

TRAINS: Approximately four coal trains run daily through the Columbia River Gorge

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Lyle, Washington — across the Columbia River from Rowena—over a two-month period, and measured tiny particles emitted into the air.

The team identified 293 freight trains and 74 coal trains in its most recent study, and found the coal trains released nearly twice as much pollution on average as the freight trains. Four of those trains also gave off a visible plume of coal dust from the uncovered coal cars, which the study refers to as “superdusters.” That claim is backed by video of the trains posted to the project website.

The findings were recently published in the journal, “Atmospheric Pollution Research.” Jaffe said their testing was done on private property along BNSF rail lines.

“We see, on average, the coal trains are emitting roughly twice as much particulate matter,” Jaffe said. “This is information that should be relevant to any of the trains passing through the region.”

Approximately four coal trains run daily through the

Columbia River Gorge on the Washington side of the river. That number would increase dramatically if three proposed coal export terminals were permitted in Washington and Canada: the Millennium Bulk Terminal in Longview, Gateway Pacific in Cherry Point and at Fraser Surrey Docks in British Columbia.

Michael Lang, conservation director for Friends of the Columbia Gorge, said the projects would result in 100 million more tons of coal shipped through the gorge every year and an additional 25-30 coal trains per day.

This study should provide additional evidence that the trains do, in fact, pollute waterways and ought to influence regulatory agencies permitting coal exports, Lang said.

“This is another important piece of evidence in a mountain of evidence that the rail companies are polluting our waterways with coal dust,” Lang said.

Courtney Wallace, regional spokeswoman for BNSF, said the company is still reviewing the study, but pointed to the Sierra Club’s

\$5,000 contribution to a previous study done by Jaffe. Friends of the Columbia Gorge was recognized as project funder for the 2015 study, along with more than 300 other individuals through a crowdfunding effort.

Wallace said BNSF is on the forefront of coal dust research, and has developed a rule for loading coal on trains that “virtually eliminates any issue with coal dust.”

BNSF also opened a new state-of-the-art facility earlier this year in Pasco, which sprays all coal trains with a second layer of surfactant to prevent dust from escaping cars.

Finally, Wallace said the Northwest Clean Air Agency found no evidence of harmful air pollution levels in samples it collected between February 2012 and September 2013.

BNSF is currently locked in a legal battle with several organizations — including the Sierra Club and Friends of the Columbia Gorge — over whether the railroad is violating the federal Clean Water Act with coal dust pollution. The case is pending in a Seattle federal court.

Across the Columbia

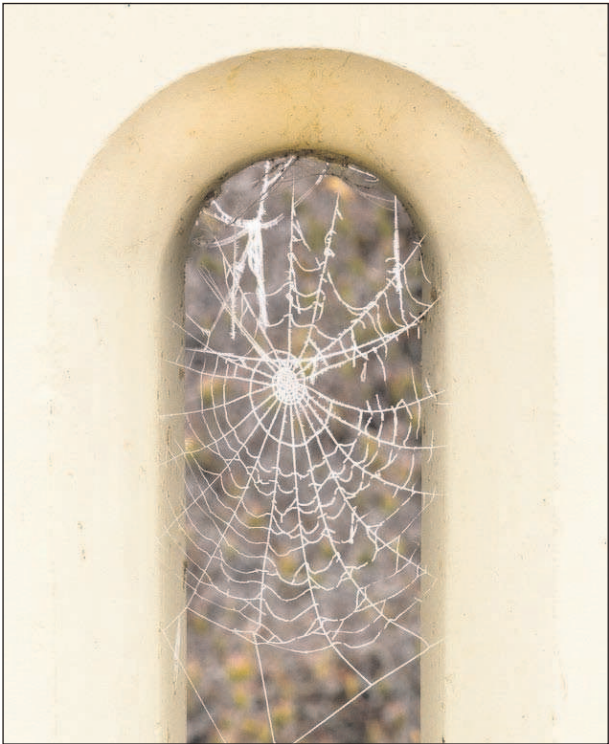
River, Union Pacific Railroad typically runs three trains per day of coal to Boardman, home of Oregon’s last remaining coal-fired power plant. That facility, however, is slated to shut down by 2020.

Another developer is fighting to build a coal export terminal at the nearby Port of Morrow, part of the Morrow Pacific Project. Lighthouse Resources, formerly known as Ambre Energy North America, wants to ship 8.8 million tons of coal per year into Boardman, where it would be transferred onto covered barges at the river terminal and sent down the Columbia.

The Oregon Department of State Lands rejected a key permit for the project last year. Lighthouse Resources has appealed, joined by the states of Wyoming and Montana as limited participants.

An appeals hearing was scheduled for Dec. 7-15, but won’t be heard now until Sept. 27-Oct. 6, 2016.

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Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Frosted web

Freezing fog early Sunday morning left a layer of ice crystals on trees, shrubs, grass and this spider web on a walking bridge near Rudy Rada Skate Park in Pendleton.

HERMISTON: Would take \$30,000 to repaint water tower

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painting the water tower,” Councillor John Kirwan said. “... I hate that we had to go through this to find out we were wrong.”

City Manager Byron Smith said FocalPoint collected 1,088 survey responses and in-person interviews about the brand and found that 67 percent of respondents did not like the tagline.

“A majority of the concerns were marijuana-related,” Smith said.

He said a majority of respondents also criticized the color scheme and the distressed look of the lettering. Ninety-two percent said the city’s brand should incorporate watermelon.

As part of the survey respondents were asked to talk about Hermiston’s strengths, and Smith said FocalPoint consultants noted the unity in the answers was unusual. Residents overwhelmingly said that Hermiston’s top three strengths were its people, its location and its diversity of transportation.

Smith said after analyzing the results, FocalPoint’s recommendations were to reconvene the branding task force, add 10 community members, develop two new brand ideas and test both with the community before making a decision. He said the consulting group stressed that the public should be as broadly included and informed as possible throughout the process.

The water tower would take about \$30,000 to

repaint — money that the city had already set aside during the current fiscal year — and Smith said implementation on everything else would cost another \$30,000. That could be spread out over a few budget cycles, he said, and some costs like ordering new envelopes and letterheads was money that would end up being spent anyway. Hiring FocalPoint to guide the city through the rest of the process would cost another \$18,000.

“I know this is a potentially expensive process,” Smith said. “This would not be my top issue to take on but it was kind of placed in my lap and I think it is important to do it the right way.”

Mayor David Drotzmann said to work on developing a brand and then see it criticized after poor implementation and bad timing was “painful,” but he also thought the city had gained a lot of valuable insight in the process. He expressed support for developing a new brand.

Hardin said other cities were going through the same process of developing a brand he supported Hermiston doing the same.

“It’s important to put your best foot forward,” he said.

After the discussion the council voted unanimously to retain FocalPoint and follow its recommendations to reconvene a task force to come up with a new city brand.

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KENNISON: Hosted college soccer matches this fall

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“It’s a great opportunity for us to provide a place for our east-side schools to play so they’re not driving to Portland, and more importantly, it’s a great boost for our economy here in town,” he said.

According to a 2013-14 economic impact study conducted by ECONorthwest, visitors spent an average of \$60.48 per day in the Hermiston area — a total of more than \$4 million — while attending events such as regional and state playoffs.

The field hosted six collegiate soccer matches and four high school soccer playoff games this fall, and according to a press release from the school district is poised to host four college track meets, including the Cascade Conference district meet in the spring.

Players, coaches and fans from this side of the state have been enjoying playing on the field and visiting the community. Adrian and Vale won the 1A and 3A state championships at Kennison Field last year, respectively, and both teams were happy to be back for semifinal games.

“It’s pretty great,” Adrian player Mike Griffin said of the facilities. “It’s not as shocking as last year when we came, but still it’s amazing.”

Griffin said he wasn’t yet on the team when they had to travel all the way to Portland for a game, but he thinks the shorter drive is beneficial for teams on this side of the state. Adrian head coach



Staff photo by Sean Hart

The Adrian football team cheers during the 3A semifinal game between Vale and Scio before their 1A semifinal against Crane Nov. 21 at Kennison Field in Hermiston.



Staff photo by Sean Hart

Vale Vikings sophomore Marquo Gomez runs the ball in the fourth quarter of the Vikings’ 42-14 victory against the Scio Loggers in a 2015 3A football state championship semifinal game Nov. 21 at Kennison Field in Hermiston. The Vikings will face Santiam Christian in the finals Nov. 28 at Kennison Field.

Paul Shenk agreed. “That’s the fairest way to do it,” he said. “Meet halfway and go. It’s good for everybody.”

Vale fan Matt Hiatt said he traveled to Hermiston Friday and stayed in a hotel. He said

the drive was better than to Portland, and he enjoyed the Hermiston community.

“It’s a very nice town, friendly people, very accommodating,” he said.

Vale athletic director Tom Snook said the team stayed in a hotel Friday as well. He said Kay and Hermiston athletic director Blaine Ganvoa “do such a good job making everybody feel comfortable,” and the facilities and location make Kennison Field a great fit.

“This is so much better for our fans,” he said. “It’s a shorter drive. The facility is really nice. Blaine and Mike go out of their way to make things very accommodating for our kids and our fans, so it’s just a great experience for us. We’re very lucky that those guys allow us to come here and play.”

MURDER: Other suspects believed to have gone to Mexico after killings

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In addition, jurors found the aggravating circumstance that the crime involved several victims. The jury did not find that Resendez Miranda knew Torres-Renteria was almost nine months pregnant when she was killed.

As Resendez Miranda was led from the courtroom, Prosecutor Andy Miller took time to console the victims’ grieving families.

“We can’t bring their children or grandchildren back,” Miller said. “Two of (the families) are raising children from the victims. It’s been a very hard thing for them.”

Miller and the defense team of Shane Silverthorn and John Chambers met with jurors after the verdict was announced.

Miller said jurors seemed to thoroughly review all the evidence, which included testimony from dozens of witnesses, videos from several convenience stores and forensic analysis from the Washington State Patrol crime lab.

“This was a triple murder execution style and most of the murderers are on the loose, so it did take courage for the witnesses to come forward.”

— Andy Miller, Prosecutor

Prosecutors presented evidence during trial that the August 2014 murders were revenge for a break-in at Resendez Miranda’s apartment.

Resendez Miranda, his family members and others were seen on video with the victims at a Umatilla gas station shortly after the nighttime break-in. Jurors heard testimony that the group chased Perez-Saucedo’s SUV to the gas station from the apartment.

The victims were reportedly driven from the gas station back to the apartment. Their bodies were discovered hours later in the cornfield.

Resendez Miranda and Perez-Saucedo knew each other from work at Wyckoff Farms. Witnesses testified the two were friends and

Resendez Miranda sometimes sold methamphetamine to Perez-Saucedo.

Resendez Miranda was apparently angry over the break-in and felt like it showed disrespect toward his family. His two brothers and father also stayed at the apartment and are still wanted for questioning in connection with the murders but may have fled the U.S.

Shoes prints matching Resendez Miranda’s were found near the bodies and a tank top with Torres’ blood was discovered at Resendez Miranda’s apartment, according to testimony from forensic scientists.

Also, a former friend testified Resendez Miranda admitted to the killings and threw Perez-Saucedo’s cellphone into the Columbia

River.

Miller told the *Herald* that many witnesses in the case were scared to testify at trial and it took courage for them to show up knowing other suspects have not been arrested yet.

“We spent a lot of time in peoples’ living rooms talking to them about the need for them to come,” Miller said. “This was a triple murder execution style and most of the murderers are on the loose, so it did take courage for the witnesses to come forward.”

Miller vowed to continue the hunt for Resendez Miranda’s family members, Fidel Miranda-Huitron, Eduardo Miranda-Resendez and Fernada De Jesus Miranda-Resendez.

The men are believed to have gone to Mexico shortly after the killings.

Mercado Retana said the verdict Monday gives the victims’ families hope that the suspects will be brought to justice.

“We got faith the other ones will be found,” he said.

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