NORTHWEST

Hanford contractors to pay \$125M settlement

SEATTLE (AP) Bechtel National Inc. and a subcontractor have agreed to pay \$125 million to settle a lawsuit alleging subpar work in building a nuclear waste treatment facility on the Hanford Nuclear Reservation in Washington state, along with accusations that Bechtel illegally used taxpayer money for lobbying.

The settlement, filed Wednesday in U.S. District Court in Spokane, resolves a lawsuit initially brought in 2013 by three whistleblowers - managers at the nuclear site who sued on behalf of the federal government because they worried about safety issues at the Hanford Waste Treatment Plant.

The waste is currently stored in aging underground tanks, dozens of which are leaking, threatening the Columbia River nearby.

Once completed, the multibillion-dollar facility is supposed to convert 56 million gallons of radioactive nuclear waste left over from the government's nuclear weapons program into glass for safe storage deep underground. But in joining the whistleblowers' lawsuit, the U.S. Justice Department said that for 13 years, Bechtel subcontractor URS and Corp. knowingly charged the Department of Energy for materials and services that failed to meet rigorous standards for nuclear facilities.

The government's investigation showed that the companies "recklessly purchased deficient materials and services with taxpayer money," said Spokane U.S.

State agencies warn pot

growers of pesticide use

BEND (AP) — State agencies are

reminding marijuana producers to limit

their use of pesticides in the wake of

The Bend Bulletin reports that

wars that cannabis producers whose

for permitted pesticides may still be

violating state regulations if they use

pesticides banned by the state Pesticide

An action level is a low pesticide

measure that the authority requires of

products test below "action levels"

a letter from three state agencies

two recent public health alerts.

Control Act.



Brawdy/The Tri-City Herald via AP, File

In this 2010 file photo, Bechtel manager Scott Neubauer, left, answers questions from Daniel Poneman, deputy secretary of energy, during his tour Hanford's Waste Treatment Plant in Richland, Wash. Federal prosecutors say Bechtel National Inc. and a subcontractor have agreed to pay \$125 million to settle a lawsuit alleging subpar work in the construction of a nuclear waste treatment facility on the Hanford **Nuclear Reservation.**

Attorney Michael Ormsby, which he called "deeply concerning given the obvious importance of nuclear safety" at the plant.

"The money allocated by Congress for the Waste Treatment Plant is intended to fund the Department of Energy's important mission to clean up the contaminated Hanford nuclear site, and this mission is undermined if funds are wasted on goods or services that are not nuclear compliant or to further lobbying activities," Benjamin C. Mizer, the head of the Justice Department's Civil Division, said in a news release.

The settlement also resolves accusations Bechtel, a giant engineering and construction company, illegally used taxpayer

dollars to fund a multiyear lobbying campaign. Bechtel paid lobbyists to downplay to members of Congress the significance of concerns raised by an independent federal oversight board, prosecutors said.

The companies denied any wrongdoing in the settlement.

"We have performed our work at the WTP project ethically and professionally,' Bechtel spokesman Fred deSousa said in an emailed statement. "A protracted legal proceeding and the distraction of a trial are not in the best interest of the WTP project. Instead, we will focus on continuing to work in collaboration with the Department of Energy to solve the most challenging and complex radioactive waste problem in U.S. history.

Bechtel will pay \$67.5 million to the federal government, while URS will pay \$57.5 million of the settlement. For bringing the suit, the whistleblowers, who said they were retaliated against or even fired for raising safety concerns, are entitled to keep 15 to 25 percent of the total payout, said Joe Harrington, a spokesman for the U.S. Attorney's Office. Hanford, located in

south-central Washington state, for decades made plutonium for nuclear weapons. The site is now engaged in cleaning up the nation's largest collection of nuclear waste.

Tom Carpenter, executive director of the watchdog group Hanford Challenge. called the settlement "justice being served."

"This is a company that probably should not be working for the government," he said. "It started by harassing and silencing whistleblowers, and when they brought their information public, it caused the work at the plant to be suspended.

We still don't have a design for the waste treatment plant after the whistleblowers pointed out the nuclear safety deficiencies in the design,' he added. "We want the plant to work, but there's little point in having a waste treatment plant if it's subject to explosion."

Bechtel was awarded the contract to design and build the Waste Treatment Plant in 2000.

BRIEFLY

testing laboratories as a measure of accuracy. Action levels do not indicate a safe level.

The letter, co-signed Monday by the heads of the Health Authority, Oregon Liquor Control Commission and Oregon Department of Agriculture, says growers that failed test results are referred to the Agriculture Department for futhher investigation.

Pair arrested on human trafficking charge

KLAMATH FALLS (AP) - Two Klamath Falls residents are facing prostitution charges related to what

police say could be a widespread human trafficking ring.

The Herald and News reports that a 28-year-old man and a 26-year-old woman were arrested last week. According to an indictment, the pair is believed to have forced at least one female victim into prostitution on three separate occasions between Oct. 8 and Nov. 6 in Medford.

Medford Police Department spokesman Lt. Kevin Walruff says the investigation is ongoing. He says the Klamath Falls pair is believed to be part a human trafficking ring with roots in Medford and Bend and connections to Washington and Wyoming.

Man sentenced after woman shot in head with nailgun

EUGENE (AP) — A former firefighter who authorities say shot nine 3-inch nails into the back of a woman's head in a botched suicide pact in Oregon has been sentenced to two years in state prison after accepting a

plea deal. Troy Vance

Thompson pleaded guilty Tuesday to attempted second-degree manslaughter after accepting a deal that allowed Thompson him to avoid

a possible maximum sentence of more than seven years in custody, the *Register Guard* reported.

The 31-year-old woman from Eugene survived but suffered permanent brain damage from the nails.

"I'm very sorry about how it turned out," Thompson said in court. "I wish we could've done something a little bit different. We had no idea it was going to be a halfway thing, or we wouldn't have done it."

47, Thompson, of Creswell told authorities he first met the woman the day before the incident when she stopped her car on Highway 99 in Eugene and approached him while he walked along the road, according to a search warrant affidavit filed in the case in June. She told Thompson she needed someone to kill her because she didn't want to be committed to a mental hospital.

The woman eventually said she would rent a gas-powered nail gun and meet Thompson in the woods to carry out a suicide pact.

Thompson told police he fired three nails from the gun into the back of the woman's head but then stopped. The woman "was still alive and told him to keep going (and) reminded Troy he had promised her

he would help her," according to court papers filed earlier in the case

He then six more nails into her skull and then put one in his own head before passing out, the documents state.

The woman's mother has told authorities that her daughter has bipolar disorder and had stopped taking her medication about three weeks before the incident, the newspaper reported. Thompson also told police that he had previous brain injuries, a history of substance abuse and suicidal thoughts, according to court papers.

The victim's mother appeared at the court hearing but declined to comment.

Lane County Circuit Mustafa Court Judge said Kasubhai that although the incident itself was unfortunate, "the underlying tragedy beyond that is that in our community, people with mental health conditions find themselves so alone that (suicide) becomes the only viable alternative."

Thompson will serve three years of probation upon his release from prison.

If he violates probation, he will be sentenced to another three years and four months behind bars, according to the agreement.

Corrections

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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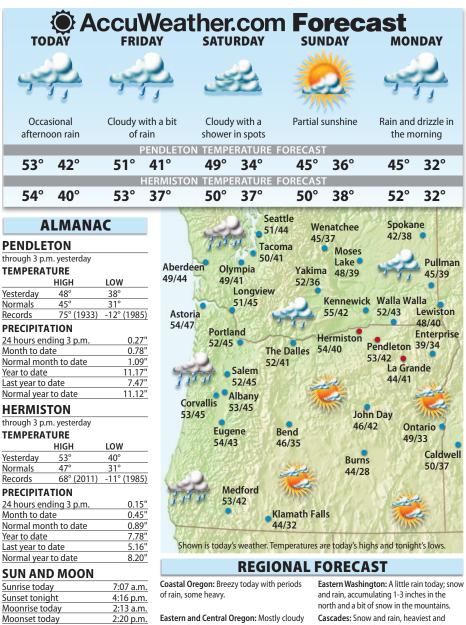
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today; a little rain across the north

Full

Dec 13

Last

Dec 20

New

Nov 29

First

Dec 7

Western Washington: Periods of rain, some heavy today

Cascades: Snow and rain, heaviest and steadiest across the north. Snow level 3,000-4,500 feet.

Northern California: Periods of rain at the coast today; times of clouds and sun elsewhere. Rain tonight.

REGIONAL CIT	IE:	S	
Today		Fri.	
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3end 46 35 c	45	35	с
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Burns 44 28 pc	43	25	sn
nterprise 39 34 pc	40	34	sn
ugene 54 43 r	50	42	r
leppner 49 40 r	50	38	r
lermiston 54 40 r	53	37 41	r
ohn Day 46 42 pc Klamath Falls 44 32 pc	46 44	41 32	r c
	44 46	38	sn
a Grande 44 41 pc Meacham 42 38 pc	40	38	sn
Aedford 53 42 c	50	39	r
Newport 54 46 r	52	43	c
North Bend 56 47 r	54	45	r
Ontario 49 33 pc	48	32	c
Pasco 56 41 r	55	36	r
Pendleton 53 42 r	51	41	r
Portland 52 45 r	51	43	с
Redmond 51 34 c	49	33	с
alem 52 45 r	51	42	С
pokane 42 38 r	44	37	r
Jkiah 44 36 c	44	36	sn
/ancouver 51 46 r	51	44	С
Valla Walla 52 43 r	52	38	r
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Mexico City	69	41	рс	70	43	рс		
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Pendleton	SSE	8-1	б	S	S 6-12			

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8 a.m. 10 a.m. Noon 2 p.m. 4 p.m. 6 p.m. **0-2**, Low 3-5, Moderate 6-7, High; 8-10. Verv High; 11+. Extreme

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

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High 88° in McAllen, Texas Low -5° in Bodie State Park, Calif. NATIONAL CITIES

Appalachians today. A wintry mix will linger over the interior Northeast and dot the north-

National Summary: Spotty rain will affect part of the Atlantic Seaboard and central

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY

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

43/3

Kansas City

50s

cold front

NATIONAL CITIES										
		Today Fri.					oday		Fri.	
	Hi	Lo W	Hi	Lo			Hi	Lo W	Hi	Lo W
Albuquerque Atlanta	54 72	31 pc 54 r	54 72	33 47		Louisville Memphis	58 63	37 с 43 s	57 63	35 c 39 pc
Atlantic City Baltimore	57 55	44 r 38 pc	55 58	45 36	-	Miami Milwaukee	81 44	70 pc 33 c	80 44	68 pc
Sillings Birmingham	45 72	30 pc 45 pc	50 70	34 41	pc s	Minneapolis Nashville	37 64	30 c 43 pc	39 64	25 c 36 pc
Boise Boston	49 43	38 pc 41 c	50 49		pc sh	New Orleans New York City	75 50	56 pc 44 r	74 52	55 pc 44 c
Charleston, SC Charleston, WV	77	54 pc 44 c	78		рс	Oklahoma City Omaha	68 48	37 s 28 pc	61 52	29 pc 29 s
Chicago Cleveland	43 51	31 c 38 c	43 46	29 37	с	Philadelphia Phoenix	55 76	41 c	56 78	44 c 56 s
Dallas	71	48 s 26 s	65 59	41 30	S	Portland, ME Providence	40	32 c 39 r	45	36 r
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l Paso airbanks	68 -5	45 pc -11 s	-3	44 -8	S	Rapid City Reno	47 52	21 sn 30 pc	57 55	30 s 37 r
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louston ndianapolis	72 48	52 s 34 c	75 48	50 32	pc c	Salt Lake City San Diego	47	28 pc	54 73	34 pc
acksonville Kansas City	78 54	53 s 33 pc	79 53	54 33	pc	San Francisco Seattle	60 51	48 pc 44 r	62 52	51 c 41 c
.as Vegas ´	62	39 s	61	42	s	Tucson	78	49 s	79	53 s
.ittle Rock .os Angeles	61 79	41 s 51 s	63 75	34 50		Washington, DC Wichita	58 64	43 pc 32 s	61 59	43 c 31 s

Weather (W): s-sunny, pc-partly cloudy, c-cloudy, sh-showers, t-thunderstorms, r-rain, sf-snow flurries, sn-snow, i-ice.

В

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38	25	S	43	30	pc	Bal
72	59	s	75	63	s	Bill
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						- KOI

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у	72	59	S	75	63	S	8

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	WINDS	
(in mph)	Today	Friday
Boardman	S 7-14	S 4-8
Pendleton	SSE 8-16	S 6-12

UV INDEX TODAY

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