

Tsunami experts attend demo on seismic warning system



KEN du Vall of Lighthouse and Dr John Collins of Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution addressing the seminar. Right: A prototype of the seismic monitoring system.

—Pictures by Saleh al Sharji



MUSCAT — Senior members of Oman's tsunami preparedness taskforce, among other key officials, attended a presentation yesterday showcasing a new ocean-bottom seismic warning system that, its creators say, could form the core hardware of a future tsunami warning system in the region.

Representatives of the Ministry of Regional Municipalities, Environment and Water Resources, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Royal Oman Police,

Directorate General of Civil Aviation and Meteorology, Sultan Qaboos University, and the Earthquake Monitoring Centre, were among those who attended the talk at the Grand Hyatt Muscat. Also present were officials from the Jakarta-based Southeast Asia Centre for Ocean Research and Monitoring.

The presentation was organised by Lighthouse R&D Enterprises, an American research firm, in association with the renowned Woods Hole Oceanographic

gauge and seismometer.

Lighthouse plans to install a prototype of the system off the Shinas coast during February-March this year in the first-ever operational deployment of this technology anywhere in the world. The equipment will be attached to an existing on-bottom cable system extending 32 nautical miles into the sea from the Shinas coast.

Lighthouse installed the existing device offshore Shinas in August 2005 as part of a project implemented on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and aimed at studying the deepwater marine environment of the Gulf of Oman. The new seismic monitoring equipment will be placed as close as possible to the Makran subduction zone, which is a known source of seismic activity linked to tsunamis.

According to Ken du Vall, oceanographic data and seismic from Lighthouse's cabled system surpasses that of a buoy-based system now in use in some parts of the world. It is also transcends buoy systems in terms of cost-effectiveness and reliability, he said.

By A Staff Reporter

Institution (WHOI) of the United States.

Ken du Vall, President and Chief Operating Officer, Lighthouse, and Dr John Collins, senior seismologist at WHOI, took the audience through the salient features of the ocean-bottom seismic cabled warning system — a trawl resistant bottom mounted package that comes integrated with an accelerometer, pressure sensor, pressure