

Upended train derails commutes


Milwaukee West Metra service to resume today

OLD FEARS RE-EMERGE
Darch: Thursday's derailment "underscores the need to make the EJ&E as safe as possible" — Page 15

BY JESSICA CILELLA AND CHRISTOPHER PLACEK
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It was around 5:30 a.m. Thursday morning when a frightening sound snapped Bartlett resident Leslie Andrie out of a deep sleep.
"It was a loud boom ... like something just wasn't right, like it was a rough turn of a train or something," said Andrie, who lives by the ninth hole of the Villa Olivia Country Club.
Moments later, the sounds of sirens and hovering news helicopters filled the air.
What Andrie and other Bartlett residents heard was 22 cars of a Canadian National freight train careening off the rails near Gifford and Spaulding roads at

Cleanup starts Thursday along the Milwaukee District West Line, which was shut down in both directions near Elgin after 22 cars of a Canadian National freight train went off the tracks about 5:30 a.m.

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• See more pictures and our video of the aftermath and cleanup efforts.


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'Slush fund' from charity

Prosecutors say former officer stole \$30,000 meant for fallen cops

BY JOSH STOCKINGER
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Scott Webb

Former Woodridge police officer Scott Webb used a charity for fallen officers as "his own personal slush fund" to finance a lifestyle that included women, motorcycles and heavy drinking, a prosecutor charged in court Thursday.

The veteran police official was ordered held on \$750,000 bail at his second DuPage County court appearance since his apprehension last month in Branson, Mo.

Assistant State's Attorney Helen Kapas said Webb's Romeoville home was in foreclosure and he was living "way beyond his means" when he pilfered more than \$30,000 in donations raised for the Illinois Concerns of Police Survivors.

Meanwhile, she said, the former officer's lifestyle consisted of heavy drinking, carousing with women and riding a Harley-Davidson motorcycle.

"This lifestyle got the best of him," Kapas said, calling it a "very sad day for law enforcement."

Local, state and federal authorities spent "countless hours and public funds" on a five-month search after Webb blew off an agreement to surrender when he was charged with felony theft in May, Kapas said. When officers found him living under an alias in Missouri in October, she said, they also found a pipe containing marijuana, bundles of cash and a handgun loaded with hollow-point bullets.

To avoid detection, Kapas

See **SLUSH** on **PAGE 18**


A hockey accident put J.J. O'Connor in a wheelchair. 16 years later, he's one of the most positive people you'll ever meet.




J.J. O'Connor, general manager the Hornets youth sled hockey team, talks with player Juan Rodarte, 9, of Island Lake before practice.

Reasons to smile

BY ROSS FORMAN
Daily Herald Correspondent


BRIAN HILL/bhill@dailyherald.com
J.J. O'Connor, 32, works out at Athletico.


SUBMITTED PHOTO
J.J. O'Connor in his youth hockey days.

J.J. O'Connor has returned to the Skokie Skatium many times over the last 16 years, but he knows this year is different.

That was the location where, on Oct. 24, 1995, O'Connor, then a senior at Loyola Academy, was playing a mid-level game for the McFetridge Patriots against the Skokie Flyers. O'Connor hit the boards at an awkward angle, fracturing three vertebrae in his neck and sustaining spinal-cord damage.

He has been in a wheelchair ever since — 16 years able-bodied, and now 16 years reliant on others for such tasks as eating or getting into bed.

O'Connor, 32, lives in Mount Prospect now, but with a much different outlook than many people would expect.

"It's bittersweet," O'Connor said, reflecting on the anniversary of his life-changing accident. "I'm very happy with my life; I'm very happy with the things I've been able to accomplish, and I've had a lot of fun experiences — a lot of things that would not have happened had this disability not happened."

O'Connor is the volunteer chairman for USA Hockey's Disabled Sector, and the general manager for the USA Patriots, a team organized to develop young sled hockey players into elite athletes.

"Who knows what I would have been doing? Who knows if I would have been involved with USA Hockey at the level I'm at, and been able to affect others and give them the opportunity to play

Shooter gets life sentence

Rolling Meadows man's murderer doesn't go quietly

BY BARBARA VITELLO
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Patrick Taylor


Marquis Lovings

Convicted murderer Patrick Taylor insisted it couldn't have been him who killed fledgling rap producer Marquis Lovings during an August 2006 home invasion and robbery at Lovings' Rolling Meadows condominium.

"Had I killed him, I'd have killed everybody in the (expletive) house. That's how you know Black Pat didn't do it," Taylor said, referring to himself by his nickname during his sentencing hearing Thursday before Cook County Judge Hyman Rieberman.

The argument did not sway Rieberman, who sentenced Taylor to natural life in prison after a two-hour hearing, which Taylor interrupted several times despite Cook County Assistant Public Defender Jim Mullenix's admonitions to calm down and remain quiet.


Calling Taylor "a lifelong sociopath," Rieberman said Taylor's criminal background and lack of remorse shows "he cannot be a useful member of the community."

"This defendant is lacking in human decency and concern for human life," said Rieberman.

Citing "repeated outbursts and threats to personnel," Rieberman ordered Taylor to be handcuffed and remain seated during the hearing, which took place with eight Cook County sheriff's deputies stationed throughout the courtroom.

It began with prosecutors detailing Taylor's extensive criminal history, which includes convictions dating back to 1986 for burglary, aggravated battery, drug possession and delivery. He

See **LIFE** on **PAGE 18**


LESTER & RIOPELL
SUBURBAN
POLITICAL RECOUNT


Page 5:
State rep finds himself in the lions' den when he plays principal for a day.

Weather
We'll take it
High of 52.
See the back of Business.



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Accident resonates with local leaders opposed to merger

By Marni Pyke
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There's a good chance the freight train that's detaining you at the local railroad crossing contains hazardous materials.

It's a common occurrence that generally goes unnoticed until an incident such as Thursday's derailment of a Canadian National train in Bartlett that involved two tankers containing sodium hydroxide, or lye, and ferrous sulfite.

No toxic substances leaked out, but the accident resonated with local leaders who opposed CN's merger in 2009 with the smaller EJ&E Railroad, which extends through numerous north, west and south suburbs.

"It underscores the need to make the EJ&E as safe as possible, to reduce potential hazards and to reduce the chance for another freight accident," said Barrington Mayor Karen Darch, who led a coalition of towns in fighting the merger.

Federal regulators approved the deal because they agreed with CN's rationale that moving trains from its lines in Chicago onto the less-traveled EJ&E would ease a notorious freight bottleneck in the region.

"CN invests heavily in the latest safety technology in the rail industry," railroad spokesman Patrick Waldron said. "We monitor the tracks and equipment across the system, including the EJ&E where we've made a heavy investment."

The U.S. Surface Transportation Board acknowledged that the transaction "would increase the risk of an accident involving the discharge of a hazardous material along the EJ&E line and decreases this risk along the CN lines into Chicago." But the agency noted the risk of spill was low and federal hazmat transport rules along with CN's system of safeguards would be adequate to prevent a catastrophe.

Authorities don't yet know what caused the derailment, which set three train cars on fire.

A look at September numbers provided by CN showed train traffic on the EJ&E line between the Mundelein area and south of Naperville has increased by about 35 percent since the 2009 merger.

Across Illinois, there were 119 derailments, ranging from minor to major incidents, involving all railroads in 2010, according to the Federal Railroad Administration's database. Of those, nine involved CN trains. As a comparison, Union Pacific had 39 derailments and the BNSF Railroad had 32.

FRA data from January through August 2011 indicates there were 17 derailments involving trains carrying hazardous materials in Illinois. Of those, one case in Iroquois County involved a release of hazardous materials.

Of the 17 derailments with trains transporting hazmat goods, four involved CN, two involved BNSF and six were UP trains.

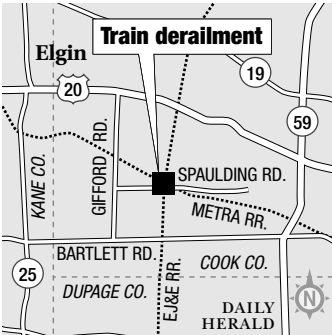
Another incident, not on the database yet, occurred Oct. 7 in northern Illinois near Tiskilwa, where a derailed Iowa Interstate Railroad freight train carrying ethanol exploded and caused a mass evacuation.

Darch said she was thankful there were no injuries in the Bartlett accident, unlike a June 2009 derailment of a CN train carrying ethanol in Rockford where an explosion and fire killed a woman and injured her family.

"There's a need to make sure (police and fire) are trained and understand what's on the train and are prepared to respond, she noted.

"Since acquiring the EJ&E, CN has worked with municipalities across the route in emergency response training," Waldron said. "We made sure those lines of cooperation were open today."

Aurora Mayor Tom Weisner, whose community is host to



EJ&E — now CN — tracks said the recent derailment left him uneasy.

"I wouldn't say I have a great comfort level," Weisner said, adding that CN freight traffic is only going to increase. "We are certainly concerned about what the future will bring."

Railroad expert James Wilson of Naperville said the transport of hazardous materials is common across the country and there's an ongoing effort to ensure safety.

"Over the last couple of years, there's been a complete review of tank car safety standards and construction," said Wilson, a principal consultant on railroads for Infosys Ltd.

Railroads, trucks and barges carry hazmat items "because these materials make up all sorts of consumer products everyone uses. There's a demand for these products and they're shipped in vessels that are designed the best way they can be to withstand the rigors of any accident," Wilson said.

"While there's not a 100 percent guarantee everything will be safe, our safety record for hazardous materials in North America is way beyond anything (elsewhere)."

Derailed: 'These things happen'

Continued from Page 1

the Elgin-Bartlett border.

No injuries were reported. The accident, which occurred close to where a Metra line intersects with a former EJ&E line now owned by Canadian National, disrupted service on Metra's Milwaukee District West Line all day Thursday, but Metra expected to have trains running to Elgin on Friday.

"Essentially, Milwaukee West commuters can expect service tomorrow," said Metra spokesman Tom Miller. A service update was posted at metra.com Thursday evening. Riders should expect delays of 20 to 30 minutes, as commuter trains would find "slow going around the derailment," Miller said.

Canadian National spokesman Patrick Waldron said the cause of the derailment — which involved a single 120-car northbound freight train traveling from Gary, Ind., to Fond du Lac, Wis. — is unknown and that an investigation is ongoing. Thursday evening he said the railway was concentrating on clearing at least one track for Metra trains.

But Chip Pew, director of the Illinois Commerce Commission's railroad safety program Operation Lifesaver, said preliminary indications are that a piece of broken rail contributed to the accident.

Two of the derailed cars were tankers that contained hazardous materials in liquid form — sodium hydroxide, or lye, and ferrous sulfite — but no chemicals were released as a result of the derailment, authorities said.

Three other derailed cars caught on fire. One contained scrap metal, another fiberboard, and one was empty. Fire crews extinguished the fire by Thursday afternoon.

Bartlett Fire Chief Michael

Friday's Milwaukee West schedule

Metra advises passengers to check the Metra website to make sure plans have not been revised.

All Milwaukee West Line trains may operate 20 to 30 minutes behind schedule.

- Trains 2201 and 2203 will stop at Bartlett. A bus will carry passengers to National Street, Elgin, and Big Timber stations (2201 passengers only).
- Milwaukee North Train 2122 will not operate.
- All passengers from Lake-Cook Road, North Glenview and all stops from Edgebrook to Healy should plan on either riding 2118 approximately 20 minutes earlier or 2126 arriving at Chicago 35 minutes later.
- Passengers normally boarding Train 2122 at stations from Fox Lake to Deerfield, and also Morton Grove, should ride Train 2124, which operates approximately 10 minutes later.
- NCS Train 106 will not operate. Train 108 will make all scheduled stops to the O'Hare Transfer, then express to River Grove, making stops at Western Avenue and Chicago. This train may operate up to 15 minutes behind schedule.

Falese said water from hose lines created the impression there was a vapor cloud, but it was merely mist.

"At no time was there any vapor cloud whatsoever, or any danger to the community, or even our people on the scene in regards to the hazardous materials," Falese said.

The derailment occurred in an industrial area, which limited the danger to residents.

Bartlett Village President Michael Kelly said while police deemed the area around the crash site to be safe, officials were prepared to evacuate people in a mobile home park near the tracks if necessary.

"That's a very key portion of our community and that's very important to me that those people are safe," Kelly said.

Metra said about 11,000 people use the Milwaukee District West Line daily, but those most affected by the

derailment were the 2,000 or so riders who use the three Elgin stops west of Bartlett that were closed Thursday. Service east of Bartlett also was affected because several trains still were parked in Elgin when the derailment occurred and couldn't be used.

While shuttle buses were running from the Bartlett train station to Elgin, none were going from Elgin to Bartlett, leaving commuters scrambling.

Richard Lawson, a recently laid-off warehouse manager from Joliet, came to Elgin in hopes of selling his plasma for \$40. His plan was to use the money to turn his cellular phone back on. But that plan didn't pan out because his blood needed to be tested first.

Then, an already disappointed Lawson found himself stuck at Metra's Big Timber Road station in Elgin. But

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