

Damage reported from magnitude-5.7 quake in Calif.

Associated Press, 5-24-13

GREENVILLE, Calif. -- A moderate earthquake centered in rural northeastern California and felt in two other states damaged some homes and ruptured a tank that supplies residential drinking water in the densely forested region, officials said Friday.

The magnitude-5.7 quake centered near Greenville sent items tumbling from grocery store shelves and downed chimneys when it hit at 8:47 p.m. Thursday. Despite the damage, no injuries have been reported.

The earthquake was felt in Reno, Nev., about 100 miles south; as far away as San Francisco, 230 miles southwest; and in Oregon. About four dozen aftershocks have been reported, including a magnitude-4.9 temblor that struck early Friday.

About 300 people were affected by the damaged water system and were under a boil advisory until further notice.

"Without question, it's the strongest quake I've ever felt here. It was very unsettling, and it lasted long enough to create a measure of anxiety," Plumas County Sheriff Greg Hagwood said. "The supermarkets and stores had a lot of things come off the shelves."

Pacific Gas & Electric said about 660 customers lost power on the southwestern edge of Lake Almanor at about 9:30 p.m. Thursday. Electricity has since been restored.

At least three houses had moderate damage including collapsed chimneys and cracked plaster. County officials said the total damage isn't yet known because many homes in the area are unoccupied and seasonal.

Susan Shephard and her husband, Alan Shephard, who run the Quail Lodge at Lake Almanor near the epicenter, said they were watching "The Hunger Games" on TV when the whole building started shaking.

"All of a sudden things started falling off the shelves, mirrors fell off the wall, vases fell down to the floor, everything started crashing," Susan Shephard told the Redding Record-Searchlight. "It felt like the end of our world."

The quake was the strongest to hit the mostly wilderness region since 1934, said Keith Knudsen, deputy director of the U.S. Geological Survey in Menlo Park.

It appeared to have occurred along a strike-slip fault line similar to the San Andreas. More than 9,000 people including from neighboring states logged onto the USGS website to report feeling the jolt.

"It was a pretty good size quake," Knudsen said.

The quake hit a rugged region where the Sierra and Cascade mountains meet. More than 100 lakes and 1,000 miles of rivers and streams flow through more than a million acres of national forest. About 22,000 people live in Plumas County.

The region's seismicity is not well-studied because the terrain is rugged and dollars have been spent on analyzing faults in more populated corridors like the San Francisco Bay area where the earthquake risk is higher. Since Thursday's quake, scientists are mulling putting more portable monitors near the epicenter.