

Police, fire crews 'may not be able to respond' after Cascadia

Emergency preparedness forum to stress self-sufficiency

By Erick Bengel
EO Media Group

Immediately after a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake, emergency responders, including Seaside's, will likely be as paralyzed as everyone else.

"The city may not be able to respond at all," Astoria City Councilor Drew Herzig said.

Residents and visitors unlucky enough to be on the North Coast when the "big one" hits should plan to take care of themselves, he said.

"We're not trying to terrify people, but we're trying to be honest with them about what they can expect from city services," Herzig said. "And the reality of our situation with a Cascadia event is that there's going to be very little service left."

Later this month, a panel of four experts — Althea Rizzo, geologic hazards program manager at Oregon Emergency Management; Tyree Wilde, warning coordination meteorologist at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; Patrick Corcoran, coastal natural hazards specialist with Oregon State University; and Neal Bond, protection unity forester at the Oregon Department of Forestry — will speak at the Liberty Theater on Astoria and Clatsop County's state of disaster readiness.

The Community Emergency Preparedness Forum on May 31 will cover a range of natural disasters facing the North Coast, from winter storms to wildland fires to a catastrophic earthquake and tsunami.

A short question-and-answer session will follow each



JOSHUA BESSEX/EO MEDIA GROUP

Members of the Coast Guard including Skip Dronen, center, and Dave Bartram, center back, jog to Fort Clatsop Historical Park as part of a tsunami drill in January. In the event of a large earthquake and tsunami, Guardsmen near the airport would have 20 minutes to make it to the higher ground at the park.

presentation, and a longer dialogue will take place at the end. Tables with resources and emergency preparedness gear will be set up in the lobby.

The goal is partly to make citizens aware of the city and county's plans and resources to confront disasters. But the forum will also drive home an unpleasant truth: In the first few days post-Cascadia, survivors may be on their own.

"Even though it may be tough to take in, it's something we need to start facing up to. Knowledge is power, particularly in something like this," Herzig said. "It's going to happen, we just don't know when. So the more we can prepare for it, the better."

Devastating to infrastructure

Astoria does not face the same tsunami threat as Seaside and Cannon Beach because the city is several miles upriver from the coast, although it still faces significant waterfront inundation from rising sea levels, Astoria Fire Chief Ted Ames said.

The primary threat is the earthquake itself.

"If we were to face a seismic event, like ... the 9-point-something-magnitude earthquake off the coast — that nearshore event — we know that it will be devastating to infrastructure," Astoria Police Chief Brad Johnston said.

Bridges will fail. Buildings will fall. Large swaths of earth will liquefy and produce landslides. City roads and streets — crushed, collapsed or covered in debris — will be impassable.

Even with the best of intentions and most professional of forces, Astoria police and fire departments will have severely diminished — perhaps nonexistent — rescue capabilities after a megaquake and tsunami.

"If we have that scale of an event, you will not see first responders rolling up in their patrol cars. It's not going to be possible," Johnston said.

"When you think about Astoria and the geography and the nature of the roadways, there's a good chance it's going to be very difficult to get places (with) things other than horses, mountain bikes, dirt bikes, ATVs and those kinds of things."

The fire department will be in the same situation: "I don't think it's realistic to think that we would be driving fire trucks around town trying to help people," Ames said.

Self-sufficiency

"I can't sit here as fire chief and tell you exactly what's going to happen, 'cause I don't have a clue," Ames said. "I just don't think that it's a real great outlook when we think about a major event."

"I'm probably scaring the hell out of people, but that's the way it is," he added.

Corcoran said that, as soon as high-magnitude earthquakes occur, power lines fall and arc, and gas and water lines break.

"So now you've got gas fires starting all over the place and no water to put them out," he said. "People's current sense of, 'Well, when my house is on fire, the entire fire department comes to help me,' is wrong."

Johnston advises citizens to prepare themselves, mentally and materially, such that they could survive without first responders and even help their neighbors.

"It's really important for people to have that ability to care for themselves in those initial hours because it's going to be tough," he said, adding that emergency management specialists now tell people to plan for a period of self-sufficiency lasting at least 14 days.

"It will be some time before government is able to re-establish that infrastructure, and the people are going to have to be prepared for that."

"Professionals don't like to say — especially cops and firemen — that they're not going to be there for you," Corcoran observed. "So, when they're telling us that they're not going to be there for us, I think you really need to pay attention to that."

City recognizes contributions of 'amazing' response

Seaside gives \$10,000 to Fallen Badge Foundation

By R.J. Marx
Seaside Signal

Seaside Police Chief Dave Ham requested a \$5,000 donation from the city to the Oregon Fallen Badge Foundation for their response in the aftermath of the February shooting death of Sgt. Jason Gooding. The City Council responded by doubling it.

"This is something they do from the heart," City Manager Mark Winstanley said. "We think it would be appropriate at this point to make some kind of gesture back. There's no way to put a price on that gesture."

Ham's request began with a May letter to Winstanley in which he extolled the foundation's volunteers for their expertise in planning and coordinating the memorial service for Gooding at the Seaside Civic and Convention Center in February.

"The resources that the Oregon Fallen Badge Foundation provided to Seaside on such short notice, and to the extent that they did, can only be described by me as amazing," the police chief wrote.

Ham suggested a donation of \$5,000 or more to the foundation, an amount "not enough to properly express our gratitude for the support they have given to our community, but any donation amount will send the message that they are appreciated and we thank them for their service."

Gooding, 39, died after being shot serving a warrant on convicted felon Phillip Max Ferry on Broadway in

downtown Seaside.

In the aftermath, the Oregon Fallen Badge Foundation partnered with the Seaside Police Department to provide backup and logistical support for the memorial service, attended by more than a thousand visitors, many of them law enforcement and first responders from around the country and Canada. The foundation served as point of contact for volunteers, honor guard and city officials.

"By the time we got to the funeral, they literally were running the entire town," City Manager Mark Winstanley said. "They came in and they handled anything and everything that needed to be done in Seaside so all of the people in Seaside were able to go ahead and participate in the memorial."

The donation will be drawn as a contingency item from the city's general fund, Winstanley said.

"They did so much for us," Councilor Tita Montero said. "I think \$5,000 is a drop in the bucket."

Council President Don Johnson suggested a \$10,000 gift, a figure unanimously endorsed by Mayor Don Larson and councilors.

Funds could be used for the foundation's operating costs, lodging or travel, Ham said after the meeting, as well as support for spouses and families of fallen officers.

Gooding is survived by his wife, Amy, and two daughters.

"They're just a great organization," Ham said. "They are dedicated. They're deserving of funds from the city and anyone else who wants to donate. For them (City Council) to make that donation is exceptional and very pleasing."



DAVE HAM

SELLER SAYS NEGOTIABLE!



\$360,000

37418 Hwy 26, Seaside

This 3,387 sq ft country home has plenty of room for entertaining, with a huge kitchen, living room and formal living room at the center of the house. The four bedrooms frame the house so all family members have their own space to hear the birds singing, the river flowing and watching the deer and elk. Acreage allows plenty of room to fish, hunt, hike and enjoy nature. Out of the tsunami zone and 20 minutes from Seaside. *MLS# 15-1670*



Robin Risley
CRS, GRI
Principal Broker
503.738.2888
robin@robinrisley.com

Cascade

Sotheby's

INTERNATIONAL REALTY



130 N Hemlock Ste 1
Cannon Beach
503-436-9000

