

5.0 earthquake shook Puget Sound Saturday



SEATTLE (AP) — The strongest earthquake to hit the Puget Sound region in 30 years caused plenty of jitters but no serious damage or injuries. It was a jarring reminder that the Pacific Northwest is prime earthquake country, scientists say.

The magnitude 5.0 quake struck at 7:11 p.m. Saturday and was centered 10-15 miles south-southwest of Seattle. It was felt as far north as Vancouver Island in Canada, as far south as Salem, west to the Olympic Peninsula and east to Yakima.

The tremor wasn't strong enough to cause any major damage. But it rattled plenty of nerves.

"It started shaking the whole trailer," said Scott Shabaz, who lives near Federal Way, about 20 miles south of the epicenter. "I have a rude friend that comes by once in a while and likes to do that with his truck."

On Vashon Island, close to the epicenter, Tristan Ruegamer, 19, was in his car when the quake hit.

"It felt like someone was standing behind my car and shaking it," he said. "We freaked out because we thought somebody was shaking the car."

The quake shattered a few store windows, knocked groceries off shelves and carved some minor hairline cracks along the walls of two aging brick fire stations in Tacoma.

In Seattle, the Kingdome, which was hosting a fishing and hunting show, was closed 45 minutes early as a

precaution but no structural damage was found.

The state Department of Transportation on Monday planned to send crews to inspect bridges and highways in the region but no structural damage is expected, said Myint Lwin, bridge and structures engineer for the state.

The state's newer bridges are designed to withstand quakes as strong as magnitude 7.5 and even the older bridges are likely to survive a magnitude 5 quake unscathed, Lwin said.

Ruth Ludwin, a research scientist with the University of Washington seismology lab, said the quake occurred less than 10 miles from the earth's surface. Aftershocks of up to magnitude 4.0 can be expected for months.

At least two minor aftershocks, neither of which could be felt, were recorded late Saturday night.

The tremor was the strongest to hit the Seattle area since a 6.5 earthquake struck on April 29, 1965. That quake injured at least 31 people and caused an estimated \$12.5 million in property damage.

In 1949, a 7.1 quake centered near Olympia killed eight people and rained bricks and debris onto city streets.

The 1949 and 1965 quakes were much deeper and originated within the subducting Juan de Fuca plate, a huge, thick slab of rock that is pushing under North America, Ludwin said. Saturday's quake was a "crustal" quake, occurring closer to the surface within the crust of the overlying North American plate.

Orphanages may be revived

PORTLAND (AP) — Talk of reviving the orphanage as a social institution appears to be gaining some support from people who grew up without parents, including state Attorney General Ted Kulongoski.

Kulongoski spent 10 years in a Missouri orphanage, beginning as a 4-year-old in the 1940s, because his widowed mother couldn't care for him.

Resorting to an orphanage to care for children from broken families drew loud criticism nationally when it was first suggested by the new Republican leader of Congress, House Speaker Newt Gingrich.

However, some Democrats like Kulongoski find themselves agreeing that an orphanage may not be a bad idea for some older children for whom adoption is unlikely.

"Kids need someplace where there is some structure, discipline and someone who looks after their interests and is on their side," Kulongoski said.

Some child welfare advocates have painted the proposal as nothing more than institutional warehousing of poor children, calling it heartless, costly and ineffective.

But others say that government, churches and nonprofit agencies can no longer cope with a rising tide of children from homes disrupted by drugs, alcohol or violence.

"In reality, there are so many families who are

past our ability to help them," said John S. Powell, supervisor of the Multnomah County juvenile corrections unit.

One 17-year-old Portland boy who spent years in the foster care system before landing in a state Children's Services Division teen group home, says he's convinced an orphanage could have helped.

"It would have made a difference. I'd know what was going to happen to me every day," said the teenager, whose name was withheld to protect his privacy.

Still, some critics reject orphanages, saying they are too expensive or fail to provide emotional support.

"Little tiny kids don't do well in that sort of institutional setting," said Ben de Haan, a former CSD administrator who now heads Child Welfare Partnership, a public-private group studying child abuse issues.

"Placement in ma-and-pa foster care works a lot better," he said.

Gingrich has praised Boys Town, the successful Nebraska-based residential center, as a model orphanage. However, critics of orphanages note that it costs more than \$40,000 a year to care for one child at Boys Town.

During the 1993-95 budget cycle, Oregon budgeted \$45 million for residential foster care.

Portland light rail tunnel delayed

PORTLAND (AP) — The 281-foot machine that's drilling a commuter rail tunnel through the city's West Hills is supposed to punch through 70 feet of rock on a good day.

These days, the \$5 million machine — nicknamed "Bore-Regard" — is lucky to plod through 12 feet. Late last year, before adjustments were made, it was getting through only 4 feet daily.

The result is a \$25 million cost overrun and a 10-month delay in the \$944 million project to bring light rail to Portland's western suburbs. And it's just the latest in a series of headaches for Tri-Met, officially known as the Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District.

Tri-Met planners envision clean-running, smooth-riding Metropolitan Area Express trains carrying passengers to

downtown Portland from all four directions.

A 15-mile MAX route from the eastern suburb of Gresham to downtown Portland opened in 1986 and attracts about 25,000 riders a day. That project came in \$7.6 million under budget.

The 18-mile line stretching from downtown to suburban Hillsboro is the second leg. Lines south to Oregon City and north to Vancouver, Wash., are still in the planning stage.

The westside project encountered few problems until it came to "The Tunnel."

Rather than run the tracks over the scenic West Hills, planners decided to go through them, with two parallel tunnels 3 miles long and 21 feet wide.

A year ago, nighttime blasts woke up residents at the tunnel's west portal, forcing Tri-

Met to build a sound-muffling curtain.

At the east tunnel opening near Washington Park, Tri-Met chose to break ground at the foot of a wooded hillside for aesthetic reasons. But it turned out to be above an ancient creekbed, which required extra shoring that ate up time and money.

The agency also had to pay to relocate about a dozen coffins from a cemetery that lies above the tunnel path after family members objected to the disruption.

He was referring to Murphy's Law, which says anything that can go wrong, will.

"The problem is about as dire as it can get," Tri-Met spokeswoman Amy Carlsen said as she stood ankle-deep in muck at the tunnel's east portal on a recent rainy day.

Officials argue over effects of expensive jails

OLYMPIA (AP) — Grandview Mayor Jesse Palacios was disappointed when Grays Harbor was picked over his town for a new state prison and its 635 new jobs.

Not to worry, though, the mayor reflected last week after hearing the news. The state's 14th prison complex, a \$160 million facility to hold 1,936 inmates, will not be the last.

"And we'll be in line for the next one if that's what the City Council wants," Palacios says.

Prisons chief Chase Riveland agreed with Palacios on both points. There will be more prisons built and Grandview is an excellent site for one.

But while Palacios salivates at the prospect, Riveland gets heartburn over the public's apparent appetite for more prisons to accommodate tougher sentences passed by the Legislature and citizens. He contrasts that with the public's matching appetite for taxes reductions and less government and wonders when the collision will come.

"The collision will come very soon, and we as a society will have to start making some tough choices," predicts Senate Majority Leader Marcus Gaspard, D-Puyallup.

Every town's gain is a drain on state taxpayers, and Riveland wonders where the state will find the money to continue build-

ing and operating prisons. They now hold about 11,000 people and are expected to house 14,000 by decade's end.

Conservatives talk of squeezing fat from other state agencies to finance prison costs, but Riveland scoffs at that. "The ubiquitous fat we talk about, I just don't see it," he says.

"The real savings could be in dealing with some people in ways other than prisons, but we're dealing in symbols, not reality. We just aren't able to give our elected officials permission to put reality ahead of rhetoric," he says.

Riveland, and his boss, Gov. Mike Lowry, want elected officials to start paying heed to what Riveland says is "excellent research" showing that some offenders — thieves, drug users — "can be successfully treated in the community" and make room in prison for violent predators to spend more time.

Riveland notes that drug offenders are the fastest growing segment of the prison population. Before 1987, drug offenders accounted for 4 percent of the population. Now they account for 25 percent, thanks largely to 1989 legislation toughening sentences for drug crimes.

House Law and Justice Chairman Mike Padden, R-Spokane, is among people who see the growth of inmate populations as

good news, not bad. It means, he and others say, that the Legislature is succeeding in its war against crime.

Padden says the way to go is to keep squeezing criminals and search for ways to cut costs. They could include permitting the private sector to build and operate prisons with an estimated savings of seven percent to 10 percent.

"I don't agree that prison costs have to be as high as they are," Padden says. Moreover, he adds, Riveland's view that too many people are in prison doesn't square with the public view. People want tougher sentences and are ready to pay the cost, Padden says.

"We will find the money," House Corrections Chairwoman Ida Ballasiotes, R-Mercer Island, said at a hearing on a new initiative to toughen sentences for gun crimes.

Senate Minority Leader Dan McDonald, R-Bellevue, says all the cost estimates fail to factor in something else — the savings to victims and the justice system when criminals are behind bars instead of out committing crimes.

Senate budget chief Nita Rinehart, D-Seattle, says she believes the public eventually will come down somewhere in the middle of the debate once they have all the information.

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