



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](mailto: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](mailto:olut@digis.net)

**OPERATION LIFESAVER**

**UTAH WEBSITE**

[www.olut.usu.edu](http://www.olut.usu.edu)

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## **State Coordinator's Message – Dave Beach Announces Retirement, New Officers for OL Utah Board of Directors**

After serving as Chair of the Board of Directors for Operation Lifesaver Utah for eight years and a member of the Board for the past 12 years, Dave Beach announced that he will retire on December 15, 2014. Under Dave's leadership, the Operation Lifesaver Utah program has excelled. He has overseen the increase of volunteers from 75 to 150, the appointment of an assistant state coordinator, the expansion of public outreach, and program financial stability – increasing the budget by 400 percent. Thanks for your leadership over these many years Dave!



Dave will be retiring after 38 years with the state of Utah. He started as an intern in the Utah Highway Safety Office in the Department of Public Safety and now retires as Director of the Utah Highway Safety Office.

Dave was appointed as the Director of the Utah Highway Safety Office in March 2001. Prior to his appointment, he had previously served as the Director of Administrative Services and the Director of the Driver License Division. Dave has been involved with and had the opportunity to serve in national organizations such as the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators and the Governors Highway Safety Association. He also served on numerous state and local committees, boards and coalitions committed to improving Utah's traffic safety environment. The entire Operation Lifesaver family wishes you the best in whatever you do next. Congratulations on your retirement!

On November 13, 2014, the Operation Lifesaver Utah Board of Directors elected new officers to serve for two years. The new Chair of the Board will be Dave Goeres, Chief Safety Officer at Utah Transit Authority (UTA). The new Vice-chair is Linda Mayne, Health and Physical Education Specialist for the Utah State Office of Education. The Secretary/Treasurer will be Nick Jones, Director of the Utah Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP). Thanks for your willingness to serve as officers on the OL Utah Board!

## **Utah Transit Authority Awarded Grant from FTA and Operation Lifesaver, Inc.**

On September 17, 2014, Operation Lifesaver, Inc. announced the award of \$162,500 in grant funds for public awareness and safety education projects involving eleven transit agencies across the United States, including \$7,500 for Utah Transit Authority (UTA). The local transit agencies and state Operation Lifesaver programs will work together to produce educational projects featuring the OLI safety campaign slogan, “See Tracks? Think Train!”

The ongoing campaign’s message is that whether driving or walking, when people see tracks, they should use caution and be alert for approaching trains. The campaign will increase public awareness of transit surroundings and help people pay attention in potentially dangerous situations.

“These grants assist local agencies with their educational safety campaigns and are important for reaching drivers, pedestrians and transit riders in their own communities,” said OLI President and CEO Joyce Rose. “We want to thank the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) for helping us

promote the availability of the funds and we especially want to thank the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for providing the funding.”

“The Federal Transit Administration is pleased to partner once again with Operation Lifesaver on this crucial campaign to raise awareness about the need for safety around transit,” said FTA Acting Administrator Therese McMillan. “As more and more communities around the nation choose to build light rail, streetcars, and other transit services that operate alongside pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers, we must continue to educate the public on the importance of putting safety first.”

## **Anika Mercier Joins OLI as Special Assistant for Education and Operations**

On September 10, 2014, Anika Mercier was named special assistant for education and operations for Operation Lifesaver, Inc., OLI President and CEO Joyce Rose announced.



“Anika’s experience with curriculum development, community engagement, meeting planning and program support will improve Operation Lifesaver’s rail safety education outreach and benefit our volunteers,” said Rose.

Mercier’s career experience includes training and customer service for Prudential Financial, special events coordination and other duties with the Office of the President of George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia, and office management responsibilities as an administrative assistant for Mason’s Office of the Senior Vice President. Her work experience during college included developing curriculum materials and managing community engagement activities with the Sierra Club, Rock Creek National Park, and the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance.

Mercier holds an Associate’s degree in fine arts and photography from Everett Community College in Everett, Washington and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

## **Libby Rector Snipe Joins Operation Lifesaver as Director of Communications**

On November 17, 2014, Libby Rector Snipe was named director of communications for Operation Lifesaver, Inc., OLI President and CEO Joyce Rose announced.



“Libby is a savvy strategic communications professional with extensive non-profit experience developing and executing integrated marketing campaigns,” said Rose. “Those skills, along with her expertise in content creation and branding, will help Operation Lifesaver, Inc. in its ongoing

mission to increase public awareness of the need for caution near tracks and trains.”

Rector Snipe has been with Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts since 2000, where she has served in a number of creative and marketing roles, including communications and marketing associate, copywriter/graphic artist, and assistant creative director. Her talents include writing and public relations, designing and producing annual reports, marketing collateral, and email blast campaigns to increase exposure of Wolf Trap’s programs and mission. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Communication from Saint Mary’s College, Notre Dame, Indiana.

## OL Utah Booth Update

Thanks for all those who participate in the booths sharing the Operation Lifesaver safety messages. Operation Lifesaver Utah attended public and private events all over Utah during the fourth quarter of 2014.

- Woods Cross Elementary Safety Fair on October 30, 2014 in Woods Cross.
- Wasatch Rails Model Train Show on November 7-9, 2014 in Salt Lake City.
- Utah Farm Bureau Annual Convention on November 20, 2014 in Layton.

## 2014 Leadership Conference in New Mexico

Operation Lifesaver Utah leaders attended the 2014 Leadership Conference on May 14-15, 2014 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. This two day leadership conference



many sessions about the three “E’s” of Operation Lifesaver – Education, Engineering, and Enforcement as well as other presentations from government, rail industry, and transit agencies. Those attending from Utah are in the photo above and include from left to right Mason Haycock, Dave Goeres, Walt Webster, Kent Jorgenson, Kathy Bessinger, and Vern Keeslar.

## Utah Transit Authority’s Public Safety Department Recognizes Vern Keeslar

On June 18, 2014, the Department of Public Safety for Utah Transit Authority (UTA) recognized Vern Keeslar, State Coordinator Operation Lifesaver Utah, and was awarded the Citizen’s Distinguished Service Award. Vern was instrumental in helping UTA Police update the Public Safety Class. The new class has been integrated with the Operation Lifesaver message and visuals. Vern also worked to ensure that all of the Public Safety Class instructors were Operation Lifesaver presenters.

Chief Larsen stated, “Vern’s dedication to rail safety and help to UTA is greatly appreciated.” Sergeant Brent Adamson, of the UTA Department of Public Safety, nominated Vern for the award. From left to right in the photo below includes Chief Ross Larsen, Dave Goeres, and Vern Keeslar.

