

★ **STORM:** *Tornado ravages area October 23*

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tures, at last count, have suffered some degree of storm damage. These range from outbuildings, barns, and sheds, to homes and businesses. A dollar estimate is still being compiled.

Greene said anyone who has damage to their home from the October 23 tornado and storm and is either uninsured or is under-insured, should call the Emergency Management Office in Taylorsville, 828-632-1160.

**HOME DESTROYED ON RINK DAM ROAD**

In addition to the damage reported in last month's issue, *The Times* has learned that the home of Mike and Lisa Gull, located on Rink Dam Road near the Bowman's Cutover Road intersection, suffered catastrophic damage, said Greene. A large tree crashed into the front of the home and parts were ripped away by high winds.

Mike Gull communicated with *The Times* via Facebook, stating "Everyone's OK, my wife, son and I were in the same room as the tree fell—very lucky."

Gull said the family is staying with relatives following the damage their home sustained.

**DAMAGE IS WIDESPREAD**

Greene indicated that three schools were hit hard by the storm. Guttering was damaged at Bethlehem Elementary, metal fascia and awnings were torn at West Alexander Middle School, and the shade structure at the Old Ellendale School was damaged.

The EM office received damage reports from the old R&N Marina northwards to the Wilkes County line, and from the Herman Dairy Farm on Three Forks Church Road west to the Caldwell County line. In effect, the whole western half of Alexander County suffered severe winds and many roads were impassable due to trees felled by the storm.

Greene said the wall ripped open at Sipe's Lumber Company Oct. 23 caused approximately \$200,000 damage (estimated) and perhaps twice that figure -- or more -- at the Herman Dairy Farm.

The EM director expressed a heartfelt appreciation for the first responders, power crews, tree removal crews, and NCDOT for their rapid response after the storm. He said about 61 percent of all electric customers in Aleander County had outages following the storm.

Greene said that Duke Energy has replaced 160 poles and over 100 transformers, and over 64,000 feet of electric line, system-wide.

NC Highway 127 was closed to through traffic from the evening of Oct. 23 until late Oct. 25 due to storm cleanup, said Greene.

**CROP DAMAGE REPORTED**

An article in the *Wilkes Journal-Patriot's* Friday, Oct. 27, issue indiated that "orchardist Ty Lowe said weather equipment near his home and orchards on Price Road in the Pores Knob Community measured a wind speed of 115 mph before it lost electricity and shut down.

The orchardist, who operates Perry Lowe Orchards, told the *Journal-Patriot* that he lost about 1,000 bushels of pink lady apples when they were blown off the trees. Around 200-300 of his apple trees were blown over, but some will be salvageable.

Lowe said he still has a good crop of apples.

**2-1-1 IS CLEANUP HOTLINE**

Greene said from now through Nov. 30, call 2-1-1 to register your property for help with home cleanup. As they are able, reputable and vetted relief agencies may assist residents with cutting fallen trees, roof tarping, and removal of debris, drywall, insulation, flooring, furniture, and appliances, etc. All services are free, but service is not guaranteed due to the overwhelming need. NC 2-1-1 can connect residents to resources for food, shelter, clothing, and other basic needs. NC 2-1-1 is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and is free, confidential and multilingual. Dial 2-1-1 or 888-892-1162 to reach a call specialist.

★ **HOKE:** *Will be honored by ACS*

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overriding decision-making process was based on the well-being of the school children and embodied the motto, *Children First*.

Hoke is a 1970 graduate of Hibriten High School and a graduate of Appalachian State University with a Bachelor's Degree in Business Education and a Master's and Educational Specialist degree in Public School Administration. Prior to his tenure in Alexander County, he served in the Caldwell County Schools as a teacher coach, athletic director, assistant principal, and principal.

The former superintendent won several awards during his career. He was one of North Carolina High School Athletic Association's "One Hundred to Remember School Administrators in 2013. He received the Order of the Long Leaf Pine in 2012, Northwest Regional Educational Service Alliance 2011 Superintendent of the Year Award, 2010 North Carolina Superintendent of the Year Finalist, North Carolina Association of School Administrators State Leadership Award 2010, North Carolina High School Athletic Association 2017 Superintendent of the Year, a 2017 Caldwell County Schools Hall of Honor inductee, and numerous other awards.

Hoke currently serves as the Executive Director of the North Carolina School Superintendents' Association. He resides in the Bethlehem Community with his wife, Joan. He has one daughter and one granddaughter.

A reception to honor Mr. Hoke is tentatively planned for early spring 2018.



**HOME RUINED ON RINK DAM ROAD** — The home of Mike & Lisa Gull on Rink Dam Road, shown above, was severely damaged when the Oct. 23 tornado ripped through the community. The high winds toppled a giant tree into the room where Mike, Lisa, and their son were at the time, but thankfully no one was injured.

**IN THE SHADOW OF HOGAN'S MOUNTAIN**

By Dr. Warren Hollar, [whollar@charter.net](mailto:whollar@charter.net)

*A Painful View of Hogan's Mountain*

Across western Alexander and surrounding counties, the sound of power saws, chippers, and heavy equipment signal the loss of a significant amount of the tree canopy of our area. No longer can one enjoy the leisurely autumn walk along a backwoods lane or road in many sections without being obstructed by fallen trees or the roots of upended trees. It is with great sadness that we view the ripped and torn trunks and branches of trees that held special memories for us. Some we can recall are where pictures of deceased relatives, proms, or special occasion pictures were made. As we walk through our upended trees in our yards, we remember the fun of picking the bounty from fruit trees or just enjoying the trees' special colors of early spring and autumn.

For the scores of homes damaged by the ferocious winds, we have seen the shell-shocked looks of devastated homeowners. For elderly homeowners the fear and helpless feeling of who will help them clean up the mess often creates significant stress. We have heard many wonderful stories of how family, neighbors, and volunteers have stepped forward to help those most in need. In the days immediately after the storm, we read many stories of blocked highways and loss of electrical service. Loss of basic telephone service added to the stress of those most affected by the storm and those children and other relatives seeking to make sure their loved ones weathered the storm. In reaction to these service and transportation interruptions, many volunteers, power company workers, state workers, and others have stepped forward to restore services and clear roads for safe travel.

As in many cases, members of my family had tree and wind damage to their homes. My most heart-rending personal loss was not on my own property, but the devastation of the 100+ trees broken and fallen on the slopes of Hogan's Mountain. Old growth trees that survived Hurricane Hugo are now twisted and torn as if tortured by the brutal and savage winds of the October 23rd EF2 tornado. Instead of a leisurely walk to the top of the mountain, I am now forced to climb through, up, and over the many va-

rieties of trees that once proudly adorned the mountain's slopes. And sporadically, I have been pleased to see an old growth tree that still stood tall beside its destroyed forest mates. Once I breached the jungle of fallen trees, I arrived at the highest flat part of the mountain. There to my amazement stood the old oak tree where my grandfather would sit for a rest after patiently leading me on a tree identification journey to the top of the mountain. These old-wized trees serve as an anchor for the development of future memories of our woodlands. Although our forest canopy will show the effects of the tornado for decades, many of us can remember the devastating impact of Hurricane Hugo and our concern for woodland survival. We will again need to heed the advice of our forest professionals to ensure the longevity of our remaining healthy trees.

How to Help Those Affected by the Tornado

The following provides a supermarket of ideas to help our neighbors and other through the difficult days of getting their lives and property back to some degree of normality. This information came from a variety of national news organizations, weather channels, and governmental agencies.

1. Stay in contact with the persons affected by the tornado. It is very important to let them know they have your support.
2. Help them identify processes for working with insurance adjusters and understanding the areas covered by policies.
3. Work with older residents to help them identify reputable companies to help them with the clean-up and repair of their property.
4. Caution older people about the dangers of over exertion as they personally attempt to clean up debris.
5. Emphasize wearing sturdy shoes or boots, long sleeves and gloves whenever handling or walking around or near debris. Many of the injuries caused by tornadoes result from stepping on nails in and around damaged homes and buildings.
6. After a storm passes, violent events like tornadoes can sometimes cause emotional and psychological trauma. Children, especially, may fear the storm will come back, or that it is punishment for real or

imagined misdeeds.

a. Talk with your children about your own past experiences in severe storms, or read a book with them about tornadoes.

b. Encourage your children to express their feelings about what has happened. Listen carefully and show that you understand their fears.

c. Include your children in the cleanup, if possible and if the affected area poses no danger, to give them a chance to see your household return to normal.

7. If you or your family needs crisis assistance, contact local emergency management offices for assistance in understanding aid that may be available to affected property owners.

8. Ask for support from people who care about you and who will listen and em-

pathize with your situation. But keep in mind that your typical support system may be weakened if those who are close to you also have experienced or witnessed the trauma.

9. Engage in healthy behaviors to enhance your ability to cope with excessive stress. Eat well-balanced meals and get plenty of rest. If you experience ongoing difficulties with sleep, you may be able to find some relief through relaxation techniques. Avoid alcohol and drugs because they can suppress your feelings rather than help you to manage and lessen your distress.

10. Help those you can. Helping others, even during your own time of distress, can give you a sense of control and can make you feel better about yourself.



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**Erin Hunt joins Hickory Real Estate Group team**

Hickory Real Estate Group is pleased to announce that Erin Hunt has joined its firm as a Realtor®/Broker. Erin specializes in residential property sales in Alexander, Caldwell, Catawba, and Burke counties.

Hickory Real Estate Group is a full service real estate brokerage company specializing in residential and commercial properties.

Since starting in 2010, Hickory Real Estate Group has continued to grow and now has 22 agents helping buyers and sellers in the Hickory area.

Erin can be contacted to help with your real estate needs. You can contact Erin by phone (828) 291-4199, email: [Erin@HickoryRealEstateGroup.com](mailto:Erin@HickoryRealEstateGroup.com) or visit the company website: [HickoryRealEstateGroup.com](http://HickoryRealEstateGroup.com).



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