



Federal Railroad Administration Awards \$1 Million Rail Safety Grant to Operation Lifesaver, Inc.

Contact: Mark Paustenbach
Telephone: 202-493-6024

Thursday, August 06, 2009 (Washington, DC) Federal Railroad Administrator Joseph Szabo today announced a \$1,015,000 grant for Operation Lifesaver, Inc. (OLI), providing the Alexandria, VA-based nonprofit organization support to continue its wide-ranging public education outreach efforts to raise awareness about the potential hazards at grade crossings and the dangers of illegal trespassing on railroad property.

In 2008, there were 2,395 grade crossing incidents resulting in 287 deaths, as well as 453 deaths due to rail trespassing, slightly fewer than similar incidents in 2007.

“Despite decreases in the number of train-vehicle collisions, promoting railroad safety is as important as ever,” Administrator Szabo said. “Through this sustained public-private partnership, OLI, with the support of the Federal Railroad Administration, will continue to draw attention to the devastating and irreversible consequences of trespassing, the leading cause of rail-related deaths in America.”

OLI’s initiatives include State Assistance Programs, which provide grants to individual state programs that support railroad safety awareness programs, training and education programs for presenters, and communications programs. In the past, OLI’s efforts have successfully increased public awareness through presentations, training, and public service announcements. OLI recently announced new initiatives to aid its efforts, including projects designed to target new and nontraditional audiences at the state and local level—training, a new safety video for professional drivers, and most notably the “Common Sense” campaign, which includes an interactive website, internet ads, videos, and local events aimed at informing youth about the risks of trespassing.

This grant supports the goals of the U.S. Secretary of Transportation’s Action Plan for Highway Rail Grade Crossing Safety and Trespass Prevention, and the recently enacted Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008, which provides a roadmap for guiding federal, state, local, industry, and other entities in combating these problems.

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