

TRAIN: Estimated 42,000 gallons of oil released

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cleared.

Trains began running Sunday through the town of about 400 people carrying mixed goods — but no crude oil.

“This is all about money. They’re willing to risk us blowing up again for their money to keep coming in,” said Loretta Scheler, who rents out a two-story building just a few hundred feet from the tracks. “It’s just insane.”

The derailment occurred on a stretch of track that passes within 300 feet of the edge of the K-8 campus in this town 70 miles east of Portland. Sandwiched between the tracks and forested cliffs at a bend in the river, Mosier is part of a scenic area that’s world famous for the summer winds that blow through the Columbia River Gorge and attract wind surfers and kite sailors.

Union Pacific defended its actions Monday, saying it was safe to run other trains while crews continued to drain oil from the crashed tankers. Thirteen tankers remained and 10 still contained crude, said Raquel Espinoza, a spokeswoman for the Railroad. Trains are moving at about 10 mph.

“We will not run any crude oil trains through this area any time soon,” Union Pacific spokesman



This aerial video image taken from a drone Monday shows crumpled oil tankers lying beside the railroad tracks after a fiery train derailment on June 3 in Mosier.

Justin Jacobs said Monday morning. “The community is at the forefront of our efforts, and we’re absolutely aware of their concerns.”

Several top Oregon lawmakers said later in the day that Union Pacific Railroad should not resume oil train traffic until the company thoroughly explains the cause of the derailment and provides assurances that it’s taking steps to prevent another one. They stopped short of calling for limiting other train traffic.

Sixteen tank cars went off the tracks Friday. Fire started in four of the cars. An estimated 42,000 gallons of crude oil was released, said Don Hamilton, a spokesman for the state, federal and tribal agencies responding. About 10,000 gallons were recovered in wastewater systems, while the rest was

burned off, captured by booms or absorbed into soil, he said.

No injuries have been reported. Dozens of residents have been given the all clear to return home.

Friday’s derailment comes as a massive oil-storage terminal proposed along the Columbia River in southwest Washington is under review. The proposed terminal near Vancouver would handle up to 360,000 barrels of Bakken crude oil, where it would be stored and loaded on to tankers for export to West Coast refineries.

Critics say the derailment underscores the risk faced by every town and city along rail lines when trains carrying volatile oil roll by.

“It shines a light on how reckless approving the oil terminal would be,” said Brett VandenHeuvel, execu-

tive director of the Columbia Riverkeeper. “I can’t see how any reasonable person can look at this explosion and invite more trains.”

The federal government regulates interstate railroad commerce, so cities and towns have no regulatory power over the movement of oil trains.

Eric de Place, policy director with Sightline Institute, a progressive think tank, said states and cities can deny projects in other ways, such as through zoning or permit restrictions. Hoquiam, Washington, last year approved a ban on bulk crude oil storage facilities. Vancouver is considering a similar ban.

Mosier is among dozens of communities that have officially called for stronger federal safety measures and other actions because of increasing oil train shipments through the Northwest.

“The federal government, the railroad and oil companies need to protect us,” said Paul Blackburn, mayor of Hood River, a city about 7 miles west of Mosier.

Hood River passed a resolution in 2014 opposing the transportation of crude oil through the Columbia River Gorge either by rail or by barge.

Mosier Fire Chief Jim Appleton said he had been a supporter of Union Pacific’s right to move oil through his town until the derailment.

ASSAULT: Mental health claims part of investigation

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sons, ages 6-11, and asked Porter for a ride to St. Anthony Hospital.

Porter obliged. Logman and her sons climbed into the back seat of the pickup, and they all headed down the road.

Logman then pulled a knife from her purse, Rowan said, grabbed Porter’s shoulder, reached over the seat and sliced his throat.

Porter stopped the pickup in the road. He got out and pulled Logman from the vehicle. He and Brenda Porter wrestled the knife away, and a passerby helped them subdue Logman and used a belt to tie her hands behind her back. They waited for law enforcement.

The sheriff’s office received a call at 11:27 a.m. reporting the attack. Undersheriff Jim Littlefield said county deputies and Oregon State Police troopers responded to the scene, and deputies arrested Logman and booked her into the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton, where she remained as of Monday morning.

Bill Porter received 11 stitches, and Brenda Porter

suffered superficial injuries in the fracas, Littlefield said, and social workers with Children & Family Services from the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation arrived and took Logman’s children into custody.

Logman told the sheriff’s office she has a history of mental illness, Littlefield said, and claimed she wanted out of the vehicle and cut Porter to make him stop. Both Porters said Logman made no request to stop and exit and gave no indication she would attack.

Pendleton police received a request the night before, at 6:42 p.m., to check on Logman’s well-being, according to its daily bulletin. A man who said he was Logman’s husband reported she was possibly having a “manic episode” and not taking medication to treat her mental illness. He reported he arrived to their home on Northwest Jay Avenue, Pendleton, and she was not there. He also said she did not contact him following a medical appointment earlier in the day.

Littlefield said the mental health claims are a part of the ongoing investigation.

APARTMENTS: Plan approved by planning commission in April

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city owned property.

The city has backed Pendleton Heights from the start, donating the land to Jivanjee’s limited liability company and paying the upfront costs for the first 32 units’ infrastructure, which Jivanjee is expected to pay back.

“Mr. Jivanjee has requested that he be able to give the Council an update on his project and an explanation of his plans. He has requested that the City participate in the cost of the infrastructure for that part of the road needing to be built, which shares road frontage with the City owned Olney Cemetery,” City Manager Robb Corbett wrote in a report to the city council.

“Staff has communicated with Mr. Jivanjee that they would support sharing in the cost of the shared road frontage for the same reasons we agreed to contribute the property which came about as a solution to the high cost of infrastructure.”

The developers originally planned to build an additional 40 units similar to the previous 32 townhouses, but they changed the third phase of the project to an apartment complex to make the new units more affordable to renters.

The planning commission approved the new plan in April, which includes sight-obscuring foliage along some of the property’s borders, a minimum of three play areas, a minimum of 150 off-street parking spaces and several other conditions.

The council also will consider adopting a \$58.6 million budget, up from the \$53.8 million the city budgeted the year before.

The \$15.8 million general fund, the city’s sole discretionary fund that pays for services like public safety and parks and recreation, is down slightly from the year before.

The council meeting will be held Tuesday at the council chambers in city hall, 500 S.W. Dorion Ave.

OIL: Oil cars travel through downtown Pendleton

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in North Dakota to a refinery in Tacoma, Washington, following UP’s main line on the Oregon side of the Columbia River. At some point, that same train ran just south of Hermiston and north of Boardman and Arlington to get where it was going.

Stanton, who also serves on the Regional Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Team for north-east Oregon, said it was only a matter of time before one of those trains derailed. Though he said UP works closely with local fire departments on training exercises, they still need additional resources to protect their communities.

“I think it does bring to light that, as first responders, we must have the training and tools needed to handle the situation,” Stanton said.

The regional hazmat team — which covers Umatilla, Morrow, Gilliam, Wheeler, Union and Wallowa counties, as well as the northern half of Grant County — is working to secure a trailer that could hold up to 1,500 gallons of firefighting foam to extinguish oil fires, Stanton said. But one team can’t do it alone. Just like in Mosier, he said it would take cooperation from multiple agencies to keep residents safe if a train derailed near the city.

“We’re going to try to

minimize damage to life, property and environment as best we can,” Stanton said. “You always have the risk of collateral damage.”

Train derailments aren’t unheard of in Eastern Oregon. In 2014, a UP train jumped the tracks along Highway 730 east of Umatilla, dumping five empty rail cars into the Columbia River. Then again last year, a total of 10 cars derailed from a UP train over Meacham Creek between Pendleton and La Grande.

Neither of those incidents involved oil cars, but crude-by-rail has become increasingly common thanks to increased production from the Bakken fields and oil sands of western Canada. Prior to 2012, crude oil was traditionally shipped to the West Coast via waterways, on either tankers or barges. A spokeswoman for UP said the railroad has now shipped 89,000 carloads of crude oil across its 23-state network, with each car hauling up to 30,000 gallons.

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation said Friday’s derailment in Mosier highlights the danger of shipping Bakken crude through the Northwest. Gary Burke, chairman of the CTUIR Board of Trustees, said the tribes are calling on the states of Washington and Oregon, along with Congress, to conduct more comprehensive environmental studies

analyzing the impacts of more oil traveling by train.

“Train shipments of Bakken crude oil through the environmentally fragile Columbia River Gorge have the potential to do incredible damage,” Burke said in a statement issued Monday. “The state and federal governments need to take a hard look at the rapid increase in the shipments of fossil fuels so the risks posed are fully evaluated before we have another, larger incident.”

Others, however, are defending UP’s overall safety record and underscoring the importance of freight transportation to the economy of Eastern Oregon. Peter Mitchell, general manager with the Port of Arlington, said railroads are critical to the small community, particularly in shipping garbage down to the Columbia Ridge Landfill south of town.

Allowing groups to single out commodities such as oil can lead to policies that greatly affect how companies are able to do business, Mitchell said.

“I think Oregon is well-served by freight on rail,” he said. “If you stop rail, what do you propose as an alternative?”

Mark Morgan, assistant city manager for Hermiston, said nobody on the city council had raised concerns about an oil train derailment prior to Friday. Morgan also

distinguished between UP’s main line and spur line that runs through the city to the Port of Umatilla, saying he would be “absolutely floored” if any oil cars actually rolled into town near homes and businesses.

The council could take a position if someone brings it up, Morgan said, but there aren’t currently any plans to look into the issue.

Unlike Hermiston, oil cars do rumble right through downtown Pendleton as part of a UP line that reaches into Idaho, near another shale formation in neighboring Utah. That line is listed on the railroad’s crude-by-rail network. However, City Manager Robb Corbett said the council has not previously raised concerns.

“We’ve always been aware the potential exists for some kind of hazardous release by the fact that the rail line runs through our community,” he said.

In Boardman, Mayor Sandy Toms said she is considering whether to bring the Mosier incident up for discussion at their next meeting. She said her primary concern is whether the city’s water supply would be contaminated by a spill.

A spokesman for UP did not return calls for additional comment.

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BAGPIPES: Group also includes six highland dancers

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kilts don’t have pockets.

The musicians gave the home crowd the full-meal deal — about a dozen Scottish and Irish tunes and some American patriotic songs, too.

McIntyre, who did readings between each set, said he pondered the bagpipe’s ability to play the American melodies before adding them to the playlist.

“The Great Highland bagpipe plays only nine notes not counting the drones, but many of our great patriotic tunes or at least snatches of them can be performed adequately by this instrument,” he said.

The group will also play a song written by 1959 Weston-McEwen graduate and former Pipes & Drum member Daniel Moore. Moore’s list of creations include “My Maria,” “Shambala” and songs recorded by the Everly Brothers, Three Dog Night, Joe Cocker and others. The band will play Moore’s “Oregon: Give Me Wings.”

New York and Boston

audiences will learn that the young musicians hail from a 170-student school deep in Eastern Oregon wheat country and this is the 57-year-old band’s eighth major tour. The group has deep roots. Some of the players have followed the footsteps of their parents or grandparents. Freshman Stephen Reitz and his grandfather Steve Pyle will play together on this trip. Pyle, who directed the group for many years, assists McIntyre and plays with the band.

The group includes six girls — Sierra Scheibner, Ami Coffman, Lila Holloway, Amiee Barrera, Becky Taylor and Maddi Muilenburg — who will put down their instruments and demonstrate the Highland fling. Highland dancing is a tradition at the school that dates back to 1953. McIntyre explained that the Highland fling is the oldest of the Highland dances. Warriors traditionally danced on the small round shields they used in battle; the shields were laid on the ground and had protruding spikes. To avoid getting

injured, the dancers stepped with precision.

“Today, the goal remains for the dancer to remain in the same spot,” he said.

McIntyre said he expects his young musicians to get a good reception.

“We’ve noticed over the years that American audiences find the bagpipes to be remarkable,” he said. “We’re treated like celebrities in some places. The last trip, we had a family follow us from New York to Washington, D.C.”

The group will play tourist when not performing. In Manhattan, they will visit the 9/11 Memorial, Greenwich Village, Chinatown, Wall Street, Times Square, the One World Observatory, museums and Madame Tussaud’s Wax Museum. They will watch a Broadway play and see the New York Yankees and Kansas City Royals play at Yankee Stadium.

When performance time comes, however, the musicians will be focused and will do Athena proud, McIntyre said. He admitted he frequently gets emotional

while watching the band perform.

“I often get a lump in my throat,” he said. “It happens to me all the time.”

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

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