

Quake *from A1*

Earthquake was shoved into the national spot light by the Pulitzer Prize winning article published in the *New Yorker* and centered around the predictions of seismologist Chris Goldfinger who is based at Oregon State University.

According to the most recent reports concerning the damage expected from the quake, coastal towns will be subject to tsunami warnings and more inland communities will face varying degrees of devastation from Seattle, Washington down to Southern Oregon and Northern California.

Since the release of the *New Yorker* article, state officials have warned residents to get prepared and has issued funds to schools across Oregon to upgrade their infrastructure. Earthquake drills have become commonplace and emergency kit how-tos have popped up more and more frequently.

But according to Goldfinger, there is only so much residents can do when the earth starts shaking.

In South Lane, several bridges connecting Cottage Grove to larger cities — including Springfield and Eugene — may not be standing, possibly leaving children isolated from parents and left to hunker down at local schools.

South Lane School District has been updating its emergency plans from school shooters to natural disasters. And in the case of the Cascadia Quake, district buildings may become emergency centers for community members, not just students — once the buildings are deemed structurally safe.

“I think the high school is a little different based on the size of the building, they probably have a little longer with food but most buildings probably have enough for a couple of weeks,” said assistant superintendent Kyle Tucker. “And again,

that’s assuming we’re talking about student population because bottom line, this is going to turn into a community issue.”

The city of Cottage Grove has an emergency plan as well but due to the age of most of the buildings in the city that could hold a large quantity of people, there are very few that could ad-

running into busy signals or deadlines.

“We couldn’t use it for personal calls but it insures that our personnel can get calls and we can get our resources into place,” Wooten said at the time of the plan, which would cost callers 75 cents per minute.

However, that is not a guarantee that school dis-

one,” he said. “What you do is you try to be as creative as possible under the circumstances. That’s one of the things I learned when I became an ALICE instructor, which is that, number one, there’s no way to prepare.

“You can have a plan, an understanding and the concept, but every situation acts different and what

quake. The alternate location is designated as the city shops.

Tucker said, in updating the district’s emergency plan, he looked at other buildings in the city and found it difficult to identify another building that could act as a community shelter.

South Lane School District may be housing children for weeks at a time with estimates of residents being able to make their way back to Cottage Grove varying widely based on the number of bridges down and the damage to infrastructure.

But the district’s plan does account for reconciling children with parents and, as Tucker noted, at some point, the Red Cross and other federal assistance would make its way to the area — alleviating some of the school district and city’s responsibility.

“We are as prepared as we can be,” Tucker said, noting the district’s update of the emergency plan and unpredictable nature of natural disasters.

Families should maintain an earthquake safety kit and have a plan in place in the event of a natural disaster.

For more information on how to be prepared, visit oregon.gov/DOGAMI/pages/emergencykit.aspx or additional site oregon.gov/oha/ph/preparedness/prepare/pages/prepareforearthquake.aspx

The Sentinel, in cooperation with the school district, opted not to publish some of the specific logistical details in the district’s emergency plan in order to assure the safety of students in the event of an emergency.

“You can have a plan, an understanding and the concept, but every situation acts different and what you have to be able to do is adapt..”

—Kyle Tucker,
SLSD Assistant Superintendent

equately serve as evacuation shelters in the case of a 9.0 earthquake. Both the city and the district are set to work together in the case of a natural disaster.

However, all of the logistics have not been ironed out due to the unpredictable nature of the unprecedented earthquake. It is possible that both cell phones and landlines fall out of service, making communication difficult.

In 2017, South Lane County Fire and Rescue Chief Jon Wooten told *The Sentinel* that the department was working to enroll in two federal programs meant to streamline emergency services in the event of an emergency.

The Government Emergency Telecommunications Services would allow the local fire district to utilize their cell phones in the case of an emergency without

district officials would be able to utilize its phone system or cell phones. Without knowing if their communication system would be affected, South Lane School District’s plan, allows it to adapt.

Each school has a generator that could keep electricity flowing but they run on gasoline. The Cascadia Quake, according to Goldfinger, may severely damage fuel stations.

“The generator would give us enough time until hopefully you could find a way to get fuel but if you really think of that in the grand scheme of things, obviously, fuel trucks are not going to be going up and down the freeway, not going to happen,” Tucker said, citing reports that Interstate-5 will most likely be out of service.

“The reality is, it doesn’t matter because no one is going to have fuel — not in Eugene, Portland, Medford, no

you have to be able to do is adapt and use whatever resources are available to you in every form,” said, Tucker, who added: “I’ll be honest; if that’s syphoning gas out of busses that are not moving or can’t be used — I mean, whatever it would take. Because again, the school isn’t just going to be for kids, it’s going to be for the community.”

The city of Cottage Grove approved a plan in 2016 for emergencies within the city. It begins with an alert of incident from the city’s emergency program manager followed by an assessment of the incident between the city manager, incident commander and emergency manager.

City Hall is currently designated as the incident command center but that facility was built in the 1970s and may sustain serious damage in the event of the 9.0 earth-

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