



Quake '06: A Campaign to Reduce Earthquake Risk in the San Francisco Bay Area

The Quake '06 Campaign is a volunteer effort capitalizing on the extraordinary earthquake risk management expertise in the San Francisco Bay area. Begun in April 2002, Quake '06 is a four-year campaign to reduce earthquake risk in the Bay Area by the hundredth anniversary of the Great San Francisco Earthquake and Fire of 1906. The campaign is a partnership between the community of earthquake professionals in the Northern California Chapter of the Earthquake Engineering Research Institute and representatives of cities, institutions, agencies, and other earthquake-risk stakeholders.

Quake '06 is different from other risk-reduction efforts because our achievements depend on the altruistic efforts of public-spirited volunteers. It is more than an awareness campaign; we are acting to motivate facility owners, institutional officers, and other decision makers to take action. It is a grass-roots effort. Our message is that every person, group, and enterprise should assess its risks and take appropriate actions.

Quake '06 works like this: We divide the risk environment into sectors—not by building type or geography, but by the decision-making process. For example, schools, houses, and office buildings might share certain risks, but those risks are regulated and addressed in very different ways. Next, volunteers working on each sector contact and work with interested stakeholder groups to identify what they have “at risk” in the broadest sense, from personal safety to financial stability. Through this process we learn where past efforts have stalled, and we develop or promote alternative risk-reduction strategies. Inevitably, there are obstacles to the implementation of even the best strategies, so we work to anticipate and reduce them. By April 2006, we hope to have initiated or boosted risk-reduction programs in every sector.

Some of the tools we use are (also see <http://www.quake06.org/>):

- Fact sheets that summarize specific risks in ways that help us communicate with nonexpert “risk owners” and with the media.
- Best practices that describe how other communities or organizations have been successful at reducing their risks.

- Public outreach through the media, taking advantage of important local earthquake anniversaries each April (San Francisco, 1906) and October (Loma Prieta, 1989).
- Workshops to bring advice from experts to interested stakeholders.
- Exhibits and speakers at conventions and conferences.

For a flavor of what the Quake '06 campaign is doing, here is a list of some of our Fall 2004 activities:

- Our media and outreach committee and other volunteers actively supported ballot Measure AA, which will provide resources for BART's seismic retrofit program. We hosted media events, wrote letters to the editor, and met with editorial boards of area newspapers (see http://www.quake06.org/chapter/committees_legislation.html).
- Our local government committee hosted a meeting with representatives of jurisdictions with unreinforced masonry buildings (URM's), some of whom have implemented successful programs and others who have made little progress.
- Our utilities and transportation committee hosted a one-day workshop for local water utilities (see http://www.quake06.org/quake06/u_and_t.html), with sessions on impact of historical earthquakes, benefits of retrofit and upgrade programs, specific vulnerabilities and mitigation alternatives, FEMA's Disaster Mitigation Program, and next steps.
- Structural engineers are donating their time and expertise to help local government facility managers evaluate the earthquake risks to their buildings.
- Our chapter's October meeting featured an address by California Assembly member Ellen Corbett, who shared with us her insights about state government, the politics of risk reduction, and opportunities for professionals to contribute in the public sphere.

There is no shortage of opportunity for involvement (or risk). A great variety of ideas have been generated, and the campaign welcomes new ideas and those interested in volunteering. We have a core group of hard-working and motivated professionals who are actively working to reduce risk in the San Francisco Bay area. If you are interested in participating, please visit <http://www.quake06.org/> and/or contact one of the authors of this short note. ✉

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