



## The Oregonian

### **A few lives lighter, Gulf Coast cats reach Oregon**

**Rescue mission - A Sherwood shelter flies 41 felines that survived Katrina and Rita to Portland**

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**CATHERINE RYAN**

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Call them the Katrina 41.

After enduring Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, several relocations and a slew of feline vaccinations, 41 cats arrived at Portland International Airport on Monday looking for new homes.

The animals arrived at Flightcraft in a private plane chartered by the Cat Adoption Team of Sherwood. Giving them the best treatment possible, the flight crew removed the Cessna 421 Golden Eagle's six seats to make room for the cats in the main cabin.

Forty of the cats were evacuated from animal shelters in New Orleans before and during Hurricane Katrina one month ago. The other cat, an orange kitten, was rescued from the New Orleans floodwaters by a volunteer. Since then, the animals have been staying at the Humane Society of North Texas.

"It's their time to find a loving home now," said Britta Bavaresco, a member of the Cat Adoption Team who has high hopes for the Louisiana cats.

The Cat Adoption Team, a nonprofit, no-kill shelter and hospital with the capacity to hold 600 cats, used donations to fly the cats eight hours from Fort Worth, Texas, to Portland. They estimate the effort cost several thousand dollars. The flight was delayed an hour in Colorado, where the plane refueled and a veterinary team had to clean up after the group of airsick felines.

The shelters where the 40 stray cats lived were destroyed by Katrina. The rescued kitten was wearing a collar, and photos of it will be posted on the Cat Adoption Team Web site and on petfinder.com until Nov. 1 so its owners have a chance to find their pet.

More than 6,000 animals have been rescued from Louisiana and Mississippi in the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, according to the Humane Society of the United States Web site.

Three other organizations in Oregon have brought pets from the Gulf Coast and more are planning similar rescues, though only the Cat Adoption Team has hired a private plane so far.

When Oregon Humane Society volunteers came back from Louisiana recently, they stowed small animals in their carry-ons for the return flight to Portland.

The Cat Adoption Team will treat, spay, neuter and vaccinate the cats before making them available for adoption Wednesday. The shelter also will place microchips in the cats loaded with owner and medical information. Local veterinary hospitals and pet stores have donated supplies to help take care of the animals.

The Cat Adoption Team hopes to find homes soon for all of the cats, most of which are between the ages of 1 and 3. Several are kittens. If the organization quickly places the cats in homes, it may repeat the process with 82 more cats from hurricane-affected St. Bernard Parish in Louisiana.

The fee for adopting an adult cat is \$85. Kittens are \$110. The Cat Adoption Team also accepts donations to care for the displaced animals as well as the roughly 500 other cats in its facilities. For more information, call 503-925-8803 or visit [www.catadoptionteam.org](http://www.catadoptionteam.org).

Bavaresco said the organization's efforts are an attempt to aid hurricane victims the best way it can.

"We're not just helping cats," she said. "We're really helping the community as a whole."

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