

# **Texas Baptist volunteers join multi-state disaster relief effort in Florida\_82304**

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Six Texas Baptist Men disaster relief mobile units were among the dozens of Baptist emergency response vehicles from multiple states that responded after Hurricane Charley swept through Central Florida.

The East Texas Baptist disaster relief unit was sent to Lake Wales, Fla., to prepare meals for storm victims, and the Texas Baptist Men Incident Command Center was dispatched to First Baptist Church in Kissimmee, Fla., to coordinate communication efforts between Baptist disaster relief workers already on site.

The 18-wheel Texas Baptist Disaster Relief Mobile Unit with its field kitchen also was sent to Florida, along with a trailer loaded with food, a generator unit and a shower unit from Hill Country Baptist Association.

“It's probably one of the greatest blessings of my life to go to someone you've never met and literally offer them a cup of water in the name of Jesus,” said Mike Brittain of Diana, coordinator of the East Texas unit. “I just stand in awe and amazement that God would use me to show his love

in that way.”

**Texas Baptists  
wishing to  
contribute to  
disaster relief  
efforts in  
Florida should  
send checks  
designated  
“disaster  
relief” to Texas  
Baptist Men,  
333 N.  
Washington,  
Dallas  
75246-1798.**

Within a few days after the storm made landfall, the Southern Baptist Convention's North American Mission Board activated more than 70 disaster relief units from around the country, and the number could grow up to 175 units, said Mickey Caison, manager of the NAMB disaster operations center.

“We're talking about months for recovery and long-term rebuilding for years,” Caison said.

The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship designated \$10,000 for the relief effort and established coordinated volunteer relief services in both Charlotte County/Fort Myers and Lee County/Venice and Arcadia along Florida's west central coast.

Charley—a category 4 storm with sustained winds above 145 miles per hour

and storm surges from 13 to 15 feet-left at least 22 people dead and hundreds missing as it crossed the state from southwest to northeast, entering from the Gulf of Mexico at Punta Gorda and exiting into the Atlantic Ocean around Daytona Beach. It was the strongest hurricane to hit the United States since Hurricane Andrew in 1992.

Days after the storm, nearly 1 million Florida residents remained without electricity, and officials told them not to expect it to be restored for more than a week.

Texas Baptists wishing to contribute to relief efforts should send checks designated "disaster relief" to Texas Baptist Men, 333 N. Washington, Dallas 75246-1798.

Compiled from reports by Texas Baptist Communications, Baptist Press and Associated Baptist Press.

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