

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 COORDINATORS

Vern and Jennifer Keeslar
Operation Lifesaver Utah
2867 North 675 East
Lehi, UT 84043
(801) 310-1035 Vern
(801) 473-1444 Jennifer
olut@digis.net

MATERIALS COORDINATOR

Beverly Thrall
(801) 359-4569

OPERATION LIFESAVER

UTAH WEBSITE
www.olut.usu.edu

State Coordinator's Message – UDOT and Union Pacific Improve Rail Crossing

Utah State Route 132 is a high-speed, rural two-lane highway that crosses Union Pacific's Sharp Subdivision track near Leamington, Utah. This at-grade crossing was historically equipped with flashing light signals which activate when a train approaches. In 2004, two (2) separate traffic crashes occurred at this crossing. In both crashes the vehicle was unable to stop and ran into the side of the train. A third crash occurred in 2007, again the vehicle ran into the side of the train.



The Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) conducted a crossing diagnostic review to determine whether safety improvements were necessary, and determined that the flashing light signals should be replaced with lights and gates. This improvement was made, however, similar incidents continued to occur. Vehicles crashed

through the gates on three (3) separate occasions prior to the train entering the crossing. Further review determined that motorists did not receive adequate advance warning of the trains because both highway and railroad tracks were on curves. The crossing lies at the bottom of a hill and West-bound traffic apparently could not see the crossing until it was too late.

UDOT's Traffic and Safety Division proposed to design and install a special advance warning system to provide adequate notice to motorists when a train is approaching the crossing. The advance warning system consists of a large overhead sign with train-activated flashing amber lights mounted on a cantilever structure. The sign is a black on yellow rectangular warning sign with the legend, "Train Approaching When Flashing." The sign is strategically located to provide



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the optimal sight stopping distance for large trucks traveling at 65 mph, but also so vehicles passing underneath the sign have time to cross prior to the gates dropping. The flashers are hard wired into a control relay which receives a signal from the Union Pacific signal house when a train is approaching. The overhead flashers are supplemented by an additional ground mounted warning sign located upstream to notify motorists they are approaching a crossing.

The advance warning system was designed and constructed within two months thanks to dedicated employees at the Union Pacific Railroad and the UDOT working together for a common goal – to improve safety!

OL Addresses Photographers Association

Operation Lifesaver President Helen Sramek participated in a webinar on May 17, 2012 with Professional Photographers of America (PPA) to educate photographers and others about the importance of safety around tracks and trains. She shared six “must-know” tips for professional photographers before considering a photo shoot near the tracks.

"We understand the passion that photographers have for their work; however, they may not realize that using train tracks as a backdrop for portraits of high school seniors, wedding parties, and families is not only dangerous, it is illegal trespassing," said Sramek. "As part of Operation Lifesaver's mission to reduce deaths and injuries around trains, we urge

professional and amateur photographers alike to set the right example for others." Kristen Hartman, Director of Member Value and Experience for PPA, adds "PPA is pleased to work with Operation Lifesaver to educate our members about these important safety issues."

Last year, almost 800 people were injured or killed while trespassing on railroad property throughout the United States, according to preliminary Federal Railroad Administration statistics.

Six Must-Know Things about Photographing near Tracks and Trains

1. Trains can't stop quickly to avoid people or vehicles on the tracks.
2. An optical illusion makes it hard to determine a train's distance from you - and its speed.
3. The average train overhangs the track by at least three feet.
4. Railroad tracks, trestles, yards and rights-of-way are private property.
5. No tracks should be assumed to be abandoned or inactive.
6. People in your community mimic your behavior.

OL and UTA attend Air Show at Hill Air Force Base

Operation Lifesaver Utah and Utah Transit Authority (UTA) provided a booth at the Warriors Over the Wasatch Air Show at the Hill Air Force Base on May 26 and 27, 2012 over Memorial Day weekend. Kent



Jorgenson of UTA, along with several volunteers from Operation Lifesaver, worked the two days at the booth handing out rail safety information and showing rail safety videos. Thanks to all you participated!

Other booth locations during the first two quarters of 2012 include the following:

- Ophir, Tintic & Western Model Railroad Show on January 21-22, 2012 in Lehi.
- World's Greatest Hobby Model Railroad Show on February 5-6, 2012 in Sandy.
- Safety Kids Safety Fair on February 24-25, 2012 in Sandy.
- Hostler's Model Railroad Show on March 2-4, 2012 in Ogden.
- Safe Kids Day Fair on April 21, 2012 in Ogden
- Hawthorne Elementary Health and Safety Fair on April 26, 2012 in Salt Lake City.
- Utah Driver and Traffic Safety Education Conference on April 30, 2012 in Sandy.
- Safe Kids F.I.T. Fair on May 5, 2012 in Kaysville
- First Lady's Parenting Conference and Expo on May 5, 2012 in Salt Lake City.
- Utah Trucking Association Management Conference on May 10, 2012 in St. George.
- Utah Asian Festival on June 9, 2012 in Sandy.