

Tuesday, July 04 2006

Missoulian

WEATHER:  64°

-  [Homes](#)
-  [Jobs](#)
-  [Cars](#)
-  [eNews](#)
-  [Rentals](#)

Search Articles:

Go

[HOME](#) | [NEWS](#) | [SPORTS](#) | [CLASSIFIEDS](#) | [FEATURES](#) | [ENTERTAINER](#) | [BRIDES](#) | [ARCHIVES](#) | [PHOTOGRAPHY](#)  
[REPRINTS](#)

<a href="#">Our Job Opportunities</a>	 <b>Archived Story</b>
<a href="#">NEWS</a>	<b>Derailment prompts concern</b> By <i>BETSY COHEN</i> of the Missoulian
<a href="#">Local News</a>	
<a href="#">Montana/Regional</a>	It took 38 minutes for Montana Rail Link officials to call 9-1-1 and notify emergency responders that five cars had derailed and one was leaking ethanol in the Missoula switchyard early Sunday.
<a href="#">Nation/World</a>	
<a href="#">Opinion</a>	
<a href="#">Letters to the Editor</a>	The derailment occurred at 4:50 a.m. and the call went out to emergency crews at 5:28 a.m, MRL spokesperson Lynda Frost said Monday.
<a href="#">Native News</a>	
<a href="#">Obituaries</a>	Missoula City Fire and members of their hazmat team were first on the scene and were assessing the situation by 5:39 a.m, said Battalion Chief Russ Beree. At 6:28 a.m., Missoula City Police were called to evacuate four homes next to the switchyard on Phillips Street, and residents were notified of the situation by 7 a.m.
<a href="#">Public Record</a>	
<a href="#">Special Reports</a>	
<a href="#">APME Surveys</a>	
<a href="#">Weather</a>	The cause for concern: 12,000 gallons of the colorless, flammable liquid had leaked out of its container. About 12,000 gallons remained in the container, and lying next to it was another full container holding 24,000 gallons of ethanol.
<a href="#">Archives</a>	
<a href="#">Photography</a>	
<a href="#">Reprints</a>	For many residents who contacted the Missoulian on Monday, the response time took far too long to address a chemical spill in the middle of the city and in the middle of their neighborhood.
<a href="#">SPORTS</a>	
<a href="#">CLASSIFIEDS</a>	Missoula Mayor John Engen said he too is concerned about derailments in the city, and is calling for a meeting of Missoula officials, emergency responders and MRL.
<a href="#">ONLINE EXCLUSIVES</a>	
<a href="#">Breaking News</a>	"This is serious stuff for the city and MRL," Engen said, "and I want to put our heads together to make sure we are doing the best we can to ensure the safety of the folks around the core activity of the switchyard and for the city as a whole.
<a href="#">Online Local News</a>	
<a href="#">Online Local Sports</a>	
<a href="#">University News</a>	"We will be getting together with MRL to review our procedures and to be sure we are working in the best interest of the community."
<a href="#">Real Estate Weekly</a>	
<a href="#">Homestyles</a>	MRL personnel followed the required guidelines and protocol when emergency alarms went off Sunday, Frost said, and the response did not take an unreasonable amount of time.
<a href="#">Lawn &amp; Garden</a>	
<a href="#">Bridal Guide</a>	Strict procedures are set in motion when those alarms go off - and when they do, there's nothing to indicate that the cause is a derailment or a brake valve with dirt in it, Frost said.
<a href="#">Body &amp; More</a>	
<a href="#">Book Reviews</a>	The only way to know the difference is to walk the train line, which takes time. If a derailment is discovered and a leak is identified, responders must find the exact containers involved in the accident and check a master inventory list to determine the cargo of each container.
<a href="#">eBabies</a>	
<a href="#">Consumer's Edge</a>	
<a href="#">FEATURES</a>	
<a href="#">ENTERTAINER</a>	On Sunday, assessing the situation was complicated by the fact that a 33-car train was parked alongside the 75-car train with the five derailed containers, Frost said, blocking a clear view of the accident.
<a href="#">SPECIAL SECTIONS</a>	
<a href="#">SUBSCRIBER SERVICES</a>	When the 9-1-1 call was made, emergency crews knew exactly what they were rolling on - MRL said it was a chemical spill involving ethanol.
<a href="#">NIE</a>	
<a href="#">SITE MAP</a>	As rare as it is to have a derailment in the switchyard, it's equally rare for firefighters and hazmat crews to know what chemical they are dealing with before they arrive on the scene, Beree said.

Timing and information is critical for emergency crews to do their job without injuries to themselves or to the public, he said, and everyone on Missoula's multi-agency response team takes their responsibility to heart.

The regional response team trains twice a month, he said, all year long to be ready and prepared to handle large-scale disasters.

advertisement

"We run disaster scenarios - worst-case stuff - and we practice a lot," he said.

Along with their practice is extra schooling, which involves learning organic and inorganic chemistry, learning to use high-tech monitoring equipment and how to identify combustible, dangerous products.

But the effort is worthwhile, Beree said.

"This is our community, and our business is to save lives, protect property and ease suffering," he said. "Saving lives is the first thing on our list.

"It's our families that live by the railroad and the switchyard, and our friends, and it's our health too."

Reporter Betsy Cohen can be reached at 523-5253 or at [bcohen@missoulian.com](mailto:bcohen@missoulian.com).

 [Email Story](#)

 [Print Story](#)

 [Readers Interactive Survey](#)

[Subscribe to the Missoulian today — get 2 weeks free!](#)

[HOME](#) | [NEWS](#) | [CLASSIFIEDS](#) | [BRIDES & GROOMS](#) | [JOBS](#) | [REAL ESTATE](#) | [CARS](#) | [CONTACT](#)



Copyright © 2006 Missoulian, a division of Lee Enterprises.