The Mitigation Strategic Implementation Plan: Toward tsunami-resistant communities

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Abstract. The National Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program is a federal/state partnership to reduce tsunami risk. The Mitigation Subcommittee constructed a Strategic Implementation Plan for Tsunami Mitigation Projects that has as its goal assisting coastal communities in becoming "tsunami resistant communities." A tsunami resistant community is one that reduces the impact of tsunamis by:

1. understanding the nature of the tsunami hazard,
2. having the tools it needs to mitigate the tsunami risk,
3. disseminating information about the tsunami hazard,
4. exchanging information with other at-risk areas, and
5. institutionalizing planning for a tsunami disaster.

The Strategic Implementation Plan also provides a framework for the development of specific tools and policies that states and local communities can use that will help them become tsunami-resistant communities.

To measure performance, the key question becomes: have we actually succeeded in helping communities become more tsunami resistant than they were before we began to implement the Strategic Plan, and can we define this? To answer this question we will revisit a baseline 1994 survey of community needs that served as a catalyst in the formation of the program. We will compare "snapshots" of several West Coast communities in 1994 and in 2000 to see if and how the Strategic Implementation Plan has helped them become more tsunami resistant.

If the process has been successful in the United States, then it could serve as a model for other tsunami at-risk communities in the world. Then we have to ask, what have we learned and how do we transfer the model?

See paper R-8 for full text.

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