

OL's Driver Ed Video Earns Three Awards

OL's two latest videos, *Look to Live* for new drivers, and *Are You in Control?* for 'tweens, are receiving recognition. These training videos are the newest tools for OL presenters to incorporate into their presentations. The videos feature non-actors who learn about rail safety through a hands-on approach. *Look to Live's* on-screen narrator, Anna Pate, is an OL presenter from Louisiana; in *Are You in Control?* real kids who perform stunts in movies and on television offer reasons why their peers should stay away from tracks and trains.

Look to Live has received *Telly Awards* for Safety Programming and Editing. The *Telly Awards* honor outstanding local and regional television commercials, productions, and non-broadcast video productions. In September, the National Capital Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America awarded its *Thoth Award* to the driver education video for excellence in public relations in Multimedia Communications for External Video.



An image from OL's award-winning *Look to Live* video

Remembering Ernie Oliphant



Ernie with former Idaho Governor Cecil Andrus and Sam Grayson (right) who initiated OL.

Ernie Louise Oliphant (1935-2008), who worked to improve highway-rail safety for more than

30 years, passed away July 17 in Phoenix, AZ. She began her association with OL in 1977, and later served as a consultant with OL when it was operated as part of the National Safety Council. Ernie became national field director in 1986, when OL became an independent entity. After the national office opened in

Alexandria, Virginia, Ernie continued to assist with state programs and directed the organization's symposium events. More recently she coordinated the database for the GCCI course and the RSER program. Ernie is survived by her husband, George, three grown children, and several grandchildren.

National Advisory Council to Guide OLI Program Development

In November, OLI's Board of Directors approved a new structure to assist the national office in creating the materials and programs that enable Operation Lifesaver to deliver its lifesaving education and training programs to the public. The newly created National Advisory Council (NAC) is an advisory body that works through project teams to carry out its responsibilities. Members of NAC are experts in the fields of education, enforcement, and engineering and include representation from government, private partners, and state program leaders.

The new structure is designed to streamline the process of developing new products, ensuring that the subject matter experts are part of project teams that also include state program leaders and partners who know what education tools are needed in the field. The NAC will have fewer members than its predecessor body but allow for additional stakeholders depending on the work task. NAC will work to align the programmatic objectives of the organization with the policy direction established by the OLI Board of Directors.



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O P E R A T I O N L I F E S A V E R

annual report

2008

President's Report

Keeping the "Life" in Operation Lifesaver



Another year in the life of Operation Lifesaver (OL) has come to an end. I use the word *life* deliberately. Although it has existed for almost four decades, Operation Lifesaver retains the commitment, enthusiasm and passion that have characterized the program from the beginning. Working to save lives and reduce injuries captures the essence of volunteerism for those drawn to OL's lifesaving cause.

2008 was a banner year for Operation Lifesaver. The highlight was the 15th International Symposium, held in July in Cincinnati. Over 300 state program leaders, OL partners, and volunteers attended the symposium – a solid attendance at a time of record gasoline prices. The opening session speaker, Deputy Secretary of Transportation Admiral Thomas Barrett, was the highest ranking federal transportation official to appear at an OL event. The 2008 symposium also drew representatives from six nations, demonstrating again that the Operation Lifesaver message extends beyond U.S. borders.

Rail Safety Act:

- Congress affirmed support for OL with passage of the Rail Safety Act. This authorizes continued grant funding from the FRA for OL's public education outreach and work with state programs.

Other highlights of this year included:

- OL unveiled two new training videos – one for drivers' education, the other for middle school. Two animated PSAs – using humor to deliver a serious safety message – were launched and are also available in Spanish.
- A much improved version of the Grade Crossing Collision Investigation Course (GCCIC) was unveiled at the symposium.
- Exploring the use of technology and new media became a focus as efforts to reach young adults were initiated.
- A new national presenter database has been launched, providing a much improved method for state coordinators and partners to track volunteer activity.
- OL's partnership with public transit agencies broadened, with state coordinators bringing OL training and educational resources to the expanding light and commuter rail sectors.
- A new trespass prevention campaign has been developed, which if funded will place renewed emphasis on the most vexing problem facing rail safety – the growing number of trespass incidents.

Now you can see why the term *life* so aptly describes Operation Lifesaver in 2008. The organization thrives because of the dedicated corps of volunteers who go out every day throughout America to deliver a powerful lifesaving message.

Sincerely,
Helen M. Sramek, *President*

New Safety Spots Make an Impact

Two new 30-second animated television public service announcements (PSAs) that use humor to convey a serious message about train safety for pedestrians and drivers began airing in November on broadcast stations in a number of states. Spanish versions of the PSAs were also produced.

The PSAs were posted on YouTube and OLI's website to increase visibility. News releases on the campaign resulted in media coverage, and the resulting hits to www.oli.org/shark have made it the site's third most popular page.





OL National Presenter Database Launched

Operation Lifesaver has launched its national online database and presentation tracking system. The custom-designed database allows a centralized method for state coordinators and partners to track safety presentations, training and special events.

Multiple query fields eliminate paper reporting and provide access to data not previously available. By capturing this information in one central location, OLI achieved a goal that has long been sought by partners, state program leaders, and presenters.

The new system allows online continuing education for presenters and trainers to reinforce their training. Another new feature is the ability to map presentations by state, providing a snapshot of where presentations are given in a specified time period. Additional functions can be added to meet future needs.

Safety Education Results

Operation Lifesaver has safety presenters and active programs in 50 states and the District of Columbia. In 2008, growth in Operation Lifesaver's training and safety education efforts continued.

- Operation Lifesaver's certified speakers gave 23,000 safety presentations to **1.1 million people** nationwide, including K-12 students, driver education classes, professional truck and bus drivers, emergency response personnel, law enforcement and others.
- OL representatives also reached **more than 3 million people** with safety messages through 2,700 special events across the U.S., including state and county fairs, mock crashes, special trains, and community blitzes.

- A total of 130 certification courses were held nationwide, adding **500 new presenters** to our corps of certified speakers.
- **1,900 special training classes** were held, with 40,000 participants, including school bus drivers, law enforcement officers in Grade Crossing Collision Investigation classes, and fire fighters and emergency response personnel in Rail Safety for Emergency Response classes.
- OL's website, **www.oli.org**, drew more than 400,000 page views, with 80 percent of the visits from new users, and an **average time spent on site of nearly 3 minutes**. Visitors from 171 countries worldwide accessed the site last year.

2008 International Symposium Highlights



The 15th International Operation Lifesaver Symposium and Training Seminars, held in July at the Cincinnati Marriott at RiverCenter and the Northern Kentucky Convention Center, drew 340 attendees, speakers and guests.

The keynote speech by Mike Glenn, former NBA star and deaf advocate, and the international panel drew the highest ratings. Other highlights included Deputy Transportation Secretary Admiral Thomas Barrett's speech, a presentation on improving speaking skills by Carlos Alvarez of Tero International, and the education, engineering and enforcement breakout sessions. Special sessions and activities included the July 23 GCCI Instructor



OLI Board Chair Reilly McCarren, OLI President Sramek, and Deputy DOT Secretary Thomas Barrett, who announced a \$1 million federal grant for OL at OLI's opening session.

Recertification Course, the first to use the completely revamped GCCI instructor certification curriculum; and OL's first-ever symposium exhibits.

Save The Date:

16th International Operation Lifesaver Symposium and Training Seminars
Hyatt Regency Baltimore on the Inner Harbor • Baltimore, Maryland
August 29 – September 1, 2010

Operation Lifesaver Expands Transit Safety Partnership

As transit systems and ridership expand across the country, Operation Lifesaver is extending its lifesaving safety messages to an increasing number of communities. Thanks to a grant from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), OL has developed a range of education materials and programs for children and adults licensed by more than two dozen transit agencies internationally. Last year, Operation Lifesaver state coordinators partnered with transit agencies to offer training programs and design safety materials around the country. A few examples:

- The OL logo can now be seen on posters printed in Chinese to remind Muni riders in San Francisco to use caution around train tracks.

- Austin's Capitol MetroRail, scheduled to open in March, 2009, adapted OL's Earl P. Nutt materials in a variety of different formats.
- Benefiting from its partnership with North Carolina Operation Lifesaver, Charlotte's LYNX light rail system celebrated its first full year of operation with an enviable safety record.
- Demonstrating the "ripple effects" of a program initially begun for light rail, through this FTA grant, New Jersey Transit and Operation Lifesaver jointly developed driver education safety DVDs that will be distributed in 2009 to every drivers' education class in the state.



OL presenter Armando Izzarelli and OL California State Coordinator Pete Aadland flank Roni, a K9 with North County Transit District, at the OL booth at APTA EXPO 2008 in California. As a top transportation trade show with more than 15,000 visitors and 800+ booths, EXPO provided increased visibility for OL.

"The Operation Lifesaver logo can now be seen

on posters printed in Chinese...in San Francisco..."

Transit Expert Joins Board

In November, Paul O'Brien, rail service general manager for the Utah Transit Authority (UTA), was named to OLI's Board of Directors. 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.

Crossing Incidents Down, Trespass Deaths Up

