



**OPERATION  
LIFESAVER®**

**Utah**

**Newsletter  
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This is the official newsletter of **Operation Lifesaver Utah (OL Utah)**, 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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[www.oli.org](http://www.oli.org)

## **State Coordinator's Message – Utah OL Conducts Training Sessions**

Utah OL held its annual training update for existing authorized volunteers and face-to-face training for new volunteers on Tuesday, November 27, 2018 at the Utah Trucking Association in West Valley City. More than 55 people participated in the update training in the morning and 10 in the face-to-face training in the afternoon. I think that the audience was ready for the prize drawing and the provided lunch.



Photos of Operation Lifesaver Authorized Volunteer training update held on Tuesday, November 27, 2018 at the Utah Trucking Association in West Valley City.

## Utah OL Booth Update

Thanks for all those who participate in the booths sharing the Operation Lifesaver safety messages. Operation Lifesaver Utah attended the following events during the fourth quarter of 2018.

- Kaysville Fire Prevention Week at the Kaysville Fire Station on October 3, 2018.
- Intermountain Train Expo at the Mountain America Credit Union Expo Center in Sandy on November 10 and 11, 2018.
- The Pedestrian Safety Summit at the Kearns Oval in Kearns on November 29, 2018.



## Ron Ries Named Recipient of Operation Lifesaver's Champion Award



Washington, D.C. (October 23, 2018) - The national rail safety education organization Operation Lifesaver, Inc. (OLI) congratulates Ronald Ries for being selected as the recipient of the Champion Award for 2018. Ries recently accepted the honor at a meeting of OLI's National Advisory Council where he has served as the federal agency representative for many years. Ries is the Staff Director of the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) Highway-Rail Crossing and Trespasser Programs Division.

The Champion Award was established in 2010 to recognize people inside or outside of the Operation Lifesaver program who advance Operation Lifesaver's community safety goals. The award honors an individual who, through their work, have contributed significantly to the mission in any of the three "E" components of rail safety: education, enforcement or engineering.

"I strongly believe that Operation Lifesaver makes a very big difference. Its message is important. Operation Lifesaver has been an organization that I put at the top of the list in my career," says Ries.

Ries joined the FRA in October 1994 as a Crossing and Trespasser Regional Manager. Four years later he began work on crossing safety and trespass prevention issues at FRA Headquarters in Washington, D.C. with the Crossing Safety and Trespass Prevention Programs team. Ries was appointed Staff Director of the crossing team in January 2001. He is retiring at the end of the year.

Ries' involvement with OLI began early in his career when he chaired Iowa's Operation Lifesaver governing committee. Since then, he has trained many of the educators who share OLI's safety messages throughout the United States. In addition, Ries has been a frequent speaker about rail safety and trespass prevention. He helped create one of the first trespass prevention guides in the late 1990s – a joint project with OLI, and Transport Canada. The guide was adapted, and used by, FRA and Transport Canada. Ries' career at FRA has also involved work with train horn regulations and quiet zones.

"Ron Ries exemplifies the word champion," says Wende Corcoran, Interim President of OLI. "He's been an integral part of our National Advisory Council and a vital supporter for the Operation Lifesaver state programs across the country. Ron understands the need for state and local community support. His passion concerning Operation Lifesaver's mission of saving lives around tracks and trains is unmistakable and ever present in his work. We will miss his expertise and dedication. We wish him happiness in the next chapter of his life."

## **OLI Welcomes New Executive Director**



Washington, D.C. (November 1, 2018) – The Board of Directors of Operation

Lifesaver, Inc. (OLI) is pleased to welcome Ms. Rachel Maleh as Executive Director of the nonprofit railroad safety education organization. Maleh has served as OLI’s Interim Chief Operating Officer since February 2018.

OLI Board of Directors Chair Jo Strang says, “Rachel Maleh is an accomplished senior executive who has helped lead the OLI team in her previous role. Her experience working with our state partners, and financial supporters, is invaluable. I’m confident that her impressive skillset, and dedication to our mission, will lead to even greater success in this new position.”

“Ms. Maleh’s extensive experience in non-profit management and fundraising will be a great asset to our organization,” says OLI Board Vice-Chair and Treasurer Mark Schulze. “We’re very pleased to have her lead OLI and deliver our important safety message.”

Maleh runs a communications consulting firm in the greater D.C. area. Previously, she was the Deputy Executive Director of

the Greater Washington Region of the American Heart Association.

“I’m looking forward to growing our safety effort, and expanding funding, so our valuable safety messages reach even more people,” says Maleh. “We have an excellent team in place to do so, working with established state programs across the county. I can’t wait to get started.”

Maleh has advanced degrees in International Relations and International Communications from Boston University, as well as a Master of Science in Marketing from Johns Hopkins University. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and French from Hobart and William Smith Colleges. She has also served as a judge for industry competitions.

Maleh succeeds Interim President Wende Corcoran who has helped lead OLI in various positions for two decades. Corcoran returns to her previous role of Vice President.

## **OLI Welcomes New Education Manager**



Washington, D.C. (December 6, 2018) - Operation Lifesaver, Inc. (OLI) welcomes Ericka Thomas as the Manager of Education, Training and Instructional Design for the national rail safety education organization. In this role, she will develop safety education materials for the public, and provide oversight for OLI eLearning programs as well as instructor-led training for Operation

Lifesaver Authorized Volunteers (OLAVs) and OLI Coaches.

Rachel Maleh, Executive Director of OLI, says Thomas has a keen knowledge of the process for developing eLearning tools and other education materials. “Ericka brings key insights as to how engaging eLearning products can lead to measurable results for safety education. Her background will help enhance the effectiveness of our materials and training programs. We’re excited to welcome her to the team.”

Thomas has experience supporting government agencies at the federal and local levels. She has held senior learning and development roles with eLT Technology Consulting, Pitney Bowes Management Services, GeoLearning, AT&T, Aerotek, and American Cybersystems.

Thomas has a master’s degree in Vocational and Technical Education-Human Resource Education from the University of Illinois. Maleh resides in Montgomery County, Maryland where she volunteers for arts and community groups.

## **OLI Welcomes New Director of Communications and Marketing**



Washington, D.C. (October 12, 2018) – Operation Lifesaver, Inc. (OLI) welcomes Jessica Puchala to the national rail safety education organization as director of communications and marketing. Puchala joins OLI with 20 years of experience in communications and project management. She will be responsible for enhancing the

nonprofit rail safety organization's marketing and communications strategies and strengthening the OLI brand.

Puchala is an accomplished executive who has been honored by numerous groups for her work in corporate communications, state government, non-profit management and television news. They include the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, the National Association of Government Communicators, and local chapters of the Public Relations Society of America and the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences, among others.

“We are delighted to have Ms. Puchala as a leader of the OLI staff. Her extensive experience in digital marketing and public relations is incredibly valuable to our growing team,” says Wende Corcoran, Interim President of OLI. “Jessica brings strong leadership, and a fresh perspective, to OLI during this exciting time.”