

news Briefs

should be answered. Weber says, "That was what we needed to hear as opposed to 'this is no big deal.'"

She says, "The primary concerns are MDT and IDT not looking at the same trucks. Every truck that goes through Idaho goes through Montana." She says Idaho reviewed 14 different truck size and weight configurations, while Montana analyzed only one.

As a result, Weber says Idaho found that extra measures were needed to protect bridges from overloading. In Montana the plan is to slow the trucks down to five miles per hour as they cross the bridges. Not only does Weber question whether that is enough to protect the federal bridges — "These trucks are so extreme this could be the one in a hundred time it doesn't work," she says — the question arises of how the trucks will not hold up traffic for more than the legal 10 minutes while slowing down for each bridge. — *Camilla Mortensen*

SIERRA CLUB SPREADS SOLAR PANELS

This year when Rudolph and company prance across Oregon roofs, homeowners may want to request that they try not to scuff the solar system.

Oregon has an odd relationship with energy, especially coal, importing coal-fired energy even as the Boardman plant is slated to shut down by 2020. The solar industry is growing and already employs more Americans than the U.S. steel production sector, according to the U.S. Solar Foundation.

Oregon's Sierra Club and RS Energy are partnering to offer rooftop solar installations at rates affordable to what may be a surprising share of homeowners. After the Sierra Club announced the deal on June 13, Oregon Sierra Club Director Brian Pasko says they received 120 requests for assessments in the first 24 hours. "It's an amazing response," he says.

The discounts are being offered to all Oregon Sierra Club members. Non-members can join the Sierra Club and immediately be eligible for the evaluation, and RS Energy will help customers wade through the details of financing the projects.

David Richards of RS Energy says that incentives can cover up to 75 percent of a system's cost. "EWEB offers a really nice incentive," Richards says. "They pay an up front amount for the system; that lowers the homeowner's cost. The homeowner's also eligible for a \$6,000 state tax credit and a 30 percent federal tax credit."

The typical system requires about 350 square feet and is made mostly of silicon, with a glass top and aluminum frame. Richards says the systems are fairly flush to the roof and usually dark black or dark blue. While it may surprise homeowners that solar power can be aesthetically pleasing, Richards says that the recent drop in price seems to be a bigger surprise. "I think the biggest thing that people are not aware of is that it has become significantly more affordable than it was even a year or two ago," he says.



PHOTO BY KELLY BEAL, BEAL DESIGNS

UGLY DOGS ARE GOOD DOGS, TOO

El Diablo, "the Chihuahua from hell" who became a star on Cesar Millan's *Dog Whisperer* TV show, isn't the only rescue from Eugene-based Luv-a-Bull looking for fame. Lucille, a pit bull with the head of a gargoyle, the body of a bat and a tendency to spin in circles, has entered the 2011 World's Ugliest Dog Contest at the Sonoma-Marín Fair in Petaluma, Calif.

Liesl Wilhardt, Luv-a-Bull's founder, writes in an email encouraging dog lovers to vote for Lucille, "We want to have Lucille's story bring more attention to the plight of badly bred, unwanted pit bulls and their need for rescue and love."

She adds, "We don't really think she is ugly."

Lucille was adopted from Luv-a-Bull and now has a loving home in Portland. She will be heading down to California for the contest on June 24. While the ugliest dog in the world will be decided by a panel of judges, ugly dog fans can vote for their own favorite (and check out the full panel of ugly dogs) at <http://wkly.ws/12p> — *Camilla Mortensen*

Happening people BY PAUL NEEVEL



BETH LITTLE

Born and raised in Orlando, Fla., Beth Little studied history at Guilford College in Greensboro, North Carolina, where she also met her husband, Tim Little. After graduation, they drove a VW van to Alaska for a summer in the fisheries, discovering Eugene along their route. "We came back, bought a '69 school bus, and drove to Eugene," Little recalls. "We went to national parks. It took months." A year later, in 1987, the Littles began selling wood and canvas deck furniture at the Saturday Market. "I felt a kinship to the market community from the start," she says. "The structure of representation and the amount of volunteerism is paramount to its success." She served as chair of the market board in the early '90s, and she learned about management first-hand in two years with the nonprofit Family Resources and five years at Burley Design. Little became general manager of the Saturday Market in April 2000. "Our sustainable practices have bubbled up from customers and vendors," she notes. "Now we sort 100 percent of waste and compost at least 1,000 pounds every Saturday." Tim Little owns Built to Last Woodworking. The couple's deck furniture can be seen at the Oregon Country Fair, Booth Two.

LOADS TOO HEAVY FOR BRIDGES

Despite the efforts of Native American, conservation and activist groups, 200 massive loads of tar sands equipment have been steadily making their way up the Columbia River and over twisty mountain roads to Canada where they will be used in greenhouse gas generating oil production and the destruction of boreal forests.

Groups have objected to Imperial Oil's Kearsarge Module Transport Project (KMTP) not only because it uses U.S. rivers and highways to facilitate toxic tar sands extraction, but also due to the effects on the roads, on nearby salmon streams and on local residents.

The trucks and their loads combined can weigh up to half a million pounds. Last year, after *EW* reported on the heavy haul, Congressman Peter DeFazio made headlines when he sent a letter to Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood in which he wrote, "If Idaho and Montana issue oversize load permits in violation of the federal bridge formula, American taxpayers will pay the price for the unprecedented wear and tear on our highway system."

Trish Weber of All Against the Haul says the group obtained copies of the engineering evaluations of the infrastructure that was performed by the Idaho Department of Transportation (IDT) and the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), respectively. She says her group commissioned an independent engineering analysis of these evaluations by Scott Kent, a professional engineer with a doctorate in structural engineering. Kent determined from information included in the IDT bridge evaluation calculations that the KMTP trucks exceed the allowed weight per axle as calculated by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) federal bridge formula.

In a letter sent to DeFazio and Sen. John Tester, Weber wrote, "The states of Idaho and Montana, by permitting the KMTP, have not done an adequate job of protecting federal highway infrastructure."

Weber, who is also a professional engineer, says as a result of the letter she flew to Washington, D.C., in early June for meetings with the FHWA. While the analysis and permitting for the heavy loads has been done by state agencies, FHWA told Weber it has jurisdiction over bridges on I-90 and bridges more than 20 feet long on all the state highways.

Weber says she met with Michael Onder, team leader for truck size and weight division at FHWA, and he brought the analysis to bridge engineering department, which said the questions raised are valid concerns and