



**Building Strong Foundations  
for a Better Future**

## **NEWS RELEASE**

*For Immediate Release*

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### **TsunamiReady™ Communities Learning to Reduce Dangers and Damages** *Tsunami Preparedness Is a Serious Business for West Coast Contractors*

**COOS BAY, OR – October 2011** – The question is not whether a serious Tsunami will hit the Pacific Northwest, the question is whether we'll be ready. David Kronsteiner, president of West Coast Contractors, one of Oregon's leading marine construction companies, warns that coastal communities need to upgrade their waterfronts and ports to be prepared for tsunamis.

A growing number of communities are heeding the warning produced by the latest Japan tsunami and are becoming TsunamiReady™ communities. Initiated by NOAA, the TsunamiReady program began in the Pacific because it has the highest number of subduction zones which produce powerful earthquakes. To earn the TsunamiReady designation, a community is required to establish a 24-hour-a-day warning system, promote public readiness through community education and develop a formal tsunami plan which includes emergency exercises.

While this program helps save lives, Kronsteiner and WCC focus on what they can do to minimize infrastructure damage. Damage to bridges, highways, harbors and utility facilities can not only cost millions of dollars but also severely slow emergency responses and the recovery of a community.

Coos Bay is a designated TsunamiReady area and home to West Coast Contractors, WCC is renowned for building structures designed to endure severe weather conditions and recently completed building the home port for NOAA's Pacific fleet in nearby Newport, Oregon.

"NOAA's new home port was built in accordance with the latest earthquake standards," Kronsteiner said. "In addition to being in an active earthquake zone, the weather conditions in the Northwest are often severe and one of the requirements of the job was that the pier be able to hold a ship securely in a 105-mph wind."

Kronsteiner says that while tsunamis don't occur often – The earthquake near Japan in May, 2011 and Alaska in 1964, both caused tsunami damage in Crescent City - many structures along the coast are vulnerable to damage, particularly the hundreds of piers, bridges and structures built on wood pilings. WCC is currently doing a tsunami repair job in Brookings where the outward rush of water from the tsunami that hit Japan caused the sheet pile walls to fail. The repair job includes divers working on the removal of the sheet pile wall and the replacement of wood pilings with new concrete and steel pilings.



“In most areas of the Northwest, tsunami plans focus on the evacuation of people,” Kronsteiner said. “Old deteriorating structures present a problem and not rebuilding or replacing them altogether could someday end in disaster.”

One thing is for sure. Tsunamis are unpredictable and when the next tsunami will hit, nobody knows for sure. But whether or not it will come is an absolute certainty.

### **About West Coast Contractors**

Founded in 1962, WCC is a general contractor that specializes in heavy construction projects including bridges, harbors, marine facilities, commercial developments, governmental projects and industrial complexes. Based in Coos Bay, Oregon WCC is headed by President and CEO, David Kronsteiner and Vice President of Operations, Lonnie Kronsteiner. WCC is renown for construction projects on land and at sea that are able to withstand severe weather conditions, and is a leader in developing environmentally sound procedures for sensitive locations. Clients include the U.S. Corps of Engineers, Coast Guard, states of Oregon and California, Chevron, NOAA, Roseburg Forest Products, and the Ports of Morrow, Newport and Coos Bay. For inquiries, contact WCC at (541) 267-7689.

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