

One death and a serious injury for a utility worker have been blamed on Hurricane Sandy here in the High Country. The fatality came with high drama in a rescue effort in Banner Elk. There, a truck crashed into Shawnee Haw creek at the head of the Mill Pond on the Lees-McRae campus, and rescuers on the scene reportedly found that a person was still in the overturned underwater truck. A wrecker was called to try to at least help position the truck so rescuers could reach the victim of the crash, and the victim was pulled from the water and rushed to Cannon Memorial, where he was pronounced dead. Banner Elk Police are investigating, and did not identify the victim as of late yesterday.

Serious injuries are reported for a lineman working in the predawn hours yesterday in Ashe County. Crews from the DOT, Warrensville Fire, and utility crews were working together on NC 88 West near Carl Eastridge Road to remove the downed tree and put back the downed utilities when the tree suddenly kicked back, and the emergency call went out for help from others at the scene. Sheriff James Williams said that Blue Ridge Medical transported the Skyline crewman to Ashe Memorial, and he was transferred to Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center. Skyline issued a release saying the worker suffered broken ribs and a punctured lung, but it did not list the name of the man.