Beat: Travel

5.7-magnitude earthquake jolts southcentral Alaska

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USPA News - A moderate earthquake Monday shook large parts of Southcentral Alaska, including the state`s largest city, seismologists and witnesses said. There were no immediate reports of major damage except for small items which were knocked off of shelves.

The 5.75-magnitude earthquake at 4:42 p.m. local time (0142 GMT Tuesday) was centered in Cook Inlet near the census-designated place of Beluga, or about 27 miles (44 kilometers) west of Anchorage, the state`s largest city. It struck about 33 miles (53 kilometers) deep, making it a shallow earthquake, according to the Alaska Earthquake Information Center (AEIC). The earthquake`s tremors were widely felt across the region, including by residents in the cities of Anchorage, Wasilla, Eagle River, Palmer, and Kenai. But there were no immediate reports of casualties or major damage, except for mostly small items which were knocked off of shelves. Chloë Akers, a student at University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA), was in her Japanese class when the quake hit. "The computer desks started rocking back and forth, and the projection screen started to sort of wave," she said. "It felt like a large jolt of shaking back and forth, then again and again. It shook pretty hard for about 20 seconds at least. Some of us got under the desks. The room was shaking enough that I had to brace myself a little bit." The sparsely populated region of Alaska, which sits on the so-called `Pacific Ring of Fire`, is occasionally struck by powerful earthquakes. Most notably, an enormous 9.2-magnitude earthquake struck north of Prince William Sound in Alaska on March 27, 1964, unleashing a tsunami which killed at least 143 people.

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