

Disaster relief responds to damage around BMCU campus

On the night of Sunday, May 26, severe winds toppled several heavy trees, along with many sizeable branches, across Blue Mountain Christian University and the town of Blue Mountain. Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief (MSBDR) received word through the Pontotoc County Baptist Association Team Lead, Randy Young, of the need for assistance. MSBDR reached out to President Barbara McMillin and COO Joyce Peters to offer help.

MSBDR Incident Manager Thomas Nix, of the Itawamba Association, completed an initial assessment the following Monday afternoon. With “six large trees down and several smaller ones scattered” across campus, the work took three teams (Belden Church/Lee Association, Calhoun County Baptist Association, and Benton/Tippah Association) who deployed on May 28.

John Henry, the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board’s disaster relief consultant, utilized the MSBDR tracked lift for assistance with the cleanup. Most of the work was finished late in the afternoon May 28, but the Belden/Lee Association team returned to complete two off-campus requests May 29. The Benton/Tippah Association assisted with all remaining work in Blue Mountain.

“We serve in Christ’s name,” Nix commented. “We try to take care of both the physical and spiritual needs when we’re out there. Most of what we did in Blue Mountain was on the college itself, but we did work on a few individuals’ houses and properties.”

Homeowner in Blue Mountain and missions pastor of Harrisburg Church in Tupelo, Clay Anthony, shared his gratitude for disaster relief. “That night, we had a large number of

straight-line winds which knocked down a tree in our yard that covered up a major street there in Blue Mountain. There was no structural damage, but trees were down everywhere on the campus and in town. When I called Hubert Yates shortly after, they were already on it. Within a matter of a couple of hours, the utility companies came up to do what they could with the tree, but that was mainly to get the lines restored and the street opened up. But the yellow shirts were right behind them getting trees off the properties.”

“My church and I are disaster relief qualified,” Anthony explained, “and I personally have been on several disaster relief trips wearing a yellow shirt: from Katrina, to Amory, to Texas, to Louisiana flood relief. I have done several of those trips, but I had never been the beneficiary. It was nice just to be able to make that phone call and have churches show up within a matter of hours to do what they do best. I’m grateful for disaster relief, but I hope I never need them again,” he laughed.