

Many programs are in place

Editor:

In response to the letter to the editor entitled "Windstorm a wake-up call" (*Coast Reporter*, Jan. 13), I would like to give a description of emergency preparedness on the Sunshine Coast.

The Sunshine Coast Emergency Program is an integrated program of the Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD), including the Town of Gibsons, District of Sechelt and the Sechelt Indian Government District (SIGD). The program is located at the SCRD Field Road office with the Emergency Program coordinator, Bill Elsner. An emergency communications centre is housed there along with the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC). Regular monthly planning meetings are held with representatives of all emergency services. Emergency plans are discussed and exercises and training are coordinated by this group. A vital services directory exists wherein available resources on the Coast are compiled and maintained. Copies of the Sunshine Coast Emergency Plan are available at the Gibsons and Sechelt libraries.

Information on emergency preparedness and the Neighbourhood Emergency

Preparedness Program is available for the asking to community groups and associations, businesses and governments. Offices of the SCRD, District of Sechelt, Town of Gibsons, the SIGD and the Pender Harbour Health Centre have a supply of brochures and other information on personal preparedness.

The SCRD website (www.scrd.bc.ca) has 26 Weeks to Emergency Preparedness and links to volunteer groups. The Provincial Emergency Program website (www.pep.bc.ca) contains an abundance of information on personal preparedness and many links to emergency information.

Individuals are advised to prepare themselves with at least one week's supply of food, water, medication, lighting and a battery-powered radio. Kits are available pre-assembled from suppliers or can be put together on your own. They make wonderful gifts.

The Sunshine Coast is fortunate to have hundreds of volunteers trained and ready to assist in emergencies. Search and Rescue, Social Services, emergency communications the firefighters and the Coast Guard Auxiliary are always looking for new members. For more information, call 604-885-0738.

Bill Elsner, Emergency Program Co-ordinator