

Bend would be 'worse-case scenario' command center in big earthquake

BEND (AP) — A new state report says Bend would be the center of the state's emergency response in the worst-case scenario of a catastrophic earthquake along the Cascadia Subduction Zone off the Oregon Coast.

The *Bulletin* reports that the Oregon National Guard Youth Challenge Program's Bend campus is the fallback site for the state's Emergency Coordinating Center if the current command center and two other locations in Salem are knocked out.

The Bend site was listed as backup Emergency Coordinating Center in the state's newly revised Cascadia Playbook, a 100-page outline of actions to be taken in the first hours and days after the disaster. The playbook covers the first two weeks after an earthquake.

Scientists have predicted a possible 9.0 scale earthquake and subsequent tsunami along the 700-mile subduction zone could kill up to 25,000 people in the Pacific Northwest. Areas east of the Cascades are expected to escape with light to moderate damage.

That could make Bend the linchpin in state plans for a worst-case scenario disaster.

"The youth facility has plenty of capacity for people to bunk down, IT capability and communications facilities," said Andrew Phelps, director of the state Office of Emergency Management.

Oregon Youth Challenge Program is a tuition-free, residential alternative high school associated with the



In this May 24, 2016, file photo, Washington Air National Guard soldiers from Fairchild Air Force Base in Spokane, Wash., work to assemble temporary living structures at Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington to train for emergency response in case of a natural disaster. A new state report says Bend would be the center of Oregon's emergency response in the worst-case scenario of a catastrophic earthquake along the Cascadia Subduction Zone off the Oregon Coast

National Guard that draws at-risk students from across Oregon.

The campus 9 miles east of Bend is currently undergoing a \$10 million renovation and building program to expand its facilities, including a new dormitory. Buildings are also being seismically retrofitted to withstand earthquakes. When work is completed, the campus will be able to house 240 students.

Because Oregon lacks the major military bases of neighboring California and Washington, the Redmond Airport would also likely be

a central staging ground if airfields at Portland, Salem, Eugene, Medford and other points west of the Cascades are rendered unusable.

"We don't have that large federal footprint, like Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington, where you can expand operations without much additional planning," Phelps said. "We need to make sure we are on the same page as our federal partners about what they are going to bring, and when and where they are going to bring it."

Redmond Airport has two runways. Its princi-

pal runway is 7,038 feet long. The secondary runway, at 7,006 feet long, has recently undergone a \$10.1 million upgrade to bring its lights and paving up to Federal Aviation Administration standards. The Boeing C-17 Globemaster III, the military's main heavy lift transport and cargo aircraft, can take off and land on runways as short as 3,500 feet.

Phelps said Central Oregon would also likely be where many people leaving the earthquake zone would go, especially if major north-south highways are knocked out.

HERMISTON

Public library expanding its hours

Hermiston Public library is expanding its hours in the new year.

Starting Jan. 2, the library will open at 10 a.m. instead of 11 a.m. on Monday through Thursday. The library will continue to close at 7 p.m., and Friday and Saturday hours will remain from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Library director Mark Rose announced the change in an email, stating it reflected one of the goals that the library had put together after a community-based strategic planning

process this year. "With our growing community we see this as a benefit to families with small children and those needing access to the internet for work, housing and other needs," he wrote.

In addition to the earlier opening time, the library is also moving its Friday story time for children to Thursday at 10:15 a.m.

For more updates on the library, visit its new website at <https://hermiston-library.us> or like them on Facebook.

Pair of wrecks cause minor injuries

East Oregonian

Four people were involved in a wreck at the intersection of East Highland and Southeast Fourth Street around 5:20 p.m. Thursday.

One vehicle ran a stop sign and hit another, and police closed off the intersection for about half an hour. One person was

taken to the hospital with minor injuries, and others declined medical attention. One child was in the car and was not badly injured.

The fire department also responded to a two-vehicle crash Wednesday evening, at the corner of East Elm Avenue and Fourth Street. One person sustained minor injuries in that crash as well.

BRIEFLY

Wounded Warrior placards available Jan. 1

SALEM — Beginning Jan. 1, qualifying Oregon veterans can apply for the new Oregon Wounded Warrior parking placard from the Oregon Department of Transportation.

Those eligible must qualify for a disabled parking permit and have a service-connected disability that is VA-rated at 50 percent or greater. The Oregon Wounded Warrior parking placard exempts the driver from paying fees in public parking areas with metered parking. It also enables veterans to park in time-limited spaces for longer than the posted limit — except in zones that are designated 30 minutes or less.

There is no fee for the placard. Its expiration coincides with the veteran's driver's license or identification card. Qualified veterans who already have a disabled parking placard need to complete Form 735-265 and submit it with a copy of their benefit summary letter. Those not currently possessing a handicap placard must have their doctor sign the form.

For more information, contact 503-945-5000, stop by local DMV offices or visit www.oregondmv.com

IMAC cooks up breakfast fundraiser

IRRIGON — A hearty breakfast is featured during a fundraiser for the Irrigon Multicultural Arts Center.

The meal is Saturday from 7:30-10:30 a.m. at Stokes Landing Senior Center, 150 Columbia Lane, Irrigon. The cost is \$4.50 per person.

The nonprofit group is interested in preserving Irrigon's 1921 school building and developing a regional arts venue. For more information, call Peggy Price at 541-567-3806.

Governor establishes rural broadband office

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
East Oregonian

Oregon Governor Kate Brown has established an office that will develop broadband opportunities for rural and underserved areas of the state. Brown signed an executive order to create the Oregon Broadband Office on Dec. 14.

Eastern Oregon Telecom CEO Joe Franell is chair of the Oregon Broadband Advisory Council, a state-wide committee that backed the creation of the new office.

In her proposed 2019-2021 budget, the governor allotted \$5 million to broadband development in rural Oregon for the Broadband Infrastructure Fund. Franell said funding has not been approved for the office yet.

Franell said he doesn't yet know exactly how the office

will be staffed, but said there are supposed to be five employees. He said there is already telecommunications analyst, Chris Tamarin, who has provided support to the advisory council.

He said Brown has expressed specific interest in helping rural Oregon communities get broadband access. Franell said there are still more than 40 schools around the state that don't have access to high-speed internet.

But he said there are more gaps to bridge in broadband service than just the urban-rural divide.

"I think once we dig in we'll find out that there's a digital divide along other lines," he said. "Socioeconomic and cultural lines."

He said the second of two comprehensive studies by the advisory council found that Latino communities around the state had

seen a reduction of broadband adoption recently.

"Like water or electricity, everyone should have access to broadband," he said. "I think the office will be quite busy."

The advisory council was created by the legislature in 2009, Franell said, specifically to provide advice to government officials on broadband utilities and availability. Brown appointed spokespersons for several areas, including representatives for tribal government, education, economic development organizations, healthcare providers, and urban and rural telecommunications service providers. Franell was appointed to represent the latter. Every two years, the council gives a full report to the legislature.

Franell said the concept for a state broadband office was spearheaded by State

Rep. Pam Marsh, from Ashland. Marsh is also on the advisory council.

"She brought it up because there were federal funds we'd been missing out on," he said. "The council decided it was something we needed to put in our report."

Earlier this month, when he testified before the House Interim Committee on Economic Development and Trade on behalf of the advisory council, Franell talked about digital inclusion — giving all Oregonians access to high-speed internet in order to bridge educational, medical and safety gaps.

At 84.9 percent Oregon has a higher rate of internet adoption than the national average, 81.4 percent. But Franell said changing broadband standards mean that coverage is less than ideal.

"The definition of broadband is a moving target," he said in his presentation.

Lawmakers get committee assignments

Smith prepares to start 10th term

East Oregonian

Oregon State lawmakers have received their committee assignments for the coming session.

Few changes appeared on the list of assignment for the three legislators representing Northeast Oregon.

Rep. Greg Smith, R-Hepner, will soon be sworn in for his 10th consecutive two-year term as a member of the Oregon House of Representatives, making him the longest-serving member of the GOP Caucus.

Smith wields continuing congressional clout as

co-vice chair of the Joint Ways and Means Committee and co-chair of the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on General Government. Other assignments include Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction, co-vice chair of the Joint Student Success Committee, Joint Tax Expenditures Committee, Joint Legislative Administration Committee, Joint Legislative Audit Committee and the House Committee on Revenue.

"I am honored to have been appointed to these positions by my colleagues and look forward to the opportunity to continue to serve in a leadership capacity," Smith said. "These committee appointments will allow me to continue to bring House District 57's voice to the table as I work with my colleagues to craft solutions to the issues facing our great state."

Sen. Bill Hansell, R-Athens, is midway through his second four-year term. His committees include the Joint Committee on Ways and Means, Committee on Workforce and the Transportation and Economic Development Subcommittee. He will also take

on the General Government Subcommittee for the first time.

Rep. Greg Barreto, R-Cove, was named as Business and Labor vice chair and will serve on the Economic Development and Natural Resources Committees. Barreto was elected to the Oregon House of Representatives in 2014.

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