



Members of Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) 4 Sunland, board members of Sunland Owners Association (SLOA), and staff for Clallam County Fire District 3 gather for the ceremonial passing of the key from David Walp, SLOA acting president, to Susan Pressman, captain of the Sunland CERT, on Aug. 27. SLOA purchased the trailer and is allowing CERT to use it for emergency preparedness to help Sunland's 900-plus homes in case of disaster. Sequim Gazette photo by Matthew Nash

Sunland adds emergency trailer

CERT, Fire District continue Cascadia preparedness

By Matthew Nash

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Looking to make their community safer during possible worst-case scenarios, members of Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) 4 Sunland, along with members of the Sunland Owners Association (SLOA) worked together to bring in an emergency trailer to help neighbors in need.

“It’s for the safety and security of our residents in the event of the Cascadia earthquake,” CERT 4 Sunland Captain Susan Pressman said.

Scientists predict the Cascadia earthquake could reach a seismic magnitude of 9.0 followed by a tsunami expected to hit the Olympic Peninsula because of shifting plates in the Cascadia Subduction Zone.

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Pressman said they could use the trailer as a home base to support the residents of 900-plus homes in Sunland with light search and rescue, first aid and more.

Blaine Zechenelly, disaster planning/EMT for Clallam County Fire District 3, said the trailer is part of their strategy to have emergency trailers for all 15 CERTs from Gardiner to Deer Park.

“If we lose the roads, this becomes a point where the community can really come around to,” he said. “Even if phones and the roads are down. This is so you can see what’s going on. You touch base here first.”

Sunland is the third community to host a trailer for CERT with one in Diamond Point and another in Gardiner. A fourth is planned for a private residence in Agnew, Zechenelly said.

Members of Sunland’s board said they’ve worked with Sunland residents, CERT and Clallam County Community Development officials for about two years on logistics and to acquire the structure and permits for it.

David Walp, SLOA acting president, said they paid about \$3,000 from a Spokane reuse container company and are donating its use to CERT “because it benefits everyone.”

Fellow board members Bob Eichhorn and Phil Merlin helped with the process saying it’s been a journey to get the trailer here.

Eichhorn said the permitting process for the trailer was a learning experience for the homeowners association and Clallam County Community Development staff but they appreciate everyone’s efforts.

With its location near Sunland's main office, he said they " wanted to make sure it's not an eyesore, yet accessible and easy to get to."

If a major earthquake were to hit, Merlin said they anticipate many neighbors north of them in the tidal wave area to come towards them too.

For now, Sunland's CERT is looking to equip the trailer with shelving prior to bringing in communications equipment and supplies, such as blankets and stretchers, Zechenelly said.

CERT 4 Sunland has about 22 people involved in training monthly for emergency preparedness. Each of the 15 CERTs range from 20-40 trained members in the Sequim area.

For more information on participating with CERT 4 Sunland, contact Susan Pressman at psmerlin@pacbell.net.

For more information on CERT, contact Cindy Zechenelly at 360-504-2531 or czechenelly@ccfd3.org.



Susan Pressman, captain for Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) 4 Sunland, said the new trailer in the 900-plus home community will serve as a home base during disasters housing communication and emergency equipment. Sequim Gazette photo by Matthew Nash

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