

Peninsula residents told how to shelter at home after big quake

PENINSULA
Daily News

- By Rob Ollikainen
- Friday, February 2, 2018 1:30am
- **NEWS** CLALLAM COUNTY



Earthquake-preparedness advocate and former state legislator Jim Buck of Joyce gives a presentation at the Port Angeles Public Library on Wednesday on how to prepare for a large Cascadia quake. (Keith Thorpe/Peninsula Daily News)

PORT ANGELES — An overflow crowd of nearly 400 packed the Port Angeles library to gather tips on how to shelter at home after a major earthquake.

Most people on the North Olympic Peninsula will survive a magnitude-9.0 Cascadia subduction zone earthquake and tsunami when it hits, former state Rep. Jim Buck told the audience Wednesday night.

The trick for survivors will be to find a warm, dry place to hunker down in the days and weeks that follow, Buck said in a new disaster-planning presentation called *Camping in Your House*.

“We’re going to be on our own,” said Buck, who is active with Joyce Emergency Planning and Preparation.

The last major earthquake on the 800-mile long Cascadia subduction zone off the Northwest coast occurred on Jan. 26, 1700, scientists say. Geologists say that it is not a matter of if, but when, the next quake will strike.

Emergency planners say that after a massive quake, Clallam and Jefferson counties will be divided into dozens of isolated “micro-islands” formed by collapsed bridges, failed culverts and crumbled roads.

Buck and others are urging the public to be prepared to shelter in place for up to 30 days.

People will need a supply of food, medicine and emergency items like candles, flashlights, first aid kits, radios, dust masks and water purifiers, Buck said.

It will help to have a tent to pitch in a dry room, he added.

“One of the things that I really wanted to impress on you is you have most of this stuff,” Buck said in a 90-minute presentation.

“You don’t need to spend a gazillion dollars to go get ready for this thing.

“Think in terms of what you have at your house that you can put into that (emergency) pack,” Buck added.

“You’ve got most of this stuff. It’s a question of thinking in terms of how you’re going to adapt using it.”

In addition to a Cascadia subduction zone quake, a major trembler from an inland fault like the Lake Creek/Boundary fault south of Port Angeles also has the potential to cause significant damage.

“Most people live through the earthquake,” Buck said.

“The problem we’re going to have is if the earthquake happens on a day like today. How many of you are prepared to be cold and wet without supplies for more than two or three days?”

Buck displayed a photograph of a heavily-damaged house that would not be safe to camp in.

He advised the attendees to inspect their homes after an earthquake before setting up camp.

For houses that remain structurally sound, residents should clean up broken glass and other debris from the area they plan to camp in.

“If you get cut on glass or nails or things like that, there’s going to be very little first aid available here for quite a while,” Buck said.

“There’s going to be a lot of people that have been injured in the earthquake that are going to need (first aid) worse than somebody who got cut on a piece of glass that they didn’t clean up.”

“You need keep it sanitary,” he added. “Be very careful. Mop the place out.”

Buck suggested keeping separate pairs of shoes for indoors and outdoors.

Liquefaction from the earthquake will rupture water mains and sewer pipes, causing sewage to bubble up the surface, Buck said.

“When it dries out, it’s going to turn to dust and it’s going to blow,” Buck said.

“You want to go ahead and wear your outdoor shoes. Take them off before you go inside.”

To keep warm without electricity, use a blanket to section-off the room or rooms residents plan to camp in, Buck said.

“You want to make sure you have a room that has no holes in the roof and, if possible, will keep the wind out so that you don’t have drafts,” Buck said.

“When you put the tent up inside, you have established a micro-climate inside of the house, and you keep the tent much warmer in when you’re inside.”

Buck displayed slides with suggested items for repairs, sanitation, warmth, water purification, food, cooking, human waste disposal, fire starting, fire protection and optional equipment.

“If you’ve got fire, it could be a really good thing or it could be a deadly enemy,” Buck said.

“You’re going to have to have fire extinguishers.”

Examples of items to have for repairs include duct tape, plumbers tape, angle iron, tie wire, zip ties and tarps.

“This blue tarp, this is known as the national flag of Joyce,” Buck said. “These things are all over the place out there.”

Buck reviewed the work being done in Joyce to prepare for Cascadia.

Joyce Emergency Planning and Preparation, or JEPP, has identified shelters and helicopter landing zones near Crescent School, secured propane tanks, stocked an emergency cache and built a portable water filtration system to help serve the 3,700 who live in the Joyce micro island between the Elwha and West Twin rivers.

“We’re kind of the guinea pig community for trying to figure out how were going to make it,” Buck said.

British Broadcasting Corporation video journalist Colleen Hagerty documented the presentation and spent the day Wednesday touring the Joyce area with Buck.

Buck and Sequim-based Clallam County Fire District 3 have been giving a series of talks on how the Cascadia earthquake will impact individual communities.

“After the earthquake, things are going to be kind of miserable around here and you’re going to want to have all the buddies and friends that you can have,” Buck said.

“When you’re planning to take care of things, please make sure you think in terms of taking care of your pets.”

For more on disaster preparation, contact emergency management offices in Clallam County at <http://www.clallam.net/EmergencyManagement/> and in Jefferson County at <http://www.co.jefferson.wa.us/950/Dept-of-Emergency-Management>.

Reporter Rob Ollikainen can be reached at 360-452-2345, ext. 56450, or at rollikainen@peninsuladailynews.com.



A crowd of nearly 400 people listens to a presentation by Jim Buck on earthquake preparedness on Wednesday at the Port Angeles Public Library. (Keith Thorpe/Peninsula Daily News)