

## Two weeks without help is a long time

*Major and mid-range disasters could leave residents on their own*

BY CINDY YINGST  
*The Columbia Press*

So much has changed since the Great Coastal Gale of 2007. Yet there's much to do before Clatsop County is ready for a repeat.

Part of those preparations were made Tuesday night, when Warrenton city commissioners recognized Warrenton-Hammond CERT as a group of trained individuals who can help emergency responders in a disaster.

Another step takes place Sept. 29, when the city co-sponsors with CERT a daylong emergency preparedness event

at Warrenton Community Center.

Vincent Aarts, Clatsop County's emergency management coordinator, has been working with members of CERT (Community Emergency Response Team), as has Bob Johnston, Warrenton's new certified building official. Both are ham radio operators and devoted to seeing the county and city as prepared as possible.

Aarts talked about the state of Warrenton's emergency readiness in an interview this week.

**Q. What's the biggest threat to Clatsop County residents?**

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Vincent Aarts is Clatsop County's emergency management coordinator.

## School district approves lease on city's library

BY CINDY YINGST  
*The Columbia Press*

School officials approved a five-year lease Wednesday night with the city of Warrenton on the building that houses Warrenton Community Library.

The city had signed a lease for just one year when it moved into the building last summer. The former library, housed in the old city hall building in Hammond, had structural problems that made keeping it as a public library unfeasible.

The five-year lease runs through May 2023, with the city paying the school district \$2,085 per month.

"The most expensive repairs have been done," Superintendent Mark Jeffery said when board member Dalan Moss asked whether the district's costs could go up.

The district has owned the building for years and most recently had rented the 2,295-square-foot former bank to Serendipity Café.

The building got a new roof in 2009 and Olson Asphalt Maintenance of Seaside recently paved the parking lot as a gift to the library.

On Aug. 14, the city signed an agreement with the state to receive a \$36,566 grant to automate the library. An intergovernmental agreement with the city of Seaside was signed Aug. 28, allowing the two cities to share an integrated library system, sharing books, materials and a part-time employee to oversee the automation process.

## Improvements coming to Highway 101, Ensign intersection

*The Columbia Press*

Concerns about excessive collisions at what has become the city's busiest intersection has prompted Oregon Department of Transportation to make some changes there this weekend.

An ODOT crew will remove the flashing yellow arrows at the Highway 101 intersection with Ensign Lane. Beginning Saturday, the north/south left-turn lanes on 101 will be "protected only," which means travelers must wait for a green arrow before turning. There will no longer be "permissive" left turns with the flashing yellow arrows.

The city of Warrenton asked ODOT to evaluate how the flashing yellow arrows were working and the results made it clear a change was needed, according to Lou Torres, ODOT's public information officer.

There were seven crashes caused by turning movements at the intersection between May 2015 and May 2016, the latest information available. Since Walmart opened, the city has noticed a further increase.



Cindy Yingst/The Columbia Press

Cars queue up on Ensign Lane at the intersection with Highway 101.

While most of the crashes during the study year caused only property damage, ODOT's policy is to run "protected only" left-turns if there are more than five crashes in a 12-month period.

Last month, the city commission delayed action on a zone change near the intersection because of concerns about traffic problems there.