

Meeting Minutes
October 8, 2024

MINUTES OF MECKLENBURG COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met in Budget/Public Policy Session in Conference Center Room 267 on the 2nd floor of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center located at 600 East Fourth Street, Charlotte, North Carolina at 2:31 p.m. on Tuesday, October 8, 2024.

ATTENDANCE

Present: Chair George Dunlap and Commissioners
Vice-Chair Mark Jerrell, Leigh Altman,
Patricia “Pat” Cotham, Arthur Griffin,
Vilma D. Leake, Laura J Meier, Elaine Powell,
and Susan Rodriguez-McDowell
County Manager Dena R. Diorio
County Attorney Tyrone C. Wade
Clerk to the Board Kristine M. Smith
Deputy Clerk to the Board Arlissa Eason

Absent: None

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Dunlap, followed by introductions and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Commissioner Patricia “Pat” Cotham joined the meeting at 2:49 p.m.

24-0580 RECEIVE UPDATE ON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO TROPICAL STORM
HELENE

The Board received an update on emergency response efforts In Mecklenburg County after Tropical Storm Helene from the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Emergency Management Office and County staff.

Chief Robert Graham, Deputy Director, Charlotte Mecklenburg Emergency Management Office (CMEMO); Raynard Washington, PhD, MPH, Health Director; Ebenezer Gujjarlapudi, Director of LUESA; Peter Cook, Deputy Director of Park and Recreation; John Peterson, Director, and Damien Gonzales, Deputy Director, Medic provided the presentations.



Hurricane Helene in Mecklenburg County

- Key Points
 - 1 fatality in Mecklenburg County (09/27)
 - 89 structures with water in the living space (10/08)
- Response
 - 3 areas under evacuation orders
 - 2 voluntary: North Side of Mountain Island Lake; Allison Ferry Road
 - 1 mandatory: Riverside Dr – Riverhaven Dr
 - Shelter opened at Tuckaseegee Recreation Center in partnership with American Red Cross

Public Warning and Alerts Timeline

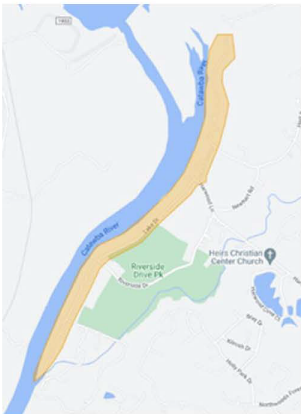
Tuesday 24 -Thursday 26

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| • Tuesday Sept 24 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• NWS: Severe Thunderstorm Warning | • 1241: Additional CharMeck Alert, Flash Flood Alert |
| • Wednesday Sept 25 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• NWS: Severe Thunderstorm Warning | • 1831: WEA, Voluntary Evacuation |
| • Thursday Sept 26 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 0800: EOC Activates• 0940: CharMeck Alert, Flash Flood Alert to Riverside for expected flooding• 0955: NWS Flash Flood Warning• 1000: Door to door, flyers and contact by CFD• 1159: NWS Flash Flood Warning | • 1845: WEA, Voluntary Evacuation Expanded |
| | • 1900: Reception Center Established, Shelter Requested from ARC |
| | • 2100 Tornado Watch |

Public Warning and Alerts Timeline

Thursday September 26th

- 0800: EOC Activates
- 0940: CharMeck Alert, Flash Flood Alert to Riverside for expected flooding
- 0955: NWS Flash Flood Warning
- 1000: Door to door, flyers and contact by CFD
- 1159: NWS Flash Flood Warning
- 1241: Additional CharMeck Alert, Flash Flood Alert
- 1831: WEA, Voluntary Evacuation
- 1845: WEA, Voluntary Evacuation Expanded
- 1900: Reception Center Established, Shelter Requested from ARC
- 2100 Tornado Watch



Map of voluntary evacuation zone on Riverside Dr.

Public Warning and Alerts Timeline

Friday September 27th

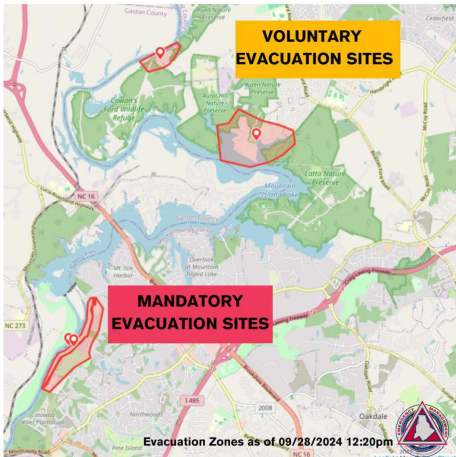


- | | |
|---|--|
| ■0305: NWS, Flash Flood Warning | ■1027: WEA, Flash Flood Imminent |
| ■0438: NWS, Flash Flood Warning | ■1357: WEA, Flash Flood Imminent |
| ■0559: NWS, Flash Flood Warning | ■1628: WEA, Lake Wylie and Lake Norman |
| ■0611: WEA, Mandatory Evacuation | ■1717: WEA, Mtn Island Lake |
| ■0806: CharMeck Alert for entire County | ■1939: WEA Overnight Advisory |
| ■0808: NWS Tornado Watch | |

Public Warning and Alerts Timeline

Saturday, September 28

- 2206: CharMeck Alert for continued flooding along the Catawba
- CFD conducted on-going rescues along the Catawba



Aftermath



Mecklenburg County Major Disaster Declaration

Mecklenburg County Now Listed on FEMA Disaster Declaration

Mecklenburg County, NC (Oct. 7, 2024) – Mecklenburg County residents are now eligible for Individual Assistance through the [Federal Emergency Management Agency \(FEMA\)](#). Homeowners and renters who had uninsured damage as a result of Hurricane Helene can apply for FEMA disaster assistance.

This funding can help with needs including displacement, temporary lodging, basic home repairs, and personal property loss. FEMA cannot duplicate benefits for losses that are covered by insurance. The fastest way to apply is online at [DisasterAssistance.gov](#). [Residents can also apply via the FEMA App, or by calling 800-621-3362.](#)

- Applicants will need:
- A current phone number where you can be contacted.
 - Your address at the time of the disaster and the address where you are now staying.
 - Your Social Security number.
 - A general list of damage and losses.
 - Banking information if you choose direct deposit.
 - If insured, the policy number or the agent and/or the company name.

For information on what actions are eligible for FEMA assistance visit the [FEMA Individuals and Households Program website](#). For [additional details about North Carolina's recovery](#), visit [fema.gov/disaster/4827](#). For additional details about Mecklenburg County's recovery efforts, visit [clt.gov/me/recovery](#).

Recovery Efforts

- Completed
 - Community Cleanup: 120 volunteers from dozen different churches and nonprofits
 - Donation Drive: over 10,000 items donated and cataloged
- In Progress
 - Emergency Management
 - Setting up Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) in conjunction with FEMA
 - Team Rubicon volunteers active to support residents in the next few weeks
 - Other County Partners
 - Parks and Recreation: bringing staff and heavy machinery to assist residents
 - Stormwater: Staff onsite to answer resident questions
 - Code Enforcement: Staff onsite to answer resident questions




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Update from
Western North
Carolina

- 15 county EOCs activated
- 25 county States of Emergency
- 3300 NC National Guard personnel deployed
- 17 shelters with 737 occupants
- 84 fatalities











North Carolina Department of
PUBLIC SAFETY

State Emergency Response Team

20240924 Tropical System Helene

Executive Summary #26

8 October 2024 1000



Lifeline Summary

Safety and Security

- 15 county EOCs are activated: Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Haywood, Henderson, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Watauga, Wilkes and Yancey.
- 25 county States of Emergency (SOE) and 52 municipality SOEs have been declared (see attached county SOE map).
- There are currently 440 fire personnel with 78 engines and 499 EMS personnel with 253 ambulances actively engaged. Immediate life saving resources will begin to demobilize where no longer needed.
- NC National Guard (NCG) continues to support with 3,300 total active-duty personnel, 2,000 National Guard soldiers and airmen, and over 1,300 Title 10 soldiers deployed. Forces are being used for distribution, aid and road clearance operations. This includes a recent delivery of high priority insulin to the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.
- Avery, Haywood, Henderson, Mitchell, Watauga (including Boone and Blowing Rock), and Yancey counties continue to maintain curfews.
- FEMA continues working to complete site inspections to open Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs) in Alleghany, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, McDowell, Mitchell, Mecklenburg, Polk, Swain, and Watauga counties. Buncombe and McDowell county locations are expected to open this week.
- 14 counties have schools that are closed, 10 WNC colleges remain closed.

Food, Water, and Sheltering


- 17 shelters are open with a total of 737 occupants and 106 pets. There are currently 3 State Operated Shelters in Buncombe (2), and Rowan (1) counties. Shelter operations in Rowan County are in the process of demobilizing.
- Operations continue to open an additional State Operated Shelter in Caldwell County. Once operational, occupants from Rowan County are expected to this location.
- 3 mass feeding sites (Buncombe, McDowell, and Watauga counties) continue delivering meals to approximately 42 sites across 12 counties. Over 20,000 hot meals are served each day through efforts of the Mass Feeding Task Force. Additional feeding sites, either fixed or delivery, can be requested through WebEOC.
- It is estimated that over 360,000 meals have been provided to impacted communities through the combined feeding efforts of partners and self-deployed feeding sites.
- To date, over 123,000 individuals have registered for FEMA Individual Assistance. There has been over \$37 million approved and over \$32 million disbursed to survivors.
- The Transitional Sheltering Assistance (TSA) program is currently supporting over 2,600 individuals in hotel rooms.

Health and Medical

- Teams are reporting completion of hasty, primary and secondary searches across many affected counties, meaning that these areas are considered 100% searched. Search and rescue continues within 5 counties which are nearly complete with these efforts.
- There are 2 State Medical Support Shelters with a population of 22 patients.
- A 10-person support team will be arriving tomorrow, 8 October, via EMAC to support public health operations.
- 84 storm related fatalities have been reported. Additional staff are expected to assist with fatality management planning.

Update from
Western North
Carolina

- 630 roads remain closed
- I-40 is closed indefinitely in both directions for 43 miles between exit 432 in Tennessee and exit 20 in North Carolina











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State Emergency Response Team

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Lifeline Summary

Energy (Power and Fuel)

- Power outages remain concentrated in western NC with the highest being reported in Buncombe, Henderson, Mitchell, and Yancey counties.

Communications

- All TERT requests have been filed to organize 911 staffing throughout the impacted counties and partners are beginning to look into future staffing needs.
- PSAPs remain stable and are improving. 2 PSAPs remain routed to alternate locations but all 911 calls continue to be answered.
- 7 VPER sites remain on generator power.
- Messaging continues regarding the importance of avoiding damage to temporary fiber. Damaged fiber lines can be reported by texting FIBER to 41444.

Transportation

- There are at least 630 roads that remain closed due to flooding, trees, and downed power lines. This number will fluctuate as connectivity is restored and reporting improves.
- There are over 2,000 Department of Transportation employees responding to the storm with more than 1,100 pieces of heavy equipment in the affected area.
- NCDOT Rail is coordinating to ensure oversize/overweight permits are issued to railroad contractors for movement of equipment to begin repairs.

Hazardous Materials

- There are 33 active debris sites which are active with more pending review and approval.
- The Waste Transfer Station is in operation in Buncombe County.
- Through site assessments, NCEQ and EPA are reporting large amounts of contamination and are encourage responders to wear appropriate PPE.

Water Systems

- There are 84 potable water systems on boil water advisories, and of these, 48 systems need bacteria results to clear the advisory. Additionally, 14 systems have no power, 52 are operating on backup power, and 26 systems are out water.
- There are 53 wastewater treatment plants in the affected area that are operating under normal operations. Additionally, 28 wastewater treatment plants are partially operational or operating on back-up power.
- The wastewater treatment plant supporting the community of Summit Lake was restored yesterday, 7 October.
- NC WaterWARR has provided 21 crews, 32 pieces of equipment, 4 generators, 76 staff and 33 trucks in support of restoration efforts.
- NC DEQ Division of Water Resources has coordinated with EPA Region 4 to station a mobile lab in Buncombe County to process free Total coliforms and E. coli required to lift boil water advisories.

Mecklenburg County Supports WNC

- Charlotte Fire Department
 - Deployed teams to help respond to calls and telecommunicators to assist 911 centers
- CMPD
 - Deployed teams to Asheville to assist local law enforcement
- Mecklenburg Sheriff’s Office
 - Deployed teams to WNC to assist local law enforcement
- Charlotte Water
 - Deployed crews to assist in reestablishing potable water in rural communities



Monetary Donations

- North Carolina Disaster Assistance Fund: nc.gov/donate
- American Red Cross: redcross.org/donate/dr/hurricane-helene
- United Way of NC: unitedwaync.org
- Community Foundation of Western North Carolina: cfwnc.org
- Manna Food Bank Asheville: mannafoodbank.org
- Samaritans Purse: samaritanspurse.org/disaster/hurricane-helene
- Operation Air Drop: operation-airdrop.com/hurricane-helene

Challenges

- Short term and long-term housing
 - Especially during winter months
- Electricity
- Long term Road Closures
 - I-40 remains closed
- Transportation for residents in rural communities

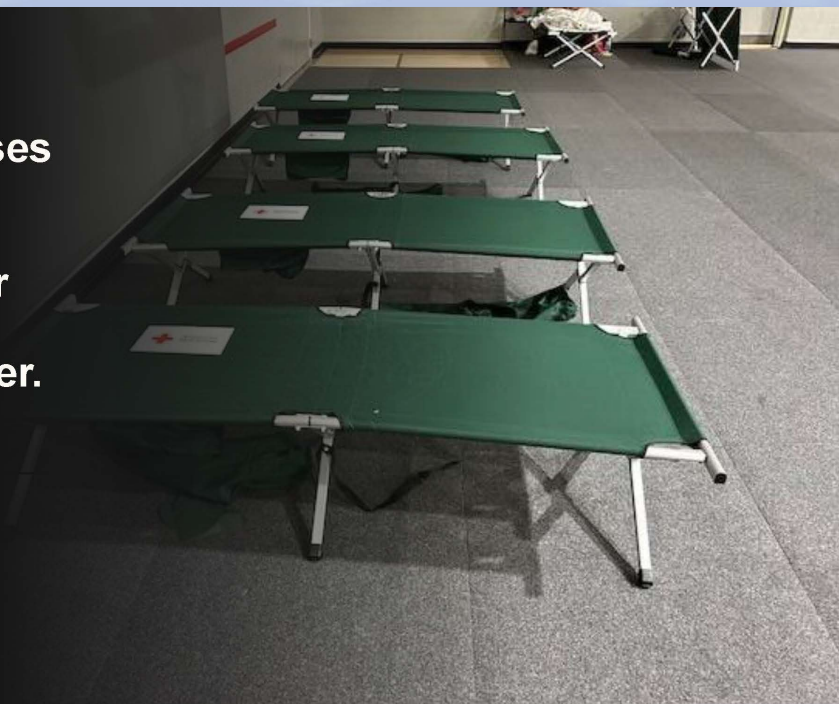


Update on Hurricane Helene Public Health Response

Presented October 8, 2024

Raynard Washington, PhD, MPH
Director,
Mecklenburg County Public Health

**Public Health nurses
provided 24/7
medical care at
emergency shelter
at Tuckaseegee
Recreational Center.**



Environmental Health is distributing information and beginning well testing along Catawba River this week.

Call 980-314-1680 for questions about wells or septic tanks.

Support to Western North Carolina

Public Health is providing vaccines and medical supplies as requested to WNC local health departments.

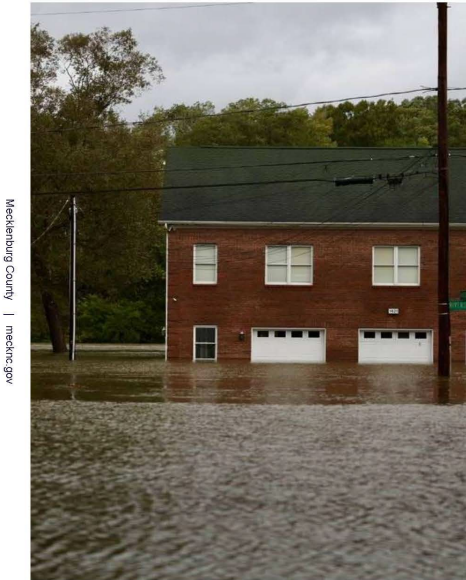
To date, TDAP vaccines and oxygen concentrator sent (to refill oxygen tanks) to Buncombe County. On standby to provide additional medications and supplies.

Many Public Health nurses and environmental health specialists are on statewide deployment list.

First cohort of nurses expected to deploy *this week*. EHSs are not expected to deploy until water and power are restored.

Public Health strike team(s) are readying for deployment when state coordination begins.

Expect to deploy non-clinical personnel to help restart local public health operations and support ongoing incident management activities.



Mecklenburg County | mecknc.gov

BOCC PUBLIC POLICY WORKSHOP

HELENA UPDATE

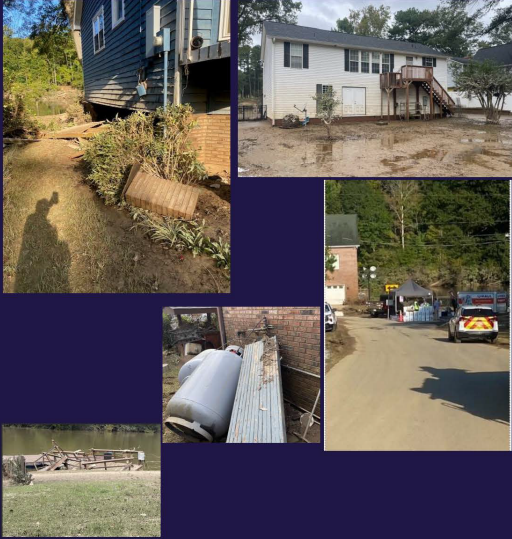
LUESA COORDINATED RESPONSE

Code Enforcement, Storm Water


Solid Waste and GIS



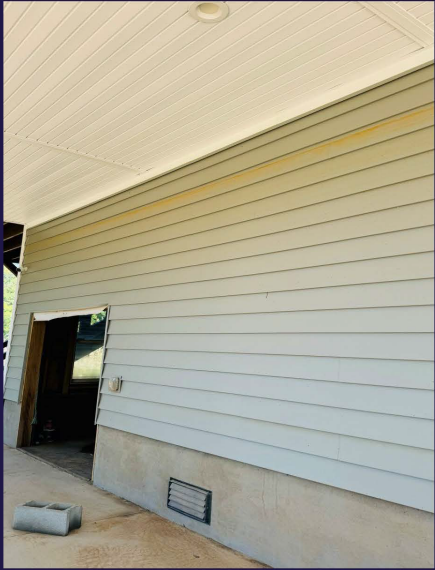
Code Enforcement



Code Enforcement



Code Enforcement



Pre-storm Coordination and Preparation

- Code Enforcement began initial response on Wednesday, September 25th, in collaboration with the Charlotte Mecklenburg Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and the County Fire Marshals Office (FMO) to disconnect power (de-energize) on Friday, September 27th, to high risk structures within the Riverside Dr. and Mountain Lake area based on updates from Duke Energy.
- Staff leads and teams were identified to respond once the storm passed.
- Coordinated with County Storm Water Services and GIS to model potential flooding on Riverside Dr. and the Mt. Island Lake area, to determine the potential number of structures that would be affected based on storm predictions.



Post – Storm Coordination and Response

On Sep 30th, the Code Enforcement team along with the County Storm Water team initiated efforts to:

- Provide residents (if still in the area) have the necessary contact information for assistance regarding shelter, supplies etc.
- Work with partners in the EOC to define the boundaries of the affected areas, establishing what’s in the flood zone, and preparing the scale of damage assessment scope.
- Conducted preliminary walk through of possible properties for initial assessment of damage.



Post-Storm Continuing Efforts

From October 1st to October 4th, the Code Enforcement team completed their first high-level review of the scale of damage.

- Estimated 84 properties were impacted and will need to contact the department to the need permits before they could be occupied based on the observed damage.
- 18 residence structures had power restored, with minor damage either in the occupied or unoccupied spaces.
- Information flyers were provided to each resident to help guide steps in the permitting process.
- CE customer service teams have been briefed on the situation to best guide those residence for the services needed.
- Over 500 hours of response provided in the first week.





Storm Water



Mountain Island Lake (MIL)

- 7.9 ft of water above spillway at peak
- 4 ft of water on homes in lower MIL
- 14 ft of water on downstream homes.



Before

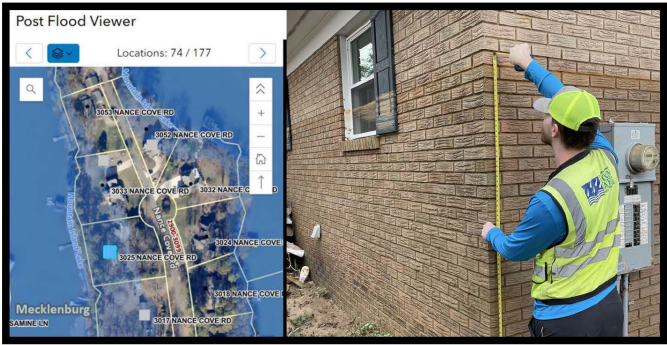


After

Storm Water



Riverside Drive Response and
Command Center



- Monitored flood levels during the flood using our network of level sensors
- Provided 24-hr flood level mapping support to staff at Emergency Operations Center (EOC)
- Performed 200 post-damage building inspections
- Staffed the Command Center on Riverside Drive to address resident's questions about recovery and collect data to assess funding needs



Storm Water



Solid Waste



Solid Waste



LUESA Riverside Drive Response



- Storm Water’s drone was used to observe and identify flooding
- Preliminary Estimates indicate over 100 building structures potentially impacted by living space flooding



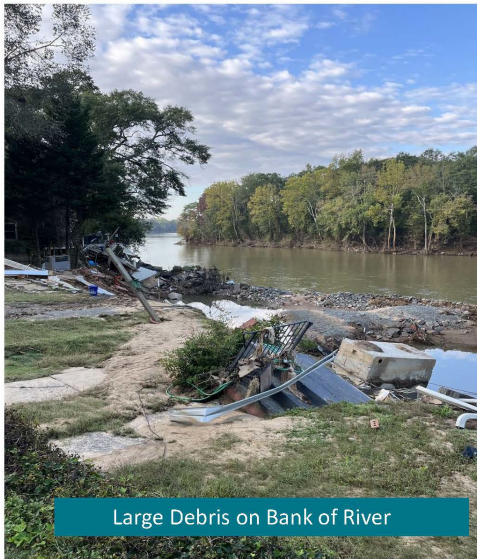
LUESA Riverside Drive Response

Coordination with other agencies

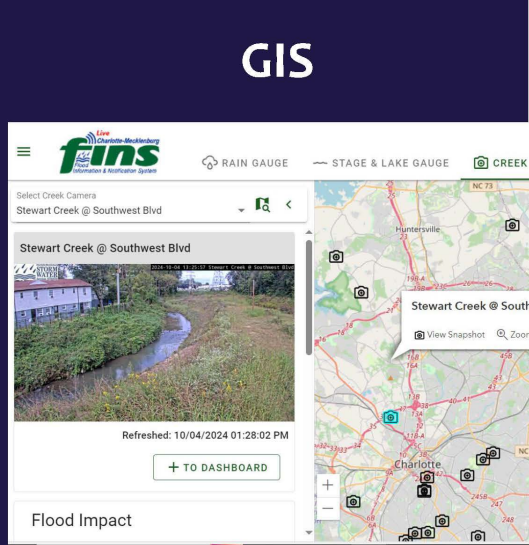
- Deploying Dumpsters & Removing Debris
- Working 7 days/week. Staff working long hours
- Establishing a Temp Disposal & Sorting Area
- Using heavy Equipment to remove large debris
- Coordinating Right of Entry/Permission to remove large items from shoreline and properties
- Coordinating heavy equipment and staff with multiple Park & Recreation Teams.



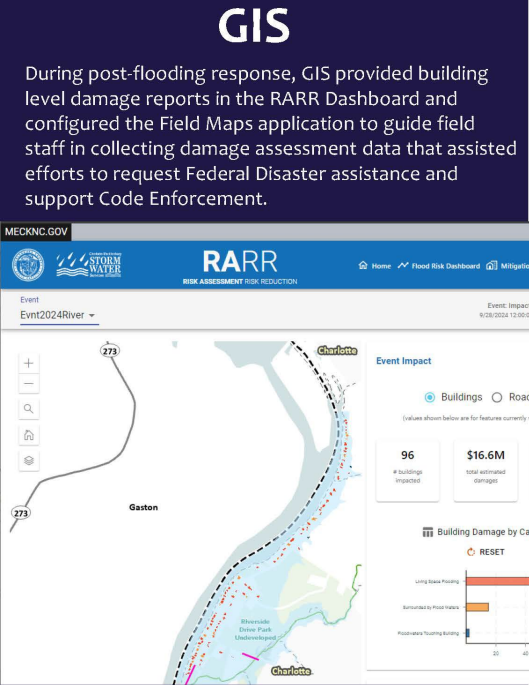
LUESA Riverside Drive Response



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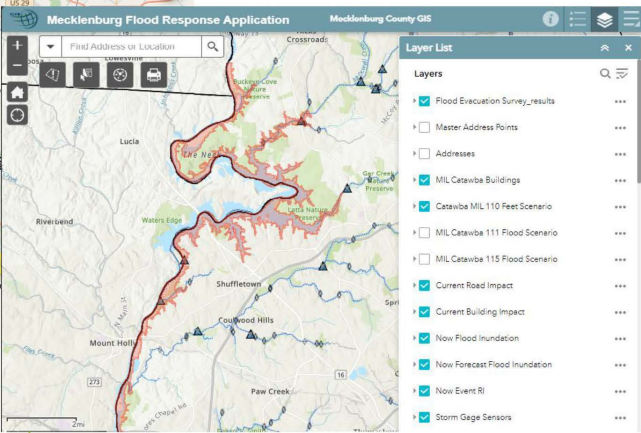
At the EOC, GIS solutions like **FINS Live** and **Flood Response Application** provided real-time monitoring of flood levels and forecasted flood maps, helping Emergency Management identify potentially affected areas to prioritize evacuation planning and resource allocation.



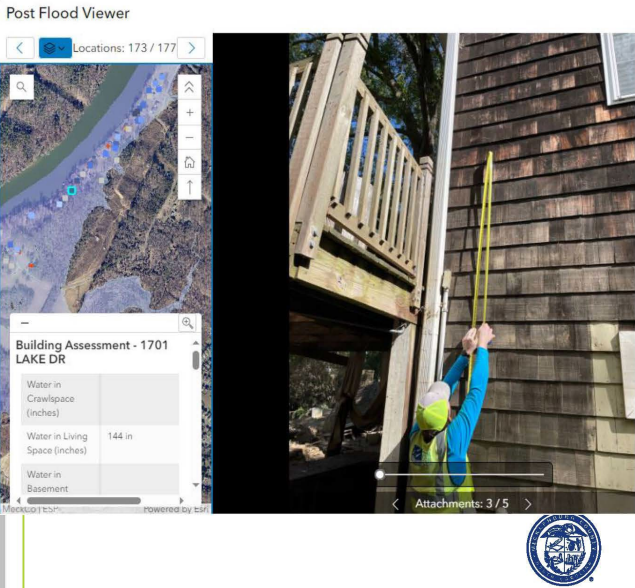
LUESA-GIS Support During Hurricane Helene

During Hurricane Helene, GIS technology investments were instrumental in enhancing situational awareness and improving the efficiency of the overall response.

LUESA-GIS played a crucial role in flood monitoring and response efforts by providing detailed mapping visualizations and applications that guided evacuation plans and relief operations.



LUESA-GIS Support Post Hurricane Helene



LUESA HELENA RESPONSE

Thank you!



Emergency Assistance

- Tuckaseegee Recreation Center activated as an Emergency Shelter for Mecklenburg County residents, Sept 26 – Oct 2, serving 65+ overnight residents during the entire activation.
- Staff at Tuckaseegee assisted Emergency Response staff with operations of the shelter to include providing youth programming.
- Programs regularly scheduled for Tuckaseegee were transferred to nearby recreation centers, so no loss of services.
- In response to CMS cancelling classes on Monday, September 30, staff quickly established “School Day Out” programs at 9 different recreation centers for working parents – 64 kids attended.



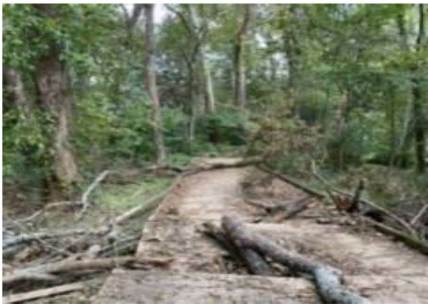
Parks-Greenways-Nature Preserves

- Lakes and Catawba River were at their highest levels since the 1940's.
- Three (3) County operated boat ramps were closed for public use, Sept 27 - Oct 5, consistent with Duke Energy's management of water access areas related to storm - water quality and debris management.
- Tree loss was not as significant as expected, but over 100 trees were removed along roads and trails in parks and nature preserves.
- Power outages due to trees impacted nature preserves and parks at Reedy Creek Park, Freedom Park, Thomas Winget Park and Latta Nature Preserve.
- McDowell Campground was without internet and phone service for several days.
- Ongoing debris removal will continue over the next 30 days at multiple park and recreation facilities, including greenways, recreation centers and nature preserves.



Current Closures

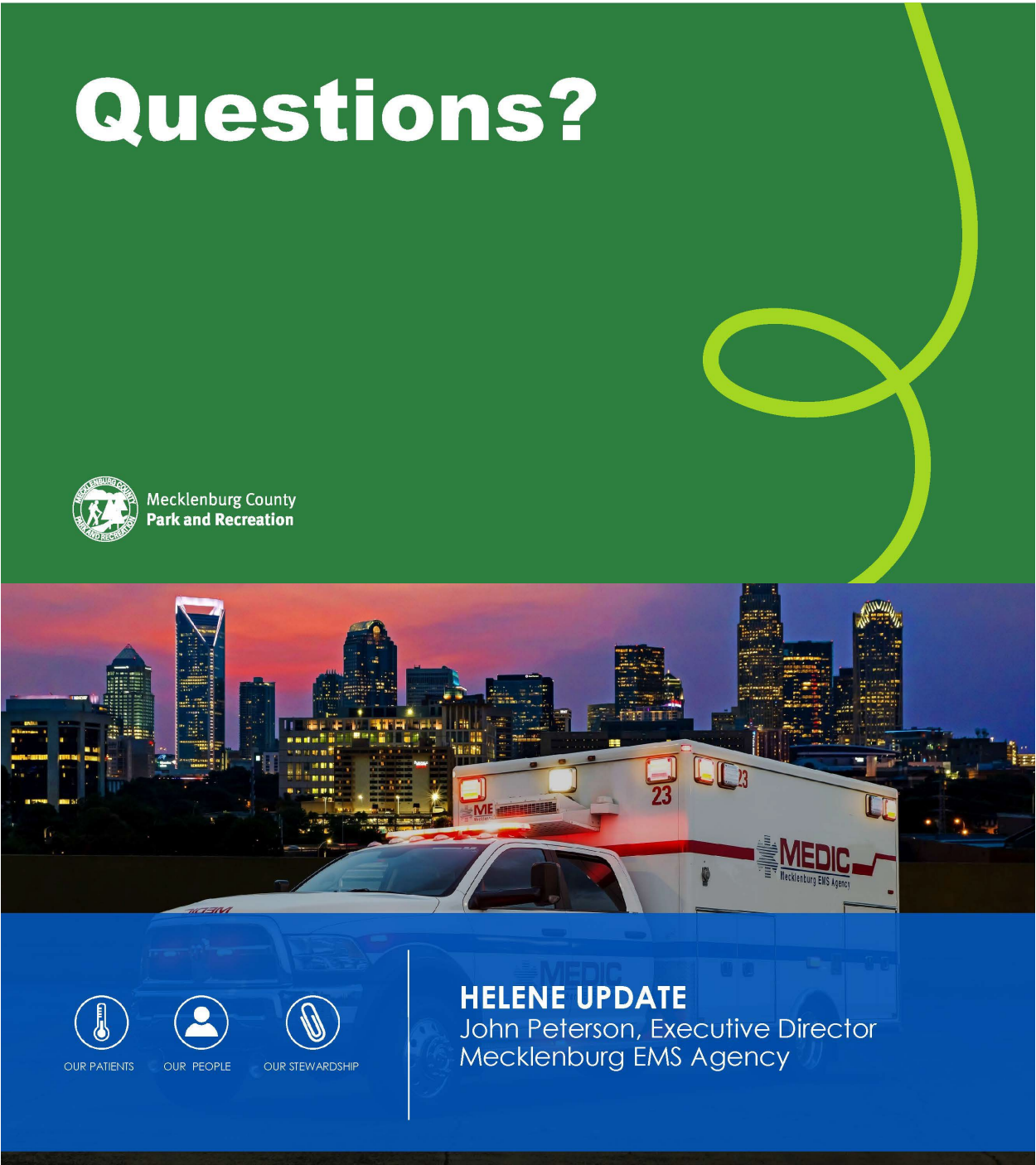
- Clarks Creek Greenway has one (1) damaged pedestrian bridge located near Armitage Road that could take up to 12 months to replace.
- McMullen Creek Greenway is closed for the next week, due to nine (9) sections of damaged boardwalk.
- A tennis court at Hornets Nest Park is offline due to a tree falling on a light pole that damaged fence and court. Eleven (11) tennis courts remain operable.
- Fishing Dock access areas at Latta Nature Preserve.



Post Storm Recovery Assistance

- Park & Rec, LUESA and Emergency management working together to assist residents with debris removal/clean up efforts along Riverside Drive on Tuesday and Wednesday this week and into the near future.
- Providing free stay and firewood at McDowell Campground through the end of October for those from Western NC.
Several Western NC residents currently at the campground, and we are almost full.
- Several Mecklenburg County Recreation and Nature Centers will operate as donation drive sites through Friday, November 1 for basic needed items, to include but not limited to, non-perishable food, bottled water, cleaning supplies, work gloves, first aid kits, flashlights, etc. to be delivered/distributed in coordination with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Emergency Management.





Comments

Commissioner Powell thanked Chief Graham, Division Chief/Deputy Director, and Tony Bateman, Emergency Management Planner, for their efforts. She highlighted the efforts of both the City and County during Hurricane Helene's recovery efforts. She said she was happy the County was included in the declaration and said it wouldn't have happened without LUESA. She also thanked Chief of Staff/Deputy County Manager Derrick Ramos for his work with Emergency Management.

Commissioner Altman thanked the presenters and their staff for allowing pets to shelter with their owners. She said she was moved by all the counties pitching in to help. She said it all made her proud to be an American. She said they should anticipate a more direct hit and asked how they would adapt as an inland community. *Chief Graham said they had to consider mitigation efforts as they grew. He said if he were to rank the states that handled disasters the best, they would be California, Florida, and North Carolina. He said the culture they had created was strong.*

Commissioner Cotham thanked the presenters, their staff, and the volunteers working on the recovery efforts. She said they would rise again.

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Commissioner Leake thanked the “foot soldiers” of Mecklenburg County. She said her concerns were with the seniors receiving messages about what to do, how to do it, and when. She said many didn’t take it seriously that it would be a major storm. She asked how they would get the information out to the public to get prepared. She asked them to publicize the information they had received to prepare the public for what was to come.

Commissioner Griffin said he was amazed and grateful for their work. He mentioned a story in the Bible that referenced “who their neighbor was,” and it reflected during this time. He said he was also thankful for the support of their first responders’ families.

Commissioner Meier said she was thankful for Mecklenburg County's response and impressed by their actions. She mentioned it would be cold there soon and asked the public to provide what they could for the impacted community.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell thanked the presenters. She said that they had to rebuild, stand firm, and learn from the damage to prevent the bad things from happening that they couldn't. She said they had to invest in protecting the future. She gave Commissioner Powell a shoutout for her deep care.

Chair Dunlap said none of the solutions happened without leadership. He said the presentations they received showed how strong the leadership was in Mecklenburg County. He thanked everyone involved today, including those who were not mentioned.

Vice Chair Jerrell said those impacted were in their thoughts and prayers. He asked what sustained support would look like and wanted to ensure they leaned into whatever long-term support was. He said that going from tragedy to tragedy, they sometimes forget what happened months prior. He thanked all the responders and their families. He said they were heroes times ten, and their coordination together was impressive.

24-0581 EXECUTIVE SEARCH & RECRUITMENT SERVICES – COUNTY MANAGER - UPDATE

The Board received an update on the Request for Proposal (RFP) – Executive Search & Recruitment Services – County Manager.

Teresa Rausch, Procurement Director

Background: The Procurement Division was directed to submit RFP for the above-noted services. The solicitation was posted on Monday, Aug 26th, 2024, with several responses. This process is necessary to review the responses and seek guidance on next steps in the selection of a firm to execute a contract by November 1, 2024. This discussion will include a review of the proposals that were received and answer any questions.

Comments

The Commissioners asked clarifying questions. *Teresa Rausch, Procurement Director, responded.*

Commissioner Leake asked how long the Mecklenburg region in Germany had been a sister city to Mecklenburg County. *County Manager Diorio said thirty years.*

Commissioner Leake said she asked because some of them had not had good relationships with some countries. She mentioned how, during World War II, German migrants would be brought

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through the community and spew derogatory words. She asked for them to be made aware of what the costs were for the County and what the community gained from them going to visit Germany.

24-0582

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioners shared information of their choosing within the guidelines as established by the Board, which included, but not limited to, past and/or upcoming events.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Board, Chair Dunlap declared the meeting adjourned at 4:23 p.m.

Arlissa Eason, Deputy Clerk to the Board

George Dunlap, Chair