



PRESS RELEASE

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LOCAL FIRM WORKING ON FEMA TSUNAMI CONTRACT

While the magnitude of destruction caused by the South East Asia Tsunami is still developing, people in other coastal communities are questioning their risks and what steps our government is taking to mitigate them. This past Fall, Steven M. Baldrige, President of BASE Research & Development, LLC (sister company of Honolulu-based Baldrige & Associates Structural Engineering, Inc.), made several trips to the San Francisco area to attend conferences on Tsunamis. His main goal was to develop a plan to expand the knowledge base regarding the impact of Tsunami loads on building structures. As a result of this work, Steven Baldrige was named Project Director for a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Task Order Contract “Development of Design and Construction Guidance for Special Facilities for Vertical Evacuation from Tsunami.”

This work is part of a FEMA Request for Proposal (RFP) HSFEHQ-04-R-0070 for “Seismic and Multi-Hazard Technical Guidance Development and Support.” The objective of this Task Order Contract is to support (1) the investigation of seismic and related multi-hazard

technical issues as they are identified by FEMA, (2) the development and publication of technical design guidance products to address those issues, and (3) the dissemination of that information and other related outreach activities to the various user groups who need that information.

The goal of this work is to determine whether it is possible to build a structure that would be capable of resisting the extreme forces of a tsunami, and if so, to develop a technical design and construction guidance document for special facilities that would allow for vertical evacuation from tsunami conditions. This is a programmatic question that has become central to the National Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program (NTHMP), which is led by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

The question is being driven by the fact that there are several coastal communities along our nation's west coast that are vulnerable to a tsunami triggered by an earthquake on the Cascadia Subduction Zone (Alaska and Hawaii are subject to similar tsunami hazards), which could potentially generate a tsunami within minutes. A large tsunami, given that many of these coastal communities are located in areas that would be impossible to quickly evacuate, could result in a significant loss of life. NOAA/NTHMP and FEMA, who currently leads the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP), are looking for ways to prevent this. Vertical evacuation, if such a structure could be constructed to resist tsunami loads, is the only feasible alternative to avoiding significant loss of life in areas that are impossible to evacuate in time.

As Project Task Director, Mr. Steven Baldrige is responsible for the overall management of the project, including the preparation and submittal of quarterly progress reports to the Project Executive Director. In this role, Mr. Baldrige will serve as a consultant to the

Applied Technology Council (ATC) who is provided overall management of several task orders under the “Seismic and Multi-Hazard Technical Guidance Development and Support” RFP.

The ATC noted, “Mr. Baldrige is ideally suited to serve in this capacity. In addition to more than 20 years experience as a practicing engineer, he has authored technical papers on the impact of abnormal loadings on structures. These include “Preventing Progressive Collapse in Concrete Buildings,” published in Concrete International, a practical applications journal of the American Concrete Institute, and a Structural Bulletin for the Concrete Reinforcing Steel Institute, “Reinforced Concrete and Secure Buildings: Progressive Collapse.” Mr. Baldrige is also a FEMA trained “Structural Specialist” for collapsed building rescue and Chairperson of the Structural Engineers of Hawaii Disaster Response Committee.”

Baldrige & Associates Structural Engineering, Inc. was formed in 1995 as a full-service Structural Engineering and Forensic consulting firm. Since inception, our staff has been encouraged to evaluate each project from the client’s point of view. Emphasis is placed on schedule, economy and detail as reflected by the unique needs of the client and their project. This commitment has guided our office in the successful completion of projects both large and small. Our attention to clients’ needs has resulted in work not only in Hawaii, but also in Guam, Korea and the Mainland as well.