

Texas Baptists gear up for long-term disaster ministry

May 28, 2015

SAN MARCOS—With 37 counties declared disaster areas and rain continuing to fall across much of the state, Texas Baptists prepare for a widespread long-term disaster relief and recovery effort.

In Hays County, where the Blanco River overflowed and floods affected more than 1,400 homes, [Texas Baptist Men](#) disaster relief officials set up their mobile command post at Calvary Baptist Church in San Marcos and a field kitchen at First Baptist in San Marcos. The food-service team prepared 3,500 meals March 29 that the American Red Cross and Salvation Army delivered to shelters and other remote locations.



Blanco River flooding has damaged more than 1,400 homes. Volunteer chaplains and a team that distributed cardboard boxes for displaced residents' scattered belongings began work in San Marcos May 26.

Mud-out teams began work the following day.

“We’re waiting to see how many homes are condemned before we start mud-out,” said Terry Henderson, TBM state disaster relief director, soon after the mobile command post was set up.

Calvary Baptist is serving as the check-in site for volunteers.

Unlike most instances—in which TBM volunteers handle immediate disaster relief and [Texas Baptists’ Disaster Recovery](#) program handles long-term rebuilding and restoration—the two groups will overlap and even work in tandem in San Marcos.

“This is going to be a long process,” Henderson said. “It won’t be over any time soon.”

Plans to mobilize volunteers

Texas Baptists’ Disaster Recovery office plans to mobilize volunteers to assist TBM volunteers with mud-out operations, said Marla Bearden, disaster recovery specialist with the Baptist General Convention of Texas. Her recruits will help remove items—and muck—from homes, and trained TBM volunteers will spray-wash and sanitize the houses.

Volunteers must be age 16 or older. Individuals interested in serving should contact Bearden at marla.bearden@texasbaptists.org.

During the initial disaster relief phase, TBM will take responsibility for San Marcos, and volunteers with the Southern Baptist of Texas Convention will serve nearby Wimberley. Although the two cities are only 20 miles apart, the main road between them is impassible, and a one-way trip from one site to the other takes about an hour and a half following detours.

However, once long-term recovery and rebuilding operations begin, Texas Baptists’ Disaster Recovery program will work in Wimberley, Bearden

noted.

TBM volunteers served meals at a shelter in Wichita Falls after mandatory evacuation there, and a mud-out crew remained on standby. TBM mud-out crews also continued to work in Robstown, Smithville and Krum, and a chainsaw crew worked in Henderson County.

TBM disaster relief volunteers remained on standby for possible work in the Houston and Gonzales areas.

How to help

TBM disaster relief relies entirely on donations. To give, [click here](#) or send a check designated “disaster relief” to Texas Baptist Men, 5351 Catron, Dallas 75227.

Texas Baptists’ Disaster Recovery program already began mobilizing volunteers and facilitating church-to-family partnerships to repair and rebuild homes for uninsured or underinsured residents of Van who were affected by a tornado that hit the East Texas town. Housing for volunteers is available at First Baptist Church in Edom.

Churches can provide volunteer teams to perform light and heavy construction, fence building, painting, debris removal and other tasks. To sign up or receive more information, contact Bearden at (214) 537-7358 or [click here](#). Charles Baker with Texas Baptists’ Disaster Recovery is working as on-site volunteer coordinator. Contact him at (254) 541-4725.

Skilled and experienced construction volunteers can volunteer through the Shalom Builders program. Contact Gerald Davis at (214) 924-6401 for more information.

Donations for Texas Baptists’ Disaster Relief can be mailed to 333 N. Washington,

Dallas 75246 or contributed online [here](#).

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