

Drill was organized regionally

**CASCADIA continued
from front page**

levels throughout Oregon, Washington and Idaho. For the first time ever, all nine federally recognized Tribes in Oregon participated.

Jamie Baxter, the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde's Emergency Operations coordinator, reported that at 8 a.m. Tuesday, June 7, a 9.0 magnitude earthquake shook the coast for more than five minutes and created a 600-mile long rupture from northern California to southern British Columbia along the Cascadia Subduction Zone. The quake triggered a coast-wide tsunami estimated to be between 30- and 50-feet high and it was reported to have hit Astoria at 9:10 a.m.

The doomsday drill was organized regionally by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Federal officials said as many as 20,000 people would be participating in the exercise, which is the largest of its kind ever held.

Tribal employees in Grand Ronde kicked off the exercise on Tuesday when they stopped, dropped and covered under their desks collectively at 1 p.m. Supervisors made the employee drill mandatory.

"Cascadia Rising is an important emergency planning exercise in which the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde will play a key, leading role with the state of Oregon," said Tribal General Manager Dave Fullerton in an all employee e-mail. "The other eight Oregon Tribes will also for the first time all participate."

Fullerton said that the exercise involved practicing the treatment of and evacuation of critically injured and deceased victims. He said he expected all employees to participate along with key staff members because it is important to be prepared.

"Please be safe and help your Tribal government plan for a real catastrophe so when it does happen we are better prepared," said Fullerton.

On Wednesday, Tribal staff practiced working with Tribal emergency communications, such as satellite phones and ham radios, so Grand Ronde can communicate with outside areas in such a situation.

Tribal Chairman Reyn Leno wel-



Photos by Michelle Alaimo

Amanda Walker, left, Tribal certified medical assistant, bandages a moulage leg wound on Emily Reynolds in the treatment area of the Cascadia Rising mass casualty exercise held on the Tribal campus on Thursday, June 9.

Visit the Tribes' **facebook** page to see more photos

comed more than 200 people to the Tribal Community Center in Grand Ronde on Thursday, June 9, for the mock disaster scenario.

"I've been asked to welcome everybody and acknowledge everybody that prepared for this," said Leno to an audience of Tribal members, Tribal Elders, staff, first responders from many local agencies and Tribal and community members dressed as injured victims. "I would just like to thank everybody because this is a great thing for the Tribe. Preparing for an emergency is a big thing. You don't really know what's going to happen in an emergency. I believe that is what this type of training will do."

Leno introduced Baxter, who organized and coordinated the event in Grand Ronde.

"I'd like to acknowledge Jamie," said Leno. "We had an emergency plan, but we decided to take the next step and hired Jamie on. She's done an outstanding job. She's a real go-getter. She's been great."

Baxter then took the microphone and took charge of the day at the same time.

"Our goal here is for everybody to have a good time and learn, and that we develop our skills," said Baxter.

Baxter, who has worked for the Tribe since 2014 and whose last day was Friday, June 10, laid out the disaster scenario for those involved. She explained it was currently Day Three following the Cascadia earthquake.

"Teams have been working for two days and a new set of volunteers is arriving," said Baxter. "Medical is finally coming in to fly out some of the most severely injured. Communications have been down, but our satellite system has allowed us to pull a newscast up that lets us know what's been going on. What we are showing you here is a snapshot of a response."

The report said there had been "massive devastation along the Northwest coast. We have witnessed massive damage to critical infrastructure. We've seen flood waters rising, buildings being collapsed and heard reports of massive power outages."

Baxter introduced Andrew Phelps, director of the Oregon Office of Emergency Management, who described the Tribal turnout as "unbelievable."

"This is fantastic looking around and seeing everybody that's participating in this exercise," said Phelps. "It's important to communicate that every citizen has a role to play when there is a disaster. This is what communities should be doing. This is what community emergency response should look like."

Phelps said he is happy to work with the Tribes on this type of event.

"Being able to work with the Tribes and augment the structure that they have in place I think is part of an overall strategy ensuring help gets where it needs to go in a timely manner regardless of what the disaster is," said Phelps. "Our goal for this exercise is twofold. One is to stress and evaluate the systems that we have in place to coordinate life-saving, life-sustaining efforts after a disaster and also

to reinforce to the community that while we are doing all we can to prepare for this, it's up to individuals and families to make sure that they are doing their part to prepare for whatever disaster may come."

Baxter said the exercise helps people understand how to prepare and what the scene will look like in the event something like a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake does occur off the Oregon Coast.

According to the Pacific Northwest Seismic Network, the last Cascadia Subduction Zone mega-quake occurred in January 1700. Geological history says that seven such earthquakes have occurred in the last 3,500 years.

"This provides a snapshot for the community on what could happen during a large earthquake," said Baxter. "It gives our whole community a chance to practice together, meet each other and learn to work together before an event. We've been working on a plan for over a year now. We're trying to think full community."

In preparing for the exercise, the Tribe worked with the West Valley Fire District, Yamhill County Public Health Department, the city of Willamina, the McMinnville Amateur Radio Club, West Valley Hospital, the Grand Ronde Church of the Nazarene and the American Red Cross, among many others.

Tribal leadership felt the exercise was important for the community. Participants ranged from Tribal Elders, such as Kathryn Harrison and Gladys Hobbs, to Tribal children who enjoyed being made up as earthquake victims.

The event also saw participation from many Tribal departments. Health & Wellness Center doctors triaged victims while Tribal Building Official Alton Butler assessed damage to Tribal buildings, tagging those that were no longer inhabitable.

Tribal Council members learned how to declare an emergency and request additional state and federal aid in such a dire circumstance.

"I think it's critical for the rural areas to realistically pinpoint these places where people can actually go because they say your bigger population areas could be your bigger problems," said Tribal Council Chairman Reyn Leno. "You need a place to start and that's what I view Grand Ronde will be. It'll be a starting point for this community anyway."

Tribal Council member Chris Mercier said he was pleased to see so many first responder organizations present for the exercise.

"From the leadership perspective it was good to see that we have these relationships with all these other entities," said Mercier. "It's good to know that we have these people that we can turn to and that they can turn to us in the event that something like an earthquake or a tsunami."

"It just shows the community is organized and can handle these kinds of events and it's good to know that. It's good to have an idea



Lily Baker gets blood paste applied to her face to simulate a cut by moulage artist Kathy Worthing in preparation for the Cascadia Rising mass casualty exercise held on the Tribal campus on Thursday, June 9.

See CASCADIA continued on page 22