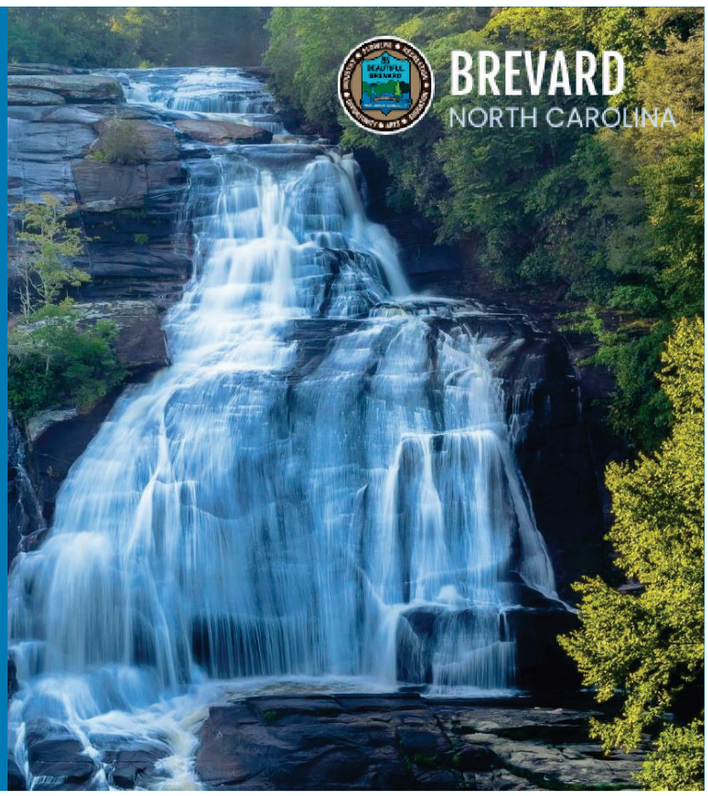
Hurricane Helene Recovery Update

Mayor Maureen Copelof

November 2024



Emergency Housing

- Approximately 52 homes substantially damaged in COB/ETJ
- Families initially in emergency shelter, staying with friends, remaining in damaged homes, STRs
- BMC provided temporary housing for 15 families
  - Housing not heated so families need to move by early December
- FEMA provided initial $750 emergency funds, housing vouchers and instituted the direct lease program
  - 11 local properties approved for direct leasing
- Sunset Motel accepting housing vouchers

Temporary Housing Task Force

- Transylvania County
- City of Brevard
- Habitat for Humanity
- Housing Assistance Corporation (HAC)
- Platt-- Helene Emergency Assistance Longtime (HEAL)
- El Centro
- Sycamore Builders
- Brevard Music Center
- Amy Fisher
- Builders Association of the Blue Ridge Mountains

Long Term Temporary Housing

- Habitat arranged 6 campers from Operation Helo, 1 additional from donor
  - Arrived Nov 8th. Families already moved in.
- 8 Campers purchased by Platt HEAL & managed by HAC
- 1 trailer from Baptist Home Mission
- Consolidated list of families from FEMA, HAC, El Centro, Habitat.
  - Almost everyone on list now has temporary housing
  - May still be more who have not signed up
- Working one on one to situate families in trailers or houses
  - 13 families placed in local homes for long term rental
  - 16 families into trailers
- Goal is to move families out of BMC by end of month

Regional Helene Recovery Meeting Convened by NCLM and NCACC

- Mayors, Chairs of County Commissions and Managers from WNC
- State Legislators, Governor Cooper, FEMA Administrator, NCEM Chief of Staff, Senator Tillis
- Current status (as of Nov 8th): 273 roads still closed; 18 water systems still boil advisory; 15 WWTP various states of disrepair (3 no power; 5 closed significant damage)
- Look at: Immediate Needs (Response); Intermediate Needs (Recovery); Future Needs (Rebuilding)

Land of Sky (Buncombe,Transylvania, Henderson & Madison Counties) Priorities

- **Immediate funding for government, individual and businesses**
  - Cash flow issues; reduced sales taxes; waived fees; businesses loss of revenue;
  - Grant funding needed in NC Supplemental Funding Bill. Follow COVID example
  - SBA funding needed at federal level
- **Housing**
  - FEMA regulations; time delay with programs; not enough contractors or engineering expertise
  - Need to cut the red tape. Eliminate middle man.
  - Longterm assistance: Revamp LIHTC; Reinstate state level funding programs;
- **Water & Sewer Repair & Replacement & Resiliency**
  - What do we do so it doesn't happen again? Interconnections. Eliminate single points of failure.
- **Other Infrastructure (roads, bridges, communication systems)**
  - Satellite communication versus fiber?
- **Debris Removal**

Other Issues

- Mental Health services needed.
- Technical assistance to comply with FEMA programs.
- Grant writing assistance.
- Regional Coordination.
- Extension of PA and IA deadlines
- Relaxing of NCDOT and DEQ procurement requirements
- Focus on Climate Resilience & Mitigation efforts

Leadership Comments

- **FEMA Administrator**: Flexibility in system. If you find creative solutions challenge her team on authorities.
- **Governor Cooper**: Over $53B in damage. Need GA to approve grants to small businesses not just loans; state needs to front the money for Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, recoup from Federal Govt later. Push GA for COVID like programs. This taking big portion of this years and future years budgets.
- **Senator Tillis**: Most deadly and damaging storm in NC. Think long term. Need to look regionally. Forge new partnerships. Redefine what recovery looks like. Need swift, decisive government. Use COVID relief programs as examples. Get private sector investment. We need a new model.

Next Steps

- Immediate:
  - Review need for additional temporary housing
  - Assisting families with navigating the process. Nov 21st Information Meeting
  - COB Submission of PA request.
  - COB repair of infrastructure
- Long Term:
  - COB review of infrastructure for resilience/strengthening underway
  - Lobbying State Representatives for measures Governor Cooper mentioned
  - Lobbying Washington for SBA funding and robust funding of CDBG-Disaster Recovery Grant program