

TBM volunteers prepare to respond to Hurricane Florence

September 12, 2018

As Hurricane Florence approached the Carolinas, Texas Baptist Men disaster relief volunteers prepared for likely deployment to the East Coast, while also keeping a watchful eye on a storm forming in the Gulf of Mexico.

TBM crews loaded equipment and supplies on trucks, with the expectation they might leave for areas affected by Hurricane Florence as early as Sept. 15, depending when the storm makes landfall.

TBM's largest emergency food-service unit, capable of preparing 30,000 meals a day, was one of 22 Southern Baptist mobile field kitchens around the country the American Red Cross placed on standby, according to Eddie Blackmon, disaster response specialist at the North American Mission Board. The 22 units have a combined capacity of 315,000 meals per day.

Although the number could vary greatly depending on the size of the affected area and how much rain the region receives if the hurricane stalls over land, authorities anticipated an initial need for 200,000 meals a day. More than 1 million people in the Carolinas were under mandatory evacuation orders.

In addition to the statewide food-service unit, other TBM volunteers on standby included childcare workers, mud-out crews, chainsaw teams, water purification specialists and volunteers who staff shower and laundry units.

Carefully watching storm in the Gulf

While volunteers prepared for possible service on the East Coast, TBM

disaster relief leaders carefully monitored a storm system off Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula that could create major flooding along the Texas coast.

In consultation with Emergency Management officials in Texas, TBM leaders kept most disaster relief resources in Texas until they had a better idea about the potential impact both of Hurricane Florence and the storm in the Gulf.

While many volunteers packed their bags and prepared for deployment, other TBM workers were returning home from service.

A chainsaw crew completed 11 jobs in Rockport, which continues to recover from Hurricane Harvey one year ago.

TBM mud-out crews in Pennsylvania and Wisconsin donated more than 1,700 volunteer hours after heavy flooding in those areas. The volunteers serving in those two states made about 100 ministry contacts and distributed 19 Bibles.

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](#).