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## **PBEM unveils communication “beacons,” announces partnership with OPB radio**

Portland, Ore. – The Portland Bureau of Emergency Management (PBEM) is pleased to announce two separate advancements in post-disaster communication. First, the Bureau has identified 48 new Basic Earthquake Emergency Communication Node (BEECN) sites throughout the city of Portland.

BEECNs (pronounced “beacons”) are places to go for emergency assistance and information during a post-earthquake communications blackout. BEECNs are intended for use when phones and email aren’t working and when residents in dire need of help are unable to remain safe at home. Workers at BEECN sites will use radios to relay calls for help to first responders.

“Communication is critical in the hours after an earthquake. It’s how lives are saved and how precious emergency resources are managed smartly. Radios are a great way to bridge the communication gap when phones are down,” said PBEM Director Carmen Merlo. “And with 48 sites carefully chosen across the city, emergency help is not far away.”

A map of BEECNs is now arriving in the mailboxes of all Portland residents. The list of BEECNs may change over time. PBEM’s goal is to have each of these temporary nodes activated under a clearly marked red and white shelter within 24 hours of an earthquake, if needed. The Bureau is now acquiring equipment for the BEECN network and staffing it with city employees, Neighborhood Emergency Team (NET) members and other volunteers.

In a separate action, PBEM is seeking approval from the Portland City Council for an agreement with OPB. Under this agreement, OPB would broadcast emergency alert messages directly from the Mayor of Portland during a major emergency.

"We're pleased to play a role in this team effort to ensure information reaches our community in the event of an emergency," said Morgan Holm, OPB's Vice President, News.

Media are invited to see a BEECN display – including a shelter tent and radio gear – outside City Council Chambers on December 12th at 1:45 p.m. The agreement with OPB will come to Council for approval during the ensuing City Council meeting.

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WHAT: BEECN press conference and display  
WHEN: December 12, 2012 at 1:45 p.m.  
WHERE: Just outside Council Chambers

WHAT: OPB agreement  
WHEN: December 12, 2012 at 3:00 p.m.  
WHERE: Inside City Council Chambers

Information about BEECNs is available in English, Spanish and Russian at [www.publicalerts.org/earthquake](http://www.publicalerts.org/earthquake). Included at that website is information on how to: prepare your home or business for a disaster; register for real-time emergency cell, text and email alerts at PublicAlerts.org; and sign-up for free emergency preparedness training by joining PBEM's NET program.

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