

A Publication of the Granite Falls Historical Association, Inc.

## GOOD-BYE, SUMMER! HELLO, FALL! *Festival on Main Welcomes One and All!*

The 14th Annual Festival on Main was held downtown Granite Falls on Saturday, September 21, from 2 until 8 p.m. The opening ceremony began with the presentation of colors by the West Caldwell High School Naval Junior ROTC and the playing of the Star Spangled Banner by the South Caldwell High School Band. Eugene Crawly served as emcee. Rev. David Smith of Lenoir gave the invocation. Mayor Caryl Burns welcomed attendees, thanked sponsors of the event, and acknowledged the 125th Anniversary of the Town of Granite Falls. Mike Mackie, President of the Granite

*(FESTIVAL ON MAIN continued on page 4)*



## CELEBRATE THE TOWN'S 125TH ANNIVERSARY *With the Granite Falls Historical Association*

The Granite Falls Historical Association, Inc. (GFHA) invites the public to celebrate the 125th Anniversary of the Town of Granite Falls during its Seventh Annual Meeting to be held Tuesday, October 8, 2024, in the Granite Falls History and Transportation Museum. The event will begin at 6 p.m. with registration, fellowship, and a dessert, which is appropriately called 125 Year Old Black Walnut Pound Cake.

After a brief business session, attendees will be free to examine the museum's extensive collection of resources available for research such as news clippings, photographs, and other historical documents relevant to Granite Falls and neighboring areas. These materials are ideal for researching family history, old buildings, special events, etc. The Association is still accepting articles for inclusion in its new history book about the Town of Granite Falls, and members are hoping the available resources will inspire individuals to write down their family stories and other memories.

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## HURRICANE HELENE *An Unwelcome Visitor*

Hurricane Helene arrived in Granite Falls on the morning of Friday, September 27, 2024, leaving downed trees, broken branches, damaged property, power outages, spotty cell service, no cable TV or internet, and excess water. The now historic hurricane hit the Florida coast at 11:10 p.m. EDT on Thursday, September 26. As the storm made its way from the Gulf of Mexico, rain began falling in Granite Falls on Wednesday, September 25, with one local resident recording 1 inch on that day and 1.1 inch on Thursday, September 26. Helene left an additional 3.5 inches of rain when she arrived. Much of the damage occurred because some trees could not withstand the heavy winds and the already oversoaked ground.

*(HURRICAN HELENE continued on page 2)*



Hurricane Helene came knocking on the door of the Baird House, the oldest residence in Granite Falls, on Friday, September 27, 2024. The museum was closed, but Helene left her "calling card" outside.

During the business session, members will elect officers, hear reports on projects, update its by-laws, and share ideas for projects and activities. They will also fine tune rules for the Christmas Decorating Contest.

The meeting is open to the public at no cost and with no obligation to join the Association. However, the treasurer will be available to accept dues for 2024-2025. Annual dues are \$12 for individuals, \$18 for families, and \$25 for organizations. The Granite Falls Historical Association, Inc. has been approved by the IRS as a 501(c)3 nonprofit. Persons interested in attending may preregister by texting Linda Crowder at (828) 496-2835, or they may email her at lrdcrowder@gmail.com. They may also use this contact information to learn more about how to contribute photos and articles for inclusion in *Dateline: Granite Falls, North Carolina*, which the Association plans to publish in early 2025.



### **MAKING REPAIRS Keeping the Dam Safe**

At the first of September, the owners of the dam on Gunpowder Creek had the Mill Pond drained so repairs could be made to the dam, which was built by Shuford Mills in 1915. They began filling it back up mid-month. The photo above was taken by Jonathan Fox from a lot on Lake Street.

### **MARK YOUR CALENDARS Coming Event**

Tuesday, October 6 - 12: The Town of Granite Falls will celebrate Public Power Week. Stop by the Granite Falls Town Office on Tuesday, October 8, between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., for light refreshments and promotional items, while they last.



Photo Above: Motorists had to detour around this fallen tree, which blocked Duke Street on Saturday, September 28, 2024.

( HURRICAN HELENE continued from page 1)

Some residents of Granite Falls, had power within a few hours, but those served by Duke Power and Blue Ridge Energy had longer waits. The Town of Granite Falls continued to provide services (water/sewer and fire/police). As word spread about the outages, individuals, businesses, and churches reached out via social media and word of mouth to offer their assistance to persons needing a hot meal, shower, and a place to recharge cell phones.

Shopping for basic necessities became challenging. Some stores could not open at all due to lack of electricity; others could not accept debit/credit cards because their internet was down. Filling stations saw long lines for gas. As power returned, shelves containing frozen and refrigerated items emptied quickly as residents replaced items lost in the power outage.

Meanwhile, Helene was ravaging areas to the north and west of Granite Falls. As cell service improved, residents began learning about the village of Chimney Rock being swept away and devastation to areas in the mountains very familiar to us, including Interstate 40 and other primary roads in Western North Carolina. Authorities prohibited travel except for emergencies. Persons scrambled to find and aid family members, friends, and strangers. Groups organized drives for supplies and food. Scam artists also took advantage by setting up phony websites and charity drives. Rumors spread as fast as the raging storm waters. Basic supplies (toilet paper and paper towels) ran low as local residents not only shopped to help people in Western North Carolina, but also stocked up due to a pending strike by longshoreman along the East Coast and the Gulf of Mexico.

Helene also affected this newsletter - not only delaying it, but also changing the content to include this basic article. The editor would like to carry more details in the next edition, but she needs assistance from people who had different experiences. Please send articles and photos about storm damages and relief efforts (such as meals served by churches and trucks loaded with donations) to Linda Crowder at lrdcrowder@gmail.com.

# NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

## North Highland Avenue Update



Surveyors came on August 7, 2024 to mark the boundaries for a replacement natural gas line.



On August 19, a contractor connected a cable to a new pole erected earlier in the summer.



Employees of the Town of Granite Falls worked with employees of Miller Pipeline to check the sewer on August 26.



After Miller Pipeline left on August 26, electrical crews removed a utility pole no longer needed.



Miller Pipeline moved heavy equipment into place on the corner of Pinewood and N. Highland on September 6.



Miller Pipeline installed a yellow pipe that sticks up out of the ground on September 6.



Someone from Miller Pipeline used special equipment to check along the route of the new pipeline on September 6.

(FESTIVAL ON MAIN continued from page 1)

Falls Merchants Association, declared the opening of the Festival. The South Caldwell High School Band was first to entertain the crowds followed by Sims Country Cloggers and Chris Taylor and the Rumor. Festival goers found a variety of crafts, merchandise, and food/drink along with information booths, free handouts, and activities for children. Employees of the Town of Granite Falls were on duty to ensure safety and security.



First Horizon Bank and Mackie Furniture



South Caldwell High School Band



Park Square Looking North



South Main Street Looking South



Sims Country Cloggers



Chris Taylor and the Rumor



*Tablet II* is a publication of the Granite Falls Historical Association, Inc. The purpose of the publication is to provide members with news and information about the Association along with articles and photos of historical interest. The purpose of the Association is to preserve and interpret the history/heritage of Granite Falls and Southern Caldwell County by historical preservation, publications, active museum and historical site programs, public meetings, and various activities related to these programs.

Contact the Editor: Linda Richards Crowder by phone at (828) 396-1066, by text (828) 496-2835, or by email [lrdcrowder@gmail.com](mailto:lrdcrowder@gmail.com).

For more information about the Granite Falls Historical Association, Inc and the Granite Falls History and Transportation Museum, go to the website - [www.granitefallshistorymuseum.org](http://www.granitefallshistorymuseum.org) or the Facebook page under "Granite Falls (N. C.) History and Transportation Museum."