

Tennessee Baptists to tackle 'building blitz'

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BRENTWOOD Tennessee Baptists are gearing up for a major building blitz in Gulfport, Miss., April 21-May 3.

The goal is to complete five houses for victims of Hurricane Katrina in two weeks, said David Acres, Tennessee Baptist Convention disaster relief director.

If we have more volunteers, we will add more houses to the goal, Acres said.

Jim and Bonnie Sellers, members of Belle Aire Baptist Church in Murfreesboro, who serve as on-site coordinators for rebuilding efforts, say there is no shortage of homes to build.

The couple estimates that thousands of people are still living in FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Administration) trailers.

Sellers noted that in Pass Christian, Miss. (where the Tennessee teams will build homes) the town had a population of 6,200 before Hurricane Katrina hit the community in 2005. The town's current population is about 1,500, Sellers said.

Acres said the idea of a blitz is appealing because it will help local residents get into a home more quickly.

Families are anxious to get into their homes, he stressed.

Acres observed that families in Pass Christian will have less anxiety knowing that when a team comes to their building site on April 21 that they should be able to move in two weeks later. It will make all the difference in the world, he predicted.

All volunteers will be welcome, Sellers and Acres said.

Volunteers with specialty skills such as electrical, plumbing, roofing, heating and air conditioning, drywall, framing, tile and flooring, and siding are especially needed.

Because of the nature of the project, volunteers working in a particular area, such as roofing, plumbing, and electrical, could come later in the week after the house was framed and in the dry, Acres said.

Sellers stressed that volunteers need to be aware that all of the homes to be built will be elevated at least eight feet off the ground.

Churches are invited to send teams or individuals can volunteer and be placed on a team, the TBC leaders said.

The TBC will provide meals and lodging at Robinson Road Baptist Church in Gulfport. Volunteers will be responsible for their travel.

A team leader meeting for churches sending two or more volunteers will be held at the Baptist Center in Brentwood on Feb. 9 from 8 a.m.-noon. Lunch will be provided.

Sellers stressed that the Gulf Coast is a missions field. Teams are coming to build houses, but there will also be opportunities to talk to home owners and others about salvation, he said.

Bonnie Sellers noted that efforts thus far have far surpassed disaster relief and rebuilding projects.

People are being witnessed to and we have seen people saved.

To volunteer, call Jim Sellers at (615) 427-1413 or Bonnie Sellers at (615) 424-4425. They can also be reached in Gulfport at (228) 328-0534.