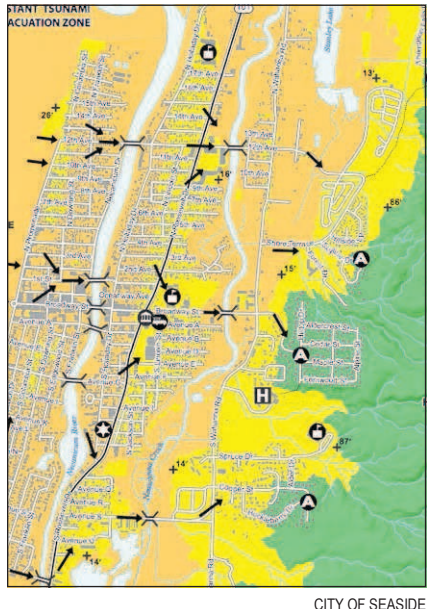


False tsunami warning startles residents, visitors



Tsunami safety is at issue after a false warning in early January.

Residents urged to be prepared

By Brenna Visser
Seaside Signal

Residents and tourists were left confused and startled Wednesday, Jan. 3, after hearing a tsunami warning alert instead of the regular monthly test siren.

A malfunction in the system replaced what was supposed to be a test message with an alert that advised a tsunami was approaching in four hours.

“For years, the city has been running monthly tests of the system on the first Wednesday of the month,” said Jon Rahl, the city’s public information officer. “While evaluating the system in December, the server that runs these warnings

crashed. Early morning testing today led us to believe the system was back online and would operate correctly.”

The usual procedure was followed when conducting the test, Rahl said, but reports indicate that one of the pre-recorded messages the city has to warn of an actual emergency pre-empted the usual “this is only a test” message.

“We regret the error,” Rahl said, “but it’s also a reminder of why we do these tests and run them throughout the year. Tests give us the opportunity to evaluate what’s working, and in this case what’s not.”

About 15 minutes after the alarm, the Seaside Police Department sent email and text notifications explaining and correcting the error.

But Rich Trucke, owner of Trucke’s 1-Stop, said panic had

already set in for some of his customers.

“It’s 11 a.m. on a Wednesday,” I assured the panic-stricken tourists. “They test regularly,” he wrote in a letter to The Daily Astorian.

A moment later, he wrote, someone hastily drove up, demanding gas to leave town. They told Trucke the system warned that a wave was coming in four hours. Another person told Trucke it was a mistake, but when he called the Seaside police non-emergency line, he was faced with a busy signal and no answers for all of the customers calling asking him questions.

“We never heard another report from the public warning system saying, ‘This is just a test,’ or any follow-up at all. Now I am answering phones and calming visitors. One customer had me dial his 95-year-old mother to let her know

not to worry anymore, since he had called her earlier to have her pack her things for evacuation,” Trucke wrote. “Reaching only her answering machine, he left quickly. Were this an actual tsunami, how many would fail to get the true message?”

City management and the Seaside Police Department are working together to continually improve the system, Rahl said.

The city encourages residents and visitors to use this, and every monthly warning, as a reminder that emergencies can strike at any time and not just in the form of a natural disaster, Rahl said.

To sign up for tsunami text updates, along with information about road closures and safety warnings, send the zip code, 97138, by text, to phone number 888777 or register for email and phone updates by visiting nixle.com.



Firefighters Dan Mullery, Chris Dugan, Doug Roberts, Roy Dague and Mike Smith as Katie Bulletset is among those recognized.

Firefighters honored

By R.J. Marx
Seaside Signal

Mayor Jay Barber joined Fire Chief Joey Daniels at the City Council meeting Jan. 8 in recognition of members of Seaside Fire and Rescue who battled fires in 2017 both near and far.

“I do appreciate the council support and the citizen support,” Daniels said. “Our volunteers do a great job and so do our career staff. This just adds to everything we do.”

As partners in the Clatsop County strike team, Seaside sent two firefighters to the Millie Fire near Sisters in mid-August. When dry weather and

high winds fanned flames at the Chetco Bar Fire in Brookings, three Seaside firefighters joined the task force — a period when the department had Hood to Coast and Labor Day coverage to maintain.

In September, four Seaside firefighters joined crews to fight the Eagle Creek Fire near Hood River. In October, five Seaside firefighters battled the Santa Rosa, California, blaze. And before year ended, Seaside firefighters headed to Ventura County for more than two weeks in December to aid crews there.

“When a person becomes a firefighter, their greatest act of bravery has been accomplished,” Barber said. “What comes after is all in the line of

Looking ahead

High-angle rescue, water rescue and continuing education will be elements of focus in 2018, Chief Joey Daniels said after the meeting.

Retirements — including that of 24-year department veteran Tom Hecox — will be offset by new volunteers. “That’s going to be a big loss to us,” Daniels said. “We’re picking up new guys, but we’re losing some valuable senior firefighters.”

work. Thank you again, chief, for all their work.”

Near-misses prompt Gearhart speed reduction

By R.J. Marx
Seaside Signal

Golfers in a hurry to get to the course?

It’s understandable in a city where golf is a tradition, the mayor is a PGA professional and the Gearhart Golf Links is the oldest in the Northwest.

At their December meeting, city councilors lowered the speed limit from 35 mph to 25 mph on Gearhart Lane between U.S. Highway 101 and Marion.

“Nothing against golfers, but there are some people who come out of Marion like a bat out of hell to Pacific Way,” City Councilor Kerry Smith said in support of the lower limit. “It’s a residential community. Twenty-five mph, period, from the get-go when you enter Gearhart.”

The request came after Daniel Lane, chairman of the Clubhouse Condominium Association, submitted a petition in September signed by 33 nearby property owners as a result of cars “whipping around the blind curve right at our entrance.”

“Seems like as soon as drivers hit that 35 mph zone they accelerate through that curve,” Lane wrote. “I have had a few close calls myself.”

Golfers crossing Gearhart Lane from the first green to the second tee of Gearhart Golf Links have also reported near misses, City Administrator Chad Sweet said.

‘...THERE ARE SOME PEOPLE WHO COME OUT OF MARION LIKE A BAT OUT OF HELL TO PACIFIC WAY.’

Gearhart City Councilor Kerry Smith

Police Chief Jeff Bowman had no issue with the change, Sweet said, and speed reduction was consistent with city transportation plan goals to increase safety for cars, pedestrians and bicyclists. Signs, flagging and postings would “probably be under \$1,000” and could be paid for from the current budget.

After discussion, Mayor Matt Brown and councilors unanimously supported the reduction.

“When you come into Gearhart, you kind of go, ‘ahhh,’” Councilor Paulina Cockrum said. “It’s a relaxing feeling. That kind of goes along with the 25 mph. It’s not a place you need to speed.”

Valerie Lynne Winstanley Warrenton Jan. 11, 1955 — Jan. 8, 2018

Valerie was born in Port Angeles, Washington, on Jan. 11, 1955. She was taken from us by a massive stroke Jan. 9, 2018, at the age of 62, in Astoria, Oregon, surrounded by her family.

She was the fifth child of Clifford Raymond and Evelyn Viola Block Chittim. She lived in Port Angeles until she was 6, then moved with her family to Fairbanks, Alaska. In 1963, the family moved to Seaside Oregon, where Valerie spent all her school years at Seaside’s Central School, Broadway Middle School, and graduated from Seaside High School in 1973.

She married Mark Winstanley on Aug. 18, 1973, and they moved to Corvallis, Oregon. In 1985, they moved back to Seaside, and resided in the area ever since. Both of her children, Melissa and Mitchell grew up in Seaside.

Valerie was a fun, loving person. Clamming, walking on the beach and picking mushrooms and berries were a few of her favorite things to do. She was always excited for a good thunderstorm, and never wanted to live anywhere but

right on her little spot in Surf Pines.

She was also an amazing cook! She was so happy to have her three grandsons so close by, to cook with and to take on hikes. She will be remembered as a wonderful wife, mother, grandmother, sister, aunt, and friend.

Valerie is survived by her husband of 45 years, Mark Winstanley; her daughter, Melissa Bilyeu (Jeffrey) of Warrenton, Oregon; son Mitchell Winstanley of Monmouth, Oregon; three grandsons, Adam, Alexander, and Zachary Bilyeu of Warrenton, Oregon; sisters InaRae Ussack (Bill) of Sequim, Washington, Carol Anne Gates (John) of Warrenton, Oregon, and LeeEllen Brown of Seaside, Oregon; brother Gene Lewis Chittim of Portland, Oregon; as well as many nieces, nephews and cousins who loved her dearly.

She was preceded in death by her parents. As per her wishes, there will be no service. In lieu of flowers, her family requests donations be made in her name to: Reading Outreach for Clatsop County (ROCC); or the Seaside Library, Seaside, Oregon.



Valerie Winstanley

American Legion Post 99 to help community

Military veterans in and around this region are invited to a special service session at the Seaside American Legion Post 99 located at 1315 Broadway Street in Seaside. National and state teams along with local post members from The American Legion will be in town to discuss veterans’ benefits and service and kick off this community and veteran service campaign within the community.

Veterans are invited to Post 99 to learn more about the American Legion and veteran benefits. Membership and veteran information staff will be available on Jan. 25 and Jan. 26, from 9 a.m.



American Legion Auxiliary member Marilyn Falker helps guests at the Christmas dinner choose a knitted hat.

to 4 p.m. each day and Jan. 27, from 9 a.m. to noon. A veteran service officer will be available to assist

area veterans with claims or other veteran benefit related questions during these times.

‘Turkey’ the turtle dies after infection

Seaside Signal

Turkey, the olive ridley sea turtle found stranded on Washington’s Benson Beach, died Jan. 8.

According to the Oregon Coast Aquarium in Newport, which treated the dehydrated and hypothermic turtle since her arrival on Thanksgiving Day. Sea turtles are not found on local beaches unless stranded.

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