

## Announcements

### Alaska Earthquake Is Largest of 2002

The magnitude 7.9 central Alaska quake that occurred on November 3 was the world's biggest earthquake in 2002, and the largest to hit the United States since 1996, when another 7.9 event struck Alaska's Andreanof Islands.

According to the U.S. Geological Survey, in 2002, 85 significant earthquakes killed 1,711 people around the world. The deadliest earthquake of the year was a magnitude 6.1 in Afghanistan that killed at least 1,000 people. 2002 saw 13 major quakes (magnitude 7.0 to 7.9) and no great earthquakes of magnitude 8 or higher. In the United States, earthquakes pose significant risk to 75 million Americans in 39 states.

The Alaska quake caused \$20 million in damage and temporarily suspended operation of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline (see the eight-page preliminary report in the February 2003 *Newsletter*). Lake Pontchartrain in Louisiana sloshed about, and wells in Washington, Idaho, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Missouri, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania produced muddy water as a result of the Alas-

ka temblor.

One noteworthy aspect of this earthquake was what didn't happen — the Trans-Alaska pipeline did not rupture. Long-term research and a commitment to hazard preparedness and mitigation played key roles in protecting the pipeline. It was designed and built to withstand the effects of a magnitude 8.0 earthquake with up to 20 feet of movement at the pipeline. These standards proved to be on target for this event. "Mother Nature lacks the malice of terrorists, but compensates with endless energy and dogged persistence. We must be prepared," said USGS Director Chip Groat.

The USGS locates about 50 earthquakes each day, or almost 20,000 a year. Significant earthquakes have a magnitude of 6.5 or greater or cause fatalities, injuries, or substantial damage. On average, there are 18 major earthquakes (magnitude 7.0 to 7.9) and one great earthquake (8.0 or higher) each year worldwide. Real-time earthquake information can be found at [earthquake.usgs.gov](http://earthquake.usgs.gov).

## Announcement

### Nominations for Tsunami Mitigation Award

The National Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program announces the call for nominations for its Richard H. Hagemeyer Tsunami Mitigation Award. Nominations are encouraged for projects and programs that address one or more of the following areas of emphasis:

- improving tsunami education
- providing tools and training for construction, land use planning, or emergencies
- planning and response in tsunami inundation zones.
- creating and strengthening links within and among coastal communities and states to support long-term tsunami mitigation
- improving the tsunami mitigation science infrastructure
- encouraging local innovation and sponsorship of tsunami mitigation programs

For more information, visit [www.pmel.noaa.gov/tsunami-hazard/Hagemeyeraward.htm](http://www.pmel.noaa.gov/tsunami-hazard/Hagemeyeraward.htm). The deadline for submissions is September 1, 2003.

## News of the Institute

### UPR Student Chapter off to a Great Start

The first semester of existence for EERI's newest student chapter at the University of Puerto Rico (UPR) was remarkable. Chapter President Juan Carlos Virella and Academic Advisor Luis E. Suarez reported that from September through November of 2002, the chapter organized seven lectures. The average number of attendees was about forty, but two lectures attracted more than 150, including one speaker who traveled the longest distance — Ashraf Habibullah, president of EERI subscribing member Computers and Structures in Berkeley, California.

For the second semester, the chapter lined up another seven lecturers from academia and industry.

In addition, the student members were involved in outreach activities with students and teachers from two local middle schools who visited the UPR Department of Civil Engineering and Surveying in November and December. The visitors were introduced to the earthquake phenomenon and its effects on structures and components through audiovisuals and a demonstration on a shake table. The chapter received very positive feedback from the visitors.

The chapter members will continue with K-12 demonstrations, both in their institution and in the schools themselves.

This year the chapter also plans to host a Friedman Family visiting professional sponsored by EERI. Congratulations to the EERI student chapter at UPR for getting off to such a great start!

