

Union Pacific to resume oil trains through Columbia River Gorge

By KRISTENA HANSEN
Associated Press

Heavy-duty trains with thousands of gallons of crude oil in tow will soon begin rolling through the scenic Columbia River Gorge for the first time since a fiery derailment in early June.

Union Pacific on Wednesday announced plans to resume operations at some point this week. The June 3 derailment of one of its trains caused a 42,000-gallon oil spill and subsequent fire. Nobody was hurt, but it forced evacuations and disruptions to water systems in Mosier.

The rail company's announcement comes as local officials plead with the federal government to halt the use of railroads to transport crude oil, a practice they say can never be completely safe for communities in the trains' path.

Among them are Oregon Sens. Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden, who urged the Federal Railroad Administration in a letter Wednesday afternoon to exercise its emergency moratorium authority before Union Pacific resumes in the Gorge. "Unit trains travel on tracks that pass through and near many small towns that are not well-equipped to deal with the type of fire that occurred in Mosier," Merkley and Wyden wrote to the administration.

Union Pacific officials have concluded that faulty "lag bolts" — fasteners used to attach the rail to the rail tie on a curved section of track — caused the problem in Mosier. Federal rail authorities are also investigating the



Brent Foster via AP, File

In this June 6, 2016, file photo from video, crumpled oil tankers sit beside the railroad tracks after a fiery June 3 train derailment that prompted evacuations from the tiny Columbia River Gorge town of Mosier. Union Pacific announced Wednesday plans to resume transporting oil by train through the Oregon side of the scenic Columbia River Gorge at some point this week.

cause. The company defended its decision to restart operations in a statement, reiterating the federal obligations it's under and highlighting the tiny fraction of its Oregon shipments — less than 1 percent — that come from oil trains.

"Railroads provide the infrastructure, flexible networks and efficiency needed to move crude oil from locations where oil is recovered to customer facilities," said Wes Lujan, a public affairs vice president for Union Pacific. "The federal common carrier obligation requires railroads to transport crude oil and other hazardous materials. If a customer delivers a crude oil tank car in conformity with U.S. Department of Transportation requirements, we are obligated to transport

the rail car to its destination."

Also on Wednesday, Union Pacific announced that another train spilled 1,500 gallons of diesel fuel the night before near Troutdale, Oregon, roughly 20 miles east of Portland.

Leaders at the Oregon Department of Transportation, Multnomah County and several municipalities including Portland and Mosier have called on Congress and the White House for bans on oil being moved by rail, which is under the federal government's authority.

Reacting to Union Pacific's plans, Oregon Gov. Kate Brown reiterated her previous call for a federal moratorium on transporting oil on trains until the system is unquestionably safe.

"Federal agencies and policymakers in Washington,

D.C., will continue to put people and ecosystems at risk as they postpone implementation of reasonable safety measures that protect us unless we demand accountability," Brown said in a statement.

Gov. Jay Inslee of Washington state, where a different rail company operates along the Columbia River, has held similar discussions with federal leaders in recent weeks, although he's stopped short of requesting a moratorium.

Rebecca Ponzio, spokeswoman for the Stand Up To Oil advocacy group, blasted Union Pacific in a statement, saying the company has shown a "reckless disregard" for communities, ignored officials' pleas and "proceeded on with what matters most to them: the bottom line."

Sales figures could make pot Oregon's most valuable crop

By ERIC MORTENSON
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Sales and tax figures collected by state agencies may finally solve one of Oregon's long-running farm crop questions of whether marijuana is indeed the state's most valuable crop, as cannabis advocates have always maintained.

Tight controls and reporting requirements by the Oregon Department of Revenue and Oregon Liquor Control Commission should result in accurate information about pot, said Bruce Pokarney, spokesman for the state Department of Agriculture. The department compiles an annual list of the state's most valuable crops.

The sale of recreational marijuana became legal in Oregon last October, in addition to medical use, which was already legal. The state revenue department collects a 17 percent tax on recreational pot purchases, while the OLCC licenses producers, processors, retailers, wholesalers and labs.

The information, however, poses another head-scratcher. Most agricultural statistics published by the ag department come from the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service, or NASS. Although it's now legal in several states, the feds still classify marijuana as an illegal drug. Dave Losh, Oregon state statistician for NASS, said

the agency won't include marijuana in its annual crop statistics due to federal policy.

For the same reason, people can't use water from federal projects to irrigate marijuana, he said, and such things as Natural Resources Conservation Service programs can't be applied to pot crops.

Pokarney, of ODA, joked the department might have to put an asterisk beside the pot crop value in its annual report. "We will have sales numbers, but I don't know how we would report it," he said.

Oregon crop statistics from 2014 list cattle and calves as the state's top agricultural product, at \$922 million value. Greenhouse and nursery plants was second at \$829 million, and hay was third, at \$703 million.

Seth Crawford, an Oregon State University sociology professor who teaches a pot policy class, estimated in 2015 that Oregon's marijuana crop had an annual value approaching \$1 billion.

Meanwhile, the OLCC continues to process license applications as entrepreneurs seek opportunities in the state's recreational cannabis market.

As of June 21, there were 723 applications to grow pot in Oregon. Of those, 122 were in Jackson County and 91 were in neighboring Josephine County. Southern Oregon has long been the state's cannabis production hotbed, legal or illegal.

Feds will evaluate response to Hanford vapors issue

SPOKANE, Wash. (AP) — Federal health officials will conduct a short-term evaluation related to the exposure of workers to chemical vapors on the Hanford Nuclear Reservation.

The probe by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health is expected

to focus on several areas including medical response, safety and health program management, and exposure control.

"Having an agency entirely separate from the Department of Energy conducting oversight into the safety of working conditions at Hanford is

critical to protecting workers," said U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., who met recently with Hanford workers concerned about exposure to the vapors.

For decades, Hanford made plutonium for nuclear weapons. Much of the waste from that work is stored in 177 giant underground tanks that

are the focus of cleanup efforts at the site near Richland. Cleanup is expected to take decades and cost billions of dollars.

"I will be closely following this process to ensure this evaluation provides the guidance necessary to keep workers safe," said U.S. Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash.

Corrections

A brief in Wednesday's paper gave incorrect information about the location of the parade for Landing Days in Umatilla on Saturday. The parade begins at 11 a.m. at Nugent Park and will head east on Sixth Street. The East Oregonian sincerely regrets the error.

The East Oregonian works hard to be accurate and sincerely regrets any errors. If you notice a mistake in the paper, please call 541-966-0818.

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AccuWeather.com Forecast

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Sunny, breezy and pleasant	Variably cloudy with a shower	Sunshine; pleasant and warmer	Sunshine	Hot with plenty of sunshine
78° 53°	71° 49°	82° 50°	89° 57°	93° 60°
83° 57°	76° 49°	85° 55°	94° 58°	97° 58°

ALMANAC

PENDLETON

through 3 p.m. yesterday

TEMPERATURE

HIGH	LOW
Yesterday 84°	48°
Normals 81°	53°
Records 103° (1973)	37° (1916)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"
Month to date	0.91"
Normal month to date	0.95"
Year to date	6.50"
Last year to date	4.99"
Normal year to date	7.50"

HERMISTON

through 3 p.m. yesterday

TEMPERATURE

HIGH	LOW
Yesterday 86°	47°
Normals 82°	54°
Records 105° (1936)	41° (2014)

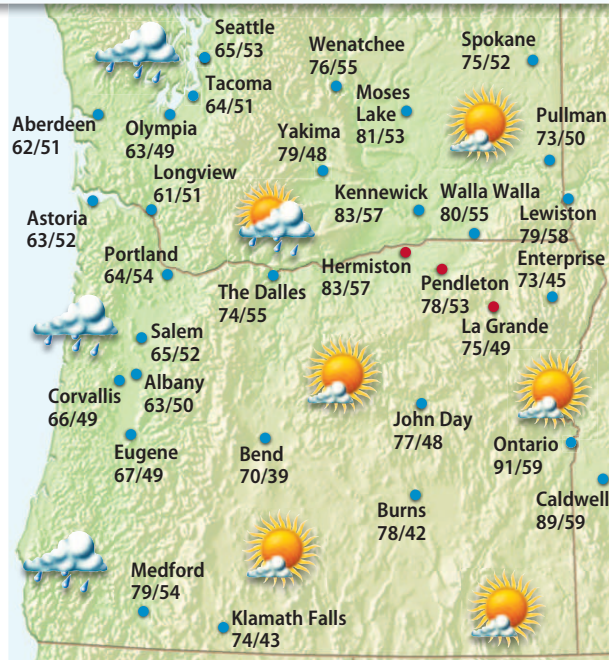
PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"
Month to date	0.41"
Normal month to date	0.48"
Year to date	4.64"
Last year to date	3.14"
Normal year to date	5.62"

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	5:06 a.m.
Sunset tonight	8:49 p.m.
Moonrise today	11:01 p.m.
Moonset today	8:32 a.m.

Last	New	First	Full
June 27	July 4	July 11	July 19



Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.

REGIONAL FORECAST

Coastal Oregon: Mostly cloudy today with showers. A passing shower tonight, except dry in the south.

Eastern and Central Oregon: Mostly sunny today; not as warm in central parts.

Western Washington: Rather cloudy today with showers. Partly cloudy tonight with a couple of showers.

Eastern Washington: Some sun today with a shower in the area.

Cascades: Some sun today with a couple of showers; cooler. Partly cloudy tonight with a shower.

Northern California: Partly sunny today; pleasant at the coast.

REGIONAL CITIES

	Today			Fri.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Astoria	63	52	sh	65	52	sh
Baker City	75	45	s	64	35	c
Bend	70	39	pc	65	37	c
Brookings	63	52	sh	68	52	pc
Burns	78	42	s	68	34	pc
Enterprise	73	45	s	60	40	c
Eugene	67	49	sh	73	46	pc
Heppner	76	47	pc	68	44	c
Hermiston	83	57	pc	76	49	pc
John Day	77	48	s	68	41	c
Klamath Falls	74	43	s	70	40	pc
La Grande	75	49	s	65	41	c
Meacham	72	46	s	62	39	c
Medford	79	54	pc	78	50	pc
Newport	61	51	sh	62	48	sh
North Bend	64	53	sh	67	52	c
Ontario	91	59	s	76	47	pc
Pasco	84	56	pc	76	51	pc
Pendleton	78	53	pc	71	49	c
Portland	64	54	sh	68	53	sh
Redmond	72	43	pc	68	36	c
Salem	65	52	sh	72	51	sh
Spokane	75	52	pc	64	48	c
Ukiah	71	44	pc	62	38	c
Vancouver	63	53	sh	67	51	sh
Walla Walla	80	55	pc	70	53	c
Yakima	79	48	pc	74	46	c

WORLD CITIES

	Today			Fri.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Beijing	94	69	pc	92	65	s
Hong Kong	93	83	s	93	83	pc
Jerusalem	89	71	s	90	72	s
London	73	57	t	69	54	sh
Mexico City	72	54	t	74	56	t
Moscow	75	60	pc	76	62	pc
Paris	86	65	s	74	57	s
Rome	87	66	t	88	68	s
Seoul	85	70	pc	76	65	r
Sydney	65	53	s	63	46	s
Tokyo	78	70	r	76	71	c

WINDS

(in mph)	Today	Friday
Boardman	WSW 10-20	WSW 12-25
Pendleton	W 8-16	W 15-25

UV INDEX TODAY

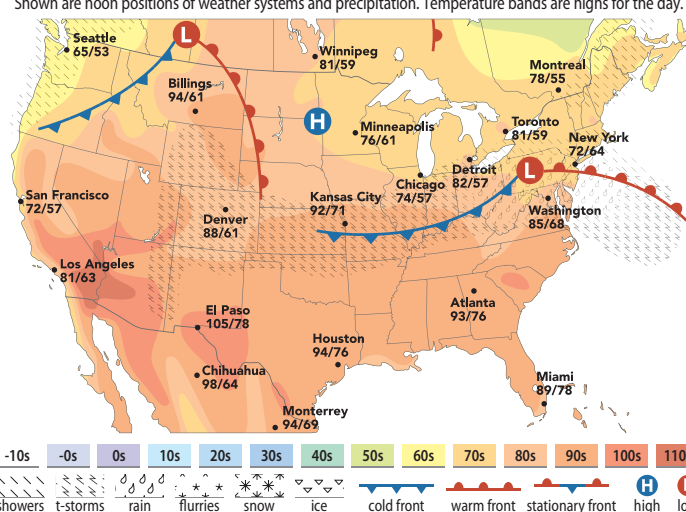
2	5	7	7	5	2
0-2, Low	3-5, Moderate	6-7, High	8-10, Very High	11+, Extreme	

The higher the AccuWeather.com UV Index™ number, the greater the need for eye and skin protection.

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NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY

Shown are noon positions of weather systems and precipitation. Temperature bands are highs for the day.



National Summary: Severe thunderstorms will plague areas from the mid-Atlantic to southeastern Missouri today. Hot air will sizzle most of the southern tier of the nation. The Northwest will be cooler with showers.

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 114° in Needles, Calif. Low 29° in Stanley, Idaho

NATIONAL CITIES

	Today			Fri.			Today			Fri.			
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W	
Albuquerque	96	69	t	98	70	t	Louisville	90	73	t	89	71	pc
Atlanta	93	76	s	93	77	pc	Memphis	86	80	s	96	80	t
Atlanta City	76	64	t	76	63	s	Miami	89	78	t	90	79	pc
Baltimore	82	64	t	83	62	s	Millwaukee	71	58	pc	77	64	s
Billings	94	61	s	90	51	pc	Minneapolis	76	61	pc	86	71	pc
Birmingham	92	74	s	93	76	pc	Nashville	96	77	t	94	74	t
Boise	90	56	s	73	49	pc	New Orleans	91	75	s	92	77	pc
Boston	74	60	c	76	61	s	New York City	72	64	r	83	63	s
Charleston, SC	97	77	pc	97	78	pc	Oklahoma City	97	73	s	94	71	s
Chicago, IL	87	68	t	85	64	pc	Omaha	88	68	pc	90	73	pc
Chicago	74	57	c	83	64	s	Philadelphia	76	63	t	85	63	s
Cleveland	78	62	r	82	62	s	Phoenix	111	87	pc	109	86	s
Dallas	97	76	s	95	76	s	Portland, ME	75	54	pc	76	54	s
Denver	88	61	t	90	59	t	Providence	73	59	sh	81	58	s
Detroit	82	57											