



**For Immediate Release:**

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## **How U.S. Engineers Helped Peru Assess Damage From Deadly Earthquake**

### *Volunteer Degenkolb Engineers Offer Expert Advice*

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (Sept. 13, 2007)— After an 8.0 earthquake struck the coast of Central Peru on Aug. 15, killing more than 600 people, two experts from the nation's leading earthquake engineering firm spent eight days helping in recovery.

Degenkolb Engineers, which specializes in the design and seismic strengthening of buildings, sent associate principal Kent Yu and design engineer Liliana Pinto to Lima, immediately after the quake. Yu and Pinto worked along with a reconnaissance team from the Earthquake Engineering Research Institute of Oakland, Calif., to study the structural performance of the buildings and other engineered structures in the affected areas of Peru.

The engineers' focus was on hospitals and schools. They monitored how the buildings fared in terms of damage and mortality rates, and helped the people of Peru determine the safety of damaged buildings and whether the buildings were repairable, inhabitable, or would require demolition or reconstruction.

Besides making their recommendations to Peru officials, they will summarize their findings in two articles to be published in the Earthquake Engineering Research Institute's October newsletter.

"This experience has changed my perspective," Yu said. "It's helped me understand how to communicate with our clients and understand what's important to them. When we calculate and design in the office, we think about the consequences of natural disasters such as earthquakes, but to actually see the damage! This experience made me realize what's most important to people, and I will keep that in mind for the rest of my life when I do design."

During the eight-day reconnaissance trip, the engineers visited 10 cities and towns in Peru, including Lima, Cañete, Chincha Alta, San Clemente, Pisco, Ica, Chincha Baja, Paracas, San Andres, and Tambo De Mora. They concentrated their efforts on the inspection of three major hospitals and several schools. The preliminary observation report provided a basic overview of structural damage.

Established in 1940, Degenkolb Engineers is one of the nation's leading structural engineering firms in the design and seismic strengthening of buildings. Degenkolb offers comprehensive design, rehabilitation, and consulting services to architects, building owners, hospitals, educational institutions, corporations and government agencies. The firm has offices in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Oakland,

San Diego, Portland and Seattle. Degenkolb routinely leverages firm-wide experience, calling on support from any of its six U.S. offices to ensure technical excellence on all projects.