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PRIVATE COMPANY STEPS UP TECHNOLOGY FOR EARTHQUAKE FORECASTING

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With the upcoming one-hundred year anniversary of the devastating San Francisco Earthquake and in the wake of the 2004 Tsunami, we are still wondering why these cataclysms are still catching humanity by surprise. Even a few minutes of early notice could save thousands of lives by evacuation and emergency response measures. After decades of study, are we any closer to finding a quake-warning system to forecast these events?

QuakeFinder, a private research company based in Palo Alto, California, is undertaking a significant upgrade of search coil magnetometer sensor technology applied to measuring the subtle effects in the earth and ionosphere, occurring several hours to days before major earthquakes, which may provide the foundations of short-term forecasts. QuakeFinder is building and deploying the next 10 ULF "reference" monitors — fifteen times more sensitive than their predecessors — in locations close to the major faults in California to fill the gaps in the original network of 60 ultra low frequency (ULF) magnetometers that already constitutes the largest network in the world.

“Ultimately,” says Tom Bleier, President of QuakeFinder, “the new reference sensors are a step forward towards our goal of developing a fundamental improvement in short-term earthquake forecasting in the next decade, based on an emerging technique of monitoring electromagnetic noise signatures generated near quake focal areas. We strive to reach a point where people will be able to turn on their radio, TV or computer and receive earthquake forecasts, just like they do today with hurricanes or tornado warnings.”

QuakeFinder is one of several entities including NASA —as well as Stanford, UC Berkeley and other leading Universities— studying the correlation between electromagnetic phenomena and pre-seismic activity. The tsunami reinvigorated long-dormant tsunami research budgets of NOAA, but this type of short-term earthquake forecasting research has been typically hampered by the lack of both government and private research funding. QuakeFinder stepped up to the plate on its own initiative through a private/public partnership. In this innovative approach, QuakeFinder not only partners with scientists or researchers but is also making it possible for members of the general public to contribute by directly sponsoring more ground systems. Any individual who is interested can simply go to www.quakefinder.com and register online.

ABOUT QUAKEFINDER – QuakeFinder is a private business located in Palo Alto, CA, dedicated to saving lives by conducting research to enable global forecasts of seismic activity, in order to eventually provide customers with early warnings of potentially destructive earthquakes.

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