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Subject: Hurricane Helene update #3 from Congressman Edwards
Date: September 30, 2024 at 11:17 AM
To: robasfamilyco@gmail.com



News from Congressman Chuck Edwards



Dear Anna,

Today is especially hard hitting in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene. We're back to the work week and most of you likely should've been on your way into the office this morning, if not for the damage caused by the storm.

Instead, Western North Carolina is still on a DO NOT TRAVEL advisory from the North Carolina Department of Transportation. Unless it is absolutely necessary, please stay off the roads and stay home.

Major updates today include a timeline for the restoration of service for most NC-11 Duke Energy customers by Friday, October 4, over 150 more roads have been cleared, and more resources are en route to western NC to ensure we will continue to have access to food and water over the coming days.

Today is update number three, with more information to follow in the coming days. Please be sure to read everything and share it with your friends and family.

Food and Water

- Supplying drinkable water remains a top priority for emergency crews.
 - 100 water systems are on a boil advisory and 38 plants have reported having no power.
 - My office has worked with private stakeholders to address potable water needs.
 - Just this morning, an additional 12,000 cases of water were secured from our friends at Pepsi Bottling Co. and will be distributed to western NC through Red Cross and United Way.
- Henderson County worked with my office to secure an industrial-sized generator to power the Ingles Distribution Plant in Black Mountain, NC.
 - Ingles staff slept on site last night waiting for the generator to arrive.
 - This will allow the distribution facility to begin emptying its shelves to restock grocery stores.
 - We are currently working on solutions to restock the distribution center.
- As of the evening of September 29, 301 pallets of water (81,270 gallons) and 200 pallets of MREs (115,200 meals) have been deployed throughout our western counties.
 - The state has been unable to supply me with a location for where these meals and water have been dropped off but check your local shelters and stay tuned. As you learn more, so will you.

The State of North Carolina has provided 40 trailer loads of food and 20 trailer loads

- The State of North Carolina has promised 40 trailer loads of water and 20 trailer loads of food daily through at least October 6.
- Counties are beginning to stand up Resource Hub locations for water distribution and other supplies as they become available.
 - Distribution will begin at noon today, Monday, September 30, 2024, at the following locations:
 - Etowah Elementary: 320 Etowah School Rd., Etowah, NC 28729
 - Rugby Middle School: 3345 Haywood Rd., Hendersonville, NC 28791
 - East Henderson High School: 150 Eagle Pride Dr., East Flat Rock, NC 28726
 - North Henderson High School: 35 Fruitland Rd., Hendersonville, NC 28791
 - Mills River Town Hall: 124 Town Center Dr., Mills River, NC 28759
 - Fletcher Town Hall: 300 Old Cane Creek Rd., Fletcher, NC 28732
 - As we learn of additional hubs, we will continue to update this list.

Power and Gas

- 396,000 customers remain without power in North Carolina.
 - Nearly all these outages are in Western North Carolina.
- Damage assessments show many areas in NC-11 where the power system will need to be completely rebuilt before service is restored.
 - Nonetheless, Duke Energy has stated that restoration of service for the major customers in Western North Carolina is expected by Friday, October 4, 2024.
 - WARNING: Customers in areas that are inaccessible, dependent on infrastructure that has been destroyed or are unable to receive service may see additional delays.
- An additional 7,000 linemen have made their way to the Carolinas to help restore power, meaning a total of over 18,000 linemen are here to serve WNC, including crews from other states and Canada.

Roads

- A “DO NOT DRIVE” message remains in place from the North Carolina Department of Transportation for Western North Carolina.
 - Unless it is an emergency, please do not travel.
- 220 roads remain closed in Western North Carolina, a significant reduction from the 400 roads that were closed as of yesterday morning.
 - I-40 remains closed from Exit 66 to Exit 72.
- NCDOT has established a base camp in Flat Rock with 250 people to assist with clearing roads.
- Transylvania County’s roads have been some of the hardest hit:
 - 4 acres of Becky Mountain is gone.
 - 70 percent of U.S. 276 is gone near Connestee Falls.
 - 1,200 feet of East Fork is gone into the river.
 - Severe damage on N.C. 215 due to multiple mud/landslides and parts of the road are being completely gone.

Asheville Regional Airport

- Asheville Regional Airport closed mid-day on Friday, September 27, due to risk of flooding.
- As of TODAY, September 30, commercial air service is resuming.
 - Two American Airlines flights have already landed this morning.
 - Delta and United are also resuming limited flights today.
- If you parked your car in an Asheville Regional Airport lot and could not retrieve the vehicle due to the storm, great news – none of the airport’s lots flooded and all cars are fine.

Stay safe and pick up your car when you are able.

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Cell Service

- While significant limitations still exist, communications capabilities are beginning to increase.
- Service providers have brought 24 more temporary cell sites online since yesterday update, including temporary deployables in the following areas:
 - Dillsboro
 - Sylva
 - Western Carolina University
 - Cashiers
 - Highlands
 - Cherokee
 - Franklin
 - Bryson City
 - Lake Toxaway

North Carolina National Guard

- 650 North Carolina National Guard soldiers and airmen have been deployed to provide support to Western North Carolina so far.
 - This includes the deployment of 250 vehicles, such as High-Water Vehicles, Palletized Load Systems for commodity distribution, and Forestry Support Teams for debris clearance.
- Air missions continue today in support of search and rescue, damage assessments, and supply delivery.
- Additional National Guard personnel, vehicles, and air assets will be arriving today, Monday, September 30.

For Local Government Resource Requests

- For county leaders: This is a reminder to make sure your Emergency Operation Center has submitted the request for gasoline, food, water, cell service deployables, etc. with North Carolina Emergency Management to have your request processed and resources delivered.
 - My office stands ready to assist with checking the status of your request if the county or municipality has not heard back from NC Emergency Management within 24 hours.

For Individual Assistance through FEMA

- North Carolina received a Major Disaster Declaration for the following counties: Buncombe, Clay, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Polk, Rutherford, Transylvania, and Yancey Counties and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.
- If you reside in one of the above-listed counties and had damage to private property from Hurricane Helene, you may be eligible for Individual Assistance through the Federal Emergency Management Agency.
- Individual Assistance provides financial aid and services to eligible individuals and households that have been affected by a disaster to assist with the recovery process. Individuals can officially begin applying for Individual Assistance online at www.DisasterAssistance.gov, or by calling the application phone number at 1-800-633-6362 (TTY: 800-462-7585) between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m. EST.
 - To date, over 2,000 survivors have registered with FEMA for Individual Assistance.
 - FEMA has also approved two new programs for use in NC:
 - *Displacement Assistance* - Provides immediate housing for up to 14 days.
 - *Serious Needs Assistance* - Provides immediate financial assistance to

- **Critical Needs Assistance** - Provides immediate financial assistance to replace and recover financial needs.

To Connect with a Loved One

Residents trying to connect with family members may call NC 211 (or 1-888-892-1162 if calling from out-of-state) to report missing loved ones or request a welfare check.

Additionally, people in the impacted areas can indicate that they are safe by reporting themselves safe through Red Cross Reunification by calling 1-800-RED-CROSS (1-800-727-6767).

- Please only use 911 for life-threatening emergencies so the lines remain open for critical situations.

Shelters

- For those unable to evacuate to a safe location or in need of a place to go, the following shelters are currently open and available as of September 29:
 - Buncombe
 - A-B Technical Community College
 - 340 Victoria Rd., Asheville, NC 28801
 - First Baptist Church Swannanoa
 - 503 Park St., Swannanoa, NC 28778
 - WNC Agricultural Center
 - 1301 Fanning Bridge Rd., Fletcher, NC 28732
 - Haywood
 - Haywood County Government Armory
 - 285 Armory Dr., Clyde, NC 28781
 - Henderson
 - Edneyville Elementary School
 - 2875 Pace Rd., Hendersonville, NC 28792
 - Henderson County Recreation Center
 - 708 S. Grove St., Hendersonville, NC 28792
 - Jackson
 - Cashiers Recreation Center
 - 355 Frank Allen Rd., Cashiers, NC 28717
 - Jackson County Department of Aging
 - 100 County Services Pk., Sylva, NC 28779
 - Madison
 - Madison County Wellness Center
 - 5734 US 25-70 Hwy., Marshall, NC 28752
 - McDowell
 - First Baptist Church of Old Fort
 - 203 E. Main St., Old Fort, NC 28762
 - Glenwood Baptist Church
 - 1550 Old US 221 S., Marion, NC 28752
 - McDowell County Senior Center
 - 100 Spaulding Rd., Marion, NC 28752
 - Polk
 - Polk County High School
 - 1681 NC 108 Highway E., Columbus, NC 28722
 - Rutherford
 - Rutherfordton/Spindale Central High School
 - 641 US 221 Hwy. N., Rutherfordton, NC 28139
 - Swain
 - Swain Community College
 - 125 Brendle St. Bryson City, NC 28713

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