Media Advisory: ALBANY SCHOOL CELEBRATES EARTHQUAKE AWARENESS AND STATE-FUNDED SEISMIC UPGRADES
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Media and the public are invited to attend an assembly, earthquake drill and building walk through highlighting recent seismic upgrades at Central Elementary School, 336 9th Ave., Albany, Ore., April 24 from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m.

Oregon State University scientists estimate there is a 37 percent chance that a major Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake will strike Oregon within the next 50 years, and smaller earthquakes are even more likely to occur.

"In a disaster people want to know their children will be safe," said Kiri Carini, Seismic Rehabilitation Grant Program Coordinator for Oregon Office of Emergency Management. "It's an important part of overall recovery and resilience."

Since 2009, state-funded seismic retrofit grants have been awarded to 21 K-12 schools in 15 Oregon school districts, 3 Oregon community college and university campuses, and 18 public safety facilities deemed in danger during a large earthquake. The Governor's budget requests $30 million for this priority for the next two years, and legislators will decide the final funding level later this spring.

The Office of Oregon Emergency Management's Seismic Rehabilitation Grant Program, established with legislative efforts by Senate President Peter Courtney (D-Salem) focusing on public schools and public safety facilities, has been awarded the Western States Seismic Policy Council (WSSPC) Board of Directors 2013 Overall Award in Excellence in the category of mitigation efforts.

According to a 2007 study released by Oregon Dept. of Geology and Mineral Industries, more than 1,000 Oregon school buildings were recognized as at risk of collapse during a major earthquake.

Thanks to a $1.5 million seismic retrofit recently completed at Central Elementary School, the building is much more likely to withstand an earthquake, explained David McKay, director, Project Solutions Group, Willamette Education Service District. McKay was the project manager for the seismic retrofit at Central Elementary and will lead the Apr. 24 walk through.

Here is the schedule of events:

9:00 a.m. to 9:25 a.m.--Assembly at Central Elementary School with scheduled speakers, Sen. Betsy Close, R-Albany; Dr. Chris Goldfinger, earthquake expert from Oregon State University; Martin Plotner, director, Oregon Office of Emergency Management; David McKay; and Ryan McGoldrick, American Red Cross Preparedness Program coordinator.

9:30 a.m. to 9:40 a.m.--School Earthquake Drill.

9:45 a.m. to 10:15 a.m.--Presentation by Dr. Goldfinger and school tour highlighting recent seismic upgrades at Central Elementary led by McKay.

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