Quake damage to O.C. public property rises to $10.5 million

Quake damage to O.C. public property hits $10.5 million. The county is expected to seek state and federal assistance.

Signs are posted on the doors to the Paulina June and George Pollak Library at Cal State Fullerton letting students know that because of damage from the recent earthquake some of the floors are closed until they can be repaired.

BY MARTIN WISCKOL / STAFF WRITER
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The March 28 La Habra earthquake caused more damage than initially reported in Orange County, with officials now saying that $6 million in needed repairs at Cal State Fullerton have lifted the overall cost to more than $10.5 million for public property.

Pollak Library South sustained the bulk of the campus’ damage from the quake, with floors two through six remaining closed because of damage to the ventilation system, university spokeswoman Paula Selleck said.

Brea Olinda Unified School District sustained the next-highest amount of damage, with an estimated $2 million of repairs needed to 10 schools there, Raymond Cheung, the county’s assistant emergency manager, said Monday.

The Orange County Board of Supervisors is expected to ratify a proclamation of emergency Tuesday. The ratification is required before Gov. Jerry Brown and President Barack Obama can consider declaring an emergency at the state and federal levels.

“That provides the opportunity to get state and federal funds,” said county Supervisor Pat Bates, who signed the county proclamation of emergency on Friday.

Cal State Fullerton was largely empty when the 5.1 magnitude quake hit at 9:09 p.m. March 28, and no injuries were reported. Sustaining minor damage were the Langsdorf Hall and the Humanities and Social Sciences building, Selleck said.

In addition to there being few night classes on that Friday, it was the last day before spring break and that contributed to the lack of people on campus.

State and federal agencies will be verifying the damage estimates. A minimum of $10.5 million in public damages and response costs is required before an area can be eligible for state and federal emergency funds.

Other damage and response cost estimates include $1 million to Fullerton homes and businesses, $700,000 to schools and other buildings in the Fullerton Joint High School District and $500,000 to Fullerton city property, Cheung said.

A total of $2 million in city and private damages reported by the cities of Brea, La Habra and Fullerton last week has been updated by the county estimate, and damage at Cal State Fullerton and public schools have been added to those cities’ totals.

The $10.5 million amount does not include CalTrans’ cost to fortify Carbon Canyon, where a landslide occurred.

On top of the estimated $10.5 million in damages to public property, an estimated $1.7 million in damages were sustained by residences and businesses, Cheung said. At least 800 homes typically must sustain major damage for residences to qualify for state or Federal Emergency Management Agency relief. Only a single home sustained major damage, he said.

However, the Small Business Administration may make a declaration of disaster and offer assistance to businesses and homeowners, he said.

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