

TRAIN: High-centered trailer on tracks causes accident

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accident. "I was turning up the hill go to home and he (Castro) was out of his truck and I saw him turn to go back towards his truck, and then I just saw the train smash through. It went 'bam!'"

"Then I turned around to see if he was okay. He had been out of his truck and I turned around and came back and just checked on him to be sure he was okay because by then he was sitting in his truck. I thought, 'Oh, my, God was he in it?' But he hadn't been and he was okay, and I stayed with him until some people showed up for him."

Hughes said the trailer "high centered" on the tracks and was unable to move for about 10 minutes after getting stuck, when the eastbound Union Pacific train came, "and he (Castro) did not have enough room to stop and hit it."

Union Pacific spokesman Tim McMahan said, "The lead locomotive was damaged to the point where it's not road worthy, although it can be safely moved to a repair facility."

He added that rail traffic was routed around the scene. The impact of the train caused wood chips to spill along the bank for about 70 feet, and uprooted the north rail crossing bar; the south one was undamaged.

On the north side of the train, however, lay about two-thirds of the trailer.

About 20 people employed at businesses on the north side of the tracks were unable to leave the area, because the train blocked two access roads, for about 45 minutes until the Port of Cascade Locks opened a gate at the entrance of a private driveway connecting to Forest Lane, east of the crash site. Responders were able to route Forest Lane vehicles around the scene.

The truck and train were expected to be in place for about two hours while preliminary investigations at the scene were carried out by Federal Railroad Administration, according to Hughes. Hughes said no traffic citation was issued.



Photo by Kirby Neumann-Rea

TRAILER remnants along the Union Pacific siding shortly after the crash; visible between engines is the larger portion of the trailer.

FLOODING: State of emergency declared in three counties

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erty at tinyurl.com/w4838tq. This information will be used by the county to capture impacts of the flood to request support from the state and federal government.

The search and rescue operations will transition to an assessment process to determine the extent of the damage. Umatilla County crews will evaluate roads and the damage to county equipment, and ODOT will continue to inspect and repair roads and structures and assess poten-

tial damage, and is working on I-84 but there is no timeline for reopening the second eastbound and westbound lanes. Umatilla County crews will inspect and assess damage to Walla Walla River Road and Mill Creek Road.

Crews will continue recovery efforts throughout the area, including damage assessment and planning/constructing repairs.

"... I am grateful for all of our first responders for their efforts to keep our families safe since the waters began rising."

Gov. Kate Brown

Emergency declared

Brown declared a State of Emergency on Friday in three Oregon counties due to severe flooding, increased snowmelt, landslides, and erosion. This declaration comes at the request of local legislators and is based on the recommendations of the Oregon Office of Emergency Management (OEM).

"Fast-moving, severe floods have required the evacuation of residences and shut down critical roads in northeastern

Oregon. I am grateful for all of our first responders for their efforts to keep our families safe since the waters began rising," Brown said. "This emergency declaration ensures state resources, emergency response personnel, and equipment can be activated to complement critical local resources as this situation progresses."

Brown's declaration directs OEM to coordinate the deployment of the Oregon National Guard, Oregon De-

partment of Transportation, Oregon State Police, Oregon Water Resources Department, Oregon Department of Human Services, and Oregon Health Authority to support local communities as needed.

OEM will facilitate the access and use of state resources, personnel, and equipment to protect communities, property, and the environment, and aid in the recovery from flooding. The State of Emergency will remain in effect for 30 days.

BREEZEBY: Electronic tolling intended to ease impact of heavy summer traffic

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can fix, but overall, it's going great," Vollans said. "I'm very pleased with the partnership and where we're at right now with it."

The Port of Cascade Locks signed an intergovernmental agreement with the Port of Hood River back in October for use of the BreezeBy system. Because the Port of Hood River owns the BreezeBy system, the Port of Hood River will provide back office services for the Port of Cascade Locks and The Port of Hood River will retain 13 cents per crossing to cover operational costs.

Electronic tolling is expected to speed up transactions across the Bridge of the Gods and ease the heavy backlog the bridge sees over the summer months, said Jess Groves, Port of Cascade Locks Commission president.

Ultimately, the Port of Cas-

cade Locks hopes to add a second lane to the toll-booth area so that BreezeBy customers don't have to wait in the same line as cash-paying customers. "The goal is to have enough of traffic breezing through to help those lines," Groves said. That addition is at least a few years out, but Vollans said that he has already noticed an improvement in bridge traffic during morning and evening commutes. However, they have to wait until summer traffic hits to see how effective the system really is for easing traffic backups on the bridge.

"I think the big test will be when we hit May and June," Vollans said. "We'll have more people with transponders by that point; hopefully, we'll be close to 50 percent transponders by that point."

Approximately 70 percent of traffic on the Hood River

Bridge is currently using BreezeBy, Kowell said, but that percentage drops to about 60 percent during the summer months because of the influx of visitors.

The Port of Cascade Locks gave bridge-users until Feb. 3 to phase out their coupon books and local stickers that previously provided discounted tolls; Vollans said that he expects a surge of new BreezeBy customers once those are no longer accepted for toll payment.

Cascade Locks Commissioner Joëinne Caldwell has been taking BreezeBy applications to local businesses to help them with registration, and said that she hopes to get all of the local trucking companies and the Oregon Department of Transportation's motor-pools onto the BreezeBy system.

"I found everybody really

thrilled that they can do Hood River and the Bridge of the Gods both," she said, adding that that people's biggest problems with registration are figuring out what class their vehicle is, and where they're supposed to put the transponder on their vehicle. (See sidebar for information on BreezeBy registration.)

Vollans and the Cascade Locks commissioners specifically thanked Port of Hood River staff for helping with the educational component of BreezeBy implantation in Cascade Locks; staff and commissioners from both ports said they were happy with how well the ports have been working together through the implementation process.

"I think it's a great partnership all around," Vollans said.

How do I register for BreezeBy?

New BreezeBy accounts can be created online at portofcascadelocks.org (click BREEZEBy, then click the BreezeBy logo, then click "New Account") or at csc.portofhoodriver.com/accounts/signup. There is no required personal identification to open an account, but each transponder is linked to a specific vehicle, so the make, model, color, year, and license plate number is required.

Customers can also register at either the Port of Hood River or Port of Cascade Lock's physical offices, located at 1000 E Port Marina Drive, Hood River, and 427 Portage Road, Cascade Locks, respectively. Both offices are open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. New accounts cannot be created at the toll booths due to traffic flow and safety concerns.

Port of Cascade Locks customers can redeem any unused bridge coupons for credit of their value into a BreezeBy account at either port office during regular business hours. There are no fees to open an account, and each account receives one transponder for free; each additional transponder costs \$5.

Current Port of Hood River BreezeBy customers don't need to do anything to be able to use their transponders on the Bridge of the Gods: BreezeBy customer account statements will depict which bridge was crossed for each charge to the account balance.

GENDER: 'We need to continue to have this conversation'

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who a person is on the gender identity spectrum unless we ask. The takeaway is that gender identity is really big, we all have one, and making assumptions on folks and who they love isn't going to get you a lot of places."

Winn said it's always okay to ask a person their preferred pronouns, and that if you mis-gender someone, it's important to simply apologize. "Don't make the experience about you," she said, "about how sorry and devastated you are. You're not helping anyone in the room. Apologize and move on."

Even if someone shares their preferred pronouns, it's important to get permission before using those pronouns in other situations.

"Maybe someone is sharing a piece of themselves, but they're not ready for everyone else to know," she said.

Winn shared resources for

kids, including the Human Rights Campaign, Teaching Tolerance and GLSEN, all of which support youth and/or can train teachers. There is also the website Therapy of the Gorge, which can point kids and parents to therapists

trained in gender issues.

"We need to continue to have this conversation," Winn concluded. "If you've learned something new, please share it. And if you've learned something about someone's identity, please have permission

before you share."

Library Assistant Director Arwen Ungar said that, while this is the last in this series of Lunch and Learn presentations, it will begin again at the end of May. Topic suggestions are welcome.

About Columbia Gorge Pride Alliance

Columbia Gorge Pride Alliance is an all-volunteer organization working to provide a safe environment for the LGBTQ community. The group formed in 2016.

Plans are underway for the annual Pride event, which is typically held the last Saturday of June. "Our hope is to continue to expand and reach more parts of the Gorge," said Winn.

For more information, visit columbiagorgepride.com.

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