

Quakes near Tahoe could have been a disaster

By Patrick Perron, Bay Area News Group

A trio of significant earthquakes that struck a remote part of western Nevada early Wednesday were big enough to cause as much as \$1 billion in damage if they had been centered beneath a big city, a leading expert said.

The first of two magnitude-5.7 quakes that began shortly after midnight and a third that registered 5.5 resulted in no injuries or reports of significant damage. The epicenter was east of the Sierra range and the Nevada-California line near rural Hawthorne about 100 miles southeast of Lake Tahoe and 90 miles south of Reno.

“Thankfully, it’s not underneath a big city because a sequence of 5.7s could certainly do a lot of damage,” said Graham Kent, director of the University of Nevada’s Seismological Laboratory.

“If you put this underneath Reno, we are probably looking at a \$1 billion event, probably with some fatalities and many casualties,” he told the *Associated Press*. “It’s much better to be beneath a ranch 20 miles outside of Hawthorne.”

Bodie State Historic Park sustained damage and is closed while officials assess the buildings.

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