

Shelter from the Storm



Stephanie Morton • *The Ocean Observer*

Pete Riedel, president of Reliable Emergency Shelters, stands next to one of his Rescue Pod tsunami shelters near the Taurus beach approach on Jan. 30.

BY STEPHANIE MORTON

Looking much like oversized, fluorescent orange fishing bobbers, two RescuePod tsunami shelters were displayed on back of a trailer at the Taurus beach approach in Ocean Shores on Monday, Jan. 30. Pete Riedel, president of Reliable Emergency Shelters, said he was visiting Ocean Shores and other Washington beach towns to “test the waters” of a possible market for his shelters. His company manufactures and sells the RescuePods.

Because Ocean Shores resides within the Cascadia subduction zone and sits right next to the Pacific Ocean, it faces a risk of a potentially devastating large earthquake and subsequent tsunami. If a big earthquake of a magnitude

8 or higher were to strike, scientists say the first tsunami wave may arrive within 15 to 30 minutes after the initial shock. With limited time and the possibility of damaged roads from liquefaction (where the ground turns to liquid), a tsunami-proof shelter may be an option for some people.

Riedel said his RescuePods were made of a high-density polyethylene to protect the occupants from tsunami debris. Other features of the RescuePod include windows, air vents, safety seats and an emergency beacon.

While it is close quarters inside the RescuePod, there is room for two adults and

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a few days worth of emergency food and water. The pod sits mostly above the water line, Riedel said, and is extremely buoyant. The bright orange color makes the shelter highly visible to rescuers.

The research and development of the pods has taken about five years, Riedel said. To put his money where his mouth is — Riedel himself went over a waterfall in one his RescuePods.

“It was scary, because you have no control,” Riedel said.

Reliable Emergency Shelters, located in Vancouver, Wash., has sold six of the shelters in Oregon and Alaska at a cost of about \$6,500. To see Riedel go over the falls and for more information on the tsunami shelters, visit the company’s website at reliableemergencysshelters.com.

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countries overseas. Marlene Thomasson's series, "Home States," will highlight

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