

Railroad blamed for fiery oil train derailment

Investigators say company failed to maintain track

By **MATTHEW BROWN** and **GILLIAN FLACCUS**
Associated Press

PORTLAND — Federal investigators on Thursday blamed Union Pacific Railroad for a fiery oil train derailment along the Oregon-Washington border, saying the company failed to properly maintain its track.

Preliminary findings on the June 3 derailment in the Columbia River Gorge raise questions about why the company didn't find the broken bolts that triggered the wreck when it inspected the tracks right before the derailment. Union Pacific faces potential penalties for safety violations, officials said.

The Associated Press obtained the findings ahead of their Thursday release.

Advanced electronic brakes proposed by regulators could have made the derailment less severe, Federal Railroad Administrator Sarah Feinberg said. The brakes could have reduced the number of cars that went off the tracks and prevented the one that first burst into flames from being punctured, officials said.

Railroads have resisted those brakes because of their high price tag.

"We're talking about upgrading a brake system that is from the Civil War era," Feinberg said. "It's not too much to ask these companies to improve their braking systems in the event of an accident so fewer cars are derailing."

The derailment released 42,000 gallons of crude oil and sparked a massive fire that burned for 14 hours.

Union Pacific said its inspections didn't detect the broken bolts that caused the derailment. The company tests for sideways movement in the rails using a machine that puts an amount of pressure equivalent to a locomotive on the rails — a stress test that would reveal loose or broken bolts, said Justin Jacobs, a Union Pacific spokesman.

The stress test previously was conducted every 18 months but will now be done every three months, Jacobs said. Union Pacific also has expanded inspections of all its

tracks in Oregon and Washington state, particularly in curved portions of track, he said.

The company has said the rails were inspected as recently as May 31, but it wasn't clear if the inspection included the stress test. Jacobs didn't know.

The government's preliminary report said walking inspections along the rails were critical to detect broken bolts and track movement. Feinberg said it was the railroad's responsibility to detect those problems.

"We feel like it could have been prevented with closer inspections, better maintenance," she said.

At least 27 oil trains have been involved in major derailments, fires or oil spills in the U.S. and Canada during the past decade, according to an AP analysis of accident records. Federal officials have responded with requirements for tougher tank cars, speed restrictions and other actions, but the accidents have continued.

Steven Ditmeyer, a rail consultant who worked in leadership positions at both the Federal Railroad Administration and at Burlington Northern Railroad, said sheared-off bolts like those seen in the Oregon derailment are likely symptoms of a larger problem.

In the 1990s, he said, Burlington Northern had a series of derailments on tracks in Wash-



A train towing cars full of oil sends up a plume of smoke after derailing June 3 near Mosier by the scenic Columbia River Gorge.

ington state that all involved sheared off cut spikes, which served the same function as the bolts in question in the recent wreck.

Investigators eventually determined overloaded cars, a lack of lubrication between the wheel assembly and the body of the tanker cars and not enough gravel in the railroad bed combined to put strain on the track when the train was in a curve. That strain loosened the bolts holding the rails to the rail ties and pushed the rails apart, causing derailments, he said.

"When they said those sheared lag bolts, that was the

hint that said they really need to look in the direction of these other aspects," Ditmeyer told the AP. "These are heavy cars when they're fully loaded," and a treatment to reduce the volatility of the Bakken crude makes the oil heavier, he said.

The Oregon Department of Transportation last week asked federal rail authorities for a moratorium on oil trains in the Columbia River Gorge after also expressing concerns that the weight of the oil trains might be too much for the tracks.

In a presentation last week,

department administrator Hal Gard said the lag bolts found at the scene were rusted on both ends, indicating they were sheared off before the derailment. State officials showed a photo of a pile of lag bolts collected at the site.

The report was released the day after Union Pacific said it would start moving oil trains through the scenic Columbia River gorge again sometime later this week.

The company defended its decision in a statement, reiterating the federal obligations it is under and highlighting

the tiny fraction of its Oregon shipments — less than 1 percent — that come from oil trains.

In addition to state transportation officials, Multnomah County and several municipalities including Portland and Mosier have called on Congress and the White House for bans on oil being moved by rail, which is under the federal government's authority.

Gov. Kate Brown has called for a federal moratorium on transporting oil on trains until the system is unquestionably safe.

"The preliminary findings released today by the Federal Railroad Administration confirm the deep concerns we have regarding track safety in the Columbia River Gorge. Union Pacific has not done enough to regain the confidence of Oregonians shaken by the Mosier derailment to restart oil shipments through this area," U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden and U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley said in a statement.

"We reiterate our call for federal rail regulators to put in place an emergency order, and to continue examining issues related to lag bolts and track fastening systems that appear to have caused this accident."

Brown reported from Billings, Montana.

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TV LISTINGS

Evening listings
THURSDAY

| THURSDAY EVENING | | | | | | | | | | | | JUNE 23 | |
|------------------|-------|---|---|---|--------------------------|--|-------------------------|--|-------------------|--|------------------|--|-------------------|
| A | L | 6 PM | 6:30 | 7 PM | 7:30 | 8 PM | 8:30 | 9 PM | 9:30 | 10 PM | 10:30 | 11 PM | 11:30 |
| 2 | KATU | (2) KATU News at 6 | | Jeopardy! | Wheel of Fortune | BattleBots "Robots Activate: Qualifying Round Begins" (SP) (N) | | | | Celebrity Family Feud | | KATU News at 11 | (35) Jimmy Kimmel |
| 3 | KOMO | (4) KOMO 4 News | | Jeopardy! | Wheel of Fortune | BattleBots "Robots Activate: Qualifying Round Begins" (SP) (N) | | | | Celebrity Family Feud | | KOMO 4 News | (35) Jimmy Kimmel |
| 4 | KING | (5) NBC Nightly News | KING 5 News | KING 5 News | Evening | Spartan "No One Triumphs Alone" (N) | | Spartan "No One Triumphs Alone" (N) | | Aquarius "Revolution 1" (N) | | KING 5 News | (35) Tonight Show |
| 6 | KOIN | (6) KOIN 6 News at 6 | CBS Evening News | Extra | Ent. Tonight | Big Bang Theory | Life in Pieces | Big Brother | | Code Black "Black Tag" | | KOIN 6 News @ 11 | (35) S. Colbert |
| 7 | KIRO | (7) KIRO 7 News | CBS Evening News | The Insider | Ent. Tonight | Big Bang Theory | Life in Pieces | Big Brother | | Code Black "Black Tag" | | KIRO News | (35) S. Colbert |
| 8 | KGW | (8) KGW News at 6:00 p.m. | | Live at Seven | Inside Edition | Spartan "Premiere" | | Spartan "No One Triumphs Alone" (N) | | Aquarius "Revolution 1" (N) | | KGW News at 11 | (35) Tonight Show |
| 9 | KRCR | (9) Seinfeld | Seinfeld | Modern Family | Modern Family | DC's Legends of Tomorrow "Fail Safe" | | B. & Beast "Something's Gotta Give" (N) | | KGW News at 10 | (35) Two 1/2 Men | (05) Two 1/2 Men | (35) King of Hill |
| 10 | KOPB | (10) Mickela Mallozzi | Business (N) | PBS NewsHour | | Oregon Art Beat | Oregon Guide | DCI Banks "Wednesday's Child" | | (35) Afterlife "Mirrorball" | | Ore. Experience | |
| 12 | KPTV | (12) 6 O'Clock News | | Family Feud | Family Feud | Bones "The Stiff in the Cliff" (N) | | Home Free "Holmes on the Ranch" (N) | | 10 O'Clock News | | 11 O'Clock News | Loves Ray |
| 13 | KPDx | (13) Mike & Molly | Mike & Molly | Big Bang Theory | Big Bang Theory | FOX 12's 8 O'Clock News on PDX-TV | | FOX 12's 9 O'Clock News on PDX-TV | | The Mentalist "Aingavite Baa" | | The Mentalist | "Blood Money" |
| 14 | KCPQ | (14) Name Game | Modern Family | Big Bang Theory | Big Bang Theory | Bones "The Stiff in the Cliff" (N) | | Home Free "Holmes on the Ranch" (N) | | Q13 News at 10 | | Q13 News | Modern Family |
| 20 | TBS | (20) Seinfeld Pt. 1 of 2 | Seinfeld Pt. 2 of 2 | Seinfeld Pt. 1 of 2 | Seinfeld Pt. 2 of 2 | 2 Broke Girls | 2 Broke Girls | Big Bang Theory | Big Bang Theory | 2 Broke Girls | 2 Broke Girls | Conan (N) | |
| 22 | KZJO | (22) Two and a Half | Two and a Half | The Simpsons | The Simpsons | Modern Family | Modern Family | Q13 News at 9 | | Big Bang Theory | Big Bang Theory | Friends Pt. 1 of 2 | Friends |
| 29 | ESPN | (29) (4:30) NBA Draft (L) | | | | SportsCenter | | SportsCenter | | O.J.: In America "Part Five" O.J.'s post-acquittal life takes ever stranger turns. 5/5 | | Jalen & Jacoby (N) | NFL Live |
| 30 | ESPN2 | (30) (5:00) NCAA Baseball Division I Tournament (L) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 31 | NICK | (31) Sanjay Craig (N) | Henry Danger | The Thundermans | The Thundermans | ★★ Zookeeper (2011, Comedy) Rosario Dawson, Leslie Bibb, Kevin James. | | Full House | Full House | Friends | Friends | | |
| 32 | DISN | (32) Liv and Maddie | K.C. Undercover | Stuck in Middle | Stuck in Middle | ★★ Finding Nemo (03) Albert Brooks. | | (10) Liv Maddie | (35) Walk Prank | K.C. Undercover | Girl Meets World | | |
| 34 | FAM | (34) (5:00) Bride Wars (09) Kate Hudson. | | (15) ★★ The Wedding Planner (2001, Romance) Matthew McConaughey, Bridgette Wilson, Jennifer Lopez. | | | | Pretty Little Liars "Tick Tock, B*tches" | | The 700 Club | | | |
| 35 | FMC | (35) (5:00) X-Men Origins: Wolverine | | (15) FXM Presents ★★ X-Men Origins: Wolverine (09) Liev Schreiber, Danny Huston, Hugh Jackman. [(45) FXM Presents | | | | ★★★★ A Good Day to Die Hard (13) Bruce Willis. | | (55) FXM Presents | | | |
| 36 | LIFE | (36) Wives "Pretty Young Deadly Things" | Deadly Wives "Marlboro Man Murder" | Deadly Wives "Murder for Profit" | Deadly Wives "Acid Lady" | Deadly Wives "Acid Lady" | | Deadly Wives "Craven for Murder" | | Deadly Wives | | | |
| 38 | ROOT | (38) (5:00) Champions Tennis | MLB Baseball Seattle Mariners at Detroit | Tigers Site: Comerica Park -- Detroit, Mich. | | | | Post-game | NHRA Drag Racing | | | | |
| 39 | FST | (39) (5:30) UFC Fight Night | | Fox Sports Live | Fox Sports Live | TMZ Sports (N) | Best I Heard (N) | Fox Sports Live | Garbage Time | Speak for Yourself | | | |
| 43 | SPIKE | (43) (4:00) Machete | ★★★ Law Abiding Citizen (2009, Crime Story) Gerard Butler. | Colm Meaney, Jamie Foxx. | | Lip Sync Battle | | Lip Sync Battle (N) | Lip Sync Battle | Lip Sync Battle | Lip Sync Battle | | |
| 44 | COM | (44) Futurama (c:25) Futurama | (55) Futurama | Futurama | | Jim Gaffigan (N) | Jim Gaffigan (N) | Tosh.0 | Tosh.0 | The Daily Show (N) | Nightly Show (N) | | |
| 45 | HIST | (45) Pawn Stars | Pawn Stars | Pawn Stars | | Alone: A Deeper Cut "The Ascent" (N) | | Alone "The Madness" (N) | | (05) Mountain Men | | (05) Mountain Men | |
| 46 | A&E | (46) The First 48 "The Graveyard Shift" | The First 48 "Murder in Treme" | The First 48 "Blood on Bourbon" | | The First 48 "Mother of Two" (N) | | Extreme Weight Loss "Rachel" (N) | | Fat Chance "Brian" (N) | | My Big Fat Fabulous Life "Speechless" | |
| 47 | TLC | (47) My 600-lb Life "Nikki's Story" | My 600-lb Life "Gideon's Story" | My 600-lb Life "Marla's Story" | | Street Outlaws: Full Throttle (N) | | To Be Announced | | Street Outlaws (N) | | Street Outlaws "Lonestar Smackdown" | |
| 48 | DISC | (48) Fast N' Loud | Life Below Zero | Life Below Zero | | Life Below Zero | | Life Below Zero | | Port Protection | | Life Below Zero | |
| 49 | NGEO | (49) Primal Survivor | Castle "Under the Gun" | Castle "Under the Gun" | | ★★★ The Green Mile (1999, Drama) David Morse, Bonnie Hunt, Tom Hanks. | | ★★★ Bad Boys (1995, Action) Martin Lawrence, Téa Leoni, Will Smith. | | Queen of the South "Pilot" | | 2 Fast 2 Furious (03, Act) Paul Walker. | |
| 50 | TNT | (50) Alice in Wonderland | ★★ Hitch (2005, Comedy) Eva Mendes, Kevin James, Will Smith. | WWE Smackdown! WWE superstars do battle in long-running rivalries. | | Chopped "Meatball Madness" | Chopped "San Francisco" | Beat Bobby Flay | Beat Bobby Flay | Beat Bobby Flay | Beat Bobby Flay | Beat Bobby Flay | Beat Bobby Flay |
| 51 | AMC | (51) Law & Order: S.V.U. "Ghost" | Law & Order: S.V.U. "Conscience" | WWE Smackdown! WWE superstars do battle in long-running rivalries. | | Chopped "Meatball Madness" | Chopped "San Francisco" | Beat Bobby Flay | Beat Bobby Flay | Beat Bobby Flay | Beat Bobby Flay | Beat Bobby Flay | Beat Bobby Flay |
| 52 | USA | (52) Chopped "Rock Stars" | Chopped "Fig Out" | WWE Smackdown! WWE superstars do battle in long-running rivalries. | | Chopped "Meatball Madness" | Chopped "San Francisco" | Beat Bobby Flay | Beat Bobby Flay | Beat Bobby Flay | Beat Bobby Flay | Beat Bobby Flay | Beat Bobby Flay |
| 53 | FOOD | (53) Chopped "Rock Stars" | Chopped "Fig Out" | WWE Smackdown! WWE superstars do battle in long-running rivalries. | | Chopped "Meatball Madness" | Chopped "San Francisco" | Beat Bobby Flay | Beat Bobby Flay | Beat Bobby Flay | Beat Bobby Flay | Beat Bobby Flay | Beat Bobby Flay |
| 54 | HGTV | (54) Masters of Flip "Who Paints Brick?" | Masters of Flip "Don't Be a Hero" | Flip or Flop | Flip or Flop | Flip or Flop (N) | Flip or Flop | House Hunters (N) | House Hunters (N) | Vintage Flip (N) | Vintage Flip (N) | Vintage Flip (N) | Vintage Flip (N) |
| 56 | FX | (56) The Croods (2013, Animated) Emma Stone, Ryan Reynolds, Nicolas Cage. | | Hotel Transylvania (2012, Animated) Kevin James, Andy Samberg, Adam Sandler. | | Hotel Transylvania (2012, Animated) Kevin James, Andy Samberg, Adam Sandler. | | Hotel Transylvania (2012, Animated) Kevin James, Andy Samberg, Adam Sandler. | | Hotel Transylvania (2012, Animated) Kevin James, Andy Samberg, Adam Sandler. | | Hotel Transylvania (2012, Animated) Kevin James, Andy Samberg, Adam Sandler. | |
| 57 | CNN | (57) Anderson Cooper 360 | CNN Tonight With Don Lemon | Anderson Cooper 360 | | CNN Newsroom | | CNN Newsroom | | CNN Newsroom | | CNN Newsroom | |
| 58 | FNC | (58) The Kelly File With Megyn Kelly | Hannity | The O'Reilly Factor | | The Kelly File With Megyn Kelly | | Hannity | | On the Record | | On the Record | |
| 61 | CNBC | (61) Amer. Greed "Capturing the Fugitives" | American Greed: Scam (N) | Amer. Greed "Psychic Fiend's Network" | | American Greed "Six Feet Plunder" | | American Greed: Scam | | Paid Program | | Paid Program | |
| 63 | BRVA | (63) Below Deck "Charter King" | Million Doll "No Moore Mr. Nice Guy" | Million Dollar List "Take a Walker" | | Million Doll "Windows to Your Sale" (N) | | H.Wives "When the Ship Hits the Fan" | | WatchWhat (N) | | Million Dollar List | |
| 64 | TCM | (64) (5:00) ★★ West Side Story (61) Natalie Wood. | (45) ★★ The Music Man (1962, Musical) Shirley Jones, Buddy Hackett, Robert Preston. | ★★★ Bye Bye Birdie (63, Mus) Dick Van Dyke, Ann-Margret. | | | | | | | | | |
| 65 | SYFY | (65) (5:00) A Nightmare on Elm Street 5:... | ★ Saw VI (2009, Horror) Costas Mandylor, Betsy Russell, Tobin Bell. | Saw: The Final Chapter (2010, Horror) Betsy Russell, Costas Mandylor, Tobin Bell. | | Friday the 13th (09) Jared Padalecki. | | | | | | | |
| 162 | RFD | (162) SF Machinery | Small Town | Rural America "Live" | | Steve Lantvit | Rural Eve. News | Market Journal | GA Farm Monitor | SF Machinery | Small Town | Time Life Library | |

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