COS Speakers Series presents

Megathrust Earthquakes in the Pacific Northwest

by Bill Hirt

Thursday, 12-Apr-2012 at 7:30 PM in Room LS-3 on the Weed campus

On January 26, 1700 the Pacific Northwest was rocked by a magnitude 9 earthquake that was almost identical to the one that devastated Japan in March 2011. Although no one living here today has experienced such a quake, dating of ancient forests drowned by tsunamis reveals that great “megathrust” quakes—produced when the North American plate lurches westward relative to the adjoining seafloor—typically strike this region every 300-500 years. This talk will explore the causes of megathrust quakes and describe how geologists are monitoring “silent slip” events that may enable us to better predict them in the future. Please join us for this sixth and final Speakers Series presentation of 2011-2012 academic year.

Bill Hirt is the geology instructor at COS. He grew up in California and earned his degrees in geology from UCLA and UC Santa Barbara. He joined the College's faculty in 1991 after teaching at University of Arizona and UNC-Charlotte and working for the Idaho Geological Survey.