

County leaders reflect on new state tsunami building policy

By EMILY LINDBLOM
The Astorian

Leaders in Clatsop County say they wouldn't want to build new schools or police and fire stations in the path of a tsunami, although Oregon now allows it.

Cannon Beach Mayor Sam Steidel said he was disappointed when the Legislature repealed a nearly 25-year-old ban on the construction of critical facilities in tsunami inundation zones in June.

"It seems very irresponsible to allow for public buildings to be built in an area known to be dangerous," Steidel said, adding he didn't feel there was enough discussion about the issue before the repeal.

Seaside Mayor Jay Barber shared Steidel's disappointment. "We are dismayed by the action to eradicate the ban before really having something else to offer," he said.

Seaside is relocating schools outside of the tsunami inundation zone, as well as a water reservoir, with space for emergency radio communications, emergency medical technicians and fire services.

"But we do know the state is preparing to meet with local leaders to discuss what is needed in the inundation zones," Barber said.

Gov. Kate Brown's office plans to hold a meeting with local leaders this month about creating new standards for construction in areas at risk in a tsunami.

The new law was driven by coastal lawmakers, particularly from the central coast, who said the ban could have significant economic consequences for towns unable to build critical infrastructure. The state House and Sen-



Colin Murphy

Several bridges in Seaside have been determined to be insufficient in an earthquake or tsunami.

ate voted overwhelmingly to repeal the ban. State Rep. Tiffany Mitchell, D-Astoria, and state Sen. Betsy Johnson, D-Scappoose, voted for the repeal.

Preparation

Like Steidel and Barber, Astoria Mayor Bruce Jones said he can't see his city building any new public safety facilities in places where they could be flooded in a tsunami.

However, Jones noted the state is in a transitional period in preparing for a potential Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake and the tsunami that's expected to follow. He said he sees the new law as part of that process, not the final word.

"There's a lot of work going on with the state right now, so we're going to let this process play out," he said. "Building public awareness and encouraging members of the community to have their own preparedness plan and supplies is an ongoing challenge, but I hope that in 2020 the city will focus more on preparation and resilience."

Warrenton Mayor Henry Balensifer said he doesn't think Warrenton would start developing new facilities in the tsunami area, but there are many factors to consider when deciding where to build, such as expense and accessibility.

Warrenton's police department, fire department

and city hall are located inside the inundation zone.

"The fire station isn't likely to be moved because most of the firefighters live in that area," Balensifer said. "If there was a major tsunami, you'd have to consider whether the volunteer firefighters would even make it to the facility. Most of what the city of Warrenton would be responding to would be underwater."

He added the city has almost maxed out its ability to develop east of U.S. Highway 101, so in the future he'd be interested in expanding the city limits to include higher ground further east.

According to Balensifer, the intent of the new law is

to allow public buildings to be constructed in towns that don't have land outside the tsunami or landslide zones.

"It wasn't designed to open the floodgates of emergency services to be built in the tsunami area, it was to enable exceptions," he said.

But Gearhart Mayor Matt Brown said the original ban already built in exceptions for towns that didn't have other options.

"I don't really understand why Gov. Brown changed the law because you could always get an exception if you didn't have an area above the tsunami line to build," he said.

Before the repeal, Gearhart had already been working with the state Depart-

ment of Land Conservation & Development to amend its codes and ensure future critical infrastructure is built at high enough elevations.

"So even though the state got rid of it, we've had it in our city code," Brown said. "That being said, even within our code there are also exceptions."

Chad Sweet, Gearhart's city administrator, added the city plans to relocate its fire station to a place above 60 feet but still within a close enough range to be able to respond to everyday calls.

"Not allowing fire departments or police departments in tsunami inundation zones sounds like a good idea initially, yet taking it away from people who need it could create problems in everyday life," he said.

Each community in Clatsop County is different in its layout and exposure to potential tsunamis, so Sweet said maybe the state should provide a framework for preparedness and let each city make its own decisions.

Disaster resilience Sarah Nebeker, the chairwoman of the county Board of Commissioners, said she thinks the repeal is a good start to look at the future safety of the county's public buildings.

"I understand this is not easy, there's all kinds of issues with it," she said. "But we see what happened with Seaside passing a bond to move the schools, so we see when people come together things work out."

Nebeker said she's not aware of any new county buildings to be constructed in the tsunami zone. She added that Tiffany Brown, the county's emergency manager, has been working to inform herself and the county about improving the area's disaster resilience.

Exploring the Oregon Film Trail

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Astorian

The rugged, iconic coastline at Ecola State Park has played a starring role in several movies, from the stormy finale of "Point Break" and a beachside stroll in "Twilight" to a school carnival in "Kindergarten Cop" and the Fratelli family hideout in "The Goonies."

The Oregon Film Trail on Monday, Oct. 14, unveiled two signs marking the park's contribution to Hollywood history.

Ecola film sites

Ecola State Park has played host to several movie shoots.

Oregon Film works with partners like Travel Oregon, the Oregon Coast Visitors Association and local agencies to place signs that identify iconic filming locations and production facts.

Astoria has signs for "The Goonies," "Short Circuit" and "Kindergarten Cop." The Hammond Marina has a sign for the escape scene in "Free Willy."

Tim Williams, the executive director of Oregon Film, said the state agency tries to get filmmakers to work in Oregon, but also honors the 110-year history of films shot in the state, starting with the 1909 film



Edward Stratton

A new sign at Ecola State Park describes the scenes of "The Goonies" and "Kindergarten Cop" shot at the iconic viewpoint.

"The Fisherman's Bride" shot in Astoria.

"There's been 500 movies shot in this state," Williams said. "We're trying to recognize them in some way."

Teri Wing, the North Coast district manager for the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, remembers working at a seasonal job at Fort Stevens and sneaking on set at Ecola during the two-week filming of "Point Break." She reminisced about spotting Patrick Swayze sitting in a hot tub and Keanu Reeves walking across a parking lot looking haggard.

The two new signs at Ecola State Park make 12 on the Film Trail. The state hopes to raise up to 25 within the year and con-

nect them with a digital app that will guide people to the filming locations.

"Each one of those stops along the way will have some kind of stories about it ... have places to go along the way, local vendors, and hooking back into the (Oregon Film Museum) as we do all of this, so everything driving itself to film tourism overall," Williams said. "We can use Astoria as a hub to send people out across the state and get a sense of what is a 500-movie, 110-year history of filmmaking here in Oregon."

4-H Cloverbud volunteer leaders needed

The 4-H Cloverbud program is an educational program designed especially for younger age youth. The program helps kids learn self-control, build self-confidence, improve decision-making skills, learn social skills and more.

The program has about 20 Cloverbud-aged participants and seeks leaders to volunteer and help form clubs.

An informational meeting on what 4-H leadership for this age group takes place Tuesday, Oct. 29, at 6 p.m. at the 4-H Club House by the Fairgrounds. For more information or directions, call the extension office at 503-325-8573.

Dog agility class

Classy Canines 4-H Club holds the annual public-participation Dog Recreational Agility CGC Event (or "Dog R.A.C.E.") on Saturday, Nov. 16, at the Clatsop County Fairgrounds and Expo Center arena.

This event gives dogs and their owners a chance to try

some beginning level dog agility. There will also be an opportunity for participants to test for the American Kennel Club Canine "good citizen" or "trick

title" certification from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. This dog activity day will be No previous experience is needed. Participants are asked to help to put the equipment away at the end of the day.

The competitions will feature ribbons for the top placements. A spectacu-

lar prize drawing will take place after lunch. Proceeds from the fun competitions and the drawing will be donated to River Song

Foundation. There will also be vendors organized by Angels for Sara Sanctuary

Spectators are welcome. For more information or to donate to the drawing, please contact Sally Freeman at youngsriv@yahoo.com or 503-325-7161 or text 503-308-2372 prior to the day of the event.



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