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Michael's wrath



When a Category 4 hurricane hits a few little towns in the Florida panhandle, there's not much left behind except debris, as these photos show. ABOVE LEFT: A portion of the Hy-Temp Gas store in Blountstown was demolished. TOP: Michael ripped off huge sections of the roof at the new Blountstown High School. LEFT: This mobile home was no match for the powerful storm.

PHOTOS BY DOMENICK ESGRO and DR. LABAN BONTRAGER

Hurricane Michael leaves area unrecognizable after destroying homes, businesses & schools

by Teresa Eubanks, Journal Editor

Seven days after the hurricane, the power is still out.

Cell phone service is sporadic, if you're lucky enough to get a signal.

Unless you happened to have a generator and a supply of gas standing by, everything in your freezer and refrigerator has spoiled.

The contorted metal shells of cars, trucks and farm equipment dot front yards and fields.

You've probably got at least one big tree on your roof, with several more blocking your driveway.

A Hosford man who called in to speak on a Tallahassee radio program the night after the storm summed up the aftermath in two words: "Tore Up."

.....

Hurricane Michael slammed into the Florida Panhandle Wednesday morning, snapping huge pine trees in two and knocking power lines down like dominoes along State Road 20 in Calhoun and Liberty counties.



A tree tipped over a delivery van at the Calhoun-Liberty Journal in Bristol last Wednesday. Numerous other trees fell around and on top of the office as well as blocking the driveway. TERESA EUBANKS PHOTO

Michael grew into a Category 4 hurricane as he entered the Florida Panhandle.

Even if your property was spared, your life was put on hold as communication ceased with the rest

of the world. Cell phones and land lines went out, along with the internet and television. The folks who held on to their old portable radios had something to listen to...if they had enough fresh batteries, of course.

Law enforcement officers and emergency responders had to work around the problems, including losing the use of their police radios. Much of their job became hands-on as they wielded chain saws to clear the way.

Inside this special issue of The Calhoun-Liberty Journal we'll share the challenges law enforcement faced and show you some of the damages in our area.

And like those on duty that night, we're doing it all without electricity. At this writing, our first generator has already burned out, followed by our second one. A new one is sitting on the front porch, connected by an extension cord to a single computer inside our office on Summers Road.

If you're reading this now, you'll know the third generator lasted until our deadline.

Keeping folks fed PAGE 12

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Few spots left untouched in Calhoun Co. by hurricane

by Teresa Eubanks, Journal Editor

CALHOUN COUNTY - "No one escaped," said Calhoun County Sheriff Glenn Kimbrel about the impact of Hurricane Michael on Oct. 10. "There was no property that did not suffer damage. Millions of dollars of timber was destroyed all over this county. I don't believe there was a road without a tree blocking it."

While the City of Blountstown expects to get power within a month, Kimbrel said it will probably be three to four months before all power customers are back in service in the county's rural areas.

He was at the county jail when the hurricane hit. "The jail was shaking and vibrating," he said. He likened the experience to "being in a three hour tornado."

As soon as the winds died down, everyone went to work but there was a huge challenge - no communications. "Our radio system went down; would couldn't dispatch fire and EMS."

They had to come up with a way to work around things. "We had to figure out how to take 911 calls on cell phones," he said. As of Sunday, they could still only receive 911 calls that were made from landlines.

He got in touch with the Florida Sheriff's Association President Mark Hunter to request help. After they

spoke, Hunter called back and told Kimbrel, "Sheriff, Seminole County is on the way."

In a response effort coordinated by Steve Harriet, a crew of 29 arrived midday Thursday with supplies including a mobile kitchen. The group is set up in the parking lot of the courthouse.

Other law enforcement officers from around the state have come to help, including around 40 FWC officers, he said. Many other groups have set up camp in Calhoun County to help, including the National Guard. "They brought eight chain saws to work with and are mixing in some patrolling along the way," Kimbrel said.

"Our local volunteer fire departments have been just incredible. They've really stepped up to the plate. I don't know what we would have done without them," he said.

Church groups as well as former residents like Mike Dalton have been lending a hand, too, he said. "These are my people and I'm coming to help," Dalton told the sheriff as he got ready to leave his home in Texas, accompanied by several volunteers. They have set up a spot next to Blountstown City Hall to offer hot meals. Dalton also brought along a much-needed front end loader to help clear away fallen trees and debris, he said.

Two airplanes arrived Saturday from Gainesville with medical supplies including first aid kits as well as diapers and hand wipes, he said.

•••••

After securing the jail and calling other agencies for assistance, the sheriff and a few deputies grabbed some flashlights and chain saws and "cut our way up Hwy. 71," he said. "It took us about six hours."

Two deputies on patrol during the hurricane found themselves trapped that night after trees fell near their patrol cars. Ricky Mayo was on 275 N trying to help some people when his vehicle was blocked, according to the sheriff. "He was in the patrol car during the hurricane," the sheriff said, and added that when help arrived around 3 a.m., "he was glad to see us!"

•••••

Rescuers working in Calhoun and Liberty counties weren't aware of what was going on in other areas hit by the hurricane. "We haven't been able to communicate with other area sheriffs...we're all too busy," Kimbrel explained.

At least two area prisons were impacted by the storm. Damages to three dorms at Calhoun Correctional Institution forced them to relocate a number of inmates by bus.

Gulf Correctional Institution sustained storm damage and had been evacuated.

And the sheriff is aware of at least one more home that still has two trees on the roof: His own.

"There was no property that did not suffer damage. Millions of dollars of timber was destroyed all over this county."

---Calhoun County Sheriff Glenn Kimbrel

Police Chief getting used to a 'new normal' in Blountstown

by Teresa Eubanks, Journal Editor

BLOUNTSTOWN - "Thursday and Friday I thought there's no hope, but by Friday night things began to get better. It's starting to feel like a new normal," said Blountstown Police Chief Mark Mallory.

The town was decimated by Hurricane Michael last Wednesday. Homes and property were destroyed, communications were cut off and everyone lost power when utility poles were knocked down and lines snapped as the powerful hurricane made its way through Calhoun and Liberty counties.

But five days later, the chief thinks things are looking up. Governor Rick Scott toured the area Sunday. "He made a personal visit here to the police department, along with a FEMA official," he said and he anticipates that the community will get the assistance it needs.

"All I see is progress...there's just

a lot to do," he said Monday afternoon. One thing on his list is to relocate the Blountstown Police Department (BPD).

"When the roof blew off at the peak of the storm, it left a hole over our servers and the phone lines were knocked out," he said. "The phone lines were restored Sunday."

He credits BPD Captain Adam Terry with suggesting they contact attorney David House to ask about renting his old office located behind the Calhoun County Courthouse.

Mallory got in touch with House, who said "no" when asked if he would rent it to them. Instead, he just handed over the key, the chief said.

As of Monday, the BPD communications system was being

"Thursday and Friday I thought there's no hope, but by Friday night things began to get better."

---Blountstown Police Chief Mark Mallory

moved to the new site. "The servers are working and I've got two laptops up and running," he said.

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No one can say for sure when the power will return but there are many crews working toward that end.

"We've got about 40 linemen working in the city getting our grid rebuilt," he said. "We're going to have to rely on the power companies and co-ops to get their lines rebuilt to feed Blountstown and Bristol."

He said the power companies had put hundreds of linemen on the job to rebuild their grid.

West Florida Electric, which serves Blountstown homes north of SR 20, has given 30 days as their best estimate for

the power to be back on, he said.

He said that city customers have water and sewer service.

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It didn't take long for help to start heading his way thanks to the Florida Police Chiefs Association, he said.

The hurricane hit Wednesday. By 5 a.m. Thursday, "The Ocala Police Department had 18 officers at my front door," he said. "They were driving during the hurricane to get here."

What kind of assistance did they offer? "They told me whatever the Ocala Police Department has is mine."

He said the Ocala team is also planning to do what they can to see that the damaged homes of BPD Officers are repaired.

The chief urges anyone who would like to help their neighbors to drop off items to the donation center established at the Senior Dental Office (formerly Billy Carr Chevrolet) on Hwy. 71 South.

Numerous homes destroyed in Altha, families need supplies

by Teresa Eubanks, Journal Editor

Altha Police Chief Jimmy Baggett was quick to put his town on a 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. curfew, explaining, "I'm not tolerating anything."

He told FHP Troopers who came out to help, "If you see anybody out after curfew with a flashlight, send 'em home or take them to jail."

Although there had been some problems with people stealing propane bottles and gas, he doesn't believe they will have a problem with looters.

Two things have made his job extra challenging:

His office is in Altha Town Hall, which didn't have a back up generator when Hurricane Michael wiped out everyone's power last Wednesday. "Nothing in town works," he said Monday, five days after the hurricane.

The shelter at Altha School was shut down, with the expectation that those who needed a place to stay would go elsewhere. Some people took temporary shelter at town hall. "People don't have the gas to get to the Blountstown shelter," Baggett said.

There was some good news, though. Monday night, he was scheduled to have a generator delivered with the help of Florida Public Utilities so that town hall could open back up, making it easier to coordinate hurricane response efforts.

Many homes within the town limit were destroyed.

The community is in great need of diapers, baby formula and toilet paper as well as all of the daily necessities, the chief said. Items can be dropped off at Altha Town Hall.

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Storm damage brings help from Texas relatives

by Teresa Eubanks, Journal Editor

CALHOUN COUNTY - Stephanie Branton, 22, was at her mother's house eight miles west of Blountstown last Wednesday when the hurricane hit.

"We were in the laundry room and started hearing something cracking," she said. "We watched a huge pine slowly fall over and then the whole house shook." The concrete block building wasn't immune to the force of the hurricane but it did keep them safe.

"Trees were snapping like toothpicks and others were uprooted," her mother Amy said.

When things settled down, they walked outside to see two big trees on the roof, along with a yard full of other trees, limbs and debris.

After sharing the news with her family in Texas, got a nice surprise. Amy's brother, Andy Hudson, grabbed his son-in-law and the two traveled from Texas to cut up and remove the trees from the roof. Amy said he'd always told her he'd never come to Florida "because we're from Texas." She said he arrived Friday and stayed until Sunday to visit after getting the job done.

"I've been here 20 years and it's the only trip he's made to the house," she laughed.



Andy Hudson of Colorado City, TX looks on as his son-in-law, Trent Smith of Gail, TX, cuts up a large pine tree that Hurricane Michael left on a roof. The two traveled from Texas to the home of Hudson's sister outside Blountstown to help clear away the debris. TERESA EUBANKS PHOTO

Couple's home and business damaged but they find comfort in visits from friends

by Teresa Eubanks, Journal Editor

CALHOUN COUNTY - The side of the yard facing SR 20 still looks nice and clean but the hurricane left its mark behind June King's SR 20 home, six miles west of Blountstown with trees destroyed in just about every way - snapped, twisted, stripped of bark and split down the middle.

Michael destroyed their back porch, breaking out a window and tearing off the metal roof before peeling it back and over the top. It battered her husband's grill and a treasured antique windmill yard ornament.

Her business, Alday Insurance, also took a few hits in the hurricane. "A tree went through the roof, I have some broken windows, a porch support came out and the vents in the upper portion of the porch got sucked out. The tree left a hole over the kitchen area; in the back, trees are laying against the windows," she said.

A co-worker from her husband's office

in Tallahassee came to visit. When June opened the door, she found the woman in tears. She was stunned at the damage she had seen on the drive there and said that people in Tallahassee didn't realize how hard hit this part of the panhandle was. She vowed to come back with some supplies for them. As they said goodbye, the visitor leaned in and asked June what she could do to make her happy. "Could you manage to bring my husband a little Blue Bell vanilla ice cream?" she asked. "It's a done deal," the woman replied.

They returned Sunday with a generator, a new grill, a couple of big steaks and some mashed potatoes, and last but not least, the ice cream for Joe.

As much as they appreciated the food and supplies the couple brought, there was one thing even better, said June - a good old-fashioned visit. Instant communication through cell phone texting and Facebook messaging have kept people from really being together. With cell phone service spotty or nonexistent

This tree was split while the other, shown below, was twisted and stripped of its bark.

TERESA EUBANKS PHOTOS



following the hurricane, she said it was nice to rediscover the pleasure of getting together with friends to sit, talk and enjoy one another.



Looters may be keeping an eye on your property

by Teresa Eubanks, Journal Editor

While there are many good-hearted strangers who have come to help Calhoun and Liberty counties, there have also been reports of some unfamiliar faces trying to take advantage of the turmoil caused by Hurricane Michael.

Joe and June King were showing friends the damage to their home and yard Sunday afternoon when they had a surprise visitor.

"This guy just pops up, looks at

us and says 'hi,'" June said. He quickly added, "I just came to see if you needed anything."

She ran through the house to get a look at his car and see if he was alone. She thought it odd that his car was parked in her front yard, up to the door.

She said he seemed a little surprised when he walked up to find the group outside. "It was like a wall of my family stood up" when he appeared, she said.

Her husband asked him, "What are you doing here?" He stood there, smiled and told them, "I have a chain saw and I'm ready to work." It was late afternoon, around 5 p.m., a little late to be looking for a day's work. She also noted, "he wasn't dressed to work."

She said they escorted him back to the front of the house, where they said, "No thank you and don't come back."



Post-hurricane road hazard

Drivers throughout areas of the panhandle have plenty of road hazards to look out for after Hurricane Michael's departure. A tall tree hangs horizontally across SR 20, west of Blountstown Friday afternoon.

TERESA EUBANKS PHOTO

Florida Public helps by finding solutions after the hurricane

by Teresa Eubanks, Journal Editor

Crews from Florida Public Utilities were going through Bristol Monday, clearing away trees and removing damaged utility poles.

"We're making headway, that's for sure," said FPU's Project Manager - and Bristol resident - Jerry Lewis, who was traveling with the crew.

In addition to readying the area for new equipment to be installed along the roads, they recently replaced a power line that crossed the Apalachicola River...until it didn't. The line was apparently snapped during last week's hurricane and fell from a 100 foot pole into the water.

He's also helping the folks of Altha get the town hall back open after his company arranged to pay the rental on a generator that was delivered Monday night.

While working long hours, he and his wife, Liberty County Emergency Management Director Rhonda Lewis, are living out of a camper at the Emergency Operations Office in Bristol.

They're in the camper because they don't have power at home either. Even though he works with FPU, there's not much he can do about it. And since another utility company provides their service, they're just waiting patiently like the rest of us.

Survivors in Calhoun, Gadsden, Jackson and Liberty counties may apply for Individual Disaster Assistance

Homeowners, renters and business owners in Calhoun, Gadsden, Jackson and Liberty counties may now apply for disaster assistance for uninsured and underinsured damage and losses resulting from Hurricane Michael.

Calhoun, Gadsden, Jackson and Liberty counties were designated for Individual Assistance on Oct. 12.

To be eligible for disaster aid, storm damage and losses from the hurricane and flooding must have occurred as a result of Hurricane Michael, beginning Oct. 7.

If you have a homeowner's or flood insurance policy, file your insurance claim immediately before applying for disaster assistance. Get the process started quickly. The faster you file, the faster your recovery can begin.

If you cannot return to your home, or you are unable to live in your home, visit DisasterAssistance.gov, or call 800-621-3362 (800-462-7585 TTY) to determine if state, voluntary or local organizations are in your community to address your immediate needs.

If you can return to your home and it is safe, has working power, water, and sewer or septic service visit DisasterAssistance.gov to determine if state, voluntary and local organizations in your community can address any unmet needs.

Don't be discouraged if you do not have access to telephone or internet service. Disaster survivor assistance specialists are helping people register for assistance in designated counties.

Although the federal government cannot make you whole, it may be able to help your recovery move forward by providing grants for basic repairs to make your home safe, accessible and secure. FEMA assistance also may provide temporary help with a place for you and your family to stay while you build your own recovery plan.

If you can return to your home and it is safe, has working power, water, and sewer or septic service visit DisasterAssistance.gov to determine if state, voluntary and local organizations in your community can address any unmet needs.

Long-term, low-interest disaster loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) also may be available to cover losses not fully compensated by insurance and do not duplicate benefits of other agencies or orga-

nizations. Applicants may apply online using the Electronic Loan Application (ELA) via the SBA's secure website at DisasterLoan.sba.gov or by calling the SBA Customer Service Center at 800-659-2955 (800-877-8339 for the deaf and hard-of-hearing) or by sending an e-mail to disastercustomerservice@sba.gov.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency is unable to duplicate insurance payments. However, those without insurance or those who may be underinsured may still receive help

after their insurance claims have been settled. These counties also were designated for FEMA's Public Assistance Program to reimburse the state and local governments and certain private nonprofit organizations for debris removal and emergency protective measures (Categories A and B), including direct federal assistance.

Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, call FEMA toll-free at 800-621-FEMA (3362). For TTY call 800-462-7585. FEMA's temporary housing assistance and grants for public transportation expenses, medical and dental expenses, and funeral and burial expenses do not require individuals to apply for an SBA loan. However, applicants who receive SBA loan applications must submit them to SBA to be eligible for assistance that covers personal property, vehicle repair or replacement, and moving and storage expenses.

What to expect after registering for FEMA Disaster Assistance

TALLAHASSEE – After registering for disaster assistance, you may be contacted by a FEMA-contracted housing inspector to schedule an appointment for a housing inspection.

Your first contact with an inspector may be by text or phone call and may come from an area code different from yours. The inspection is needed to verify and assess damage indicated when you registered. The inspection generally takes about 20 to 40 minutes, but may take longer. The inspector will want to see the damaged areas of your home as well as damaged furniture and personal property. There is no fee for the inspection.

When a housing inspector comes to visit your home, ask to see a FEMA photo ID badge. If you are not shown photo identification, do not allow the inspection.

All FEMA-contracted housing inspectors will be able to identify you by the unique nine digit number you were assigned when you applied for federal assistance. FEMA inspectors will never ask for this

information. They already have it in their records. If you are unsure the inspector is with FEMA, call (800) 621-3362 (TTY 800-462-7585) to confirm.

Someone 18 years of age or older must be present during the inspection. The inspector will ask to see some documents. If you are unable to provide the requested documents, the inspection cannot be completed and will have to be rescheduled. Please have these documents on hand when the inspector arrives:

- Photo identification.
- Proof of ownership/occupancy of damaged residence (structural insurance, tax bill, mortgage payment book/utility bill).
- Insurance documents: home and/or auto (structural insurance/auto declaration sheet).
- List of household occupants living in the residence at time of disaster.
- All disaster-related damage to both real and personal property.

Once the inspection is complete, your case will be reviewed by FEMA and you will receive a letter

When a housing inspector comes to visit your home, ask to see a FEMA photo ID badge. If you are not shown photo identification, do not allow the inspection.

UF update on Florida crop damage

GAINESVILLE - As of October 15, economists with the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences have begun gathering information they need to develop formal estimates of damages and crop losses Hurricane Michael inflicted upon agricultural and natural resources industries operating in Florida's Panhandle.

Dollar figures aren't ready yet, but they're on the way, said Alan Hodges, director of the UF/IFAS Economic Impact Assessment Program.

Currently, Hodges said, it appears that about 1 million acres of field crops and 3.6 million acres of upland forest in Florida were potentially impacted by Hurricane Michael, with the most serious impacts affecting a "core" of 200,000 acres of crops in Bay, Gulf, Frank-

lin, Liberty, Calhoun, Washington, Jackson and Gadsden counties. Within this core area, winds were recorded in the Category 3 and 4 hurricane range, corresponding with speeds of 111 to 156 miles per hour, he said.

Panhandle areas that produce horticultural crops, such as winter vegetables, fruit and nut trees, and ornamental plants, are still being assessed, he said.

This year's Florida cotton crop in the core area appears to be a near-total loss, because harvesting began recently and more than 90 percent of the crop remained in the field when Michael struck, Hodges said. The peanut crop within the core area is probably a 40 percent loss, with correspondingly smaller losses in less-affected areas.

Damage to Florida planted-pine acreage is believed to be significant

but will take longer to assess than agronomic crops, Hodges said.

Hodges, based at the main UF campus in Gainesville, leads the effort to consolidate and analyze raw data reported by UF/IFAS Extension agents who are tasked with visiting affected operations and interviewing producers and on-site managers.

"Things are moving forward, but we want to be deliberate and careful in our work," Hodges said. "It takes some time, because of the severity of the damage in some counties, the challenges involved in reaching hardest-hit areas, and the fact that rescue efforts are still in progress."

Hodges said he is unable to provide dollar figures as of October 15 but expects to have them ready to share later this week or possibly next week.



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Liberty County Emergency Management



Part of the crew at the Liberty County Emergency Management Office in Bristol Friday afternoon. ABOVE LEFT: Dale Hobby and his wife, Carol. ABOVE RIGHT: Vanell Summers, Carol Hobby and Mike Cross with the FHP, who happened to be marking his 62nd birthday that day. TOP: Specialists Michael Gorman, left, and Seth Hoholick of Jacksonville make sure the communications systems are working. TERESA EUBANKS PHOTOS

Hurricane leaves its mark on most Liberty County homes

by Teresa Eubanks, Journal Editor
 LIBERTY COUNTY - "Easily 75 percent of the homes in Liberty County have damage, with 30 percent or more having substantial damage," according to Liberty County Emergency Management Director Rhonda Lewis about the impact of last Wednesday's Category 4 hurricane.
 "Many homes had complete roofs taken off but were still standing," according to Liberty County Sheriff's Office Capt. John Summers.
 Over 330 people sought refuge at the shelter set up at Tolar School, while around 100 made their way to Hosford School shelter, she said.
 Just days after the storm, the crew at the Emergency Management Office is busy fielding phone calls, helping some with transpor-

tation to leave their property and organizing more supplies to be delivered to the area.
 There are still many to worry about because, "We have people living in houses that are not safe," Lewis said.
 Those who may have wanted to leave may not have been able to until help arrived. "We had well over 1,000 road blocks," Summers said.
 It was rare to find a road in the county that was not blocked by trees and debris.
 But by Friday, Summers said, "All the main arteries and major roads were cleared."
 Lewis added, "The roads are probably close to 98% passable."
 A lot of that clearing work was done by local loggers as well as deputies, he said. Deputies would also conduct welfare checks as

they made the roads passable.
 They've had a lot of good help. "The National Guard came in Tuesday," Lewis said. "Everybody started on Wednesday afternoon."
 They've also gotten assistance in from the Taylor County Sheriff's Department, who brought a mobile command center, she said. Employees had to work extra

shifts at the county jail to accommodate a large number of inmates who were moved from the Franklin County Jail Tuesday. They were later transferred to the Leon County Jail on Thursday, Summers said.
 No figures are available yet on how many people were injured or even died during the hurricane.



The courthouse is shown just after last week's hurricane. DANIEL WILLIAMS PHOTO

Liberty County Courthouse will be open Wed., Oct. 17

The Liberty County Courthouse will be open for business Wednesday, Oct. 17, according to Clerk of Court Kathy Brown.
 She said the Corps of Engineers have provided a portable electric generating plant that will supply the whole courthouse and keep things up and running.

Updates on local business hours & hours

- According to the Liberty County Sheriff's Office as of Tuesday, Oct. 16:
- The Liberty County garbage service should be running on schedule. Any county water related issues should be addressed to Lead Water Operator Page Wahlquist at 850-545-1370.
 - The Altha Farmer's Co-op in Blountstown is open, on a cash basis or charge accounts.
 - Buy-Rite Pharmacy in Bristol will be open 10:00 - 2:00, Monday - Saturday, until power is restored.
 - The drive through at Blountstown Credit Union is open.
 - There is a burn ban within the city limits of Bristol. At this point it would be extremely difficult to address a wildfire.
 - Local business updates:
 - Piggly Wiggly is up and running with limited hours.
 - Both Dollar General Stores, both Bristol and Hosford, are open, cash only, one customer at a time.
 - T.J's Store - up and pumping gas with a \$50 limit
 - Busy Boys in Hosford - up with a \$50 limit.

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 TELEPHONE (850) 643-3333 Fax (888) 400-5810
 EMAIL: thejournal@fairpoint.net
 ADS: cljads@fairpoint.net

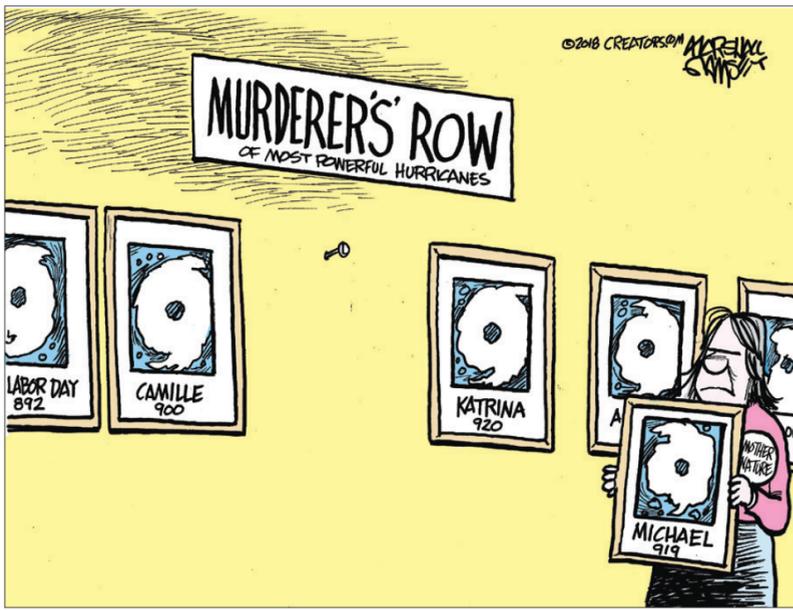


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Johnny Eubanks.....Publisher
 Teresa Eubanks.....Editor
 Sandra Brown.....Bookkeeper
 Domenick Esgro.....Advertising
 Patricia Sherrod...Production Assistant

OFFICE HOURS: 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. M-F



SAFE AND ALIVE AFTER THE STORM

I'm in North Alabama, far from the aftermath of Hurricane Michael. Long stretches of the Gulf Coast are trashed. But by a divine miracle, my family is safe, alive, and accounted for. So are my friends and neighbors. A miracle.

So I'm getting a haircut.

I almost went for a haircut yesterday, but I couldn't pull myself away from the televised hurricane coverage. It was high adrenaline stuff.

Gone are the days of sedate news reporters who look like your father's dentist, seated behind news desks. Today, we have a breed of brave journalists, fearless, with the courage to risk their lives for breaking news, public safety, and six-figure incomes.

Yesterday, I watched one such reporter stand on a beach, enduring gale force winds that were strong enough to ruin most reproductive organs.

He screamed into the camera: "It's windy out here, guys! Super, super windy! Back to you, Bob!"

I shudder to think of what could've happened if he hadn't told us that.

Anyway, my mother texted me today and told me the lethal storm passed over her home yesterday. Today, she is enjoying sunshine, crocheting a scarf.

Like I said, a miracle.

So getting back to the barbershop. When I enter the shop, a bell on the door announces my arrival. This is your average clip joint. There is a barber's pole out front.

Inside are men who gather for no particular reason. They pause their conversation when I enter.

I greet them. They are quiet. But soon, they go back to telling stories like before.

I am grateful for their stories. I'm tired of hurricanes, storm surges, and reporters with death wishes. I need something to take my mind off the anxieties of Hurricane Michael. And that's exactly what I get here.

Soon, I am sitting in a barber's chair over-hearing stories of all kinds.

The woman snipping my hair is a hairdresser—trained in cutting women's hair. There is a difference, she explains, between being a barber and a hairdresser.

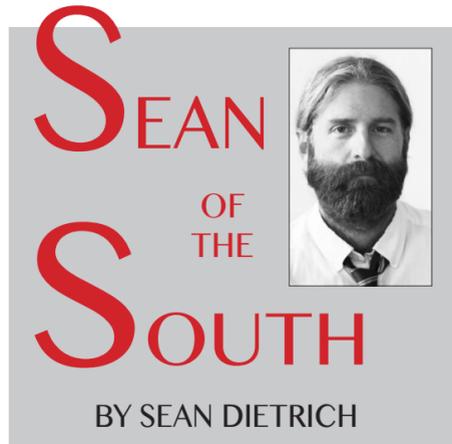
"A HAIRDRESSER can cut women's hair AND men's hair," she says. "But a barber cuts men's hair and tells dirty jokes."

This shop is full of white-haired men who love jokes. They talk and talk. She listens to their outlandish tales without interrupting because she is a smart woman.

In her line of work she has learned the two cardinal rules of old men:

1. Always tell clever stories intended to make people laugh.
2. When all else fails, fart.

One man is talking about his son, who sells agricultural equipment up in Pennsylvania. It's



not a funny story, per se, but it's good to hear a man brag on his son.

Another man talks about his fishing trip, and about getting stranded on a lake. Men laugh. I laugh. It's a good tale with a great punchline.

Then, a man with a walrus mustache tells a joke about the preacher and the farmer's daughter, and several of us nearly ruin our pants.

Then, an older man begins talking about the Old Days.

This topic is holy. And it brings out the best in elderly men. They talk of their own history with a kind of reverence you can feel. They wear looks on their faces that make them seem older and wiser than they are. They smile. They recite the simple poetry of our people.

One man recalls the autumn evening he stole

his brother's Chevy so he could take his first sweetheart to a movie.

Another recalls the day he kissed his sweetheart goodbye and went to Korea, then Vietnam.

The man in the barber chair next to me, cape around his neck, tells the story of how he met his second wife:

"She was a school teacher," he says. "My first wife died when I's twenty-six. I was raising my boys on my own, and this pretty teacher come into town..."

His story is beautiful, and he tells it so well. After one year, he finally worked up enough courage to ask her out. He took her to Huntsville and bought her a steak and a glass of beer.

They were married a lifetime. She is no longer with us.

When my haircut is finished, I bid these men goodbye. I wish I had a good joke to tell them, or a good story, but that would only spoil it. Today, I was here to listen.

I crawl into my vehicle and breathe a few times. I call my mother. She is glad to hear from me, and I am glad to hear her voice.

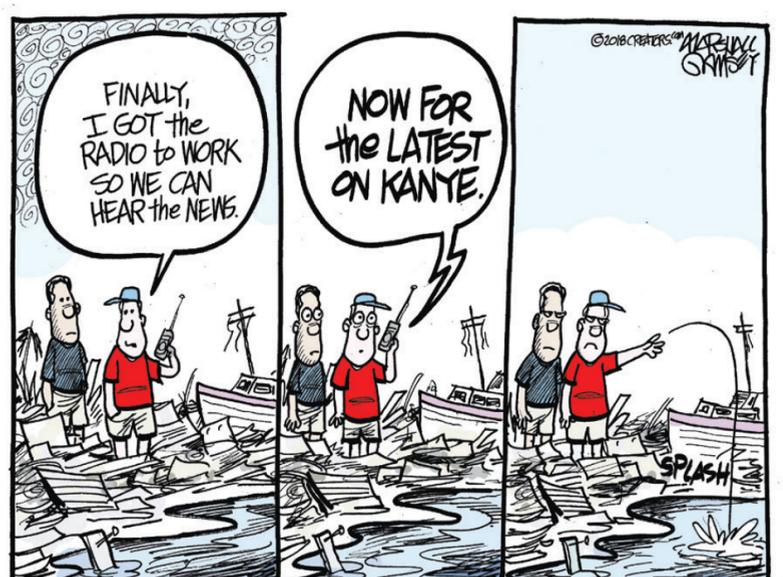
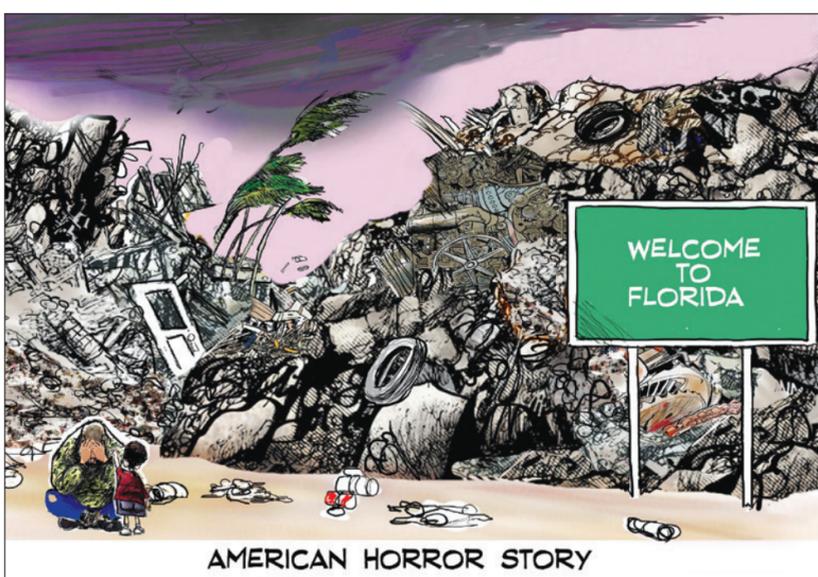
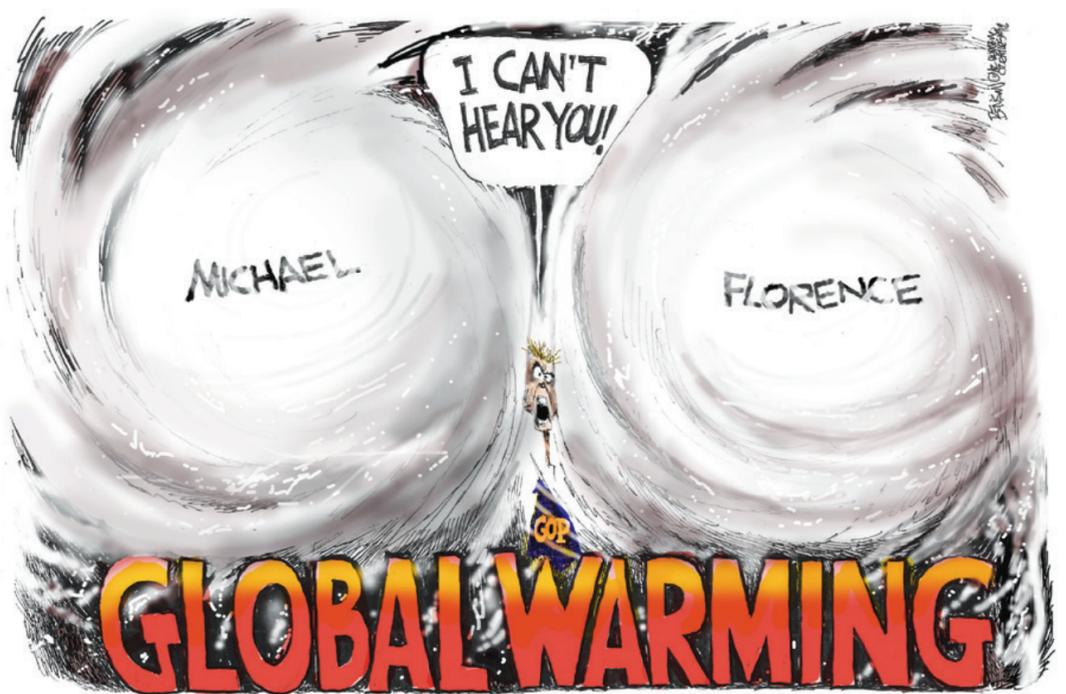
And even though this hurricane caused a mess that will cost billions to clean; even though it looks a war zone only thirty miles from my house; even though a storm almost killed us all, we're alive. And I am grateful for that.

I am grateful for old men who tell stories. For laughter. Good haircuts.

And any miracle involving my mother.

Sean Dietrich writes about life in the American South. His columns have appeared in South Magazine, the Bitter Southerner, Thom Magazine and the Tallahassee Democrat. He shares his observations and chronicles his

interaction with friends, family and strangers he meets along the way while sharing glimpses of daily life in our little corner of America. He has written several books which can be found on Amazon.com.





The front facade of the hospital was torn away, along with the sign out front and of exterior sections of the building.

DOMENICK ESGRO PHOTOS

Calhoun Liberty Hospital kept going through the storm

by Teresa Eubanks, *Journal Editor*

Calhoun-Liberty Hospital kept open and remained in operation during Hurricane Michael. “We saw 11 patients that night,” said the facility’s administrator Charles Durant.

“There were four Blackhawk helicopter landings here Thursday to evacuate critical patients,” he said. The Calhoun County Emergency Management Office (EOC) is working with the hospital to get an emergency helicopter based there as soon as possible.

The facility had a 45 KW generator until Friday night. “The EOC found us a 300 KW generator that was brought in,” he said.

The facility is seeing a steady stream of patients, many with storm-related injuries including chainsaw accidents, lacerations and head injuries from falls. “We’ve also had people with heat exhaustion, chest pains, strokes, shortness of breath, sick babies and a lot of rashes due to contact with poison ivy during



clean ups,” he said.

The hospital didn’t escape damage from the hurricane but “we never suffered any injuries and all employees were accounted for,” he said.

“It’s really messed up but we’re in great shape,” he said.

Hurricane Michael took out the structural cross-

hairs for the portico in the front of the building, blowing them into another building.

“This building is old,” he said but added, “We do need storm-rated windows.”

He said staff saw about 50 patients in a 24-hour period Sunday.

“We’ve had people working here for two and three days straight,” he said.

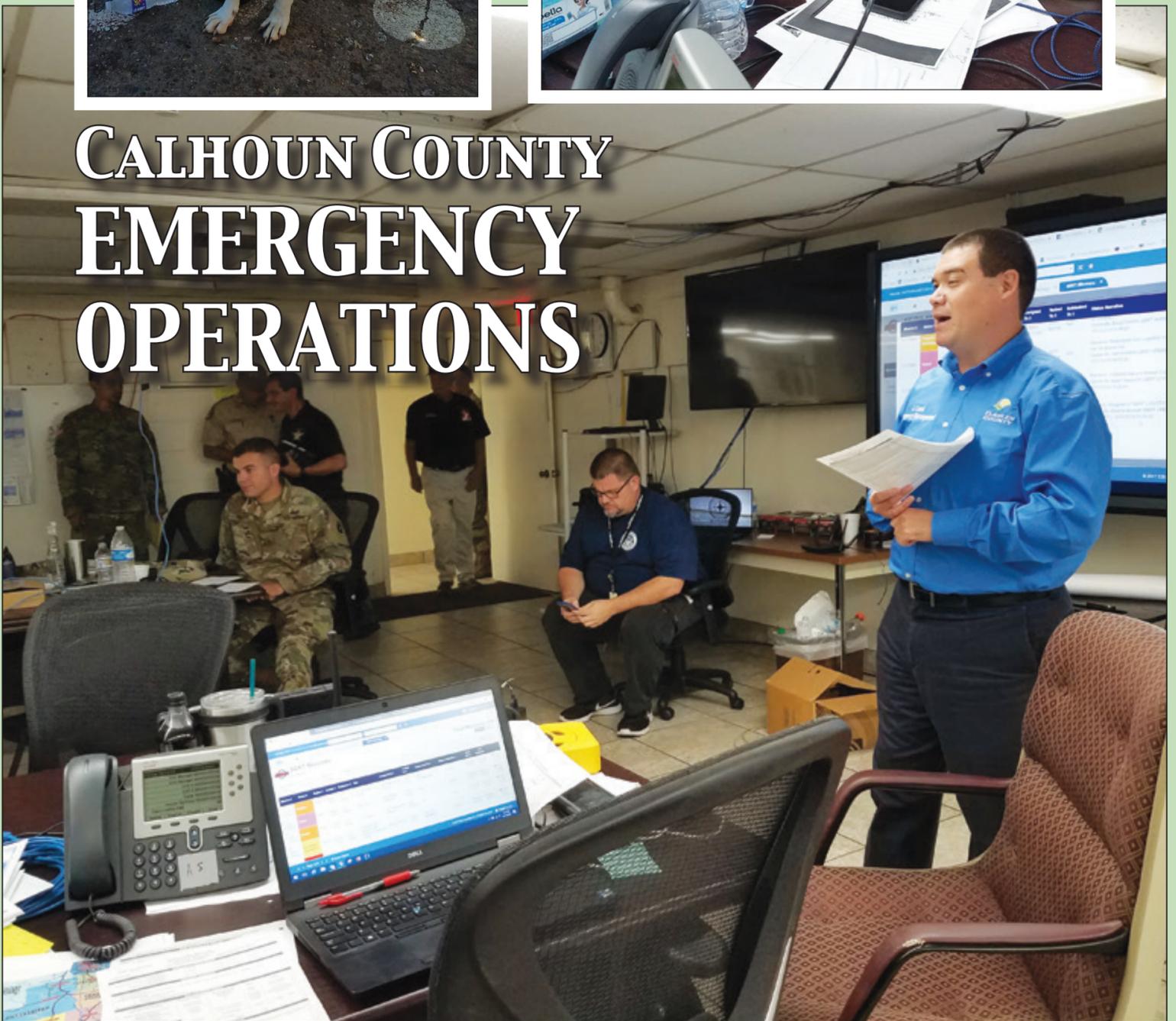
Two medical teams known as “DMATs” have been assigned to the facility to help care for patients. Each seven member team includes a team leader, a doctor, nurses, paramedic and two security people. “They are here to help us during the surge of patients,” he said.

Monday the hospital resumed their regular outpatient services - including X-rays and lab work - daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. CT.

Durant said they are working on getting a generator for their rural clinic next door and hope to have it up and running again very soon.



CALHOUN COUNTY EMERGENCY OPERATIONS



Calhoun County Emergency Management Director Adam Johnson updates county officials and emergency personnel about the latest issues in the county during one of the twice-daily meetings held at the emergency operations center in the basement of the Calhoun County Courthouse following the devastation left by Hurricane Michael last Wednesday. TOP LEFT: A search dog was among the those turning up to help out. Top RIGHT: An emergency worker keeps others updated on incoming information.

HURRICANE MICHAEL

Oct. 10, 2018

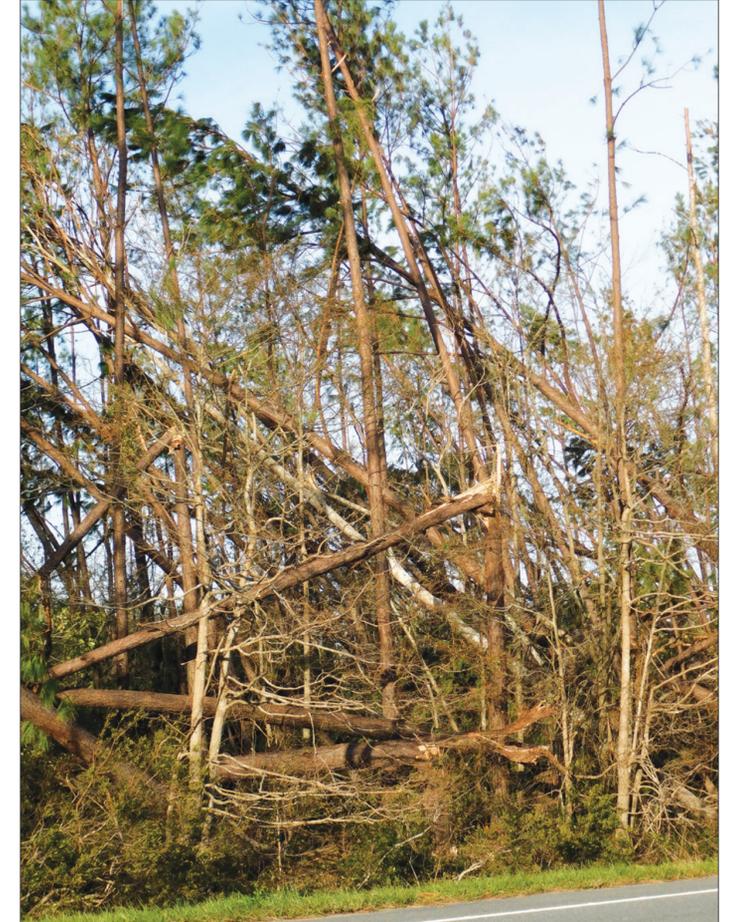


ABOVE: These storage buildings in Blountstown took a tumble. BELOW: These silos were left in a jumble.



TOP CENTER: The silhouettes of broken trees line SR 20 west of Blountstown. ABOVE: The Bristol shop, Some Place Else, was buried in fallen bricks. LEFT: Storefronts in Blountstown. BELOW CENTER: The interior of the damaged Blountstown High School Gym. BOTTOM CENTER: Insulation was blown all the fence and yard at the Blountstown Bus Barn. BELOW: The hurricane left a tangle of trees along SR 20. FAR LEFT: Another badly damaged Blountstown building.

PHOTOS BY TERESA EUBANKS, DOMENICK ESGRO, DANIEL WILLIAMS & LEIGH ANN SUMMERS





LENDING A HAND

Volunteers were busy making a place for those who had no where to go after the destruction left by Hurricane Michael last Wednesday and making sure they had something to eat. ABOVE: Matt Schmarje prepares sandwiches at his restaurant, The Sand Bar, in Blountstown. BELOW: Volunteers stay busy at the grill during a cookout. DANIEL WILLIAMS PHOTOS



Seven distribution points set up in Calhoun County

CALHOUN COUNTY – Emergency Management officials in Calhoun County have secured additional Points of Distribution to provide critical supplies to residents throughout the county.

“We are very fortunate to have assistance from across the state and nationally,” said Calhoun County Emergency Management Director Adam Johnson. “Everyone is working very hard to get everyone’s needs met. We appreciate the patience of all of our residents during these trying times.”

Seven Points of Distribution have been set up for bottled water and food to be provided to residents during daylight hours only. Those locations are:

- Sam Atkins Park, on NW Silas Green Street outside Blountstown
- Mossy Pond Library, 22216 NW Lake McKinzie
- Altha Town Hall, 25586 N Main Street
- Kinard VFD, 5382 SW SR 73
- Scott’s Ferry VFD, 7226 SE Iola Road
- Hugh Creek Library, 11442 CR 69
- Ocheessee Community Park, 26129 NE CR 286

Two shelters remain open for residents who need a safe place to stay:

- Blountstown High School, on SR-69 north outside Blountstown, and
- Mossy Pond Library, 22216 NW Lake McKinzie, Altha

Liberty Co. consolidates all distribution points

LIBERTY COUNTY – Liberty County Emergency Management officials have reduced all Points of Distribution (Hosford, Estifinulga and Bristol Emergency Management) for critical supplies to Veterans Memorial Civic Center.

All donations should also be delivered to the same location. Volunteers willing to donate their time to help expedite the process are welcome and appreciated.



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Beware of frauds and scams after natural disasters

ATLANTA – When natural disasters occur, it is common for people to take advantage of survivors by posing as official disaster aid workers or as relatives trying to help survivors complete their applications.

Survivors should be aware of fraud and scams and report any suspicious activity or potential fraud from scam artists, identity thieves and other criminals.

Floridians need to know common tactics used by these criminals, such as phone calls from people claiming to work for FEMA. The caller might ask for the survivor's Social Security number and income or banking information. Giving out this type of information can help an unscrupulous person make a false claim for assistance or commit identity theft.

These are common post-disaster fraud practices survivors should be vigilant of:

HOUSING INSPECTORS CLAIMING TO REPRESENT FEMA

Be cautious if somebody asks for your nine-digit registration number. FEMA inspectors will never ask for this information. They already have it in their records.

FEMA inspectors never require banking or other information. Ask the inspectors to show you their identification

badge. Federal employees and contractors always wear an official government or government contractor badge to identify themselves.

Call FEMA at 800-621-3362 (TTY 800-462-7585) if you are suspicious of someone who says they're a housing inspector sent by FEMA.

FAKE OFFERS OF LOCAL OR FEDERAL AID

Don't trust someone who asks for money. Federal and local disaster workers do not solicit or accept money. FEMA and U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) staff never charge applicants for disaster assistance, inspections or help in filling out applications.

Don't believe anyone who promises a disaster grant and asks for large cash deposits or advance payments in full.

Report suspected fraud to the Florida Attorney General's Office by calling 866-9-NO-SCAM or file a complaint online at MyFloridaLegal.com.

FRAUDULENT BUILDING CONTRACTORS

Use licensed or verified local contractors backed by reliable references.

Don't pay more than half the costs of repairs in advance.

Demand that contractors detail the job to be done with guarantees in writing.

Check with the Florida Attorney General's Office at 866-9-NO-SCAM to see if there are complaints against a company or contractor.

If you suspect fraud, call the National Center for Disaster Fraud Hotline at 866-720-5721.

TRUSTED INFORMATION SOURCES

A rumor control page has been set up to dispel false information about Hurricane Michael: fema.gov/hurricane-michael-rumor-control.

Unfortunately, criminals can exploit disasters by sending fraudulent communications through email or social media and by creating phony websites designed to solicit contributions. Tips may be reported 24/7 to the National Center for Disaster Fraud at 866-720-5721. Or, email disaster@leo.gov.

For a list of locations where survivors can obtain commodities (water, food, etc.), visit www.floridadisaster.org/info.

West FL Electric Oct. 16 update on hurricane outages

GRACEVILLE – Multiple requests for information regarding the number of days the power will be out for specific areas have been made. Unfortunately, we cannot narrow that down to particular roads or defined areas. However, we have been able to estimate the number of days the power could be out in each county served by the co-op.

The following figures apply only to members who have not sustained damage directly to their home's service entrance and who can safely accept power:

Washington & Holmes Counties: within 10 days - 90% restored & within 14 days - 100% restored

Jackson County: within 20 days - 50% restored; within 25 days - 75% restored & within 30 days - 100% restored

Calhoun County: 30 plus days before the majority of members are restored

As the co-op continues working and assessing damage, more detailed information should become available.

In regard to additional progress, two circuits coming out of the Alford substation have been repaired today and crews are currently working on the third circuit.

In addition, the cooperative now has approximately 600 linemen and right-of-way workers helping restore power in our area. Thirty-nine more men also are expected to arrive tomorrow morning.

We continue to have members inquiring about how to pay their bill since the due date was the 15th. To make payment, members can mail payments to the Graceville office as usual. They can also place payments in the night deposit at the Bonifay and Graceville offices or make payments online (www.westflorida.coop) or with the mobile app.

The Sneads office building sustained damage from Hurricane Michael so no payments can be accepted there until further notice. Neither delinquent charges nor penalties will be charged for payments that were late on the 15th of this month as a result of Hurricane Michael. The co-op is currently working under a grace period until further notice.

Follow the co-op on social media or visit the website for more information. This is currently one of the few ways we have to communicate with our members due to the lack of phone service in our area.

Settlement needs help putting up tarps following hurricane damage

There is a lot of damage in the living museum in Blountstown, according to Willard Smith, co-founder of The Panhandle Pioneer Settlement.

Many of the structures are missing part, if not all of their roofs.

With all that is going on, they have no help to tarp or repair the roofs.



Hurricane damages vocational wing at LCHS

According to Kevin Williams, Director of Maintenance, Transportation and Facilities for Liberty County School District, Liberty County High School was the only county school to receive any major damage, mostly to the Vocational Wing.

W. R. Tolar was being used as a command center for law enforcement relief efforts.

All Liberty County Schools will be closed until further notice.

Williams, who lives near in the Telogia area, spotted a tornado with his family outside his front door during Hurricane Michael on Oct. 10 around 2:41 p.m. ET

DOMENICK ESGRO PHOTOS





Keeping folks fed after the hurricane

A good meal may not make up for what was lost in Hurricane Michael but it sure can make your stomach feel better! Mike Dalton brought his wife and two sons along with employees from their trucking company to help out the people of Calhoun County. He formerly worked as a law enforcement officer in Calhoun County and packed up his family, friends and their gear to make the trip here from Victoria, Texas last Thursday. In addition to his semi that has a built-on smoker with two pits and sinks, Dalton brought along a front end loader to help clear roads.

DOMENICK ESGRO PHOTOS



Volunteers brought food to feed the emergency personnel set up at the EOC staging area located at Bristol Pentecostal Church.

DANIEL WILLIAMS PHOTOS

Liberty County Emergency Management guidelines for curbing your debris

The Liberty County Emergency Management has issued guidelines for a speedy, low cost cleanup when you curb your debris. Be sure to keep roads and storm drains clear and do not stack debris against trees, poles, hydrants or storm drains. Place your items next to the road if there is a sidewalk or at the edge of your property otherwise.

Debris needs to be sorted for pickup into six categories:

- Vegetation Debris (Tree branches, leaves, logs, etc.)
- Household Garbage (Bagged garbage, discarded food, paper, packaging, newspapers, etc.)
- Hazardous Waste (Oil, batteries, pesticides, paint, cleaning supplies, compressed gas, etc.)
- Construction Debris (Building materials, drywall, lumber, carpet, plumbing, furniture, etc.)
- Large Appliances (Refrigerator, washer, dryer, air conditioner, stove, water heater, dishwasher, etc. removing any doors the appliance may have)
- Electronics (TVs, computers, stereos, DVD players. etc.)



Members of the Christian Aid Ministries brought their "Loaves & Fishes Food Kitchen" from Berlin, OH to cook for Liberty County Residents after Hurricane Michael.

DANIEL WILLIAMS PHOTO



Forest Service safety tips for burning hurricane debris and yard waste

TALLAHASSEE – Florida Commissioner of Agriculture Adam H. Putnam and the Florida Forest Service, a division of the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, urge the public to exercise extreme caution when burning hurricane debris and yard waste in the wake of Hurricane Michael. Large amounts of flammable building debris and millions of acres of dead trees and shrubs throughout the Florida Panhandle create ideal conditions for wildfires.

Before burning hurricane debris and yard waste, Floridians should check with local city and county officials or visit FloridaForestService.com to see

if there are any burn restrictions in the area. Yard waste is any vegetative debris, such as grass clippings, brush, leaves, tree limbs and palm fronds that are a result of yard maintenance. It is critical to avoid burning green vegetation at this time to avoid smoke hazards.

“Residents can help protect not only their family and communities from the risk of wildfire, but our wildland firefighters and first responders by using caution and following burning laws that are in place for their safety,” said Jim Karels, State Forester and Director of the Florida Forest Service.

Floridians must meet the following requirements to conduct debris and

yard waste burns without authorization: Comply with required setbacks for outdoor burning and ensure there are no local city or county ordinances that prohibit burning;

Limit burns to yard waste generated on your property that will fit in an 8-foot diameter pile or non-combustible container; and

Ignite fires after 8 a.m. ^{CT} or 9 a.m. ^{ET} and extinguish fires one hour before sunset.

Setbacks for outdoor burning require hurricane debris and yard waste to be:

- 25 feet from your house;
- 25 feet from any wildlands, brush or

- combustible structure;
- 150 feet from other occupied buildings; and
- 50 feet from paved public roads.

Piles greater than 8 feet in diameter will require an authorization from the Florida Forest Service, suppression equipment on-hand and additional setback requirements. At this time, burn authorizations for piles larger than 8 feet will not be issued for the following counties: Bay, Calhoun, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Walton and Washington. For more information on burning outdoors in Florida, visit FloridaForestService.com or contact your local Florida Forest Service field office.

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OBITUARY

JAMES DAVID REVELL

James David “Jimmy” Revell was best known as a husband and father, teacher and farmer, hunter and fisher, believer and friend. He went to be with the lord on Wednesday, Oct. 10, 2018 after a robust 85 years of life. He was married to Shirley Nelson Revell for



59 of those years and he leaves her and this world along with three children, John Revell, Jimmie Lynn Revell, and Tracey Smith.

He was a proud graduate of the University of Florida and a member of the Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity. He served with distinction in the United States Army and upon leaving the service became an educator with Gadsden County Schools. He went on to become the principal of Greensboro High School where he was a beloved teacher of agriculture to many generations of local students. He also founded the football program there which went on to win a state championship in 1975.

He spent his life as an avid outdoorsman who loved to hunt and fish the woods and waters of the rural Big bend area. He raised Champion beagle dogs and farmed his homestead in Greensboro for decades.

He was a most proud grandfather to five young men, Jay, John Hilton, Blake, Hunter and Slade. He cherished the many memories made with them and his entire family while hunting, fishing, working on projects, and enjoying big family gatherings.

When he passed away, he did so in the arms of the family he loved. He left his family for a seat at the hand of the lord. His memory will live on in the hearts of his loved ones and his body will always lie close to the land he loved so much.

Services were held Tuesday, Oct. 16 at the First Baptist Church of Greensboro. Interment followed at the family cemetery on his farm.

Lifesong Funerals & Cremations was in charge of the arrangements.

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Liberty Storm Damage

Businesses and homes were at the mercy of Hurricane Michael on Wednesday as high speed winds and rain ripped through the Florida Panhandle. TOP: Large trees were completely uprooted. CENTER: Many residents found trees laying across their roof after the storm. ABOVE FROM LEFT: Trees were left across fences, roads and driveways as well after the hurricane force winds battered the area. Dollar General in Bristol was left with debris in their parking lot and a dilapidated sign.

LEGALS

<p>NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR TAX DEED</p> <p>NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that KENNY KING the holder of the following certificate has filed said certificate for a tax deed to be issued thereon. The certificate number and year of issuance, the description of the property, and the names in which it was assessed are as follows:</p> <p>Certificate Number: 108 Year of Issuance: 2016</p> <p>Description of Property: (Parcel ID#015-2-S-8W-02495-000) Lot 2, Block 3, Estifanulga Subdivision, Unit No. 1, as per Plat recorded in the Clerk of Court Office, Liberty County, Florida</p> <p>Name in which assessed: L.C. JOHNSON ESTATE</p> <p>Said property being in the County of liberty, State of Florida.</p> <p>Unless such certificate shall be redeemed according to law the property described in such certificate shall be sold to the highest bidder at the front door of the Liberty County Courthouse at 11:00 A.M. ET on 8th day of November, 2018.</p> <p>Dated this 27th day of September, 2018.</p> <p>Kathleen E. Brown Liberty County Clerk of Court 10-3T10-24</p>	<p>NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR TAX DEED</p> <p>NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that KENNY KING the holder of the following certificate has filed said certificate for a tax deed to be issued thereon. The certificate number and year of issuance, the description of the property, and the names in which it was assessed are as follows:</p> <p>Certificate Number: 134 Year of Issuance: 2015</p> <p>Description of Property: (Parcel ID#015-2S-8W-02489-004) Lot 6, Block 2, Estifanulga Subdivision, Unit No. 1, as per Plat recorded in the Clerk of Court Office, Liberty County, Florida</p> <p>Name in which assessed: L.C. JOHNSON ESTATE</p> <p>Said property being in the County of liberty, State of Florida.</p> <p>Unless such certificate shall be redeemed according to law the property described in such certificate shall be sold to the highest bidder at the front door of the Liberty County Courthouse at 11:00 A.M. ET on 8th day of November, 2018.</p> <p>Dated this 27th day of September, 2018.</p> <p>Kathleen E. Brown Liberty County Clerk of Court 10-3T10-24</p>
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Liberty and Calhoun counties among those getting emergency supply centers, sheltering enhancements

TALLAHASSEE - Following the devastation caused by Hurricane Michael, Governor Rick Scott announced Saturday that more emergency supply distribution centers and sheltering enhancements were deployed to the following counties: Bay, Liberty, Franklin, Calhoun and Gulf. Many distribution sites have been established and are operational with many more coming online throughout the weekend. Also, to protect the health and wellbeing of impacted Floridians, Governor Scott directed the deployment of additional showers, portable toilets, laundry facilities, comfort stations and feeding stations to local shelters. These shelter enhancements will help families stay as comfortable as possible as more housing options are identified.

Governor Scott said, "Following Hurricane Michael, we've deployed an enormous amount of resources into our communities. One of the most important things we can do now is ensure that families have food, water, medication and a safe place to stay. We have made this critical mission a top priority and will work day and night to keep everyone safe and healthy."

Also, Governor Scott assisted the Florida National Guard with an airlift, water and supplies into Franklin County for families in need. The state has millions of meals and gallons of water on their way into impacted communities, including three million Meal,



ABOVE: Governor Scott assists with an airlift of critical supplies in Franklin County with Florida National Guard Troops Saturday.

Ready to Eat (MRE), two million gallons of water and two million pounds of ice. So far, more than 142,000 gallons of water and nearly 174,000 MRE have been dropped.

Emergency Supply Distribution Centers, or Points of Distribution (POD), are places where the public can pick up emergency supplies following a disaster. These sites have food, water, or other critical supplies.

Currently Open Emergency Supply Distribution Centers:

- Bay County - Frank Brown Park 16200 Panama City Beach Parkway
- Bay County - Merriam Cherry Street Elementary School 1125 Cherry St.
- Gadsden County - Florida State Hospital 100 Main St.
- Jackson County - Jackson County

- Point of Distribution 3018 Hwy. 71 N
- Leon County - Fort Braden Branch Library 16327 Blountstown Hwy.
- Jackson County - 2027 3rd. Ave.
- Leon County - Woodville Community Center 8000 Old Woodville Hwy.
- Altha - Altha Town Hall 25586 Main St.
- Blountstown - Magnolia Square Intersection of SR 20 and SR 71
- Blountstown - Sam Atkins Park 22216 NW Silas Green St.
- Bristol - Liberty County Emergency Management 10979 Spring St.
- Carrabelle - US Post Office 156 Heffeman Dr. #A
- Carrabelle - Carrabelle Police Department 1001 Gray Ave.
- Chipley - Possum Palace Rec Park - 3121 Possum Palace Drive
- Chipley - Chipley High School - 1545 Brickyard Rd.

- Cottondale - Crossroad Baptist Church 3276 Main Street
- Crawfordville - Medart Park 79 Recreation Drive
- Crawfordville - Wakulla County Sheriff's Office 15 Oak St.
- Eastpoint - Eastpoint Fire Department 24 6th St.
- Eastpoint - Franklin County 379 Avenue A
- Graceville - Beginnings Baptist Church 1049 Sanders Ave.
- Havana - Gadsden County Jail 2135 Pat Thomas Parkway
- Marianna - Walmart 2251 SR 71
- Panama City - Rosenwald High School 924 Bay Ave.
- Quincy - Gadsden County Point of Distribution 192 14th St., Suite 1
- Tallahassee - Woodville Community Center 8000 Old Woodville Rd.
- Tallahassee - Tallahassee Fire Department Station #1 327 N Adams Street
- Tallahassee - Tallahassee Regional Park 7550 Apalachee Parkway

For an updated list of currently open supply distribution points, as well as other resources available to individuals impacted by Hurricane Michael, please visit <https://floridadisaster.org/info>.

For additional updates regarding Hurricane Michael, follow us on Facebook at www.Facebook.com/FloridaS-ERT and on Twitter at www.Twitter.com/FLSERT.

Thousands working to restore cellular service

TALLAHASSEE - As of Sunday, Oct. 14 Governor Rick Scott announced that more than 2,000 telecommunications professionals working in 200 Communication Technician Repair Crew Strike Teams are fully mobilized in impacted counties working to restore cellular service. AT&T, Verizon and T-Mobile have deployed mobile cellular towers to provide service.

Governor Scott said, "After a catastrophic storm like Hurricane Michael, one of the most important things we can do is make sure families can connect with loved ones, find information on critical services and maintain open lines of communication with emergency response officials. At my direction, the Florida Highway Patrol has been working hand-in-hand with cellular service provider crews to get them access to service stations where repairs need to be made. I also directed the Florida Department of Transportation to provide excavators, heavy loaders, and chainsaw crews to assist cellular service providers in quickly accessing sites in the Panhandle.

"Since Michael's impact, thousands of telecommunications professionals have deployed into impacted communities to begin rebuilding cellular networks and opening lines of communication. We will not stop this important work until service is fully restored and these impacted families can connect with the friends, family and resources they need to recover."

The following updates on cellular service restoration have been provided to the State Emergency Response Team (SERT):

- At the direction of Governor Scott, Florida Highway Patrol escorted cellular service provider crews to the affected areas this afternoon. See the video [HERE](#).
- Emergency communications crews have been attached to the law enforcement emergency push teams working task force missions.
- At Governor Scott's direction, the Florida Department of Transportation to provide excavators, heavy loaders, and chainsaw crews to assist cellular service providers in quickly accessing sites in the Panhandle.
- The state has deployed 12 Public Safety Mobile Communications Trailers and Towers.
- Thousands of public safety portable radios from the state have deployed to officials in the Panhandle.
- The State Law Enforcement Radio System (SLERS) has remained operational thanks to supplemental support and temporary power measures. In those areas where local law enforcement lost their own towers and connectivity, the State has provided local officials the ability to use SLERS connectivity and radios.
- Communications support packages have been dispatched through the Florida National Guard to Holmes, Liberty, Jackson, Gadsden, Calhoun, Gulf, Franklin, and Washington counties.
- AT&T has reported to SERT that its service in Franklin County has been restored.
- AT&T has deployed:
 - 32 COWS (Cell on Wheels) and COLTs (Cell on Light Trucks)
 - Seven Emergency Communications Vehicles

(ECVs) and Emergency Communications Portables (ECPs)

- I Hazmat and Mobile Command Center
- AT&T reports it has been working around the clock, deploying portable cell sites and recovery equipment. AT&T continues to deploy assets and is currently supporting affected areas, including but not limited to Mexico Beach, Apalachicola, Panama City, Blountstown, Port St Joe, Southport, Tyndall Air Force Base and Cypress.
- AT&T has deployed network assets at the guidance of public safety. FirstNet SatCOLTs have boosted connectivity for FirstNet subscribers in hard-hit areas. These deployments are supporting national guardsmen, airmen, state patrol, trauma care, police, fire and rescue teams who have traveled from as far as Oregon.
- Earlier this week, AT&T delivered hundreds of FirstNet-enabled devices to first responders who are without service from their commercial providers in parts of Florida.
- AT&T has also delivered generators to emergency response and local command centers.
- As recovery efforts and conditions allow, AT&T retail stores are open for people to charge their devices and connect to WiFi. Locations are available [HERE](#).
- AT&T announced that for customers in the areas affected most by the hurricane, it is automatically issuing credits and waiving overage charges from October 10 through October 14 to provide unlimited talk, text, and data access for AT&T wireless and AT&T PREPAID. More details can be found [HERE](#).
- Verizon's "Big Red" trailer has arrived at the Bay County Sheriff's Office, providing that office with full telecommunication operations including full satellite uplink.
- Big Red is Verizon's most robust deployable asset working cell and internet service, as well as multiple workstations with Chromebooks.
- Verizon has also reported that it has restored full telecommunications capabilities to the Bay County Emergency Operations Center.
- Verizon's crews are working around the clock to repair severely damaged and destroyed fiber systems in Panama City, Panama City Beach and surrounding areas.
- Several sites in the area have come back into service including Sneads, Altha, Chattahoochee, Rose-dale, Alford, Jacob City, Campbellton, Graceville.
- Verizon has deployed 10 additional COWs to the area which are ready to activate once the fiber systems are restored.
- Verizon has deployed a Tactical Command Center to the Panama City Beach Police Department. This trailer provides command center capabilities with communications.
- Verizon has nine SPOTs (mobile cell sites connected with a satellite link) at several locations, including the Springfield Police Department, Gulf Coast Regional Medical Center, City of Parker Police Department, Tyndall Air Force Base, FDOT Chipley Office and the Panama City Police Department.

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Calhoun Storm Damage

Hurricane Michael has left the Panhandle of Florida in shambles. Folks are left to pick up the pieces without electricity which makes recovery all the more difficult.



ABOVE: Mason Road in Blountstown remained blocked for days after the storm. LEFT: A Blountstown structure missing a wall, windows and part of its roof claimed by Hurricane Michael. BELOW: Hurricane damage along SR 69 North in Blountstown. BELOW LEFT: A mangled structure along 11th Street in Blountstown.



A clear message was left on a 4'x8' sheet of OSB on 11th Street in Blountstown.

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