



Your Community-Minded Newspaper

YANCEY COMMON

TIMES JOURNAL

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Burnsville, North Carolina 50¢

In-person early voting opened Oct. 17th

In-person early voting for the 2024 general election began Thursday, October 17th and ends at 3 p.m. Nov. 2 in all 100 counties. Statewide, 419 early voting sites opened on Thursday across North Carolina.

"In-person early voting has been the most popular method of voting in recent general elections, and we expect that will continue in 2024," said Karen Brinson Bell, executive director of the State Board of Elections.

In 2020, 65 percent of North Carolina voters chose in-person early voting as their voting method. And in the presidential election of 2016, 62 percent of N.C. voters cast their ballot early.

Eligible voters may cast a ballot at any early voting site in their county. For sites and hours in all 100 counties, use the Early Voting Sites Search found on the website www.ncsbe.gov.

Sample ballots are available through the Voter Search tool. For information on candidates for the state Supreme Court and Court of Appeals, see the State Board's Judicial Voter Guide: 2024 General Election. The Guide is also being mailed to all N.C. households. Election officials do not provide information about candidates for other contests.

Voters will be asked to show photo ID when they check in to vote. Most voters will show their driver's license, but many other forms of photo ID will be accepted. Voters who do not have photo ID can meet the photo ID requirement

by either (1) filling out a form explaining why they are unable to show ID, or (2) showing their ID at the county board of elections office by 5 p.m. Nov. 14. More information about the photo ID requirement is available at BringItNC.gov.

Any registered voter who needs a photo ID can get one for free from their county board of elections office during the early voting period, which ends on Nov. 2.

The regular voter registration deadline was Oct. 11. But any North Carolinian who is eligible to vote may still register and vote during the early voting period. Registrants must provide proof of their residence address, which can be a driver's license or other government document, paycheck, utility bill, or bank statement.

During early voting, registered voters may update their name or address within the same county, if necessary.

Voters who vote by absentee ballot can return it by mail or hand it to an election official at an early voting site in their county. They can also drop it off in person to their county board of elections office. Voters registered in the 25 counties in the Helene disaster area in Western North Carolina may return their absentee ballot to any early voting site in the state during early voting hours. Ballots will be kept secure and delivered to the voter's county board of elections for processing.

Voters who requested an absentee ballot but have not yet returned it may choose instead to vote in person during

the early voting period or on Election Day, Nov. 5. Voters may discard the absentee ballot and do not need to bring it to a voting site.

All voters should respect the rights of others to participate in the election. Election officials are trained to quickly address incidents that might interfere with a voter's ability to cast their ballot. Intimidating any voter is a crime. Voters who feel harassed or intimidated should notify an election official immediately.

Voters in need of assistance may bring an eligible person to help them enter and exit the polling place or to help them complete their ballot according to the voter's instructions. Election officials are also available to help voters. Curbside voting is also available for voters unable to enter the voting site.

For more information about early voting, visit www.ncsbe.gov.

Yancey County Board of Elections Office is located at 30 East US Hwy 19E By-Pass, Burnsville, NC. Phone 828-682-3950, email: boe@yanceycountync.gov.

Early voting dates and hours for YCBOE include Oct. 17, 18, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 28, 29, 30, 31, Nov. 1 / open 8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.; Oct. 26 / open at 10am to 3p.m. & Nov. 2 / open 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.; Oct. 19, 20, 27 / closed. Yancey County Board of Elections Director Mary Beth Tipton stated the YCBOE is working with the State Board of Elections and FEMA to help insure that every precinct will be open for voting on Election Day.

and local governments affected by disasters, helping them recover and rebuild.

- FEMA Individual and Household Program: Visit FEMA.gov or www.diasterassistance.gov.

- Apply online, over the phone 800-621-3362, or in person with officials at the Yancey County Public Library from 9am-5pm.

Small Business Administration

The SBA provides low-interest loans to businesses or homeowners/individuals for disaster recovery efforts. Apply ASAP.

- Online: Disaster assistance - sba.gov.

- Phone: 800-659-2955 from 8am - 8pm Monday - Friday. If you are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability, please dial 7-1-1 to access telecommunications relay services.

- Email: diastercustomerservice@sba.gov.



Cooperative Extension Service distribution location

While dealing with the temporary closure of his produce market due to flooding, Harold Davis of Davis Farms offered to let the Yancey County Extension Service use his Cane River School Road location as a distribution point for the feed and hay for their agencies' membership.

Yancey County Helene response updates

Aprel Wilson, Public Information Officer Yancey County

Western North Carolina has shown remarkable resilience as we continue recovering from the historic impacts of Tropical Storm Helene. Since the storm struck on September 26th, we've made incredible progress thanks to resources from across the state and country. Jeff Whitson, Chairman of the Yancey County Board of Commissioners, shared the latest updates on our efforts:

Search and Rescue: State and federal search and rescue teams have completed missions in over 90% of the affected areas. The storm caused damage to 7708 structures, with 3772 of those either majorly damaged or destroyed.

Donations: We are overwhelmed by the generosity of our community. However, we're running out of storage space and kindly ask that future donations be coordinated with us.

Monetary contributions to local aid organizations or volunteer efforts are incredibly appreciated.

"Yancey County thanks the community for its overwhelming generosity during our ongoing recovery efforts. Your support has been crucial in helping those impacted by the storm," said Whitson.

Points of Distribution (PODS): We have set up PODS at various locations in the county for critical supplies. Supplies are shipped daily to these points for affected citizens to pick up, free of charge. Volunteers and the North Carolina National Guard are assisting with resource management.

Comfort Stations: Com-

fort stations have been established to help those without housing, power, or running water. These stations offer restrooms, shower facilities, and laundry services at no cost. Currently, East Yancey Middle School has a fully operational comfort station on the football field. More stations will open across the area over the next few days.

Power Restoration: Progress: We've made significant progress in restoring power.

At the outage's peak, about 17,000 residents were without power; that number is now just over 4,000.

Utility crews are working tirelessly, and we're closely coordinating with power pro-

viders to resolve the remaining outages. We appreciate your patience and cooperation as we continue these efforts.

Water Infrastructure: The water supply and wastewater systems are being restored, though some measures are temporary. Interruptions in service and pressure loss may occur.

A Boil Order remains in effect until further notice.

Stay updated For assistance or to report ongoing outages, please get in touch with the Yancey County EOC at 828-678-9266 or visit our website at <https://yanceycountync.gov/> for the latest information.

Yancey County October meeting

By Kayti Ledford

Public Hearing

Michelle Ball with the High Country Council of Government, presented on the CGBD-NR Program. This is to fulfill the second public hearing for this program.

Ball stated a new resolution needed to be signed for Yancey County's Application for Community Development Block Grant Funding for the Neighborhood Revitalization Project.

The original plan had a maximum award of \$950,000 with a due date for applications and home inspections that passed during the Helene crisis. The application process has now been extended until October 31st with more than \$2 million more added to the total funds. This would allow Yancey County to help twice as many homes as before if they were awarded the funds.

Ball has been actively working with Morgan West, the County Clerk, on the current application before Helene. With the extension and added funds, this program could help up to 10-12 homeowners in Yancey County get new homes. The criteria for applications have not changed, homeowners must own the land the current house is on, it can not be in a flood plain, and a family of two can not make more than \$48,450 per year. Ball explained that this program could help those affected by Helene.

Chairman Whitson called the session into a public hearing, there were no public comments. The commissioners agreed to adopt the resolution and move forward with the application process for the program.

The second public hearing included a presentation by Michael Harris, Transportation Director. This is an annual hearing that must be held for the Public Transportation Program Resolution each year, this hearing is for the FY 2026.

Harris stated that his department has applied for \$312,229 in grant funds with the local match being \$66,093. The majority of the funds will go to administration and capital expenses, with \$70,000 for operations and out-of-town travel expenses.

Harris also stated that \$95,000 is for a vehicle purchase to replace an aging vehicle. The new purchase will be equipped with cameras and a dual fuel system. The dual fuel system is gas/propane which was vital to the Helene rescue efforts when gas was unavailable.

Chairman Whitson called a second public hearing where one citizen spoke, agreeing with the need to support the transportation department. The commissioners approved the Transportation Resolution for FY 2026.

County Manager Report

Manager Lynn Austin presented a Resolution for Kid Mountain Playground. Austin stated that she consulted the county attorney, Donny Laws, on how best to do bidding for the new park equipment and design. They agreed that a Design-Build Bid would be the best for all parties. This bidding system would allow bidders to bid a full design with equipment cost included. The commissioners approved the resolution for Kid Mountain.

County Commissioner Report

Jeff Whitson spoke briefly on Hurricane Helene. He recognized members of the audience who were vital to the rescue and recovery efforts. He specifically thanked the emergency command team and Aprel Wilson who are training the commissioners to take over the incident when the Florida team leaves. Whitson said there is a long way to go and that they will continue their daily updates on the radio and Facebook for the public.

Town of Burnsville gives update as of October 17th

Water and Sewer Systems

The Water Treatment Plant is slowly phasing water into distribution lines, with crews repairing breaks throughout the system.

Outages may reoccur as crews make repairs. Water must be boiled until the system can be flushed and sanitized.

The water is still usable for showering and flushing toilets. See the official Boil Water Advisory at <https://townofburnsville.org/public-notices>.

A major break has been discovered at Cane River creating a continued outage west of the river.

There are a limited number of portable water filtration bags available for residents. Come by Town Hall to pick one up.

The Wastewater Treatment plant has some capacity to operate but we are still asking all water customers to be conservative and flush as little

as possible.

Port-a-johns and hand washing stations are beginning to show up, we encourage citizens to use them when possible.

Garbage

Burnsville Residential trash pick-up is on the regular schedule. There will be no recycling pick-up until further notice.

The Convenience Centers at Riverside, East Yancey, Micaiville, and South Toe are now open Monday thru Saturday from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Only household bagged trash will be accepted at this time.

Food and Supplies

The main Point of Distribution is the former Fred's Store in the Burnsville Plaza. Supplies can be picked up or donated at this site, open from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

FEMA

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) aids individuals, communities,



NC Health and Human Services Secretary Kody H. Kinley toured Mitchell and Yancey counties with Governor Roy Cooper on Tues., October 8, surveying storm damage, meeting with community members and thanking first responders at the Burnsville and Spruce Pine fire departments.



U.S. Senator Ted Budd visited Yancey County, taking time to speak with Burnsville Works employees and traveling throughout Yancey County to witness the devastation Helene brought to Yancey and Western North Carolina.

AgSouth Farm Credit Announces 2024 Board of Director and Nominating Committee Results

AgSouth Farm Credit CEO Vance Dalton announced the winners of the 2024 Board of Director and Nominating Committee Election.

AgSouth Farm Credit is a member-owned cooperative and relies on their members to help build the leadership that serves them. Open Director seats and the Nominating Committee are voted for by eligible stockholders during the Annual Meeting. This year's Annual

Meeting was held on September 4, 2024, in Braselton, Georgia. Eligible stockholders were able to submit their ballot by mail or online. For more on AgSouth's election process please visit www.agsouthfc.com.

The 2024 Director Election Results are as follows: Region 1, Seat 2 - Tina Gross (Sanford, NC); Region 4, Seat 3 - Leslie Sparks (Sparta, NC); Region 6, Seat 2 - William Robinson (St. Matthews, SC). The terms are effective October 23, 2024.

There will be a runoff election for Region 7, Seat 3 due to neither candidate receiving majority votes pursuant to AgSouth Bylaws Section 410.6. The runoff election is being held between Jonathan Mann (Surrency, GA) and Kenneth Bennett (Blackshear, GA). All voting stockholders as of the record date for the election are allowed to vote in the runoff election. All votes must be received by November 29, 2024.

Emergency Feeding Sugar Available for Beekeepers at Hoopers Creek Bee Supply

Given the damage and destruction I see all around us, and having spoken to beekeepers who have lost their homes and hives, I certainly understand if beekeeping is low on your priority list at this time.

However, for those who

wish to take advantage of the next few warm days to do some emergency feeding, the NCSBA and Greater Good Charities have arranged for sugar to be available for beekeepers to pick up at Hoopers Creek Bee Supply in Arden, just south of Asheville.

All those who may benefit from this supply of sugar should coordinate directly with Hoopers Creek at 828-676-0989.

There are other ongoing efforts at the state level to assist beekeepers who have lost hives to repopulate and rebuild their apiaries in the spring. You can get more information and fill out a form requesting bees, equipment, sugar and other supplies at this link or

<https://pollinators.ces.ncsu.edu/2024/10/disaster-recovery-for-beekeepers-in-wnc/>

Yancey County DSS Monthly Meeting

The Yancey County Department of Social Services Board will hold the monthly meeting on Monday, October 28, 2024 at 6:00 pm. The meeting will be held in the offices of the Yancey County DSS.

Blue Ridge Parkway Remains Closed

The entire North Carolina section of the Blue Ridge Parkway remains closed due to portions of the roadway that have been compromised by flooding and tree hazards. Crews continue with emergency stabilization and damage assessments following Hurricane Helene.

For safety reasons, park managers are asking the public to please be patient and respect the closures. Many areas remain unsafe due to visible and hidden hazards, such as weakened and missing portions of the roadway; standing dead and downed trees; unstable slopes; and crews and heavy equipment operating on the road. Unauthorized use also hinders recovery operations of work crews. The National Park Service is working diligently, and areas will reopen as soon as it is safe to do so. Due to increasing instances of visitors entering closed areas and disregarding or vandalizing safety barriers, rangers will begin enforcing closure violations and issuing citations as necessary. These actions are necessary to prevent accidents and injuries to the public and our crews.



Storm Help for Dementia Caregivers – Support Group, FEMA Applications & More

Sadly, we had to cancel the October 24th Dementia Caregivers Workshop with Mary Donnelly ("Learning to Dance with Dementia") due to Tropical Storm Helene. But - we know caregivers need each other for support and encouragement when the skies are sunny, and they especially need each other now in the aftermath of this catastrophic storm and flooding in our beautiful Yancey County. In lieu of the workshop, please join us instead for a Support Group Meeting & More on October 24th. See below for the details.

• What: Dementia Caregivers Support Group & More Meeting (volunteers to help with FEMA applications, caregiver supplies such as adult diapers, caregiving experts to talk through difficult situations, and other resources)

• When: Thursday, October 24, 1:00 - 3:30 p.m.

• Where: First Presbyterian Church, 120 Church St., Burnsville, NC 28714 (look for our sign, "Dementia Caregivers & Friends").

• TO RSVP for the Support Group: If you think you'd like to come to the support group meeting, please let April know

by phone/text, 850-228-1228. We'll save you a seat and something good to eat, too!

• Optional - Onsite Group Respite (this is not drop-off respite): For those whose loved ones are in early-stage dementia and do not require personal hands-on care, we will offer a group activity during the support group meeting so you may participate. Volunteers will be available to lead a fun activity with your early-stage dementia loved one in a separate room at the church, and you'll be just a door or two away. This service requires pre-registration by Noon on Wednesday, Oct. 23 so we can adequately prepare staffing and materials. TO REGISTER YOUR LOVED ONE: Call April Henkel at 850-228-1228 by Noon on Wednesday, Oct. 23. You'll be asked specific questions to determine your loved one's eligibility to participate.

Support for Caregivers during the Storm: Dementia Caregivers & Friends has access to many kinds of supplies and in-home well checks for dementia family caregivers. Here's a list of what's available.

• Incontinence Supplies (adult diapers)

Free post-Helene Healing & Support Group Sun Oct 27 at MMA

Three local healing practitioners are pleased to offer calm after the storm in a healing & support group event Sunday, October 27, 1-3:00pm at Mountain Medical Arts (MMA), free and open to the public with registration required.

For most of us, our physical safety is no longer being threatened, but our nervous systems don't know that. Many of us are in some version of fight-or-flight. Over time this activated nervous system can contribute

to post traumatic stress. Early intervention to help regulate the nervous system can help decrease the long-term effects of what we each have lived through.

Join Jonathan Polgar, PA-C, SEP, Amy Earnheart, LCSW, LCAS, CCS, and Jennifer Dorfield, MAT, in a facilitated group session to begin to help settle the nervous system. There will be some time that we work wordlessly with allowing the body to discharge some of what we've

been holding, followed by time to be supported in sharing what we are feeling and experiencing in this world-changing time for us in Yancey County.

The event is free and open to the public, but registration by noon Saturday 26th is required for planning. To attend, please register online at <https://buytickets.at/returninghome-healing/1437636>. If unable to register online, you may instead register by contacting Jennifer Dorfield at 413-883-0589.

This may be the first of a few healing events offered by these practitioners, inviting our community to come together to heal from Helene just as we've come together to rescue, provide for, and rebuild through this historic disaster. Fifteen spots are available. If interested but available spots are full, please message us via the event link with your interest in a future event.

Free Workshops for Dementia Caregivers

The free workshops for Dementia Caregivers scheduled for October 24 and November 14 at the Town Center have been postponed due to the severe impacts our community has experienced from Tropical Storm Helene. As soon as new dates can be arranged with our keynote speaker, Mary Donnelly, and a location secured, we will publicize the free workshop dates and re-open registration. Stay tuned!

Instead of the Workshop: Since we will not be holding the free workshop on October 24th as planned, we will instead hold a Dementia Caregivers Support Group Meeting on October 24th from 1:00 to 3:30 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church, 120 Church Street, Burnsville, NC. In addition to the support group meeting, we'll also provide assistance to caregivers needing to apply for FEMA assistance, and have caregiver supplies such as adult diapers, bed pads and other resources available. For more information, contact April Henkel, phone/text 850-228-1228, or by email, DementiaCaregiversWNC@gmail.com.

Times Journal Deadline

Deadline for newspaper, pictures, classified advertisements is 12:00 on Friday for Wednesday's publication. Copy should be brought by the office located at 22 North Main Street or mailed to Times Journal, 22 North Main Street, Burnsville, N.C. 28714.

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Parkway Playhouse Family

Parkway Playhouse Junior:

All rehearsals, classes, and performances are canceled for 2024. Performances for Anastasia Youth Edition, Frog and Toad KIDS, and Power Chords will be rescheduled for 2025. If you have purchased tickets for any of these performances, we're contacting folks now about refunds. Please keep an eye on your inbox.

Auditions:

As of this time, our 2025 auditions are still scheduled to take place on January 18-19, 2025. We'll keep our community updated as we know more details.

Appalachian Playwriting Festival:

We are reopening script submissions for the Appalachian Playwriting Festival for the remainder of October for folks who didn't have a chance to submit before Helene hit. You can submit your script here.

Donations:

We've had many folks reach out to us about where they can donate at this time.

• Reconciliation House: This organization provides physical assistance to families in crisis situations. Assistance includes food, clothing, heating, and utility bills.

• First Baptist Church Burnsville: These folks have been helping our community in incredible ways including food and supply distributions. They are also hosting free mental health support weekdays from 10am-4pm at the church.

• Mountain Community Health Partnership (MCHP): This organization is a cornerstone in healthcare in rural WNC and are committed to providing care and supplies to those in need.

• Partners Aligned Toward Health (PATH): This organization is focused on the health of children and families in Mitchell and Yancey Counties and is doing a great job of organizing

information and volunteers.

• Pensacola Volunteer Fire Department: Volunteer emergency responders are working around the clock to clear roads, deliver supplies, provide wellness checks, rescue at risk individuals, and help begin to rebuild the community.

• Arthur Morgan School: Many Parkway Playhouse students attend this school and they are in need of repairs.

As a place of gathering for over 77 years, we look forward to the day we can turn the lights on once more.

Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church Food Pantry

Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church will have their food pantry open Oct. 18, Nov. 1, from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. This will be operating as a drive thru service. Please call 1-828-536-0130 when you arrive at the church to check in and let them know that you are there. Someone will bring the food to your car.

This service is for anyone who is in need of food. Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church is located at 151 Scronce Creek Road, just off Highway 19 E in Burnsville.

We need your stuff!

The Barkin' Basement is a thrift store in downtown Burnsville. All profits from sales support the Yancey Humane Society. We gratefully accept gently used furnishings, appliances, clothing, books, linens, and other household goods. All donations are tax deductible and we offer pickup for larger items! Please call with questions and to schedule pickups. 682-1200.

Volunteers needed

Meals on Wheels needs volunteers to deliver meals. any weekday from 10:30 to noon to Yancey County's shut-ins.

For information call the Senior Center at 682-6011.

DEQ offers emergency loans to local governments

The North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality is offering initial emergency loans to 20 local governments for emergency projects to rehabilitate drinking water and/or wastewater systems in response to damages caused by Hurricane Helene.

Many water and wastewater systems in the region have been impacted by storm damage. DEQ is working with federal and state partners, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), U.S. Environmental Protection

Agency, and NCWaterWARN, to complete detailed assessments of impacted utilities.

The Department recognizes that local governments may need financial assistance for emergency repairs in advance of the available FEMA Public Assistance.

Initial offers for zero interest emergency loans have been extended to Asheville, Bakersville, Banner Elk, Beech Mountain, Black Mountain, Burns-ville, Canton, Chimney Rock Village, Hendersonville, Hot Springs, Lake Lure, Lansing, Marshall, Montreat, Newland,

Old Fort, Saluda, Spruce Pine, Watauga County, and Woodfin Sanitary District.

DEQ's Division of Water Infrastructure will work with local governments to expedite the funding to address public health emergencies per N.C.G.S. § 159G-33(a) (4) and § 159G-34(a)(4). The emergency loans are subject to approval by the state's Local Government Commission and may qualify for reimbursement through FEMA's assistance program. Future loans are expected based on anticipated needs in the region.

Post Hurricane Helene - operational plan for Yancey Department Social Services

Due to damage to the agency building caused by flooding from Hurricane Helene, the building is closed to the public.

We are continuing to provide ALL services to our community. Please see the following for helpful information. Our normal office hours are Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

We will be answering calls during our normal office hours. We are working diligently to fully restore agency operations so that we will be able to open to the public.

To report suspected abuse or neglect call (828) 682-2470 or (828) 682-6148 during our normal office hours. For after hours, weekends, or holidays, please call the Sheriff's Department at (828) 682-2124.

To inquire about or apply for Food & Nutrition (Food Stamps):

- Clients can complete an application On-Line at Epass. gov: <https://epass.nc.gov/>

- Pick up a paper application at the office. Paper applications are available in the file cabinet under the covered porch at the DSS office. You can also download an application at: <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/child-and-family-well-being/food-and-nutrition-services-food-stamps/apply-food-and-nutrition-services-food-stamps>

Complete the application and put in the green drop box in the parking lot at the front of the building, mail it to the agency, fax it to the agency at (828) 682-6712, or email it to ida.wilson@yanceycountync.gov

- Call the agency at (828) 682-6148 to complete a telephone application and interview.

To inquire about or apply for Medicaid:

- Clients can complete an application On-Line at Epass. gov: <https://epass.nc.gov/>

- Pick up a paper application at the office. Paper applications are also available in the file cabinet under the covered porch at the DSS office. You can also download an application at: <https://medicaid.ncdhhs.gov/apply>

- Complete the application and put in the green drop box in the parking lot at the front of the building, mail it to the

agency, fax it to the agency at (828) 682-6712, or email it to YanceyDSSMedicaid@yanceycountync.gov

- Call the agency at (828) 682-6148 to complete a telephone application and interview.

Updated October 15, 2024
To inquire about or apply for Work First:

- Pick up a paper application at the office. Paper applications are also available in the file cabinet under the covered porch at the DSS office. Complete the application and put in the green drop box in the parking lot at the front of the building, mail it to the agency, fax it to the agency at (828) 682-6712, or email it to sarah.street@yanceycountync.gov

- Call the agency at (828) 682-6148 to complete a telephone application and interview.

To inquire about or apply for Child Support:

- Pick up a paper application at the office. Paper applications are also available in the file cabinet under the covered porch at the DSS office. You can also download an application at: <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/social-services/child-support-services>

- Complete the application and put in the green drop box in the parking lot at the front of the building, mail it to the agency, fax it to the agency at (828) 641-9788, or email it to lisa.harrell@yanceycountync.gov

- Call the agency at (828) 682-6148 to complete a telephone application and interview.

To inquire about or apply for Child Care Subsidy:

- Pick up a paper application at the office. Paper applications are also available in the file cabinet under the covered porch at the DSS office. Complete the application and put in the green drop box in the parking lot at the front of the building, mail it to the agency, fax it to the agency at (828) 682-6712, or email it to Rebecca@swcdcinc.org

- Call Southwestern Child Development at (828) 254-4015 to complete a telephone application and interview.

To inquire about or apply for Energy Assistance (LIEAP):

- Contact the agency at

(828) 682-6148 for information.

For general inquiries or requests for special assistance, contact (828) 682-6148.

SBA low interest disaster loans

Low-interest disaster loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) are available to businesses and residents in North Carolina following the announcement of a Presidential disaster declaration for Tropical Storm Helene that began on Sept. 25.

“SBA's mission-driven team stands ready to help small businesses and residents in North Carolina impacted by this disaster in every way possible under President Biden's disaster declaration for certain affected areas,” said SBA Administrator Isabel Casillas Guzman. “We're committed to providing federal disaster loans swiftly and efficiently, with a customer-centric approach to help businesses and communities recover and rebuild.”

The disaster declaration covers Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Clay, Cleveland, Gaston, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Lincoln, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Transylvania, Watauga, Wilkes and Yancey counties and The Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians in North Carolina which are eligible for both Physical and Economic Injury Disaster Loans from the SBA. Small businesses and most private nonprofit organizations in the following adjacent counties are eligible to apply only for SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDLs): Cherokee, Graham, Iredell, Mecklenburg, Surry, Swain and Yadkin in North Carolina; Rabun, Towns and Union in Georgia; Cherokee, Greenville, Oconee, Pickens, Spartanburg and York in South Carolina; Carter, Cocke, Greene, Johnson, Sevier, and Unicoi in Tennessee; and Grayson in Virginia.

Disaster survivors should not wait to settle with their insurance company before applying for a disaster loan. If a survivor does not know how much of their loss will be covered by insurance or other sources, SBA can make a low-interest disaster loan for the total loss up to its loan limits, provided

Medicare beneficiaries need to check their options for 2025

Insurance Commissioner Mike Causey reminds Medicare beneficiaries to compare and evaluate their current plans and make necessary changes during the annual Open Enrollment Period.

“Medicare plans and prices change,” Commissioner Mike Causey said. “It is important for Medicare beneficiaries to take advantage of the Open Enrollment Period by contacting local Seniors' Health Insurance Informatin Program (SHIIP) counselors to save money, improve your coverage or both.

The Open Enrollment Period begins on Oct. 15 and runs for eight weeks to give you enough time to review and make changes to your Medicare coverage. Changes must be made by Dec. 7 to guarantee your coverage will begin without interruption on Jan. 1, 2025.

disaster loans

the borrower agrees to use insurance proceeds to reduce or repay the loan.

Businesses and private nonprofit organizations of any size may borrow up to \$2 million to repair or replace disaster-damaged or destroyed real estate, machinery and equipment, inventory, and other business assets.

For small businesses, small agricultural cooperatives, small businesses engaged in aquaculture and most private nonprofit organizations, the SBA offers Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDLs) to help meet working capital needs caused by the disaster. Economic Injury Disaster Loan assistance is available regardless of whether the business suffered any physical property damage.

Disaster loans up to \$500,000 are available to homeowners to repair or replace disaster-damaged or destroyed real estate. Homeowners and renters are eligible for up to \$100,000 to repair or replace disaster-damaged or destroyed personal property.

It is important to contact your local SHIIP counselor before deciding about coverage for 2025. This may help you receive a more affordable and better Medicare health and/or drug plan in your area. For example, even if you are satisfied with your current Medicare Advantage or Part D plan, there may be another plan in your area that covers your health care and/or drugs at a better price.

SHIIP is a division of the North Carolina Department of Insurance and offers free, unbiased information about Medicare, Medicare prescription drug coverage, Medicare Advantage, long-term care insurance and other health insurance issues. SHIIP counselors can also help people find out if they are eligible for Medicare cost savings programs.

Here are some of the ways to review and compare plans available for 2025:

- Get one-on-one help from your local SHIIP office by calling Yancey Co. Cooperative Extension at 828-682-6186.

- Get one-on-one help from SHIIP, by calling 1-855-408-

1212, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

- Visit www.medicare.gov/find-a-plan to compare your current coverage with all the options that are available in your area and enroll in a new plan if you decide to make a change.

- Review the Medicare & You handbook. It was mailed to people with Medicare in September.

- Call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) 24-hours a day, seven days a week, to find out more about your coverage options. TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.

- Contact your trusted licensed insurance agent.

SHIIP counselors are not licensed insurance agents, and they do not sell, endorse, or oppose any product, plan or company. If you have questions about your specific plan, we encourage you to contact your insurance agent or the insurance company. For information about SHIIP and Medicare Open Enrollment Period, call 1-855-408-1212 or visit www.ncshiip.com.



Yancey County Farm Bureau

will hold it's Annual

BUSINESS MEETING

Tuesday, October 29th
at the Yancey County Farm
Bureau Office at 5:30 p.m.

This will be a business-only
annual meeting. No meal will be
served at this meeting.

All Yancey County Farm Bureau
Members are invited to attend!



Storm damage includes huge sink holes

The excessive amount of rainfall produced by Hurricane Helene has caused the earth to literally ‘open up’ as massive holes have appeared around Burnsville. Pictured above is the Hwy 19 Bypass entry to First Citizens Bank and at right residents entering the Banks Family Square Center on the Bypass are urged to use caution in navigating the large opening in that parking lot.



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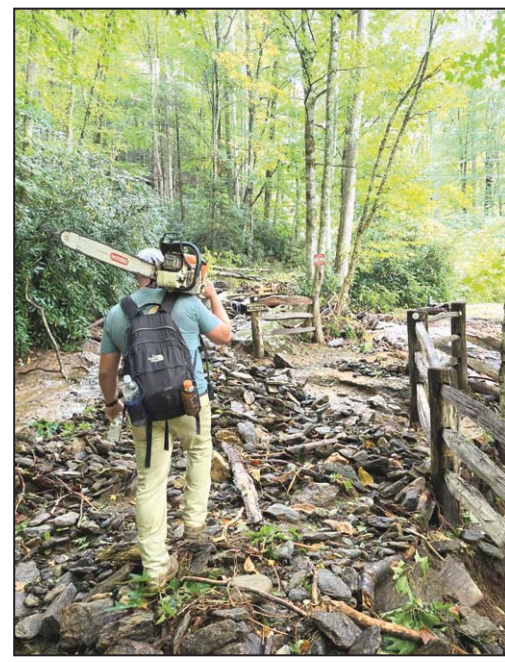
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Tropical Storm Helene



Pictured below is the Relief Community of Yancey County



The tree remains -- the home is gone



The walkway remains -- the home is gone



Bridge crossing the Toe River at Relief, looking from Yancey toward Mitchell Co.



The railroad tracks hang in the air, Relief in Mitchell County

By Anna Webb

For those of us with years of experience under our belt, we have climbed that mountain called life and have begun the decent back down. Many is the time in daily conversations to hear – what is the world coming to. Younger generations who can't seem to function without a device of some sort up in their face. What appears to be a lack of awareness of the world spinning around them.

Well... I offer up a challenge. Look through the multiple photos of the destruction

from Helene. Look beyond the mud, debris and broken landscapes. Look to the faces of the hundreds of volunteers out helping neighbors or complete strangers.

The young adults have put those cellphones and computers down and stepped up to lend a helping hand. They are elbow deep in water-soaked ruins, manning chainsaws to help cut trees, climbing roofs to replace shingles, wading mud to clean up homes and businesses, driving miles to come back to their hometown to check on

residents, deliver supplies and so much more.

And if you look even deeper into these photos, you will find these young adults are smiling. Smiling while doing jobs that require hard work and getting paid with nothing but a simple “thank you” from the community.

You might say – the lack of electricity and phone service forced them to put their electronics aside. And yes, there were those who sought out the temporary hot spots to play their games and search social media outlets. BUT... many did not. Many laid those devices aside, took their SUVs to check on Yancey County residents, helped residents get to safer surroundings, made sure there was food and water in the homes, even checked for medical needs. Some went on an individual basis, some banded together into groups or joined volunteer organizations to lend a helping hand.

As we look forward and wonder about the future, I believe these young adults have proven – the future is in good hands.



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Safety measures for heating homes in Western NC as temperatures drop

As cooler weather arrives in western North Carolina, the NC Department of Health and Human Services urges individuals, families and communities impacted by Hurricane Helene to take safety precautions when heating homes, buildings or other enclosed spaces.

Using gas or wood-burning heat sources without proper safety measures can lead to carbon monoxide poisoning and other hazards, especially if fuel sources or appliances have been damaged by the storm.

Safe Practices for Wood-Burning Stoves

Properly installed, correctly used wood-burning appliances should generate very little smoke. If you regularly see or smell smoke, you may have a problem. Take the following steps to reduce smoke inside and outside your home:

- What NOT to burn: Do not burn household trash (including cardboard, plastics, foam, magazines, boxes and wrappers), coated wood, painted wood, pressure-treated wood, driftwood, plywood, particle board, wood with any glue on it, wet or green wood, rotted wood, moldy wood, asbestos, rubber, manure or animal remains. These materials can release toxic or harmful chemicals when burned and may also damage your stove.

- What to burn: Try to burn mainly dry, split, well-seasoned wood. Properly seasoned wood is darker, weighs less and sounds hollow when hit against another piece of wood. You can also use branches, sticks or limbs from fallen trees that are off the ground. Do not use wet or green wood.

- Use a starter: Start fires with newspaper, dry kindling or all-natural fire starters. Never start a fire in a wood-burning stove with gasoline, kerosene or charcoal starter.

- Keep flammable items away: Maintain a safe distance between stoves and items like curtains, furniture, newspapers, books or paper. Regularly remove ashes into a covered, metal container, and store the container outdoors on a non-flammable surface.

- Keep the fire hot and door closed: For most appliances, a smoldering fire is not safe or efficient. Build a hot fire and keep the doors of your wood-burning appliance closed unless loading or stoking the live fire. Harmful chemicals, like carbon monoxide, can be released into your home through an open stove door.

- Keep a fire extinguisher handy: In case of a fire, have a fire extinguisher, fire blanket or ample sand or water on-hand to put it out before it can spread.

Safe Practices for Generators and Fuel-Burning Heat Sources

In previous hurricanes in North Carolina, people have died from carbon monoxide poisoning caused by generators running indoors. Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless gas produced whenever fuel is burned. In an enclosed space, such as a home, garage, car or camper, carbon monoxide can build up to deadly levels quickly.

High levels of carbon monoxide can be deadly within minutes. Carbon monoxide poisoning can be fatal to anyone, especially children, pregnant women, older adults and those with chronic illness.

People who are sleeping can die from carbon monoxide poisoning without ever becoming

aware of their symptoms.

Anyone testing or using a generator or other fuel burning device should take proper safety precautions, including the following:

- Do not use gasoline-powered tools or engines in enclosed or partially enclosed spaces. Use them outdoors at least 20 feet from all doors, windows and air vents.

- Do not use charcoal grills or propane stoves indoors, even in a fireplace.

- Never use the kitchen stove or other gas appliance to heat your home.

- Do not idle your car, truck or other vehicle in the garage, even if the garage door to the outside is open. Fumes can build up quickly in the garage and living area of your home.

- Keep rooms well ventilated

- Read and follow all instructions that accompany fuel-burning devices. Use the proper fuel and make sure there is enough air for ventilation and fuel burning.

Even low levels of carbon monoxide can cause dizziness, fatigue, nausea, headaches, confusion or fainting. If you are experiencing these symptoms, get to fresh air immediately and seek medical attention as soon as possible



Mail service has resumed

Mail service for many Yancey County residents moved past the days following Helene with limited to no interruption. For others, the process will require some work as mail boxes were either damaged beyond repair or completely taken away by the high water.

The post office located in the Micaville Community (above) was completely wiped away from the landscape by the raging water, only a few concrete blocks remain.

The United States Post Office, Green Mountain, NC received major flood damage as the Toe River rose out of its banks and consumed the building, (right).

Rural carriers are out cautiously maneuvering the storm destroyed country roadways, getting residents that are currently accessible their mail.



Safe drinking well water, safety measures for septic systems

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services is urging western North Carolinians who rely on a private well for their drinking water and were impacted by Hurricane Helene to continue to use bottled, boiled or treated water until private wells can be disinfected and tested for dangerous bacteria. Safety measures and precautions are also needed for septic systems that have been impacted by the storm before returning to use.

More than 300,000 people in or near flood-impacted areas in western North Carolina are estimated to rely on private wells, and the number on septic systems is estimated to be slightly higher. People in flood and storm-impacted areas should have their private wells and septic systems inspected and repaired if damaged. Wells should be disinfected and tested after repairs to ensure water safety, while septic systems should be inspected to confirm they are functioning properly. These steps are essential to help keep individuals and their families safe following the storm.

North Carolinians who lost access to water or septic through a private well or damaged septic system as a result of Hurricane Helene may be eligible for FEMA assistance. Visit disasterassistance.gov or call 800-621-3362.

Safety Measures for Private Wells

Excessive rain and flooding can cause water in private wells to become contaminated, meaning the water can make people sick if it is consumed. People with medical conditions can be particularly susceptible to severe illness or even death related to dangerous bacteria from contaminated wells.

After a flood, your private well must be assessed for damage, disinfected and tested. It is critical that people do not drink or use water from a private well that has been damaged or flooded until it has been properly disinfected and tested after the storm. Potentially contaminated water should not be used for drinking, washing and preparing food, making ice, preparing baby formula, washing dishes, brushing teeth or washing hands. Use an alternative water source until testing confirms contamination is no longer detected in your water. Alternative sources include bottled water, a source you know isn't contaminated or

boiling your water for at least one minute before use.

Follow these steps to assess your well:

- Wait to turn on electricity. Do not turn on the electricity to your pump until flood waters recede.

- Check your well for damage. If your well is damaged, contact a licensed well driller for assistance. You can search for well contractors in your county at Find Certified Well Contractors.

- Disinfect your well. If you are able to determine your well is not damaged, and you already have the necessary disinfection materials on-hand, you can disinfect your well to prepare it to be tested. Use the NCDHHS instructions on How to Disinfect Your Well After a Flood for assistance.

- If you do not have disinfectant supplies or have questions about disinfecting your well, contact your local health department for assistance.

- Test your well. Because you cannot see, taste or smell bacterial contamination in your well, it is imperative to have the water tested after disinfection to determine whether it is safe for use.

- The North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health provides free testing available through local health departments.

- If you live near animal feeding operations, agricultural fields where pesticides are applied or industrial chemical factories, you should talk with your local health department about additional testing, especially if you smell fuel or chemicals in your water.

Interpret your results. Your local health department or testing lab will provide the water testing results back to the well owner as quickly as possible. If you need help interpreting your results, you can use the online Be Well Informed tool (select North Carolina) or contact the NCDHHS Occupational and Environmental Epidemiology Branch at 919-707-5900 or oeceb@dhhs.nc.gov.

In response to Hurricane Helene, the NC State Laboratory of Public Health and NCDHHS Environmental Health Section are working to provide both disinfection and sampling kits at Point of Distribution locations across Western North Carolina. More details will be announced soon.

Safety Measures for Septic Systems

Your septic system can also pose a public health risk after a flood or storm because of sewage back up, dangerous gases or contaminated wastewater. It is important to keep your family, especially children and pets, away from areas affected by sewage or wastewater to reduce the risk of disease.

If your property was affected by flooding or damage from Hurricane Helene, follow these steps to protect your septic system and your health:

- If your property has been flooded, do not use the plumbing system while the septic tank is still under water.

- Look for signs that your septic system may have been damaged, such as soil settling around the septic tank or drain field, septic system components that have moved or surfaced, or sewage backup into your home or wastewater on the ground.

- Do not use your plumbing system if sewage water has backed up into your home and avoid contact with any sewage from a septic tank that is not operating.

- Avoid putting floodwater or disinfectants into the system as these can cause further damage. Instead, contact your local health department if your system requires repairs.

- Have your septic system inspected by a certified wastewater system inspector after a flood or if you suspect storm-related damage. You can call the NC Onsite Wastewater Certification Board at 336-202-3126 to find a certified inspector near you.

- Before restoring power to the system, ensure your electrical and system components are working properly. Check the electrical system for any damage, clean the effluent filter or screen, and determine whether your septic tank needs to be pumped by a licensed professional before coming back online.

- For assistance or additional information on repairing or constructing a septic tank system, contact your county health department.

If your flood or storm-impacted septic system has caused sewage to back up into your home, take precautions while cleaning the area to avoid exposure or direct contact with the debris. Wear rubber gloves, boots, and eye protection while cleaning and disinfecting the area. More Hurricane Helene resources are available at ncdhhs.gov/helene.



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“Our thoughts and prayers go out to the families that were affected by Helene.”



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Matt Hyder,
Used Car Manager

Consider purchasing flood insurance

By Mike Causey
Insurance Commissioner

As I visit many of the western North Carolina communities devastated by Hurricane Helene, I'm heartbroken by the destruction I see. I'm also disturbed that many people whose homes were damaged or lost by floodwaters during Helene, which had tropical storm force winds when it passed through western North Carolina, did not have flood insurance.

While mobile homeowners and comprehensive (other than collision) automobile insurance policies do cover damage from flooding, standard homeowners' insurance does not cover damages from floods. Dwelling insurance and renters' insurance policies also do not cover damages from flooding.

Most flood insurance policies are written by the federal government through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). There is also a private insurance flood program offered in North Carolina.

To get flood insurance through the NFIP, you need to go to their website at www.floodsmart.gov or call them at 800-427-4661. Don't wait for another hurricane to head to North Carolina to sign up. There's a 30-day waiting period between the time you sign up for coverage to begin.

Most North Carolina homeowners do not have flood insurance. While mortgage companies usually require standard homeowners' insurance as a condition of getting a loan,

Guardian ad Litem volunteers needed

The NC Guardian ad Litem Program is seeking volunteer advocates to represent abused and neglected children in Yancey, Mitchell and Madison.

If you have any questions or would like to learn more about the local Guardian ad Litem program, please call Erica Edwards at 828-682-4754 or visit volunteerforgal.org.



many do not require flood insurance unless they're located in a high-risk flood zone.

NFIP statistics show that about 139,000 people have flood insurance through NFIP statewide, with most of those located in the coastal areas of North Carolina. Only about 0.7% of homeowners in the 25 counties falling under the Hurricane Helene disaster declaration had flood insurance.

I've said on many occasions, if it rains at your house, you need flood insurance. Since Hurricane Florence cause a lot of flood damage in 2018, I've initiated efforts to inform North Carolinians about the need to purchase flood insurance. We have flood insurance classes, where insurance agents, adjusters, real estate agents, engineers and others can get continuing education credit by attending the classes. We remind homeowners many times during the year of the need to buy flood insurance.

We've made some progress, but obviously not enough progress.

Many people may not buy flood insurance because they think they don't need it or that it's expensive. I'm sure there are a lot of people in western North Carolina who wish they'd bought it. If you live in a low-risk flood zone, a flood insurance policy may be quite affordable.

I encourage you, while it's fresh on your mind, to consider purchasing flood insurance. Buying it can help put your mind at ease as future storms approach.



The Relief Substation was one of the areas hit by high water from the Toe River

Update from French Broad Electric on outages

Saturday, October 19, 2024

We are now have over 50 crews working in Mitchell and Yancey county. These guys have done amazing work over the last three weeks. Even though we have power restored to the vast majority of our customers, we are now faced with more difficult situations in the remaining areas. In Mitchell, we are still plowing through popular creek and pigeon roost as well as Beams Creek. Our facilities in these areas were torn to pieces by high winds and what looks to be tornado like activity. Hundreds of poles have been broken and wire is down in almost every span.



Broken poles and downed power lines throughout Yancey County have proven an obstacle for restoration of service.

To make things even more difficult, most of the broken poles are on mountains or ridges, inaccessible with most of our equipment. With that, we think that we should have most of Beans Creek and Popular on by Wednesday and should wrap up Pigeon Roost on Monday. In Yancey, we have re-scouted the areas of Big Creek, Little Creek, Cane River, Pensacola, and Roses Branch. These areas were devastated by flood waters. Miles of our poles and wire along with the roads no longer exist. Access to these areas with our equipment has been impossible. The NCDOT is doing a remarkable job of creating new roadways, slowing making it possible to reach these areas. We have developed a plan to bring power in Big Creek and Little Creek with an alternate feed. Road access is still extremely challenging but we feel like we may have a way to provide service to these areas in the next couple of weeks. We will be constructing new lines without all of our typical equipment so things could take a little longer to complete. In Pensacola, the situation is similar to a point. If we can get access up NC 197 past Bolens Creek, we will construct a new three phase line along the road bed. We will need to build miles of new line to reach up to Ewart Wilson road and other taps, but with multiple crews working, our timeline would be several weeks instead of months.

Parts of Roses Branch was completely washed away and so we will be looking at alternate ways to supply power. Currently, multiple crews are building lines down NC 80 that will cross the river into Yancey and give us the ability to pick up parts of Roses Branch that wasn't washed out. Cane River

is the most difficult to figure out. 19w is in large part gone. It looks like we can now get close to Langford Branch and will be moving that direction as soon as the road allows.

In going over these areas, I really feel for the people who live there. Many lost their homes and other possessions. Those that didn't still have no way to get to their places. Please know we are doing everything we can to get power back to you if at all possible. We celebrate those that now have power of course, but our main focus is on those who do not.

We are now averaging over 100 pole replacements per day. Before this storm, the worst we had ever seen was a total of 120 poles over a seven day period in 2009. We are now well over 1200 poles replaced to date and still have hundreds left to do. Please keep our crews in your thoughts and prayers. They have been going strong for over 3 weeks now and all they want is for everyone to get power back to their homes.

Sunday, October 19, 2024:

More crews arriving today to provide additional support and also a couple of replacement crews also coming in to relieve some outside help that has been here for the last two weeks. In trying to provide updates as to where we are working and the status, it is very difficult to list every place and where every crew is working on a daily basis. Candidly, I did leave out our Spruce Pine area unintentionally last night, it was late and I apologize to those folks who deserve to be updated. Good news is that there are 5 crews that have been in that area for days. Two crews are rebuilding the three phase line along the Altapass Hwy to Biggerstaff road and

then will work all the tap lines. Three crews are going in the opposite direction towards Bear Den and are almost to the Parkway. Crews are finding more poles broken and wires down all along the route, so it is been a slower process than we hoped. They will continue to work on these lines until everyone is back on. Crews are also working along McKinney Mine, Cabbage Patch, and and Strawberry Ridge.

Many other crews are working in Mitchell county to finish up Bakersville, Popular, Pigeon Roost, Buladean, and Beans Creek just to name a few areas. In Yancey, there are over 20 crews all over the county working on restoring anything from major feeder lines to taps and services.

No one has been forgotten or left behind. We value every member in every area we serve. There are unique challenges in each area that is still without power and we are working day and night, seven days a week to overcome each one and get electric service to every member.

(A lot of folks are curious as to why it has taken as long as it has to reach some of our out lying areas. It's a combination of the amount of time it takes to change out a single pole and reinstall the wires times the number of broken poles. The truck accessible poles take anywhere from 2-3 hours to fix where an inaccessible pole could be 8-12 hours. One section in Buladean, 29 broken poles and we couldn't see the roughest parts at the end of the line. We have found similar situations on almost every line we have. Currently, changing out over 60 poles each day with all of the crews we now have working for us.)

Protect yourself from "storm chasers"

Natural disasters often bring out the best in people as strangers reach out to help others in need. Unfortunately, the aftermath of a crisis also brings out contractors taking advantage of those who have already been victimized.

Local contractors may be busier than usual with new customers after a natural disaster, meaning victims of storm damage may be eager to hire a contractor to fix their home repairs as quickly as possible, ignoring red flags.

BBB warns homeowners affected by natural disasters to beware of "storm chasers" and out-of-town contractors soliciting business. Although not all storm chasers are scammers, some may lack the proper licensing for your area, offer quick fixes, or make big promises that they don't keep. There are some things you should do when hiring any contractor.

Contact your insurance company.

Ask about your policy coverage and specific filing requirements. Be sure to confirm the insurance deductible that you will need to pay. Save all receipts, including those for food, temporary lodging, or other expenses that may be covered under your policy. Your insurance company may also have recommended contractors or specific requirements.

Do your research.

Find businesses you can trust on BBB.org by looking for the Accredited Business Seal. Check your state or provincial government agency responsible

for registering and/or licensing contractors. Get references from friends and relatives.

Resist high-pressure sales.

Some storm chasers use tactics such as the "good deal" you'll get only if you hire the contractor on the spot. Be proactive in selecting a contractor and not reactive to sales calls on the phone or door-to-door pitches with too-good-to-be-true offers on price and timelines. Disaster victims should never feel forced to make a hasty decision or to choose an unknown contractor.

Be especially careful of door-to-door contractors.

Many municipalities require a solicitation permit if salespeople go door-to-door. Ask for identification. Check their vehicle for a business name, phone number, and license plates for your state or province. Also look to see if they display the BBB Accredited Business Seal- and check BBB.org to verify it. BBB requires Accredited Businesses to have proper licensure, and only ABs can display the Seal.

Don't sign over insurance checks to contractors.

Get an invoice from the contractor and pay them directly. If the business allows it, consider paying with a credit card, which offers additional fraud protection over other forms of payment (but be aware of possible transaction fees). Don't sign any documents that give the contractor rights to your insurance claims. Be sure to read any documents or contracts carefully before signing them. If you have questions, contact your insurance company or agent.

Be cautious of requests to pay for everything up-front.

"Storm chasers" may ask for the full payment or a very large down payment before any work begins or any supplies delivered. This is a red flag, as the contractor would now have your money and could choose not to return to complete the job. Some contractors require a deposit or payment for materials (once they are delivered) before they start the job. If you have to pay a portion of the cost before any work begins, be sure to have a signed contract in place that outlines the payment terms and be able to see the items you are purchasing.

Be wary regarding places you can't see.

While most contractors abide by the law, be careful allowing someone you do not know to inspect your roof and other areas of your house. An unethical contractor may create damage to get work. The same goes for attics, crawl spaces, ducts, and other places you cannot easily access or see for yourself. Ask for pictures of the damage that allow you to verify they are of your home.

Get familiar with your home.

Keep tabs on the conditions of your roof, siding, gutters, and other exterior areas of your home often. You can even keep photos on hand to compare to the ones the contractor takes. If your home is damaged by a storm, you'll have a better idea of what needs to be repaired versus what a "storm chaser" tells you should be fixed.

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Pisgah Ranger District on the Pisgah National Forest reopens

The Pisgah National Forest will reopen the Pisgah Ranger District effective Friday, October 18, 2024, in coordination with local communities and governments.

While crews continue to work throughout the district clearing debris and repairing roadways and trails, the USDA Forest Service urges the public to use extra caution when visiting the area.

Closures remain in effect for the Appalachian and Grandfather Ranger Districts of the Pisgah National Forest.

Like many areas in Western North Carolina, the Pisgah National Forest was heavily impacted by Hurricane Helene, and visitors may encounter several hazards caused by storm damage, such as: land-

slides along forest service roads and trails; fallen trees and large limbs crossing trails; washed out trails and bridges; rough roads that require high clearance vehicles where previously it did not; limited cell phone service in case of emergency.

Several restroom facilities on the Pisgah Ranger District are currently out of order and will remain closed. In addition, the following roads will be closed to motor vehicle traffic: Avery Creek Road; Yellow Gap Road (between Wolf Ford and North Mills River); Headwaters Road (from 475 – to the Sunwall TH); Catheys Creek Road (northern portion).

For the status of campgrounds on the Pisgah Ranger District please contact Naven-ture at <https://www.naventure.com/outdoor-adventures-north-carolina>.

com/outdoor-adventures-north-carolina.

For the status of the Cradle of Forestry on the Pisgah Ranger District please contact FIND Outdoors at <https://gofindoutdoors.org/sites/cradle-of-forestry/>.

“Thank you for your patience as we work to clear roadways and trails,” said Dave Casey, District Ranger, Pisgah Ranger District. “We understand the forest is a place of refuge for many, especially during times like these. There’s still plenty of work to do, but we look forward to once again having folks back on their public land.”

Remember: You are responsible for your safety and for the safety of those around you.

‘Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Bristol’ announces Nov. 14 grand opening of permanent facility

Country music superstar Blake Shelton to perform

Virginia’s first casino is making final preparations to open the doors to its permanent facility, Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Bristol.

‘Bristol Casino — Future Home of Hard Rock’ together with The United Company and Par Ventures, Hard Rock is excited to announce the grand opening date for its permanent facility, Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Bristol, on Thursday, Nov. 14, 2024.

To commemorate the historic milestone, the venue will host a grand opening ceremony featuring the signature Hard Rock Guitar Smash and a concert by country music icon Blake Shelton at the new Hard Rock Live entertainment venue.

Located at 500 Gate City Highway in Bristol, Virginia, the permanent casino will open its doors to the public on Nov. 14 at 12 p.m.

“We are thrilled to open Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Bristol,” said Jon Lucas, COO

of Hard Rock International. “Hard Rock’s rich history fits perfectly with Bristol’s distinction as the ‘Birthplace of Country Music.’ Both the Hard Rock brand and the new hotel & casino are rooted in great music. With this property, Bristol — and the entire region — have a new major entertainment destination, filled with gaming, exciting food & beverage offerings, live entertainment, and world class service for all visitors. Hard Rock is proud to open this amazing facility to serve the residents and visitors to the Tri-Cities area.”

Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Bristol is a 620,000-square-foot resort destination that will feature nearly 1,500 slot machines, over 50 table games, a sportsbook, a 303-room hotel, and multiple dining options, including a signature Hard Rock Cafe, Council Oak Steaks & Seafood, YOUYU Asian Dining, Constant Grind, and the Marketplace. The facility also will house a Rock Shop,

a 2,000-plus seat Hard Rock Live, authentic music memorabilia and much more.

Since opening in July 2022, ‘Bristol Casino – Future Home of Hard Rock’ has hit impressive milestone numbers, attracting tourism to the region, adding new jobs, and generating tax revenue — these include: welcomed over 3 million guests; paid over \$66,000,000 in gaming taxes to the Commonwealth of Virginia; donated more than \$960,000 to support local community non-profits; paid out over \$260,000,000 in jackpots; promoted over 600 team members; and processed over 55,000 employment applications.

Shelton’s performance perfectly pairs Hard Rock’s legendary vibe and iconic stature in the music industry with the inviting charm and hospitality of Bristol and the region. For more information about the concert or to purchase tickets, please visit casino.hardrock.com/bristol.

WGU’s new Heartbeat of Healthcare Scholarship aims to advance access to BSN and MSN degrees

Accredited, online Western Governors University has announced the creation of a new \$10-million scholarship fund — Heartbeat of Healthcare — to support its registered nurse (RN) students joining the redesigned Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN-to-BSN) and the bridge Master of Science in Nursing (RN-to-MSN) program at its Michael O. Leavitt School of Health. The investment, running through June 2025, aims to advance access to the university’s high-quality nursing program and address the demand for more baccalaureate and graduate nurses for improved patient care.

WGU established an affiliate in North Carolina in 2017 and currently has more than 5,400 students enrolled in the state, including 739 enrolled in the Leavitt School of Health. Over the last 12 months, WGU has awarded more than \$11.1 million in scholarships in North Carolina.

Magnet hospitals in the United States — hospitals recognized for nursing excellence and superior patient outcomes

— require all nurse managers and nurse leaders to hold a baccalaureate or graduate degree in nursing. Surveys conducted by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) also show that nearly 28 percent of employers require new hires to have a bachelor’s degree while 72 percent strongly prefer baccalaureate-prepared nurses. Additionally, the current demand for master’s- and doctoral-prepared nurses for advanced practice, clinical specialties, teaching and research roles far outstrips the supply.

WGU’s Heartbeat of Healthcare scholarship will be awarded after a thorough evaluation of various criteria, including the candidate’s academic record, financial need, readiness for online study at WGU, and current competency. Students who apply for the scholarship will be reviewed for support in one of the two tiers: Tier 1: Full tuition scholarship for up to two terms available to 100 recipients across the country; Tier 2: A \$2,500-scholarship available to all other qualifying applicants (\$1,250 per term for

up to two terms).

“Nurses are truly the heartbeat of the healthcare industry, yet nursing education remains expensive and difficult to obtain due to a shortage of nursing faculty,” said Ben Coulter, Ed.D., chancellor of WGU North Carolina and Southeast regional director. “This scholarship, in addition to WGU’s affordable competency-based model of education, is our way of extending care to nursing students as they prepare to advance professionally in their caregiving journey.”

To learn more about the scholarship visit <https://tinyurl.com/heartbeatbsn>.

SNHU announces Summer 2024 President’s List

It is with great pleasure that Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) congratulates the following students on being named to the Summer 2024 President’s List. The summer terms run from May to August. Amber McCracken of Burnsville and Austin Bradford of Burnsville.

Full-time undergraduate students who have earned a minimum grade-point average of 3.700 and above for the reporting term are named to the President’s List. Full-time status is achieved by earning 12 credits over each 16-week term or paired 8-week terms grouped in fall, winter/spring, and summer.

SNHU is a private, non-profit, accredited institution with a 92-year history of educating traditional-aged students and working adults. Now serving more than 200,000 learners worldwide, SNHU offers approximately 200 accredited undergraduate, graduate and certificate programs, available online and on its 300-acre campus in Manchester, NH. Recognized as one of the “Most Innovative” regional universities by U.S. News & World Report and one of the fastest-growing universities in the country, SNHU is committed to expanding access to high quality, affordable pathways that meet the needs of each learner.



Mountain Heritage High School Sports

Sports photos courtesy Jessica Whitson Bryant / Prints on the Paw

The Mountain Heritage Varsity Cougar football faced off against Avery High School on Saturday, October 19th with a final score: Mountain Heritage 44 / Avery High School 7. The football games are being held on the Madison High School football field. (In other local high school football Mitchell defeated Draughn 33 to 14)



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NORTH CAROLINA

STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS

Obituaries



Linda Robinson Edge

Linda Robinson Edge, age 79, passed away peacefully at her home in Burnsville on Wednesday, October 9, 2024. Born on May 31, 1945, she was the daughter of the late Robert Howard Robinson and Georgia Viola Jones Robinson. In addition to her parents, she was also preceded in death by her loving husband, Billy Ray Edge; brothers: Bobby Edge and Carroll Edge; and sister, Edna Eckard.

Linda loved reading, gardening, cooking, and taking care of her family. She retired from the I.R.S. and was the first female field agent in her Hickory office.

Surviving are her son, Billy Ray Edge, Jr. and wife, Shannon; grandchildren: Cory, Brett, Reese, Jackson, their spouses, and five great-grandchildren. She is also survived by a sister, Jerelean Wilson; brother, Randall Robinson and wife, Debbie; and lots of cousins, nieces, nephews, and friends.

Graveside services were held at Holcombe Brothers Cemetery on Monday, October 14, 2024, at 1:30 p.m. The family asks that donations be made to Hospice or any Hurricane Helene relief effort.

Holcombe Brothers Funeral Home is respectfully serving the Edge family.

Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church Food Pantry

Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church will have their food pantry open Oct. 18, Nov. 1, from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. This will be operating as a drive thru service. Please call 1-828-536-0130 when you arrive at the church to check in and let them know that you are there. Someone will bring the food to your car. This service is for anyone who is in need of food. Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church is located at 151 Scronce Creek Road, just off Highway 19 E in Burnsville.



Alex Steven Biddix

Alex Steven Biddix age 51 of Spruce Pine passed away Thursday October 10, 2024, at his residence. Born in McDowell County, he was a son of the late Manuel Biddix and Rebecca Duncan Biddix Hedrick. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by a sister, Cheyenne Biddix, brother Joseph Shew-Biddix and an infant brother.

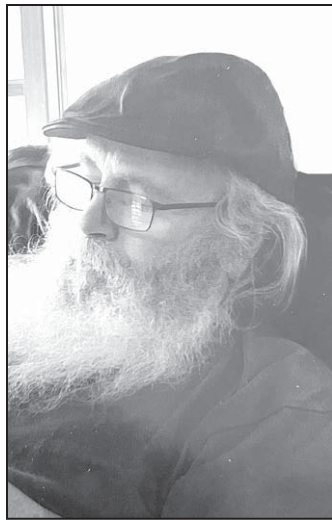
Alex worked as a carpenter, he was a member of First Freewill Baptist in Spruce Pine and was a former member of the Newdale Fire Department. He enjoyed fishing, hunting and camping.

Left to cherish his memories is his wife Katherine Cooper Biddix of the home, sons Jax and Zeke Biddix of the home and Terry Biddix of Burnsville, daughters, Nicki Rife of AR, Bethany Biddix of Burnsville and Brooklyn Biddix of Forest City, sisters, Christina Biddix of Spruce Pine and Denise Davis of KA, Paternal grandmother, Hortense Biddix of Spruce Pine, grandsons, Justin Coltharp, Carson Coltharp, Clifford Crain, Aaron Robinson, Aiden Biggs and Manuel Biddix, step father Rev. Ralph Hedrick and a host of nieces and nephews.

Funeral services for Mr. Biddix was held at 2:00 pm Tuesday October 15, 2024, at the First Freewill Baptist Church in Spruce Pine with the Rev. Ralph Hedrick and Mr. Travis Wynkoop officiating. Interment followed in the First Freewill Baptist Church Cemetery.

Donations may be made to Webb Funeral Home 128 Roan Road Spruce Pine, NC 28777 to help the family with funeral expenses.

Words of comfort may be e-mailed to the family by going to our website; www.webbfh.com, selecting Alex Biddix's name and then you may sign his guestbook. Webb Funeral Home has been entrusted with the arrangements for Mr. Biddix and is honored to be serving the Biddix family. Mr. Biddix's obituary has also been posted on Facebook for viewing.



George Andrew Sanford

George Andrew Sanford, age 59 of Burnsville, NC, went Home to be with the Lord on Saturday, October 12, 2024. Born on January 7, 1965, he was the son of the late George Luis Sanford and Barbara Ann Hilyard Sanford. In addition to his parents, he was also preceded in death by his brother, Scott Sanford; sisters: Paula Karnacki and Janet Sims; and half-brother, Mark Lehman.

George's nicknames, Santa and Superman, fit him well. He always had children run up to him, calling him "Santa" and asking for presents, and he never turned them away. In that way, he was "Superman". He loved hunting, fishing, motorcycles, and telling tales of his days fixing trains and things he did as a child. He could both make you laugh and frustrate you in the same minute. He valued family and hard work, but more than anything, he was overwhelmed with pride for his beautiful daughter, Seanna. He never knew a stranger and would talk to anyone with ears to listen. He was loved by many, and he will be truly missed.

Left to cherish his memory is his loving wife, Sarah Ogden Sanford; daughter, Seanna (Julien Brown) Sanford; sister-in-law, Kara Sanford; sister and brother-in-law, Helen and Joseph Marotta; friend, Carolyn Seely Sanford; nephews: Zack (Jessen Giles) Marotta, DJ (Caylea) Marotta, and Nick (Stormy Mead) Marotta; brothers: Terry (Lisa) Sanford, and Mark Sanford; step-brother, John Lehman; sister, Trudy (Ray) Hulburt; step-sister, Connie (Randy) Diapiece; niece, Kay Buckingham; three great-nieces: Lily Marotta, Rosie Marotta, and Liberty Marotta; and one great nephew, Jace Marotta.

A memorial service will be held at a later date.

Holcombe Brothers Funeral Home is respectfully serving the Sanford family.



Ella Mae Duvall Bailey

Ella Mae Duvall Bailey, age 85 of Sweet Creek Road in Bakersville passed away Sunday, October 13, 2024, at her daughters' home. Born in Mitchell County, she was a daughter of the late Noah and Lucy Hoilman DuVall. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by an infant brother, Jimmy Lee DuVall and a brother, Paul DuVall.

Ella Mae held numerous jobs in her life, besides being a mother and wife, she worked at Western Steer Steakhouse in Spruce Pine for seventeen years being the people person she was there she got to know and make many friends. She also worked at Blue Ridge Regional Hospital for several years, she was an avid blood donor, in the time she worked there.

Ella Mae loved to travel with her husband, Isaac. They took many trips; she loved going on cruises. They traveled out West and also to Switzerland. These were joyous times for her. She cherished the time she spent with her daughter, going shopping and eating out. Spending time with her sisters was a big part of her life as well. Ella Mae's family was of the utmost importance to her, she loved each and every one of them. During her illness, one thing that brought her joy was taking those long rides with her special buddy. She leaves behind a legacy of love and a void that can never be filled.

Left behind to cherish her memory is her husband, Isaac Bailey of Green Mountain, her daughter, Phyllis Canipe and fiancé, Bart Greene of the home, Step daughter, Kathy Clark and husband, Aaron of Greenville, SC a step grandson, Triston Clark of Greenville, SC and four sisters, Anna Rae Burleson, Louetta Callahan (Mack), Billie June Callahan (Ned) and Mary Bell Callahan all of Bakersville, eleven nieces and nephews and numerous great and great-great nieces and nephews.

Funeral services for Ella Mae Bailey was held at 2:00 pm Thursday, October 17, 2024, at the Fork Mountain Baptist Church with the Rev. Jonathon McKinney officiating. Interment followed in the Bailey Memorial Cemetery.

The family would like to extend it thanks to Hospice and Home Care of the Blue Ridge for their continued care of Ella Mae during her illness. And to her two caregivers, Pam Yelton and Nikki Briggs who became a part of her family and gave her such special care.

Words of comfort may be e-mailed to the family by going to our website; www.webbfh.com, selecting Ella Mae Bailey's name and then you may sign her guestbook. Webb Funeral Home has been entrusted with the arrangements for Mrs. Bailey and is honored to be serving the Bailey family. Mrs. Bailey's obituary has also been posted on Facebook for viewing.

Guardian ad Litem volunteers needed

The NC Guardian ad Litem Program is seeking volunteer advocates to represent abused and neglected children in Yancey, Mitchell and Madison.

Training session are held periodically for volunteers with this program to advocate for local children.

If you have any questions or would like to learn more about the local Guardian ad Litem program, please call Erica Edwards at 828-682-4754 or visit volunteerforgal.org.



June Kathleen Randolph

June Kathleen Randolph, age 89, went Home to be with the Lord on October 13, 2024, in Fort Mill, South Carolina. Born on June 8, 1935, she was the daughter of the late Mack Dewey Randolph and Ruby McIntosh Randolph of Burnsville, North Carolina.

June married her beloved husband of 60 years, Carl Jackson Randolph, on October 15, 1954. The couple moved to Fort Mill in 1967 where they built their life together surrounded by family. She was a constant, positive force in the lives of her nieces and nephews; most notably her nephew, Randy, and his family who cherished living next door to their "Aunt" for more than 30 years. June was known for her strong will, generosity, and love for her family and community. She was a faithful member of both Sisk Memorial Baptist Church in Fort Mill and the Order of the Eastern Star.

June took special joy in admiring nature, tending to her yard, and reminiscing about growing up in the mountains. She was a lover of all animals, especially birds and her loyal Maltese poodle, Dillon. June's infectious smile will be deeply missed by all that loved her.

Left to cherish her memory are her sisters, Janette Roper of Burnsville, NC, and Nina (Wayne) McCurry of Fort Mill, SC; nephew, Randy (Ann) McCurry of Fort Mill, SC and their daughters: Devan McCurry of Fort Mill, SC, and Brooke (Tony) Bono of Charleston, SC; niece, Diane Hood of Fort Mill, SC; nephews: Dallas Presnell, Doug Presnell, Phil Presnell of Rock Hill, SC, Kelly Wilson of Burnsville, NC, Furlon Lewis of Morganton, NC, and Terry Lewis of Newton-Conover, NC; and numerous other great-nieces and great-nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents and her loving husband, as well as siblings: Martha Presnell, Daphne Wilson, Phyllis Randolph, and Haskel Lewis.

While our hearts mourn the loss, we take comfort in knowing that June lived a full life and she is no longer suffering. Family and friends are welcome to attend a celebration of life service at the Lighthouse Pentecostal Holiness Church at 333 U.S. Highway 21, Fort Mill, South Carolina on Thursday, October 24, 2024, at 4:00 p.m. A graveside service will be held on Friday, October 25, 2024, at the Randolph-McIntosh Cemetery in Burnsville, NC.

Holcombe Brothers Funeral Home is respectfully serving the Randolph family.

Online condolences may be made at www.holcombebrothersfuneralhome.com

Need a Broom?

Since 1950, the Burnsville Lions Club has been selling their trademark brooms as a fundraiser to provide vision care to needy persons in Yancey County. While we no longer go door to door selling our brooms, we have placed our "broom boxes" in a variety of places throughout the county. Following is a list of businesses where you may locate our "broom boxes" and purchase a broom. Buchanan & Young (713 E. Main), Jill's Hairport (212 W. Main), Phil's Tire Service (617 E. Main), Sue's Beauty Shop (511 W. Main), Fox Country Store (680 W. Main), Troy's Greenhouse (30 Cherry Ln), Shear Perfection Salon (117 Westover St.), and Yancey Graphics (607 W. Hwy 19E).

We appreciate your continued support of this long standing project.



Margaret Beth McCurry

Margaret Beth McCurry, age 88 of Micaville, NC, went Home to be with the Lord on Wednesday, October 2, 2024. Born on July 5, 1936, she was the daughter of the late Albert Steven Johnson and Mabel Clark Johnson. Margaret was also preceded in death by her loving husband, Phillip Ray McCurry; two sisters: Hazel Franklin and Melba Jean Bartlett; and a son, Scott Albert McCurry.

She was a life-long member of Newdale Presbyterian Church, where she served as an Elder for many years.

Left to cherish her memory are her sons: Phillip McCurry, and wife, Donna, of Old Fort, and Allen Ray McCurry, and wife, Monica, of Atlanta Georgia; sisters: Mary Lou Buchanan of Boone, NC, and Judy Bartlett of South Toe; grandchildren: Liam McCurry of Birmingham, AL, Conal McCurry of Brookhaven, GA, Declan McCurry of Woodstock, GA, Jason McCurry of Marion, Russell McCurry of Wilmington, Jessica Hyatt of Burnsville, and Bethany McCurry of Marion.

At Margaret's request, no services are being held.

Holcombe Brothers Funeral Home is respectfully serving the McCurry family.

Sarah Lauren Westall

Sarah Lauren Westall, age 36, of Burnsville, passed away unexpectedly on Thursday, September 26, 2024. A native of Yancey County, she was the daughter of Ralph Steven Westall and the late Frances Elizabeth Seals Westall. She was preceded in death as well by a brother, Loren Westall, and the father of her daughter, Dustin Allen.

Sarah loved nature and our rivers, swimming and doing things outdoors. She always had her dog tagging along with her. She was a kind, sweet person who loved her family and will be missed by all.

In addition to her father, she is survived by her daughter, Sparrow Westall of Burnsville; two brothers: Lance Westall of White Oak and Bobby James of Greenville, SC; grandmother-in-law, Janice Allen of Cane River; as well as several aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews and cousins.

A Celebration of Life will be held at a later date.

Memorials may be made to the funeral home to help the family with funeral expenses. To send online condolences, please visit our website at www.yanceyfuneralservice.com.

Larry Dean Williams

Larry Dean Williams, age 68, of Burnsville, went to be with his family in Heaven on Wednesday, October 16, 2024. A native of Yancey County, he was a son of the late Howard and Vernie Hensley Williams. He was also preceded in death by a grandson, Caleb Gage and sister, Joy Ball. Larry Dean enjoyed gardening and spending time with his four-legged baby, Sampson.

Surviving is his best friend and former wife, Thelma Bowens Williams; children: Michael Williams of Micaville, Crystal Williams of Spruce Pine and Karen Carroll and husband, Randall, of Banks Creek; seven grandchildren and many other extended family members also survive.

A memorial service will be held at a later date at his church and will be announced. To send online condolences, please visit our website at www.yanceyfuneralservice.com.

Church Directory



To have your church information included in the Church Directory contact Pat Randolph at pat@yanceypaper.com for publication costs

BURNSVILLE, NC

ST. THOMAS Episcopal CHURCH

welcomes you

HOLY EUCHARIST, SUNDAYS 10:30 A.M. 372 RESERVOIR ROAD

WWW.STTHOMASONLINE.ORG

First Presbyterian Church

120 Church Street, Burnsville 682-4789

Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.

Childcare Available

www.firstburnsville.org

All are welcome!

Mountain of Glory Ministries

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." - Psalm 91:1

Spirit-Filled Praise and Worship

Sunday: 10:00AM

Wednesday: 6:00 PM

Prayer and Healing 1040 East US Hwy 19E 284-4378

Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church

Summit Street, Burnsville

Rev. Anthony Mbanefo

Sundays 11:30 a.m.

2:00 p.m. Misa en Espanol

For information call St. Andrew's Rectory 689-3719

P.O. Box 1406, Mars Hill, NC

Messiah Of The Mountains Lutheran Church

19E Micaville 675-4291

Worship Service 11:00 a.m.

Visit our website: <https://messiahofthemountains.org>

email: messiahofthemountains@gmail.com

Pastor Naomi Sease Carriker

Pensacola United Methodist Church

Sunday Services 9:30 a.m.

9255 Hwy 197S Burnsville, NC

Contact: contact.pumc@gmail.com

Pastor: Kent Smith

West Burnsville Baptist Church

Sunday School 9:45 a.m.

Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.

Evening Worship Service 6:00p.m.

Wed. Prayer Meeting 6:30 p.m.

TeamKid Youth 6:00 p.m.

Special Studies 7:00 p.m.

Pastor Chris Fox Church Office 682-3990

222 West Burnsville Church Road

HOPE FELLOWSHIP WNC

Growing in Grace, Walking in Love.

Pastor: Jack Sielaff

SUNDAY 11 a.m.

Burnsville Town Center Auditorium 6 South Main Street Burnsville, NC 28714

www.hopefellowshipwnc.org

Obituaries



Ruthie L. Beaver

Ruthie L. Beaver, age 70, of the Prices Creek Community, went Home to be the Lord on Sunday, October 20, 2024 at Smokey Ridge Health and Rehabilitation. A native of Yancey County, she was a daughter of the late Joe and Opal Fox Blankenship. She is preceded in death by her husband, Scotty Beaver, and two sisters: Adalene Higgins and Cathy Austin (Burl).

Ruthie's favorite past time was reading the Bible and spending time with her family. She was a member of Prices Creek Union Baptist Church where she taught Bible School every year and loved singing in the choir.

Surviving are her sons: Travis Brown (Cynthia) of Charleston, SC and Chris Brown (Christel) of Burnsville; a daughter, Kim Brown (Kenny) of Kentucky; Grandchildren: Ashley, Brandon, Tyler, Caleb, Christa, Christian, Jordan, Austin, Daniel and Cody; two nieces: Debbie Hensley and Amy Autrey; one nephew John Austin; one brother-in-law: Ray Higgins of Burnsville. She is survived as well by many great-grandchildren and extended family members who she loved very much.

A Celebration of Life service will be held at a later date.

Memorial donations may be made to Gideon Internationals, P.O. Box 264, Burnsville, NC 28714.To send online condolences please visit our website at www.yanceyfuneralservice.com.

Attention All Veterans

The Sgt. E. L. Randolph Chapter 57 Disabled American Veterans is in need of some Veterans volunteering to join our Honor Guard. If you are interested please contact Jerry Miller between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. at 828-208-2486.

Senior Center needs volunteers

The Yancey Senior Center is in need of dedicated volunteers to deliver meals to the homebound. Meals are delivered Monday - Friday from 10:30 until noon.

You can choose which day or day(s) that you would like to volunteer.

The Senior Center could not offer the Meals on Wheels program without its dedicated volunteers. Without this service, many of the elderly would not receive a hot, nutritious meal every day.

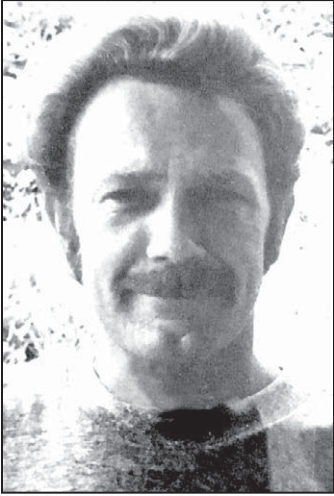
So, if you enjoy meeting new people and helping others, please call 682-6011, ext. 14. The staff looks forward to working with you and appreciates your willingness to make a difference in the lives of so many people.

Men's Bible Study on Revelation

Bible Study Fellowship meets weekly on Tuesday at the Family Life Center at Higgins Methodist Church, located at 101 N Main Street in Burnsville. Bible Study begins at 7 p.m. Call 828-284-6901 for more information.

Burnsville Al-Anon Meetings

If you have been affected by someone's alcohol or drug use, you can find help, hope and support in Al-Anon. We meet at the First Baptist Church Annex, 51 Town Square in Burnsville. Meetings are on Monday at 1:15 p.m. and Friday at 7 p.m.



Robert Oscar Hoilman

Robert Oscar Hoilman, age 74, of Bakersville, passed away on Sunday, October 13, 2024, at his home, surrounded by his loving family. A native of Mitchell County, he was a son of the late Ralph and Dorothy Phillips Hoilman. He is preceded in death as well by four sisters: Betty Wilcox, Nora Nell Wayson, Rebecca Doris Hoilman and Debra Weiford; two brothers, Herbert and Albert Hoilman; three brothers-in-law, Rodger Cochran, Daniel Cochran and Carl Lafon; and father-in-law and mother-in-law, Harold and Betty Penson Cochran.

Robert had a number of hobbies that included bass fishing, listening to oldies music, and was an amazing wood-worker, making toys for his children and grandchildren over the years. He was known as a "jack of all trades" and could fix anything mechanical. He also had a wonderful sense of humor. Robert was a goodhearted man and was loved by everyone, especially his family.

Surviving is his loving wife of 56 years, Andrea Cochran Hoilman; his children, Andrew Lee Hoilman (Melissa) and Sandra Louise Hoilman, all of Bakersville; six grandchildren: Juanita Roberts, Danielle White (Quentin), Brandon Hoilman (Amanda), Matthew McKinney, Tyler Hoilman and Nicholas Olson; six great-grandchildren: Kavion, Jaylen, Zameer, Ahvani, Brandon, Jr., Aleah, Robert Kirkland and Christopher Kirkland; a sister, Hettie Wilcox of Bakersville; a brother, Ralph Hoilman, Jr. (Melody) of Bakersville; three sisters-in-law: Anita Gorman (Roy) of Maryland, Brenda Lafon of Maryland, and Marlene Cochran (Marty) of Oklahoma; and four brothers-in-law: James Cochran (Susie) of Maryland, Harold Cochran (Lorena) of Maryland, and Skip Weiford (Donna) of Bakersville. He is survived as well by many nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

Funeral services were held at 2 p.m. on Sunday, October 20th in the chapel of Yancey Funeral Services. Pastor Skip Weiford and Pastor Brett Hoilman officiated. Burial followed in the Hoilman Cemetery in Bakersville.

Memorial donations may be made to the funeral home to help the family with funeral expenses. To send online condolences, please visit our website at www.yanceyfuneralservice.com.

Need a Broom?

Since 1950, the Burnsville Lions Club has been selling their trademark brooms as a fundraiser to provide vision care to needy persons in Yancey County. While we no longer go door to door selling our brooms, we have placed our "broom boxes" in a variety of places throughout the county.

Following is a list of businesses where you may locate our "broom boxes" and purchase a broom. Buchanan & Young (713 E. Main), Jill's Hairport (212 W. Main), Phil's Tire Service (617 E. Main), Sue's Beauty Shop (511 W. Main), Fox Country Store (680 W. Main), Troy's Greenhouse (30 Cherry Ln), Shear Perfection Salon (117 Westover St.), and Yancey Graphics (607 W. Hwy 19E).

We appreciate your continued support of this long standing project.

Thank you,
Burnsville Lions Club



Laura Ann Renfro

Laura Ann Renfro, age 62, of Burnsville, went Home to be with the Lord on Friday, October 18, 2024 at Mission Hospital. A native of Yancey County, she was a daughter of Elsie Carroll Renfro and the late Kenneth Dean Renfro. She was also preceded in death by her grandparents: Effie and Adam Carroll, and Pearl and Johnny Renfro.

Laura enjoyed watching wrestling and scary movies, and listening to music by Elvis Presley. She loved children and loved spending time with them. They gave her inspiration with their innocence and the love she received from them. She collected stuff animals, but one was particularly special to her - Rufus, her stuffed monkey. Laura touched everyone's life in a very special way and will truly be missed.

Left to cherish her memory in addition to her mother are her siblings: Kenny Renfro (Wanda) of Hardscrabble, Karen Renfro (Junior Byrd) of Micaville, Tim Renfro (Joan) of Micaville, Mark Renfro (Trish) of Roan Mountain, TN, and Doyle Renfro (Melinda) of Micaville; uncles and aunts: Leroy Carroll (Venita) of Forest City, Keith Renfro (Janet) of Burnsville, Frances Boyd of Crabtree, and Estelle Westall of Newport News, VA; and nieces and nephews: Kacie Renfro, Kayla Renfro, Nathan Renfro, Ashley Deyton, Adam Renfro, Mistie Renfro, Julia Renfro (Stephen McDowell), Emily Bradford (Kevin) and Rachel Higgins (Tyler). She is survived as well by several great-nieces and great-nephews and other extended family.

Graveside services were held at 4 p.m. on Monday, October 21st at the Wilson-Rector Hill Cemetery on Double Island. Pastor Chris Morgan officiated.

Memorial donations may be made to Gideons International, P.O. Box 264, Burnsville, NC 28714, or to the charity of one's choice. To send online condolences, please visit our website at www.yanceyfuneralservice.com.

We need your stuff!

The Barkin' Basement is a thrift store in downtown Burnsville. All profits from sales support the Yancey Humane Society. We gratefully accept gently used furnishings, appliances, clothing, books, linens, and other household goods. All donations are tax deductible and we offer pickup for larger items! Please call with questions and to schedule pickups. 682-1200.

Marine Corps League Mt. Mitchell Detachment #1266

Meeting Notice Located at the Western Sizzler Restaurant, 11961 S Hwy 226, Spuce Pine, NC 28777

Meeting the 3rd Thursday of Every Month at 7:00 p.m. All branches are welcome and families!

NA meetings at First Baptist Church

Burnsville Back Room Group of NA meets twice a week at First Baptist Church. The group meets on Sunday at 4 p.m. in Room 101 Annex and Thursday at 6 p.m. in Room 213 Annex. First Baptist Church is located at 51 Town Square in Burnsville. NA is a 12 step program that deals with addiction.



Earlene "Nanny" McCourry

Earlene "Nanny" McCourry went to be with her Lord and Savior on October 15, 2024, surrounded by her loved ones. A devoted follower of Jesus, she was welcomed into His loving arms, her body restored and made whole. Her family rejoices knowing that Nanny is now in the presence of her Savior, where there is no more pain, only peace and joy. Her unwavering faith in the Lord gave her strength throughout her life.

Born to Ben and Lizzie Peterson on March 5, 1935, Earlene's life was a testament to her faith, as she lived each day loving others as Christ loved her. She had a heart for serving others and created a legacy of love that will live on through the countless lives that she touched. Nanny's home was always a place of warmth and love, open to everyone who needed a friend or a kind word. Many times, you'd find her in the kitchen, always ready to offer a meal to whoever stopped by or working in the flowers she loved so much.

Earlene and husband Alvin McCourry raised five children: Mike McCourry, Danny McCourry, Gayla Bryant, Liz Elkins, and Cheryl Dale, each of whom carry forward the values of faith and love she instilled in them. Nanny took great pride in her large, loving family and was blessed with numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Mike and Beth's family includes their three children: Justin McCourry, Erin McCourry and fiancé Jorge, and Alex McCourry. Justin and Jessica have two daughters, Madison and Caroline. Alex and Sean have a daughter, Catherine.

Danny and Valerie's family includes Adam McCourry and

Renee McCourry. Adam and Jenny are the parents of Ally Jane and Ben. Renee and Jamie have three sons, Mack, Thomas, and Ellis.

Gayla and Gary's family includes Kenny and Mandy Bryant as well as David and Leslie Bryant who have two children, Levi and Haven.

Liz and Eric's family includes Blake Elkins, Haley Elkins, Nealy McIntosh and his children Charlie and Ava.

Cheryl and fiancé Chris's family includes Kayla Blankenship and Jacob Dale. Kayla and Frank have two children, Willow and Micajah. Jacob and Jacquelin have a daughter, Paisley.

Earlene is also survived by her siblings Bud, Mary, and Bet. She is now reunited in Heaven with her siblings Edward, Jay, Seth, Virginia, Carl, Jerry, Clay, and Verna and her son in law, Michael, who went before her.

The family would like to extend our gratitude to the many dedicated caregivers who poured themselves out to provide compassionate support and care to our beloved Nanny in her final days, including Sarah Angel and Amy Hughes. Their kindness, patience, and gentle care brought comfort not only to her but to all of us during a difficult time. We are forever grateful for the way you honored her dignity and filled her last moments with peace and love.

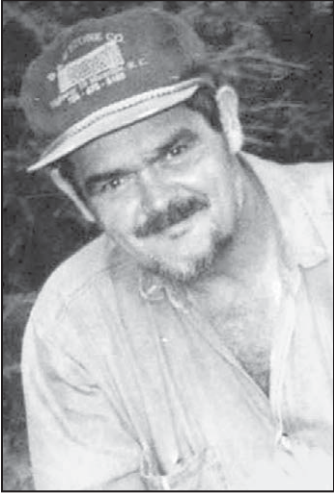
Though our hearts are heavy with grief, we find comfort in the assurance that Nanny is now in the presence of our Lord, where her faith has now become sight. Nanny will be deeply missed, but we rest in the assurance that they will see her again in eternity. Until that day, we celebrate her life she lived and the love she shared during her time on this earth. We are encouraged by the words of Jesus in John 16:22: "And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." Though we grieve the loss of Earlene, who was so much to so many, we take comfort in the promise of a future reunion, where sorrow will be replaced with unshakable joy. This truth will bring us peace and strength in the days ahead as we hold onto the treasured memories of our Nanny.

Funeral services will be held at 1:00 p.m. on Monday, October 21, 2024, in the Chapel of Holcombe Brothers Funeral

Home. The family will receive friends and loved ones for visitation two hours prior to the service. Interment will follow the service in the McCourry/Peterson Cemetery on Jacks Creek in Burnsville, NC.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks for donations to Hospice of the Blue Ridge, The Gideons or Samaritan's Purse.

Holcombe Brothers Funeral Home is respectfully serving the McCourry family.



Robert Vincent Ogle

Robert Vincent Ogle, age 70, of the Cattail Community, went Home to be with his Lord and Savior on Monday, October 14, 2024, at his home. A native of Yancey County, he was a son of the late Ralph Vincent and Edith Barnett Ogle. He was also preceded in death by one brother, Johnny Wayne Ogle; three sisters: Eva Mae Griffith, Anna Jean Wright and Brenda Kay Barnett; and a brother-in-law, Charles Neill Ellis.

Robert was a kind and generous man who adored all animals. He was a nature lover and enjoyed camping and traveling. His passion in life was music and he loved playing guitar and singing. He will be missed by all who knew him.

Surviving are two sisters: Linda Sue Ellis of Burnsville and Cathy Silver (Bobby) of Spruce Pine, as well as several nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

A Celebration of Life will be held at a later date and will be announced.

Memorials may be made to the Yancey County Humane Society at 211 Kind Hearts Way, Burnsville, NC 28714. To send online condolences, please visit our website at www.yanceyfuneralservice.com.

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During these current hard economic times, Holcombe Brothers Funeral Home would like to help those in need to have a respectful burial without the stress of cost.

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HELP WANTED: Long term property/farm help needed (no livestock). Tending to landscaping, property maintenance and lodging guest-accommodations. Need committed, reliable & skilled help. Couples welcome, bi-lingual a plus. Housing & compensation provided in Green Mountain, NC. Apply by calling 828-655-6644.



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2072 sq. feet. Price: \$509,000.

For more information or scheduled tour, call 216-956-9744.

Classifieds

LEGAL NOTICE

LEGAL NOTICE ADMINISTRATOR'S NOTICE

Having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of James R. Shuford of Yancey County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons and corporations having claims against the Estate of said deceased to present them to the undersigned on or before the 3rd day of January, 2025 or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate please make immediate payment.

This the 2nd day of October, 2024.

Larry Shuford, Administrator

7282 Hwy 80, South Burnsville, NC 28714
Charlie A. Hunt, Jr.
Attorney at Law
PO Box 509
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
Telephone: (828) 765-2062

Published October 9, 16, 23, 30, 2024

Volunteers needed

Meals on Wheels needs volunteers to deliver meals weekdays from 10:30 to noon. Call the Senior Center at 682-6011.

LEGAL NOTICE IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE, YANCEY COUNTY NORTH CAROLINA SUPERIOR COURT DIVISION

NOTICE TO CREDITORS Administrator / Executor Notice

Having qualified as Executor of the Estate of Morris Kelly Hylemon of Yancey County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons and corporations having claims against the Estate of said deceased to present them to the undersigned on or before the 23rd day of January, 2025 or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate please make immediate payment.

This the 23rd day of October, 2024.

Danny T. McIntosh
5 Sunrise Lane
Burnsville, NC 28714
Published October 23, 30,
November 6, 13, 2024

LEGAL NOTICE IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE, YANCEY COUNTY NORTH CAROLINA SUPERIOR COURT DIVISION

NOTICE TO CREDITORS Administrator / Executor Notice

Having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of Linda R. Edge of Yancey County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons and corporations having claims against the Estate of said deceased to present them to the undersigned on or before the 23rd day of January, 2025 or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate please make immediate payment.

This the 16th day of October, 2024.

Billy Ray Edge, Jr.
P.O. Box 985
Burnsville, NC 28714
October 23, 30, November 6, 13, 2024

LEGAL NOTICE ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

**Town of Burnsville
Contract A – Main Street
and Bennett Street Water
Line Improvements
SRP-D-ARP-0124**

Sealed bids for the project entitled **Contract A – Main Street and Bennett Street Water Line Improvements** will be received by the **Town of Burnsville until 2:00 P.M. local time November 26th, 2024, in the Burnsville Town Hall located at 2 Town Square, Burnsville, North Carolina 28714.** At said place and time, all Bids that have been duly received, will be publicly opened and read aloud.

The project generally consists of: **The installation of approximately 12,350 LF of 8" DIP, 6" DIP, and 2" PVC water line, with all necessary accessories and appurtenances.**

A pre-bid conference will be held at **11:00 am on November 4th, 2024, located at 2 Town Square, Burnsville, NC 28714.** Interested parties are invited to attend this meeting to review the plans, ask for additional information or clarification and to visit the project site.

Digital copies of Bid Documents are available for purchase at www.mcgillassociates.com for a fee of \$100.00 per set. These documents may be downloaded by selecting this project from the "Bids" link and by entering **Quest Project Number 9375881. For assistance and free membership registration, contact QuestCDN at (952) 233-1632 or info@questcdn.com.**

Additional information regarding the bidding of this project can be found at www.mcgillbidline.com.

Each bid shall be accompanied with a cash deposit or certified check drawn on a bank or trust company insured by the FDIC or a Bid Bond prepared on the form of Bid Bond contained in the Bidding Documents or

a Surety Company's standard form and properly executed by a corporate surety licensed under the laws of North Carolina to execute such bonds. The amount of the bid bond shall be equal to five (5) percent of the total of the bid. The bid deposit shall be retained by the Owner if the successful bidder fails to execute the contract or fails to provide the required bonds, as stated above, within ten (10) days after the proper notice of award of the contract.

Bidders must comply with the requirements of the State of North Carolina and be appropriately licensed as a Contractor as provided in General Statutes Chapter 87. See NCDWIDWI MBE/DBE Special Conditions Package and Supplementary Conditions for additional bidding information and requirements.

Neither the Owner nor the Engineer will be responsible for full or partial sets of Bidding Documents, including any Addenda, obtained from any source other than the Owner's representative, McGill Associates, P.A. Each Bidder shall be responsible for the review of all addenda for the project and shall acknowledge the addenda on the bid form.

The Owner reserves the right to reject any and all Bids, to waive informalities, or to reject non-conforming, non-responsive, or conditional bids. The Owner reserves the right to award a contract to the lowest, responsive, responsible bidder or bidders, taking into consideration quality, performance, and time.

Heather Hockaday, Town Manager

Published October 23, 2024

LEGAL NOTICE ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

**Town of Burnsville
Contract B – Glendale
Avenue Area Water Line
Improvements
SRP-D-ARP-0124**

Sealed bids for the project entitled **Contract B – Glendale Avenue Area Water Line Improvements** will be received by the **Town of Burnsville until 3:00 P.M. local time November 26th, 2024 in the Burnsville Town Hall located at 2 Town Square, Burnsville, North Carolina 28714.** At said place and time, all Bids that have been duly received, will be publicly opened and read aloud.

The project generally consists of: **Installation of approximately 15,500 LF of 6" DIP and 2" PVC water line, new booster pump station, and all necessary accessories and appurtenances as detailed in the plans and specifications.**

A pre-bid conference will be held at **11:00 AM on November 4th, 2024, located at 2 Town Square, Burnsville, NC 28714.** Interested parties are invited to attend this meeting to review the plans, ask for additional information or clarification and to visit the project site.

Bidders and other interested parties should note that prequalification of equipment manufacturers by the Engineer prior to the bid opening is required for this project. Prequalification submittals for the following items will be accepted until 5:00 P.M. local time on **November 13th, 2024.**

Variable Speed Booster Pump Station – Section 221123

Digital copies of Bid Documents are available for purchase at www.mcgillassociates.com for a fee of \$100.00 per set. These documents may be downloaded by selecting this project from the "Bids" link and by entering **Quest Project Number 9375883. For assistance and free membership registration, contact QuestCDN at (952) 233-1632 or info@questcdn.**

com. Additional information regarding the bidding of this project can be found at www.mcgillbidline.com.

Each bid shall be accompanied with a cash deposit or certified check drawn on a bank or trust company insured by the FDIC or a Bid Bond prepared on the form of Bid Bond contained in the Bidding Documents or a Surety Company's standard form and properly executed by a corporate surety licensed under the laws of North Carolina to execute such bonds. The amount of the bid bond shall be equal to five (5) percent of the total of the bid. The bid deposit shall be retained by the Owner if the successful bidder fails to execute the contract or fails to provide the required bonds, as stated above, within ten (10) days after the proper notice of award of the contract.

Bidders must comply with the requirements of the State of North Carolina and be appropriately licensed as a Contractor as provided in General Statutes Chapter 87. See NCDWIDWI MBE/DBE Special Conditions Package and Supplementary Conditions for additional bidding information and requirements.

Neither the Owner nor the Engineer will be responsible for full or partial sets of Bidding Documents, including any Addenda, obtained from any source other than the Owner's representative, McGill Associates, P.A. Each Bidder shall be responsible for the review of all addenda for the project and shall acknowledge the addenda on the bid form.

The Owner reserves the right to reject any and all Bids, to waive informalities, or to reject non-conforming, non-responsive, or conditional bids. The Owner reserves the right to award a contract to the lowest, responsive, responsible bidder or bidders, taking into consideration quality, performance, and time.

Heather Hockaday, Town Manager

Published October 23, 2024.

LEGAL NOTICE THE GREAT STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA IN THE COUNTY OF YANCEY IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE SUPERIOR COURT DIVISION, BEFORE THE CLERK 24 E 232

**In the Matter of the Estate of
GERALD HONEYCUTT,
Deceased**

NOTICE TO CREDITORS HAVING QUALIFIED

as Executor of the Estate of GERALD HONEYCUTT, deceased, of YANCEY COUNTY, NC, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the estate of said decedent to present them to the undersigned on or before 10TH day of January 2025, or this notice will be pled in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to the said estate please make immediate payment.

This the 2ND Day of October 2024

SYLVIA JOYCE
HONEYCUTT, Executor
2000 Shoal Creek Road
Burnsville, NC 28714
DONNY J. LAWS, Attorney
P. O. Box 397
Burnsville, NC 28714

Published: October 2, 9, 16, 23, 2024

Times Journal Deadline

Deadline for news copy, pictures, classified advertisements is 12:00 on Friday for Wednesday's publication. Copy should be brought by the office located at 22 North Main Street or mailed to Times Journal, 22 North Main Street, Burnsville, N.C. 28714.

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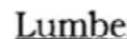
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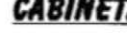
Lumber



Paints



Stains



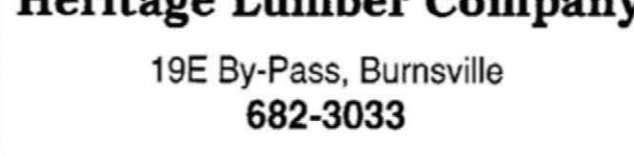
CABINETS



CARPET



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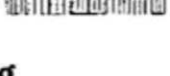
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**CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENT
DEADLINE / COST**

DEADLINE for classified ads and news copy is 12:00 noon on Friday for Wednesday's publication.

COST is \$7.00 for the first 20 words, 25¢ for each word over 20, 50 word limit.

Classifieds

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Times Journal Deadline Noon on Friday for Wednesday's publication. Located at 22 North Main Street. Phone 828-682-2120.

YANCEY GRAPHICS - For all your quick copy, full color copy, fax, laminating, binding, graphic design and commercial printing needs, call Yancey Graphics at 828-682-6620. M-F 8:30-4:30, across from TD Bank. Here for you since 1973. 1-18un

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WILSON HOME IMPROVEMENTS: bathroom remodeling, custom showers, handicap showers, tile laying, decks, deck repairing, handicap ramps and pressure washing. Free estimate. Call anytime, 828-682-1496, 828-284-8256. pd7-31

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Trane 828-765-7659 Rheem
superiorhvac@bellsouth.net
Rebecca Honeycutt, Office Manager

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SEARCH Takes a Deeper Look at Medical Debt

SEARCH Takes a Deeper Look at Medical Debt

Sustaining Essential And Rural Community Healthcare

SEARCH

HOSPITAL

SEARCH (Sustaining Essential and Rural Community Healthcare) is a nonprofit organization working to promote safe, affordable access to local healthcare. Today's article reviews what SEARCH members are learning about medical debt.

One's ability to pay for medical care is an important social determinant of health. A 2021 Census Bureau study found nearly 1 in 5 households couldn't pay for medical care when it was needed. A 2022 Consumer Financial Protection Bureau report cited this as the most likely reason debt collectors contact consumers.

Medical debt influences a person's decision to postpone or avoid seeking needed care and often results in people cutting down spending on food, medicines and other important expenses such as heating and utility bills. Many believe is that if you have health insurance you can afford the medical services health care providers recommend. Most discussions about our healthcare system focus on the 10% of Americans who lack health insurance at a given point in their lives and ignore two critical problems that confront the remaining 90% who are insured: incomplete coverage and insecure coverage.

Important details about medical debt:

- NC ranks # 3 out of the top 5 States with the highest share of adults with medical debt.
- Although 90% of US people have health insurance. The national average of those with outstanding medical debt is 8.6% (1 out of every 12 adults). In the US South the average of people with outstanding medical debt is 20%.

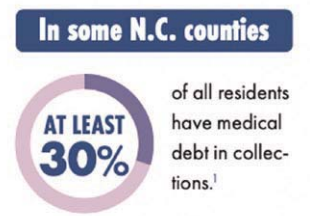
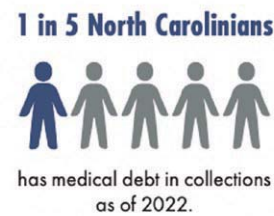
- In 2022, 1 in 5 North Carolinians had medical debt in collections. Contributing factors include insurance coverage with high deductibles, surprise billing, and out of network costs. In the US we pay more than twice the amount per person for medical care compared to other wealthy nations, yet we rank low on key population health markers.

- Medical debt is the leading cause (66.5%) of personal bankruptcy. Almost one out of every three working US adults carries some kind of medical debt. It is estimated that over half of bankrupt debtors had health insurance in the beginning of their illness but then lost coverage.

- A 2022 National Health Interview Survey analysis looked at how medical debt contributes to a mental health treatment gap in the US. The estimated 1 in 4 US adults with depression and anxiety who carry a medical debt, have a more than 2-fold increase in delaying or forgoing treatment for mental health disorders.

In August of this year, Governor Roy Cooper announced the successful negotiation of an innovative Medical Debt Mitigation Program approved by the Center for Medicaid and Medicare. Ninety-Nine eligible NC hospitals will receive additional funds through an enhanced federal Medicaid reimbursement program in return for voluntarily doing away with medical debt going back to early 2014 on current Medicaid enrollees and for non-enrollees based on income or whose debt exceeds 5% of their annual income. Going forward, participating hospitals will provide deep discounts on medical bills to low-and middle-income individuals and agree to enroll people automatically in charity care programs and agree not to sell their debt to collectors or tell credit reporting agencies about unpaid medical bills. This Debt Mitigation Program also places a cap on interest rates on unpaid bills.

The fact sheet "Healing Without Debt" by the North Carolina Justice Center www.ncjustice.org/publications/healing-without-debt/ provides additional info on medical debt in NC along with the opportunity for individuals to share a medical debt story via the link: bit.ly/MedDebtVoices.



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