

East Texas disaster moves from relief to recovery

May 17, 2017

CANTON—After working more than 4,000 volunteer hours, Texas Baptist Men completed immediate disaster relief ministry in tornado-stricken parts of East Texas and prepared to work alongside residents there in long-term recovery.

Meanwhile, in response to flooding in the Midwest, a TBM incident management team is on-site in Jefferson City, Mo., two flood-recovery teams are working in Neosho, Mo., and an additional flood-recovery crew and two assessor teams are on their way to Missouri.

In East Texas, TBM disaster relief volunteers distributed 3,843 boxes to help residents gather and store their storm-scattered possessions, and “blue-tarp” crews provided eight homes with temporary roof coverings.

Chainsaw crews completed 61 jobs, heavy-equipment operators logged 228 hours, and food-service volunteers prepared 469 meals. Chaplains recorded more than 250 contacts and distributed 33 Bibles. TBM volunteers provided access to 209 showers and washed 207 loads of laundry.

Long-term recovery process begins

Gerald Davis, TBM long-term recovery coordinator, attended the initial meeting of the Van Zandt County Long-term Recovery Group May 15. He reported the crisis cleanup database includes 396 homes in Van Zandt County that were damaged or destroyed, not counting affected homes in Rains or Henderson counties.

Of the 205 homes identified as destroyed, 55 percent belonged to

homeowners without insurance, he noted.

[TBM long-term recovery](#) projects—such as ongoing ministries in Houston and Southeast Texas following floods in those areas—focus on uninsured, underinsured, disabled or elderly disaster survivors, Davis said.

“Once we have the opportunity to assess needs, we will mobilize volunteers to build and repair homes,” he said. “Of course, it’s all contingent on fund-raising for the supplies. There’s a need for ongoing support.”

To date, the Van Zandt Long-term Recovery Account established locally at Ben Wheeler State Bank has received about \$128,000, and additional fund-raising events are planned in the next two weeks.

Updated information is posted regularly on the Van Zandt County Tornado 2017 Facebook page [here](#).

To donate to TBM, send a check designated “disaster relief” or “long-term recovery” to Texas Baptist Men, 5351 Catron, Dallas 75227 or click [here](#) and select the appropriate fund from the pull-down menu.