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OUR VIEW

How we should prepare for the megaquake

The power is out, and will remain out for 6-8 weeks. The food in your cupboards may be all you have access to in that time, and the same goes for the fuel in your vehicle's tank. There is no internet, no cellphone reception.

On the other side of the state, a massive earthquake on the Cascadia Subduction Zone has wreaked havoc on cities, homes and infrastructure. Everything west of I-5 is toast. Hundreds of thousands of refugees from the disaster of the century are headed this way with only the clothes on their back.

This is not a certain future, nor is it a purely speculative scenario. Experts at Oregon State University have predicted a 40 percent chance of the big one — magnitude-9 or higher — hitting the Pacific Northwest in the next 50 years, and the exact fallout is unknown.

But many people have decided not to shrug it off as a possible problem for some future generation to deal with. They are treating it as a "when" instead of an "if," and assuming the tectonic plates beneath our feet give us a few years of lead time before acting out their natural cycle, we can be prepared to deal with the crisis in a way that limits the catastrophe.

Just because the damage in Eastern Oregon will be less extensive doesn't mean we shouldn't be thinking and planning. Those who make it out of the chaos west of the Cascades will need supplies and shelter, and we may be the most stable place around.

Joseph Franell, chair of the Oregon Broadband Advisory Council, is concerned specifically with communications in the

aftermath of Cascadia, but spoke last month at a Hermiston Chamber of Commerce luncheon about the larger part Umatilla County can play in the days and weeks after the quake.

If we are prepared to take care of our own, it will take a great strain off emergency responders helping those in real need.

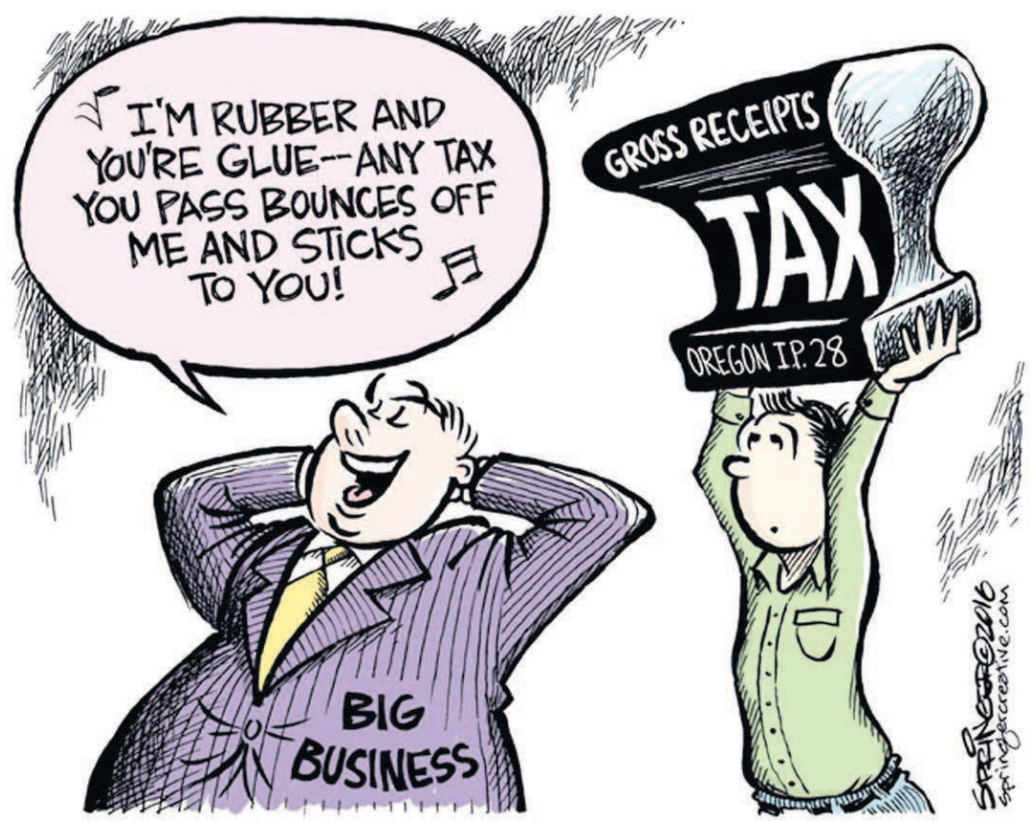
Many residents of Eastern Oregon take pride in being able to take care of themselves and their own. But even we can take little things for granted — modern conveniences like electricity and running water, for instance, and the even more modern luxury of instantaneous communication.

Franell suggested keeping a stockpile of 6-8 weeks worth of essentials for your family. That means bottles of water, preserved foodstuffs and batteries. And keep in mind that you may have displaced family and friends showing up looking for help.

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Businesses should also be thinking about how to serve the quickly swelling population. At the *East Oregonian* we are considering how we will spread urgent and essential news when the usual networks are down. We hope those who provide similar important services are considering how to meet the demand.

It's hard to even wrap our minds around such a large-scale catastrophe, the worst natural disaster in recorded U.S. history. But by taking it to a personal level, and then community-wide, we can at the very least keep our own families safe, and at the best provide care for a region in crisis.



OTHER VIEWS

The political orphans

In barely two weeks, Republicans will converge in Cleveland for the Trumppocalypse, a fact-free and hate-filled gathering likely to be as scary as it will be entertaining. A week later the Democrats will assemble in Philadelphia in a focus-group-tested pander fest, as tightly scripted as the visualize-world-peace answers at a Miss Universe contest.

If you feel left out, you have plenty of company. You can search across the fruited plain and nowhere will you find a political convention for the affiliation that more Americans identify with than any other — independents. According to Pew Research, the share of indies now stands at its highest point in more than 75 years of polling: 39 percent. And although other surveys slightly disagree, the point is the same: a plurality of voters has no place to call political home.

This large island of independents is a habitat of shruggers, doubters and contrarians. There's room for nuance in their thinking. Millions of these middle-grounders are actually leaners who sorta, kinda, maybe like most of what one party stands for — and then find out that they share a label with Sarah Palin.

As someone who thinks Democrats are ossified on education and afraid to speak out against the PC censors in their midst, and who finds Republicans horrific on science, guns and nearly everything else, I went online looking for a party hookup. In one quiz, after answering a dozen questions, I was found to be a moderate Democrat. In another, said to test your political DNA, the result was scornful. "You're not much of a joiner" was the conclusion. "We're kind of surprised you took the quiz."

You get dinged as more of a lefty for saying you "mostly agree" that the government needs to do more to make health care affordable and accessible, and sometimes doubt the existence of God. What sentient human doesn't share those thoughts? And I was labeled "apolitical" in the other analysis largely because I loathe tedious gatherings of the self-righteous and long-winded — "active political participation," as it's called.

But that doesn't mean I don't vote in every election, a dutiful citizen, hoping for a day when my kids can attend college without going broke or my Congress will actually investigate things that matter to everyday people.

A few years ago Gallup found that 58 percent of voters said a third party was needed because Republicans and Democrats do such a poor job representing average Americans. There is hope of that happening this year.

The Republicans, on the verge of nominating a man with the temperament of a sociopath, someone who praises a murderous dictator while damning the American troops who fought him, should crack up and break



TIMOTHY EGAN
Comment

This large island of independents is a habitat of shruggers, doubters and contrarians.

apart. For years, this party stood for something — lower taxes, a lighter government hand, personal responsibility, global engagement. After Cleveland, they will stand for nothing but the bombastic tyrant who lets the smallest thing get under his very thin, very orange skin. From Trump, you hear more praise of Saddam Hussein and Vladimir Putin than for Lincoln or Reagan. The

Republican base created this monster; by the power of hubris, he should destroy their party.

More important, Republicans have shown no interest in governing. After at least seven probes, more time has been spent investigating the four American deaths at Benghazi than was spent on the attacks of 9/11 or Pearl Harbor. All to conclude that

the crazy conspiracy theories concocted about this tragedy have no basis in fact.

Where are the exhaustive inquiries into why so many Americans are falling behind? Where are the subpoenas of the people who rigged the financial system to a point where it crashed the global economy? What is the legislative response to ideas favored by huge majorities of the people — simple gun measures to keep terrorists from getting assault rifles, or a boost of the minimum wage? And how are the people's representatives dealing with an epidemic of murder of our fellow citizens by police officers?

Well, you know the answers. Attacking the opponent's party is the only game in town. The leaders of this Congress do not legislate. They stage show hearings to keep them in office.

The Democrats, though more representative of issues that people care about, need to call out the fringe of their party on campus, in town halls and elsewhere who are enemies of free speech. When Bernie Sanders had his microphone forcefully taken away from him by a Black Lives Matter protester, it was, in fact, a shameful thing — no matter how important the cause. Instead, too many Dems let it pass.

So wish for a crackup in Cleveland, where Trump and maybe Newt Gingrich — with six wives between them — will represent the party of family values. And hope for a course correction in Philly, where Democrats might listen to working-class voters who feel betrayed by the corporate elites in power suites.

Wish and hope — weak words, admittedly. But it's all the crumbs that we political orphans, an underserved majority, can count on over the next month.

Timothy Egan worked for 18 years as a writer for The New York Times, first as the Pacific Northwest correspondent, then as a national enterprise reporter.

YOUR VIEWS

ODFW should do more to encourage future hunters

"Oregon RMEF is committed to creating the next generation of hunters and conservationists. ... In 2015 Oregon RMEF supported seven youth programs for a total of \$8,000."

The Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife has five references encouraging youth hunting in its 2016 Big Game Hunting Regulations, including mentored youth hunting. The consensus seems to be we need more hunters and that hunting should be a family activity.

As a soon-to-be 85-year-old Oregon native, Korean vet, the father of seven, grandfather of 12 and the holder of a lifetime Pioneer Hunting License, the above claims don't seem to reflect ODFW's real mission, which appears to me to be lottery draws, big game auctions and other fundraisers to encourage head hunters, not family outings.

Case in point: 1) If I draw a deer tag for 2017, I will be 3 months shy of my 86th birthday, and it will be my second tag in eight years; 2) Three years ago, a son from Montana wished to hunt the Keating Unit with his brothers and me. He got his tag; we drew blanks. As an aside, his 12-year-old twin daughters each killed an antelope after taking Montana's hunter safety course; 3) My 10-year-old grandson has spent time with his granddad in a duck blind since he was 4, but has never been able to follow granddad on

a buck hunt; 4) Yes, I might have found the Minam and the Imnaha better draws than the Keating Unit, but I'm approaching 85, not 35!

As a family we just burned the mortgage on a cabin and five acres in the Keating Unit after 24 years of monthly payments. It would be great if it could be used as a base camp for a deer hunt as well as for fishing and picking huckleberries.

I would like to propose the following as a father and granddad to encourage youth and family hunting: For all Oregon-born residents with a Pioneer Hunting License and 75 years of age and older, ODFW should issue big game hunting tags in the unit of the hunter's choice. I have no statistics, but my guess is it would affect less than 100 resident hunters throughout the state. OK, for that 100 the success rate for us "old codgers" would probably be less than 10 percent, a small price for encouraging our future hunters.

Please give this proposal serious consideration.

John G. Heriza
Baker City

Thanks for the trip

I would like to commend E.J. Harris for the wonderful photos taken on his trip from the California border to Pendleton last week. He is a wonderful photographer. We enjoy all his photos.

Margaret McLaughlin
Pendleton



LETTERS POLICY

The East Oregonian welcomes original letters of 400 words or less on public issues and public policies for publication in the newspaper and on our website. The newspaper reserves the right to withhold letters that address concerns about individual services and products or letters that infringe on the rights of private citizens. Submitted letters must be signed by the author and include the city of residence and a daytime phone number. The phone number will not be published. Unsigned letters will not be published. Send letters to Managing Editor Daniel Wattenburger, 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801 or email editor@eastoregonian.com.