

# **Disaster declaration requested by Reeves; historic hurricane season drawing to an end**

JACKSON, Miss. (Special) – Miss. Governor Tate Reeves has requested a federal disaster declaration for individual and public assistance as well as U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) assistance due to damage left behind Oct. 28 by Hurricane Zeta, which produced eight feet of storm surge and maximum wind gusts around 100 mph.

Joint Preliminary Damage Assessments were conducted by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency, and local governments beginning November 10, 2020.

Estimated damage totals include \$79,000,000 to public infrastructure and more than \$10,000,000 to homes and businesses. Six counties met the threshold to receive individual assistance as well as SBA assistance, and eight counties met the threshold to receive public assistance.

Individual assistance has been requested for George, Greene, Jackson, Hancock, Harrison, and Stone counties. Public Assistance has been requested for George, Greene, Jackson, Hancock, Harrison, Perry, Stone, and Wayne counties. SBA assistance has been requested for George, Greene, Jackson, Hancock, Harrison, and Stone.

U.S. President Donald Trump must approve Reeves' request.

A list of Mississippi Baptist Convention churches reporting damage from Zeta includes:

- Bay Vista Church, Biloxi. Steeple and roof damage.
- Cambridge Church, Gautier. Roof damage.
- Emmanuel Church, Ocean Springs. Steeple and roof damage.
- First Church, Ocean Springs. Roof damage and damage to pastor's home.
- Rocky Creek Church, Lucedale. Steeple and roof damage.

### **Southern Baptists respond**

Meanwhile, Southern Baptist Disaster Relief (SBDR) ministry teams including Mississippi Baptists have responded to each storm that has made landfall both inside and outside the state so far during the record-breaking 2020 hurricane season which ends Nov. 30.

The teams have provided meals, removed downed trees and storm debris, installed temporary roofing, and engaged in a number of other needed services, all while presenting the Gospel at every opportunity.

In addition, thousands of volunteers have served across North America this year in various emergencies, from the California wildfires to an ice storm in Oklahoma. SBDR reported more than 872 people have professed faith in Christ following 6,780 Gospel presentations by Southern Baptist disaster relief volunteers.

"It's been an incredible show of people being willing to serve others in the midst of a global pandemic," said Sam Porter, SBDR national director at Southern Baptists' North American Mission Board (NAMB) in Alpharetta, Ga. "I am so thankful that, even in the midst of the numerous responses, we've had minimal amount of [COVID-19 coronavirus] issues despite the fact that thousands of people served during these months of response."

## **Donations**

In-kind donations (clothing, shoes, diapers, etc.) for disaster relief are not being accepted at this time. Monetary donations may be made online at [mbcb.org/giving](http://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 critical supplies 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.

## **Pray**

Please be in prayer for the victims of the many storms of Hurricane Season 2020 as they pick up the pieces of their lives, for the dedicated Mississippi Baptist and Southern Baptist disaster relief volunteers, and for discipleship of the new Christians who have come to know Jesus Christ as Lord and through disaster relief ministries.

Contributing to this article were Baptist Press, NAMB, SBDR, and staff of The Baptist Record. Those interested in volunteering for disaster relief may contact [dvail@mbcb.org](mailto:dvail@mbcb.org).