

MSBDR team on the ground in Georgia in response to Helene

By Hubert Yates

MS Disaster Relief Director

We had a good day under the hot Georgia sun. As of Oct. 2, our site is now fully operational, with many things coming together last night and today. We remain without electrical power, except for generator-powered equipment and refrigeration. However, the entire "dormitory" is wired to a Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief (MSBDR) generator for lights, CPAPs, fans, and other essentials. There is joy in the camp.

The Georgia Baptist Disaster Relief (GABDR) Shower Unit, Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief (ALBDR) Mass Feeding and Volunteer Feeding teams, and MSBDR Incident Management, Chaplains, and Assessors are all working together. Our first chainsaw teams will begin work Oct. 3. ALBDR fed 10,000 meals today in partnership with The Salvation Army, and MSBDR has received close to 150 work requests from four counties. GABDR's shower unit had hot showers ready for crews as they finished their work this afternoon. There is a great working relationship with Dr. Ron Sweatt of First Baptist Church Alma and Dr. Mike Taylor of the Smyrna Association. We also had visits today from Georgia Baptist Convention (GBC) Communications staff and the GABDR state director, Dwain Carter.

Our MSBDR team made sure to take advantage of every work order submission to pray, offer encouragement, and share the Gospel with each family. It was heartening to see the compassion with which they carried out their tasks. There were numerous ministry opportunities today with emergency management, fire, and law enforcement personnel. Late this afternoon, while

picking up work requests from the Coffee County Emergency Management Agency (EMA), we were able to meet with Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp. He saw the yellow shirt, stopped, and expressed his appreciation for Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Disaster Relief coming to help the residents of Coffee, Bacon, Atkinson, and southeastern Georgia.

Currently, in this three-county area, besides SBC Disaster Relief and The Salvation Army, no other organized nonprofit or faith-based organization is on the scene. This five-state response, with major needs in each state, is stretching the capacity of not only SBC Disaster Relief but also other response groups. The National State Director's call displayed the power of the SBC Disaster Relief network, but we also acknowledged that we will be pressed to meet the demand for volunteers in the coming days. Please pray that the Lord will send more workers into the harvest.

Chainsaw work begins Oct.3, providing many more opportunities for direct contact with survivors. Pray for our chaplains and assessors as they go out into the hardest-hit areas, where numerous ministry opportunities await. Earlier today, the Chaplain/Assessor team located an elderly couple who were isolated in their home due to numerous trees blocking the driveway and more trees on their home. The wife is recovering from a broken leg, and the husband could not leave due to the downed trees. It was a great ministry opportunity as the team assessed the project, spent time assuring the couple of assistance, returned to camp to prepare a food box and hot meals, then returned to the home to love on the pair, pray, and share with them.

An Arkansas Baptist Disaster Relief volunteer was severely injured in Vidalia while operating a chainsaw. The tree kicked back, knocking him down and pinning him. He was airlifted to the hospital and immediately underwent surgery. He remains in the ICU, but is making progress, though a long recovery is expected. Prayers are appreciated.

We have seen a good initial response from our volunteers. Please continue to pray for our volunteers and for a harvest of souls for the Kingdom.

Churches can give to the Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief effort by clicking [here](#), while individuals can click [here](#).