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PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

Helene: Trump admin releases final \$4M for worker grant program

Jacob Biba
Asheville Citizen Times
USA TODAY NETWORK

The Trump administration has released the remaining portion of a \$10 million grant that’s been funding temporary jobs in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Helene, Gov. Josh Stein announced in an Oct. 24 news release.

The new funds, which total \$4 million, represent the remaining portion of the Disaster Recovery Dislocated Worker

Grant that the U.S. Department of Labor awarded North Carolina following Helene. The September 2024 storm killed more than 100 people across the state and led to significant job losses.

“This federal grant will enable folks in Western North Carolina who are out of work to get a job helping their neighbors and businesses recover and rebuild,” Stein said in a Oct. 24 statement. “It is a win-win.”

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Residents of Marshall begin cleaning up businesses and the area around Main Street on Oct 1, 2024 after catastrophic flooding of the nearby French Broad River caused by Tropical Storm Helene. JOSH MORGAN/USA TODAY

Fall color moves down WNC’s mountains



Fall color spreads across the mountains as seen from the Blue Ridge Parkway in Asheville on Oct. 15.

JOSH BELL/ASHEVILLE CITIZEN TIMES

Where can you see it at its peak?

Sarah Honosky
Asheville Citizen Times
USA TODAY NETWORK

ASHEVILLE – As the highest elevations pass their peak, fall color is rushing down the slopes, with areas below 3,000 feet expected to be at their most vibrant heading into the weekend and the final week of October.

Leaf color will likely reach the lowest area elevations by the end of October and into the first week of November, said Howard Neufeld, a professor of plant eco-physiology at Appalachian State University in Boone. He also runs the popular “Fall Color Guy” Facebook page.

Though popular high-elevation spots

along the Blue Ridge Parkway, like Craggy Gardens north of Asheville and Graveyard Fields to the south, have lost most of their leaves, Neufeld recommended leaf peepers seek out views along the parkway, and look down across the mountains.

“It’s going to be the forest that you see from the overlooks that should be having great color right now,” he told the Citizen Times Oct. 22.

A weekly report from Explore Asheville said fall color now rests between Asheville’s valleys and ridges, with areas “glowing in peak reds and golds,” touting color at the mid-elevations, at about 2,000 to 4,000 feet.

Asheville sits at about 2,200 feet elevation.

With temperatures cooling, Neufeld said it’s some of the best weather for fall viewing that he can remember in years. He has dubbed the year “on time,” a largely “yellow-orange” fall, with less of

the sought after red pigment.

There has been some leaf loss from dry weather, but not enough to detract from the experience, he said. He cautioned Oct. 23 that it may shorten the season somewhat as leaves drop due to lack of rain, though he also noted that precipitation was forecast for the coming week.

According to a National Weather Service Facebook post Oct. 23, lack of recent rainfall “is causing steadily worsening drought conditions and increasing the seasonal wildlife danger,” but confidence was increasing that a quarter-inch of rain would come Sunday through Tuesday night.

So far this October, Asheville has seen .18 inches of rainfall, compared to a normal of 2.45 inches, said National Weather Service meteorologist Thomas Winesett. Conditions in the

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Trump headlines ASEAN summit

Oversees talks on trade, Thai-Cambodian truce

Trevor Hunnicutt and Rozanna Latiff
REUTERS

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia – President Donald Trump hit the ground running on the first leg of his Asian tour on Oct. 26, announcing a slew of trade agreements in Malaysia and joining the signing of an expanded truce between Thailand and Cambodia that he brokered in July.

Within six hours of landing in Kuala Lumpur for the summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Trump announced trade deals with four countries, met regional leaders and held talks with Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who said their teams would start tariff discussions.

Trump also said he was confident of hammering out a deal with Chinese President Xi Jinping ahead of an expected meeting on Oct. 30 as top trade officials from both sides met for a second day in Kuala Lumpur and agreed on a framework for a trade agreement.

Cambodia-Thailand ceasefire

Top billing for Trump on Oct. 26 was the signing of an agreement between Cambodia and Thailand, building on a ceasefire reached after he intervened to halt deadly border clashes, earning him a Nobel Peace Prize nomination by Cambodia.

At a ceremony with the Thai and Cambodian leaders against a backdrop covered in U.S. insignia and the words “Delivering Peace,” Trump, who has touted himself as a global truce-broker, said the agreement demonstrated his administration’s pursuit of peace “in every region where we can do it.”

“My administration immediately began working to prevent the conflict from escalating,” Trump said.

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