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Cascadia Region Earthquake Workgroup
P.O. Box 30875, Seattle, Washington 98133

Contact: Heidi Kandathil
Executive Director
(206) 790-0923

313 Year Anniversary of Cascadia Fault Earthquake and Tsunami Observed

SEATTLE — January 26, 1700 is when an estimated magnitude 9.0 megathrust earthquake and tsunami occurred on the Cascadia Subduction Zone off the coastline of Washington, Oregon, Northern California, and British Columbia. This Saturday, January 26, 2013 marks the 313th anniversary of the last great Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake and associated tsunami. The Cascadia Subduction Zone is recognized as one of the world's most dangerous faults as it poses a significant earthquake hazard for western United States and Canada; including some the region's most highly populated cities including Portland, Oregon, Seattle, Washington, and Vancouver, British Columbia.

A magnitude 9.0 earthquake on the Cascadia fault would be one thousand times more powerful than the 2001 magnitude 6.8 Nisqually, Washington earthquake. In addition, the impacts to coastal communities will be similar to the temblors that struck Japan in March, 2011 and Chile in February, 2010. Future Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquakes and tsunamis will have long-term impacts to coastal communities and the potential to inflict tens of billions of dollars in physical damage that will dramatically impact the region's economy well beyond the coastlines.

“This anniversary offers Cascadia region residents, schools and businesses an opportunity to prepare for the future” said Cascadia Region Earthquake Workgroup (CREW) President, John Schelling. “To help reduce the risk and vulnerability to future Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquakes and tsunami hazards, the CREW brings together researchers, practitioners and citizens from northern California to British Columbia to help our region plan for and become more resilient to these catastrophic events” said Schelling.

CREW has developed a number of free products to help Cascadia residents, schools, businesses, and emergency managers become better prepared for future earthquakes including: earthquake scenarios, disaster planning toolkits for small businesses, and post-disaster recovery guides. These and other preparedness materials are accessible online at www.crew.org.

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