

Long Term Recovery of Macon County is the long name of the local organization that was formed to take care of the needs of citizens who were affected by the February 5th tornado – but not nearly as long as the needs of those citizens or the time it will take the county to recover.

The purpose of the LTRMC and the services and processes it will provide were explained to the 60 or 70 people that attended an LTRMC information expo that was held on Saturday, March 30.

Macon County has had all kinds of help from FEMA, TEMA, the Red Cross, and many groups and organizations from outside the county and even the state – but all these organizations and help eventually pull out, go home, or reach their deadline, leaving the long-term recovery of the county in local hands.

LTRMC are the hands that reached out to accept the task of overseeing a recovery process that may take years.

“We’re all volunteers,” explained vice chair Vickie Henderson to the 60 or 70 individuals who attended. “There is no paid staff. If we make mistakes – and we probably will - we’re sorry. We’ve never done this before, and we’re learning. If we’re made aware of a mistake or problem, we will do our very best to rectify it.”

The many volunteers come from over 50 governmental entities, not-for-profit agencies, community civic and service groups, religious groups, educational organizations, and just the good human concern that lies in the hearts of people.

Generous grants and donations are funding the LTRMC, and 100% of the money goes to provide services for recovering citizens, Henderson promised. The group will actively pursue financial donations, grants, fund-raising activities, and donated goods and services to help meet the needs of recovery.

Not only Macon Countians are qualified for the services provided by the LTRMC. According to the by-laws, the group may cross county lines and aid those in Sumner and Trousdale

Counties, and perhaps Kentucky, if needed.

Those seeking assistance from the LTRMC will first have to have applied with FEMA for assistance, said Henderson, adding that LTRMC will not require social security numbers. All information given to the LTRMC will be strictly confidential. Although applicants may be asked to sign information release forms to speed the process of their recovery, they don't have to sign them, and all information will be strictly confidential.

In order to determine the long-term recovery needs of people who were affected by the tornado, volunteers from the Disaster Response Services of the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee are now conducting interviews.

Known as the Green Shirts, they will be going from door-to-door in affected areas to conduct interviews, and will also be available at the LTRMC office at 668 Highway 52 ByPass West. (For complete information on the interviews, refer to the Disaster Surveys Begin box on Page A-5.)

Once the interviews have been completed and the needs of families or individuals determined, individual case-managers will work individually and confidentially with folks to meet those needs and get them back – or as close as possible- to where they were before the tornado.

The many volunteers who have contacted the county are being coordinated by Ed Swanson, and will be sent to help families and individuals with clean-up, construction, fencing, or whatever is needed. Volunteers will sign a release saying they will be responsible for their own medical bills, and property owners will also need to sign a release to have volunteers come on their property.

A voucher system will be used by LTRMC to pay for goods and services from participating vendors. Merchants, vendors, and licensed insured contractors who are interested in participating in this effort should contact the LTRMC at 666-9714.

Although the Green Shirts and LTRMC are making every effort to contact everyone who was affected by the tornado, those attending the expo were asked to contact neighbors who may have been displaced or who haven't yet heard about the services provided by the LTRMC.