

Call goes out for credentialed Disaster Relief volunteers as Hurricane Delta closes in on Gulf Coast

By Hubert Yates

Correspondent

Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief teams (MBDR) have been placed on standby as Hurricane Delta, now a Category 4 storm, takes aim at the central Gulf Coast area of the U.S., with landfall on Friday or Saturday of this week. On the current forecast track, Delta may strike Mississippi with its northeast quadrant, known as the most violent part of hurricanes where the winds and storm surge are at peak.

MBDR teams are anticipating the need for chainsaw/debris removal, placement of temporary tarps on damaged roofs, assessment, and chaplaincy teams. Until the actual landfall location is known, the Mississippi Gulf Coast and south Mississippi should complete all pre-storm preparations as soon as possible as hurricane effects will develop rapidly during the Oct. 9-10 time frame.

Credentialed MBDR disaster relief volunteers who can serve in the coming weeks are requested to check in with the Men's Ministry Department at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board: dvail@mbcb.org. For the latest information on developing hurricane conditions, visit <https://www.nhc.noaa.gov/>.

Laura, Sally

MBDR teams continue to play an important role in Southern Baptist Disaster Relief (SBDR) operations supporting Louisiana Baptist Disaster Relief and Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief after Hurricanes Laura and Sally made landfall in those areas earlier this hurricane season.

Volunteers from Yalobusha Association's Disaster Relief Team and First Church, Madison, operated during the week of Sept. 28 – Oct. 4 from Trinity Church in Lake Charles, La., working with SBDR teams from Louisiana, Virginia, North Carolina, Ohio, and Texas in providing chainsaw/debris removal, placement of temporary tarps on damaged roofs, and chaplaincy services to those affected by Hurricane Laura's landfall on August 27.

In Baldwin County, Ala., MBDR teams and volunteers from X-tended Missions Network in Hernando and Emmanuel Church, Grenada, have been working alongside teams from Alabama, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Oklahoma to provide the same services as in Louisiana to those impacted by the landfall of Hurricane Sally on Sept. 16. Both sites anticipate relief work to continue through the month of October as residents continue to need recovery assistance.

In addition, multiple SBDR teams are also assisting Florida Baptists with Hurricane Sally recovery in the Pensacola area.

Wildfires response

Out West, affiliated SBDR Teams from California, Oregon, Arizona, Washington, Utah, Idaho, and Colorado are working to assist those affected by the ongoing wildfire outbreaks. Teams are currently providing local feeding support, ash-out, chaplaincy, and shelter assistance to those being displaced and affected by the massive fires. This work is expected to continue through October as the peak of the western fire season is reached.

Church-to-church

With many Louisiana Baptist Convention churches damaged by Hurricane Laura, the Louisiana Baptist Convention is coordinating a church-to-church recovery program, whereby individual churches interested in helping repair/rebuild affected churches are directly connected to the churches in need of those services. More information on that program can be found at louisianabaptists.org/churches-helping-churches/.

Donations

In-kind donations (clothing, shoes, diapers, etc.) are not being accepted at this time. Monetary donations may be made online at mbcb.org/giving/. Select "Give as an Individual," and then

designate your gift to "Disaster Relief." Check donations are also accepted. Simply make the check payable to the "Mississippi Baptist Convention Board," designate "MS Disaster Relief" on the memo line, and mail to MBCB, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530.

All financial donations given through Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief are tax deductible and go directly to support relief/recovery efforts in partnership with local Baptist churches and associations.

By making financial donations to reputable response organizations like MBDR, those who give enable the purchase of needed materials in bulk, allowing for the efficient storage and distribution of large quantities of those materials using pallets and forklifts and thereby reducing the time needed to get the supplies to the hardest hit areas.

Please encourage financial giving to reputable groups like MBDR operating in the area. Thanks to the generous support shown by Mississippi Baptist churches for the Cooperative Program, administrative costs of the MBDR ministry are covered and all donations go directly to support relief/recovery efforts in partnership with local Baptist churches and

associations.

Prayer needs

Through all the responses, God continues to use the men and women who volunteer with SBDR to bring help, healing, and hope. To date, 353 professions of faith have been recorded. Please encourage your churches to pray for all the Southern Baptist teams that are at work or are preparing to go in the coming days and weeks. Pray especially for the MBDR teams – your disaster missionaries on point to share help, healing, and hope in Jesus' Name.