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# The Columbian

SERVING CLARK COUNTY, WASHINGTON

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**SPORTS, B1**  
Gabby Douglas latest American to win Olympic gymnastics all-around gold



**WEEKEND, INSIDE**  
The Old West rides again at this year's Clark County Fair

**BNSF BUSY IN WASHINGTON**

## Railroad work totals \$106M



An 1,800-foot Loram "undercutter" machine reconditions the railroad bed under the tracks on Thursday near North Bonneville. BNSF Railway crews started the work last month.

Photos by STEVEN LANE/The Columbian

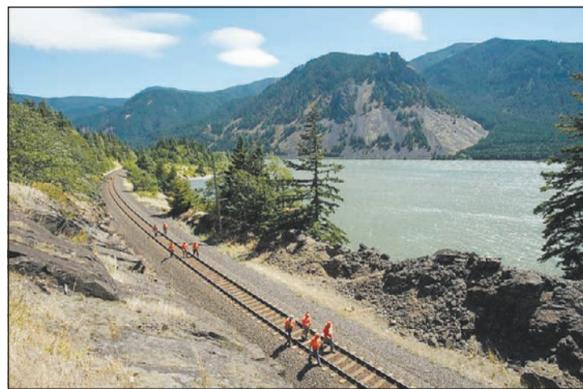
Much of attention focuses on line between Vancouver, Gorge

By ERIC FLORIP  
Columbian staff writer

An estimated \$106 million in rail work aims to boost capacity on BNSF Railway's Washington system this year — much of it on the century-old line connecting Vancouver to the Columbia River Gorge. Construction crews on Thursday finished replacing various sections of rail between Vancouver and Pasco, said BNSF spokesman Gus Melonas. The two-month job wrapped up near Home Valley, just east of Stevenson.

That wasn't the only project on the

RAIL WORK, Page A5



A BNSF Railway maintenance crew walks the tracks near Home Valley in the Columbia River Gorge as part of a final inspection.

## Annan quits as Syrian envoy

Diplomat assails Assad, opposition, Security Council

By ELIZABETH A. KENNEDY and JOHN HEILPRIN  
Associated Press

BEIRUT — Kofi Annan announced his resignation Thursday as peace envoy to Syria and issued a blistering critique of world powers, bringing to a dramatic end a frustrating six-month effort that failed to achieve even a temporary cease-fire as the country plunged into civil war.

Annan also had harsh words for the Syrian regime, saying it was clear President Bashar Assad "must leave office."

As the violence escalated on the ground, rebels used a captured tank to shell a military air base near Aleppo — one of the first known uses of heavy weapons by the insurgents.

Speaking to reporters in Geneva, Annan blamed the Syrian government's intransigence, the growing militancy of Syrian rebels and a divided Security Council that failed to forcefully back his effort. Since he took on the job, Russia and China have twice used their veto power to block strong Western- and Arab-backed action against Assad's regime.

The White House said Annan's resignation highlighted the failure of Russia and China to support action against Assad and called the regime's continued violence



**Kofi Annan**  
Joint special envoy of the United Nations and the Arab League for Syria

against its own people "disgusting." "It is impossible for me or anyone to compel the Syrian government and also the opposition to take the steps to bring about the political process," said Annan, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate and former U.N. secretary-general.

"You have to understand: As an envoy, I can't want peace more than the protagonists, more than the Security Council or the international community for that matter."

Annan singled out the regime for blame for the violence. But he also said the opposition's increasing militarization had contributed to dooming his six-point peace plan, which included a cease-fire and a Syrian-led political process to end the crisis.

"The bloodshed continues, most of all because of the Syrian government's intransigence, and continuing refusal to implement the six-point plan, and also because of the escalating military campaign of the opposition — all of which is compounded by the disunity of the international community," he said.

"At a time when we need — when the Syrian people

ANNAN, Page A5

## \$750,000 grant to aid waterfront project

City hails funds for Renaissance Trail, park

"The waterfront project will create jobs, provide access to the Columbia River and revitalize an area of downtown that will positively impact our community for generations to come."

Mayor Tim Leavitt

By ANDREA DAMEWOOD  
Columbian staff writer

A \$750,000 grant, announced Thursday, will help the city of Vancouver start work on the extension of the Waterfront Renaissance Trail and Waterfront Park.

The Federal Highway Administration Transportation, Community and System Preservation Program grant will be used to extend the city's most popular trail about a half-mile westward from the Interstate 5 Bridge along the downtown waterfront.

Vancouver-Clark Parks & Recreation Planner Jean Akers said the grant was "great news" and will add to a \$1 million state grant awarded to the project earlier this year.

The grant money won't fully cover the cost of building the trail and the park — design, permitting and construction along the Columbia River is costly and takes time.

"This is a huge project, and it will take time," Akers said, adding the city will phase the park and trail work as money comes in. "We're not in a situation where we're flush with lots of capital dollars."

The trail route and park are at about 30 percent of total design, meaning that initial permitting work and other measures are being done. In an ideal world, some of the park features could be open to the public in two years, Akers said. The city doesn't yet have a full

GRANT, Page A5

## CLARK COUNTY FAIR OPENS TODAY



Butler Amusements carnival workers Andrew Jackson, 44, foreground, and Roosevelt Conley, 39, wash the top for the small carousel in preparation for the Clark County Fair.

The Clark County Fair opens today with the hugely popular pancake breakfast. From 8 to 11 a.m., fairgoers will be treated to free breakfast and free admission to the fair with a coupon available at Fred Meyer stores.

Between now and a week from

Sunday, hundreds of blue ribbons will be awarded and thousands will attend.

For more on this year's fair, see The Columbian's Weekend and Beyond guide in today's paper. Smartphone users can access our new mobile site.

Bring a camera and send us your fair photos. We'll post them on our website and publish three of the best in our Aug. 15 Neighbors section. Upload to <http://www.columbian.com/newstip> or email to [metrodesk@columbian.com](mailto:metrodesk@columbian.com).

Photo by Zachary Kaufman of The Columbian

### If you go

■ **What:** Clark County Fair.

■ **When:** 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. today. Carnival opens at 9 a.m.

■ **Where:** 17402 N.E. Delfel Road, Ridgefield.

■ **Cost:** Adults, \$10; seniors 62 and older, \$8; kids 7-12, \$7; 6 and younger, free. Unlimited carnival rides, \$25.

■ **Parking:** \$6; C-Tran shuttle, \$2 per person round-trip from park-and-ride lots; 6 and younger ride free. \$1 off fair admission with bus fare stub.

■ **Highlights:** Sara Evans with Morgan Frazier, 7:30 p.m. at the Sleep Country Amphitheater. Moto X Big Air Bikes, 2 and 6:30 p.m.; The Flying Monkeys, 2 p.m.

■ **Pets:** Not permitted, except for personal service animals or those on exhibition or in competition.

■ **Information:** <http://www.clarkcofair.com> or 360-397-6180. Columbian's mobile website for the Clark County Fair: <http://www.columbian.com/fair-mobile/>.

### Weather, D6

High: 88  
Low: 62  
Warmer.

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### OPINION, A6

**Ruth Marcus:**  
Campaigns fixate on gaffes, not issues.

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