

Meridian Serve Tour effort benefits local ministries

By William Perkins
Editor



Simmons

Southern Baptists' Serve Tour stop in Meridian on March 18-19 was a major success, with 40 churches from five states sending more than 675 volunteers to participate in community improvement projects while sharing the Gospel with local residents, according to coordinator Sammy Simmons, national project director for the SEND Relief joint compassion ministry of the International and North American Mission Boards of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

"One overall theme was the blessing stated by project leaders to have multiple churches serving together on a single project," Simmons said in an executive summary of the weekend. "From a project leader: 'It was refreshing to watch everyone working together in unity. It was a true testimony of the love of Christ.'"



Parker

“We had a fantastic rally [on the evening of March 18] with great energy with Dr. Shawn Parker and several team members from Mississippi Baptists, Dr. Ed Litton, and General Doug Carver all present and on stage for different segments,” he said.

Parker is executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB). Litton is SBC president and senior pastor of Redemption Church, Saraland, Ala. Carver is a retired former chief of chaplains of the U.S. Army and ordained Southern Baptist minister who presently serves as the North American Mission Board’s executive director of chaplaincy.



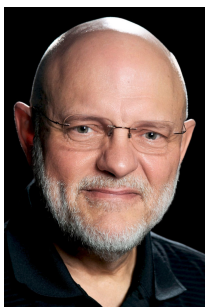
FOR THE HOMELESS – Volunteers working in Meridian March 18-19 as part of the SEND Relief Serve Tour constructed “Conestoga Huts” to help a local ministry house homeless people who live in the area. (Photo credit: NAMB)

Members of the Mississippi Disaster Relief Task Force provided

a full meal for the March 18 evening rally and lunches on March 19. Other statistics released by Simmons in the executive summary in addition to the 675-plus volunteers from 40 churches include:

- Total projects: 32, 19 of which were public works projects coordinated with the City of Meridian.
- People served: 2,828.
- Gospel Conversations: 530.
- Salvations: 9.
- Meals distributed: 2,754.
- Construction hours: 3,122.

“Serve Tour Meridian was a wonderful example of the kind of cooperation that makes Southern Baptist work so great,” Parker said in a written statement. “I saw firsthand how churches were blessed, ministries were expanded, and the Gospel was shared in a winsome way. I truly praise the Lord for everyone who participated and all that was accomplished for God’s glory!”



Ray

Mike Ray, MBCB missions mobilization director, served as the board’s liaison for Serve Tour Meridian. “Greg Massey [former Lauderdale Association mission strategist] and John Maxey [current Lauderdale Association mission strategist] did an excellent job in determining and coordinating the ministry sites and opportunities.

“The energy and enthusiasm of the teams and individuals who participated was evident and contagious. The NAMB team was helpful and ready to be sure that needs were taken care of in a timely manner. The spirit of the entire weekend was very positive and encouraging,” Ray said.

For information on the remaining stops on the national SEND Relief Serve Tour, visit sendrelief.org/serve-tour/.