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Man-Made Quakes Rattle North Bay Town

Quakes Damage Homes In Anderson Springs

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ANDERSON SPRINGS, Calif. -- Earthquakes are common in the Bay Area. But there is a community in the North Bay that is shaking more than the rest of the Bay Area, and these quakes have nothing to do with nature, NBC11's Jean Elle reported.

Anderson Springs is a small community about 100 miles north of San Francisco. And residents say the hills pack a punch.

"They feel a lot like a truck backing into the side of your house, and the big ones feel like a truck going through your house," said Jeff Gospe, an Anderson Springs resident.

The U.S. Geological Survey says small quakes rattle the Anderson Springs community an average of 1.5 times every day.

Residents say the rocking is shaking their community apart.

"All of the sudden, boom, there is a huge crack," said Muriel Madrano, an Anderson Springs resident.

The stone wall at the community center is cracking and so are people's homes.

Glinda Addington's porch is starting to split apart, and part of her foundation is also falling apart.

"Watching it go from a quarter inch to 3 inches, almost, and watching my walls fall apart," Addington said.

Seismologists say the quakes are man-made.

Calpine and the Northern California Power Agency are operating more than a dozen geothermal plants in the nearby Geysers Geothermal Field.

They're removing steam from the earth to make power. The process also produces shaking.

"When power plants started in an area where there previously (were) no earthquakes, then in about six months the earthquakes would start," said David Oppenheimer of the USGS.

Seismologists say removing steam from the earth causes the rock to constrict a lot like a sponge does when it's out of water, Elle reported.

"We can see expression of contraction because if you measure elevation of ground, you can see it sinking every year," Oppenheimer said.

Marketplace

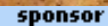
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Residents also say the quakes are getting more intense.

Residents don't want to shut the plants down, but they do want the energy producers to pay for what those plants are doing to their property.

Residents are currently in talks with Calpine and the Northern California Power Agency trying to work out a solution to their concerns.

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