

Filling the Public Works Leadership Void Following a Cascadia Earthquake and Tsunami

Concept: The Oregon Coast experiences a 9.0 earthquake and 50-foot tsunami. The Willamette Valley experiences a 7.0 earthquake and east of the Cascade Range experiences a 3.0 earthquake. There is significant damage to infrastructure systems including transportation, power, communication, water, and sewer. Regional fuel supplies are severely limited. There are deaths, injuries, and significantly damaged buildings, including emergency response facilities and hospitals. The Oregon Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) mobilize State and Federal resources for deployment into the hardest hit areas.

All Oregon coastal counties have limited staff. During disasters of this magnitude, responders will become victims of the event, leaving a void of leadership during the critical days that follow.

What: Develop “Sustainable Sister Counties” for initial management of local critical resources and coordination of State and FEMA assistance after the earthquake event. The Coastal County Public Works Department (PWD) develops professional relationship with Sister Counties. The relationship is between a Coastal, Valley and Central/Eastern County PWD to form a three County relationship to define the following:

1. Disaster response culture and priorities;
2. Facilities, infrastructure, and resources, e.g., rock quarries, equipment, critical life line routes, etc.;
3. How to augment/replace them in the Emergency Operation Center (EOC) Incident Command System organization;
4. How to direct State and FEMA resources to provide the most effective assistance.

The Coastal County learns the same about the Valley and Central/Eastern Oregon Counties. Response to snow or wildfires devastating to their communities may be a reciprocal benefit.

When: Assistance from the Sister County will occur within 0-48 hours of the earthquake. This response would be designed for a 5-7 day self-sufficient deployment following the earthquake, with the ability to extend. The Sister County will receive the highest life safety priority for seats on State and Federal helicopters going to the Coastal County’s EOC. All State and/or Federal Staging Areas in Oregon will provide this priority during the first 48 hours following the event.

Goals:

- 2014 - Develop 5 Sister County relationships, one for each Coastal County with PWD HQ along the Coast.
- 2015 - Sister Counties begin meeting annually and meet their respective County Commissioners. Get approval from Boards.
- 2015 - Cascadia Earthquake develop and sustain the following:
 - Understanding of each County's potential leadership needs and resources, based upon current PWD resources, e.g. staff, equipment, contractors, etc.;
 - Develop and commit to a yearly resource estimate to sustain the Sister County relationships;
 - Find and obtain resources to sustain the relationships;
 - Annually, officially submit each PWD's helicopter priority names and 24/7 contact information to OEM and FEMA and request confirmation. Keep them informed at all agreements, policy, procedures and changes;
 - Sign Public Works mutual aid type agreements and review yearly together
 - Managing Oregon Resources Efficiently (MORE)
 - Omnibus Agreement
 - Oregon Water/Wastewater Agency response Network (ORWARN)
 - Oregon Department of Transportation Mutual Agreement (ODOT)
 - Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC)
 - Confirm all PWD staff meet ICS training requirements and practice in each other's EOC at a frequency which sustains an "opening night performance" level of confidence;
- Update members of the Oregon Association of County Engineers and Surveyors (OACES) at the yearly conference.
- Update members of the Oregon Chapter American Public Works Association (OR-APWA) at one of their yearly conferences.
- Annually, include status of Sister County relationship in each County's Emergency Management Preparedness Grant status report.