

# TBM clears downed trees in Longview

May 16, 2019

LONGVIEW—Texas Baptist Men disaster relief volunteers helped remove massive fallen pine trees from the homes of Longview residents after straight line winds swept through several neighborhoods.



Brian Gibson from Bull Creek Cowboy Church in Lone Oak moves logs cut by Texas Baptist Men chainsaw volunteers working in Longview. (Photo / Ken Camp)

Initially, observers attributed the widespread damage to a tornado, but the National Weather Service determined 90 mph straight line winds on May 8 caused the destruction and power outages. The storm's path was about 17 miles long—although not continuous—and about 2,500 yards wide, the weather service said.

TBM mobilized volunteers who set up a base of operations at Greggton First Baptist Church in West Longview. After trained assessors surveyed affected neighborhoods, chainsaw crews and heavy equipment operators fanned out across the northern half of the city to remove downed trees.

# No charge

Janet Spiekermann, a member of First Baptist Church in downtown Longview, was out of town caring for her hospitalized mother when the winds hit her neighborhood.



Texas Baptist Men volunteers remove fallen timber from the front yard of Janet Spiekermann, a member of First Baptist Church in Longview. (Photo / Ken Camp)

“Neighbors said it didn’t last long at all, but they heard trees snapping all around,” she said.

When Spiekermann returned to her home, she discovered a large tree down in her front yard.

She was grateful for the work of the TBM crew who promptly cut it down to manageable-sized logs and moved the debris to the curb—all free of charge. She already had received a bid from a commercial tree-trimmer.

“He would have charged \$1,000,” she said.

Several TBM volunteers noted residents often were surprised to learn they

provide their services free to anyone in need. One disaster relief volunteer commented a fellow chainsaw crew team member had the best response when asked how much the men charge for removing downed trees.

“We don’t charge anything. Jesus paid it all,” he said.

## **Working from Greggton First Baptist**



A Texas Baptist Men chainsaw crew from Lake Pointe Church in Rockwall works in Longview. (Photo / Ken Camp)

In addition to the chainsaw crews and heavy-equipment operators and chaplains who accompanied them, additional volunteers staffed the incident management command post or worked with the mobile shower and laundry unit from Green Acres Baptist Church in Tyler, both located at Greggton First Baptist Church.

Volunteers from Denton Baptist Association arrived May 13 to set up a smartphone and electronics charging center and install security cameras to support the work of the asset protection team.

James Pierce, pastor of Greggton First Baptist Church, reported about a half-dozen member families in his congregation had trees down, but he had not learned of any who sustained damage to their homes.

Quite a few members were without electricity for an extended period, but several stayed in the homes of family members who were not affected by the storm, Pierce said.

To contribute financially, send a check designated “disaster relief” to Texas Baptist Men, 5351 Catron, Dallas, TX 75227, call (214) 275-1116 or click [here](#).