

By: Lauren Chapman

Hurricane Helene has become one of the most damaging hurricanes to ever hit the southeast. According to the Augusta Chronicle, Hurricane Helene has resulted in over \$417 million in damage. Augusta, Georgia and its surrounding areas were one of the hardest hit areas.

Many locals feel that their hardships are not only being looked over by the country, but their own local government as well. According to [WRDW](#), the city of Augusta was not on the official list of cities that requested help from President Biden and the White House right after the hurricane. In addition, WRDW claims that the city has often shut down the water service, and even shut down the bus service temporarily since the hurricane.

Locals want the world to know that they are not just a golf course, but a group of people who are going through one of the most mentally, physically, and economically draining periods of their lives.

Brant Lowe, a 4-year Augusta resident, says that Augusta has a prevalent issue regarding the aftermath of the hurricane.

“The initial communication from the city’s government is what I’ve heard people complain about the most, and I don’t disagree,” Lowe claims. “No one seemed to know how bad other places were across the CSRA (Central Savannah River Area, the area where Augusta and its surrounding cities are located) and the communication provided by the Augusta government was pretty sparse.”

Lowe also recalled how a lack of LEOs (Law Enforcement Officers), made the community feel unsafe.

“Having LEOs deployed at a few key intersections seems like a good use of their abilities, but I don’t remember seeing a single manned intersection,” Lowe recalled. “It was more of a game of chicken than anything else.”



Photo courtesy of Aruba Chowdhury.

In addition to the lack of state communication, dispersed aid and resources have also been a significant point of scarcity for residents. According to [WGAC](#), Hurricane Helene caused over 220,000 homes in Augusta and its surrounding areas to lose power. Justin Garrison, a 34-year Augusta native, knew firsthand what it was like.

“I have power but still no Wi-fi or internet,” Garrison said. “It took 8 days for the power to come back on.”

Garrison also notes the mental toll that hurricane has taken on him.

“The hardest part for me was the mental aspect of it,” says Garrison. “I have pretty extreme anxiety anyway and I’m a very structured person. That went out the window once the storm hit so just keeping some normality to my everyday life was a must.”

Without communication, many of Augusta’s citizens had to use information they found on social media to find resources. While not all social media resources are inaccurate, social media sites are 70% more likely to spread false information rather than true information according to [VOA News](#).

Patrick Gaskins, an Augusta native for 42-years, said it was difficult for him to find proper news about the aftermath of the hurricane.

“The information released was piecemeal, coming from various sources such as Facebook, Reddit, and local news, which caused confusion and frustration,” Gaskins recalled.

Hurricane victims are encouraged to visit [FEMA](#) to get accurate, up-to-date news regarding the hurricane.