COCKE COUNTY, TN RECOVERY NEWSLETTER

November 2026

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November is a month for giving thanks, and this year I have plenty to be thankful for. Two years after Helene, the crowds of volunteers have thinned, but the ones who still come bring the same heart we saw in those first weeks. As the days get shorter and winter approaches once more, our focus turns to keeping families warm, safe, and moving toward home. To every partner, volunteer, church, and neighbor still at the table: thank you. We could not do this work without you.

~ Spring Duckett, Executive Director

LONG-TERM RECOVERY GROUP NEWS

Sister Corps Spotlight: 25 Women, Six Job Sites, One Week

During the last week of October, 25 women from **Sister Corps** spent five full days serving survivors on six job sites across Cocke County. Founded in 2017, Sister Corps is a women-led volunteer organization that mobilizes skilled teams to help communities rebuild after disaster, with work ranging from drywall, paint, and flooring to decks and accessibility ramps. Their team planned with us months in advance, arrived with their own tools, and went to work as self-starters, giving between 800 and 1,000 hours of skilled labor in a single week. Just as meaningful was the warmth they brought to every site, and the survivors they served were delighted by them. Two years after Helene, with volunteer numbers slowed to a trickle and families still waiting on repairs, Sister Corps came exactly when we needed them. Thank you, Sister Corps. You are welcome back in Cocke County anytime.

A Place to Rest: Thank You, Carson Springs

A volunteer team is only as strong as the rest it gets at night. Our thanks to **Carson Springs Baptist Conference Center** in Newport for providing accommodations for the Sister Corps team during their week of service. Giving visiting volunteers a comfortable place to stay right here in Cocke County kept them close to the work and made a week like this possible. Carson Springs has been a longtime partner in our county's recovery, and we are grateful for their hospitality.

Spotlight: Empower Cocke County

Since the day the floodwaters receded in 2024, **Empower Cocke County** has stood with Helene survivors, and they are still standing with them today. Empower brings Christian churches together to share the Good News of Jesus Christ and do what no single church could do alone. Working hand in hand with our disaster case managers, they have helped meet survivors' unmet needs in dozens upon dozens of homes across the county, covering nearly every part of repairing or rebuilding a home, from building materials to entire HVAC systems. Their generosity has been a backbone of Helene relief and recovery for so many families. Thank you, Empower Cocke County, for serving our neighbors in Christ's name.

Thank You, Lutheran Disaster Response: Southeastern Synod ELCA

This month, a Helene survivor's home received a new steel awning, fully covered by a case payment from Lutheran Disaster Response through the **Southeastern Synod ELCA.** LDR has been a steady partner in Cocke County's recovery, meeting needs like this one and funding our Outreach & Intake Coordinator position, which helps survivors find their way to the table. Thank you, LDR, for standing with our survivors.

Current Needs

Here are some of the top needs in our communities:

- ☐ Mobile Homes
- ☐ RV/Camper Repairs
- ☐ Licensed HVAC/Electrical volunteers
- ☐ Landscaping volunteers

Needs Met

Here are some of the needs recently met:

- ☑ Six job sites with major repair projects
- ☑ Awning for long-term camper fully funded
- ☑ GRRF projects continue across the county
- ☑ Volunteer Lodging

How to Donate?

Visit unitedwayetnh.org/ltrg/cocke/