



Hurricane Helene Update

As of 5 p.m. Oct. 17, 2024

Latest News

- We have now reopened 750 roads and are reporting 101 roads with partial access. We have reopened 17 roads in the past 24 hours.
- We are now reporting 516 road closures in our system – of which 79 are primary routes. We are glad to see this number decrease as we restore access to more sites.
- We've now identified 7,263 damaged sites, including 648 bridge sites and 693 culverts. We expect at least 120 bridges will require replacement.
- Cut and shove operations are 99% complete and damage assessments are 99% complete, with most locations transitioning to temporary repairs and reconstruction.
- Crews continue to refine estimates, determine what work can be done in-house and work to draw up contracts for site-specific repairs.
- We are tracking 12 locations where residents do not currently have normal vehicular access using the state-maintained transportation system.
- Our staff is developing a recovery program, with plans to dedicate staff to see this process through as safely and efficiently as possible.
- NC National Guard has two additional crews in Chimney Rock and has extra equipment we are working to assign to other locations.
- We've reinforced social media messaging about not driving around barricades, reminding people it is illegal to do so.

- We plan to publicly launch a new dashboard Friday, highlighting our efforts to reopen roads.

Other Items of Interest

- Transportation infrastructure damage estimates to this point are up to several billion dollars.
- We have more than 2,000 DOT employees responding. This includes 1,400 working in Western NC (230 transfers), another 375 from our Central Units, and 70 from Kentucky.
- We have more than 900 pieces of heavy equipment, dump trucks, backhoes, loaders and graders in the affected areas.
- We have awarded an \$8 million contract which was below our engineer's estimate of \$10 million to Wright Brothers Construction to stabilize the westbound lanes of I-40 in the Pigeon River Gorge. The contract includes incentives to be completed by Jan. 4.
- We anticipate awarding a contract for the permanent repair of I-40 in the Pigeon River Gorge by the end of this month.
- We are fielding media inquiries asking about the timeline and if the two westbound lanes of I-40 can be utilized before the repair is complete. Our response is that we will have a better sense of the timeline once we are further along into design and have the contractor on board. Safety is our top priority – for the traveling public and contract crews.
- All but three driver license offices – Asheville, Burnsville, and Spruce Pine – that were closed due to Hurricane Helene have reopened.