



Agencies and organizations in the State of Idaho are preparing to participate in the Cascadia Rising 2016 Functional Exercise which will be held the week of June 6, 2016. This exercise is intended to test the ability of local, state, tribal, Federal government, and select private sector and non-governmental organizations to jointly respond to an earthquake and tsunami. The scenario involves a 9.0 magnitude earthquake which occurs along the length of the Cascadia Subduction Zone (CSZ) fault with an epicenter 95 miles west of Eugene, Oregon. The earthquake triggers a tsunami which impacts the entire Pacific Basin.

The Cascadia Subduction Zone plate interface is a giant fault (approximately 700 miles long) that runs along the Pacific Coast from Northern California through Oregon and Washington and into British Columbia. The world's largest quakes occur along subduction zones. The most recent one was the East Japan earthquake and tsunami of 2011 that killed 16,000 people. Based on scientific evidence and a few Native American and First Nations oral stories, it is believed that the last known earthquake that occurred along the Cascadia Subduction Zone happened in January 1700. It was estimated to be on the order of magnitude 9.0, followed within minutes by a large tsunami. Stresses have now been building along the Cascadia Subduction Zone for more than 300 years.



More than 8 million people live and work within the projected CSZ earthquake damage zone in Washington and Oregon. It is estimated that an earthquake and tsunami of this magnitude could result in over 10,000 deaths and more than 30,000 injured people. Damage from the earthquake and subsequent tsunami will also likely result in extensive road and bridge damage, air, rail and seaport transportation disruption, infrastructure damage (water & wastewater systems, dams and levees, electric power and natural gas systems, hospitals and schools), and communication systems disruption. Over 1 million residences may be damaged. Some estimates suggest that 1 million people may need short-term sheltering.



So, why is Idaho participating? It is likely that the Idaho emergency responder community will be asked to assist our neighbors in Washington and Oregon. This assistance should be well coordinated in order to avoid contributing to problems within the affected areas. In addition, Idaho may also be directly impacted by the cascading effects of such a disaster. As evidenced during the 2005 Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the mass evacuation of thousands of people can have impacts in neighboring states. In addition,

transportation disruption may impact the availability of critical supplies and resources, including food, to Idahoans.

This exercise provides us with an opportunity to test the state and local plans, policies and procedures which would have to be implemented during this type of disaster. In addition, the exercise provides an opportunity to interface with our partners in Washington and Oregon, as well as our federal partners such as FEMA Region X. The Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security and Idaho Military Division have committed to participating in the exercise and have invited participation from the counties and tribes in the North Central and North Areas of Idaho. An Initial Planning Meeting was held on May 28, 2015, and the planning process has begun. Stay tuned as more information will be forthcoming.

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