

OREGON

Earthquake readiness focus of proposed OR bill

Brown asks legislature to fund \$7.5 million in earthquake early warning system build out

■ **By Sam Stites**
Oregon Capital Bureau

Oregon would like to prepare 250,000 households to become self-sufficient following a catastrophic earthquake under legislation advancing in Salem. The legislation, Senate Bill 1537, also would double the number of monitors that would alert public officials to an earthquake. The proposals are the latest effort to prepare Oregonians for what scientists say is inevitable – a destructive earthquake in the Cascadia

Subduction Zone that would destroy buildings, roads and more. Some \$3 million is being requested by Gov. Kate Brown to fund “Two-week Ready Oregon” within the state Office of Emergency Management. The program would be administered by the Oregon Military Department and aims to give 250,000 Oregon households the supplies and expertise to be self-sufficient for two weeks following a natural disaster. That means having enough food, water, first-aid supplies and other emergency items to keep a household functioning for two weeks. The legislation, pending before the Legislature’s budget committee, would build out Oregon’s ShakeAlert system, a network of seismic monitoring stations administered by the U.S. Geological Survey along the Pacific

Coast. The network extends from northern California to British Columbia and feeds into similar programs at CalTech, the University of California, Berkeley, and University of Washington. ShakeAlert monitors seismic activity and allows the Geological Survey to alert counties, cities, utility companies and others before shaking from an earthquake begins. It gives people time to methodically take shelter rather than scrambling in a panic. It also allows utilities to take precautions and shut down critical infrastructure that could be damaged by shaking. A total of \$7.5 million would be allocated the network, which currently has around 120 sensors located across the Willamette Valley and Oregon coast. The goal is to set up 250 sensors in Oregon by 2023. A team from the University of Oregon would install and

monitor the stations. Eight team members at UO work to install new stations in the field and monitor activity. That includes One of those on the team is Professor Doug Toomey, seismologist, geophysicist and one of the pioneers of in the use of ocean-bottom seismology. “One of the remarkable aspects about the project is how collaborative and well distributed it has been over its development,” Toomey said. “The University of Oregon actually has one of the stronger seismology departments on the West Coast with five active seismologists.” According to Toomey, the benefit of ShakeAlert is its impact on protecting public safety not only in Oregon, but along the entire earthquake zone. “If you think of the impacts we have locally in terms of helping people and helping



Prof. Doug Toomey is one of the foremost seismologists on the west coast and oversees the University of Oregon’s ShakeAlert program.
Photo courtesy Oregon State University

a water utility save water by shutting off valves, that’s multiplied by many hundreds along the West Coast,” he said. “Funding from the state is critical not only just for Oregon, but our performance within ShakeAlert

impacts the resiliency of California, Washington and British Columbia.” Also packed within the bill are provisions that would review dam safety across the state and update the state’s resilience plan.

Two unrelated deaths at Meadows this week

■ **By Emily Fitzgerald**
The Hood River News

Two unrelated deaths were reported from Mt. Hood Meadows over the extended holiday weekend: 45-year-old Ryan Zeitner from Portland, and 47-year-old Tim Bauters from Sunnyvale, Calif. Both deaths occurred near Heather Canyon: A posted double-black diamond, or “extremely difficult” area. “Our thoughts dwell on the families. These are tragic incidents,” said Meadows General Manager Greg Pack. Zeitner suffered a snowboarding fall in the Heather Canyon area on Feb. 16. Nobody witnessed Zeitner’s

initial fall, according to Pack, but eyewitnesses reported seeing Zeitner sliding down the steep terrain, and nearby volunteer patrollers got him out quickly. Zeitner was pronounced dead shortly after medics arrived on the scene and performed life-saving efforts. The Hood River County Sheriff’s Office (HRC SO) was dispatched at 11:17 a.m. At approximately 1:45 p.m. the next day, 47-year-old Tim Bauters from Sunnyvale, Calif., was reported missing. Bauters’ family advised HRC SO that he had been in Oregon for an extended work trip and failed to arrive back in California as planned. Meadows Ski Patrol was

notified by a guest on Friday, Feb. 14, that they witnessed an individual (later identified as Bauters) enter into a roped-off closed area in Heather Canyon. Two separate patrollers were dispatched immediately, said Pack, but neither were able to make contact, or see any evidence of the witnessed account, according to a Meadows press release. Bauters was believed to be snowboarding alone, was reportedly in good shape, and had gone to Meadows multiple times while on his work trip, according to HRC SO. Meadows security was able to verify that his rental vehicle was still on site, and a record of Bauters’ lift scans narrowed

down a last known time and location. On Monday, HRC SO Search & Rescue aircraft was launched and Meadows Ski Patrol began searching the likely area. At approximately 6:15 p.m., HRC SO received a call from Meadows that Bauters’ body had been located in the Heather Canyon area. HRC SO has stated that both incidents are under investigation, and that no further information is available at this time. Meadows is conducting a separate internal investigation, and has notified the Oregon Department of Forestry. “Our deepest sympathies are with his family at this time,” said Pack. “Our team takes extensive measures to protect

our skiers and riders from the natural hazards that exist in this extreme terrain; unfortunately, in this tragic situation, the rider was found inside a closed area, established by a rope line.” Meadows’ initial investigations reveal that neither incident was related to conditions, Pack said, and that they were confident the conditions were adequate when they opened over the weekend. “We’re really aggressive on how we manage that terrain,” he said. “The skiing conditions were appropriate, and we had a lot of people back there.” The last death at Meadows occurred back in March 2017, when a Steve Leavitt, 57, from

The Dalles went missing near Heather Canyon and, after eight days of search and rescue efforts, his body was found near the bottom of the Heather Chair Lift. The Heather Canyon area is posted as a double black diamond difficulty and, as with Clark Canyon and Private Reserve, access is available via RFID access gates only. Meadows states that these areas are not patrolled on a regular basis and that avalanche risk exists at all times, along with other dangers. Pack recommended that skiers exercise caution, ski with a buddy, and not ski above a level they’re comfortable with.

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