



Sunflower State Signal

Official Publication of Kansas Operation Lifesaver, Inc.

Coordinator's Corner



Wow has 2021 been busy. It feels like we have gone from trying to fill the days to having not enough hours. As you can see KS OL has been busy as well. This quarter has been BIG, but I will let you read about that. This quarter I want to draw your attention to RISC training.

RISC: Railroad Investigation and Safety Course. RISC prepares first responders to use the proper safety techniques while investigating or responding to a grade crossing collision or trespasser incident, in addition to maintaining on-scene safety unique to the railroad environment.

If you or someone you know is a first responder, please have them consider completing this free training. For more information contact Captain Matt Vogt at mvoigt@valleycenterks.org

Please feel free to contact me anytime at jmays@kscapitol.com

Jessica Mays



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KS OL AWARDED NATIONAL GRANT

WASHINGTON, DC, May 13, 2021 – [Operation Lifesaver, Inc. \(OLI\)](#), in partnership with the [Federal Highway Administration \(FHWA\)](#), today announced \$200,000 in grants to Operation Lifesaver programs in 11 states. The grants will fund a variety of highway-rail grade crossing safety public education projects, many of which will be conducted in conjunction with the nonprofit safety group's observance of Rail Safety Week, September 20-26, 2021.

Funded by FHWA, the grants will be awarded to Operation Lifesaver organizations in **Arizona, California, Kansas, Minnesota, North Carolina, New York, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Washington**. These state programs will use the funding to launch public awareness campaigns and host community events that deliver critical rail safety tips to target audiences, including motorists of all ages and professional drivers.

"OLI is grateful for our ongoing safety partnership with FHWA, which facilitates these grant-funded railroad crossing safety efforts by state Operation Lifesaver programs," said **OLI Executive Director Rachel Maleh**. "We are excited to see the results of the projects as we work to stop track tragedies," she stated.

"The US Department of Transportation is committed to putting safety first, including the safety of those traveling across railroad crossings," said **Acting Federal Highway Administrator Stephanie Pollack**. "The FHWA is pleased to provide the funding that will help prevent crashes at rail-grade crossings nationwide."

The approved grants were awarded through a competitive process, with selection based on criteria such as the defined safety need, the number of highway-rail collisions in the state, and how the proposal leverages federal funds with private partnerships.

Kansas Project Description on pg 2



Board of Directors

Matt Vogt, President
Kansas Peace Officers' Association

Mike Foster, Vice President
Member at-Large

Norbert Angell, Secretary
Member-at-Large

Adrian Hertog, Treasurer
BNSF Railway Proxy

Mitch Sothers
Kansas Dept of Transportation

Candice Breshears
Kansas Highway Patrol

Ryan Yanez
K&O; Shortline Representative

Ross Boelling
Member-at-Large

COMPETITIVE GRANT CONTINUE



KS OL Works with Denny Matthews & the KC Royals Radio Network to Stop Track Tragedies

KS OL has received \$20,000 in grant funding from OLI and the FRA to carry out radio advertising targeted at Kansas City Royals baseball fans. Over 30 Kansas radio stations and one Missouri station to educate fans on safely navigating railroad crossings. The pre-game ads will air for all 162 games, April 1st – October 3rd. The ads will feature Denny Matthews, the “Voice of the Royals.”

This is a huge in-kind donation that KS OL is extremely grateful for.

KS OL is also working on a geofencing campaign that will run during Rail Safety Week, September 20-26 that will target specific high-risk crossings and areas using unsafe motorist reports and FRA data.

This project has had many additional contributors. Denny is a railroad enthusiast and was happy to do the ads for us. Alpha Media has been gracious enough to donate all of the post-game spots and a pregame show sponsorship until those time slots sell.

To hear the radio ads, go to ksoli.org [OLAV Resources](#). If you have a high-risk crossing in your area you would like for us to target, contact Jessica at jmays@kscapitol.com



KANSAS CITY ROYALS PARTNERSHIPS

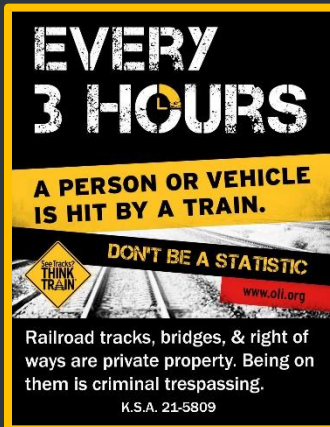
OLI NAMES 2021-2023 BOARD & NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

WASHINGTON, DC, April 28, 2021 – [Operation Lifesaver Inc. \(OLI\)](#), the national rail safety non-profit committed to preventing injuries and fatalities around railroad tracks and trains, announces the members of its Board of Directors and National Advisory Council (NAC) for the two-year term that began January 1, 2021.

OLI’s Board of Directors provides organizational oversight and actively engages in sharing the rail safety message. The NAC assists the Operation Lifesaver National Office in creating the programs and materials used to deliver safety messages to the public.

“Operation Lifesaver, Inc. is incredibly fortunate to have dedicated, active board members as well as engaged NAC members,” says **OLI Executive Director Rachel Maleh**. “All of these knowledgeable professionals are committed to our mission to prevent deaths and injuries at railroad crossings and around rail and transit property.”

For list of new members visit oli.org/about-us/news



Advertisement run in the Kansas Wildlife 2021 Fishing Regulations





ABILENE & SMOKEY VALLEY RR SPREAD SAFETY MESSAGE

Kansas Incidents

2020

Trespassing Incidents

13

Deaths

6

Injuries

7

Crossings Incidents

36

Deaths

9

Injuries

15

Total Incidents

49

Deaths

15

Injuries

22

Average for KS 2020 is
4.08 incidents a month.
Or roughly one a week

2019 total of 44 incidents
an average of 3.67 per
month.

2021 total so far on pg 4



A&SVRR and KS OL have joined together to create a train experience with a message. A KS OL board member Ross Boiling also works with A&SVRR and had stated that A&SVRR's two gondola cars needed repainting. With the help of A&SVRR & KS OL Ross repainted and added rail safety message to both gondola cars to inform passengers and pedestrians about rail safety.

A&SVRR runs two locomotives including steam engine #3415 and sees more than 4,000 riders each year. Trains run most of the year Thursday – Saturday at 10 am & 2 pm with special events, dinner trains, and charters available.

Signs were formatted and printed by Abilene High School.

KS OL Partners with A&SVRR to Educate Passengers & the Public about Rail Safety.



RAIL SAFETY WEEK SCHEDULE

September 20–26



Rail Safety Week 2021 Daily Themes



Unifying Theme: "STOP TRACK TRAGEDIES"



DAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
DATE	9/20/2021	9/21/2021	9/22/2021	9/23/2021	9/24/2021	9/25/2021	9/26/2021
THEME	#STOPTrackTragedies	Operation Clear Track	Crossing Safety	Transit Safety Thursday & Professional Driver Safety	Wear Red for Rail Safety	Trespass Prevention	No Photos/Video/Selfie is Worth the Risk
AUDIENCES	News Media, Government Officials, OLI Partners, General Public	Law Enforcement and First Responders	General Public, Farmers, New Drivers, Outdoor Enthusiasts, People Experiencing Homelessness	Transit and Commuter Riders, Professional Drivers, School Bus Drivers	All Audiences	General Public, Pedestrians, Cyclists, Joggers, Outdoor Enthusiasts, College Students, People Experiencing Homelessness	Photographers (Professional and Amateur)



KS OL OUT & ABOUT...AGAIN

Kansas Incidents

2021

Trespassing Incidents

2

Deaths

2

Injuries

0

Crossings Incidents

4

Deaths

0

Injuries

1

Total Incidents

6

Deaths

2

Injuries

1

These numbers are subject to change as the FRA is still investigating cases. Their numbers will be updated as cases close not as incidents happen.



Watco sent out a team to man the booth at the Four State Farm Show in Pittsburg. The three-day annual event from May 21 -23 sees about 20,000 visitors each year.

OLAVs are back to giving presentations & attending events! Over a 108 so far this year!



April 8th Captain Matt Vogt with the Valley Center Police Dept. conducted a Railroad Investigation and Safety Course (RISC) at the Osage County Sheriff's Office in Lyndon, If your agency would like to schedule a class, contact Captain Vogt at mvogt@valleycenterks.org



May 20th KHP troopers from Troop A worked together with Gardner Police Department, Johnson County, KS Sheriff's Office, and BNSF Railway Police to conduct an Operation Lifesaver lane to promote railroad safety!

UP COMING EVENTS

June 10th, 10:00 – 3:00: KS OL Board & Committee Meeting: Abilene & Smokey Valley Railroad, [200 SE 5th St, Abilene, KS 67410](#)

July 14th: Coach/RISC Training contact Matt Vogt for more info

July 14 – 15: OLI Leadership Conference Register at oli.org/safety-partnerships-together-towards-tomorrow

July 31st: Safe Kids at the Topeka Zoo (OLAVs needed)

September 9th, 2:00: KS OL Board & Committee Meeting

September 20-26th: Rail Safety Week

October 2-3 & 9-10: Railfest Great Plains Transportation Museum, Wichita (OLAVs needed)