

State Baptist disaster relief teams headed to Kentucky

*By Hubert Yates
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Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear put the death toll at 30 as of August 1. "There are hundreds of unaccounted-for people, minimum," he said, cautioning that accurate counts at this point are "nearly impossible."

First into the affected areas have been volunteers with Kentucky Baptist Disaster Relief (KBDR) as they have begun to assess and plan the response to assist their friends,

neighbors, and sister churches in 50-plus communities in over 10 counties.

Joining them August 1 are units from South Carolina Baptist Disaster Relief, North Carolina Baptist on Mission Disaster Relief, Tennessee Baptist Disaster Relief, and Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief.

Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief (MBDR) is currently on standby pending a request for deployment and coordination with KBDR. Teams may be needed to assist with mass feeding, cleanup, chaplaincy, and repair/rebuild efforts.

Churches and associations that are not affiliated with SBC/DRM that would like to respond to the Kentucky flooding should coordinate through MBDR. Flood recovery training and SBC disaster relief credentialing are available in a just-in-time format for those who desire to become involved.

Contact MBDR at (601) 292-3334 or hyates@mbcb.org for additional information.

Initial efforts are focused on sheltering and feeding those who have been displaced by the flood waters and meeting their basic needs. As the week progresses, efforts will shift to cleanup and debris removal.

It is anticipated that elements of SBC/DRM will be needed over the next one to two months to assist with cleanup and recovery. This disaster situation follows an extremely busy spring severe weather season as Kentucky was impacted by several large tornadoes and storms.

Ron Crowe, KBDR state director, shared that KBDR is currently engaged in assessment, mass feeding, spiritual/emotional care, and providing shower and laundry units to residents who have been displaced.

As the water recedes, cleanup and repair/rebuild operations

will begin. At this time, KBDR is not requesting material goods donations due to transportation and warehousing situations, but is asking that those who would contribute to do so by designated gift to Disaster Relief/KY Flood Recovery through their state Baptist convention or directly to the Kentucky Baptist Convention (www.kybaptist.org/flood).

All designated gifts will be used to support the flood response for eastern Kentucky. Those wishing to donate may also send gift cards in any amount from Wal-mart, Tractor Supply, or Lowe's. Mail to Kentucky Baptist Convention, Disaster Relief, 13420 Eastpoint Centre Drive, Louisville, KY 40223.

Please pray for the people of eastern Kentucky, KDBR and their volunteers, and the assisting Southern Baptist Convention disaster relief teams.

The MBDR disaster relief ministry is supported by gifts to Mississippi Cooperative Program and donations.

Yates is state director for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's disaster relief ministry.