Creating a tsunami-ready community

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Abstract. In the TsunamiReady pilot program Grays Harbor and the City of Ocean Shores were designated the first TsunamiReady community in the United States. This feat has taken many years and many partnerships to accomplish. Grays Harbor County has participated in the Washington State and Local Tsunami Working Group and has developed both public and private partnerships to accomplish the goal of increased community preparedness.

The many threats that impact the Washington Coast created a need for an all-hazards program that could be utilized for tsunamis, coastal flooding, and high winds. We developed redundant communications networks, both private and public. Education is key to any successful awareness campaign and through signage and Preparedness Month activities the communities of Grays Harbor became more aware of the threat and their responsibilities.

In preparing any community there are many obstacles that must be overcome. One is the public perception about what is needed and what must be done to protect the population and their property. Another is the reality of agency budgets, economics, topography, and legislative limitations. Finally, though we can plan and prepare for our residents, we must still deal with the annual visitors to our communities and the responsibility we take on for their education and safety.

An example of the TsunamiReady application for Grays Harbor can be viewed by clicking the following link: TsunamiReady Application.

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