



KENAI PENINSULA



Resources for building stronger, safer communities on the Kenai Peninsula

Spring 2011

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Spring Tsunamis — Real and Imagined

National Tsunami Awareness Week, March 27-April 2

On March 10th, as Kenai Peninsula Borough coastal communities were gearing up to participate in a National Tsunami Exercise, a magnitude 8.9 earthquake struck Japan, generating a real tsunami that devastated a number of Japan's coastal communities and traveled across the Pacific Ocean towards California and Alaska. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) West Coast and Alaska Tsunami Warning Center automatically activated the tsunami warning sirens along Alaska's coast. KPB/OEM Director Eric Mohrmann spent much of the night coordinating with city officials. Fortunately, the waves that reached Kenai Peninsula shores early in the morning of March 11 were one foot or less in height and caused no damage. But the event serves as a grave reminder that the danger of tsunamis is genuine, and drives home the need to be prepared at all times for a major event.

Fortunately, being prepared for the unexpected is what CERT volunteers are all about!

Tsunami Awareness Week is a good time to do some 'mental exercises' of your own: Do you live or work in areas that are vulnerable to tsunami? Does your family have a plan for reacting to a tsunami? Do you know the fastest route to safety? Do you know how to contact family members if you become separated and cell phones don't work?



While tsunamis directly impact only coastal communities, CERT volunteers could potentially be affected by a tsunami, either because you live in a coastal community or because, in a large event, you may be asked to deploy to coastal areas to give assistance.

Choosing to live in a seismically active area means accepting a certain level of risk. Being thoroughly prepared for the earth to shake and the sea to rise is some of the most important insurance you can have!

To learn more about tsunami risk in the KPB: <http://www.borough.kenai.ak.us/emergency/HazMit/plan.htm>

For preparedness information: <http://www.borough.kenai.ak.us/emergency>

On a related disaster topic: we're receiving a lot of calls and email questions about Japan's nuclear plant problems and radiation risks. Here's a link to the Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management website for radiation related information and risk updates:

<http://www.hss.state.ak.us/prepared/radiological.htm>

Recent Training

Jan. 24—Feb. 5 Seward CERT Training

Congratulations to **Janice Cipriotti-Melvin, Dylan Critchett, Jason Flowers, Craig Gettle, Mariah Johnson, Sue Lang, Samuel Melvin, Cheryl Seese** and **Frederick Surio**, our newest CERT volunteers in the Seward/Bear Creek area. It's great to see a strong team developing on the eastern Kenai Peninsula!



Using the buddy system to put out a fire

Many thanks to intrepid instructor **Curt Jacobson**, with capable assistance from **Todd Camm** and **Sal Galvano** and **Trooper James Buttrey**. Thanks also to **Scott Bartlett** for providing classroom space at the Seward Military Resort, as well as snacks and drill set-up and safety oversight, **Jamie Walker** and **Jewel Williams** for their help with the drill and to **Michelle Stewart, Carla, Gordon** and **David Merrill**, and **Rick** and **Cindy Moore** for traveling from Soldotna to take part in the final drill! Congratulations are also in order for Rick and Cindy, who incorporated helping with the drill into their 32nd wedding anniversary celebration! Now that's commitment!



Green Helmets in action!

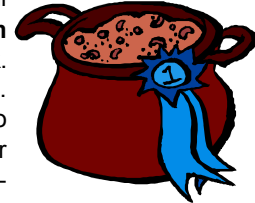
Upcoming

Opportunities

April 10-16: National Volunteer Week An entire week celebrating people in action to make our world a better place!

April 30: Seward Area Emergency Services Chili Cook-Off Several Seward-area emergency service groups will be hosting a chili

cook-off on **April 30th** from **11 am – 2 pm** at the Dale R. Lindsey Railroad Terminal. The event is free and open to the public, and is a chance for the public to meet the emergency service groups who protect them, and for the organizations to recruit new volunteers. Participating organizations include the fire departments from Lowell Point, Seward, Bear Creek and Moose Pass; the Seward Volunteer Ambulance Corps, and Seward/Bear Creek CERT. If you would like to participate, please contact Glenda Landua, glandua@borough.kenai.ak.us; 1-800-478-4441, ext. 2098.



April 30 and May 1: Soldotna Home Show We'll be sharing a booth with Division of Forestry (FireWise) and focusing on wildfire and earthquake preparedness. If you have time to help, please contact Glenda.

May 21: Soldotna Safety Days, 11am–3pm: same great day of education and activities for the whole family in a new location. This year the event is at Soldotna High

New Maps



In the last few months, all CERT volunteers should have received laminated maps of your response area with the names and residential addresses of fellow volunteers who live nearby. These maps are intended to help CERT volunteers locate each other in the event of an emergency and should be kept in your CERT bag. If you have not received a map, please contact Glenda at: glandua@borough.kenai.ak.us

Spring Classes

A spring CERT class, a GPS orienteering event and Animals in Disaster classes are being planned.

Watch your e-mail and www.kpvvolunteers.org.



CERT Team-Building Pilot Project



The Kenai Peninsula Borough has been recruiting and training CERT volunteers for several years now, and thanks to our members, we've got a program that's nearly 200 volunteers-strong!

This pool of capable volunteers reflects the quality of the citizens we have here on the Kenai and is a tremendous resource, but it also creates some challenges. One of the "golden rules" of the Incident Management System (ICS) is Span of Control, which states that the number of people that can be effectively supervised by any one person is between three and seven. Fewer than this and resources aren't being used efficiently; more than this and the supervisor is overloaded. Without a formal organizational structure, CERT has definitely exceeded this number!

In addition, the beginning of a disaster response is typically a time of chaos. It is not the most effective time to be developing teams and determining roles. Should an incident, particularly one with potentially borough-wide effects such as an earthquake, occur, our CERT volunteers can function most effectively if they are in teams that have trained together, have a practiced response plan in place and are guided by experienced team leaders.

With the support of the Kenai Fire Department, we're beginning a pilot program in Kenai to develop cohesive teams of CERT volunteers. Each team has a Team Leader and Deputy Team Leader as well as members who live and/or work in a common geographic area.

Team Leaders will have several responsibilities, including:

- reporting to the CERT Coordinator for routine matters and training;
- providing information to team members of upcoming training, exercises and events;
- notifying team members of actual or pending emergencies utilizing a telephone tree;
- organizing, supervising and directing the team members;
- establishing and maintaining accountability of team members;
- reporting to the Staging Officer or Incident Commander, or Operations Section Chief;
- periodically inventorying disaster caches and other resources; and
- reporting team needs, including training and logistics, to the CERT Coordinator.

The Kenai area volunteer teams have been formed and will serve as "test pilots" for this new way of organizing. Once we have some experience in how to organize and communicate effectively, we plan to expand the team-building to other CERT groups throughout the Kenai Peninsula.

Related projects include developing a written set of Standard Operating Guidelines for CERT volunteers and working with other emergency response organizations such as fire/EMS departments and law enforcement agencies to establish a plan for coordinating with CERT teams in emergency situations.

These changes reflect the growth and increasing professionalism of CERT on the Kenai. Our goal is to make CERT a more effective and efficient organization that can smoothly integrate our skills with other emergency response organizations to help our communities in times of need.

CERT Contact Information — UPDATE in progress

Volunteer Robin Ross has been diligently verifying and updating contact information for every one of our nearly 200 CERT volunteers. If we haven't been able to reach you by email, the next step is for Robin to call or send a letter. Thank you in advance for responding and helping us with this important task!

CERT Volunteers — Please do your part and help us keep our training grants. IS 100 and 700 are required for everyone who may be called on to respond during a disaster.

IS-100: Introduction to Incident Command System
IS-700: An Introduction to the National Incident Management System

FEMA's Emergency Management Institute offers the classes free online:

www.training.fema.gov/IS/NIMS.asp

After you complete each class, please forward FEMA's confirmation certificate link to glandua@borough.kenai.ak.us.

KENAI PENINSULA CITIZEN CORPS



Think Spring — and Wildfire Season!



The snow will be melting soon (*really, it will!*) and with the spring comes the reality of fire danger. Dry vegetation from last summer ignites easily. Now is a good time to start thinking about making your home fire-ready. Clearing brush and taking other steps to make a defensible space around your home and outbuildings is time well spent to protect your property. And if you plan to do any burning, make sure you get a permit, take measures to keep the burn under control, and notify your local fire service agency if you anticipate large amounts of smoke. For more information, check out www.firewise.org or contact the Alaska Division of Forestry.



Prepare. Plan. Stay Informed. ▶

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