

# Earthquake Talk: What to Know and How to Prepare

BY MARY ANDONIAN

If you haven't read the article that was published in The New Yorker last July, stop what you're doing right now and go to [www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/07/20/the-really-big-one](http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/07/20/the-really-big-one).

As intense as it may seem, we should be grateful this information is out there. It's drawn a lot of attention to Oregon's plan (or lack thereof) to prepare itself in the event of a major earthquake.

To summarize, we're living to the east of what's called the Cascadia Subduction Zone, a seven hundred mile stretch that runs from Mendocino, California to Vancouver Island, B.C. The zone refers to the two tectonic plates that move toward each other, with one sliding beneath the other (subducting) as part of the natural shaping of the earth over time. Sometimes, however, the plates collide (instead of glide), causing a major earthquake.

The Cascadia Subduction Zone is important to understand because scientists estimate it will cause a 9.0+ magnitude earthquake and tsunami, similar to the Tohoku, Japan event that happened in 2011. Scientists also predict there's a one in three chance this will happen within the next 50 years.

What is Tualatin doing about it? According to Jerald Postema, Public Works Director, Tualatin is already working closely with several outside resources to ensure we have

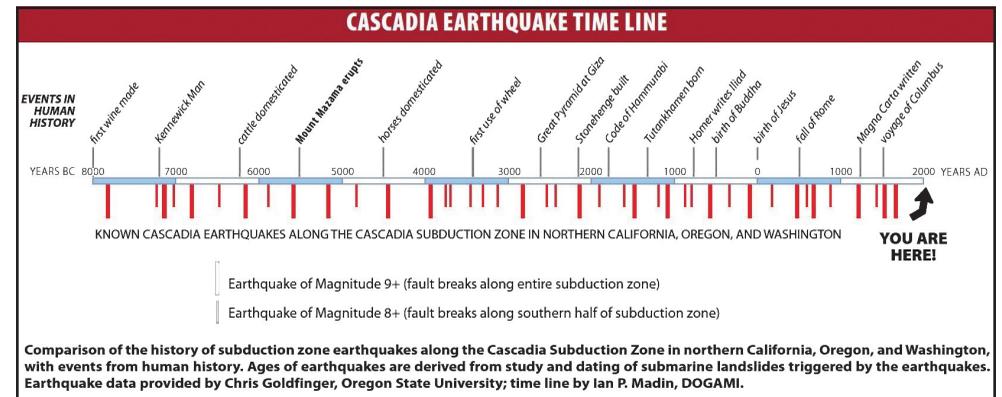
a good emergency response plan in place, should we need one. The city of Tualatin publishes links on its website (<http://www.tualatinoregon.gov/publicworks>) where you will find checklists and resources in the event of an emergency. For example, it provides links to the Red Cross website, which in turn offers suggestions for creating an emergency preparation kit (food, water, water filtration kits, etc.), as well as guidelines for how much to buy and prepare, and where to store emergency items. It's important to note, however, that this information should be studied NOW, not during a crisis. Internet access post-earthquake is unlikely, so the crucial key is to plan ahead.

Tualatin is also coordinating with Washington County as part of its emergency preparedness initiative. Our city will participate in a mock disaster exercise, called Cascadia Rising, in June 2016. Tualatin, along with several other communities, will go through the simulation as a way to better prepare itself should the big one hit.

Tualatin has also partnered with the Regional Water Providers Consortium, a group dedicated to preparing area residents for any type of water emergency. We are one of over 20 groups pooling resources to purchase mobile filtration systems so we can purify drinking water if our water supply becomes contaminated. So far the group has purchased several filtration units, and plans to acquire more as funds allow.

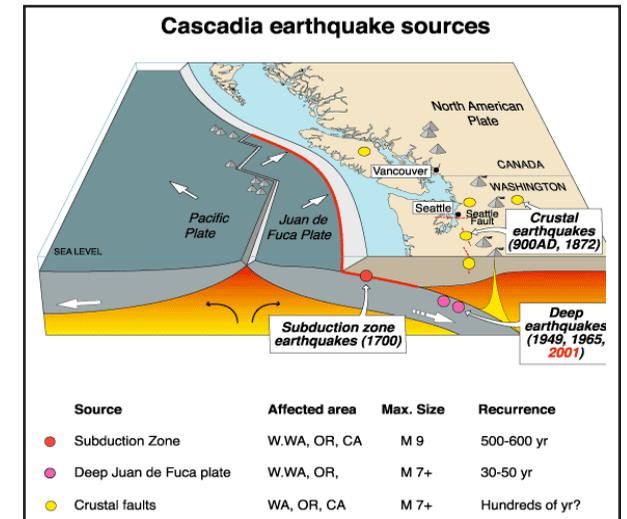
The city is working with Tigard-Tualatin School District's 4<sup>th</sup> graders to help create a 2016 calendar that will focus on emergency preparedness. The kids will provide the artwork, and the calendar will be filled with helpful information.

This month's city newsletter provides more information on earthquake preparedness, so make sure to stay up to date through the newsletter, as well as the city of Tualatin's website.



For statewide, comprehensive information, go to OPB's website and check out their take on this earthquake business: [www.opb.org/news/series/unprepared/](http://www.opb.org/news/series/unprepared/). OPB is running an awareness campaign about the "Mega-Quake." Look for their upcoming special, Oregon Field Guide documentary, which airs Oct. 1. (Check local guides for times/channels.) OPB even offers a handy tool on their website where you can enter your address and it will tell you what you can expect when the big one hits.

Work with your neighbors. Contact your local CIO (Citizen Involvement Organization) at [www.tualatincio.org](http://www.tualatincio.org), or your neighborhood watch group, and learn how you can pool your resources to make sure you and your neighbors are covered in the event of a catastrophic emergency. Also check out the American Red Cross's website [www.redcross.org/local/or](http://www.redcross.org/local/or) to learn how to make emergency supply kits for your home and car.



The Cascadia subduction zone. Image via US Geological Survey

According to FEMA, September is National Preparedness Month ([www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)), so please take the time to educate and prepare your family in the event of an earthquake. Let's make Tualatin the ultimate safety zone in the wake of a Cascadia Subduction Zone crisis.



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