

## Earthquake rocks Indonesia's Aceh province; at least 25 dead

By AYI YUFRIDAR  
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Associated Press

BIREUEN, Indonesia — A strong undersea earthquake rocked Indonesia's Aceh province early on Wednesday, killing at least 25 people and causing dozens of buildings to collapse.

A frantic rescue effort involving dozens of villagers, soldiers and police was underway in Meureudu, a severely affected town in Pidie Jaya district. Three excavators were trying to remove debris from shop houses where three people were believed buried, said Suyatno, who heads Aceh's search and rescue agency.

District chief Aiyub Abbas said hundreds of people in the district have been injured and more than 40 buildings including mosques, stores and homes were flattened. The district is located 11 miles southwest of the epicenter.

Abbas said 25 people have been killed in that district alone. A local health office said eight were young children.

The U.S. Geological Survey said the shallow 6.4-magnitude earthquake that struck at 5:03 a.m. was centered about 6 miles north of Reuleut, a town in northern Aceh, at a depth of 11 miles. There was no risk of a tsunami.



Rescuers use heavy machine to search for survivors under the rubble of a collapsed building after an earthquake in Aceh province, Indonesia, Wednesday. A strong undersea earthquake rocked Indonesia's Aceh province early on Wednesday, killing a number of people and causing dozens of buildings to collapse.

Abbas said there is an urgent need for excavation equipment to move heavy debris and emergency supplies.

TV footage showed rescue personnel taking bodies in black bags away from the rubble.

In the nearby district of Bireuen, a teacher at an Islamic building school died after being hit by falling debris, said health worker Achmad Taufiq.

About 20 people were being treated at a health center and one person was moved to a hospital because of broken bones and a head injury, said Taufiq.

Residents of the nearby town of Lhokseumawe ran out of their houses in panic during the quake and many people fled to higher ground.

The world's largest archipelago, Indonesia is prone to earthquakes due to its location on the Pacific "Ring of Fire," an arc of volcanoes and fault lines in the Pacific Basin.

In December 2004, a massive earthquake off Sumatra island triggered a tsunami that killed 230,000 people in a dozen countries. More than 160,000 people died in Indonesia alone, and most of those deaths occurred in Aceh.

## Potential Oregon ballot measure targets 'sanctuary' immigration law

By CONRAD WILSON  
Oregon Public Broadcasting

At least two members of the Oregon Legislature want to repeal a 1987 statute that prevents police from enforcing federal immigration law.

Right now, law enforcement agencies can't use their resources to apprehend immigrants if their only violation is being in the country illegally.

But a potential ballot measure would do away with the long-standing state statute.

"Law enforcement is prohibited from enforcing the law," said Republican Rep. Mike Nearman of Independence.

Nearman, along with Republican Rep. Sal

Esquivel of Medford, wants to get the measure on the 2018 ballot. Oregon law requires 1,000 signatures to begin the process, which they've already collected.

But the Oregon Department of Justice has refused to give Nearman a ballot title.

The DOJ argues Nearman's group wasn't clear about what they were asking people to sign when they collected signatures.

"Based on our review, it does not appear that a person signing the petition would necessarily have understood that they were signing a petition in favor of repealing an existing statute," Assistant Attorney General Shannon Reel wrote in an Oct. 28 letter, denying a request from the

Secretary of State's Office to draft a ballot title.

Nearman said he's working with attorneys to determine whether to take legal action against the DOJ or collect the signatures again.

"Law enforcement needs this as a tool to be able to make a dent in illegal immigration. I think we're going in the wrong direction," Nearman said.

Oregon lawmakers passed the law in the 1980s because several local police departments and federal immigration officials conducted raids that targeted the state's Latino community, said Andrea Williams, the executive director of Causa, an advocacy organization that works with Latino immigrants.

## SKI: Spout Springs looking to sell facility

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over the weekend, with hours from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Then, starting Saturday, Dec. 17 through Sunday, Jan. 1, the hill will be open daily for the holiday break, excluding Christmas Day.

Another 8 inches of snow fell Monday night at Anthony Lakes, continuing into Tuesday. As of Tuesday evening the resort has 25 inches at base, and 58 inches so far on the season.

The closest downhill ski area to Pendleton, Spout Springs, is also counting on a stronger year. Owner John Murray said they are now hiring seasonal staff, and could be ready to start by mid-December.

Spout Springs is located along Highway 204 near Tollgate. Snow is in the forecast through the weekend, and Murray estimates they already have close to 2 feet.

"It's all speculation, but this does look like a good year with a December opening," he said. "If we get good snow, I'm positive we'll have a good turnout."

Last year, Spout Springs

opened Dec. 26 and ran through the second week of March. Murray said he needs at least 30 inches of packed snow before he feels comfortable opening.

"It has to be safe," he said.

Murray, who also runs a dry dock in Portland, is looking to sell Spout Springs after 18 seasons. At a price of \$1.25 million, he said he's received a half-dozen inquiries, both local and out-of-area, but did not disclose any potential buyers.

Cross-country skiers are also getting ready to capitalize on the recent snow, including the Blue Mountain Nordic Club, which maintains and grooms 18 miles of trails at the Meacham Divide Nordic Area between Pendleton and La Grande.

Club president Anne March said they have about 18 inches of snow in the area, which should allow them to start grooming trails as early as this weekend.

"This last storm really made a good base for us," March said. "We're really excited."

Earlier this year, the club sold its old Bombardier groomer and purchased a smaller Thiokol Super Imp Snow Machine, which March said should be cheaper to operate and allow them to groom more often, up to two or three times per week during the season.

At an elevation of 4,100 feet, March said conditions at Meacham Divide can be highly variable throughout the season, but if the snow keeps up skiers should be in for a good winter.

"You just have to be ready for whatever the weather brings," she said.

Meacham Divide Nordic Area can be accessed off Summit Road, exit 243 along I-84, and offers views of Meacham Canyon and Spout Springs Ridgeline. The trails are now open. A Sno-Park permit is required for parking.

For more information about the Blue Mountain Nordic Club, visit [www.new.unc.org/bmnc](http://www.new.unc.org/bmnc).

Contact George Plaven at [gplaven@astoregion.com](mailto:gplaven@astoregion.com) or 541-66-0825.

## AIRLINE: Boutique says its planes will offer a faster and quieter ride

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Much of those troubles surrounded Pendleton's former provider of air service — SeaPort Airlines.

Due to declining boarding numbers, the U.S. Department of Transportation said in June that it would strip Pendleton's Essential Air Service subsidy unless the city could successfully appeal the decision.

The situation was compounded by SeaPort declaring bankruptcy in February.

Although SeaPort assured the city and its customers that it intended to exit bankruptcy as it honed its focus on the Northwest, the Portland-based airline grounded its planes and shuttered its doors in September, a month after Pendleton announced it would choose the San Francisco-based Boutique over SeaPort.

With Pendleton arguing that SeaPort's failures led to



Boutique Air, which uses the Pilatus PC-12 plane, will begin service between Pendleton and Portland Dec. 19.

a low passenger count, the DOT restored the city's EAS subsidy and gave Boutique the green light to start as soon as possible.

Boutique has centered its appeal around its fleet of Pilatus PC-12 planes, which the company says will offer a faster and quieter ride than SeaPort's fleet of Cessna Caravans.

While it is relatively new to EAS contracts, Boutique

also staked its reputation on its ability to dramatically increase the passenger counts of the communities it serves, some of which were previously covered by SeaPort.

Besides Pendleton, the airline currently has routes in Arizona, Alabama, California, New Mexico, Texas, Colorado, Nebraska, Minnesota, Mississippi, Tennessee, Georgia and Utah.

## HOUSING: Auditors recommend the agency boost planning efforts for housing preservation projects

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Secretary of State Jeanne Atkins said in a statement Tuesday. "The loss of even a single rental unit could mean one or more Oregon families may not be able to find a home."

In multiple instances, auditors found the agency failed to monitor contracts for pricing and results.

For example, since 2003, OHCS has continuously renewed a contract with Neighborhood Partnerships of Portland without putting the contract out to bid. The contract is for managing individual development accounts, a matching savings system that helps low-income families build financial management skills and save toward homeownership.

Low vacancy rates and a growing population have driven up home values across the state by 12.5 percent since 2015, while rents have climbed by nearly 7 percent per month, making it increasingly challenging for low-income families to find housing.

Auditors found that OHCS has failed to complete a required annual statewide housing plan that would identify and find ways to meet needs, largely because the agency has not

kept an accurate inventory of affordable housing around the state. Outdated data systems have contributed to barriers the agency faces in completing an accurate and comprehensive inventory, the audit noted.

"Partnerships with housing developers, funders, advocates, and others in the housing community, are a crucial part of preserving low-income affordable housing," Atkins said. "However, the audit found that OHCS needs to improve its relationships with stakeholders through better communications and transparency."

Auditors recommended that the agency boost planning efforts for housing preservation projects and work with the Legislature to increase the availability of funding for housing developers to promote more housing units in the state.

"Our auditors found that crucial communications between OHCS leadership and the Housing Stability Council are lacking, and that the council needs clarity about its role," Atkins said. "I urge the Legislature to work with the council and agency leadership to help define this essential relationship."

The agency also faces organizational problems, including poor commu-

nication with employees, inconsistent staffing and workloads, and inadequate policies and procedures, the audit found.

Gov. Kate Brown hired Margaret Salazar, formerly of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, in late September to direct OHCS and steer improvements at the agency. Less than a month after starting her new job Nov. 1, Salazar responded to the audit's preliminary findings.

In her response, Salazar said she is working to address the shortcomings found in the audit.

"While I am new in my role as director of OHCS, I have come to quickly understand the need to address these critical issues," Salazar wrote in her Nov. 29 response.

The agency is in the process of updating its computer systems and plans to have a new system for tracking multifamily housing finance data installed at the agency by the end of 2017.

"The age of the systems and ... workarounds make it difficult for staff to extract information," the audit states. "Only a few staff have the long-term knowledge and expertise to do so."

The agency also plans to debut its first housing plan in many years, Salazar said.



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