

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF GEOLOGY AND MINERAL INDUSTRIES

Vicki S. McConnell, State Geologist



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Today is the 312th anniversary of an Oregon-shaking event!

Portland, Oregon: Today marks the 312th anniversary of the last, great Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake to strike the Pacific Northwest.

Scientific research in Oregon, Washington, and Japan tells us that at 9:00 PM on January 26, 1700, a magnitude 9.0 earthquake, centered about 75 miles offshore, ruptured along a 600 mile long fault, running from Northern California to Southern British Columbia, causing untold damage and destruction to the Pacific Northwest coast and the Native American tribal communities that made the coast their home.

The destruction caused by the similar magnitude 9.0 earthquake and the tsunami it generated on March 11, 2011, offshore Japan provides a chilling parallel to what could happen here in Oregon.

“The geologic record of these great offshore earthquakes goes back at least 10,000 years,” said Ian Madin with the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries. “We know they occur about every 300 to 600 years, so it is a matter of when, not if, the next one will strike.”

Oregon coastal towns are the most vulnerable to a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake because of the devastating tsunami the earthquake generates as it ruptures the ocean floor. That’s why coastal communities from Brookings to Astoria are making emergency plans and continue to practice evacuation drills to help those living and working in the tsunami inundation zone - that area where ocean waves would push inland.

“We need all Oregonians to know that strong shaking felt on the coast means to evacuate immediately, and all coastal residents should know where to go and how to get there,” said Madin.

Beginning in 2009, many individuals and organizations have been working to make Oregon coastal communities aware and prepared through the Tsunami Outreach Oregon campaign. DOGAMI hires temporary employees to act as local tsunami champions to recruit volunteers, conduct door-to-door education campaigns, distribute maps and preparedness materials, and help communities conduct tsunami evacuation drills. This effort is aimed at building a sustainable, volunteer-based, tsunami mitigation effort in coastal communities. In this, DOGAMI collaborates with Oregon Emergency Management (OEM), local National Weather Service (NWS) offices, Tribes, Community

DOGAMI's mission is to provide earth science information and regulation to make Oregon safe and prosperous.

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Emergency Response Teams (CERT), K-12 schools, community colleges, and universities. The primary goal is to reduce loss of life and property damage from tsunamis.



To learn more about the 2011 Japan earthquake and tsunami and the lessons they provide for the Oregon coast, read the latest issue of *Cascadia*, DOGAMI's departmental newsletter:

<http://www.oregongeology.org/pubs/cascadia/CascadiaWinter2012.pdf>

For more information on tsunamis, visit www.OregonTsunami.org:

<http://www.oregongeology.org/tsuclearinghouse>

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The Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries is an independent agency of the State and has a broad responsibility in developing an understanding of the state's geologic resources and natural hazards. The Department then makes this information available to communities and individuals to help inform and reduce the risks from natural hazards, such as earthquakes, tsunamis, landslides, floods and volcanic eruptions. The Department assists in the formulation of state policy where an understanding of geologic materials, geologic resources, processes, and hazards is key to decision-making. The Department is also the lead state regulatory agency for mining, oil, gas and geothermal exploration, production and reclamation.

Learn more about Oregon's geology online: <http://www.OregonGeology.org>

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