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shore up every floor and wall in the hospital to ensure both the immediate safety of our patients, visitors and caregivers should an earthquake strike and the continued operation of the hospital in the aftermath of such a disaster.”

According to Peace Harbor Emergency Management Coordinator and Manager of Facilities Pat Kirby, “It’s always been my fear that we wake up one morning and we’re going to be rushing to the hospital with an earthquake happening. What we have is a hospital that was built in 1989. It was about the

same time the State of Oregon was starting to upgrade their building codes to meet more seismic resilience, taking after California and their earthquakes.”

At the time, research on the Cascadia Subduction Zone was still in its infancy — lawmakers were reacting to incidents such as the Loma Prieta, Calif., earthquake which killed 63 and caused \$6 billion worth of damage. It wasn’t until research came in the late 1990s that the true dangers of Cascadia were known.

“In 2001, the Oregon State Legislature started to build a program for buildings to start to get upgraded,” said Kirby. “The grants

for the funding have been available since 2010. Every year they’ve offered grants for seismic upgrades for first responding police departments and public buildings that would have a certain volume of people, like schools. In 2013, we started getting on the bandwagon and realizing we needed to get the hospital upgraded.”

The upgrades will not be campus wide, instead focusing on the main facility at 400 Ninth St.

“The grant is only eligible for special critical access hospitals, and clinics don’t count,” Kirby said.

The upgrades, which are expected to begin in December or January and will last until 2021, will focus on retrofiting footings in 47 locations within the hospital and placing new wall anchors in more than 50 locations.

“Work will be done in every department within the hospital,” Hawkins said. “We will make sure the construction plan is designed in a way to minimize the impact on delivery of care. We expect to continue to offer our full range of medical services throughout the duration of the project.”

He added, “Any short-term inconvenience will be well worth it, given the critical need for these potentially life-saving upgrades.”

If a Cascadia event does occur in the interim, Kirby suspects there could be critical damage to the facility.

“It may not collapse, but it may be enough damage to the point where we may not be able to use the building after an earthquake,” he said. “Earthquakes are hit and miss with the damage they cause, but there will probably be a lot of shak-

ing in this building that will cause quite a bit of damage.”

However, major portions of Peace Harbor have already been upgraded.

“As we’ve done upgrades to the hospital in the [emergency and radiology departments], we took that opportunity to make sure we went back and seismically upgraded those areas,” Kirby said. “We’ve had so many upgrades with all the new building codes added to it, which adds strength to the hospital as a whole, even though the hospital isn’t seismically upgraded. In my mind, I would think we would fare well in a smaller earthquake.”

The one thing that Peace Harbor will likely not have to worry about is a tsunami. Early in the decade, the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI) began doing serious mapping on tsunami inundation scenarios.

“They used a lot of resources and did some very good analysis up and down the coast,” Kirby said. “They spent quite a bit of time going through the layout of the land: The ocean, the shelf, how far the fault is out there and the depth of water.”

When the map was released in 2013, Peace Harbor was not listed in the tsunami zone, which Kirby found odd — the Siuslaw River is located just 100 feet from the hospital property.

“We’re dang close, and

that scared me,” he said.

In 2016, Kirby said Peace Harbor asked DOGAMI to reevaluate the area surrounding the hospital “so we can plan for it. It’s a tough decision to make if you have an earthquake and you have to evacuate the hospital, that’s a whole different ballpark than staying here to defend and keep operating ... If we were in it, we wanted to know.”

DOGAMI looked at a worst-case scenario — Cascadia level earthquake directly off the coast during high tide with a storm. The hospital was still outside of the zone, resting in a geographical sweet spot.

“The river makes a big ‘S’ shape, but also at the same time there’s over a mile of flats and sand dunes out here off the river site,” Kirby said. “Unfortunately, [parts of] Greentrees and the Coast Guard station will get the big blunt of the tsunami wave. It hits that, swirls around, then travels up the river. But the wave itself will pass us by because we’re on the backside of the ‘S.’”

With the seismic upgrades and safety from a tsunami, Hawkins stated that Peace Harbor will become a vital part of disaster relief.

“This will be a safe haven for our community to come and get care,” he said. “This will be a sanctuary for when people need us the most. We’ll be here.”

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