

Megaload protesters report being contacted by FBI

SPOKANE, Wash. (AP) — Activists who oppose the transport of giant oil-field equipment through parts of Idaho and Washington say they have been contacted by FBI agents.

Helen Yost of Moscow, Idaho, said she recently received a text message that unsettled her.

"I need to speak with you," the December message said. "Please give me a call. I am an FBI agent."

The *Spokesman-Review* reported Friday that Yost, 57, is a co-founder of Wild Idaho Rising Tide, a climate-change action group that opposes the megaload shipments. Yost has been arrested twice while protesting the shipment of equipment to Canada's tar sands oil fields.

She was among the 20-or-so protesters at the Port of Umatilla in November 2013 attempting to stop the first of three trucks that carried refinery equipment to the oil sands of Alberta, Canada.

The group also opposes rail shipments of crude oil and coal through the Northwest.

"We don't see ourselves as posing any threat," said Yost, who refused to talk to the agent. "We see the FBI contact as being unwarranted."

Yost is one of a dozen activists in Idaho, Washington and Oregon who say they've been contacted by the FBI in recent months, said Larry Hildes, a Bellingham, Washington, civil rights attorney. Agents have shown up on their doorsteps, at their workplace or contacted them by



A protester raises his fist in the air after learning that Omega Morgan has called off moving the megaload in December 2013 at the Port of Umatilla.

phone, he said. Hildes said he's told his clients not to talk to FBI agents.

"We honestly don't know what they're up to, or why, and that concerns us," Hildes said. "Nobody associated with any of the groups has ever done anything dangerous or violent. Some of the folks have been involved in civil disobedience, but that's not a federal issue."

The complaints follow demonstrations last summer against oil trains in Oregon and Western Washington, where some protesters were arrested for blocking the rails. The actions targeted the Everett rail yard, an Anacortes

refinery and two Oregon oil terminals.

With the Keystone Pipeline headed for a vote in Congress, Hildes said he suspects the FBI is monitoring protest activities related to tar sands.

Ayn Dietrich-Williams, an FBI spokeswoman in Seattle, said she couldn't answer questions about any contacts with protesters. In most instances, the agency neither confirms nor denies that investigations are taking place or that specific individuals have been contacted for questioning.

"We don't investigate anyone for First Amendment activities," Dietrich-Williams said.

Investigations occur when the agency has reasonable grounds to believe someone is engaged in illegal activity or planning it, she said.

Herb Goodwin, 65, of Bellingham, said a city police officer and a woman who identified herself as an FBI agent contacted him in October.

They asked if he would answer questions, but he declined.

"It's actually pretty spooky to have the FBI show up at your door, ask one question and leave," Goodwin said. "I think they were there to put me on notice that I was being watched."

PENDLETON Energy upgrades save big bucks at Smith, Grain Craft

East Oregonian

Two Pendleton-area food processors announced energy efficiency upgrades that are expected to save nearly \$200,000 annually.

Smith Frozen Foods in Weston and Grain Craft in Pendleton made the announcement of the upgrades this week in a press release from Energy Trust Northwest.

Smith Frozen Foods replaced several existing freeze tunnels with two new energy-efficient models, saving an estimated 2.2 million kilowatt hours and nearly \$111,000 per year, according to the release. Energy Trust of Oregon provided technical guidance on the improvement and also gave Smith a \$499,999 cash incentive.

Among the changes to the tunnels are welded seams and fans located outside the tunnel, eliminating fan motor heat from the refrigeration system's load.

Smith is also participating in Energy Trust's Strategic Energy Management initiative, which trains staff on how to make behavioral, operations and maintenance changes to maximize energy savings.

"It's amazing how much

energy you can save when you raise employee awareness," said plant manager Vernon Hawks. "We found out that by questioning our behaviors and making changes we have saved more than \$50,000 annually."

Pendleton Grain Craft also is following the initiative and expects to cut annual energy costs by \$25,000.

"We got employees excited about finding ways to save, and ourselves to think beyond 'business as usual,'" said Trent Inskeep, Grain Craft production administrator. "A good example is why lights or equipment are turned on at a specific time. All too often the answer is 'we've always done it that way.'"

As part of the initiative, Grain Craft found that a wheat dust suction motor at its grain elevator was running unnecessarily 24 hours per day. That change alone delivered \$15,000 in savings per year.

Energy Trust provided Grain Craft \$9,900 and Smith \$23,000 for participating in the training. Energy Trust of Oregon is an independent nonprofit organization. Learn more at www.energytrust.org or call 1-866-368-7878.

West Coast seaport talks resuming after rallies

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Labor strife at seaports along the West Coast prompted thousands of dockworkers to rally against employers they say are trying to exploit a crisis of cargo congestion at harbors that handle about \$1 trillion worth of goods annually.

While labor contract negotiators took the day off Thursday, port police estimated that 6,000 people took part in the rally in Los Angeles and Long Beach, port spokeswoman Rachel Campbell said. Hundreds more rallied in Tacoma, Washington.

Contract talks were expected to resume Friday.

Earlier this month a federal mediator intervened in contract bargaining that began eight months ago but by fall had deteriorated into a blame game as goods languished on docks.

Longshoremen have been working without a contract since the previous

one expired in July.

The companies operating port terminals assert that workers have slowed the rate at which they process containers brought from Asia aboard massive ships, adding to gridlock as mountains of imports dwell on dockside yards.

Employers started scaling back work crews this month, saying they won't unload ships at night and instead are focused on clearing the backlog from dockside yards. They say the strategy is working.

Longshoremen dispute employer statistics that indicate their productivity has dropped and say employers are cutting back jobs to hurt workers and pressure negotiators for their union into a bad deal.

As for congestion, dockworkers say they're not culpable and cite broader problems with the supply chain. Congestion at Los Angeles and Long Beach is not improving.

Oregon girls dealing with mysterious paralysis

By LYNNE TERRY
The Oregonian

PORTLAND — One girl is in a Portland hospital paralyzed from the neck down and another, who's been discharged, is hobbling around with a brace. They don't have polio, which would cause similar symptoms. But doctors have no idea what's wrong.

There is no cure, at least not yet, but their syndrome has a name: Acute Flaccid Myelitis.

"It's a living nightmare," said Mikell Sheehan, mother to Bailey, who was discharged in December.

The Sheehans, who live in Welches, have become close with an Albany family, whose 7-year-old daughter McKenzie Andersen is in Randall Children's Hospital, with feeling only in some fin-

gers and toes.

Bailey, the first Oregon case, became paralyzed in her right leg and arm at the end of October.

"Nothing has changed in her paralysis," Sheehan said. "What has changed is that her therapist has taught her how to walk using a brace and a walker. If she has her brace on, she can get around fairly well."

A total of 107 children in 34 states have the same mysterious syndrome, said Dr. Richard Leman, public health physician at Oregon Public Health Division. About a third of the cases tested positive for enterovirus D68, which swept across the country last year, killing five children. Sheehan said Bailey, now 8, tested positive for the virus.

Leman said results for enterovirus D68 are pending on

Oregon's second case.

Two-thirds of the patients nationwide have improved but only one child has been cured, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

In September, Colorado health authorities first notified the CDC of nine children in a Denver hospital who had suddenly developed an unexplained neurologic illness with limb weakness. That month, the CDC put out an advisory, asking neurologists to be on the lookout for patients. They're defined as children 21 or younger, with an acute limb weakness who became ill after Aug. 1 and who have lesions in the central part of their spinal cord.

Both children in Oregon fit the case definition, Leman said.

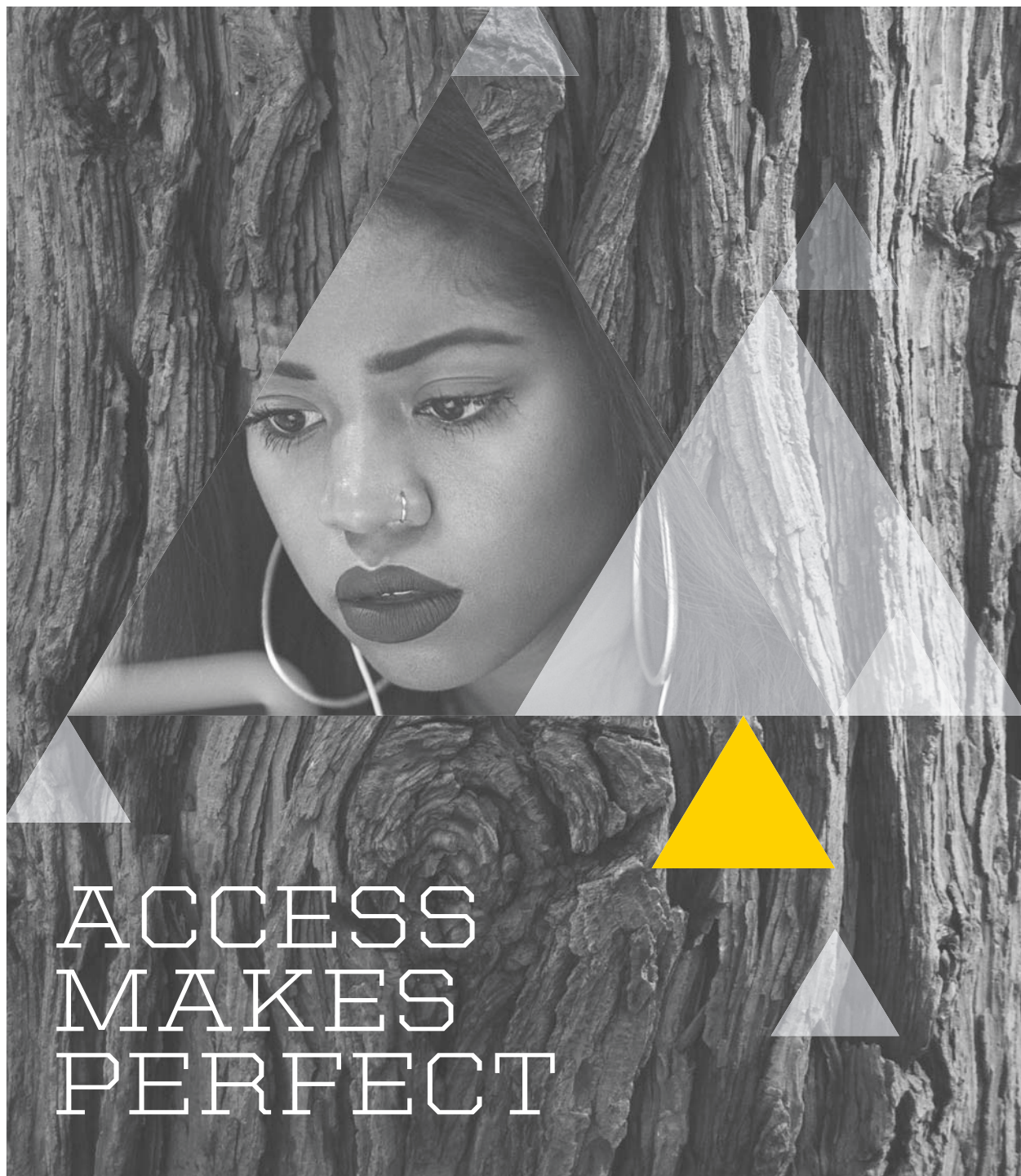
"It is kind of scary," he said. "One case of this is too

many, clearly."

Treatment is supportive, just like polio, which was eradicated in the United States in 1979 thanks to nationwide vaccination program. But there is no treatment for Acute Flaccid Myelitis. Doctors don't even know what's causing it.

It started in the Sheehan household in Welches with flu-like symptoms at the end of October. Everyone was sick, including Sheehan's 4-month-old baby and her son, who's 5 years old.

But Bailey was hit the worst. She had a headache — it felt like an apple pressing against her eye, she said — along with back and neck pain. Six days later she lost feeling in her right leg and arm. Back and forth to the hospital, Bailey was admitted to Randall Children's Hospital in November.



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