

Mississippi Baptist response continues after double blow from hurricanes

By William H. Perkins Jr.

Editor

Volunteers with the Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief (MBDR) ministry are counted among the 12,056 volunteer days and 105,524 volunteer hours of Southern Baptist work contributed after Hurricanes Ida (Aug. 29) and Nicholas (Sept. 14) swept through Louisiana and Mississippi.

“Although conditions are wet, MBDR teams continue to provide cleanup operations in and around Covington, La.,” said Hubert Yates, disaster relief director for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

“Teams were in place this past weekend from the MBDR Task Force, Jackson County Association in Pascagoula, Carterville Church in Petal, Temple Church in Hattiesburg, First Church in Florence (two teams), Briar Hill Church in Florence, Tennessee Baptist Disaster Relief, and Oklahoma Baptist Disaster Relief,” he reported.

At the request of Louisiana Baptist Disaster Relief, MBDR is staffing an Incident Management Team to coordinate and support chainsaw operations in the hard-hit area around Covington, La., Yates said. That team is operating from First Church, Covington.

“There are currently 12 Recovery Operations Sites in southeast Louisiana staffed by volunteer teams from 19 different state conventions,” Yates said:



MOVING IT OUT – Members of the volunteer disaster relief team from First Church, Gautier, remove debris from a yard in Lacombe, La., in response to wide-scale damage caused by Hurricane Ida and Hurricane Nicholas. (Photo credit: Louisiana Baptist Message)

- Alabama and South Carolina in Belle Chase.
- North Carolina in New Orleans.
- Texas Baptist Men in Gonzales and St. Amant.
- Florida in Kenner.
- Georgia in Kentwood.
- New Mexico, Arizona, and Colorado in Houma.
- Mississippi and Tennessee in Covington.
- Oklahoma and Southern Baptist Convention of Texas in in Morgan City.
- Missouri, Illinois, and Kansas/Nebraska in Mandeville.
- Arkansas in Hammond.
- Louisiana in Denham Springs.

“Electrical power and food supply issues are rapidly being solved in most areas, with the exception of Houma and areas

south to the Gulf of Mexico. The Oklahoma, Texas Baptist Men, and Alabama kitchens will remain open on a day to day/week to week basis as conditions continue to improve," Yates said. "All other kitchen sites closed over the last few days."

Kitchen One, MBDR's feeding unit, was operating in Jefferson outside New Orleans until a suspected case of COVID-19 among the volunteers forced the unit to demobilize. All volunteers working at Kitchen One when the infection was discovered have completed quarantine and medically recommended treatment" Yates said. The Kitchen One crew was able to provide about 5,500 meals before returning home.

There have been 8,379 ministry contacts with 513 Gospel presentations by Southern Baptist volunteers resulting in 87 professions of faith, Yates reported. Total meals prepared by all Southern Baptist disaster relief operations totaled 638,660, as of Sept. 19. In addition, Southern Baptist volunteers completed 494 chainsaw work/debris removal orders, and placed 141 tarpaulins on damaged roofs.

"Teams working this week include the MBDR Task Force, Calhoun Association in Calhoun City, Pearl River Association in Carriere, Alcorn Association in Corinth, and a Tennessee Baptist Disaster Relief team," Yates said. "Temple Church in Hattiesburg, Carterville Church in Petal, Jackson County Association in Pascagoula, and Dixie Church in Hattiesburg are scheduled for the weekend of Sept. 24-25."

Yates also reported that a number of Mississippi Baptist churches have "self-deployed" to areas in which congregational and/or pastoral contact has been made. "Material donations continue to pour into the area in which recovery is already well underway," he added.

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.

For more information on the Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief ministry, contact Deanna Vail at dvail@mbcb.org.