

Update on Hurricane Responses

As Floral Management's October issue went to press, hurricane relief and recovery work was still ongoing—and it continues today. Here are some additional updates since our issue went to press:

AIFD Foundation Launches Hurricane Maria Florist Fund

The Hurricane Maria Florist Fund, modeled after the group's Harvey and Irma funds, was organized in concert with the American Institute of Floral Designers' Southern Chapter.

"We have never had three massive hurricanes hit the United States within six weeks of each other," said Lynn Lary McLean, AIFD, AIFD Foundation CEO, noting that 100 percent of funds collected for each fund will be awarded. "To learn that upwards of 75 shops were damaged by Hurricane Harvey alone caused great concern for Texas. If these shops were unable to reopen, there would be significant impact. If those employed no longer had jobs then they would be forced to leave their homes and go elsewhere. The same held true with Florida and those affected by the Hurricane Irma."

"With those affected by Hurricane Maria, the needs are even more basic," McLean added. "We certainly want to do all we can to help."

The group is currently accepting donations and applications for all three funds.

The AIFD Foundation worked with the Texas State Florists' Association to establish the Hurricane Harvey Florist Fund and with the Florida State Florists' Association for the Hurricane Irma Florist Fund.

After Hurricane Harvey, **BloomNet/Napco** established a matching funds program — an effort that the company has since extended to the Irma and Maria funds. The company will continue to match dollar-for-dollar donations made by BloomNet network members through December 31. McLean also noted "generous" financial contributions from **FTD**, the **California Association of Flower Growers & Shippers** and the **Wholesale Florist & Florist Supplier Association** as well as "individuals across the country who have so generously supported these efforts."

At press time, the group was compiling information on current donation totals. Follow the AIFD Foundation's social media pages for additional information.

Other Responses:

Complementing the financial relief efforts, **BloomNet** has implemented a hurricane assistance plan for flower shops in Texas and Florida, working closely with shop owners to help get their businesses up and running again, according to a company press release. As part of this effort, BloomNet has been providing shops with items such as floral supplies, fresh flowers, vases, new marketing materials, and computer equipment.

"Throughout these catastrophic events, one thing became clearly evident — the floral industry is not just a business. It is a remarkable community, a close-knit family of loving and caring people who are resilient and come together to support each other for the greater good. It is a beautiful testament to our

industry and to the amazing people who enable our floral industry to thrive,” said Lisa Carmichael, Vice President of Marketing & New Business Development, BloomNet.