News Release

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Oregon's first evacuation assembly point (EAP) equipment successfully tested in Tillamook

(Tillamook) – Earlier this week leaders from the Oregon Department of Human Services' Office of Resilience and Emergency Management (OREM) and Tillamook County, along with volunteers, set up and tested Oregon's first set of evacuation assembly point (EAP) equipment.

OREM designed this emergency preparedness exercise to train Tillamook leaders to set up the equipment without assistance. "Coastal communities like Tillamook are prioritized to house these supplies because data shows they are likely to be cut off from the rest of the state during the Cascadia earthquake," said Ed Flick (he/him), director of the ODHS Office of Resilience and Emergency Management. "ODHS has primary responsibility for mass care and shelter following disasters, so helping local communities access critical supplies that can quickly be used to serve their local community is important to us."

OREM budgeted eight total hours for equipment set up. The team had 15 tents set up in just four hours. 38 OREM staff, Tillamook County staff and volunteers spent Tuesday night in the tents to test the equipment. The team also ate meals ready to eat (MREs) for lunch because that's what people who use the EAP will eat.

"The exercise proved that Tillamook is definitely getting prepared for Cascadia and other types of emergencies. It was a great exercise. It showed how the different community partners come together, work together and can accomplish tasks as a team," said Randy Thorpe, Tillamook County Emergency Manager.

Evacuation assembly points are short-term locations for people to gather while emergency responders work to access the impacted area. They are not intended to be long-term shelters but are places people can register, receive nourishment and short-term shelter, get essential medical care and be scheduled for transport out of the area when needed. The ability to provide immediate support and transportation to people is especially needed in areas with large tourist populations, like Oregon's coast.

"As the most disaster rich county in the state, Tillamook County was thrilled to partner with Oregon Department of Human Services' Office of Resilience and Emergency Management in the Able Readiness 4 exercise at the Port of Tillamook Bay on August 22 and 23. We are grateful to the State of Oregon for the investment in resiliency of Oregon communities to prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies and disasters. We are very much heartened by our partnership with OREM and our enhanced ability to provide for the needs of our citizens in future disasters," said Mary Faith Bell, Tillamook County Commissioner

OREM plans on deploying more of these supplies to other coastal cities, but the locations have not yet been determined.

About the Oregon Department of Human Services' Office of Resilience and Emergency Management

ODHS holds three distinct roles through its Office of Resilience and Emergency Management, all of which reduce the impact of disasters on people. In its most foundational role, OREM staff work every day with ODHS programs, offices and affiliated agencies, to ensure the safety of the people served by our programs, and our staff. The second role is as the lead agency for cooling, warming and cleaner air centers to protect the public from life-threatening weather and related events. The third role is as the primary agency for mass care and social services recovery, as outlined in Oregon's comprehensive emergency operations and recovery plans. In this role, ODHS supports the evacuation, sheltering, feeding, emergency assistance, family reunification, distribution of emergency supplies and human services needs of people impacted by disasters.

Across all these roles, ODHS develops and relies on partnerships and coordination with public and private organizations at the local and regional levels and with our state and Tribal Nation partners.