

# Megaquake: About 800 soldiers practiced rescue operations

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At Camp Rilea in Warrenton, the staff at the County Emergency Operations Center practiced communicating and coordinating efforts with local agencies and military personnel.

The team leveraged social media for the first time during an exercise, and conducted successful ham radio operations with everyone they'd intended to — including Arch Cape and a citizen in Lewis & Clark — plus some they hadn't: Federal Emergency Management Agency Region X headquarters in Bothell, Washington, and Pacific County Emergency Management.

In addition, they used the county mass notification system, ClatsopALERTS!, to communicate with other participants in the training exercise, notify community leaders that the EOC had been activated, and advised Arch Cape and Falcon Cove residents that the military would be conducting aerial assessments in their area.

These latest measures follow steps the county has taken to raise awareness of Cascadia, including the installation of signs directing people out of the tsunami zone and local high schools adding Community Emergency Response Team training to the curriculum.

"We only have so many resources to throw at this, and I think we're moving in the right direction in terms of whole community planning," she said.

"There's also no end to the list of things that we need to be looking at, improving upon."



Erick Bengel/The Daily Astorian

Soldiers from the Kentucky Army National Guard practice moving a reinforced concrete block with metal bars and woodblocks at Camp Rilea's Cascadia Rising disaster training site.

## 'Cycle of improvement'

How did communication between the county's emergency operations center and military personnel go during Cascadia Rising?

"It went great," Brown told a group of local officials and community leaders touring the military base Thursday. "Did it go like we thought it was going to? Yes and no. We knew there would be problems talking to one another, systems that didn't jive. But that's the nature of exercising."

Most of those problems happened on the first day, before the teams had found their "battle rhythm," she said.

"When it came time to send our requests to the state, the way we had practiced and understood that it would be happening was not the way it ended up happening, and it took us several hours to sort of readjust and get that moving in

the right direction," she later elaborated. "And it's no one's fault, it's just the way things played out that morning that weren't anticipated."

Sometimes a communication hiccup boiled down to human error. Other times it was a technical difficulty, like a nonfunctioning fax machine.

"You can have all the systems and the plans and the latest and greatest equipment, but, at the end of the day, you still have human beings running it," she said.

Making mistakes and figuring out how to correct them is precisely the point of training exercises, she said: "Mistakes are good in this world. And it's counterintuitive to a lot of people, but mistakes are what we're looking for."

"We write a plan, we exercise it to identify the gaps and vulnerabilities, we take corrective action, we update our

plan, we exercise our plan, and we continue that," she said, "and, in this way, it's a continuous cycle of improvement."

Meanwhile, the agencies build relationships and get used to working together under pressure.

"If you participate in an exercise, you always have the opportunity to improve relationships," she said. "That may be the most important thing that comes from them in many cases."

## Disaster relief

During Cascadia Rising, about 800 soldiers comprising a dozen military teams assembled at Camp Rilea and ran through a series of simulated rescue operations, including saving people in a collapsed inner city.

After touring the County Emergency Operations Center, some local leaders — and a few international dignitar-



Erick Bengel/The Daily Astorian

A triaged earthquake "victim" unable to walk awaits medical care at Camp Rilea during Cascadia Rising, a four-day series of exercises intended to prepare local and state agencies for the "Big One."

ies from partner agencies in Vietnam and Bangladesh — headed to the training site to observe the mechanics of a relief effort.

The VIPs witnessed National Guard soldiers moving and breaking up heavy boulders from a rubble pile to reach victims; attending to wounded or deceased (played by actors in Hollywood-style makeup) at a casualty collection site; checking the area for chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive materials while decontaminating people suspected of facing exposure; and triaging and treating the survivors.

Maj. Gen. Michael Stencil, the adjutant general of Oregon, told local leaders — including Astoria Mayor Arline LaMear, Gearhart Mayor Dianne Widdop and Cannon Beach Mayor Sam Steidel — that under the worst-case scenario, a 9.0 earthquake, most life-saving efforts in the first 36 to 72 hours will depend on local responders, able-bodied citizens and well-prepared neighbors.

"We expect that the casualty rate's going to be phenomenal, and even a lot of your firemen ... aren't going to be there right away," he said. "We don't know what the condition's going to be for your hospitals and their ability to take patients."

Though outside forces will come, the mobilization may take a while, he said. "They're going to be anxious to get here, but it's going to be a struggle."

Stencil asked the officials to do everything they can to help their citizens prepare for Cascadia.

Compared to Japan — a country that had spent about 50 years preparing for an earthquake and tsunami, yet lost more than 15,000 people during the 2011 disaster — "we're behind the curve," Brown said.

"We just need to do more of this," she said. "And my hope in all of this, despite what anyone did or didn't learn in the exercise, is that it helps them recognize the importance of it, and makes them want to do more of it."



Edward Stratton/The Daily Astorian

Jesse Miller, left, and Alex Autio are Clatsop Community College's Students of the Year.

## Students: 'It's the best feeling in the world, knowing that I will be able to be the role model she deserves'

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Then Miller said he spiraled downward between 2009 and 2012, becoming addicted to drugs. "It was just choosing the wrong people to hang out with," he said.

Miller said he was sentenced to three years in prison for committing identity theft to support his habit. He spent time at East Oregon Correctional Institute in Pendleton, Mill Creek Correctional Facility in Salem and South Fork Forest Camp near Tillamook.

"The South Fork Forest Camp was a very good transition for me and a lot of other people in my situation," said Miller, who worked trails and fought fires alongside other inmates in the minimum-security camp.

The Christmas before he was released, his aunt and uncle Mary Jean and Jon Englund of Astoria visited Miller and offered him a place to stay away from his bad influences.

"We were hopeful," Mary Jean Englund said of why the couple extended the offer. "We knew he had the drive."

Miller, who said moving to Astoria was a life-saving

decision, was released in May 2015. He hit the ground running, taking a full-time job at Bio-Oregon, saving up money and finding his own apartment the summer before he started college, where he has another year to earn an associate's degree in welding. Since rejoining school, Miller said he has earned straight As every term, after never having earned an A in any grade before.

Miller would like to join the boilermakers' union, and eventually counsel others in the same situations he's faced. He's also waiting for his first child, a daughter, who he said is due on the Fourth of July.

"It's the best feeling in the world, knowing that I will be able to be the role model she deserves," he said. "It's just heartwarming."

## Leaving home

Autio, 20, said he didn't know what to expect from college after a lifetime of home schooling, but was pleasantly surprised.

"We have a good academic community," he said. "We're really friendly with each other and supportive. Being in home school became an

advantage for me, something to be proud of."

While at college, he enmeshed himself in the campus arts and literary scene, being published in and helping design RAIN Magazine, the college's literary publication, and traveling.

"Having Alex in classes for the past two years has elevated the educational experience for all of his peers," said writing instructor Nancy Cook, who oversees the magazine. "I feel really grateful to be his teacher."

Autio graduates Friday and heads to Oregon State University, where he will major in business administration and minor in music. An avid musician, Autio said he would like to marry his love of the arts with the business world and be able to support the family business, Autio Co., a food processor manufacturer, if need be.

## JUNE 18 to JULY 3, 2016 ASTORIA MUSIC FESTIVAL

### FIRST WEEKEND

CELEBRITY SOLOISTS OPENING MATINEE  
Saturday, June 18 at 4:00PM

FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA GALA OPENING  
Saturday, June 18 @ 7:30PM

SYMPHONIC SUNDAY MATINEE with THE RED VIOLIN  
Sunday, June 19 @ 4:00PM



### MID-WEEK MUSIC

BACH BY CANDLELIGHT  
Tuesday, June 21 @ 7:30PM  
Grace Episcopal Church

3 LEG TORSO  
Wednesday, June 22 @ 7:30PM

"CITY GIRL" CLASSIC SILENT FILM WITH LIVE MUSIC  
Thursday, June 23 @ 7:30PM

### SECOND WEEKEND

CHAMBER MUSIC with CARY LEWIS and the FESTIVAL ALL-STARS  
Friday, June 24 @ 7:30PM

HAPPY HOUR with SERGEY and FRIENDS  
Saturday, June 25 @ 4:00PM

SYMPHONIC SHOWCASE  
Saturday, June 25 @ 7:30PM

VERDI'S IL TROVATORE  
Sunday, June 26 @ 4:00PM



### YOUNG ARTISTS WEEK

FESTIVAL CHAMBER PLAYERS  
Wednesday, June 29 @ 7:30PM  
Venue: Astoria Masonic Center, 1572 Franklin Avenue

LITTLE WOMEN  
Friday, July 1 @ 7:30PM  
Saturday, July 2 @ 2:00PM  
in the Clatsop Community College Performing Arts Center

### SPECIAL COMMUNITY EVENTS

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- NORTH COAST SYMPHONIC BAND "AMERICAN HEROES"

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