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SONDRA CAMITE
 4335 CLAY #4
 ST. LOUIS, MO. 63122

July 17, 2001

DR. JANE R. SUMMERSON
 EIS Document MANAGER, M/S 610
 US Department of Energy
 P.O. Box 30307
 North Las Vegas, NV 89036-0307

DEAR DR. SUMMERSON:

PLEASE FIND ENCLOSED THE ARTICLE
 ON THE TRAIN DERAILMENT THAT OCCURRED ON
 MAY THE 31ST - and also additional comments.
 My viewpoint COINCIDES WITH THOSE
 EXPRESSED HEREIN.

I URGE YOU, PLEASE, TO PAY SERIOUS
 ATTENTION TO THIS DANGEROUS SITUATION.

There ARE MULTITUDES OF OTHER CITIZENS
 THAT FEEL THE SAME.

WE MUST ALL TAKE ACTION TO SUBVERT
 "BUSINESS AS USUAL" PROCEDURES AND MOVE
 INTO A GREEN MILLENNIUM OF WISE LIVING.
 PLEASE HELP.

Sincerely,
 SONDRA V. CAMITE

Webster-Kirkwood TIMES

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June 8 - 14, 2001

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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.

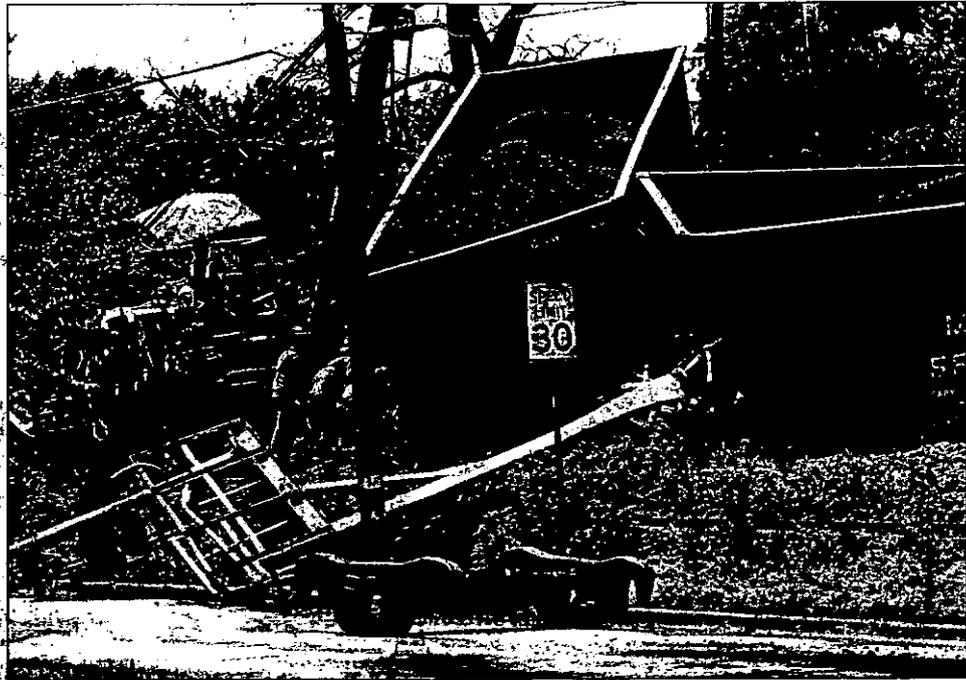
It was about 8:15 a.m. on Thursday, May 31, when 14 of 113 cars of a coal train jumped the Union Pacific Railroad tracks along West Lockwood Avenue between Rock Hill and Berry roads. Each car carried 90 tons of coal.

"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.

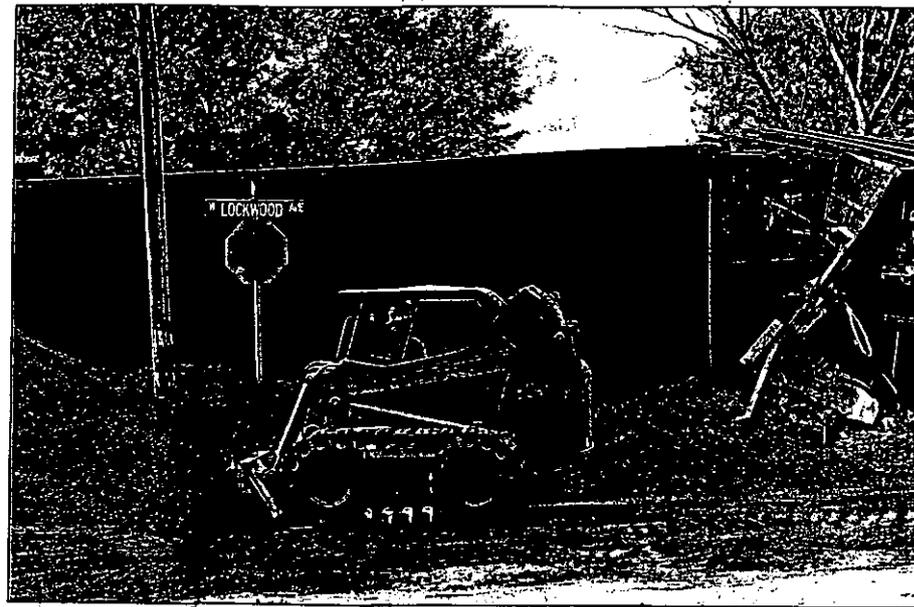
The Missouri Motor Carrier and Railroad Safety Division of Economic Development, along with federal inspectors, are investigating the accident.

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.

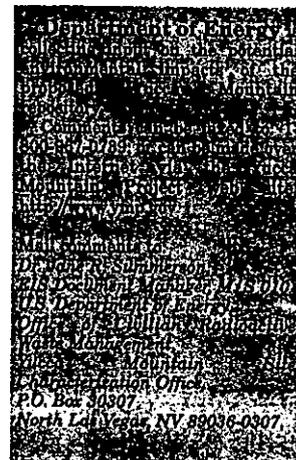
photos by
Ursula Ruhl

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."



Derailment Was A "Timely Reminder"

On the morning of May 31, a train derailed in Webster Groves. No hazardous materials were involved and, thankfully, no one was hurt. It was not an unusual event. Derailments occur frequently in this country and that is my concern.

President George Bush is pushing for a massive expansion of nuclear power. It is a mistake to pump billions into the nuclear industry at a time when we still have not resolved the significant public health problems caused by the shipping and disposal of nuclear waste.

It is only by chance that the Webster Groves derailment did not include hazardous materials. That line is already used to ship nuclear waste. Unlike shipping via public highways, the public has no say on which rail routes are for hazardous waste, including highly dangerous radioactive materials from nuclear reactors. There is no consideration of how many people live near a route or whether a school is nearby. There is no consideration of the availability of medical facilities that can treat exposure to radiation. St. Louis has only one bed in one hospital that can fully treat a victim of radiation. There is no public notice or comment on the proposed route like there is for shipping nuclear debris by highway.

These facts are why I strongly oppose President Bush's rush to build the first new nuclear reactor in over 25 years. That rash decision today endangers lives and creates a nuclear waste problem that will last for decades — long after nuclear power plants are obsolete.

A disproportionate share of that waste would be shipped by rail through the heart of St. Louis. I am not prepared to take that risk. This derailment was a timely reminder of the big problems posed by nuclear waste to our community.

I am encouraging anyone who took pictures of this incident to send a copy of them to my St. Louis office, 11140 South Towne Square, Suite 201, St. Louis, Mo., 63123, so I can show my colleagues just how dangerous this could be.

U.S. Rep. Richard A. Gephardt
Third District

Derailment Shows Danger Of Overuse

The train wreck on the Union Pacific tracks in Webster ought to awaken residents in Webster and Kirkwood to the danger posed by the 'overuse' of the Union Pacific tracks with its frequent number of coal trains requiring constant maintenance because the cars are extremely heavy. The dust from the trains is not good for the health either. Cars should be covered when they are transporting coal.

Beyond that, is the much more important subject of the movement of radioactive waste on trains traveling west which are loaded with radioactive debris from places like Three Mile Island. The spent nuclear fuel rods and radioactive materials are a danger to the entire community far worse than any other commodity.

The Department of Energy (DOE) is required by law to enforce safety regulations for the transportation and storage of nuclear waste. Why? Because they are dangerous to the well being of the 'public.' The idea that the community should be subject to the risks of a radioactive accident as a result of a train wreck makes no sense. These cars with their dangerous cargo ought to be following routes in less populated areas.

Later, this year plans call for the movement of this awful trash through your community. It is a risk that should not and does not have to be taken. We do not have to resort to recklessness to deal with waste storage.

What is planned to go through Webster and Kirkwood (later this year) is hot radioactive trash that needs to be safely transported and stored in another place. But, not at the expense of Webster, Kirkwood, or any other part of Saint Louis. This waste is contaminated with radioactive isotopes that have a decay rate and concentration capable of adversely affecting an area (should a spill or accident occur) for thousands of years! It can kill and damage our community permanently. And, for that reason must be stopped.

Everything possible should be done by the residents here to fight these risks to our area.

There are other safer ways to transport hazardous materials without endangering the lives and property of the residents. Transporting these risky trainloads of poison around the area rather than through it makes more sense! The only beneficiaries to all of the risks being taken are the energy companies and those corporations involved in the transport of their commodities. And, the public is being robbed and abused by this unholy coalition.

I was glad to see Congressman Gephardt take a stand against it. But, this is a bi-partisan community effort and it needs the united involvement of all citizens.

Dave Adams
Kirkwood

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