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BUILDING DISASTER RESISTANT COMMUNITIES ONE STEP AT A TIME

Students Survey Wildfire Risk in Walla Walla

Walla Walla High school student volunteers began surveying homes in Walla Walla County in early April, to help their community Project Impact partnership identify structures at risk from wildfire. Their dual mission included going door-to-door with detailed surveys, while passing out literature on reducing wildfire risk. According to Project Impact volunteer supervisor Terry Glover, they'll come back and do an even more detailed assessment on request from homeowners.

The risk survey helps identify areas that may need more emphasis on creating defensible space, a term used to define the area around a structure that allows firefighters space to protect a home threatened by wildfire. Owners that take action now are less likely to lose their home during the fire season.

Walla Walla Project Impact is offering grants to home and business owners who have structures at risk to wildfire. The grant will be combined with the owner's efforts to create



Walla Walla High Schoolers Jennifer Wilson, Ceo Williams, Joan End, Miranda York and Project Impact volunteer supervisor Terrie Glover survey Wildfire Risks over Spring Break.

defensible space by clearing brush, cleaning pine needles from roofs and gutters, and moving wood piles.

For more information contact Don Marlatt, (509) 527-3285.

Project Impact, National Geographic & Allstate to Offer Prizes for Disaster Savvy Students



School students are now eligible to win great prizes for their disaster knowledge through a new National Geographic sweepstakes co-sponsored by FEMA's Project Impact and Allstate. To be eligible for prizes,

"This is a great way for students to learn about disaster, test their knowledge and find out about what can be done to stop disaster damage. We hope every student in the country enters the contest."
—James Lee Witt, FEMA Director

youngsters must answer such questions as what is the term for reducing the risk for disasters and what is the most common natural disaster in the U.S. The answers can be found on the FEMA for Kids Web site.

Prizes include National Geographic products. To obtain the sweepstakes entry form visit the FEMA for Kids website at <http://www.fema.gov/kids/FEMAcon.pdf>.

Schools can also participate in a Reduce the Risk contest and win prizes for their efforts to safeguard their community. Students in grades six through 12 must work together with local emergency management officials, the private sector or volunteer organizations to create and implement a project to reduce the risk for disaster damage. The first place class wins \$3,000 worth of National Geographic products. To obtain the Reduce the Risk Rules and entry form: <http://www.fema.gov/kids/FEMAsweep.pdf>.

A quarterly newsletter published by FEMA Region 10 to share information, leverage resources, and capitalize on proven successes for building Project Impact disaster-resistant communities.

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From Regional Director David L. de Courcy

Applying Project Impact tenets to building more disaster-resistant-schools



Last month, Monroe Public Schools secondary education director Dr. Mike Murphy invited me to Chain

Lake Elementary School to see student workstations built with donated FEMA computers, and observe their participation in a Washington state-wide “Drop-Cover and Hold” drill. When the alarm sounded, we scrambled for cover, and proceeded in an orderly fashion to prearranged stations for head counts and status reports. Aid stations, emergency response teams and backup communi-

cations centers were set up quietly and competently. Chatting with Dr. Murphy after the drill, and in fielding media queries at a joint press briefing, we discussed the larger issues of Safe Schools and school violence programs.

School safety priorities surfaced with our very first Project Impact pilot program in Seattle, correcting nonstructural seismic hazards in public schools. Similar projects are part of the mix in Pierce County, Washington; Benton County, Oregon and Boise, Idaho. With a proven track record in multi-jurisdictional program coordination, bringing diverse and even disparate components together so that the individual pieces fit together, *Project Impact* has much to offer towards enhancing effective, sustainable, and long-term school violence programs. A good fit for developing the policies, plans and procedures that need to be understood and implemented by

schools system staff in case an event occurs, it may be equally effective in addressing the root causes and prevention of school violence. Broader applications are in the wings.

FEMA and Allstate have partnered with National Geographic to create a nation-wide Disaster Savvy Sweepstakes for school kids, and National Geographic’s Reduce Risk Contest joins classrooms with local emergency managers, businesses and volunteer groups to reduce disaster damage. A useful list of resources for parents and teachers is available at our own FEMA for Kids website <http://www.fema.gov/kids/> and a soon-to-be finalized American Red Cross “Masters of Disaster” curriculum is at <http://www.redcross.org/disaster/masters/>.

David L. de Courcy, Director, FEMA Region 10

Seattle's 8th Disaster Saturday Highlights Proactive Mitigation

The City of Seattle held its eighth “Disaster Saturday” on April 1, 2000. The event was held at Asa Mercer Middle School where non-structural seismic retrofits have recently been completed. The school is a model of Seattle Project Impact’s School Retrofit work being performed in partnership between the City, school district, PTA, and other volunteers. At the event, members of the community attended a plenary describing what Seattle Public Schools has done to spearhead the School Retrofit program focusing on non-structural mitigation. Awards were presented to five student winners of the Seattle Project Impact Earthquake Poster Contest. Informative workshops, such as fire extinguisher use on a real fire, were held throughout the event sponsored by Seattle Disaster Aid



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FireFree Expands in Central Oregon

by Peter S. Ribble — Project Impact Coordinator, Deschutes County



Deschutes County, located on the Eastern slopes of the Cascade Range, is a new **Project Impact** community. Our major focus is pre-disaster planning for recurring wildland fires in the urban interface areas. The cornerstone of our efforts is continuation of the **FireFree** program, established by the SAFECO Insurance Company, Deschutes Rural Fire Protection District # 2, and the City of Bend Fire Department. FireFree challenges property owners to “Get in the Zone.” This refers to the creation of a safety zone around properties in the urban interface which are at high risk from catastrophic wildfire.

The **FireFree** campaign is entering its third year in Deschutes County and recently partnered with **Project Impact**. A

dozen high risk interface neighborhoods have been targeted for special attention this season. Last year, nearly 10,000 cubic yards of material were recycled in a county landfill during the **FireFree** weekend cleanup activities. Collection dumpsters are donated, volunteer assistance is provided, and the debris is recycled. Speakers from various fire agencies are partnered with insurance industry representatives to provide information and motivation to interested residents.

Major elements of the **FireFree** program include: creation of defensible space around the rural home, reduction of flammable vegetation, removal and pruning of trees, fire resistive roofing materials, relocating wood piles and propane tanks away from the home,

keeping the roof and gutters free of pine needles, and having easy to read address signs with adequate access to the property. Past efforts by homeowners in Deschutes County have resulted in structures saved from sure destruction from wildfire.

Project Impact is excited to partner with **FireFree**, and the insurance industry to seek solutions and actions that will reduce property destruction and loss of life in the wildland urban interface. Together, we are working hard to mitigate the disastrous effects of wildfire.

For more information call (541) 312-6008.

Wildfires...

... are a natural part of living in the urban interface. Hundreds of homes are threatened, and several are lost as our region experiences another hot, dry, summer. **Awbrey Hall, Skeleton, and Smith Rock** are wildfire names etched in the minds of residents and emergency responders in Deschutes County. Property losses have run into the millions and personal losses are immeasurable.

But... our experiences and some help from FEMA has given us a new tool to combat these catastrophic losses. **Project Impact** enables Deschutes County to take a large step forward through pre-disaster planning and actions that will reduce the risk and consequences of wildland fire. Built upon local partnerships, government support, and business participation, **Project Impact** will further creation of defensible space, fuels modification around homes, visible addresses, fire resistive building materials, and emergency access to homes in the urban interface. Programs such as: **FireFree, Fire Safe, FireWise, and Living With Fire** will be expanded and communicated throughout the region to further spread the important message of prevention.



Photo Courtesy Bob Madden — Bend Fire

The most exciting part of **Project Impact** in Deschutes County is the collaborative approach being taken by all our partners. Established business partners are actively getting involved in pre-disaster planning and activities. New business partners are coming to the table to share their ideas and resources. Public and private partners are coming together to draw up strategies to create safer and more disaster resistant communities. Together, we are working to make Deschutes County

a disaster resistant region.

When wildfires strike again, and they will, we anticipate that **Project Impact** activities will reduce the losses, and help individuals to accept personal responsibility for safeguarding their property. This will enhance the livability, businesses, and scenic beauty of our region. **Project Impact** will have an impact in Deschutes County!!

For more information call Pete Ribbell, (541) 312-6008.

Kitsap LIDAR Mapping in the News

To announce their mapping project, Kitsap County Project Impact held a press conference on March 10, 2000. A panel of representatives from the local government, United States Geological Survey (USGS), FEMA Region 10, and the mapping contractor remarked on the project and the role of partnerships in making the project a reality. Three of the Puget Sound area's major television stations covered the event on their evening news broadcasts.

The LIDAR mapping project will identify fault lines in the county using remote-sensing technology for measuring the shape and elevation of the earth's surface using a laser beam emitted and read from an airplane. The product of a LIDAR survey is a very detailed Digital Elevation Model map that will support the enhancement of the county's GIS system, one of their Project Impact activities. Future plans include distributing this data and subsequent maps over the Internet. "Most importantly," commented Phyllis Mann Director of Emergency Management, "are the Internet-accessible tools that residents will access to mitigate hazards in their area."

Coming together to pool expertise and help defray costs of LIDAR mapping are Kitsap County, City of Seattle, Puget Sound Regional Council, Kitsap County Public Utility District, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). The LIDAR mapping project was funded through a \$500,000 grant from the USGS.



Left to right: Kitsap County Department of Emergency Management Director Phyllis Mann, LIDAR contractor TerrePoint President Dan Cotter and FEMA Regional Director David L. de Courcy discuss partnerships at the March 13 press conference.

Benton Encourages Earthquake Preparedness in April

Benton County Project Impact, in partnership with the Corvallis-Benton County Public Library and others, conducted a series of earthquake public education sessions throughout the month of April. Four sessions led area residents on a multifaceted journey informally titled "April Earthquake and Tsunami Awareness Month: History-Science-Research - Action."

The journey started April 4 with history about earthquakes and tsunamis in the Pacific Northwest. Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries geologist Gerald Black presented Japanese, Native American and geologic documentation on massive historic earthquakes and tsunamis in the Pacific Northwest - to standing-room-only audiences.

Follow-on sessions included "The Science of Earthquakes," on April 13, presented by Oregon State Geosciences' Andrew Meigs; "What's Being Done in Benton County and the State of Oregon?" on April 20, presented by Dogami's Yumei Wang and Benton County Emergency Management Council/Project Impact's Diane Merten. The sessions concluded on April 25 with "What Can You Do to Protect Yourself?" by Benton County Emergency Services Coordinator, Peggy Peirson. According to Peirson, "it's all about information with our community members, in a way that is interesting."

Additional April earthquake observances included school earthquake drills, a month-long earthquake display and functional OSU Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences seismograph set up at the Public Library.

For more information contact Peggy Peirson, (541) 766-6864.



The Kenai Peninsula Borough shares the Project Impact Message

The Borough grabbed the attention of the attendees at the Central Kenai Community Village Fair on March 4 by providing mitigation tools to reduce the future loss from disasters. The significance of the display and the local, state, federal participation so close to the recent February Alaska avalanche disaster provided the impetus for mitigation reduction education. Disaster mitigation's most teachable moment is in close proximity to a natural disaster incident.

Mitigation information was put into the hands of Kenai Peninsula residents when they were most receptive. The Village Fair, a one day community event, focuses on health and safety of individuals and families and was a positive vehicle for sharing Project Impact ideals. Project Impact Partners Helen Donahue, KPB LEPC Vice Chair, Becky Hutchinson, Alaska USA Federal Credit Union, Jonathan Pedersen, Soldotna First Baptist Church, Kerre Martin, Alaska Military and Veterans Affairs and Chalice Dew from FEMA's Mitigation Team. The kids are playing with FEMA for kids.

Mat-Su joins the Project Impact Family

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough is glad to announce that we have joined the Project Impact family. Each year, disasters destroy property and affects families within the Mat-SU. The Project Impact Initiative 2000 will reduce the effect of such disasters as wildland fire, tsunami's, volcanic events, winter storms, earthquakes and strong winds. The long-term impact of these disasters would be felt for years through lost jobs and could collapse the economy of the Borough. By working together through Project Impact, there are steps we are taking to reduce our vulnerability and transform our own community into a disaster resistant one.

The Borough has partnered with the Alaska Job Corp Center in Palmer, Alaska to kick off Project Impact. The Job Corps was selected as the site for the June 17, 2000 Signing Ceremony. The Job Corp Center is uniquely suited and will help in the development and implementation of Project Impact throughout the Borough. Young adults are trained in professions such as

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Breaking the Cycle in Tillamook

Tillamook Co. Board of Commissioners unanimously approved a repetitive flood loss provision for their floodplain management ordinance. This action strengthens the community's ability to address the challenges presented in a repetitive flooding situation.

Many structures in Tillamook County have experienced repeated flooding events. By virtue of the near certainty that floodwaters will return to cause additional damage to such buildings, the county has taken action to formalize the way the county handles repairs to such facilities. This effort is in line with many other activities that the community has undertaken as they strive to reduce their vulnerability to flood related losses. This code enhancement also serves as a model example of one of the steps a community can take to permanently reduce the economic drain natural disasters have on a community.

Sue Cameron, County Commissioner, said "This was an opportunity to put our money where our mouth is and pass an ordinance that will really help Tillamook County become a disaster resistant community."

Establishing a repetitive loss provision will earn the community points towards reducing their Community Rating System (CRS) rating. This benefit, added to the other points for numerous elevation projects and other mitigation efforts, makes entering the CRS even more beneficial and enticing to the community. "NFIP policyholders will love it when Tillamook County enters the CRS," said Commissioner Cameron when describing the premium reduction CRS compliance would bring to policyholders. Contact: Tom Manning, (503) 842-3412.

Idaho is Earthquake Country, in Ada County

As part of Earthquake Preparedness Week in Idaho, April 10 - 16, 2000, Ada City-County Emergency Management (ACCEM) printed 10,000 "Idaho is Earthquake Country" brochures to be distributed throughout Ada County. The earthquake preparedness brochures focus on the threat of earthquakes in Idaho and what to do before, during and after one occurs. A public service announcement promoting the brochures will air on local TV stations during the month of April. The announcements will encourage the public to pick up a brochure at any of the area libraries or by calling ACCEM at 208-377-6645 to receive a brochure by mail. The brochure was sponsored by the American Society of Safety Engineers (Snake River Chapter), Boise Project Impact, KBCI Channel 2 News, and ACCEM.



Blaine County Signing Ceremony in May

The Blaine County, Idaho, Project Impact signing ceremony is scheduled for Friday, May 26th. A tour of natural hazard areas in the Wood River Valley will precede the signing ceremony, which is scheduled for 4pm at the River Run Lodge in Sun Valley. Contact Denise Jackson at 208.788.8805 for more information.

Deschutes County Partner Celebration and Signing Ceremony

May 25, 2000
Call: Peter Ribble
(541) 312-6008

COMING UP!

Next quarter's "Project Impact Today" newsletter will be our first "all-electronic" issue. Be sure that your Region 10 Liaison Officer has your current e-mail address(es)!!!

Project Impact Western Territory Workshop: "Taking Hold in the West"

Project Impact Coordinators and partners from communities throughout the western United States will be gathering at the Renaissance Parc 55 Hotel, in San Francisco, California, on May 31-June 2, 2000. The Project Impact Western Territory Workshop, "Taking Hold in the West," will be a valuable opportunity to develop skills and strategies for sustaining Project Impact in our communities and States. Project Impact partners may contact their local coordinator if they are interested in attending the workshop.

Project Impact Partner Creates Hazard Mitigation Institute

An Institute for Hazard Mitigation Planning and Research has been established in the College of Architecture and Urban planning at the University of Washington. The Institute is providing research, mitigation planning courses, and community outreach opportunities for graduate and undergraduate students, and faculty from a variety of disciplines. Through the Department of Urban Design and Planning's M.U.P. program the Institute currently offers an area of emphasis in mitigation planning and has plans to offer a certificate program during the coming year.

The Institute was an outcome of the participation of Dr. Richard McCormick, President of the University of Washington, at the 1997 Seattle Project Impact Signing Ceremony in support of the University's partnership in making the City a "Disaster Resistant Community."

Research opportunities have already involved a wide variety of applications including geographic information systems, remote sensing, pre-event planning, and a study of homeowners' attitudes toward structural retrofitting. Outreach opportunities will be through intern positions in local government emergency management, planning and public works offices and through local disaster operations as they occur.

For further information contact Bob Freitag by email at bfreitag@u.washington.edu or visit the Institute's web site: <http://depts.washington.edu/mitigate/>

Seattle's Disaster Saturday

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and Response Teams (SDART). In addition, there were exhibits from Seattle Project Impact's Home Retrofit program and the Office of Housing's low-interest loan program for home improvements aimed at seismic retrofitting. As part of the event, Seattle Project Impact presented the Seattle Public Schools' Superintendent, Joseph Olchefske, with the Outstanding Partner Award. Seattle Project Impact presents this award at each successive Disaster Saturday to the partner who is accomplishing the most proactive mitigation efforts. Seattle Public Schools has permanently institutionalized the School Retrofit program begun through Project Impact, making a commitment of both long-term personnel and funding. Seattle Schools has also been active in mentoring other communities as far away as Kenai, Alaska, on their impressive program.

Mat-Su Joins Project Impact Family

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plumbing, electrical, construction, food service and life skills. While students attend their classes, emphasis on hazard mitigation techniques will be passed on to the student. When the students graduate from their respective program, the mitigation knowledge that was learned will leave with them as they enter their new professions.

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

