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State Coordinator's Message – Helen Sramek, Operation Lifesaver President, to Retire

I have had the experience of working with Helen for the past five years. Helen is a wonderful leader and has worked hard to move the OL program forward. She has been instrumental in working with industry leaders, state coordinators, volunteers, and the OLI Board members to deliver the message of rail safety education more effectively and efficiently. I will miss working with her and wish her the best in her new pursuits. Below is the press release about the announcement.



WASHINGTON DC, September 6, 2012 - Helen M. Sramek, who has served as president of the national rail safety nonprofit Operation Lifesaver Inc. (OLI) since 2007, will retire from the position on November 1, 2012, OLI Board Chair Reilly McCarren announced today.

“We are indebted to Helen for her leadership and vision in reshaping Operation Lifesaver to more effectively deliver rail safety education information through volunteer community outreach and with digital technologies like e-Learning, social media, and the www.oli.org website,” McCarren stated.

McCarren noted several accomplishments for OLI under Sramek’s leadership, including:

- Developing OLI’s "ProDriver Challenge," an online, interactive tool that teaches professional truck drivers safe driving behaviors at highway-rail crossings, to address the 25 percent of crossing crashes involving tractor-trailers and other large trucks;
- Raising awareness of the role that distraction plays in both highway-rail crossing and pedestrian incidents through public service announcements;
- Introducing new technologies to reach out to younger audiences, while strengthening the role of community-based volunteers;
- Streamlining organizational processes and procedures to expedite development of new outreach materials;
- Implementing a national on-line database used by Operation Lifesaver volunteers and trainers to track presentations and more effectively target activities in each state.

“Serving as OLI’s president has been the highlight of my career,” said Sramek. “I am retiring this year because it’s time to explore the next chapter of my life. I leave knowing that Operation Lifesaver will remain the preeminent rail safety education organization in the country – indeed, the world.”

OL Utah to hold New Presenter Training in October

Operation Lifesaver Utah will conduct a new presenter training class on Thursday, October 18, 2012. This class is for new presenters that will give rail safety education presentations. This class is limited to 10 people and preference will be given to school districts that do not have a certified presenter to instruct their school bus drivers and drivers' education classes.

Please contact Vern Keeslar to RSVP for this class by October 4, 2012. He can be reached at 801-310-1035 or at olut@digis.net

Andrew C. Glad Nominated for Operation Lifesaver Volunteer Award

Andy Glad was nominated for the F. Tom Roberts Memorial Volunteer Award.



Started in 1994 in memory of a man who dedicated the majority of his life to reducing or eliminating death and injuries along railroad tracks, the *F. Tom Roberts Memorial Award* honors an individual who has demonstrated outstanding dedication to safety in the

number of volunteer hours committed to Operation Lifesaver annually, the nature of volunteer activities performed, and other personal contributions to the Operation Lifesaver program.

Andy Glad was one of nine individuals nominated nationally. The award recipient was John Cross of Covington, Georgia. Andrew was trained in August 1996. Since that time, Andrew has been a consistent voice and a faithful ambassador for rail safety education.

Andrew has dedicated his presentations to one of Operation Lifesaver's primary target audiences – new drivers. In 2011, Andrew gave 106 presentations to approximately 3,408 drivers' education students from five Utah high schools. It is estimated that Andrew has donated 225 hours of his time to Operation Lifesaver in 2011. During the last four years (2008-2011), Operation Lifesaver records show that Andrew has given 357 presentations to approximately 12,363 students.

It is estimated that during Andrew's time as an Operation Lifesaver Certified Presenter during the past 16 years, he has given more than 1,350 presentations to approximately 45,000 drivers' education students! Thanks Andy for your volunteer service. Andy will be recognized in March at the Operation Lifesaver Utah Appreciation and Awards Dinner.

OL Vice President of Communications, Marmie Edwards, Moves On

Marmie Edwards has been with Operation Lifesaver for 18 years and will leave at the end of September 2012. Marmie has been the person responsible for the development of wonderful public service announcements (PSAs) and videos produced for a variety of audiences. She has been a constant and consistent voice in messaging the Operation Lifesaver mission. It has been a pleasure to work with Marmie the 16 years that I have known her. Best wishes to Marmie as she pursues other interests.

Operation Lifesaver Leadership Workshop held in Denver

Six members of Operation Lifesaver Utah attended the Leadership Workshop in Denver, Colorado on June 27 and 28, 2012. The event brought together rail safety education leaders from North America and around the world to explore the latest information and innovations on improving safety at railroad crossings and along railroad rights-of-way. Using marketing communications and social media in public safety education, transit safety, and international issues was among the topics covered. "We shared new ways to educate drivers and pedestrians to stay safe around tracks and trains in collaboration with our program leaders and safety partners," said OLI President Helen M. Sramek.

From left to right, Vern Keeslar, Kathy Bessinger, Dave Beach, Mason Haycock, Walt Webster, and Kent Brown.

