Fortuna store clerks survey the work ahead after a moderate Saturday morning.

Moderate Quake Wakens North Coast Residents

FORTUNA (UPI) — A 16-second earthquake early Saturday covered store floors with fallen merchandise, smashed windows and kept 4,600 homes in darkness.

The quake, described as moderate, struck at 1:17 a.m. It measured 5.4 on the Richter scale and was centered 20 miles southwest of Fortuna, just off the coast.

A couple of dozen store windows shattered. Most people in Fortuna and Eureka, 10 miles north, were awakened as buildings shook and things tumbled from shelves.

In 4,600 Eureka homes residents could not turn on their lights for an hour and 45 minutes because the quake knocked out a 60,000-volt fuse.

No injuries were reported. The quake was felt in lesser degrees along a 250-mile stretch of northwestern California and Oregon coast.
CIVIL DEFENSE AND DISASTER SERVICES

By this time it should be apparent that Fortuna and Humboldt county need an active and well coordinated civil defense and disaster preparedness program.

Earthquakes and floods we have more than aplenty, but the responses early last Saturday morning, June 7, following a 6.3 scale earthquake were gratifying with a relative minimum of confusion. Firemen and police responded quickly and despite heavy damage there was no known looting in either Fortuna or Rio Dell.

Sometimes it is hard for newcomers to realize what this community has gone through in years past and what is necessary to meet the emergencies as they arise.

In this instance, perhaps, a general emergency should have been declared, but the extent of damage was not realized for many hours after the shock.

The proper agencies have been diligent in assessing the damage and compiling the reports necessary for federal and state coordination.

We are definitely in earthquake and flood prone areas. We cannot afford to neglect the necessary coordinating services. Our community does a good job for itself but we cannot afford to go it alone. There are times we need every agency in the book to keep our balance, and this means service and protection for our citizens.

Above all, we need prompt action and coordinated records of all performance.

Police Chief Marcel Jojola Monday gave an official C-D estimate of Rio Dell damage as in excess of $200,000.

In the business district, 12 plate glass windows were shattered and the aisles of the stores were more than a foot deep in shattered glass, dented cans and split open boxes. Marcel Jojola, police chief, reported four blasts of glass shot from east to west across the highway during the quake.

First on the scene were the police who were already on their night shift rounds. When the fire siren blasted, a large crew of firemen and volunteer police appeared. Stores were guarded to prevent looting until the owners arrived to decide what articles should be disposed of. It was then that the firemen and firemen grabbed shovelied and loaded trucks with the debris which they carried off long before daybreak. The Rio Food Mart reported at least a $2000 loss and Lark’s Drugs at least $1000. Some other establishments had heavier losses, and some less.

The first chimney to be knocked down by firemen was the lotty one on the downtown Bianchi Building which seemed ready to drop any minute. On Saturday and Sunday firemen were kept busy taking down 36 brick fireplace chimneys within the city. The fireplace in the Jack Miranda Jr. home on Painter Street separated completely a few feet from the ground.

Many homes reported windows broken as well as what is hoped is minor structural damage. Inspection in the near future will assure the safety of the inhabitants. Nearly every home has a collection of broken articles to throw out.

The drugstore, hardware store, liquor shop, the variety store and grocery stores all had one comment, “The police and firemen did a fantastic job and were the greatest assistants in restoring the city to normalcy. They have never worked better.”

Many telephone wires parted during and after the quake and had to be repaired or rewired. On Saturday afternoon high winds caused a power outage and for a time water was shut off to repair a main line which had separated in the Beliveau area. These delays were very short considering the time it took for repairs during the 1964 flood.

Several minor settling quakes have occurred since the main quake, the most notable of which were the two before daylight Saturday and the Sunday morning quake.

The comment from those who suffered losses, “It could have been much worse.”

Other than losing a plate glass window in the Sprouse Reit Store, Scotia reported only minor damage.

Residents are wondering why no Environmental Impact Report was filed prior to the uprooting of redwood trees which cascaded down the bluff.
The lofty bluffs just east of Rio Dell came tumbling down during the jerky earthquake of Friday night, June 8, stretching out over 150 yards of Northwestern Pacific railroad tracks. With the light of dawn the plight of the railroad was revealed in full. Several hundred tons of rocks, layers of sediment and redwood trees had broken off the bluff and plunged downward, some reaching the tracks and on down to the Eel River. A part of the concrete trestle was demolished. Railroad tracks, resembling huge bent wires descended from the trestle and roadbed into the river. There a large redwood tree still stood upright after its descent from the top of the bluff. Two smaller slides to the north at French's Gulch had jerked off of another bluff and covered the tracks. As the slide hit the river a great wave formed and swept the Rio Dell river bar for 35 yards inland on the river beach. By daybreak several hundred inch long fish were found dried in the gravel. Caterpillars worked all weekend removing material above the tracks and terracing the main slide.
FORTUNA ACE HARDWARE suffered window losses early Saturday with store manager Robert Loudon II manning the push broom on the sidewalk. There was considerable merchandise damage, but not as bad as could have been expected.  LaVoie Photo
BUDGET BASKET, FORMERLY PURITY, joined in the shambles parade Saturday morning, but still the damage was lighter than might be expected.
Rio Dell firemen helped dismantle chimneys from 36 fireplaces within the city on Saturday and Sunday. The safety measure was necessary as most of the bricks could be toppled by another moderate quake or a gust of wind. The home is the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Ingraham.

Humboldt Beacon 6/12/75

ANOTHER VIEW OF THE BOWMAN DRUGS INTERIOR showing the full list of last Saturday morning's 6.3 earthquake, second strongest on record in Fort...
The fireplace at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Miranda Jr. on Painter Street shows a distinct jagged line where the bricks separated moving the fireplace out of alignment.

THE AISLES OF BUDGET BASKET were full of merchandise Saturday morning after the earthquake, necessitating much cleanup.
Fortuna Civil Defense Disaster Service Assessing Quake Damage

Fortuna Civil Defense and Disaster Service officials started implementation of their new Emergency Operations Plan immediately following the severe earthquake Saturday morning reported by Humboldt County as an unofficial magnitude of 6.3 on the measuring instruments located at the Pacific Gas and Electric Company Nuclear Power Plant at Buhne Point according to Mayor and Director of Fortuna Civil Defense and Disaster Service by Ray Stewart. Stewart praised the expediency of the Police Department, Fortuna Volunteer Fire Department and Public Works Department in notification of downtown merchants of damage to their businesses.

Key personnel were alerted to be prepared to mobilize and open the EOC if the situation warranted, and the Mayor was in constant touch with Assistant Director Joni Sipola throughout the night. Since there were no injuries, deaths, misplaced persons or mass evacuation decision was made not to open the EOC but to keep Information Service personnel available to assist other Emergency Services, if needed. Mrs. Sipola was in constant touch with both the Humboldt County Coordinator Bill Chambers of the Office of Emergency Services and Regional Coordinator, Donna Darling, of the OES, State Region 2 staff.

Over the weekend an assessment team was organized under the direction of Mrs. Sipola and supervised by Tom McWhorter, Supt. of Public Works in charge of the Public Sector and Walter Johnson, in charge of the Private Sector. Other members of the team assessing the business district damage are George Rapin; Fortuna CD&S Operations Officer, Paul Scales, Resource Mgt.; Food Division, and Michael Ward, CETA Employee of the City of Fortuna, Resource Mgt., Clerk. The inventory of assessment damage as to number of business and estimated cost of damages and number of homes and estimated cost of damages is required by the State & Federal Govt., under Public Law 93-288, Federal Disaster Relief Act.

Any individuals having structural damage who have not been contacted are urged to phone 725-3308 or 725-5131 to give the information needed.

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Quakes Compared In Full Reports

Probably the heaviest registered shock to hit Humboldt County since the April 1906 earthquake which rocked San Francisco (also reaching to Humboldt) was the one which rocked Southern Humboldt on November 25, 1954 (Thanksgiving Day). It centered 100 miles west of Ferndale. Seismograph needles were shaken off the record locally but Fordham University in New York showed the magnitude as a 7 on a scale which reaches 10. Its long slow rolling motion caused dishes to rattle but did no damage. Seismographs showed it lasted five minutes.

This shock was followed a month later by a 6.5 which brokeplate glass windows and did other great damage on December 21, 1954. Eureka and Arcata suffered the greatest losses at city hall and courthouses.

Humboldt Beacon 6/17/75
Ferndale licks Out On Quake Although Severe

Ferndale - The main topic of conversation in the valley is the earthquake. Those who were awake felt, "This is it! The great state of California is going into the ocean for sure." Ferndale, sitting on the Russ Fault, was the center of the earth's movement in the early hours of Saturday. It was as if the movement went east to west, then north to south, with a shuddering convulsion, but no roll-out.

The residents of Pleasant Point and Waddington Road, it would appear, suffered a greater disturbance beneath the earth's surface than in Ferndale itself. At the John J. Miranda ranch in that area, the dairy cows stampeded and recently installed metal posts in the corral were bent like putty. At the Ernie Christensen place the chimney was damaged and bricks fell.

It is interesting to note that the Ferndale Elementary School, presently being rehabilitated with Federal funds, showed no damage, although its nearest neighbor - George School - was hit through the recent earth movements with no apparent damage.

The Ferndale seismograph recorded the earthquake at 6.0 on the Richter Scale and went off the track. It is very astounding that Ferndale suffered relatively little damage.

The damage assessment team of R. Walter Johnson and George Rapin checked out 80 business firms and listed a total of $32,210 structural and $29,815 contents. Several business firms had not been able to make initial estimates.

A total of 42 homes had been checked up to noon Wednesday.

Heaviest Quake Since
1954 Rocks Fortuna-RD

BOWMAN DRUGS. Fortuna's largest discount drug store, took a major shelling in the Saturday morning quake. Thousands of dollars in merchandise heaved into the aisles. Prompt action by employees and other helpers saved much of the non-breakables, but still the loss was heavy.

The Fortuna-Rio Dell areas were hit at 1:47 a.m., June 7, by the heaviest earthquake since December 21, 1954. The degree of 6.3 was established by a recording at the PG&E Buhne Point atomic plant. The Ferndale seismograph went off the chart at 6.6. For some reason, Berkeley recorded it at 5.4 to 5.9. At any rate, it shook with peculiar damage quotients, depending upon where you were.

Ferndale was scarcely damaged, yet Fortuna and Rio Dell really took it. There were no injuries. Importantly, there was no reported looting in either community. Strong support by fire departments and police units was of great help.

There was a strong aftershock at 4 a.m. and a third quake of 3.0 at 10:43 a.m. Sunday. No damage reported.

Among the estimated structural damages reported were: Veterans Memorial Building, $3,500; Fortuna Fire Hall, $1,500; Methodist Church, $5,000; Bank of America, $1,000; Fortuna Union High, $2,000; Goble's Mortuary, undetermined.