

This is the official newsletter of **Operation Lifesaver 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](mailto:olut@digis.net) or call 801-310-1035.

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## State Coordinator's Message – Utahan Named to National OL Board of Directors

I am happy to announce that Paul O'Brien, rail service general manager for Utah Transit Authority (UTA), was named to the Board of Directors for Operation Lifesaver Inc. (OLI), the national nonprofit rail safety organization.

O'Brien is active in the American Public Transportation Association, where he was the past chair of the Light Rail Technical Forum, and currently serves as vice chair of the Commuter Rail CEO committee. Earlier this year he was elected to the Executive Board of the National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. He also has international experience as a member of the UITP (International Association of Public Transport) Light Rail Committee. Congratulations Paul! Operation Lifesaver Utah looks forward to working with you and is excited about Utah being represented on the National OLI Board of Directors.

## OL Utah Booth Update

Operation Lifesaver Utah is busy as ever attending conferences and displaying our booth. Operation Lifesaver Utah has attended the following:

- Zero Fatalities Safety Summit in Salt Lake City in October.
- The NMRA Model Railroad Exposition in Salt Lake City in November.
- The Utah Council for Crime Prevention Power of Prevention Conference in Wet Valley City in November.
- The Utah Farm Bureau Federation Convention in Layton in November.

Thanks to all those who volunteer working at the booth and representing Operation Lifesaver Utah. Photo to the right is Walt Webster while at the Utah Farm Bureau Federation Convention. The photo was taken by Larry Jacobs who also worked the booth.



## 'Tis the Season to Be Careful' Rail Safety Tips for Winter Travel

WASHINGTON, DC, December 2008 -- Did you know that approximately every two hours a person or vehicle is struck by a train in the United States? Operation Lifesaver, a rail safety education nonprofit organization, is offering motorists and pedestrians a few safety tips to ensure a safe and happy holiday season.

“We’re providing “Rail Safety Tips for Winter Travel” to raise public awareness about the need for caution around tracks and trains,” said Helen Sramek, president, Operation Lifesaver, Inc. “Taking extra care while approaching a railroad crossing on foot or in a vehicle could mean the difference between a joyous or a tragic holiday.”

With increased traffic everywhere and the distractions of the holiday season, many people will pay less attention to what is happening on train tracks, Sramek noted. “Our number one safety tip is ‘Always Expect a Train.’”

While the number of fatalities has been reduced significantly in the 35 years Operation Lifesaver has been making safety presentations across America, there is still work to be done. Federal Railroad Administration statistics for 2007 show that 1,325 people were killed or injured in vehicle-train collisions, and 879 pedestrian rail trespass deaths or injuries occurred nationwide.

Operation Lifesaver is a national, non-profit safety education group whose goal is to eliminate deaths and injuries at railroad crossings and along railroad rights of way. The group’s 3,000 certified presenters throughout the U.S. are trained to give free safety talks to community organizations, schools, school bus drivers, truck drivers and law enforcement to raise awareness of the need for caution around railroad tracks and trains. More information can be found at [www.oli.org](http://www.oli.org).

To schedule a free Operation Lifesaver Presentation or for information about becoming an

OL volunteer, contact your state coordinator through the web site or call the national office at 1-800-537-6224.

### Rail Safety Tips for Winter Travel

1. Slow down. Winter weather hampers vision for pedestrians and drivers. Snow-covered roads, tracks and parking lots can spell disaster.
2. Focus your attention. Keep your eyes on the road. Hang up your phone, remove earphones, turn down your personal music, and don’t text message while driving or walking near tracks.
3. Look and listen for the train. Move your head to see around mirrors, windshields, pillars, despite wearing heavy clothing. Snow can muffle the sound of an approaching train. Crack the window and lower the sound of the radio and heater.
4. Take braking precautions. Wear non-slip footwear when crossing tracks. If you have anti-lock brakes on your car, don’t pump them, use firm pressure. In older vehicles, pump the brake going into a slide to help regain control.
5. Stop no closer than 15 feet from crossing. If you see or hear a train, stop at least 15 feet from the crossing (one car length), whether on foot or in a vehicle.
6. Mind lights and controls at the railroad crossing. If the signals appear to be malfunctioning, call the railroad at the 1-800 number listed at or near the crossing. Don’t cross until you’ve checked for a second train or the gate is in an upright position.
7. If stuck, get out! If your vehicle gets stuck on the tracks, quickly exit the vehicle and move away from the tracks. Notify law enforcement or the railroad of your vehicle’s location. Report the DOT number at the crossing and street names.

## **OL Utah Holds Quarterly Meeting**

On December 3, 2008, OL Utah held its final quarterly meeting of the year in Sandy at the Salt Lake Community College Miller Campus. Approximately 20 certified presenters attended to get updates about the state program and receive continued training. The photo to the right shows Walt Webster presenting Trisha Butler with a Lionel Polar Express train set that she won during the prize drawing at the meeting. Congratulations Trisha! We hope that more of you will come to our quarterly meetings.

