

TRAINS: Three unit trains of crude oil pass through the Gorge every month

Continued from 1A

Merkley said he realizes the NTSB is stretched thin, but investigating oil train derailments should not be left up to discretion. The MOSIER Act would increase funding to the NTSB to \$108 million, with \$2 million to hire additional investigators and inspectors.

Union Pacific conducted its own investigation into the Mosier derailment, and traced the cause of the accident back to a failure of metal fasteners known as lag bolts that connect railroad ties to the rail itself. Justin Jacobs, a spokesman for the railroad, previously told the *East Oregonian* they are increasing the frequency and intensity of rail inspections to make sure it doesn't happen again.

But Wyden said having railroads investigate their own accidents is like "Colonel Sanders guarding

the chicken coop."

"People are really looking for independent and thorough investigations," Wyden said. "Now, we're strengthening the investigative process after an accident."

In addition to federal investigations, the MOSIER Act allows the FRA to place a moratorium on unit oil trains if it feels there are unsafe conditions that need to be corrected. The bill also requires the Secretary of Transportation and Department of Energy to set a standard and reduce the amount of volatile gases in crude oil within nine months. The train that derailed near Mosier was carrying Bakken crude oil, which is highly volatile due to the amount of natural gas it contains.

Jacobs said UP hasn't had a chance to look at the bill yet, and couldn't comment specifically on the legislation. But in an earlier interview, he said the railroad is adding

a third rail inspection every week through the Columbia River Gorge, along with an additional three "enhanced" high rail inspections per week.

In a preliminary report, the FRA indicated UP is at fault for the derailment since it failed to maintain its track equipment. The railroad does operate main lines that also run through downtown Pendleton and along the Columbia River from Hermiton's Hinkle Yard.

Jacobs defended UP's safety record, and added that only three unit trains of crude oil pass through the Gorge every month. Overall, crude oil makes up less than 1 percent of commodities shipped through the region, he said.

At the end of the day, Jacobs said the goal is to eliminate derailments and they will continue to strive toward that mark.

"Safety is a top priority

for us," he said. "In order to be safer, we need to do these things."

Wyden and Merkley, along with 12 other lawmakers, have also signed on to the Hazardous Materials Rail Transportation Safety Improvement Act of 2015. That bill establishes a fee on older, outdated tanker cars in order to get them off the tracks faster. Money collected from the fee would pay for cleanup costs stemming from railroad accidents, hiring rail inspectors and training local first responders.

The MOSIER Act would be a companion piece to that legislation.

"Between these two bills, I think we're moving toward an approach that will solve the real problems," Wyden said.

Contact George Plaven at gplaven@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0825.

TRCI: Medical treatment of state inmates costs more than \$100M per year

Continued from 1A

inmates in prison longer.

"In general our population is aging, and that's definitely a concern for the Department of Corrections," she said.

Iles said the prevalence of longterm substance abuse issues among inmates means they often come to TRCI with health problems above and beyond those associated with natural aging. TRCI also has the state correctional system's only dialysis unit, drawing inmates with kidney failure to the prison, including one currently on death row.

"These guys that come in to us, sometimes they have some serious issues," Iles said. "They're not always in the healthiest condition."

So far in 2016 there have been 11 inmate deaths at Two Rivers. Iles said that's more than usual for the prison, but four were hospice patients and several others had serious health problems.

By law, the state must provide medical treatment for all of its more than 14,700 inmates, at a cost of more than \$100 million per year. Inmates are treated by on-site nurses, doctors, dentists and mental health professionals. When needed, they are also transported to local hospitals for surgery and other advanced care.

Iles said being a nurse

in a prison isn't easy. All prison employees face stresses — one reason correctional officers have an average life expectancy of just 58 years.

"They have to be in a constant state of alertness and awareness, and it's not easy to relax sometimes after they go home," she said.

As a result, the Department of Corrections has recently begun making the mental and physical health of employees a top priority, Iles said, including offering mindfulness classes to prison staff to help them practice healthy coping mechanisms.

As for the number of nurses needed at TRCI, Iles said five employees quit recently and one was fired. She declined to discuss the personnel issues further. The Oregon State Board of Nursing's records show five nurses in Umatilla County faced board discipline during the past year but does not specify where the nurses worked.

A report released in April by the federal Health Resources and Services Administration predicts Oregon will have a shortage of 6,000 nurses by 2025. About one third of the state's nurses are expected to retire in the next 10 years.

Contact Jade McDowell at jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4536

MARIJUANA: Recreational pot sales taxed at 25 percent

Continued from 1A

back across the state line. Why are we making people criminals when it's legal?"

It's the reason Lindsey is starting a La Grande voter initiative for the November ballot, of which she is awaiting review by the city's attorney, that would allow recreational sales in the city. She has to collect over 900 signatures from registered voters by Aug. 10, and she's organizing a signing and educational event at the end of the month.

Lindsey hopes experiences in other cities such as Huntington, about 90 miles southeast of La Grande, show the fruits of recreational sales.

In Huntington, medical marijuana dispensary 420Ville began selling for recreational use in February.

When Chuck Guerri was a city councilor for Huntington, he voted against allowing recreational marijuana sales during a November 2015 meeting.

Despite his vote, the council approved the application.

Now the mayor of the town of 440, Guerri still isn't an advocate for recreational use.

"I think the medical (aspect) has some validity, and it looks like it has some issues where it helps," he said. "But I'm not a fan (of recreational)."

He is a fan, however, of more revenue for his town. With the success of 420Ville, his stance, while not completely swinging 180 degrees, has softened.

"Local businesses have benefited," Guerri said. "The restaurant has increased business, the convenience and the fuel — they don't give me percentages, but most businesses (in town) have received some benefit."

And that's before getting into potential tax revenue for Huntington. Oregon law stipulates that recreational marijuana sales be taxed at 25 percent. The tax on recreational pot eventually will be replaced with a levy

ranging from 17 percent to 20 percent, once the Oregon Liquor Control Commission begins regulating recreational marijuana sales later this year. The Legislature set the base tax rate at 17 percent, but cities and counties can adopt ordinances that add up to an additional 3 percent.

Huntington city recorder Tracy McCue said the city still has to have a resolution on the November ballot for voter approval, so it hasn't collected any tax revenue yet.

To better inform voters, McCue recently requested some figures on what the city would have gained from 420Ville since recreational sales began in mid-February.

"From Feb. 17 to May 1, if we were drawing it in, we would've collected \$9,000 on that 3 percent," McCue said, adding that's very significant for a town Huntington's size.

Scott Matthews, the owner of 420Ville, did stipulate that a great deal of his business is medical. But regarding recreational pot,

he said, sales have increased substantially every month.

"Our projected numbers are getting blown out of the water. We see some Fridays and Saturdays where 300 people come through here," Matthews said. "We're probably averaging 170 to 200 people every day."

During the roughly half-year recreational sales have been allowed, Matthews said, he's hired two local residents as full-time workers, with a couple others doing odd jobs and part-time work for 420Ville. Other than a parking issue with a neighboring landowner, there have not been any problems in the town, McCue, Guerri and Matthews each said.

McCue said she wasn't a "pro vote" before, but she has, along with Guerri, modified her outlook.

"I don't think anybody knew what to expect," McCue said. "Now, we're hearing about the potential revenue, and it's like, 'Wow.' Some (residents) are a little more open now."

WORLD BRIEFLY

Chinese businessman gets nearly four years in U.S. hacking case

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A Chinese businessman was sentenced to nearly four years in prison Wednesday for conspiring to export sensitive military information to China after accessing the computer systems of U.S. defense contractors, including Boeing.

Su Bin was sentenced to 46 months in prison in federal court in Los Angeles. He had faced 30 years in prison before reaching a plea agreement with prosecutors in March. His attorneys were requesting two and a half years.

The 51-year-old Bin admitted to conspiring with two unnamed hackers in China to export U.S. military information to the communist nation between 2008 and 2014, according to Bin's plea agreement.

The men targeted fighter jets such as the F-22 and the F-35, as well as Boeing's C-17 military cargo aircraft program, according to court records.

Su, described by prosecutors as a China-based businessman in the aviation and aerospace fields, was arrested in British Columbia, Canada, in July 2014 and brought to the U.S. in February.

As part of the conspiracy, prosecutors say Su would email the hackers in China explaining what people, companies and technology to target. Once data was stolen, prosecutors say Su would translate it from English to Chinese, and email the value of the information to those who benefited from its theft.

A report by the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission last year found that China's increasing use of cyber espionage has already cost U.S. companies tens of billions of dollars in lost sales and expenses in repairing the damage from hacking. In many cases, the report by the federal commission says stolen trade secrets have been turned over to Chinese government-owned companies.

Obama: Still far from solving police, community issues

WASHINGTON (AP) — America is "not even close" to where it needs to be in terms of resolving issues between police and the communities they serve, President Barack Obama said after concluding a more than three-hour meeting Wednesday with community activists, politicians and law enforcement officials.

Obama expressed optimism, however, and said the participants — who included members of the Black Lives Matter movement — agreed such conversations need to continue despite emotions running raw.

Obama has devoted his attention this week to the gun violence directed at police officers as well as shootings by police. The focus comes a few days after a black Army veteran killed five police officers in revenge for police shooting black men in Baton Rouge, Louisiana and the Minneapolis suburbs.

On Tuesday, Obama attended a memorial service for the five slain Dallas officers and called the families of Alton Sterling in Louisiana and Philando Castile in Minnesota to offer condolences. He said he wanted Americans to have an open heart so that they can learn to look at the world through each other's eyes, and Wednesday's meeting

followed that theme.

Obama said it would be key to repeat the "kind of respectful conversations we've had here" across the country.

Still no explanation for Dallas gunman's honorable discharge

DALLAS (AP) — Almost a week after the Dallas sniper attacks, it's still unclear how the gunman obtained an honorable discharge from the military even though Army officials sent him home from Afghanistan with a recommendation that he be thrown out of the armed forces.

An attorney appointed by the military to represent Micah Johnson in a sexual harassment case speculated last week that Johnson's behavioral record could be more serious. The attorney says he's now under strict orders not to discuss the matter with reporters.

Johnson, 25, served in the Army Reserve for six years before the July 7 sniper attack, which killed five Dallas police officers.

"We are reviewing all of his records," Army spokesman Col. Patrick Seiber said Wednesday. He would not elaborate or discuss any aspect of the review.

Johnson's lawyer said he had prepared documents for a more severe other-than-honorable exit almost two years ago.



CHI St. Anthony Family Clinic

OPEN Weekends!

Walk-Ins Welcome

Appointments Preferred

Hours

8am - 7pm • Mon - Thurs

8am - 6pm • Fri

10am - 6pm • Sat - Sun

541-966-0535

3001 St. Anthony Way, Pendleton

Located in the hospital medical office building

PENDLETON: Identified \$2.5M in pipe replacement needed in next five years

Continued from 1A

you're underneath the radar screen and you get skipped over like yesterday's lunch," Chalmers said.

The city's other funding option is implementing system development charges, which would charge developers an up-front fee based on the development's impact on utilities.

"What I've overwhelmingly heard is that we don't want to stifle business by implementing those fees," Corbett said.

In an interview after the meeting, Patterson said low interest rates could increase the city's

borrowing capacity.

The city projected a 5 percent interest rate over 20 years, but Patterson said the state's interest rates are currently between 2 and 3 percent. That means the city could borrow up to \$23.3 million, instead of the planned \$18.8 million.

Patterson said the city's utility master plan identified \$2.5 million in water and sewer pipe replacement needs in the next five years. The rest could be used for other water and sewer projects, like the industrial park utility expansion.

Contact Antonio Sierra at asierra@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0836.

MEDICAL DIRECTORY

To include your business in this directory, contact Chris at 541-966-0827



CHI St. Anthony Hospital

Breast Cancer Care Specialist ...	541-278-3224
Cancer Clinic.....	541-278-6576
Cardiopulmonary Services	541-278-8284
Diabetes Education	541-278-3239
Education	541-278-2627
Home Health Care/Hospice.....	541-276-4100
Lactation Services.....	541-966-2541
Nutrition Counseling	541-278-3235
Sleep Disorders Lab.....	541-278-3685
Radiology/Diagnostic Imaging ...	541-278-3228
Maternity and OB Care.....	541-278-3261
Outpatient Physical Therapy	541-278-6610
Family Clinic	541-966-0535

541-276-5121

2801 St. Anthony Way

Pendleton