

Strong earthquake jolts Anchorage, Alaska

June 22 2009, By RACHEL D'ORO , Associated Press Writer



UPDATES magnitude to 5.4 from 5.7; map locates earthquake epicenter near Willow, Alaska

(AP) -- A strong earthquake jolted a swath of southern Alaska on Monday, sending people diving under desks and huddling in doorways but causing little damage.

The U.S. Geological Survey said the 5.4 magnitude tremor struck about 24 miles from the town of Willow at 11:28 a.m. The rumbling lasted several moments in Anchorage, 58 miles from the epicenter, and was felt as far south as Kenai and north to Fairbanks, a span of 300 miles.

"Things were swinging pretty good and shaking, like pictures on the wall, bottles rattling - and my blood pressure went up at least 20 points," said Pam Rannals, a bartender in Talkeetna, about 30 miles from the epicenter. "We had bears in the parking lot last night and now the earthquake. Those are the talk of the town."

No damage other than fallen dishes has been reported anywhere, and Rannals said even the liquor bottles at her workplace stayed put.

The quake was 26 miles deep, a reason for both the minimal damage and the vast area over which it was felt, according to Janet Herr, an employee fielding many of the calls residents were making to the West Coast and Alaska Tsunami Warning Center. Southcentral Alaska is the most populated region of the vast state.

The tsunami center reported the magnitude at a slightly weaker 5.3 and said no tsunami was generated. Aftershocks were shaking the area, with one around noon measuring 4.0.

Alaska is seismically active, and has frequent earthquakes although most are too small or too remote to be felt. The last one that measured stronger was a 5.8 in southern Alaska on Jan. 24.

Monday's [earthquake](#) and its aftershocks had nothing to do with [Mount Redoubt](#), Alaska's most active volcano with a series of explosions earlier this year. Dave Schneider, a geophysist at the [Alaska](#) Volcano Observatory, said the volcano's seismic instruments more than 100 miles from the epicenter picked up the temblors, which he enjoyed from his Anchorage office.

"I thought it was kind of fun, but I'm like that," he said.

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