



City of
OAKLAND
California

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News from: City of Oakland

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 17, 2014

Reflect. Honor. Prepare. City of Oakland Marks the 25th Anniversary of the Loma Prieta Earthquake

Oakland, CA – With the 25th anniversary of the Loma Prieta earthquake serving as a reminder to all of us to prepare for earthquakes, the City of Oakland hosted a community preparedness event on Friday, October 17, from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. The free event reflected on the tragic 1989 quake and honored those who lost their lives and the many heroes who risked their lives to aid others. The fair was held at the Cypress Freeway Memorial Park, near the site where 42 people lost their lives when the freeway collapsed.

“While we take a moment to reflect on the loss of life and damage the Loma Prieta earthquake caused here in West Oakland, this anniversary should also remind all of us to prepare for the next big one,” said Mayor Jean Quan. “Since I joined the School Board many years ago we have made our schools, hospitals, bridges and overpasses all much safer through retrofitting and policy changes. What remains is making sure our residents are as safe as possible. That means encouraging everyone to get earthquake insurance for their home, renters and owners alike, and passing sensible legislation to get our residential buildings retrofitted. Councilmember Dan Kalb and I are working with stakeholders now and will be introducing legislation in the next few months to tackle this life-and-death issue. We must not allow the next big earthquake to be Oakland’s Hurricane Katrina.”

The preparedness fair provided vital information on how residents and business owners can prepare for the next earthquake or other natural disaster. The first 100 attendees received an earthquake preparedness item. In addition to information tables on City preparedness efforts and programs, a wide range of community nonprofits shared additional materials that can help residents plan the necessary 72 hours of self-sufficiency following a major disaster.

There were many fun activities for kids. Fire trucks and engines from the Oakland Fire Department were on display at the adjacent Fire Station 3, while emergency equipment from Oakland Public Works stretched along Mandela Parkway. The Alameda County Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Services had some special equipment on static display, too.

Fire safety and prevention tips – including how to “Stop, Drop & Roll” and call 911 – were provided by the Oakland Fire Department’s Fire Prevention Bureau. “Drop, Cover & Hold On” techniques for earthquakes were taught by CORE (Communities of Oakland Respond to Emergencies) volunteers. The Oakland Discovery Center, part of the Oakland Parks & Recreation Department, demonstrated basic seismic engineering techniques that can prevent a building from collapsing during an earthquake. The Chabot Space & Science Center hosted a hands-on activity where youth built their own model structures out of marshmallows and toothpicks to test on the center’s shake table that simulated earthquakes of various intensities.

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Important community partners were on hand including the Federal Emergency Management Agency, U.S. Geological Survey, California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, California Department of Transportation, American Red Cross, Eden I & R, 1989earthquake.org, Pacific Gas & Electric, Oakland Radio Communication Association, Oakland Medical Reserve Corps, Paramedics Plus, Alameda County EMS, Alameda Health Systems and UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland. CARD, Collaborating Agencies Responding to Disasters, an Oakland-based nonprofit agency created in the wake of the Loma Prieta Earthquake, shared materials on preparedness and response needs of nonprofits, faith agencies and the diverse communities found in Oakland.

The event was supported by the Department of Homeland Security, Office of Grants and Training, CERT grant funds and other program funds.

How the City has Prepared

Over the last 25 years, City staff has established key partnerships with community-based organizations and neighboring cities, bolstered our emergency equipment and trained extensively for a variety of disaster scenarios. Additionally, the City spent more than \$195 million to completely rebuild eight buildings to higher seismic standards and retrofit an additional 22 municipal buildings, including historic City Hall.

Voter-approved Measure I, passed in 1992, allowed investment of more than \$50 million in an Alert & Warning Siren system, a fire boat, water tender trucks, a state-of-the-art Emergency Operations Center, a Geographic Information System, two new 911 Dispatch Centers, radio upgrades and much more.

More recently, the Rockefeller Foundation selected the City of Oakland as one of the first 32 municipalities across the world to join the 100 Resilient Cities (100 RC) Network. This designation provides support to hire a Chief Resilience Officer (CRO) and create a community-driven resilience strategy as well as access to tools, technical support and resources for implementing a comprehensive resilience plan. In August 2014, Victoria Salinas, Oakland's first CRO, was appointed to lead citywide resilience-building efforts to help Oakland prepare for, withstand and bounce back from catastrophic events and chronic stresses.

Through our existing resilience work, the City of Oakland has identified several initial priorities that will be examined as part of this process:

- Safer housing for Oakland, including a seismic retrofit program for 17,000 multi-family soft-story, rental units at risk of collapse after a major earthquake
- Adapting to climate change, especially rising seas, extreme heat and precipitation events
- Reducing social and economic vulnerability of many Oakland residents
- Preparing Oakland to quickly recover from a major disaster

"Over the last 25 years, the City of Oakland and our dynamic community partners have made significant progress on building up Oakland's resilience," said Salinas. "We are looking forward to accelerating and scaling up those efforts to ensure our community can thrive in the face of any adversity."

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Helping Residents and Businesses Prepare

City of Oakland programs such as CORE and “Learn, Lead, Lift” have helped to prepare and train Oakland residents and business owners.

Established in 1989 after the Loma Prieta earthquake, **Communities of Oakland Respond to Emergencies (CORE)** is among the first community preparedness public education programs in the nation. CORE is a free emergency and disaster prevention, preparedness and response training program for individuals, neighborhood groups and community-based organizations. The program teaches self-reliance skills and helps neighborhoods establish response teams to take care of the neighborhood until professional emergency personnel arrive. Since its inception, the Oakland Fire Department’s CORE program has provided free training to more than 22,000 residents, including hundreds of people who speak a language other than English.

The training schedule and resources are available at oaklandcore.org. To sign up for classes or for assistance in forming a CORE neighborhood group, call (510) 238-6351 or email core@oaklandnet.com.

To reach deeper into Oakland’s diverse communities, the Oakland Fire Department’s Emergency Management Services Division (EMSD) launched “**Learn, Lead, Lift,**” a disaster justice pilot program. The program strives to sustainably engage and integrate all of Oakland’s neighborhoods in emergency planning, preparedness and mitigation efforts regardless of social, cultural, religious or economic status.

Putting aside traditional top-down models, “Learn, Lead, Lift” fosters a new conversation and a culture of preparedness starting in the areas of the city that experience significant social and economic challenges. Unique approaches include the use of existing in-home resources, partnerships with community institutions and action-oriented, pictorial materials that do not rely on written instructions. To learn more, visit www2.oaklandnet.com/LearnLeadLift.

In partnership with the California Resiliency Alliance (CRA), the City is **helping Oakland business owners to prepare for and recover from disasters** by learning easy steps to take now to minimize business disruption and speed recovery following a natural disaster. In earthquake-prone areas, business continuity and disaster recovery planning is as important as a sound business plan.

The CRA will present a series of workshops to provide steps and resources to help small- and medium-sized businesses prepare for business interruption and resumption. Participants also learn about initiatives, such as the **Business Resiliency Network**, to promote ongoing partnerships between government agencies and businesses for community recovery following a disaster. These workshops for business owners are presented in partnership with the City of Oakland’s Economic & Workforce Development Department and the Oakland Fire Department’s EMSD.

Small business owners who would like to join Oakland’s Private Sector Advisory Committee of the Business Resiliency Network may email info@caresiliency.org and join the California Resiliency Alliance at caresiliency.org. Business owners
(more)

October 17, 2014
Page Four

can also learn about local risks for their businesses by visiting disastersafety.org and entering their zip codes. Training opportunities for businesses are also offered through the previously mentioned CORE program. EMSD staff offer free reviews of business continuity plans by calling (510) 238-3938.

Operating 24/7, Eden I&R's 211 phone line diverts non-life threatening calls away from 911 so that emergency dispatch can concentrate on life threatening calls before, during and after a disaster.

Helping Landlords and Renters to Understand their Risks

In an effort to ensure Oakland's housing stock is better prepared for the next earthquake, the Oakland City Council passed an ordinance in July 2009 that mandates seismic screening of certain **soft-story residential buildings**. A soft-story building has large ground-floor openings – such as a parking garage or store-front windows – with slender columns supporting the upper stories. These soft-story buildings, constructed before enhanced earthquake design standards were adopted in 1991, and which have not been retrofitted, are particularly vulnerable to damage or collapse in an earthquake. To learn more about the ordinance, visit bit.ly/ZtvLoQ. For more information on soft-story buildings, visit resilience.abag.ca.gov/projects/oakland-soft-story/.

Recently, the Oakland Soft-Story Map app (softstory.openoakland.org) was launched allowing residents to easily find out if they live in a soft-story apartment building with more than four units. The app was launched by Oakland resident Dave Guarino through Open Oakland, a volunteer hacker group that works with City employees to create helpful websites.

Building on the evaluation information gathered, the City of Oakland, as part of its resilience efforts, expects to announce a pilot retrofit program to assist building owners with life-saving seismic improvements in early 2015.

On October 16, the City distributed an information memorandum that described efforts underway to design a seismic retrofit program that reduces displacement and safety risks posed by wood-framed soft-story apartment buildings. To download the memo, please visit <http://www2.oaklandnet.com/w/OAK049788>.

In the coming months, staff will continue with the community engagement, stakeholder outreach and consultation needed to complete the program design. The City of Oakland will host **a community forum on Thursday, October 30, 2014, from 5:30 to 7 p.m.** in City Hall, 1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza. City staff will introduce the City's current vision for a seismic retrofit program and invite feedback on the design and implementation.

Earthquake Insurance Available

Another preparation consideration is the purchase of earthquake insurance. For more information, check with your insurance agent or visit earthquakeauthority.com/index.aspx?id=13 or uphelp.org/library/resource/renters-insurance-buying-tips.

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