are confirmed, Helene would become the most powerful hurricane to hit the US in more than a year.

Category 3 Hurricane Idalia hit northwestern Florida in August 2023.

Researchers say climate change likely plays a role in the rapid intensification of storms, because there is more energy in a warmer ocean for them to feed on.

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Pass rushes key as Eagles visit Buccaneers

September 25, 2024 | Courier-Times, The (Roxboro, NC) Author: Field Level Media| Section: National | 541 Words OpenURL Link

The Tampa Bay Buccaneers have surrendered 12 sacks while recording none of their own in their past two games. Flipping that script could be critical to Sunday's result as the Philadelphia Eagles visit Tampa, Fla., for a battle of 2-1 teams. Baker Mayfield was sacked seven times in last weekend's stunning 26-7 home loss to the previously winless Denver Broncos. For the second straight week, he threw for fewer than 200 yards and tossed an interception. Tampa Bay enters Week 4 ranked 26th in the NFL in total offense and 27th in rushing, but Mayfield refused to place all the blame for his dirty uniform on the offensive line. "There were a few pressures this week that were actually on me," Mayfield said. "There's a mindset of trying to fix the protections when they're bringing some of these pressures, and there's also a mindset to snap the ball and get it out of your hands. "Not all of that is on the O-line." The last time Philadelphia visited Raymond James Stadium, Mayfield threw for 337 yards and three touchdowns in a 32-9 wild-card playoff victory on Jan. 15 of this year. The Eagles sacked Mayfield four times in that loss -- the same number their pass rush has generated through three games this year. Philadelphia sacked Atlanta's Kirk Cousins only once in a last-minute 22-21 loss at home in Week 2, then took down Derek Carr only once in a last-minute 15-12 win at New Orleans in Week 3. Second-year Eagles defensive tackle Jalen Carter is still looking for his first sack of the season, but he shined against the Saints with four tackles (two for losses), two batted passes and a quarterback hit. "Obviously, this past game was his best game by far," defensive coordinator Vic Fangio said. "And hopefully that will set the trend moving forward. I don't know what actually triggered it, other than he, and we as a D-Line unit, didn't play good in the previous game. So I'm sure that had something to do with it." The headliners for this contest on offense include Eagles running back Saquon Barkley and Buccaneers wide receiver Chris Godwin. Barkley leads the NFL in rushing (351 yards) and is tied for the lead in touchdowns from scrimmage (five) through his first three games with Philadelphia. Godwin already has 21 catches and has scored touchdowns in all three games. Including the playoffs, Tampa Bay has won five of the past six meetings dating back to 2015. Both teams are keeping an eye on injuries and the weather, with Tropical Storm Helene expected to reach hurricane strength before striking Florida's Gulf Coast on Thursday night. Eagles star receiver A.J. Brown (hamstring) still wasn't practicing Wednesday after missing the last two games. No. 2 wideout DeVonta Smith and right tackle Lane Johnson are both in concussion protocol, while right guard Mekhi Becton (finger) and left guard Landon Dickerson (wrist) were listed as limited participants. Defensive lineman Calijah Kancey (calf) and safety Antoine Winfield Jr. (foot) did not practice for the Buccaneers on Wednesday. Limited participants included defensive tackle Vita Vea (knee), left tackle Tristan Wirfs (knee), rookie running back Bucky Irving (hamstring) and wideouts Godwin (neck) and Mike Evans (knee). --Field Level Media

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Zoo's electric-vehicle event canceled because of weather

September 25, 2024 | Courier-Tribune, The (Asheboro, NC) Author: COURIER-TRIBUNE STAFF| Section: Local | 123 Words OpenURL Link

The National Drive Electric Week event that had been scheduled to take place Friday from 9 a.m. to noon at the North Carolina Zoo has been canceled because of the forecast of bad weather, Randolph Electric Membership Corp. announced.

"Because of anticipated adverse weather conditions from Tropical Storm Helene, Randolph EMC and the North Carolina Zoo regrettably must cancel this open-air event," the announcement said.

Heavy rains and strong winds are expected later this week, and if the storm continues on a track toward this area, Randolph Electric workers may have to work to deal with the storm effects.

Those interested in learning about a special rate for EV owners through the REMC Electric Vehicle Utility Program can find more information on the cooperative's website.

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Governor declares State of Emergency ahead of Hurricane Helene

September 25, 2024 | Daily Record, The (Dunn, NC) Author: For the Record | Section: News | 469 Words OpenURL Link

RALEIGH — On Wednesday, Gov. Roy Cooper declared a State of Emergency ahead of Hurricane Helene as North Carolina prepares for severe weather impacts that could threaten life and property across North Carolina through Saturday morning.

Helene is forecast to cause significant impacts including flash flooding, numerous landslides, damaging debris flows, slope failures across steep terrain, and riverine flooding across portions of western North Carolina and portions of central North Carolina. Flooding may occur in areas that do not typically flood.

All North Carolinians should be weather aware and prepared. Tropical storm force winds are possible across western North Carolina late Thursday into Friday. With already saturated soils, trees could fall causing widespread power outages. There is a potential for tornadoes with this storm system. Tornadoes from tropical systems can quickly spin up with little warning.

"Helene threatens heavy rain, flash flooding, landslides, and damaging winds to the mountains and Piedmont areas of our state," said Cooper. "Now is the time for North Carolinians to prepare, make sure emergency kits are up-to-date and pay attention to the weather alerts in your area."

The State Emergency Response Team is deploying equipment, personnel, and resources to support impacted communities, including, North Carolina Swift Water Rescue Teams and Urban Search and Rescue Teams, resources from the North Carolina National Guard, and specialized personnel for communications and incident management support.

North Carolina residents are advised to stay aware and keep a watch on the forecast. State officials advise these tips to make sure your family is personally prepared:

Have multiple ways to receive emergency information, including watches and warnings. Make sure emergency alerts are enabled on your cell phone and monitor local new outlets and the National Weather Service.

Ensure that you have multiple ways to receive warnings, especially with the potential for severe storms to be moving through during nighttime hours.

Have an emergency plan. Know where you would go if you need to evacuate, especially if you live in a flood prone area.

Gather emergency supplies or refresh your emergency kit. Visit ReadyNC.gov for info on how to build an emergency kit.

Never drive through flooded roadways or around barricades. Turn around. Don't drown.

Make sure you know where to seek shelter if a tornado warning is issued for your area.

Check to see if your local emergency management office offers emergency alert services for its residents. You can visit your county government website for more information.

Avoid unnecessary travel. If you do not need to drive, stay home. You can find current roadway conditions by visiting DriveNC.Gov.

The State of Emergency facilitates state emergency operations and allows for the North Carolina Department of Transportation and the North Carolina Department of Public Safety to take action to ensure the quick movement of utility vehicles to eliminate power outages, vehicles carrying essential supplies such as food, medicine and fuel or transporting livestock, poultry and crops.

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Game of the Week: Westover at Central

September 25, 2024 | Daily Record, The (Dunn, NC) Author: Donnell Coley | Section: Sports | 415 Words OpenURL Link

A special Thursday edition for Daily Record Game of the Week glory pits two All American Conference contenders against one another.

Harnett Central (3-1, 1-0 AAC) welcomes Westover (3-1, 0-1 AAC) a day earlier than scheduled due to Hurricane Helene. It'll be one of the four league matchups played that evening as everyone tries to beat the impending high winds and wet weather expected Friday.

Here's what you need to know as the two teams tangle in what figures to be a close contest.

Last time out

Central eased into the conference opener against nearby foe Western Harnett, but eventually surged to a 42-6 road win last Friday.

The Trojans' high-powered offense showed balance for the fourth straight outing.

They collected over 200 yards rushing, led by Ethyn Muhammad's first trip over the century mark this fall. Landon Culbreth added 72 yards on the ground with a score, while also posting a pair of TD receptions. First-year starter Koby Howard finished 14 of 22 for 150 yards and three TDs to go with an early interception.

On defense, HC gave up a couple of chunk plays and one touchdown in the first quarter. But Deacon Stewart, Trent Haney and the Trojans' front seven quieted any comeback talks.

Haney led the group with 12 total tackles, two resulting in a loss, while Stewart notched four stops in the backfield. Cornerback Kihmarie Stacker put things away for good with his scoop-and-score in the fourth quarter.

Wrecking Wolverines

Westover is coming off its first loss of what looks to be a promising 2024 campaign.

A group with most of its roster back went undefeated through nonconference play before falling to Cumberland County rival Pine Forest, 24-22, in overtime last week.

The wolverines defense starred, especially in the final two periods. After giving up 16 in the second quarter, the group pitched a second-half shutout and even notched a safety to tie things late.

Nasir Wells paced the Wolverines offense with 111 yards on 14 carries. Richard Vanderhost posted nearly 100 yards combined as a passer and runner while also tossing a TD.

More info

This marks a fourth meeting between the two sides since AAC competition began in 2021.

HC picked up its first win in the series following last year's 20-14 road win. Before that, Westover earned double-digit victories in back-to-back seasons.

It's a matchup that features the league's top passer, Howard, and best rusher, Wells.

Thursday's kickoff in Angier is slated for 7 p.m. Follow live coverage on social media via www.twitter.com, or the 'X' app, at @MyDailyRecordNC and through Facebook using @TheDailyRecord.

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Prep Spotlight: Area football games moved to Thursday

September 25, 2024 | Daily Reflector, The (Greenville, NC) Author: The Daily Reflector | Section: High Schools | 329 Words OpenURL Link

The aftereffects of Hurricane Helene are expected to arrive in the region by Friday, with a strong chance of win, rain and storms coming with them.

With plenty of time to make the necessary adjustments, all of the area's eight local high school football teams will play Thursday night instead of Friday.

Among the games is the Big Carolina Conference showdown between South Central and J.H. Rose. It's a game that usually promises drama, although this year's installment is a contest between teams that have had opposite starts to the season.

South Central is riding high at 5-0, while Rose has endured a shocking 0-5 start to its campaign.

Across town, D.H. Conley (2-2) will welcome BCC foe Northside Jacksonville (2-3) a night earlier than planned in hopes of overcoming last week's loss at Northern Nash.

In the Eastern Plains Conference, Farmville Central will put its perfect 5-0 record on the line against scrappy Ayden-Grifton (1-3, 1-0), which finally got over the hump in overtime last week against West Craven.

North Pitt (3-1, 1-0) will make its trip to Morehead City a night early to take on 2-1 West Carteret on Thursday night.

Last week, the Panthers outlasted rival Greene Central, which is idle this week.

The final game on the slate is 2-3 Lawrence Academy visiting 2-2 John Paul II, as the Saints try to rebound from their rivalry loss last week at Parrott Academy.

Standings

Three of the four local EPC football teams opened league play with wins, putting them atop the league standings. North Pitt, Farmville Central and Ayden-Grifton are all 1-0 while Greene Central's loss to the Panthers last week put them at 0-1.

Also stuck at 0-1 are SouthWest Edgecombe (lost to Farmville Central) and West Craven (lost to Ayden-Grifton), and Washington is still 0-0.

In the BCC, South Central, Jacksonville and New Bern are all riding high with 1-0 marks, while traditional power Havelock is among the 0-1 teams along with J.H. Rose and Northside Jacksonville.

D.H. Conley has yet to play a conference game.

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Weather Permitting: What can Fayetteville expect from Hurricane Helene?

September 25, 2024 | Fayetteville Observer, The: Web Edition Articles (NC) Author: Chick Jacobs | Section: News | 523 Words

OpenURL Link

Editor's note: See Friday's story on Tropical Storm Helene here.

Hurricane Helene continues on a devastating collision course with the Florida Big Bend area late Thursday.

Fortunately for the Cape Fear region, a strong western steering pattern will prevent the storm from unleashing its wrath on our part of North Carolina. But the combination of high wind and tropical rainfall may cause havoc in the Foothills and mountains.

Locally, Fayetteville will likely see on-and-off showers into the weekend, with occasional breezy winds. Further south, toward the coast, a slim chance of severe weather, including quick spin-up tornadoes, can't be ruled out.

By late Friday, clouds will ease and the region will look at mild weather with a slight chance of afternoon rainfall.

Live hurricane updates: Helene reaches hurricane status ahead of landfall in Florida:

Here's the setup

Wednesday afternoon, Hurricane Helene was plowing into the Gulf of Mexico with near-ideal conditions for quick development. Expectations are for the storm to become a major hurricane, with winds topping 125 mph, before hitting the Big Bend area of Florida.

From there, a strong low-pressure system to the west will quickly draw Helene through Georgia into Tennessee rather than up into the Carolinas. However, the storm is a bit lop-sided, with much of the strongest wind and rain on the eastern side.

As such, and given the size of the storm, much of western and central North Carolina will see heavy rain and wind on Friday. That's especially bad news for areas to our north, which have already seen heavy rain this week. Tropical storm advisories are also posted along the coast up to Little River.

For Fayetteville and the region, Thursday should be dry, but muggy, with light scattered rainfall popping up in the afternoon. Highs of about 85 are likely. Overnight, as Helene approaches Florida, extreme outer bands will slide inland in southeastern North Carolina, moving north and west.

Rainfall should arrive in Fayetteville around sunrise, with a morning low of about 70. Clouds, rain and some gusts will linger through the morning, easing up in the afternoon. Since most local high schools moved their games to Thursday night, lingering showers shouldn't be an issue. It looks like Fayetteville will pick up between 1-2 inches of rain in that stretch, more to the west and south, less to the east.

The weekend

With all the tropical moisture hanging around, there's a slight chance of popcorn showers on Saturday, but things generally look dry with a high in the low to mid-80s. Sunday looks similar, perhaps a couple of degrees cooler with afternoon showers popping up.

Down the road

Monday should be generally sunny and mild with highs in Fayetteville of about 80. There's also a chance of afternoon showers.

The rest of the week looks seasonal as we head into October. Highs will be about 80 in Fayetteville with lows in the upper 60s. Again, lingering moisture may lead to scattered showers, but nothing serious.

In the tropics

After Helene, a deep gyre pattern persists in the Gulf and Caribbean. This is typical for the late hurricane season, but fast-forming storms can pop up quickly. Stay tuned!

Got a weather question? Chick Jacobs can be reached at ncweathound@gmail.com or NCWeatherhound on X/Twitter..

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• Citation (aglc Style)

Chick Jacobs, 'Weather Permitting: What can Fayetteville expect from Hurricane Helene?', Fayetteville Observer, The: Web Edition Articles (online), 25 Sep 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view? p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BD2F2AA92C2D28>



News Briefs

September 25, 2024 | Franklin Press, The (NC) Section: Briefs | 428 Words Page: A2 OpenURL Link

Public meetings The Macon County Board of Education will meet at 6 p.m. Monday, Sept. 30 at Highlands School. The meeting will be livestreamed, and the link is available on the Macon County Schools website, macon. k12.nc.us.

Stormy weather predicted A storm that is expected to become Hurricane Helene could bring heavy rain to Western North Carolina. In a weather briefing Tuesday morning, the National Weather Service stated heavy rainfall and isolated flash flooding could develop Wednesday afternoon through Wednesday night. The most likely time for widespread heavy rainfall, flash flooding and strong wind guest will be Thursday night through Friday morning. Macon County could receive 4-6 inches of rain, according to forecasts from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

As the storm was still developing on Tuesday, the wind forecast was uncertain since it will depend on the intensity of the storm when it makes windfall. The briefing report stated wind gusts of 35 to 45 mph could be expected Thursday night into Friday morning, based upon the expected storm track and intensity. Damaging wind gusts of more than 50 mph could occur.

Flu vaccine drive-thru clinic Macon County Public Health will hold a drive-thru flu vaccine clinic from 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 25 at the Health Department, located at 1830 Lakeside Dr. This clinic will offer flu vaccinations to residents of all ages. Standard flu vaccine cost: \$38 (for individuals aged 6 months and older) High-dose flu vaccine cost: \$84 (for individuals aged 65 years and older) Attendees should bring their insurance cards if they plan to file insurance. Payments can be made in cash or by check, payable to Macon County Public Health. For more information, please contact Macon County Public Health at 828-349-2081. Come Together The fourth annual Come Together Recovery Rally will be held from 4:30-9 p.m. Friday, Sept. 27 at the gazebo on Town Square in Franklin. Organizer Mary Guercio said the event is an "evening of information, celebration and the continued development of a community of recovering in Franklin." There will be activities for kids and live music by Jackson Grimm and Marshall Ballew. Organizations providing information on resources available include Downtown Door, No Wrong Door, Full Circle Recovery, Hazelwood Healthcare, Men's Challenge of the Smokies, NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness), Smoky Mountain Harm Reduction and WNC Aids Project. Kermes celebration Kermes, a Latin American celebration, will be held at 4 p.m. Friday, Sept. 27 at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church. There will be games for children, music and dancing. (This event was rescheduled from Sept. 13 due to weather.)

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North Florida residents dread another hurricane

September 25, 2024 | Gaston Gazette, The (Gastonia, NC) Author: Ana Goñi-Lessan, James Call , and Jeff Burlew; Tallahassee Democrat Section: News 445 Words Page: A6 OpenURL Link

Everyone is wary in Taylor County, Florida.

That's what Jody Roberts, a lifelong resident of Perry, "Tree Capital of the South," said about the probable hurricane that might hit an already battered Nature Coast.

After Hurricane Idalia, then Hurricane Debby, Florida residents aren't taking any chances, he said.

"We're getting tired of this," Roberts told the USA TODAY Network.

Florida's Big Bend is a likely destination for Tropical Storm Helene's Thursday landfall and a possible Category 3 hurricane, according to forecasters and models.

The system will strengthen over the next day or two as it moves into the Gulf, where rapid intensification is possible, the National Hurricane Center said.

It's still too early to pinpoint the exact location of landfall, but the storm could land in Taylor County again – making it the third time the area has been hit by a hurricane in a little over a year.

It could also veer west and follow the trajectory of Hurricane Michael, a Category 5 hurricane in 2018 that snapped trees like twigs and left a path of destruction across Florida's northern coast.

The storm threatens to make landfall just two weeks shy of the six-year anniversary of Hurricane Michael, which took a heavy toll on Panhandle farms, wiping out timber and other crops.

Jeff Pittman, a fourth-generation peanut and cotton farmer in Jackson County, watched the forecast with trepidation. Michael damaged his peanut crop, destroyed his cotton crop, killed livestock and wrecked barns, fences and irrigation systems.

His JG Farm was prepping for the latest storm's arrival. Just 10 days into peanut harvesting season, he said they stopped the inverters that dig up the crop. He was also making sure generators were in place to supply water to his and his neighbors' cows.

"We're taking all precautions, everything we can think to do," Pittman said. "We're taking this very seriously. It looks like it could be a very serious situation come Thursday."

In Perry, 'we're still suffering'

Michelle Curtis has worked in the forestry industry for more than 50 years, and said the region is still reeling from the one-two punch Idalia and Debby delivered.

Idalia, which made landfall as a Category 3 storm, littered U.S. 98 with tree limbs, branches and broken power poles. More than 300,000 homes across Northeast Florida lost electrical power.

The two storms created about a combined \$500million in agricultural losses, according to a University of Florida IFAS analysis based on producer surveys.

Curtis, who has a tree farm, said Debby laid flat 70 acres of year-and-half old pine she was growing. "We're still suffering," she said.

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• Citation (aglc Style)

Ana Goñi-Lessan, James Call , and Jeff Burlew, Tallahassee Democrat, 'North Florida residents dread another hurricane', *Gaston Gazette, The* (online), 25 Sep 2024 A6 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view? p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BCF6552D08A408>



County braces for Hurricane Helene's impacts

September 25, 2024 | Goldsboro News-Argus, The (NC) Author: Dylan Phillips Brunswick Beacon Editor Section: News 460 Words OpenURL Link

Brunswick County is bracing for potential impacts from Hurricane Helene, as the storm threatens the county just over a week after a tropical cyclone dropped historic rainfall and caused widespread catastrophic flood damage.

Hurricane Helene is expected to make landfall near the Big Bend of Florida on Thursday evening, Sept. 26, the National Weather Service-Wilmington (NWS) said in its Wednesday, Sept. 25 noon update. "Due its large physical size, effects will be felt far away from the storm center, especially to its east. Local impacts will include gusty winds, some areas of flooding, isolated tornadoes, and dangerous surf conditions."

As of Wednesday afternoon, the National Hurricane Center has forecasted Hurricane Helene to make landfall as a Category 4 storm in western Florida before making its way north.

Although not in the storm's direct path currently, southeastern North Carolina and Brunswick County are expected to feel the storm's impacts between Thursday evening, Sept. 26, into Friday, Sept. 27.

Currently, southeastern North Carolina, including Brunswick County, is projected to get between one and two inches of rainfall from Helene, with isolated amounts being potentially higher. The rain could result in isolated flooding.

"Areas hardest hit by last week's heavy rain event will be extra flood prone," NWS noted.

Winds gusts between 30 to 40 miles per hour (mph) are possible, according to NWS, but that is mainly across portions of northeast South Carolina. Winds up to 30 mph are expected in southeast North Carolina.

The county is still reeling from the impacts of Potential Tropical Cyclone 8 that hit Brunswick County on Monday, Sept. 16. Though between two to five inches of rain with some flash flooding was predicted, NWS's rainfall totals indicate between 14 and 20 inches fell in areas during last Monday's storm.

And while Helene's effects on Brunswick County are currently projected to be minor, Brunswick County is preparing for the worst.

Brunswick County Schools (BCS) sent students back to the classroom on a staggered schedule this week. On Wednesday afternoon, BCS has cancelled school and all athletic events at all BCS schools scheduled for Friday in preparation for the storm's potential impacts.

This includes the West Brunswick High School football game at home against Ashley. That game has been rescheduled for Monday, Sept. 30, at 6:30 p.m. WBHS will be back in action later next week when it hosts Hoggard at 7 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 4.

Brunswick County Government in its Sept. 25, 5 p.m. update on the county's response to last week's cyclone said the county is continuing to monitor Helene's path.

North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper has declared a State of Emergency ahead of Hurricane Helene as North Carolina prepares for severe weather impacts that could threaten life and property across North Carolina through Saturday morning.

Find the latest information on Hurricane Helene here: NWS Helene briefings.

• Citation (aglc Style)

Dylan Phillips Brunswick Beacon Editor, 'County braces for Hurricane Helene's impacts', *Goldsboro News-Argus, The* (online), 25 Sep 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BD5333D8FF6DE8



Helene to bring rain, high winds into county

September 25, 2024 | Goldsboro News-Argus, The (NC) Author: Sam Dietrich| Section: Local | 632 Words OpenURL Link

Hurricane Helene is predicted to bring rain and high winds in Wayne County as it moves into the area after it makes landfall along the Florida coast Thursday evening.

The Category 1 hurricane, as of Wednesday afternoon, is predicted to strengthen to a Category 3, with wind speeds expected to hit as high as 130 mph when the hurricane makes landfall in Florida before it curves toward North Carolina, said Nick Luchetti, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Raleigh.

The hurricane is predicted to make landfall along the west Florida coast around 7 p.m. Thursday before moving northwest through Georgia and curve into northwest Tennessee at 7 p.m. Friday, having the storm west of North Carolina. Luchetti said.

"It's expected to move rather fast," Luchetti said. "But it will weaken from a tropical storm to a tropical depression in Tennessee by Friday evening."

Wayne County is predicted to receive close to 1 inch of rain from the storm and wind gusts of 15 to 20 mph on Thursday and at least 25 mph wind gusts on Friday, Luchetti said.

The storm could spawn isolated tornadoes, with the system moving more through central and western North Carolina, he said.

"Luckily enough, Wayne County will likely see the least impacts from the storm," Luchetti said.

Rain will begin in the Wayne County area Thursday night and continue to increase into Friday, Luchetti said.

"It's going to move out of there pretty quick," he said.

Wayne County Emergency Management staff are monitoring the hurricane and predict that there may be some risk of fallen trees, the loss of electricity and river flooding in the area.

Gov. Cooper issued a state of emergency Wednesday and advised all North Carolinians to be aware of the storm's movement and to be prepared. The hurricane could threaten life and property across the state through Saturday, Cooper said.

"Helene threatens heavy rain, flash flooding, landslides, and damaging winds to the mountains and Piedmont areas of our state," Cooper said. "Now is the time for North Carolinians to prepare, make sure emergency kits are up-to-date and pay attention to the weather alerts in your area."

Cooper said the hurricane will cause "significant impacts" across portions of western and central North Carolina, including flash flooding, landslides, damaging debris flows, slope failures across steep terrain and riverine flooding.

With already saturated soils, trees could fall causing widespread power outages. There is a potential for tornadoes with the storm system. Tornadoes from tropical systems can quickly spin up with little warning.

The State Emergency Response Team is deploying equipment, personnel and resources to support impacted communities, including N.C. Swift Water Rescue Teams, Urban Search and Rescue Teams, resources from the N.C. National Guard and specialized personnel for communications and incident management support, according to

Cooper's office.

Cooper and state officials advise the following tips to prepare

Have multiple ways to receive emergency information, including watches and warnings. Make sure emergency alerts are enabled on your cellphone and monitor local new outlets and the National Weather Service.

Ensure you have multiple ways to receive warnings, especially with the potential for severe storms to be moving through during nighttime hours.

Have an emergency plan. Know where you would go if you need to evacuate, especially if you live in a flood-prone area.

Gather emergency supplies or refresh your emergency kit. Visit ReadyNC.gov for information on how to build an emergency kit.

Never drive through flooded roadways.

Make sure you know where to seek shelter if a tornado warning is issued for your area.

Check to see if your local emergency management office offers emergency alert services for its residents. You can visit your county government website for more information.

Avoid unnecessary travel. If you do not need to drive, stay home. You can find current roadway conditions by visiting DriveNC.Gov.

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• Citation (aglc Style)

Sam Dietrich, 'Helene to bring rain, high winds into county', *Goldsboro News-Argus, The* (online), 25 Sep 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BD5333D412E698



Tropical storm to bring rain, winds to Raleigh

September 25, 2024 | Herald-Sun, The (Durham, NC) Author: Brooke Cain; Staff Writer | Section: News | 376 Words

Page: 1A OpenURL Link

Central North Carolina, including the Triangle area, will experience rain and storms this week as a tropical system makes its way to Florida through the Gulf of Mexico.

The strengthening storm is sitting in the Caribbean and expected to become a tropical storm with near-hurricane strength early Wednesday, Sept. 25, moving north and northwest into the Gulf of Mexico, says the National Weather Service's Raleigh office.

The storm is expected to intensify into a major hurricane before it approaches the northeastern Gulf Coast on Thursday bringing the potential for "life-threatening storm surge and damaging hurricane-force winds" along the Florida Panhandle and the west Florida gulf coast, according to the NWS-Raleigh.

A Tuesday, Sept. 24, update from AccuWeather said the storm could "make landfall as a major hurricane of Category 3 strength" but "could reach Category 4 status (130-156 mph) at some point while it is over the Gulf of Mexico."

"The highest landfall probability at this time is somewhere along the coast of the Florida Panhandle late Thursday," said AccuWeather, but a track into the Florida Peninsula could mean an earlier landfall Thursday.

The next tropical storm name on the list for the 2024 Atlantic hurricane season is Helene.

What are the impacts for Raleigh and central NC?

The impact on central North Carolina depends on how TC9 interacts with a trough over the midsection of the country, said NWS Raleigh.

But as of Tuesday, NWS Raleigh forecasts gusty winds and heavy rains with possible tornado threats, late Thursday into Saturday, depending on the track. There's also the potential for "considerable isolated flash and urban flooding" across the southeast and southern Appalachians.

NWS also says "minor to isolated moderate river flooding will be possible."

Central NC, including the Triangle, is expected to have higher than normal temps all week, along with higher than normal rainfall.

Another tropical wave to the west of Africa is not forecast to pose a risk to North or South Carolina.

Hurricane John makes landfall

in Mexico

Meanwhile, Hurricane John, a North Pacific storm, made landfall in south-central Mexico on Monday, Sept. 23, and "life-threatening impacts from flooding rainfall and mudslides" are in the forecast, says AccuWeather.

The system will continue to produce heavy rains over portions of Central America during the next several days.

That storm is not expected to impact the Carolinas.

Brooke Cain: 919-829-4579, @brookecain

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• Citation (aglc Style)

Brooke Cain, Staff Writer, 'Tropical storm to bring rain, winds to Raleigh', *Herald-Sun, The* (online), 25 Sep 2024 1A https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BD2EA1EB5CD480



No classes for Catawba County Schools on Friday with Tropical Storm Helene in forecast

September 25, 2024 | Hickory Daily Record (NC) Author: Miya Banks | Section: Education | 210 Words OpenURL Link

All schools in the Catawba County Schools district will be closed on Friday due to the potential for severe weather and flooding from Tropical Storm Helene, according to an email from Marketing and Communication Director Kim Jordan.

Jordan said Friday will be an optional workday for teachers. The workday replaces a previously scheduled elementary/middle school workday.

"The weather on Friday morning is not safe for bus routes, employees and student drivers, with high winds and saturated ground potentially causing downed trees and power lines," Jordan said. "QUEST childcare will also be closed."

Newton-Conover City Schools

Newton-Conover City Schools Assistant Superintendent of Operations Beth Penley said Friday was a planned workday for the system.

Hickory City Schools

"Due to weather conditions on Friday, September 27th, including wind gusts exceeding 40 miles per hour, our buses cannot safely operate, and all buildings will be closed," Communications and Community Relations Director Natasha Eckard said in an email.

Kindergarten through eighth grade students will not be in school that day because it is a mandatory teacher workday, Eckard said. Teachers will now attend their professional development sessions remotely, Eckard said.

High school students will have a remote instructional day, Eckard said.

"This decision prioritizes the safety of our students and staff while also maximizing instructional time during this shortened semester," Eckard said.

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• Citation (aglc Style)

Miya Banks, 'No classes for Catawba County Schools on Friday with Tropical Storm Helene in forecast', *Hickory Daily Record* (online), 25 Sep 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view? p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BD556AA8829718>



AP | Helene is expected to strike Florida as a major hurricane. Residents are fleeing

September 25, 2024 | Laurinburg Exchange, The (NC) Author: Heather Hollingsworth and Stephen Smith Associated Press | Section: news news-main top-stories | 994 Words OpenURL Link

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Helene became a hurricane Wednesday after the huge storm rapidly strengthened in the Caribbean Sea and moved north along Mexico's coast on a path toward the U.S., leading residents to evacuate, schools to close, and officials to declare emergencies in Florida and Georgia.

The storm's center was near Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula on Wednesday, the U.S. National Hurricane Center said, and it was expected to intensify and grow in size as it crosses the Gulf of Mexico. Heavy rainfall was forecast for the southeastern U.S. starting Wednesday, with a life-threatening storm surge along the entire west coast of Florida, according to the center.

The storm is so large that areas roughly 90 miles (145 kilometers) north of the Georgia-Florida line could expect hurricane conditions. States as far inland as Tennessee, Kentucky and Indiana could see rainfall. On Wednesday morning, winds of tropical storm force, at least 39 mph (62 kph), extended as far as 275 miles (445 kilometers) from Helene's center.

"You are going to have a major hurricane plowing inland, and storms take a little time to decay once they're inland," said Brian McNoldy, an environmental researcher at the University of Miami.

Forecasters warned of possible tornadoes Wednesday night in western Florida and southern Alabama and said the tornado risk would increase Thursday, expanding across Florida and into Georgia and South Carolina.

Helene is expected to become a major hurricane — a Category 3 or higher, with winds above 110 mph (177 kph) — on Thursday, the day it's set to reach Florida's Gulf Coast, according to the hurricane center. The center issued hurricane warnings for part of Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula and Florida's northwestern coastline, where large storm surges of up to 15 feet (4.5 meters) were expected.

As residents of Florida's Big Bend — the curving stretch of Gulf coastline in the state's north — battened down their homes, many saw the ghost of 2018's Hurricane Michael. That storm rapidly intensified and crashed ashore as a Category 5 that laid waste to Panama City and parts of the rural Panhandle.

"People are taking heed and hightailing it out of there for higher ground," said Kristin Korinko, a Tallahassee resident who serves as the commodore of the Shell Point Sailboard Club, on the Gulf Coast about 30 miles (48 kilometers) south of the state capital.

In Tallahassee, where stations had started to run out of gas, 19-year-old at Florida A&M student Kameron Benjamin filled sandbags with his roommate to protect their apartment before evacuating. Their school and Florida State shut down ahead of the storm.

"This hurricane is heading straight to Tallahassee, so I really don't know what to expect," Benjamin said.

In the Pacific, former Hurricane John re-formed as a tropical storm Wednesday and threatened areas of Mexico's western coast anew. John had hit the country's southern Pacific coast late Monday, killing two people, blowing tin roofs off houses, triggering mudslides and toppling scores of trees, officials said Tuesday.

It grew into a Category 3 hurricane in a matter of hours and made landfall about 80 miles (128 kilometers) east of the resort city of Acapulco. It weakened after moving inland but later reemerged over the ocean.

On Wednesday, officials issued a hurricane watch for the coast from Acapulco to Zihuatanejo and tropical storm warnings from Punta Maldonado to Lazaro Cardenas. John was about 110 miles (180 kilometers) southwest of Acapulco with maximum sustained winds of 40 mph (65 kph) and was moving east at 2 mph (4 kph).

Helene, which formed Tuesday in the Caribbean, is expected to move over deep, warm waters, fueling its intensification. The hurricane was about 500 miles (810 kilometers) southwest of Tampa, Florida, and had top sustained winds of 80 mph (130 kph), according to the hurricane center. Forecasters said it is expected to become a major hurricane with its center making landfall in the Big Bend area of Florida's northwestern coast as soon as late Thursday.

Mara Lezama, the governor of the coastal Mexican state of Quintana Roo, shared photos of rain-swept streets. In Cancun, heavy waves threatened to worsen the resort city's problem with beach erosion.

In western Cuba, authorities moved cattle to higher ground and medical brigades were dispatched to communities usually cut off by storms. The government preventively shut off power in some communities as waves as high as 16 feet (5 meters) slammed into Cortes Bay.

The Cayman Islands began recovering after heavy rains and big waves lashed them Tuesday. Schools remained closed Wednesday as flood warnings continued and residents pumped water out of their flooded homes.

Tropical storm warnings were in effect for the upper Florida Keys, southern Florida and the state's northeast coast and were extended northward Wednesday morning to Altamaha Sound, Georgia. A tropical storm watch was in effect for the South Carolina coast north of the South Santee River to Little River Inlet.

Hurricane watches, a step down from warnings, were also in effect for parts of western Cuba and Florida, including the Tampa Bay area, the hurricane center said.

President Joe Biden declared an emergency in Florida, and federal authorities positioned generators, food and water, along with search-and-rescue and power restoration teams.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, who already issued an emergency for most counties, warned residents Wednesday they needed to heed evacuation orders. A dozen health care facilities including hospitals and nursing homes had evacuated preemptively, DeSantis said.

"There's clearly a pathway for this to rapidly intensify prior to making landfall," DeSantis said at a news conference in Tampa.

Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp also declared an emergency in his state. The hurricane warning area included Valdosta, a city of 55,000. Helene approached barely a year after Hurricane Idalia inflicted more than \$6 million in damage to 1,000 homes and other property.

Helene is the eighth named storm of the Atlantic hurricane season, which began June 1. Since 2000, eight major hurricanes have made landfall in Florida, according to Philip Klotzbach, a Colorado State University hurricane researcher. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has predicted an above-average Atlantic hurricane season this year because of record-warm ocean temperatures.

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Friday's Dance of the Harvest Moon powwow competition postponed due to inclement weather

September 25, 2024 | Laurinburg Exchange, The (NC) Author: Exchange report | Section: news | 273 Words OpenURL Link

MAXTON — The Lumbee Tribe "Dance of the Harvest Moon" Powwow competitions which were scheduled for Friday have been postponed due to anticipated rains from Tropical Storm Helene.

Celebrations are now scheduled to begin on Saturday through Sunday at the Lumbee Tribe Cultural Center. Friday's School Day performance is canceled. The powwow dancers may still register on Friday from 3 to 6:30 p.m. and on Saturday from 7 to 11 a.m.

The annual Powwow celebrates the rich history and culture of American Indian and Indigenous people. The staff of the Lumbee Tribe of N.C. are putting up tents, working on seating, preparing the grounds and much more as preparations continue this week for the upcoming "Dance of the Harvest Moon" Powwow.

The "Dance of the Harvest Moon" Powwow officially begins with Grand Entry at noon on Saturday with the second Grand Entry at 7 p.m. on Saturday. The Grand Entry on Sunday begins at 1 p.m. The Lumbee Powwow has something for everyone. Guest will experience Powwow dancing, a dance contest for men and women, and a drum contest. Dancers from across the nation have multiple chances to place with different dance specials throughout the weekend including a Women's Jingle Special Competition, Men's Fancy Spotlight special, Father/Daughter Two-Step Special on Saturday as well as both members of the Head staff will also have a dance special.

Guests can also learn more about American Indian Culture as they visit the "living village" and see demonstrators showcasing Native craftsmanship and expertise throughout the weekend. They also may try Lumbee food favorites with the various food vendors.

Camping spaces are available all weekend. Wash house facilities are also available onsite.

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Exchange report, 'Friday's Dance of the Harvest Moon powwow competition postponed due to inclement weather', *Laurinburg Exchange, The* (online), 25 Sep 2024 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?
p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BD1B38D5EOCCB0>



McDowell County Schools, McDowell Tech closed Thursday, Friday due to Hurricane Helene

September 25, 2024 | McDowell News, The (Marion, NC) Author: From Staff Reports | Section: Education | 189 Words OpenURL Link

McDowell County Schools will be closed Thursday and Friday due to the impending impact of Hurricane Helene.

Due to the storm's expected rainfall, potential flooding and strong winds, McDowell County Schools will be closed for students on Thursday and Friday, according to a statement from Superintendent Tracy Grit.

Staff may work remotely on Thursday and Friday. Essential employees are asked to report if it is safe to do so, Grit said.

McDowell Technical Community College will also be closed Thursday and Friday for students and employees, Director of Communications Michael Lavender said.

In anticipation of the potential impacts of the hurricane, McDowell County, the city of Marion and the town of Old Fort will be under a state of emergency beginning at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, according to the county.

The hurricane is expected to bring 10 to 11 inches of rain to McDowell County, according to the National Weather Service.

The Emergency Operations Center for McDowell County will continue sending messages as the storm enters the area. "We urge you to prioritize safety during this time," reads the statement.

To sign up for emergency alerts through McDowell County Emergency Services, text 28752 to 888777.

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p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19BD5640C11AAB48>