

RECEIVED

JUN 21 2001

1032 Glenford Court
Kirkwood, MO 63122
June 12, 2001

Dr. Jane R. Summerson, EIS Document Manager
M/S 010
U. S. Department of Energy
Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management
Yucca Mountain Site Characterization Office
p. O. Box 30307
North Las Vegas, NV 89036-0307

Dear Dr. Summerson,

This is in response to the May 4, 2001 letter I received from J. Russell Dyer, Project Manager.

I am enclosing a copy of my letter dated 2-4-2000 to Ms. Wendy R. Dixon for your information. My thoughts in this letter have not changed. However, I have a few additional thoughts to add.

1. I would like to bring to your attention a derailment which occurred May 31, 2001 in the lovely town of Webster Groves, Missouri just a couple of miles east of our lovely town of Kirkwood, Missouri. This could have been a nuclear shipment. A newspaper clipping from the Webster-Kirkwood Times dated June 8-14, 2001 is enclosed.
2. On May 15, 2001, 60 Minutes reported on the disrepair of the rails throughout the United States. I am sure a copy of that report could be made available to your department. How can our government be considering shipping such dangerous contents over miles and miles of our rails while they are in this condition?
3. How about the recent runaway train in Ohio!!!

In view of all of the items stated in my letters, I strongly oppose shipping nuclear waste to any nuclear waste dump in the United States including the Yucca Mountain Site.

Thank you,



Elizabeth A. Mathieu

010065

1032 Glenford Court
Kirkwood, Mo. 63122
February 4, 2000

Ms. Wendy R. Dixon
EIS Program Manager
U. S. Department of Energy
Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management
Yucca Mountain Site
Characterization Office
P O. Box 30307, M/S 010
North Las Vegas, Nev. 89036-0307

I am in opposition to high level waste traveling thru St. Louis. I live less than 1/4 of a mile from the Union Pacific tracks and 1/2 mile from Interstate 44 in the lovely town of Kirkwood. I can't imagine a high level nuclear accident happening in this area.....everything totally deserted and with no compensation from insurance companies, since no homeowner policy covers a nuclear accident.

Also, many experts believe Yucca Mountain is not a good storage site. It is in a seismically active area and may not be able to isolate the waste for the many hundreds of years required. So, how can we even consider such a move?

Please keep these nuclear wastes on site at the nuclear plants in safe storage until a good long term solutions can be found.

Thank you,

Elizabeth Mathieu

Webster-Kirkwood TIMES

Vol. 23, No. 48

LOCALLY OWNED & OPERATED

June 8 - 14, 2001

MetroLink
 ... pg. 4
Central Harbor Sketcher
 ... pg. 16
Graduation in Webster Groves
 ... pg. 12

Your Hometown Newspaper Since 1978

Webster Barely Escapes Rail Disaster

"This could have been a tragedy of such magnitude," said Webster Groves Mayor Gerry Welch.

Critics hope train wreck will serve to derail any plans to ship nuclear waste through area.

by *Kevin Murphy*

Jim Sparks was in the backyard of his Webster Groves West Swon home when he heard a loud "pop" sound from the direction of the railroad tracks.

"I looked across Lockwood and the coal cars were lifting off the tracks, sparking, and then they began pancaking toward the road," he said.

It was about 8:15 a.m. on Thursday, May 31, when 14 of 113 cars of a coal train jumped the Union Pacific Railroad tracks along West Lockwood Avenue between Rock Hill and Berry roads. Each car carried 90 tons of coal.

"My first concern was the crossing at Cherry, and whether any cars had been hit," Sparks continued. "At this time of the day there would usually be cars waiting at that crossing. We were very fortunate."

There were no vehicles waiting at the Cherry Avenue crossing, and while coal spilled onto the westbound lanes of West Lockwood, several coal cars came to rest just shy of the thoroughfare. There were no injuries.

Mark Davis, a spokesman for the Union Pacific Railroad, said that an axle on one of the coal cars broke in Valley Park, just after the train had passed over a detector that would have warned engineers of the problem. The next detector was located a few miles ahead of the derailment, in Maplewood.

"The axle hit an obstacle near the grade



crossing, and other cars crumpled behind it," Davis said. He said the train was traveling at about 25 miles per hour when it derailed.

West Lockwood in the vicinity of the train wreck was closed to traffic for most of Thursday. On Friday and Saturday, vehicles traveling in both directions along Lockwood were rerouted down the east lane.

Davis said that about 150 people responded immediately to the mainline derailment. He said heavy equipment is strategically placed so that it can be at any given location within several hours.

"It's important that you respond not only to begin the cleanup process, but to begin the investigation process as well. You need to look for fresh marks on the railroad ties, breaks or in the rails ... in this case that trail led 12 miles west," Davis said.

That's where railroad officials found a piece of the coal car's broken axle. The axle was dragged across the track, causing sparks as it went along, for 12 miles before causing the derailment in Webster Groves.

Davis estimated that the overall clean-up cont. p. 8

Workers begin clean-up operations of 14 coal cars which derailed May 31 on the Union Pacific Railroad line, along West Lockwood Avenue at Cherry just west of Rock Hill Road.

photo by Ursula Ruhl

Coal Cars Derail In WG

from page one

cost to Union Pacific — removing trains and replacing a 400-foot stretch of tracks — would be around \$1 million. That figure does not include the costs of delays to other trains. Workers had north track open to westbound trains by 1 a.m. on Friday. The second line was cleared and open by 8 p.m. Friday.

During the first quarter of 2001, Davis said an average of 38 trains a day came through Webster Groves and Kirkwood on the Union Pacific Railroad line.

Davis said the railroad operates under many layers of regulations, with regulations specific to the commodity being transported. Most rail cars are owned by private companies, which are liable for the contents of those cars, Davis said.

"If their car leaks, they are liable. A lot of companies (voluntarily) meet or beat requirements for safety," Davis said.

Davis also said tank cars have been redesigned in the past 10 years to make leaks less likely in the event of derailment.

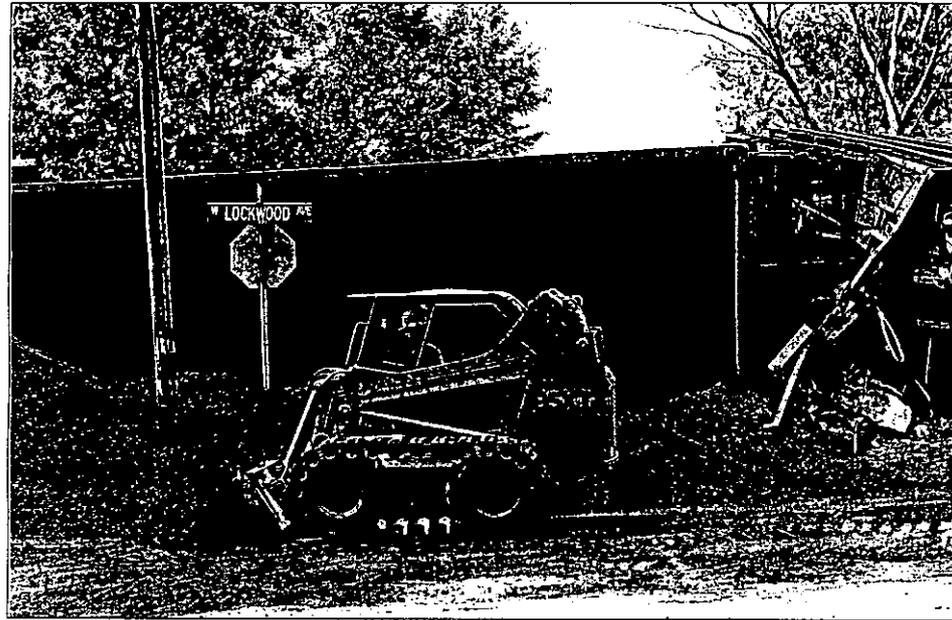
The Missouri Motor Carrier and Railroad Safety Division of Economic Development, along with federal inspectors, are investigating the accident.

Efforts To Stop Nuclear Shipments Back On Track

The U.S. Department of Energy is expected, perhaps by the end of this year, to issue a "suitability assessment" for storing high level, radioactive waste at a Yucca Mountain, Nev., interim facility. Congress had previously approved the interim storage site, but the measure was vetoed by President Bill Clinton.

"That would not happen this time around. Not with the current president in office," said Kay Drey, who has been fighting nuclear power issues since 1974.

"There are 103 operating reactors in



pictured top: A front loader works to clean up coal along West Lockwood Avenue.

the United States. Seventy-six of them are east of the Mississippi, and 27 are west," Drey said. "They have to get the radioactive waste located east of the Mississippi River out west. People who have studied the maps figure there could be a shipment through St. Louis — by train or truck — every other day for the next 30 years."

Once a bill is introduced in Congress to ship to the interim storage facility at Yucca Mountain, and once it is signed by the president, Drey said shipments could begin through the area "in no time at all."

Members of the Webster Groves City Council voted in February of 1996 to oppose nuclear waste shipments through the city. The city's current mayor, Gerry Welch, was on the council at the time, voting to oppose the shipments.

"This could have been a tragedy of such magnitude," said Welch. "Now that this incident is over, we can sit back and deal with lessons learned. I am going to invite railroad officials and local mayors to meet to talk about railway safeguards."

Welch said Webster Groves was lucky to have averted a disaster. Nuclear waste aside, the train cars could have been filled with other hazardous materials, she said.

"The train flipped east, and then west (toward Lockwood). And what if it had gone off the tracks 100 yards to



pictured left: Onlookers watch as crews clean up the mess left behind after the train derailment.

photos by Ursula Ruhl

the north or south — into a residential neighborhood or the Old Webster business area," the mayor said.

Welch said meeting with mayors and railroad officials will serve two purposes: to talk about safeguards of shipping anything hazardous through residential neighborhoods; and to form a coalition among area cities to discuss nuclear waste shipment possibilities.

"It's absolutely frightening to think of any shipments of nuclear waste or extremely hazardous materials coming through our residential neighborhoods, or the business communities, for that matter," Welch said.

"The St. Louis area is a huge population center. In the large scheme of things, this train derailment could be a very important lesson," Welch continued. "We can't be complacent about this. We could all say, 'Well, no one got hurt,' and go on. Or we can all learn from this."

Department of Energy is collecting input on the potential environmental impacts of the proposed Yucca Mountain repository.

Comments can be faxed to 1-800-967-0739; or can be made over the Internet via the Yucca Mountain Project web site: <http://www.ymp.gov>

Mail comments to:
Dr. Jane R. Summerson,
EIS Document Manager, M/S 010
U.S. Department of Energy
Office of Civilian Radioactive
Waste Management,
Yucca Mountain Site
Characterization Office,
P.O. Box 30307
North Las Vegas, NV 89036-0307.