

# SPILL DRILL: River a 'shared resource'

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to detail how they will respond to spills. Railroads, however, were not included under the law.

In April 2015, Washington Gov. Jay Inslee signed the Oil Transportation Safety Act, which extended contingency planning and drill requirements to railroads as oil-by-rail increased statewide. According to Byers, Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway now moves 10-15 oil trains per week down the Columbia River, with each train carrying roughly 3.5 million gallons of crude oil.

BNSF is one of four companies transporting crude oil in Washington, and the first to have a contingency plan approved by the State Department of Ecology. The plan was put to the test Wednesday, along with an updated contingency plan for the oil company Andeavor, formerly Tesoro. Andeavor operates an underground petroleum pipeline that crosses the Umatilla Indian Reservation en route to the Tri-Cities.

Byers said the group chose Hat Rock to practice oil spill response because it could feasibly experience an oil spill by rail or pipeline.

"We're making sure everybody has the appropriate training," Byers said. "There's a lot of moving pieces that have to come together in an oil spill, and work appropriately."

Breezy winds made for slightly choppy waters Wednesday on the river, but nothing the crews couldn't handle. Andeavor



Staff photo by E.J. Harris  
A oil boom is deployed next to an island in the Columbia River during a oil spill training Wednesday near Hat Rock State Park east of Umatilla.

also deployed a new piece of equipment known as a Current Buster, capable of recovering oil four times faster than conventional booms.

Byers said Washington law requires companies with oil contingency plans to use the best available technology. Resources are shared across state lines with Oregon when it comes to the Columbia River, he added.

"We have a great partnership with Oregon," Byers said. "We view the Columbia River as a shared resource. If there is an oil spill, it's going to affect

both states."

Byers said the drills also allow states to test their Geographic Response Plan for the Mid-Columbia River, which was updated in 2015. That plan provides site-specific strategies for cleanup response, such as staging areas and resources that may be threatened by a spill.

Geographic Response Plans fall under the Northwest Area Contingency Plan, which covers all of Oregon, Washington and Idaho.

"It takes the combined resources of the entire response community,"

Byers said.

While emergency planning is undoubtedly a valuable tool, environmental groups in the Columbia River Gorge remain dubious of oil-by-rail and continue to warn of the dangers of train derailments and spills.

Dan Serres, conservation director for Columbia Riverkeeper, said there are still holes on both sides of the river where responding to an incident would be difficult. Despite planning and preparation, he said the Mosier derailment still resulted in a 14-hour fire, as well as water contamina-

tion that posed significant safety concerns for the community.

If a controversial new oil terminal in Vancouver, Washington is approved, Serres said it would add another five oil trains traveling daily along the Gorge, increasing the risk for another calamity.

"It would be a game-changing proposal, and not in a good way," Serres said. "Our basic concern about oil-by-rail remains."

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## Facebook, Twitter and Google invited to hearings

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The House and Senate intelligence committees are inviting tech giants Facebook, Twitter and Alphabet — the parent company of Google — to appear for public hearings as part of their investigations into Russia's interference in the 2016 election, The Associated Press has learned.

The House intelligence committee is planning to hold a hearing in October and the Senate intelligence committee has invited witnesses to appear Nov. 1. The announcements of public hearings come the day before Twitter is scheduled to hold closed-door staff briefings with both panels.

Rep. Adam Schiff of California, the top Democrat on the House intelligence committee, confirmed the House hearing in an interview with the AP, though he noted a date had not yet been set.

In a joint statement, Schiff and Republican Rep. Mike Conaway from Texas, who is leading the House investigation, said they will hold an open hearing in the coming month "with representatives from tech companies in order to better understand how Russia used online tools and platforms to sow discord in and influence our election."

They added, "Congress and the American people need to hear this important information directly from these companies."

The details of the invitation from the Senate intelligence committee were confirmed by two people familiar with the panel's interactions with the companies. They spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the private invitations.

It's not yet clear whether the companies will accept the invitations to appear. Facebook and Google confirmed they had received the Senate invitations and Twitter declined to comment.

The hearings come as both panels have been scrutinizing the ways that the social media platforms and online ads were used by Russians to influence the election. The committees are examining the spread of false news stories and propaganda and whether anyone in the United States helped target those stories to specific users on social media platforms.

In the closed-door briefings Thursday, Twitter's representatives will likely face questions about the spread of false news stories and propaganda through the use of fake accounts and automated bot networks.

# RISE: Services offered to all students

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intensive help."

He said Umatilla County was a conduit for other mental health and community services, and having access to those groups would be beneficial for those in the program.

Wilson noted that the RISE program does not provide therapy, and any student who needs one-on-one counseling will still be referred to Lifeways.

There are three full-time RISE team members, who spend every day in the schools. They lead groups and interact with students in an informal setting, even being present at lunch time so students can come up and talk to them.

Wilson said so far, students have been receptive to the RISE counselors.

While any student can talk with a RISE counselor, those in the small group sessions are referred there by teachers, administrators or counselors.

"A counselor may see a family or a student potentially struggling, who may benefit from some sort of intervention," he said. That student can be referred to RISE, where the counselors can help them identify problems and ways to deal with them. If the student isn't showing results from those meetings, they can then be referred to Lifeways if necessary.

The three RISE counselors are Katrina Bretsch, Roy Barron and Taylor Wilson. Bretsch and Barron work at the middle schools, Wilson at the elementary schools, and all three work at the high school.

While they all collaborate to help students, each counselor brings a different strength to the program. Bretsch spent the last two years teaching sixth grade in Boardman. Barron has worked in alcohol and drug counseling, and Wilson comes from a mental health counseling background.

Bretsch said the counselors' main goal is to help student deal with their problems rationally.

"It's pretty much getting the child off the 'fight or



Staff photo by Kathy Aney  
Katrina Bretsch, mental health counselor and program manager of the RISE program, teaches some relaxation techniques during a small group session Tuesday at Armand Larive Middle School in Hermiston.



Staff photo by Kathy Aney  
A student squeezes a stress ball during a RISE session Tuesday at Armand Larive Middle School.

flight' state of mind," she said. "It's quite impossible for kids to learn at school if they don't feel safe. They may not be physically

unsafe, but even if they don't feel safe to express their ideas. We want to get them to an executive state of mind so they can make

**"It's pretty much about getting the child off the 'fight or flight' state of mind. It's quite impossible for kids to learn at school if they don't feel safe."**

— Katrina Bretsch, mental health counselor

decisions not just based off emotional safety."

Barron said the RISE counselors lead between five and eight groups a

day, each lasting about 30 minutes. As they spend more time in the schools, he anticipates the program will change based on students' needs.

"If we have an all-girls group about trauma, that may be better served by Katrina than by me," Barron said.

Some of the groups they lead help students work on resilience, stress management, mindfulness, empathy and self-esteem.

"As we collect our data, we've been discussing, what are the areas kids really say they've been struggling with?" Bretsch said. "A lot have said anger management is a big thing."

Barron added that many have said they need help dealing with anxiety as well. They use tactics such as breathing techniques and role playing, to help students deal with their anger.

"And we try to understand why they're feeling anxiety," Bretsch said. "For some, they may identify that they're just drinking too many energy drinks. Or they're playing too many video games. Once it's identified, we help them set goals for how to solve that problem."

Bretsch said while they help students identify some of their problems, they leave the personal analysis for private discussions.

"What we work on in the group — it's more discussing general skills," she said. "If they want to talk about something more personal, I let them know they can talk to me privately."

Barron said as of late September, they had about 150 referrals from around the district. But he anticipated that number may grow as the school year progresses.

Helping students re-evaluate the way they think about their own problems is a key for the RISE counselors.

"When we know what triggers (them), we can redesign how we think," Bretsch said.

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## REVENUE: State expects \$20B in next two years

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collect debt on behalf of other state and local agencies.

The revenue department — which is expected to collect more than \$20 billion in revenue in the next two years — has been plagued with issues in the past decade, many of them identified by multiple audits.

At the urging of the Legislature, the department is expected to undergo additional external and internal reviews in the near future.

Krawczyk says the department has met the reporting requirements laid out in Brown's executive order, and is working on a report about whether it's feasible to publicly post information about the state's debtors online, as the governor has called for.

The agency is also working to recruit for and fill vacant positions, according to director Nia Ray.

State agencies, under another bill passed this session, are now required to report debt they write off to the Department of Administrative Services by Dec. 31 every year.