

Texans on Mission provide hope in midst of desolation

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FRITCH—Joe McMahan may live just outside Fritch, but right now, it feels like a different planet.



Texans on Mission volunteer Randall Gardner (left) from First Baptist Church in Kaufman talks with rancher Joe McMahan. (Texans on Mission Photo / Russ Dilday)

Scorched black earth surrounds him. He's a rough, determined rancher, but the scene is difficult for him to take in.

"Everything is a total loss," he said, days after the Windy-Deuce Fire swept over his land. "This ranch is rather large. We probably have 30,000 acres. Maybe 2,000 acres is left."

The ranch lost 12 of its 32 bulls and too many cows to count. Every cow and calf needed medical attention after they were surrounded by the blaze.

Disaster relief volunteers with Texans on Mission, historically known as

Texas Baptist Men, arrived with critical help—diesel many ranches are struggling to get in the aftermath of the fires and much needed hay to feed the surviving cattle.

The aid “means survival for the family ranch,” he said. “Without it, we’d all be lost.”

About 80 Texans on Mission volunteers have served for more than two weeks in Fritch, including a mobile command center, chaplains, heavy machinery, fire recovery, chainsaw, asset protection, electrical support, feeding and shower/laundry teams.



Texans on Mission has picked up and distributed more than 500 bales of hay and coordinated the delivery of roughly another 2,000 from ranchers and cowboy churches from across the country. (Texans on Mission Photo / Russ Dilday)

The ministry has picked up and distributed more than 500 bales of hay and coordinated the delivery of roughly another 2,000 from ranchers and cowboy churches from across the country. One tractor trailer arrived at First Southern Baptist Church in Fritch with an unknown payload. When volunteers opened it, they found a load of medical supplies for animals.

“More than 1 million acres have burned across the Panhandle,” said Mickey Lenamon, Texans on Mission CEO/executive director. “The affected area is hard to fathom. Ranchers have lost their homes and how they provide for their families.

“In the midst of all this, Texans on Mission volunteers are delivering help, hope and healing in the name of Christ.”



Fire recovery and heavy machinery teams are cutting up burned homes and clearing lots. (Texans on Mission Photo / Russ Dilday)

Fire recovery and heavy machinery teams are cutting up burned homes and clearing lots. Often, they are with homeowners the last time they see their homes. Once the area is clear, fire recovery teams dig through the ash for family heirlooms. They’ve found jewelry and other items that have been handed down.

Many times, the scene is emotional. Some of the toughest ranchers in Texas break down in tears and hugs are common. Each Texans on Mission team gives every homeowner they serve a Bible.

“People are hurting,” said David Wells, Texans on Mission disaster relief director. “We’re providing hay, fuel and help. But more importantly, we’re praying with people. We’re sharing God’s love. He provides the comfort they’re seeking and the healing they need.”