

Cascadia Presentations - Friends in High Places

By Virginia "Jenny" Demaris, Emergency Manager Lincoln County, OR

Saturday's presentation at the Waldport Community Center was standing room only; 71 local community members came out to hear the realistic review of the potential impacts of a Cascadia event and how best to prepare.

Lincoln County Emergency Manager Jenny Demaris noted "One of the best outcomes of today's presentation was connecting community members who might not ever cross paths in their daily routines but by the end of the presentation they had formed a bond...friends in high places."

Betsy Johnson and Linda Behnke both live near each other in South Lincoln County but one is in the local tsunami inundation area and the other is on high ground. After the presentation it became very clear to Betsy, who will need to evacuate on foot for a local tsunami, that she may not have a home to return to nor a place where could she store her critical supplies in advance and shelter after she evacuates. Linda on the other hand, was interested in helping those around her that will need to evacuate the inundation area.



Cascadia Presentation attendees. Credit: Lincoln County, OR Sheriff's Office Emergency Management

Jenny Demaris brokered an introduction to the two ladies and suggested they should become tsunami buddies. Introductions and conversation began between the two and within minutes they had formulated a plan to be there for one another at their most vulnerable time.

The term "friends in high places" was generated over the past few years among local public safety representatives and Community Emergency Response Team members who regularly outreach to communities on Cascadia impacts and preparedness.

"The value of friends in high places is to preposition needed supplies for those who will need to evacuate to a location on high ground; this may be with a friend, family, neighbor or in the case of Betsy and Linda complete strangers who have formed a bond and commitment to help each other. As a public safety official and emergency planner I couldn't begin to describe the level of pride I have when our local outreach efforts pay off in such a way. The most effective way for our message to be heard and action taken to prepare is through community members talking to each other and encouraging our aware and prepared vision."

The Saturday Waldport presentation was co-sponsored by Sylvia Pauly, Financial Associate of Thrivent Financial Services. Thrivent Financial Services regularly promotes local outreach and community benefit programs. Sylvia provided an overview of the Map Your Neighborhood program, originated from the State of Washington and promoted throughout Oregon. Sylvia can be reached at Office: 541-579-6612.

More information on the Map Your Neighborhood program can be found at: <http://www.co.lincoln.or.us/emergencymanagement/page/plan-and-prepare-neighborhood-preparedness>.

Five more presentations are scheduled over the next few weeks and more will be scheduled in the future. The events are open to the public and free; contact Lincoln County Emergency Manager Jenny Demaris for more information. Presentation announcements for these events can be found on our County website at: www.co.lincoln.or.us/emergencymanagement.