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Train derailment to disrupt rail service

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A freight train derailed about 260 miles east of Reno on Saturday, triggering a bridge collapse and major disruptions in rail service on one of the country's main east-west lines, Union Pacific officials said.

The derailment occurred Saturday morning in a remote area along the Humboldt River about 10 miles west of Carlin and 260 miles east of Reno, UP spokeswoman Zoe Richmond said.

She said 13 cars containing grain were involved in the derailment and she was unsure how many cars the westbound locomotives were hauling. No injuries were reported.

The 102-year-old bridge spanning the river collapsed a couple of hours after the derailment, Richmond said, and railroad officials are unsure how long it'll take to restore it.

"We have crews looking at how to clear the mess," Richmond said. "Any derailment is tough, but we knew this one would be a bit tougher because it involved both a bridge and a derailment."

The line across northern Nevada connects Oakland, Calif., and Salt Lake City as well as other points east.

With the line shut down across northern Nevada, UP's closest alternate east-west lines are located well to the north and south, with one going through Portland, Ore., and the other passing through Las Vegas.

"Definitely, it's going to cause major disruptions in rail service," Richmond said. "The other lines are not desirable because they take a lot longer" and involve greater expense.

Amtrak uses the same line, but it was not immediately clear the impact the bridge collapse would have on its California Zephyr service, a spokeswoman said.

UP officials hope to come up with a plan by Monday on how to deal with the bridge.

"We once fixed another bridge in about a week, and we should know in the next couple of days how long it's going to take to get this bridge up and running," Richmond said.

The locomotives had passed through an 875-foot tunnel when the derailment occurred. Three cars derailed inside the tunnel and at least a couple of cars ended up in the river, Richmond said.

The cause of the derailment is under investigation by UP experts.

Among other things, investigators will examine a "black box" that recorded the engineer's actions. Most UP locomotives also are mounted with a camera.