

**Forward Edge
International**

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First team of volunteers heads to Louisiana to repair homes and a church

Sponsored by a local relief/mission agency, a work team departs PDX late Friday night for a weeklong stint in the hurricane disaster area.

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Tomorrow night Vancouver-based Forward Edge International is sending its first of some two dozen work teams of volunteers to the Gulf Coast.

Team members from the Portland area will board a red-eye late Friday night for Dallas (American Airlines 320), where they will join their Bay Area and Phoenix teammates. From DFW the entire team of 23 will board a connecting flight to Baton Rouge, from where vans will take them to their destination of Harvey—a Jefferson Parish suburb just across the Mississippi River from New Orleans.

Members of the media interested in interviewing Portland-area team members should meet them at 10:15 p.m. Friday night, October 7, at the American Airlines ticket counter at Portland International Airport. The team will be wearing navy-blue Forward Edge T-shirts.

During its week in Harvey—a Jefferson Parish suburb of New Orleans—the work team will repair the damaged homes of that town's poor, elderly, and uninsured, as well as the damaged facility of Abundant Life Church. The church will feed the team and provide floor space for them to sleep.

Forward Edge has already sited field coordinators in Louisiana and Mississippi. These coordinators are not only veterans of disaster-relief efforts, but also have a firsthand knowledge of where FEI's efforts are best used along the devastated sections of the Gulf Coast.

This is the first of two dozen (and counting) work teams—including hundreds of volunteers from not only the Northwest but around the country—to travel to the disaster zones and participate in direct relief efforts there. Although volunteers will serve on a short-term basis, the volunteer teams are being scheduled in such a way as to guarantee a long-term rebuilding presence among the ravaged communities and displaced survivors in Mississippi and Louisiana.

About Forward Edge International...

Since 1983 Forward Edge International has mobilized young people and adults to express God's love in practical ways in the U.S. and around the world. FEI organizes and facilitates teams of short-term volunteers (from churches, schools, and campuses) to complete service projects, distribute emergency aid, and—in the words of executive director Anfuso—"be the hands and feet of Jesus." In its two decades this nonprofit has equipped and sent more than 700 short-term mission teams and 8,000 volunteers to 33 nations.

FEI has a history of delivering aid and assisting in reconstruction projects following natural disasters—tasks that typically create ongoing relationships with a country's or community's people and long-term development projects in those communities. Teams and material were dispatched earlier this year to Sri Lanka's tsunami-ravaged coasts...to Manhattan's Ground Zero immediately following the 9/11 attacks (2001)... to earthquake-stricken El Salvador (2000)...to Nicaragua following Hurricane Mitch (1998).

For more information about the response of Forward Edge International to the hurricanes relief efforts along the Gulf Coast, phone 360-574-3343. For information about volunteering in the disaster area along the Gulf Coast—whether just you, or a group from your church, school, or organization—contact Helen Little at katrina@forwardedge.org or call 360-574-3343.

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