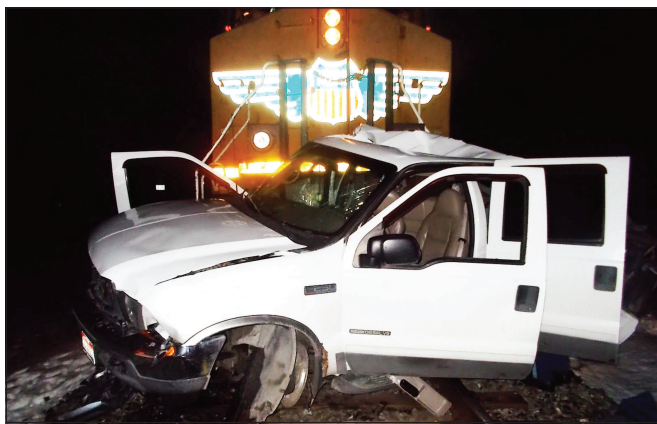


BAKER COUNTY



Baker County Sheriff's Office photo

Two people escaped from this pickup before it was struck by a Union Pacific freight train Friday evening near Haines.

Driver, passenger flee pickup before train collision

■ No one was hurt in incident last week

By Jayson Jacoby
EO Media Group

BAKER CITY — Two Baker City residents escaped injury Friday by jumping out of a pickup before it was struck by a Union Pacific freight train near Haines.

The pickup was stranded on the train tracks after it became entangled with a truck hauling potatoes.

No one was hurt. The incident happened around 5:13 p.m. where Pole Line Lane crosses the railroad tracks, just west of Highway 30 about 6 miles north of Baker City.

Tynan Morrison, 17, was driving north on Highway 30, toward Haines, with one passenger, Isaac Furtney, 18, in the 2001 Ford F-250 pickup, according to the Baker County Sheriff's Office.

Furtney said they were following a potato truck that was driving at about 25-30 mph.

The potato truck was driven by Donald Richardson, 40, of Nampa, Idaho, according to the sheriff's office.

After Morrison began to pass the potato truck, the truck started turning left

onto Pole Line Road. Furtney said they didn't see a turn signal.

The potato trailer collided with the pickup, and the two became entangled, according to the sheriff's office.

Richardson, the potato truck driver, didn't realize this had happened and continued driving across the railroad tracks, which are just west of Highway 30.

At that point the pickup dislodged from the trailer on the tracks, but the pickup couldn't move.

Furtney said they initially saw the lights from the oncoming train and later heard its horn. They jumped from the pickup 10-15 seconds before the train hit the pickup, he said.

Baker County sheriff's deputies investigated the incident. No citations have been issued.

The sheriff's office was assisted by Oregon State Police, Baker City Fire Department, Haines Fire Protection District, Baker Rural Fire Protection District and Oregon Department of Transportation.

No one on the train crew was injured, said Tim McMahan, a spokesperson for Union Pacific.



Baker County Sheriff's Office photo

Two Baker City residents escaped injury on Friday by jumping out of a pickup truck before it was struck by a Union Pacific freight train near Haines. The pickup was stranded on the train tracks after it became entangled with a truck hauling potatoes.

Practice makes perfect



Photo by the La Grande Rural Fire Protection District

Firefighters with the La Grande Rural Fire Protection District practice Saturday during a vehicle extrication class. The La Grande crew teamed up with the Imbler Rural Fire Protection District for the hands-on training for freeing people from vehicles. B & K Auto Salvage & Recycling, La Grande, provided the space and vehicles for the training.

Union looking at a new ATV ordinance

By Dick Mason
The Observer

UNION — The city of Union soon may update its all-terrain vehicle laws.

The city council agreed at a work session Monday night to work toward creating a new ATV ordinance. The council adopted its ATV regulations in 2002. The new ordinance would better conform to new state laws, City Administrator Doug Wiggins said.

The council considered revising its ATV ordinance but decided it would be easier and less time consuming to create a new one.

"Starting from scratch will be a lot easier and cleaner," said Councilor Susan Hawkins.

Wiggins said the new ordinance would reduce the city's liability by making points more understandable. For example, the city law now requires ATV riders to have driver's

licenses but does not spell this out clearly.

"It is confusing," Wiggins said.

The council at the work session also discussed possible revisions of the city's charter, a process it has been pursuing for at least several months. One proposal would require councilors to attend 75% of meetings each year or face losing their seat on the council.

Poor attendance among councilors has been an issue in recent years. Hawkins is among the councilors who said the city needs to address the issue. She stressed the work of the council cannot be done unless its members are present.

The council's regular monthly meeting followed the work session. Action items included approval of the purchase of a fire truck from the Oregon Department of Forestry for \$18,000. The truck is a 2008 Chevy 3500, which has a 300-gallon tank,

flashing lights and tools. The fire truck also has room for the Union Fire Department's extrication equipment.

The vehicle replaces a truck that carried extrication equipment but has a failed electrical system.

The council also voted to approve the purchase of a 2003 Camel hydro excavation truck from Tualatin for \$50,000. Union will use the truck for a variety of purposes, including clearing storm drains and cleaning sludge at the city's sewage treatment plant. Wiggins said the truck would pay for itself in several years because the city would no longer have to hire outside labor to perform that work.

"It would get a lot of use," Wiggins said.

The 2003 Camel truck remains in excellent condition, but Wiggins said the purchase will not be final until he has a chance to inspect it to make sure it will meet Union's needs.

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