

## Coastal similarities between Oregon, Samoan quake urge caution

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By Raju Woodward, Gazette-Times reporter | Posted: Thursday, October 1, 2009 2:30 am | No Comments Posted

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An Oregon State University professor says there's a good chance that a tsunami similar to the one that struck the Samoan Islands on Tuesday could someday strike the Oregon coast - and that Oregonians need to prepare for the possibility.

"We sit on a similar subduction zone, the Cascadia Subduction Zone," said Dawn Wright, a professor of geoscience at OSU. "There's a good percentage chance that there could be an earthquake of 8 or 9 magnitude within the next 50 years."

An earthquake with a magnitude between 8.0 and 8.3 on Tuesday triggered a tsunami that swept ashore on Samoa and American Samoa, flooding and flattening villages, killing more than 100 people and leaving dozens missing.

However, Wright said the Cascadia zone more closely resembles the subduction zone in Indonesia, where a 2004 earthquake started a tsunami that killed nearly 230,000 people.

So Wright and other OSU researchers are trying to focus on a message of preparation to the state's coastal areas. She said OSU researchers are working with several coastal towns in the state, such as Seaside and Cannon Beach, on evacuation procedures and structures that can withstand tsunami waves.

"This was a terrible tragic thing that happened," Wright said. "The people there didn't have time to react, because they are generally watching for hurricanes and typhoons. So we need to continue to be aware of this danger and prepare."

- Raju Woodward, Gazette-Times

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