



This is the official newsletter of **Operation Lifesaver Utah (OL Utah)**, a highway-rail grade crossing safety program and a railroad trespass prevention program. To unsubscribe to this newsletter, please contact Vern Keeslar at olut@digis.net or call 801-310-1035.

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State Coordinator's Message – 2015 OL Utah Appreciation and Awards Dinner

This quarterly message is about the people and safety partners that made 2015 a successful year. OL Utah held its 2015 Appreciation and Awards Dinner at the Gathering Place in Gardner Village in West Jordan on Monday, March 28, 2016. First, I would like to recognize and thank our wonderful safety partners. Without their financial and in-kind support, we would not have a program. The following safety partners were recognized at the Appreciation and Awards Dinner.

2015 Operation Lifesaver Utah Safety Partners

Gold Spike Safety Partners (\$20,000 and above)

- Operation Lifesaver, Inc. (National Office)
- Union Pacific Railroad
- Utah Department of Transportation
- Utah Highway Safety Office

Silver Spike Safety Partners (\$10,000 to \$19,999)

- Utah State Office of Education
- Utah Transit Authority

Iron Spike Safety Partners (\$1,000 to \$9,999)

- BNSF Railway
- InterPlan
- Salt Lake, Garfield & Western Railway
- Utah Railway (Genesee & Wyoming)

Laurelwood Tie Safety Partners (\$100 to \$999)

- Hostlers Model Railroad Club
- Parametrix
- Safety Awareness for Everyone (S.A.F.E.)
- Utah Local Technical Assistance Program at Utah State University
- Utah Trucking Association

There were several awards presented to volunteers and others associated with the OL Utah program. The following awards were presented.

The **Outstanding Media Award** is given to an individual or organization that has reported a story, in either print, radio, or television about safety at highway-rail grade crossings, or trespass prevention on railroad property, or about Operation Lifesaver's mission.

The Outstanding Media Award went to **Jeff Rossen, Journalist, NBC News** for a story about "selfies" and other photography while trespassing on railroad tracks. The story, *Danger on the tracks: People taking selfies hit and killed by trains* aired on November 9, 2015 on NBC's Today show. It aired in 174 markets across the U.S., reaching a potential 8.2 million viewers nationwide. While Jeff Rossen was unable to attend, he was very grateful for the recognition. Rossen stated, "It was a complete surprise to be recognized for this story and I learned so

much about rail safety around the railroad tracks.” Congratulations to Jeff Rossen! A link to the story can be found at <http://on.today.com/1R1b7XK>

The **Safety Partner Presenter of the Year Awards** are given to presenters whose employers provide time for the presenters to participate in the Operation Lifesaver program while on company time. Safety partner presenters demonstrate high activity in the program by the number of presentations given, booths worked, or other involvement with Operation Lifesaver.

The Safety Partner Presenter of the Year Award was **Vic Saunders**, Utah Department of Transportation. Vic gave 50 presentations to 1,786 people.

The Safety Partner Presenter of the Year Award 1st Runner-up was **Kent Jorgenson**, Utah Transit Authority. Kent gave 40 presentations to 938 people. He is currently serving as Area Coordinator for Davis, Morgan, and Weber Counties.

The Safety Partner Presenter of the Year Award 2nd Runner-up was **Mark Gallegos**, Federal Railroad Administration. Mark gave 37 presentations to 1,364 people.

The **Volunteer Presenters of the Year Awards** are given to presenters who are true volunteers, not being compensated for their time, and have demonstrated high activity in the Operation Lifesaver program. This high activity is demonstrated through one’s activity in the number of presentations given, booths worked, or other involvement with the Operation Lifesaver.

The Volunteer Presenter of the Year Award was **Terri Fontaine**. Terri gave 42 presentations to 726 people. Terri just announced her retirement from the State of Utah Driver License Division after 30 years of dedicated service. Thank you Terri for your excellent public service to Utah residents! We look forward to your continued work with Operation Lifesaver. She is currently serving as Area Coordinator for Salt Lake, Summit, and Tooele Counties.

The Volunteer Presenter of the Year Award 1st Runner-up was **Cindy Meiser**. Cindy gave 37 presentations to 1,105 people. Cindy covers three high schools and volunteers at many OL booths.

The Volunteer Presenter of the Year Award 2nd Runner-up was **Katherine Bessinger**. Katherine gave 20 presentations to 842 people. She is currently serving as Area Coordinator for Box Elder, Cache, and Rich Counties.

The **State Coordinator’s Award of Excellence** is given to an individual or an organization that has demonstrated excellence in participating in or supporting the Operation Lifesaver program through activity, in-kind support, and/or financial contributions.

The State Coordinator’s Award of Excellence was awarded to **InterPlan**. **Andrea Olson**, owner of InterPlan, received the award. For the past 10 years, InterPlan has provided meeting rooms for the OL Utah Board of Directors, State Advisory Council, and various meetings with safety partners and presenters. Matt Riffkin served for eight years on the OL Utah Board of Directors before his unexpected death in 2014. InterPlan has donated over 50 hours a year for employees to do Operation Lifesaver work on company time. InterPlan also donated 10 years of copy and print services. Even though InterPlan no longer exists because it merged with Parametrix, it will always be thought of as transportation experts who cared about their communities. Thanks InterPlan for all you have done for rail safety education in Utah!



Pictured from left to right: Bev Thrall, Cindy Meiser, Katherine Bessinger, Terri Fontaine, Walt Webster, Andrea Olson, Vic Saunders, Mark Gallegos, and Dave Goeres.