

TBM volunteers continue to provide disaster relief in North Texas

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ROWLETT—With chainsaws, blue tarps and skid-steer loaders, Texas Baptist Men disaster relief volunteers continued to help North Texas residents affected by killer tornadoes that swept through the region the day after Christmas.



Scott McCaleb, a Texas Baptist Men volunteer from Town East Baptist Church in Mesquite, helps clear a broken limb that extended across the backyards of three Rowlett homes. (Photo / Ken Camp) The first 10 days following the Dec. 26 storms, TBM chainsaw crews completed 100 jobs at the request of homeowners in eastern Dallas County, as well as four in Ellis County.

TBM volunteers also installed temporary roofing for eight homes, provided facilities for 49 showers and 43 loads of laundry, and distributed more than 6,600 boxes for residents to collect storm-scattered possessions. They also

gave away 44 Bibles and a dozen gospel tracts.



A Texas Baptist Men chainsaw crew from Denton Baptist Association work in a Rowlett neighborhood. (Photo / Ken Camp) Terry Henderson, state disaster relief director for TBM, expects demand to increase in Rowlett and Garland for at least the immediate future.

Initially, requests for assistance arrived fairly slowly because residents had not yet returned to their homes or were waiting for insurance companies to assess damage, he noted.



Rick Simmons, a Texas Baptist Men chainsaw volunteer from Plymouth Park Baptist Church in Irving, climbs a tree in a Rowlett homeowner's backyard to remove dangerous limbs. (Photo / Ken Camp) "Now, some of them are finding out insurance is not covering everything," he said.

TBM was scheduled to demolish two homes, and Henderson anticipated additional demolition projects. TBM heavy-equipment operators demolished 50 homes after a 2013 fertilizer plant explosion in West, and Rowlett's mayor requested the same service in his community.

At one site, TBM skid-steer operators removed a pickup that landed on a home in Garland. Ironically, the truck may have saved the lives of the couple and their grandson who were in the house when the tornado hit. When the vehicle landed, it bridged two couches in the living room. The family hit the floor as their house crumbled around them, and the space under the truck provided them shelter from falling debris.



Tim Wint, a Texas Baptist Men volunteer from The Village Church in Flower Mound, uses a pole saw to remove a broken limb from a backyard in Rowlett. (Photo / Ken Camp) At this point, some Rowlett and Garland neighborhoods remain in need of relief, while others already are gearing up for a long period of recovery and rebuilding.

“There are a lot of people back in their homes now, but there are still some areas that haven’t been touched yet,” Henderson said.



Joe Marney, a Texas Baptist Men disaster relief volunteer from First Baptist Church in Justin, serves in Rowlett with a

chainsaw crew. (Photo / Ken Camp)As a result, both TBM disaster relief and Texas Baptists' disaster recovery, a Baptist General Convention of Texas ministry, are working in the area.

In response to requests from congregations that desire immediate hands-on involvement, TBM posted contact information for Dallas-area church groups who wanted to help clear debris.

After those slots filled quickly, TBM shifted to identifying areas where church teams could serve and providing that information to Texas Baptists' disaster recovery personnel.

To contribute to TBM disaster relief, click [here](#) or send a check designated "disaster relief" to Texas Baptist Men, 5351 Catron, Dallas 75227.

To contribute to long-term recovery efforts, mail checks to Texas Baptists' Disaster Recovery, 7557 Rambler Rd., Suite 1100, Dallas 75231-2310 or click [here](#).