

Where Resilience Begins: People, a Shared Purpose, and Community

Impact and Synergy from CMCA's Support of Governor Kotek's Plan for a Resilient Oregon (PRO)

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Helen Keller once said: "Alone we can do so little; together, we can do so much." The impact and synergy of CMCA's efforts to promote community resilience when faced with natural and human-made disruptions bring this quote to life. This article celebrates our volunteers who worked tirelessly, the neighbors who showed up when asked, and the quiet dedication that makes our community stronger every day.

Context

CMCA is one of 53 community-based organizations (CBOs) competitively selected in September 2025 to support the development of Governor Kotek's Plan for a Resilient Oregon (PRO). The CBOs represent five regions across the state. Set for release in September 2026, the PRO is a people-centered and comprehensive resilience strategy designed to help communities facing disparate risks adapt to, recover from, and thrive after disasters - whether natural or caused by humans. Funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Community Development Block Grants for Disaster Recovery, the PRO will inform the work of Oregon's executive and legislative branches for the 2027-2029 biennial budget cycle. It will focus on aligning funding with community priorities while also accounting for the unique cultures, histories, and hazards found there.

Through its work on the PRO between September 2025 and August 2026, CMCA can earn up to \$20,000 through participation in monthly regional resilience forum meetings and by hosting up to two optional community engagement events. The CMCA PRO Lead, Grant-making Lead, and Board Member, Miriam Fultz, completes all activities related to the monthly meetings for the Northwest Region, including the submission of all invoices. To date, CMCA has received or has invoiced for \$15,000, which includes payment for the successful completion of two CMCA-hosted and PRO-sponsored community engagement events (January and February 2026), and for participation in the required monthly meetings where CMCA collaborates with nine non-profit CBOs in the Northwest region of the state on ZOOM. Miriam also attends all monthly PRO statewide forum meetings to better understand the PRO and to learn about what others are doing (this is optional for the CBOs). All funds will be used to expand the capacity of the Cape Meares Emergency Operations Center (EOC) (a.k.a., "the Conex Box" or the "Cape Meares Resilience Hub"). Our goal is to help our community be more resilient to disasters of different types and sizes (natural disasters and/or those caused by human activity). CMEVC executes the emergency

preparedness mission of the Cape Meares Community Association (CMCA), a nonprofit and public benefit corporation registered in Oregon.

The Power of CMCA Volunteers and Community

Yet, the deeper story rests in the volunteers who worked tirelessly for our community and the neighbors who showed up when asked. In November 2025, Kathy Burke and Miriam established the focus of the January and February 2026 PRO-sponsored community engagement events. Kathy identified dates, reserved facilities, and contacted the speakers and panelists for both events. Both volunteers coordinated with event sponsors around planning and implementation, including the ODHS Office of Resilience and Emergency Management (OREM), the Oceanside Volunteer Emergency Response Corps (OVERT), and the Tillamook Emergency Volunteer Corps (TEVC). Behind the scenes, Miriam worked with the PRO Team in the Governor's Office to negotiate the products that CMCA submitted for each event (e.g., resilience definitions, photographs, survey responses, raw data files) and to ensure that CMCA met all contractual requirements, including insurance.

From November 2025 until early March 2026, the lives of all involved focused on taking all the steps needed to ensure the maximum impact and success of both community engagement events. Miriam and Kathy developed plans, agendas and flyers and collaborated with event partners on logistics such as writing content for media outlets, distributing flyers, and obtaining audio-visual equipment. In addition, both volunteers worked with event partners to advertise the events, leaving no stone unturned. For the February event, they wrote a press release that was published in the *Tillamook Headlight Herald* (January 27, 2026, Page B2), posted on the *Tillamook County Pioneer* website, included in the Tillamook County Library newsletter, and uploaded to the Tillamook Chamber of Commerce Community Calendar. In addition, they attended two Rotary club meetings with their partner for the February event (TEVC) and released a shorter version of the press release that appeared in various Tillamook-focused Facebook groups, on the Tillamook PUD marquee, and on a KTIL radio spot. Others provided valuable support, including the Cape Meares Fencepost author extraordinaire, Ellen Steen (look at the Fencepost articles in the *Tillamook Headlight Herald* between November 2025 and March 2026). The Tillamook County Citizens Corps Council (TC4), a volunteer and emergency-focused coalition of nine communities, helped CMCA spread the word across the county—we appreciated seeing the smiling faces of our TC4 colleagues at both events.

Planning Realized: Gathering the Voices of Cape Meares Residents and Beyond

Through the efforts of Kathy, Miriam, and other CMEVC members, CMCA held the first of two PRO-sponsored community engagement events on January 24 (Oceanside Community Club) and on January 25 (Barbara Bennett Community Center). This hybrid event (in-person, ZOOM) featured the documentary "Rumblings: Preparing for Cascadia" (2025), an interactive PRO-

focused exercise (“Resilience is...”), and a lively question-and-answer session with a panel of experts, including Randy Thorpe (Director, Tillamook County Emergency Management), Chief Jeff McBrayer (Netarts-Oceanside Rural Fire Protection District), and Jeff Gilbert, Western Oregon Regional Emergency Coordinator, ODHS Office of Resilience and Emergency Management (ODHS/OREM). Community members from Cape Meares, Oceanside, Netarts, Bay City, Nehalem, and South County provided 133 definitions of the term “resilience.” A panel member expressed amazement at the attendance (>133 across both days, in-person and ZOOM). For this event, CMCA received \$5,000 after submitting all required documentation and an invoice.

CMEVC, in collaboration with the Tillamook Emergency Volunteer Corps (TEVC), hosted our second PRO-sponsored event, “Let’s Get Ready to Rock and Roll,” at the Tillamook County Library on Saturday, February 21. With this hybrid event, we supported TEVC’s first community-focused event while also supporting PRO development. Residents from Portland, Nehalem, Manzanita, Rockaway, Garibaldi, Bay City, Trask, Tillamook City, Cape Meares, Oceanside, Netarts, Hebo, Pacific City, and Tierra Del Mar attended this event, which featured Steven Eberlein. His presentation, *Before the Ground Shakes: How to Prepare for the Cascadia Earthquake*, captivated the audience and provided useful tips that are easily accomplished. The panel members for the question-and-answer session included Mary Faith Bell, Tillamook County Commissioner and Chair, Jeff Gilbert, Randy Thorpe, and Sheriff Nick Troxel, Chief of Police, City of Tillamook. Many thanks to Major Deborah Maynard and the cadets, cadet sponsors/parents, and active adult members of the Tillamook County Composite Squadron, Civil Air Patrol (CAP) Cadet Program.

CMEVC Asked, Community Members Stepped Up!

CMCA encountered a challenge with the February event: to earn the full amount (\$5,000), CMCA needed more PRO survey responses. Because CMEVC did not want to leave PRO funds on the table, Kathy and Miriam asked for the help of Cape Mearesians on MeWe and through personal phone calls. From 2:00 p.m. until 10:30 p.m. on Sunday, February 22, Miriam started and moderated four ZOOM-based viewings of the recorded February 21 in-person event with a final showing on Monday, February 23. Across the five viewings, we exceeded our survey response goal of 105 by two, which means that CMCA submitted 107 survey responses to Governor Kotek’s PRO Team. To all Cape Meares residents who stepped up to view the event and contributed their lived experiences on the PRO survey: THANK YOU. Because of your time and contribution to your community, CMCA—and YOU—earned the full amount for the February event. Words cannot convey the gratitude of CMEVC volunteers. Delivering two events in a month’s time was challenging, but in the end, so worth the effort.

Some Key Takeaways and Thank You

But...dear readers, the story is about more than these important accomplishments. Through our work, we strengthened relationships with other communities in Tillamook County, with each

other, and with our emergency preparedness colleagues beyond Cape Meares. Based on the feedback CMCA has received thus far, people who attended the January and February events are taking those first baby steps toward increasing their personal resilience like building personal go-bags and increasing the amount of rice, beans, nut butters, and water stored in their homes.

As all in Cape Meares continue their personal journeys toward optimal levels of resilience and emergency preparation, here are some principles for readers of this article:

- (1) You are your own first responder. First responders will not save you when Cascadia strikes and the inevitable tsunami arrives in Cape Meares.
- (2) Your neighbors are your second responders. Form relationships with your neighbors so that you can help each other with routine problems AND during emergencies.
- (3) Emergency preparedness and strengthening the resilience of all in Cape Meares takes a community, whether one is a resident, property owner, short-term rental property owner/manager, or visitor. Here is a goal: to build an enduring culture of preparedness and resilience in Cape Meares—one that promotes the ability of all people to withstand, adapt to, and to recover from natural and human-caused disruptions of any magnitude.
- (4) Stay informed! Sign up for state, county, and local alerts (see the Cape Meares website @ <https://capemeares.org/emergency-preparedness/> for more information).
- (5) Attend one of the CMEVC emergency preparedness drills and the annual Great Oregon Shakeout in October each year. Practice will help you break through the “mental freeze” that often occurs right after emergencies.
- (6) Consider how you might contribute to your resilience and that of your fellow community members. What are your interests and special skills? How much time do you have? Find your neighborhood captain (start here: <https://capemeares.org/emergency-preparedness/map-your-neighborhood/>). You might be surprised at how a few hours of your time multiplies the efforts of others.
- (7) As a community, we need to build on this energy. What can you do to help?

Overall, CMEVC volunteers gained experience that will benefit future CMCA efforts. Our work reaffirms what we already know: preparing Cape Meares for disruptions, regardless of the type or magnitude, requires the input and support of the community. And once more, our sincere thanks to all who supported CMCA and the efforts of the Cape Meares Emergency Volunteer Corps.