

# **Temblor tosses Northcoast**

## *Eureka suffers worst damage from 6.5 earthquake*

**Franklin Stover, Humboldt Beacon, 1-15-10**

By now, most everyone in Humboldt County is aware of the earthquake that slammed into the Northcoast on the afternoon of Saturday, Jan. 9. The jolt registered a magnitude of 6.5 and made its deepest impact on Eureka, though citizens in Ferndale, Fortuna, Rio Dell and Arcata experienced the jolt as well. There was no threat of a tsunami so no warning was issued.

The earthquake damage estimate in Eureka alone has climbed to \$21.9 million, according to Gary Bird, on Tuesday, a spokesman for the city. 240 buildings are listed as damaged by the temblor. Damage estimates are said to be on the high side and may be adjusted downward as more information is gathered.

Damage estimates for the rest of the county will be compiled later in the week. Aftershocks followed, bringing the total to 23 as of Sunday evening. The quake's location was centered in the Pacific Ocean about 27 miles southwest of Eureka.

Power outages were widespread, affecting close to 36,000 customers initially. Most Eureka residents' power restored electricity by early Sunday. No serious injuries were reported, other than an elderly woman who broke her hip. St. Joseph Hospital reported seeing 27 people for bruises and cuts sustained mainly from shattering glass at the Bay Shore Mall.

Anthony Mantova, owner of Mantova's Two Street Music in Eureka experienced some losses from the quake. He lost two electric and one acoustic guitar when they hit the ground. Four of his Jumping Flea Ukuleles also crashed and two speakers were hit hard. "Thankfully all customers were evacuated without incident within the first 10 seconds of the incident," Mantova said. Mantova recently moved from Carlotta to be closer his store in Old Town.

On Sunday, Jan. 10, the City of Eureka held a press conference to assess damage wrought by the earthquake. The meeting was attended by Congressman Mike Thompson, Assembly Member Wesley Chesbro, and elected representatives of the County and the City of Eureka as well as staff of the County and cities.

The city's report included structural damage to numerous buildings, downed chimneys, broken windows, cracked walls, fallen masonry, and several houses moved off of foundations. Eureka sustained the largest amount of damage. The earliest estimates placed damages at \$12.5 million, but after further inspection, that figure rose to \$21.9. The Bay Shore Mall was closed immediately after the quake hit and was closed from Saturday afternoon to all day Monday. On Tuesday, Jan. 12, mall officials announced that the mall reopened.

While the quake left its strongest impression on Eureka, residents up and down the coast experienced earth's tug and pull one way or another.

Jay Parrish, City Manager of Ferndale spent the last couple of days assessing damage in town. "We were fortunate not to have any reported injuries. Many of the businesses had losses and we are assessing the estimated value of those," Parrish said. "We ask people to contact City Hall with any losses, so we can record that information and send to OES, who will compile all the information from our area and pass it on to the State." More on Ferndale will be reported in next week's Beacon.

Ferndale Elementary School suffered no damage, but according to Principal Paul Meyer, a basketball game was going on. "The gym was full of parents and students attending a basketball tournament hosted by Cuddeback School when the earthquake hit. No injuries were reported. Needless to say, the

tournament was cancelled following the earthquake so the championship

and third place games will be played as soon as they can be rescheduled," Meyers said. The principal added that damage at the school was limited to papers and books that got wet when aquariums sloshed out water onto the counter and floor.

Sal Steinberg, Principal at Loleta Elementary School said, "These schools are built to last. We only had one bookcase in the library tip over, and a water cooler tip over. Couple of pictures tilted. Some cabinets opened. That's all. Pretty lucky."

Schools in Fortuna were likewise spared, according to Kay Chapman of South Fortuna Elementary and Patti Hafner of Fortuna Middle School. Hefner made mention of a grant available to schools for emergency preparedness which helps schools to update their emergency plans and coordinate services.

Kevin Johnson, manager of Beverage Plus in Fortuna lost some inventory, but their building was left intact."We lost our share, around \$1,000....mostly high-end alcohol. We never lost electricity."

Paul Rodriguez, Finance Director with the City of Fortuna was in Eureka at the time and said, "We did alright with regards to the earthquake. My kids and I were getting ready to go to a crab feed when it hit, and of course the younger ones were crying," he said. Rodriguez followed his instincts, which we are told are not to be followed in times such as these. "Quite foolishly, we went outside - as I understand it, we are supposed to take shelter indoors - but when you are inside a building that is moving, instinct can take over, and we tried to get outside."

A good reference guide to help those living in earthquake country is the 32-page booklet, "Living on Shaky Ground," available at the Eureka Red Cross, the Humboldt County Office of Emergency Services, Pierson's in Eureka, Wildberries in Arcata and the Ferndale Museum.