



PRESS RELEASE

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**COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS TO ADOPT RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING
MARCH 27-31 TSUNAMI PREPAREDNESS WEEK IN SANTA BARBARA COUNTY**
Tsunami: Know Your Risk; Know What to Do

(SANTA BARBARA, Calif.) – At its regular meeting on March 21, the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors is expected to adopt a resolution proclaiming March 27-31, 2017 Tsunami Preparedness Week in Santa Barbara County.

During the last week of March, federal, state and local emergency officials ask residents and visitors along the ocean to take a moment to learn more about their risks of a tsunami and what actions are needed. Local emergency managers, government officials and partnering agencies are using the entire month of March to remind people of the easy actions they can take in the event of a very large local earthquake that can generate a tsunami.

It has been six years since the devastating earthquake in Japan that triggered a massive tsunami killing 18 thousand people and initiating tsunami warnings along the United States' west coast. The Japanese earthquake and tsunami raised local awareness about the risks posed to left coast communities. The risk is not just from a far-source event such as in Japan, Chile or even Alaska, but also the risk posed by a near-source event caused by a major local earthquake or an off shore landslide.

“Natural disasters, such as a tsunami, can literally wipe out entire communities and cause significant loss of life,” said Robert Lewin, Director of Santa Barbara County Office of Emergency Management. “People living in the tsunami inundation areas need to know how to get to high ground in a moment’s notice.”

Tsunamis are a series of large ocean waves generated by major undersea disturbances, including earthquakes, landslides and volcanic eruptions. All U.S. ocean coasts can be impacted by tsunamis, although some areas are at much greater risk than others. Since 1812, California has experienced 14 tsunamis with wave heights higher than three feet. Of these, six caused significant destruction.

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TSUNAMI PREPAREDNESS WEEK IN SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

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In an April 20, 2015 article published in the L.A. Times, “*Earthquake Fault Heightens California Tsunami Threat, Experts Say*,” Tom Jordan, director of the Southern California Earthquake Center and earth sciences professor at the University of Southern California is quoted as saying that a huge quake on the Ventura fault could create a tsunami that would begin “in the Santa Barbara Channel area, and would affect the coastline ... of Santa Barbara, Carpinteria, down through the Santa Monica area and further south.”

Jordan went on to say, “I think that the more likely event is a magnitude 6 to 6.5 event under Santa Barbara or Ventura on this same fault system, close to what was experienced in the 1925 Santa Barbara earthquake and, more recently, in the 1994 Northridge earthquake.”

Everyone should know how to be prepared for tsunamis and what to do to be safe. This is true for people who live or work near the ocean, but also for anyone who may visit someday. To review maps of the County’s tsunami inundation zones, go to <http://cosb.countyofsb.org/central.aspx?id=19852>.

To prepare the community for disasters in Santa Barbara County, we have the Aware and Prepare Initiative dedicated to strengthening community disaster resiliency. Aware and Prepare is a public-private partnership among Santa Barbara County Office of Emergency Management and the cities of Santa Maria, Guadalupe, Buellton, Solvang, Lompoc, Goleta, Carpinteria, and Santa Barbara. The A&P initiative enhances the capabilities and coordination of government agencies and non-profit organizations in mitigating, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from emergencies and disasters.

“Aware and Prepare is an invaluable resource during emergency situations,” said Lewin. “Ensuring everyone throughout the County is prepared for emergencies and natural disasters like earthquakes, tsunamis, floods and wildfires is vital.” Lewin added, “If we can’t find you, we can’t alert you and your family about emergencies in your area. I encourage everyone to register for alerts at AwareandPrepare.org and have an escape plan.”

For information about disaster preparedness and Aware and Prepare, go to www.AwareandPrepare.org. For information about the County, go to www.countyofsb.org.