

## ***A WORD FROM DISASTER RELIEF***

2017 ended much differently than the previous 10 years for Disaster Relief. Following the arrival of four major hurricanes on US soil, it has been challenging to keep up with the needs and requests.

As Texas continued to clean up from Hurricane Harvey and the Laundry Unit from FBC Satsuma continued to serve in Texas, on September 12, Alabama State Disaster Relief came to Bay Minette and offered "Emergency" Disaster Relief training. There were 113 local Baptists from all across our area who attended and received training and certification in Cleanup/Recovery/Mudout. We welcome our new volunteers!

Then on September 20, Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico and surrounding islands in the Caribbean. Alabama Baptists and SBC Baptists from across the country continue to minister there and seek ways to help the people of Puerto Rico.

Ultimately Hurricane Nate was our closest threat on October 8. Its arrival on early Sunday morning affected many church services and ministries, but gratefully did not cause major damage locally. One church suffered some roof damage, one had some water damage, and one lost their sign. Otherwise everyone faired well.

We have seen more than 30 local churches respond in some way to the disasters in 2017. Many sent supplies; some sent volunteers; and most were praying and lifting up those affected as well as the volunteers. It has been encouraging to see churches bring supplies in to the office while other churches pick them up to be delivered to those who are hurting. We have witnessed first hand the church at work in the world!

In the midst of all the responses, MBA has been blessed with the establishment of a Ham Radio Station in the office. This will facilitate communication between leadership in the event of a local disaster. Thanks to Alan Waldo for his assistance in the project.

Additionally, we have upgraded our staging area to include monitors for the purpose of communication and information during the course of a local event. This will improve our ability to predict and anticipate needs as well as improve communication between respondents.

Finally, the donation of supplies and the needs which surfaced led to a thorough cleaning of the Disaster Relief Storage Area and a cleaning and repainting of the MBA Disaster Relief Trailer. We have been re-certified as a State DR Trailer and stand ready to respond in the event of the next disaster.

Thank you for your support and encouragement during these difficult months of Disaster Relief response. We especially want to thank Satsuma for their months of service with the Laundry Unit in Texas. What a blessing they were to the people there!

Looking ahead to 2018, we are planning to offer Disaster Relief training again this spring. Please stay up-to-date with MBA news and newsletters for more information.

Blessings for 2018!

Carolyn Battle  
Disaster Relief Coordinator