

Miss. Spared Direct Hit from Hurricane Delta as MBDR response teams move back into place

*By Hubert Yates
Correspondent*

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On Oct. 10, Hurricane Delta became the third major hurricane in the 2020 hurricane season to make landfall along the northern Gulf Coast in the past 45 days. Following Hurricane Laura Aug. 26 that made landfall near Cameron, La., as a Category 4 storm; and Hurricane Sally on Sept. 16 that made landfall near Gulf Shores, Ala., as a Category 3 storm; Hurricane Delta made landfall near Creole, La., – just 15 miles east of Hurricane Laura’s landfall – as a strong Category 2 storm.

All three storms spared Mississippi from sustaining major damage, although several counties had scattered reports of trees down and damage to structures as a result of Delta. No requests for homeowner assistance have been received by Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief (MBDR).

Return to disaster areas

All MBDR teams were recalled before Delta made landfall. With Delta having passed over Mississippi without significant impact, MBDR is returning its attention to assisting Louisiana and Alabama with recovery ministries. In western Louisiana, the Louisiana Baptist Disaster Relief (LBDR)/Southern Baptist Disaster Relief (SBDR) ministry site at Trinity Church in Lake Charles, operating in support of recovery from Laura,

reactivated October 12, following precautionary evacuation for Delta. Teams will be working to complete chainsaw/debris removal requests generated from Laura.

In addition, there is a need for replacing temporary tarps that were in place after Laura but were blown away during Delta's subsequent landfall. Many of those houses will also require flood cleanup after getting doused by both Laura and Delta. Work is anticipated to continue in the Lake Charles area through the end of October.

Two new LBDR operations sites were set up in New Iberia and Jennings on Oct. 12, to provide support for recovery operations including coordinated area command and feeding operations at Bayou Church, Lafayette. Missouri Baptist Disaster Relief is providing the feeding operations and North Carolina Baptist Disaster Relief is providing the Incident Management Team.

There is a need for assessment, chainsaw/debris removal, roof tarping, and flood recovery teams to assist the growing number of homeowners from Central Louisiana who are requesting assistance.

Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief (ABDR) continues operations at First Church, Robertsedale, in support of recovery efforts following Sally, with a need for chainsaw/debris removal and flood recovery teams. ABDR relief work is expected to continue through the end of October.

Volunteers needed

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 nhc.noaa.gov.

Church-to-church

With many Louisiana Baptist Convention churches damaged by Laura and Delta, 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. 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.

Yates is Mississippi Baptists' interim state disaster relief coordinator.