

NEWS RELEASE

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF GEOLOGY AND MINERAL INDUSTRIES

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Please note these upcoming tsunami preparedness workshops:

- **Wednesday, August 2nd at 7 PM at the Clatsop County Fairgrounds Main Stage**
- **Thursday, August 3rd at 7PM at the Hatfield Science Center Auditorium, Newport**
- **Friday, August 4th at 11AM at the Waldport City Hall**

The importance of tsunami education for coastal residents and visitors

"Tsunami awareness and preparedness go hand in hand," notes Jay Wilson, Earthquake and Tsunami Program Coordinator with Oregon Emergency Management. "The recent tsunami in Java reminds us all of the importance of tsunami education for coastal residents and visitors. While many people along the Java coast felt the earthquake and noticed the ocean's signals of an imminent tsunami, some did not understand the danger and lost their lives."

"Even in a region that has suffered from the worst tsunami disaster in history, many people were complacent and unprepared because Java was considered at

low risk from a tsunami,” said James Roddey, Earth Sciences Information Officer with the Oregon Department of Geology. “There was also no warning system in place in Java and tragedy struck. There is that same sense of complacency by many people in harms way in Oregon, despite the attention being paid to the issue by communities up and down the coast.”

In Oregon and the Pacific Northwest, there is a tsunami detection system in place, but it’s only part of the warning process.

“While the tsunami observation network of buoys and tidal gauges with it’s extensive communication network allows forecasters at the Tsunami Warning Centers to monitor conditions and issue warnings, the public must know how to react to such warnings in order to complete an effective tsunami warning process,” said Tyree Wilde, Warning Coordination Meteorologist with NOAA’s National Weather Service in Portland. “Awareness, preparation and advance warning are vital factors in tsunami readiness and citizens living in coastal communities along the Oregon Coast, must understand the importance of moving to high ground or inland immediately in the event a tsunami occurs. The upcoming tsunami education workshops will help provide information on the tsunami threat and immediate actions necessary to stay safe.”

Tsunami Preparedness workshops are being held:

Wednesday, August 2nd at 7 PM at the Clatsop County Fairgrounds Main Stage

Thursday, August 3rd at 7PM at the Hatfield Marine Science Center Auditorium, Newport

Friday, August 4th at 11AM at the Waldport City Hall.

These workshops are sponsored by The National Weather Service ([NWS](#)), Oregon Emergency Management ([OEM](#)), [Clatsop County Emergency](#)

Management, Lincoln County Office of Emergency Management and The Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI).

“We’re trying to get the word out about tsunamis by holding workshops and working with local communities on education and preparedness plans, said Roddey. “Many communities are making a good effort at tsunami education, but most people still don’t really understand the risk. Scientists estimate that the chances of having a devastating magnitude 9+ earthquake and tsunami are about 15% in the next 50 years. To me those are scary odds and should be enough for anybody to start making plans. Having an individual or family emergency plan just makes sense, because unlike other natural disasters, such as hurricanes, you may only have minutes to save yourself.”

At the Clatsop County Fair, Brian Atwater from the US Geological Survey will be on hand. Atwater is one of the leading experts in the U.S. on tsunamis and the person who first discovered evidence that our Northwest coast has been hit repeatedly over the centuries with massive tsunami surges. In Newport and Waldport, George Priest from DOGAMI will discuss the latest research on modeling tsunamis and where the inundation line for our coast should or shouldn’t be.

At all 3 workshops will be Bruce Turner, Science Officer at the West Coast/Alaska Tsunami Warning Center, who will describe the tsunami warning system and the ongoing research being conducted to better enhance tsunami warning operations.

There will be handouts, evacuation brochures, and inundation maps. Each 2 hour workshop will include a brief panel discussion and local emergency managers and responders will be on hand to answer questions.

There is convincing evidence that massive tsunamis have struck the Oregon coast every 300 to 600 years, the last being associated with a great Cascadia earthquake in 1700 A.D. Smaller or 'distant' tsunami strike more often but can be destructive as well. The last distant tsunami was spawned by the Great Alaska Earthquake in 1964. 4 people were killed at Beverly Beach and 1 in Waldport.

"The Japanese have a culture of tsunami preparedness that has developed over centuries. The State of Hawaii has a stated goal of no deaths from tsunamis after suffering hundreds of deaths from them since the 1940's. We in Oregon have a long way to go on an issue that is still little understood by many. If we all start now to engage the public, I believe we can begin moving toward the goal Hawaii has set, but this has to include local and state government *and* the private sector," said Roddey.

For More information:

<http://www.stormready.noaa.gov/tsunamiready/>

<http://www.oregongeology.com/sub/earthquakes/Coastal/TsunamiIntro.htm>

<http://pubs.usgs.gov/circ/c1187/>

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