

**MEGAQUAKE:**  
Quake could happen at any time

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the Sisters-Camp Sherman Rural Fire Protection District. Dr. McKay detailed the geological and historical record that details the 1700 full-rip earthquake, and described the effects such a quake would have in modern Oregon.

The effects, as can be imagined, would be catastrophic on the coast, with massive damage from the shaking and from a likely tsunami, which would probably inundate many low-lying areas.

Emergency planners on the coast have identified rallying points and tsunami evacuation routes for the immediate aftermath of the quake, but the effects would be long-lasting, with a massive rescue and relief effort required to rescue and/or supply and sustain isolated populations along the coast.

Effects would be felt far inland, with significant damage in the Willamette Valley. Depending on the time of year, a megaquake could trigger multiple major landslides that could cut off highways through the Coast Range and the Cascades.

And many of the state's highway bridges would be rendered unusable — either heavily damaged or collapsed.

For Central Oregon, it is this disruption of

transportation and the ripple effects of damage elsewhere that will be the most significant effect of a full-scale Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake.

Direct damage from shaking is likely to be minor, according to Dr. McKay. But the people of Sisters Country are not insulated from the effects.

Jack McGowan of Sisters has been a long-time advocate of emergency preparedness and serves on the board of directors for Oregon Public Broadcasting, which recently broadcast a major series on the megaquake scenario titled "Unprepared."

Jim Cunningham of Sisters is the former commander of the Oregon Air National Guard and, as such, was recently briefed on the latest emergency plans for the aftermath of a megaquake.

He describes the planning as "a punch-list of missions" that are expected to be needed in the first 14 days after a catastrophic quake.

"The first two weeks is going to be the toughest portion," he said. "This is like a playbook."

Both urge local residents to prioritize their personal emergency preparedness (*see related column, page 18*).

Cunningham and McGowan agree that disruption of the fragile network of modern life is the area to focus on in Sisters Country.

"Our fuel supply will

be immediately cut off," McGowan said, noting that 90 percent of Central Oregon's fuel comes from a depot in Portland that will almost certainly sustain significant damage in a megaquake.

Damage to roads and bridges may make it difficult to deliver food supplies to local markets. And electrical power may be disrupted or shut down for an extended period of time.

There has been some concern expressed that Central Oregon might be inundated with refugees. Sgt. Nathan Garibay of the Deschutes County Sheriff's Office told first responders during their December training that it is unlikely that many people would be able to reach Central Oregon even if they desired to do so, at least not immediately. Roads will be damaged — and probably be closed to eastbound traffic to enable what help can be sent from the east to get to the hard-hit western part of the state.

However, he said, "I think we have to plan for some degree of displaced population coming into our communities."

Garibay also emphasized that power will be disrupted. "We're planning for at least seven days here locally," he said.

If the quake happens in the middle of winter, as the

1700 quake did, that could leave many local residents without their main source of heat. And electrical power is vital to keeping water supplies flowing, too.

But power may not be the most critical issue.

What should local folks prepare for?

**"I think the two biggest issues are going to be water and fuel."**  
— Jim Cunningham

"I think the two biggest issues are going to be water and fuel," Cunningham said.

Self-reliance will be critical to get through the immediate and long-term aftermath of a megaquake. Emergency responders will be busy, even if they are not sent to other parts of the state to help

quake victims.

Being prepared means you are not a burden on badly stretched emergency personnel.

Both men are quick to point out that preparedness does not mean bunkering-up and hunkering down. Carrying on will require neighborly support.

"If you are prepared, you can offer support to others," McGowan said.

That means having a supply of water, food (for pets as well as humans), cooking and heating capability and a supply of vital medications (*see story, page 31*).

A full-rip quake along the Cascadia Subduction Zone could happen today — or it could happen 50 years from now. There is no reason to live in fear of even such a catastrophic natural disaster — especially if you are prepared and know that you and your neighbors and your community are ready to weather the storm.

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