

Hotels have 'mixed emotions' about tsunami plan

By KATHERINE LACAZE
EO Media Group

SEASIDE —The city of Seaside is making an effort to inform visitors about the risk of a tsunami and arm them with instructions for how to respond.

One of the means for disseminating that information is through sleeves for hotel room keys, a method that has been met with mixed responses from guests, according to several hotel managers.

Each sleeve states, "If you feel an earthquake, a tsunami may follow" and gives instructions to first, drop, cover and hold on during the earthquake; second, move inland quickly or use a local, evacuation route; and lastly, wait for an official "all clear" before returning to the beach.

The city started distributing the key sleeves during Seaside Fire Department safety inspections late last fall. Facilities have the option to incorporate the sleeves into their safety plan.

Among the hotels using them so far are the Hi-Tide Resort, the Rivertide Suites, the Ebb Tide Resort and the Sand & Sea Condominium.

Some businesses have totally embraced the program and the idea of the key sleeves, while others have expressed concern and have mixed emotions, Seaside Fire Division Chief Chris Dugan said.



Debra Hudson, manager of the Hi-Tide Resort, agreed. While she appreciates the city offering the key cards at no charge, the response from hotel guests has been mostly negative. For out-of-town customers who are unaware of the risk, being greeted up front with a tsunami warning while on vacation can be unnerving, she said. The patrons often will gasp or respond with anxiety, she said. No one has been appreciative of the warning, although she believes the key cards are effective for increasing awareness.

"It's kind of a catch-22," Hudson said.

She's gone through two cases of the sleeves and has requested more, but with business picking up for the late spring and summer months, she is unsure whether she'll continue to use them.

Mary Vellutini, general manager of Sand & Sea, said they haven't experienced a similar negative reaction.

"Basically, I think the public is informed enough about Seaside and the chance of the tsunami," she said.

Finding a balance between

enticing visitors to come to Seaside and enjoy their vacation and also spreading the word about potential hazards, such as earthquakes and tsunamis, "is something this community is always going to have a challenge with," Dugan said.

Over the slower winter months, Sand & Sea has not distributed that many key sleeves, but with business picking up, Vellutini believes they'll start using more. She thinks they will be effective in bringing more attention to a potential tsunami event and helping visitors feel prepared.

"Any little bit of information will help them in case we do have a tsunami," she said.

The hotel also has binders in each unit with a page about tsunamis that provide evacuation instructions and maps. Additionally, staff is trained to direct people toward appropriate evacuation routes.

Some hotels decided not to use the key sleeves. Best Western declined, citing a corporate policy that prohibits using any other key envelope but the ones corporate approves. Worldmark by Wyndham already has an evacuation plan that incor-

porates directing people to the facility's parking structure, said Jon Rahl, director of tourism for the Seaside Visitors Bureau.

The big picture

The key sleeves are the main feature of the Seaside's new awareness initiative for hospitality industries, which started last spring when the Clatsop County Emergency Manager told the city funds from the Oregon Office of Emergency Management were available.

The city is using the fire department to distribute the sleeves, Rahl said, because the agency already has regular safety contact with hospitality workers during annual inspections.

Other products have been developed by the state as part of a separate Oregon Coast Visitor Tsunami Awareness project. Those products, which are available free of charge to hospitality groups, include Living on Shaky Ground magazine in English and Spanish, a two-sided poster on earthquakes and tsunamis, a printable table tent with information and an Oregon Tsunami Waves video that can be played on in-room television channels.

"I think not just this one thing is going to be a cure all, but I think it's a cooperation or coalition between all entities," Dugan said. "At least it gets people talking about it."

For information, call the Seaside Visitors Bureau at 503-738-3097.



Clatsop CASA needs volunteers

Training starts next week

Community members who have a few hours a month to improve the life of a child, and are able to be objective, make commitments and speak out on behalf of vulnerable children, are needed to become Clatsop Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs). Volunteer training, which takes

place at Clatsop Community College, is from 6 to 9 p.m., starting April 15, and continues for six weeks.

Participants will gain understanding of the law and child welfare system dealing with child abuse and neglect; child development, attachment, permanence and resiliency; substance abuse; domestic violence; and other issues which affect children's safety.

Upon successful comple-

tion of training, participants will be appointed by the court to advocate for the best interests of one or more children in foster care, with the support and guidance of CASA staff.

Volunteer application packets are available for download online at www.clatsop-casa.org. Call 503-338-6063 or email casa@clatsopcasa.org for information on CASA and its services to children.

Student choreographers show off talent

The Little Ballet Theatre Choreographers Showcase, featuring Little Ballet Theatre company members who are presenting their own creative choreography, takes place at 7:30 p.m. Friday at the Liberty Theater.

The dancers, ranging in age from 10 to 18, have the opportunity each season, to create their own dances, selecting music of their

choice, and designing their own costume. They appear before a panel of adjudicators the week before the showcase, who critique them on the staging, technique, music and costume in relation to the choreography.

There are 15 choreographers on the program, plus some selected faculty-choreographed pieces, includ-

ing a medley from "Cats," lyrical dances and hip-hop, with choreographers Carleta Lewis-Allen, Emily Madsen and Alice Thompson.

Tickets are available at the door, starting at 7 p.m., and cost \$10 for general admission or \$5 for seniors and children younger than 12. For information, call 503-861-1971.

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