

Mississippi Baptist feeding unit, volunteers headed to New Orleans in response to Hurricane Ida destruction

By William H. Perkins Jr.

Editor

JACKSON, Miss. (Special) – Kitchen One, the massive Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief (MBDR) feeding unit capable of preparing 10,000 meals per day, is being deployed to the New Orleans area in response to Hurricane Ida's widespread damage earlier this week, according to Hubert Yates, director of disaster relief at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB).

The first team of trained MBDR volunteers is assembling at Gulf Coast Association in Gulfport and will depart for Louisiana on Wednesday afternoon, with meals startup expected by Thursday afternoon, Yates said.

The New Orleans area was the bullseye for Ida, but the entire state of Louisiana has been affected in some way by the Category 4 storm that made landfall on the morning of Aug. 29 with wind speeds of 150 miles per hour in some locations.

Estimates put the number of those affected by power outages at 1,000,000 over Ida's multistate footprint.

"In order to staff and maintain the kitchen, we will need a team of 30-40 volunteers for seven to 10 day rotations," Yates said. "This deployment could extend to four to six weeks."

The MBDR mobilization is the largest in several years, Yates pointed out. "Please pray for our MBDR volunteers as they

prepare to respond [by] asking for traveling graces, provision of needs, and opportunities of witness and service.”

The mobilization will expand into Mississippi over the next several days. “Gulf Coast Association has identified approximately 30 homes that may need flood recovery in coming days and weeks. MBDR is preparing response for this area. It will be a couple of days before operations can begin.”

In addition to the MBDR posting in the Jefferson area, state Baptist convention disaster relief units currently lined up for response in Louisiana include:

- Arkansas: Hammond (feeding and recovery).
- Texas Baptist Men: Gonzales (recovery).
- Oklahoma: Houma (feeding and recovery).
- Missouri: Mandeville/North Shore (feeding and recovery).
- North Carolina: New Orleans (feeding and recovery).
- South Carolina: West Bank/Waggaman (recovery).
- Georgia: Amite (recovery).
- Florida: Kenner (feeding and recovery).
- Southern Baptists of Texas: Gonazles (feeding).

Donations to MBDR can be made online at <https://www.mbc.org/giving/>. Select “Give as an Individual” and designate the gift to Disaster Relief.

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

All financial donations given through MBDR go directly to

support relief/recovery efforts in partnership with local Baptist churches and associations in affected areas. In-kind donations such as clothing cannot be accepted as MBDR is not set up to receive and distribute those items.