

TRAIN: At least 26 oil trains in major fires or derailments during the past decade

Continued from 1A

Katherine Santini, a spokeswoman with the U.S. Forest Service. Crews were working to suppress the fire, which they expected to continue doing into the night.

Officials in Mosier closed about 23 miles of Interstate 84 and evacuated a half-mile radius around the spill, including 200 school children who were later picked up by their parents and 50 homes in a mobile home park.

Silas Bleakley was working at his restaurant in Mosier when the train derailed.

“You could feel it through the ground. It was more of a feeling than a noise,” he told The Associated Press as smoke billowed from the tankers.

Bleakley said he went outside, saw the smoke and got in his truck and drove about 2,000 feet to a bridge that crosses the railroad tracks.

There, he said he saw tanker cars “accordioned” across the tracks.

Another witness, Brian Shurton, was watching the train as it passed by the town when he heard a tremendous noise.

“All of a sudden, I heard ‘Bang! Bang! Bang!’ like dominoes,” he told The Associated Press.

He also drove to the overpass and saw the cars flipped over before a fire started and he called 911.

“The train wasn’t going very fast. It would have been worse if it had been faster,” said Shurton, who runs a wind surfing business in nearby Hood River.

Matt Lehner, a spokesman from the Federal Railroad Administration, said a team of investigators had arrived at the scene from Vancouver, Washington.

Union Pacific said 11 cars had derailed, but a spokesman from the Oregon Department of Forestry, which helped extinguish the blaze, said 12 cars had been involved. The



In this frame from video provided by KGW-TV, smoke billows from a Union Pacific train that derailed Friday in the Columbia River Gorge.

KGW-TV via AP

discrepancy could not immediately be resolved.

Including Friday’s accident, at least 26 oil trains have been involved in major fires or derailments during the past decade in the U.S. and Canada, according to Associated Press analysis of accident records from the two countries.

The worst was a 2013 derailment that killed 47 people in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec. Damage from that accident has been estimated at \$1.2 billion or higher.

At least 12 of the oil trains that derailed were carrying crude from the Northern Plains’ Bakken region — fuel that is known for being

highly volatile. Of those, eight resulted in fires.

Since last spring, North Dakota regulators have required companies to treat oil before it’s shipped by rail to make it less combustible.

A May 2015 derailment near Heimdal, North Dakota, involved cars carrying oil that had been treated to reduce the volatility, but the crude still ignited. At least one train wreck involving treated Bakken oil did not result in a fire, when 22 cars derailed and 35,000 gallons of oil spilled near Culbertson, Montana, last July.

Reducing the explosiveness of the crude moved by rail was not supposed to be a cure-all to prevent

Recent oil train crashes

- The derailment of an oil train in Oregon’s Columbia River Gorge follows a string of fiery accidents in the U.S. and Canada as shipments of crude by rail have increased with more domestic oil production:
- **July 5, 2013:** A runaway Montreal, Maine & Atlantic Railway train that had been left unattended derailed, spilling oil and catching fire inside the town of Lac-Mégantic in Quebec. Forty-seven people were killed and 30 buildings burned in the town’s center. About 1.6 million gallons of oil was spilled.
 - **Jan. 7, 2014:** A 122-car Canadian National Railway train derailed in New Brunswick, Canada. Three cars containing propane and one car transporting crude oil from western Canada exploded after the derailment, creating intense fires that burned for days. About 150 residents were evacuated.
 - **April 30, 2014:** Fifteen cars of a crude oil train derailed in Lynchburg, Virginia, near a railyard eatery and a pedestrian waterfront, sending flames and black smoke into the air. Nearly 30,000 gallons of oil were spilled into the James River.
 - **Feb. 16, 2015:** A 109-car CSX oil train derailed and caught fire near Mount Carbon, West Virginia, leaking oil into a Kanawha River tributary and burning a house to its foundation. The blaze burned for most of a week.
 - **March 7, 2015:** A 94-car Canadian National Railway crude oil train derailed about 3 miles outside the northern Ontario town of Gogama. The resulting fire destroyed a bridge.
 - **May 6, 2015:** A 109-car Burlington Northern Santa Fe crude oil train derailed near Heimdal, North Dakota. Six cars exploded into flames and an estimated 60,000 gallons of oil spilled.

COLLEGE: Nation’s public university graduation rates averaged 59 percent

Continued from 1A

“When we say college, students understand we’re not just talking about a four-year university — everyone doesn’t need to go on the same path. In this economy, we need different skill sets,” Marvin said. “We no longer say ‘You just need to go to college.’”

That said, 75 percent of Hermiston seniors plan to attend either four- or two-year colleges. Six percent will join the military. About 14 percent expect to find full-time work.

The Pew Research Center reported in 2014 about “the rising cost of not going to college.” Median earnings for someone with only a high school diploma (\$28,000) were 61 percent of someone with a bachelor’s degree (\$45,000). The unemployment rate was 3.8 percent for those with bachelor’s degrees versus 12.2 percent for those without.

Other studies suggest that college also boosts interpersonal skills, increases lifespan and even leads to healthier offspring.

The sheer cost of college, though, is daunting. Tuition has surged faster than inflation.

ProCon.org (an organization that explores the pros and cons of controversial issues), compared average annual tuitions from 1971 through 2012. Adjusted for inflation, the prices of attending a four-year public college or university was \$2,456 in 1971 and \$8,816 in 2012. For private schools, the gap was \$10,515 in 1971 to \$29,557 in 2012.

In another study, the National Center for Education Statistics looked at average total tuition, fees, room and board for all institutions, using 2013 dollars. The costs ranged from \$9,138 in 1981 to \$20,234 in 2013.

Both Gregg and Marvin expend plenty of energy coaching students on paying for their college education.

“We communicate to our students to be financially aware of what they’re committing to,” Gregg said. “Figuring out finances is a challenge. You definitely have to run the numbers.”

She worries about students getting mired in debt, while admitting that “loans are sometimes a necessary evil.”

“Costs are astronomical and the resources available to help with that are limited,” Gregg said. “School is a four-year financial plan, not a one-year plan.”

Scholarships help — PHS

seniors won almost \$3 million worth this year — but most aren’t renewable and only help the first year.

It’s a Catch-22 of sorts.

Common wisdom says going to college means more job prospects and higher earnings over a lifetime. The price tag, however, can offset those higher wages for years to come. Graduating is not necessarily a given.

According to one report, the odds of graduating is only slightly better than a coin flip. The report released last week by Third Way, a policy think tank based in Washington, D.C., probed graduation data provided by the Department of Education’s College Scoreboard. The study focused on first-generation students using federal aid to attend private, non-profit colleges.

The report says, “In our analysis of this data, we found that a large proportion of the 1,027 four-year, private non-profit colleges for which data is available are putting students in a deeper hole than if they had never attended college in the first place.”

A handful of the colleges, the report goes on, had such abysmal results that “it is unconscionable to think they are allowed to serve students at all.” At 54 of the schools, less than a quarter of students graduate. Three colleges had single-digit graduation rates — Paul Quinn College in

Texas (2.3 percent), Boston Architectural College in Massachusetts (7.8 percent) and Bacone College in Oklahoma (8.1 percent).

For the nation’s public universities, graduation rates averaged 59 percent, according to CollegeMeasures.org. University of Oregon leads the state’s public universities with a 67.4 percent graduation rate and Eastern Oregon University lags with 31.9 percent. CollegeMeasures reported an average graduation rate for private, non-profit colleges of 65.3 percent.

Gregg and Marvin’s students go through a 10-year program called Success 101 where the students research career and education options, learn to budget and further examine their lives and goals as a way to remove some of the barriers to graduation.

More of the seniors are headed to community college next year thanks to a new program called Oregon Promise, which makes community college essentially free for many students.

“A number of seniors who started out the year pretty determined to go to four-year schools ended up choosing to go to community college, because it’s almost free,” Gregg said. “Also, some students on the fence about going to college — it’s encouraging them to give it a shot. They have the funds to

do it — why not give it a go?”

Gregg said students face a steep learning curve in their first year despite the financial preparation. She called high school graduation “the jumping-off point into adulthood.”

“College is a huge challenge,” she said. “They deal with the reality of having

adult responsibilities. College professors don’t baby you and check every little thing that you’re doing. They don’t care about attendance.”

Gregg and Marvin don’t have a systematic way to track their students, but they get some indication of their progress through social media

and continued communication with students.

“It’s fun to see where they go and what they do,” Gregg said. “There are so many paths.”

—

Contact Kathy Aney at kaney@eastoregonian.com or call 541-966-0810.

FAIR HOUSING 2016:

Violations Can Be Unintentional, What You Need To Know.

FREE EVENT

How do the latest developments in fair housing law apply to you?

Come hear from landlord and tenant legal experts. Understand and evaluate your practices to determine if you're treading in dangerous waters. Learn how local organizations can help you navigate those waters and connect you with quality tenants. Lunch will be provided for all attendees.

LUNCHEON

Thursday June 9th
12:00-4:00pm

Pendleton Center for the Arts
Bamboo Room
214 North Main St
Pendleton, OR 97801

TO REGISTER

Email: laura@nwpublicaffairs.com
Or Call: (541) 280-9984

QUALIFIES FOR THREE CONTINUING EDUCATION HOURS

Questions? Call (541) 280-9984

This event is not sponsored or conducted by the Arts Council of Pendleton (ACP). ACP invites ALL private groups to rent the facility for a wide range of functions.

Graduation Gifts

Put a smile on the heart with the power of flowers

HWY 395, HERMISTON
541-567-4305
Mon-Sat 8am-6pm • Sun 12pm-5am
www.cottagefloweronline.com

VBS/MegaSports Camp at HermNaz
June 13-17, 2016 • 6-8:30pm

Looking for something **DIFFERENT, EXCITING,** and **ACTION-PACKED** for kids this summer?
Hermiston Church of the Nazarene has you covered!

Vacation Bible School - ages 4 through incoming 2nd grade • games, crafts, snacks, songs, and more!

MegaSports Camp - incoming 3rd through incoming 5th grade
• training in your choice of **UNICYCLING** (NEW this year), or soccer!
(All equipment is provided; bring your own if you'd like)

Register for this free 5-night event on our website or on the "HermNaz" free App.
www.hermistonnazarene.org
(541) 567-3677
1520 W. Orchard Ave., Hermiston

Training in UNICYCLES, baseball, or soccer