

**SB 557 Uniform Tsunami Warning Signal Work Team
Minutes from conference call December 1, 2006**

Attendees of conference call

Al Aya, Cleve Rooper, Wayne Stinson, Steve Scibelli, Don Baker, John Buchanan, Mark Metcalf, Jack Lenox, and Jay Wilson

Absent

Tom Manning, George Priest, and Ryan Sandler, Chris Jonientz-Trisler, and Tyree Wilde

Agenda

1. Results of Douglas County siren test and survey
2. Inventory of tsunami sirens and authorities by county
3. Review of Nov. 15 Kuril Islands tsunami on west coast
4. Compatibility of tsunami sirens with dam failure sirens and potential LNG sirens (tones & testing)
5. View from Legislature (D. Bishoff, if available)
6. Executive Order 13407 "Public Alert and Warning System"
7. Other items

Results of Douglas County tsunami siren test and survey

Wayne Stinson reported there were 35 volunteers participating in a survey of their ability to hear three tests of the new electronic sirens: Steady tone, Wailing tone and Voice message. The most audible tone, especially at a distance, was the wailing up/down siren tone. Survey result show it was the most easy to discern at distance by 75% of volunteers. The voice message was only able to be understood in the immediate vicinity of the sirens.

John Buchanan confirmed that a similar response occurred in Florence and that people complained that the sirens couldn't be heard indoors. Al Aya agree with these results for Cannon Beach but said their sirens are directional signals and focus the voice message signal into the beach and business districts of town to provide instructions for the tourist. Residents should know what to do hearing only the sirens. Don Baker from North Lincoln Fire said that his district partnered with Lincoln City to acquire electromechanical sirens that have rotational action and that the steady tone becomes a wail tone due to the Doppler Effect. Jack Lenox from the Coquille Tribe mentioned from his experience with SONAR technology that lower frequencies penetrate better and travel farther than higher frequencies.

Inventory of tsunami sirens and authorities by county

We discussed at the last meeting a need to develop a statewide inventory of all tsunami sirens. Jay will be creating a spreadsheet format for inputting this information. The information needed is listed below. Sheriff Metcalf from Curry County noted that they have 12 sirens installed and programmed to use the wailing tone and have 11 more waiting to be installed. All of these are triggered from the Sheriff's Office.

Existing Tsunami Siren inventory

1. Coordinates need to be in the following format:
 - Decimal degrees, longitude in negative numbers, latitude in positive numbers
 - There should be no letters (N, S, etc.)
2. Datum WPS 84 or note the projection used
3. Radius
4. Device – Make and model
5. Tone/voice

6. Power source
7. Jurisdiction responsible
8. Who has Authority to trigger
9. Testing schedule and format

Review of Nov. 15 Kuril Islands tsunami on west coast

Jay reviewed timeline of event and contact between OEM and informal WC/ATWC and subsequent contact between Medford WFO and Coos and Curry County officials. Sheriff Metcalf and Chief Scibelli noted how well they perceived the message delivery was on their end. Wayne Stinson mentioned the frustration of not getting an official NWS statement on the hazardous conditions and the difficulty in recommending action without a written NWS product message. Jay has provided comments to the NWS regarding warning problems during this event and received complaints from Oregon Parks and Rec. about failures of coastal Park managers to be notified.

Tyree Wilde asked that the following statement be added to the minutes:

The NWS has established interim procedures for these sub-warning events until the Tsunami Warning Centers and the NTHMP redefines the Tsunami Advisory product to use for these type of events. As interim procedures for these sub-warning events, the NWS weather forecast offices will issue a Special Weather Statement to let the public know about the potential danger from strong currents and surges in bays and harbors. Each office will issue a similar statement using a standard template developed by the Tsunami Warning Center. The content of the statement is listed below:

THE TSUNAMI _____ (WARNING, WATCH OR ADVISORY) HAS BEEN CANCELED FOR THE _____ (E.G. OREGON, WASHINGTON AND CALIFORNIA) COASTS AS NO SIGNIFICANT INUNDATION IS EXPECTED TO BE PRODUCED BY THIS WAVE. HOWEVER, A MODERATE SIZE TSUNAMI MAY BE RECORDED IN SOME AREAS OF THE COAST WHICH COULD PRODUCE DANGEROUS CURRENTS AND SURGES IN HARBORS AND BAYS. COASTAL RESIDENTS ARE ADVISED TO STAY OUT OF THE WATER, OFF THE BEACH, AND AWAY FROM HARBORS AND MARINAS. WAVE HEIGHTS AND CURRENTS ARE AMPLIFIED BY IRREGULAR SHORELINE AND ARE DIFFICULT TO PREDICT. THE THREAT IS EXPECTED TO BEGIN AT _____ PST AND COULD CONTINUE FOR SEVERAL HOURS. THE INITIAL WAVE MAY NOT BE THE LARGEST. MARINERS IN WATER DEEPER THAN 600 FEET SHOULD NOT BE AFFECTED BY A TSUNAMI.

Compatibility of tsunami sirens with dam failure sirens and potential LNG sirens (tones & testing)

The Group discussed the need for tsunami sirens to work with other existing or future siren systems. Coos Bay has existing sirens for dam failure warning, with mapped evacuation areas on the Coos Bay/North Bend tsunami evacuation brochure. The Pony Creek Dam has two sirens that are owned by the Coos Bay/North Bend Water Board. Sirens have been tested twice since their installation in 2005. Every month they are tested electronically without the siren going off. A proposed Liquid Natural Gas terminal in the Oregon Bay Area may require its own public warning system too. Cleve Rooper urged the group to establish the tsunami tone criteria now and let the other facility adapt later.

View from Legislature

With the Oregon State Legislature returning to session in 2007, OEM needs to provide a status report on the deliberations of the Work Group.

Executive Order 13407 "Public Alert and Warning System"

Chris Jonientz-Trisler reported that FEMA HQ has submitted the required guidance for Executive Order 13407 to the President's Office and is waiting for their direction. With an upcoming realignment of FEMA expected in the Spring of 2007, FEMA says it will not address any recommended changes to

national warning standards, like updating CPG 1-17, until after April 2007. Therefore, Oregon needs to press on with our responsibilities to the Legislature for a uniform tsunami warning signal.

Other business

The Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program (CSEPP) at the Umatilla Chemical Depot will be sunseting their program in the foreseeable future. It may begin as a staged approach or wait until all work has concluded. Upon completion, the public siren systems will become available and OEM will work with coastal emergency managers on proposals to acquire these sirens for tsunami warning use. The sirens will be available at little or no cost, but the jurisdiction will be responsible for managing the transportation and installation and may need to cover removal costs as well. An inventory will be produced soon and more discussion will follow.

Next Steps

OEM will post meeting minutes and additional information on their website and will circulate a Working Group questionnaire on recommendation for unified warning criteria.