

CLUES OFFERED TO HOW FOSSIL FUEL DISASTERS MIGHT HAPPEN

A train disaster can stem from something as small as a leak — chlorine gas can be fatal when inhaled — or as massive as an ethanol or crude-oil fed fire. An environmental disaster can stem from something as simple as a train derailment or as complex as the massive amounts of fossil fuels and hazardous materials that are turning Oregon into an energy-industry gateway.

Want to know more about the fossil fuels and chemicals coming through Oregon? Small, diamond-shaped placards on all four sides of a tank car with a four-digit United Nations (UN) number will tell you exactly what that train is carrying. The number for crude oil, which might include toxic tar sands crude from Canada or fracked oil from the Bakken oil field of North Dakota, is 1267. Liquefied chlorine gas, which can spread for miles if it leaks, is 1017. Hydrochloric acid is 1789, and it can cause severe injury, burns or death. These are a few of the chemicals that *Eugene Weekly* and PictureEugene recently documented (cover story, 8/15) on railcars coming through downtown Eugene.

Conservationists say that the disaster is already here. A *Sightline Institute* report says if all the region's proposed oil projects "were built and operated at capacity, they would move nearly 805,000 barrels of crude oil per day on the Northwest's rail system." In contrast, the controversial Keystone XL pipeline through the nation's center would carry just a bit more — 830,000 barrels of oil per day.

Add the increase in oil trains through Oregon and Washington to the increase in coal trains that's expected if coal

export terminals are built in Bellingham and Longview, Wash., in addition to Canadian coal terminals. Then add studies from the railway industry that show coal dust makes the rail tracks unstable, and the Pacific Northwest starts looking like a dangerous fossil fuel gateway.

Oregon has never been known for coal mining or oil and gas extraction, but the state does have at least two small coalfields, near Coos Bay and in northern Wallowa and Union counties. It also has natural gas wells in Coos County's coal beds, which were fracked by Halliburton in 2006 and could be fracked again. NW Natural has gas wells and storage in Mist, Ore., 60 miles northwest of Portland.

The looming specter of liquefied natural gas (LNG, UN number 1972) has not disappeared from Oregon. While the Port of Coos Bay didn't wind up becoming a coal export terminal this time around, and spokesperson Elise Hamner says it doesn't export oil, the port is still pursuing an LNG export terminal, which would be accompanied by a natural gas pipeline through Oregon's public lands and under pristine rivers. The gas itself is nonodorized and flammable, and attorney Susan Jane Brown of the Western Environmental Law Center points out, "Putting a flammable pipeline through Southern Oregon, which is on fire right now, is seriously screwed up."

UN numbers for hazardous materials can be looked up online through the U.S. Department of Transportation's *Emergency Response Guidebook* at wkly.ws/1jb. — Camilla Mortensen

COUNTY COUNSEL DINGLE PAY STUB DISCREPANCY

Former Lane County administrator Liane Richardson was fired after an investigation stemming from changes she made to her pay, and now questions arise over the pay stubs of County Counsel Stephen Dingle, who has been inter-

twined with the Richardson controversy.

Dingle oversaw the outside investigation of Richardson that led to her dismissal, and many county citizens questioned even that level of involvement, given he had been part of an earlier uproar over \$20,000 pay raises that had been proposed for Richardson as well as for Dingle. An email from Richardson to the County Commission, after her unauthorized pay change was questioned, says the county finance manager had decided to consult with the county counsel over her salary change.

Pay stubs that were released to the media in response to public records requests involving the Richardson case appear to show a discrepancy with Dingle's pay. The county has yet to release materials related to Richardson and the outside investigation. The criminal investigation has been turned over to Marion County, where Dingle was once a prosecutor and Human Resources Director Madilyn Zike previously worked.

A pay stub from Jan. 11, 2013 shows Dingle accruing 14.462 hours in year-to-date (YTD) time management — pay with leave. On the stub from Jan. 25, it shows Dingle accrued 28.924 hours YTD, an increase of 14.462 over the pay period.

Looking at the ongoing pay stubs, it appears that Dingle is getting 14.462 hours each pay period (every two weeks). But according to his contract from Jan. 8, 2013, "County counsel accrues time management as other non-represented county employees with the same years of service accrue such time," and according to the time management section of Lane County's Administrative Procedures Manual (APM), it would take 19 years to accrue 14.462 hours per pay period. Dingle was hired in January 2012.

The pay stubs state that Dingle makes \$70.19 an hour. This means that \$1,015 worth of hours is being added to Dingle's paychecks each pay period instead of the \$583.14 that fewer than two years of county service qualifies him for, an increase of more than \$400 per paycheck.

HOMELESS CAMP MOVES, MAINTAINS PURPOSE

James Chastain's tent sat by Ferry Street Bridge for a week. He pitched camp and others followed — three, then five, then 20. "It became a neighborhood," he says. Homeless advocates say a neighborhood — or at least a safe place for the many homeless people in Lane County to sleep — is still needed.

On Aug. 15, the Eugene Police Department cited Chastain, an activist with SLEEPS (Safe Legally Entitled Emergency Places to Sleep), for "prohibited camping." The protest campsite swiftly moved to Wayne Morse Free Speech Plaza that day after the charges against 22 homeless and free speech advocates protesting at the plaza were dismissed as unconstitutional by Eugene Municipal Court Judge Karen Stenard.

SLEEPS chose the bridge area to call for the release of results to a police misconduct investigation following the June arrests of eight homeless campers there. Moving to the plaza was intended to celebrate the judge's ruling and to spur revision of Lane County's overnight curfew for the space. County commissioners have not yet scheduled discussion of lifting or altering the curfew.

"Homelessness hasn't been identified very clearly in the public vision," says Commissioner Pat Farr, member of the county's Human Services Commission, where a subcommission on homelessness remains in formulaic stages. "Let's address the issue [of places to sleep] rather than the [SLEEPS] gathering itself," he says.

"We'd like to have designated places to sleep," Chastain says. "If they'd give us that, we'd be glad to get off the plaza."

"With the sweeps in West Eugene, it's left everything in utter turmoil," says Wayne Martin, a retired minister on the Opportunity Village steering committee. "We're just going day by day, trying to find them a place that's safe."

"Y'all do know the Mission is full?" said camper Stephen Smith to police, during Chastain's citation. Eugene Mission's capacity recently fell from 500 to 300. Add to that evictions from West Eugene Wetlands and the sleepers just aren't sleeping.

"Opportunity Village is a great model, but it barely scratches the surface," says activist Florence Emily Semple. "There are thousands of people with nowhere to sleep. At 3 am [they] are just looking for a place to lie down. It's a huge need, and it's so easy to not see it because you're home, asleep in your own bed." — Adrian Black



PHOTO ADRIAN BLACK