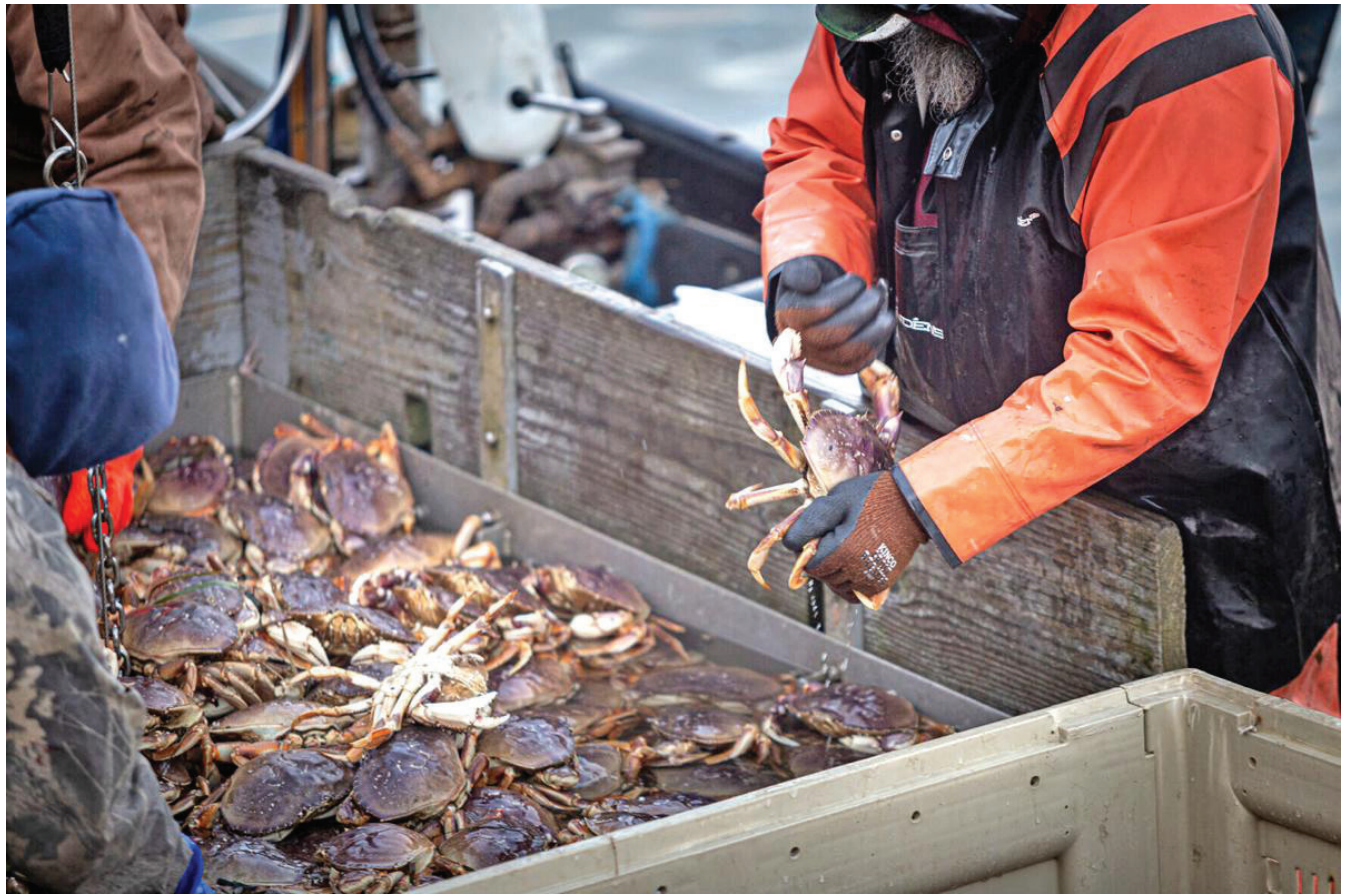


CRAB HIT THE DOCKS



Luke Whittaker/Chinook Observer

Commercial fishermen offload their catch in Nahcotta.

IN BRIEF

Authorities investigate death of inmate at county jail

Authorities are investigating the death of an inmate at the Clatsop County Jail.

Jay Christopher Jamieson, 38, died Friday at about 2:10 p.m. at Columbia Memorial Hospital in Astoria. An autopsy conducted by the state medical examiner on Saturday found Jamieson died of natural causes.

Jamieson was booked at the jail on Thursday night on charges of unlawful delivery of heroin, unlawful delivery of a controlled substance to a minor, child neglect in the first degree and endangering the welfare of a minor after a search warrant was served on his residence in Warrenton.

The death is being investigated by the Clatsop County Major Crime Team.

— *The Astorian*

State Route 401 landslide repair could take months

NASELLE, Wash. — Repairing the landslide damage between Naselle and Megler is likely to keep State Route 401 closed for an extended period of time, a Washington State Department of Transportation spokeswoman said.

The state route serves as the most direct link between Astoria and Naselle. The closure means having to take U.S. Highway 101 around the edge of Willapa Bay, roughly doubling the commuting time.

The landslide, one of several in the area caused by heavy rainfall, began taking a bite out of the route above the old Knappton Mill site on Feb. 22.

Pam Shipp, a resident who has documented the slide with her photographs, was among the first to encounter it during her evening commute. “I bottomed out and almost lost control of my car, heading over the embankment. Thought I’d run over a body! Went back and found the highway separating and sliding. Called the cops,” Shipp said on her Facebook page.

Some sections of roadway moved 3 feet in less than 24 hours. The Dismal Nitch Rest Area just east of the Astoria Bridge is also closed until further notice.

“The damage is significant and will require extensive repairs that will likely take months,” the Department of Transportation said.

— *Chinook Observer*

Two seats open on Fair Board

Clatsop County is seeking applicants for two vacant seats on the county Fair Board.

The board meets on the first Tuesday of each month and is responsible for the management of the Clatsop County Fair & Expo and organizing the annual county fair.

The positions are for two unexpired terms ending in December 2023. To apply, visit the county’s website or the county manager’s office at 800 Exchange St., Suite 410, in Astoria.

The county Board of Commissioners will make the appointments.

County seeking applications for Arts Council vacancy

Applications are being accepted for a vacancy on the Arts Council of Clatsop County.

The council’s mission is to support, promote and advocate for the arts and culture.

The vacancy is for a term ending December 2022. To apply, visit the county’s website or the county manager’s office at 800 Exchange St., Suite 410, in Astoria.

The county Board of Commissioners will make the appointment.

— *The Astorian*

ON THE RECORD

DUII

• Wilmer Rudolph Bottoms, 54, was arrested Sunday near the Peter Iredale beach access at Fort Stevens State Park for driving under the influence of intoxicants.

• Christopher Steven Garrison, 63, of Seaside, was arrested Saturday off

of Ridge Road in Warrenton for DUII.

• Richard Joseph Hodges, 57, of Silver Lake, Washington, was arrested Friday near Greenwood Village in Warrenton for DUII, interfering with a peace officer and attempting to elude a police officer.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

TUESDAY

Seaside Community Center Commission, 10 a.m., Bob Chisholm Community Center, 1225 Avenue A.

Clatsop County Board of Commissioners, noon, work session, (electronic meeting).

Port of Astoria Commission, 4 p.m., (electronic meeting).

Seaside Library Board of Directors, 4:30 p.m., (electronic meeting).

Seaside Planning Commission, 6 p.m., (electronic meeting).

WEDNESDAY

Warrenton Urban Renewal Advisory Committee, 3:30 p.m., Warrenton City Hall, 225 S. Main Ave.

Warrenton-Hammond School District Board, 6 p.m., work session, (electronic meeting).

Gearhart City Council, 7 p.m., (electronic meeting).

THURSDAY

Astoria Review Commission, 5:30 p.m., City Hall, 1095 Duane St.

Seaside Parks Advisory Committee, 6 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

the Astorian

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Earthquake alerts coming to smartphones with ShakeAlert app

By TOM BANSE
Northwest News Network

Smartphone users who opted in to a test of the West Coast earthquake early warning system got an early taste on Thursday of what is to come. Mobile phones from Seattle to Olympia in Washington state blared with an alarm for imaginary incoming shaking. The earthquake warning system — already operational in California — will launch for the general public in Oregon on March 11 and statewide in Washington in May.

The earthquake early warning system is known as ShakeAlert. It doesn’t predict earthquakes. It’s designed to give a heads up about shaking coming from an earthquake that is underway. It works because electronic signals travel much faster than rumbling spreads through the earth’s surface.

After many years in development, the U.S. Geological Survey and its state partners say they are ready to let ShakeAlert issue automated mass public warnings in the Pacific Northwest. Thursday’s targeted public test in western Washington showcased the potential and excitement for the system as well as the fact that there are still some glitches to work out.

“That’s it. Got it!” said Harold Tobin, director of Pacific Northwest Seismic Network, proudly holding up his smartphone to show viewers who joined a ShakeAlert test watch party that the alert came through seconds after transmission.

“Lovely!” enthused event moderator Mariah Jenkins of the U.S. Geological Survey, before other watch party participants piped up with their confirmations.

The ShakeAlert test used the same warning tones and distribution system as Amber Alerts, so the conversation was interspersed with the sounds of blaring alarms as the test message propagated across the cellular networks of King, Pierce and Thurston counties.

But at least a third of the participants in Tobin’s breakout room of the Zoom watch party didn’t get the test alarm or got it too late to be useful.

“A minute later and I still haven’t got my notification,” said a Seattle area man who opted into the test.

“I haven’t got mine either,” a woman who joined the event replied.

What to do

If the region experiences a moderate to strong quake



ShakeAlert

Oregon and Washington state are on the cusp of launching an earthquake alerting system for the public.

in the near future, a successful alert will say basically, “Earthquake detected! Drop, cover, hold on. Protect yourself.”

“This just gives you a few seconds of warning so that you can get to your safe area much quicker,” said Althea Rizzo, who works on earthquake preparedness at the Oregon Office of Emergency Management.

“What we recommend people do is drop, cover and hold on until the shaking stops. Then, if you are in the tsunami inundation zone on the coast, to start evacuating,” Rizzo said.

“If you’re driving in a car, the appropriate action would

Then there’s the private company in Southern California behind a free downloadable app called QuakeAlertUSA. Its version offers more info on screen, including a countdown timer for when shaking should arrive and the predicted magnitude of the incoming earthquake.

“There’s a potential to get many alerts,” said Robert de Groot, who coordinates ShakeAlert technical partnerships for the U.S. Geological Survey. “If you downloaded apps and have an Android-powered phone and you have enabled WEA on your phone, then you may get multiple alerts on your device.”

THE U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY SAID THE SEISMIC SENSOR NETWORK IS NOW 70% COMPLETE FOR THE WEST COAST, WITH 1,132 OUT OF THE PLANNED 1,675 SEISMIC STATIONS INSTALLED AS OF LAST MONTH.

be to pull over and stop the car, if possible. If you’re in a building, stay in a building,” said Tobin. “Most injuries from earthquakes in the U.S. are not from the catastrophic collapse of a building but from falling objects — lights, ceiling tiles, etc.”

The Wireless Emergency Alert system demonstrated on Thursday works automatically. You don’t need to sign up for anything. But if you want something fancier or that does more, you have some options now — with more on the way.

Newer smartphones running on the Android operating system now come with built-in quake detection and alerting software created by Google. Google’s on-screen “Drop, Cover and Hold” early warning message parallels the Wireless Emergency Alert version.

The reception gaps exposed in Thursday’s public test underscore why his agency’s philosophy is that duplication is OK so that at least one alert gets through when time is of the essence.

“We are very interested in people getting alerts through as many pathways as possible,” de Groot said. “I mean, every delivery pathway has its limitations.”

Other startups and private companies are developing devices and services that piggyback on ShakeAlert to automatically perform a shutdown or safety action in the few seconds to tens of seconds available. Rizzo said this arena has the potential for many powerful applications.

“Like raise the bay doors of fire departments or return elevators to the ground floor,” Rizzo said. “Or to inform doctors to pull the scalpels out of the patient. Or drop arms across bridges to make sure people can’t get onto bridges, but can get off of bridges before the shaking starts.”

Two engineering firms based in the Northwest have

partnered with the U.S. Geological Survey to license ShakeAlert to harden municipal water systems. Bothell, Washington-based RH2 designs seismic shutoff valves so water reservoirs don’t drain out through broken mains after an earthquake. Woodinville, Washington-based Varius is marketing alert monitoring software that water and sewer system operators can use to automatically stop pumps, close valves and prevent spills.

Earthquake strength for warning?

Commercial users can typically customize the threshold for triggering an earthquake alert response. Rizzo explained the mass public warning function of ShakeAlert has a combination threshold. The detected earthquake needs to be magnitude 5 or greater and the people to be notified should expect noticeable rocking, at a minimum.

Rizzo said the March 11 launch date for wireless mass alerts of incoming earthquakes in Oregon was chosen deliberately. The date coincides with the 10th anniversary of the magnitude 9.1 Great Tohoku earthquake and tsunami, which killed about 20,000 people in Japan. Many more lives were probably saved by the sophisticated warning systems pioneered in Japan beforehand.

The time leading up to Washington state’s launch, which is about two months later than Oregon’s, will allow for further fine tuning. In an interview posted by the University of Washington, where Tobin teaches, he said the delayed launch will also give more time to “prepare the public by educating people on what the ShakeAlert Earthquake Early Warning system is, how to receive alerts and how to protect themselves when they receive an alert.”

California rolled out ShakeAlert for the public first in late 2019. California has the most frequent earthquakes of the three participating states and the largest earthquake hazard.

The unified West Coast system took many years to build. The federal government in partnership with multiple universities and state agencies had to install hundreds upon hundreds of seismic sensors over known earthquake faults statewide in Washington, Oregon and California. Funding for this came in dribs and drabs from Congress, with occasional extra help from the states and foundations.

The U.S. Geological Survey said the seismic sensor network is now 70% complete for the West Coast, with 1,132 out of the planned 1,675 seismic stations installed as of last month.

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