

This is the official newsletter of **Utah Operation Lifesaver (Utah OL)**, a nonprofit public safety education and awareness organization dedicated to reducing collisions, fatalities and injuries at highway-rail crossings and trespassing on railroad tracks.

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State Coordinator's Message – Utah Operation Lifesaver 2019 Awards

This quarterly message is about the people and safety partners that made 2019 a successful year. Utah OL was not able to hold its Annual Appreciation and Awards Banquet this year because of COVID-19, but we are still recognizing our outstanding presenters. I would also like to recognize and thank our wonderful safety partners. Without their financial and in-kind support, we would not have a Utah rail safety education program. The following safety partners are recognized for their support during 2019.

2019 Utah Operation Lifesaver Safety Partners

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

- Union Pacific Railroad

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

- Utah Department of Transportation
- Utah Highway Safety Office
- Utah State Board of Education
- Utah Transit Authority

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

- Genesee & Wyoming (Utah Railway and Salt Lake City Southern Railroad)
- Salt Lake, Garfield & Western Railway

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

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

The following is a list of awards recognizing the great work of our volunteers for Utah OL.

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 Utah Operation Lifesaver's mission.

The Outstanding Media Award goes to **Michael Locklear**, KUTV Channel 2 News for a story during Utah Rail Safety Week. The story aired live on Monday, September 23, 2019 after the Utah Rail Safety Week press conference. Congratulations to Michael Locklear for his story on rail safety! The story can be found at the following link: <https://kutv.com/news/local/rail-safety-week-kicks-off-in-utah-after-spike-in-deadly-train-crashes>

The **Safety Partner Presenter of the Year Awards** are given to presenters whose employers provide time for the presenters to participate in the Utah 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 Utah Operation Lifesaver.

The Safety Partner Presenter of the Year is **Vic Saunders**, Utah Department of Transportation. Vic has earned this award for six years straight. He gave 71 presentations to 2,001 people.

The Safety Partner Presenter of the Year 1st Runner-up is **Ed Buchanan**, Utah Transit Authority. He gave 31 presentations to 962 people.

The Safety Partner Presenter of the Year 2nd Runner-up is **Mark Gallegos**, Federal Railroad Administration. He gave 29 presentations to 1,036 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 Utah 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 Utah Operation Lifesaver.

The Volunteer Presenter of the Year is **Norm Nelson**. He gave 128 presentations to 1,162 people. Norm gives many of his presentations at the historic Brigham City Depot.

The Volunteer Presenter of the Year 1st Runner-up is **Kent Holbrook**. He gave 43 presentations to 1,218 people. Kent gives his presentations at three high schools including Ben Lomond, Bonneville, and Freemont.

The Volunteer Presenter of the Year 2nd Runner-up is **Terri Fontaine**. She gave 35 presentations to 749 people. Terri gives many of her presentations at West High School, which is located near a very busy highway-rail grade crossing at 300 North in Salt Lake City.

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 Utah Operation Lifesaver program through activity, in-kind support, and/or financial contributions.

The State Coordinator's Award of Excellence is awarded to **Vic Saunders**. Vic has been a volunteer with Utah Operation Lifesaver since 2013 and has given more than 409 presentations to approximately 13,224 new drivers. He regularly gives presentations at the following locations: Farmington High School, Great Basin High School at Clearfield Job Corps, Layton High School, Northridge High School, Ogden Weber Applied Technology College and Syracuse High School. He also volunteers in the community by working the rail safety booth at safety fairs, model railroad shows, and conferences. Vic Saunders was awarded Safety Partner Presenter of the Year for six years from 2014-2019! Thanks Vic for your energetic participation in Utah Operation Lifesaver and your dedication to rail safety education in Utah!

In Memory of Richard L. Thornton



Richard L. Thornton, age 62, passed away on December 4, 2018. Rick was born on June 11, 1956 in Helper, Utah to George and Ann Thornton. He had three younger siblings. From a very young age his passion was for military service and law enforcement, so much so he was an officer in the R.O.T.C. at Kearns High. Right after he graduated, he enlisted into the Army and became a military police officer. He continued to serve for over 30 years, with both the National Guard and as an active reservist. He retired as a Master Sergeant.

His first civilian law enforcement position was with Sandy City PD in 1977 and soon after graduated from the police academy. A few years later he joined the State Narcotics Division. He also worked for the DEA. He finally found his home at Murray City PD and retired 15 years later as a Sergeant. While at Murray he was a D.A.R.E officer, a member of the S.W.A.T team, and a part of the joint Salt Lake City Gang Task Force. Rick found he could not stay idle, so his next adventure was with Union Pacific PD for an additional 17 years. He loved the Officer Safety Program and did all he could to make a difference. Rick was a presenter with Utah Operation Lifesaver for many years.

In between he managed to marry the love of his life, Joan Seare, and he adopted her son, Joshua, to make their family complete. They were together for 40 years, married for 37. In the middle of family and working he somehow found the time to earn a bachelor's degree from the University of Utah in Psychology with an emphasis on Criminology.