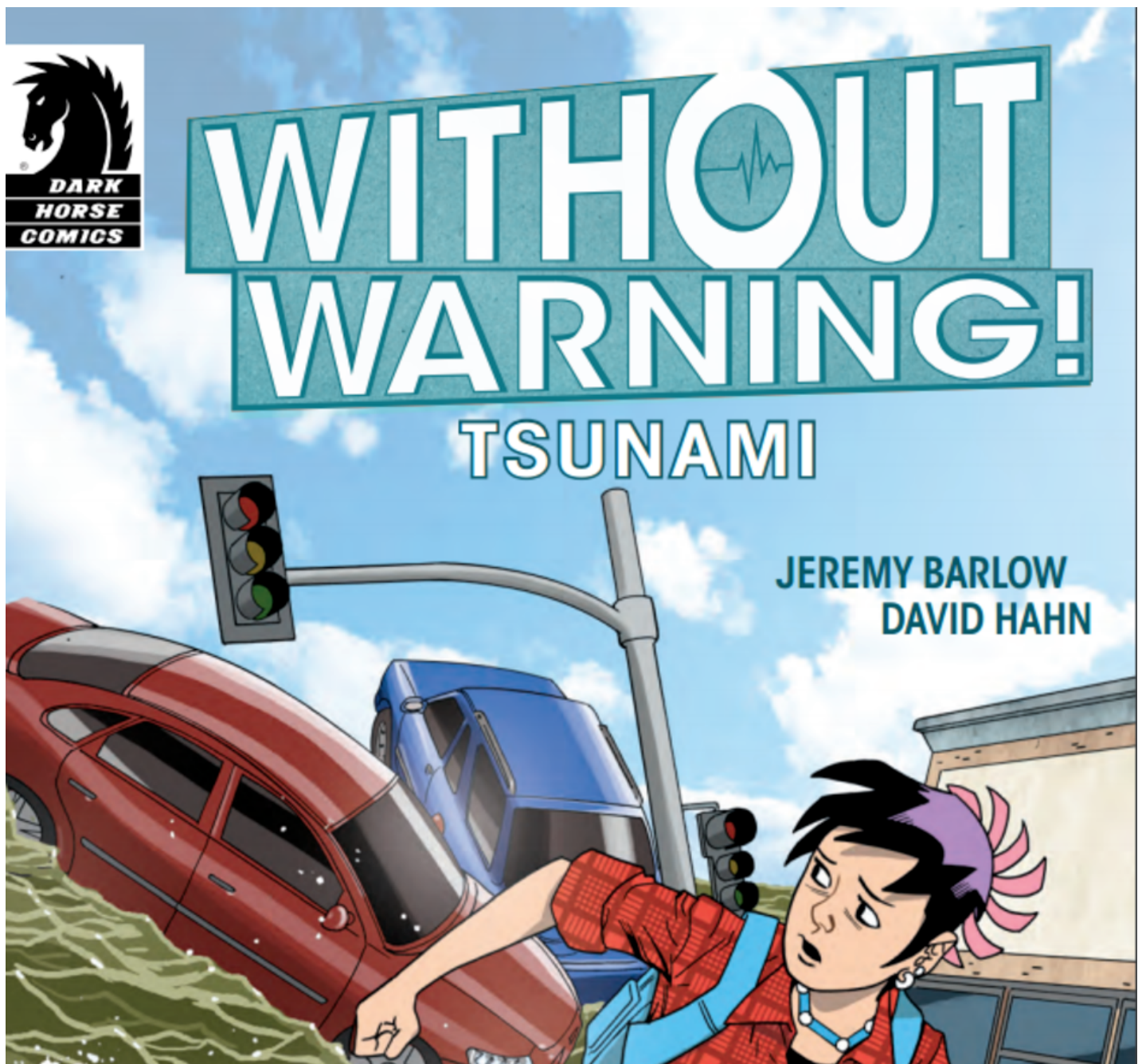


Oregon Uses Comic Book to Reach Younger Audiences About Tsunami Preparedness

"Without Warning: Tsunami" represents ongoing emergency management responses to the state's position in the Cascadia Subduction Zone.

BY ALLAN BRETTMAN, THE OREGONIAN / OCTOBER 14, 2016





(TNS) — Althea Rizzo knew where to go when she wanted an effective messenger to communicate with young people about tsunami dangers — the heralded Dark Horse Comics in Milwaukie.

Rizzo, geologic hazards program coordinator for the Oregon Office of Emergency Management, had reached out to Dark Horse before.

"About four years ago we were looking to create a publication to reach out to the younger demographic," Rizzo said, and Dark Horse was tapped to bring the message about the dangers of earthquakes to young people. That comic book, "Without Warning," published about two years ago, was quickly snapped up.

And now "Without Warning: Tsunami

(http://www.oregon.gov/OMD/OEM/plans_train/Tsunami/WithoutWarningTsunami.pdf) has been released and is available online. The 16-page comic book tells the story of a mother-daughter camping trip on the Oregon coast. The duo is forced to make life-saving choices and help others in danger when an earthquake and resulting tsunami strike.

The earthquake and tsunami comic books

(https://www.oregon.gov/OMD/OEM/pages/plans_train/earthquake.aspx) represent ongoing emergency management responses to Oregon's position in the Cascadia Subduction Zone, a 600-mile earthquake fault stretching from offshore Northern California to southern British Columbia. According to scientists and other experts, a potentially devastating earthquake could strike Oregon at any time.

"I encourage people to get a copy of it and sit down and read it with their kids," Rizzo said in an interview with *The Oregonian/OregonLive*. "And talk about their family emergency plan about what they would do if this happened without warning."

Rizzo, whose husband once worked in the comic book industry as an illustrator/inker, said the medium is ideal to reach a younger audience.

"You put a comic book out on a table and kids are going to stop and pick it up," she said.

EARTHQUAKE PREPAREDNESS EVENT PLANNED

The American Red Cross will hold Prepare Out Loud, an earthquake preparedness event Oct. 20 in Portland.

"Prepare Out Loud is about building a culture of preparedness in Oregon," Amy Shlossman, chief of the Red Cross Cascades Region, said in a news release. "By offering free preparedness education, bringing preparedness resources together in one place and practicing what to do during an earthquake, the Red Cross and our partners are taking action to get our community ready for Cascadia and disasters of all kinds."

A Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake could result in an earthquake of 9.0, wreaking destruction on the region.

The event will be held 9:30 to 11 a.m. at Montgomery Park, 2701 N.W. Vaughn St., Portland. Uber will provide free rides to and from the presentation.

The presentation will cover the science of the Cascadia Subduction Zone and the preparations that can be made in the event of a natural disaster such as an earthquake.

Rizzo came up with the story plot for the tsunami comic book as well as the one about earthquakes. Dark Horse associate editor Shantel LaRocque then worked with writer Jeremy Barlow and artist David Hahn to have them scripted and illustrated.

Rizzo said she wanted to keep her audience age in mind – but be upfront about the potential dangers of a tsunami, mindful of the one that hit Japan in 2011, causing death

and destruction on a massive scale.

She didn't want to make the story "bright, saccharine and sweet. It kind of delves into the injuries, the property damage and widespread effects – and that preparedness can make a difference."

The experience of working on the tsunami comic book had a personal impact for LaRocque.

"I certainly have changed my preparations from not really having any plans to keeping emergency kits in my home and in my car," LaRocque said in an email. "I'm still working out an emergency plan to put into practice with my family, but just having the resources to begin thinking about these types of emergencies has been a great help."

A \$20,000 grant from the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration grant paid for the project, resulting in a 25,000 edition print run, 5,000 of them in Spanish, the rest in English.

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