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NEWS RELEASE

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Governor proclaims April as Earthquake and Tsunami Awareness Month

Portland, Oregon: Governor Kulongoski has proclaimed April as Earthquake and Tsunami Awareness Month, saying in his proclamation that, "Oregon suffered considerable damage from two small earthquakes in 1993 and a distant tsunami from Alaska in 1964, and scientific evidence indicates that the State of Oregon is at risk for a much larger and potentially more damaging earthquake and tsunami."

As a telling reminder that we live in earthquake country, several moderate earthquakes occurred offshore over the weekend. Earthquakes ranging in size from 5.0 to 1.9 were detected by the Pacific Northwest Seismograph Network (PNSN) over the course of 4 days starting Wednesday March 22nd. the earthquakes occurred along known seafloor faults.

"None of these earthquakes were felt, but it does help make the point that we need to be prepared for a potentially damaging earthquake and tsunami in the future, said James Roddey, Earth Sciences Information Officer with the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI). "We've just passed the 13th anniversary of the Spring Break Quake (magnitude 5.6, March 25, 1993) as well *and* we had a tsunami scare last summer, so there are plenty of reasons to get prepared."

"DOGAMI, Oregon Emergency Management (OEM) and other State Agencies are working on a number of ongoing earthquake and tsunami related initiatives that will help save lives in the event of a devastating earthquake and tsunami," said Vicki McConnell, State Geologist. "For DOGAMI, these include earthquake hazard mapping, establishing an enhanced seismograph network throughout the state and creating tsunami hazard maps and pamphlets for all coastal communities. Also, the State Legislature passed Senate Bill 2 in 2005, which directs DOGAMI to assess the earthquake safety of schools, colleges, police and fire stations and hospitals statewide. This assessment will provide valuable information to the Seismic Rehabilitation Grant Committee that will make available up to \$1.4 billion in voter approved bonds to communities to make these facilities safe from earthquakes."

DOGAMI has also been working with the Oregon University System (OUS) since 2004 to oversee the seismic upgrading of important university buildings across the state with \$6.8 million in grants from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Special events during April

Jay Wilson, Earthquake and Tsunami Coordinator with OEM notes that a number of communities across the state will be holding special drills, exercises and town halls during April. "Because earthquakes and tsunamis provide little or no warning before they strike, the month of April provides opportunities for Oregonians to practice drop, cover, and hold drills in their home or office and walk their tsunami evacuation routes in advance," said Wilson. "Also, On April 18th Coos County will be recognized as a **TsunamiReady Site by the National Weather Service**, joining Cannon Beach, Rockaway Beach, Nehalem, Manzanita, Wheeler, Seaside and Tillamook County. In addition, both the Governor and the Legislature have new task forces to look at readiness for a catastrophic Cascadia earthquake and resulting tsunami and other related natural disasters."

To better respond to a Katrina-scale event in the Pacific Northwest, and to improve Oregon's ability to respond to a catastrophic disaster, US federal agencies, the states of Oregon, Washington and California, and British Columbia will be jointly conducting an earthquake and tsunami exercise called **Pacific Peril, May 23-25 at Camp Rilea near Warrenton**. A tsunami risk seminar to discuss Oregon's tsunami risk and promote the importance of the Pacific Peril exercise will be held in Salem on April 25th.

You may contact James Roddey with DOGAMI for more information at 800 NE Oregon St., Portland, OR 97232, (971) 673-1543 or cell phone at (503) 807-8343.