

PUMPS

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unfamiliar with the landscape don't realize hundreds of miles separate each station.

According to a record of the House's first reading, HB 3011 strives to address the following issues:

- Lack of access to fueling stations in much of southeastern Oregon

- Impact of limited hours of operation of fueling stations on travelers

- Potential danger to motorists of running out of fuel in remote areas

Due to the bill's population classification of 40,000 and under, it would apply to more than half of Oregon's counties, including communities along the Columbia River Gorge. According to a 2014 U.S. Census estimate, Hood River County's population was 22,885 and Wasco County's was 25,515.

Owners of local gas sta-

tions expressed concern regarding the economic impact of bringing self-service gas stations to Hood River County. They voiced an issue that self-service automation could eliminate existing jobs.

Florence Akiyama, who owns Nobli's gas station on Tucker Road in Hood River with her husband, Nobli, said the legislation could hurt local employment.

"I don't see the advantage really ... the worst disadvantage will be (losing) jobs," said Akiyama.

Nobi's employs 11 employees, four of whom are full-time, said Akiyama. She said the station is typically open from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., with employees working two shifts. The station is closed at night.

Butch Gehrig, owner of Gehrig's Chevron station in Odell, said his station would "keep full service" even if the option of self-service was introduced around the state.

"I suppose in a way it would save in my labor cost a

bit, but I would rather have people working," said Gehrig.

Gehrig predicted legislation would affect employment statewide but would not change gas prices considerably. He said gas prices are similar in Oregon and Washington, even though Washington uses self-service stations. According to GasBuddy.com, a nationwide gas tracker, Oregon's average price per gallon as of Friday was \$2.99 and Washington's was \$2.97.

Paco Salazar, assistant manager at Gehrig's Chevron, said a law allowing self-service stations in Oregon could "cut jobs."

However, Salazar said there wouldn't be much of an impact on Gehrig's due to its small staff. Including management, Gehrig's Chevron runs on the elbow grease of four locals. Salazar said all four workers share duties, including vehicle maintenance and lube, in addition to working as gas attendants.

TRAINS

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need to have dialogue and understand each other a little better," said Fritz.

BACKGROUND

Oregon Rep. John Huffman, R-The Dalles, worked with Rep. Mark Johnson, R-Hood River, to coordinate the visit by UP executives.

Huffman felt it was important to have a conversation about oil shipments to address concerns expressed by city councilors in The Dalles and Hood River.

In January The Dalles passed a resolution urging state officials to pursue greater federal regulations of crude oil shipments. Hood River went even further by calling for a total ban on these transports.

"I was very pleased with the turnout of gorge elected officials and community leaders," said Huffman about Tuesday's visit.

"They had the opportunity to ask UP managers questions about what they are doing as a company to address safety concerns, whether transporting oil or any potentially hazardous material.

"I sensed a real desire on UP's part to be a good partner and be available in the future to address concerns that communities may have."

Fritz was accompanied on the "whistle stop tour" by Scott Moore, vice-president of public affairs, Brock Nelson, director of public affairs and Francisco Castillo, director of corporate relations and media.

SAFETY ISSUES

He said many people don't know that railroads have 20 times fewer incidents involving hazardous material shipments than trucks.

And that train accidents, grade crossing collisions and employee injuries have dropped across the nation from 100 per year in 1980 to fewer than 20 in 2014.

He expects those numbers to continue declining with UP's \$31 billion expenditure on infrastructure safety measures between 2005 and 2014.

He said these continuing investments come out of the company's bottom line.

"As a transportation network, we are not tax based, we are privately funded," said Fritz.

"Our whole business is shipping product, serving our customer, and we do our best to ship it safely."

One safety cost has been \$2.4 billion to meet a federal mandate for "positive train control."

That method of monitoring and controlling freight

trains automatically regulates speed and stops the locomotive before certain accidents can occur that would have been caused by human error.

Fritz said lasers and ultrasound equipment now identifies rail imperfections and acoustic vibration tracking on wheels can detect problems with bearings.

Between 2010 and 2014, UP's capital investment in Oregon was more than \$520 million for track and rail car safety.

Fritz said work continues to replace wooden ties racks with concrete in high traffic corridors. Since 2014, the company has replaced 1.3 million ties and 377 miles of rail in Oregon.

"We spend a lot of time and money trying to get maintenance right," he said.

FEDERAL RULES

Because of the ongoing expenditures in safety measures, including the training of 50,000 first responders since 2004 to deal with an incident, Fritz said UP, like other railroads, opposes the mandate for new brakes that was handed down last week by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Federal officials want ECP (Electronically Controlled Pneumatic) brake systems on trains carrying flammable liquids at speeds above 30 miles per hour by the year 2021 and all trains by 2023.

Currently, UP uses air brake technology that Fritz said is proven, something that can't be said for ECP brakes, which have not been widely used.

He said the requirement for slower speeds if trains don't install these brakes will greatly hamper operations.

"It's not a cost effective way to minimize risk," he said.

The Association of American Railroads questions how a safety mandate of "such magnitude" could become a regulation when DOT officials have publicly admitted there is negligible simulation analysis regarding ECP brakes.

"Attention and resources should be allocated to addressing the underlying causes of rail accidents and brakes simply aren't on that list," said Edward Hamberger, AAR president and chief executive officer.

"Unjustified regulations such as this trigger a reallocation of investments that will not generate the kind of safety benefits the industry and the public expects.

"The regulation does not take into account the disruption the ECP mandate will wreak on railroads — both freight and passenger operations."

Fritz said railroad companies do strongly support new enhanced design standards that require train cars to have thicker shells and other upgrades that will prevent leaks and fires in the event of a derailment.

SHIPPING STATS

Although crude oil makes up only 1 percent of UP's total freight revenue, Fritz said additional capital is earned from hauling materials for drilling and other operations related to fossil fuel extraction.

Crude oil shipments comprise about 2 percent of UP transports in Oregon, between 600-800 carloads each month.

In 2014, UP shipped about 141,000 carloads of crude oil in its 23-state networks.

"We do not currently move any crude that originates in the Bakken region (North Dakota) through Oregon," said Fritz.

Bakken shale crude oil is considered more explosive than tar sands crude from Canada and shipments are opposed for that reason by environmental groups and some government leaders.

UP, which operates on the Oregon side of the Columbia, does not ship coal through the Gorge at this time, said Fritz.

Oil shipments generate 18 percent of UP's total freight revenue, with intermodal products, such as building supplies and industrial products sharing the top spot at 20 percent.

"The beauty of UP is the strength of our franchise and that franchise is very broad — so if one industry is suffering, another is doing well," he said.

Crude is moved through Oregon on two primary routes: the first follows the I-5 corridor from California's northern border north to Washington and the second runs through the Gorge once lines from Spokane, Wash., and Boise, Idaho, meet near Hermiston.

ECONOMIC STATS

Fritz said UP invested \$5 million in 2014 to train emergency responders for a potential derailment, another investment that continues.

"We have 38 fire departments on our route in Oregon and we've offered to train each and every one of them," he said.

Hail storm damage still being assessed

By KIRBY NEUMANN-REA
News editor

Wednesday's surprise hail storm caused some damage in lower Hood River valley orchards, but the extent is still being assessed.

"The fruitlets right now are small but a big enough target, and a lot of it depends on how hard it is and how long it hit," said Craig Mallon, fieldman for Duckwall Pooley packing house. Mallon said he and other packing house field reps are still assessing the extent of the damage from the storm, which pelted areas near Hood River with pea-sized ice pellets for nearly five minutes.

"Clearly there was some damage. We are still assessing it. It takes a few days for it to become apparent," Mallon said.

"It's too early to tell what that's going to look like at harvest. Field reps are scrambling to get a handle on it," said Steve Castagnoli,



Photo by Trisha Walker

A VEHICLE splashes through sudden and torrential hail Wednesday afternoon in downtown Hood River.

OSU horticulturist. "The hail can cause fruit damage, by causing marks on the fruit surface, and while some of it can be superficial, if it persists it can cause the quality to be downgraded," said Castagnoli, who reported damage to some fruit groves at the Experiment Station, in the lower valley. "If it actually bruises fruit below the surface that's a bigger concern," he said.

The other concern is dam-

age to the leaves and branches, adding to the chance that fire blight bacteria can find entry points in the trees, according to Mallon, who said orchardists will need to address fire blight soon.

The mid- and upper valley areas were unaffected by hail. "Normally, hail hits us the worst on the west side, but this time we just had hard rain," said Brian Hukari, who farms on Barrett Drive.

NELLIE

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HRVAC board president and volunteer Suzanne VanOrman, for which anyone can sign up. The center receives some financial reimbursement for recipients who meet income criteria, but even still, it loses money each month, which is why its volunteer base is especially important.

There are three paid posi-

tions at the center — a full-time cook, a part time custodian and a part time administrative assistant. Everything else depends on volunteers.

As for serving meals to those in need, VanOrman said that those who are not a part of the Meals on Wheels program are always welcome to come to the center for lunch. Extra food is prepared daily, and the comradery in the dining room is high.

"We don't want people to be lonely. The lunch program

here at the center is a very welcoming place, and people enjoy each other's company," VanOrman said. "Visiting is extremely important."

Besides Meals on Wheels drivers, the center is currently looking for a kitchen helper (no experience required), thrift store workers, Bingo leaders and receptionists. There is also one open position on the board.

For more information, stop by the center (address in story above) or call 541-386-2060.

LLOYD

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March 1980, when Mount St. Helens first started to erupt.

He flew around the mountain in a helicopter that April, taking photos of a landscape that, in just a month, would be completely changed.

"I got close ups of the big bulge coming out of the north side, of Spirit Lake covered with ice," he said.

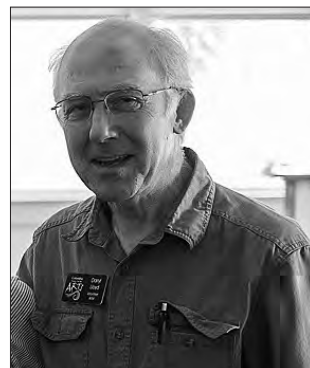
He knew that Mount St. Helens was erupting on May 18 when he saw Mt. Adams disappearing "in a huge dark ash cloud." His first photos of that day were of Mt. Adams being enveloped; he then turned his lens to Mount St. Helens from a high

point in Glenwood and spent the rest of the day photographing the eruption.

"Everyone had their own perspective of the eruption," he said. "Afterward, I got photos of how the mountain changed when I backpacked across Mt. Adams a week later ..."

The second big eruption happened that evening, May 25. "I got unique photos," he said. "I was the only one to photograph that. Thick fog covered the low land of Western Washington, and airplanes were all grounded, and no one was on Mt. Adams. I got incredible photos."

Later that summer, he flew again around Mount St. Helens, taking photos of "a completely transformed landscape around the moun-



Darryl Lloyd

tain, especially on the north side."

The community is invited to come and share their own memories of Mount St. Helens during the presentation, or just come and enjoy the program.

For more information, visit www.msinsstitute.org.

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