

From The State Coordinator...

Fred Hirsch



In 2012, a full year was spent reaching out to everyone between Portland and Brunswick in anticipation of Amtrak Downeaster's service expansion. Previously along some of the route, freight trains operated only a couple times a week and on rails at 10 miles per hour. Now, six passenger trains operate daily at 60 miles per hour and faster. Maine Operation Lifesaver's three dozen volunteers rose to the occasion in educating thousands along the way. Furthermore, it was done without going back to our railroad partners for extra money to complete the job. School children, school bus drivers, public works employees, emergency responders, driver ed students, and service club members were among those who heard our message on rail safety. Cases of brochures, coloring books, railroad trading cards, pencils, rulers, bookmarks, engineer hats, and key chains were handed out. Municipalities helped in providing public service time on local access channels. Newspapers and TV stations also assisted.



Trespass poster at Freeport station.

Looking back at our efforts in the six communities along that 30-mile segment of upgraded track, a number of personal observations stand out:

Most appreciated: Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority officials, who already had their hands full readying the expansion, became certified presenters. Patricia Quinn, Brian Beeler, and Jim Russell spoke to thousands.

Most distance in assistance: Federal Railroad Administration's Dick Towle of Foxboro, Massachusetts who made multiple trips to educate first responders.

Most proactive community: Freeport, where we visited all schools, public works, school bus drivers, service clubs, sent TV spots to cable access, asked for and received rail safety material at their train station, and even posted rail safety tips on the town website.

Least proactive community: Portland. Despite help from the city manager's office and building safer crossings, the city has a "no horn" law at crossings. Read below to further make our case.

Most ignorant comment in turning down a safety presentation: "The faster trains will mean they'll clear the crossings faster for our (Portland Metro) bus drivers."

Most disrespectful: Portland's King and Lincoln middle school principals: Never responding to numerous letters, e-mails, and phone messages simply asking for a "yes" or "no" of our presentation requests. No response from the superintendent's office either. Really!

Most disappointing: Bowdoin College, which borders railroad tracks, but where two security officers took the O/L presenter training course and soon dropped out. No help from college officials in helping educate students and staff and no media response from the college newspaper or radio station.

2012 Collisions Down, Trespass Casualties Up

It was another relatively "good" year in terms of Maine train-vehicle crashes and trespass incidents in 2012. More specifically, there were two collisions with vehicles compared to four such incidents in 2011. However, while there were no trespass injuries or deaths in Maine in 2011, two fatalities occurred last year. One of those incidents did not involve a train, but an individual walked onto a railroad bridge, fell over the side, and drowned which the Federal Railroad Administration considers a railroad incident. Figures reported here are unofficial.

Miles driven by Maine Operation Lifesaver volunteers in 2012:
9,274

Mainers Reached Way Up In 2012

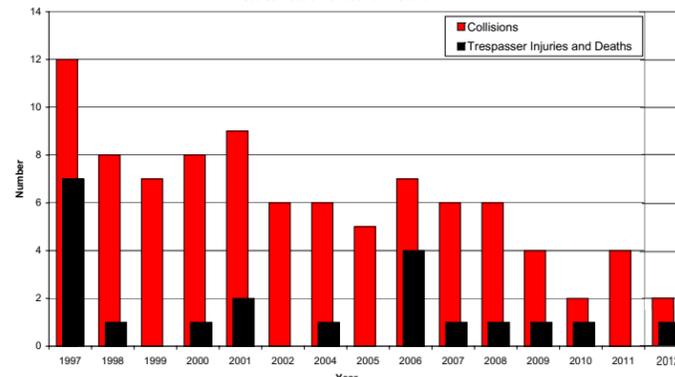
An all-out effort by Maine Operation Lifesaver volunteers produced a near record number of individuals reached in 2012. Two hundred sixty-seven presentations were made to 7,839 adults and children – a 56 percent increase over the 5,035 a year earlier! Much of the increase was fueled by the need to promote rail safety along the expanded Amtrak corridor. There were 65 percent more driver education students visited and school children were up 73 percent over 2011. A full accounting of Mainers directly reached can be found on the second page of this report. Meanwhile, another 4,021 stopped by exhibits and events to pick up educational material and talk with volunteers.



Gordon Riordon leads a presentation to Boy Scouts in Waterville.

For more information, to obtain educational material, or to arrange for a free safety presentation, go to www.maineol.org, or email at: maineol@roadrunner.com Call: (207) 945-6878, or write to: Maine Operation Lifesaver, 69 Thirteenth St., Bangor, Maine 04401

Maine Train-Vehicle Collisions and Trespass Injuries and Deaths
Source: Federal Railroad Administration



Club Congratulated For Outstanding Service



Maine O/L Treasurer Darryl Nile presents a plaque to Great Falls Model RR Club President Ed Leslie.

The Great Falls Model Railroad Club was presented with a plaque for its long time affiliation with Maine Operation Lifesaver. The recognition was made at the Auburn club building on the same day of Maine O/L's annual meeting which was hosted again in 2012 by the model train organization which included lunch, training, and prizes. The plaque reads, "In sincere appreciation of the Great Falls Model Railroad Club for the many years of dedication to railroad safety education through its members and club activities. At the annual meeting, those attending were presented with a can of olives. Olives? The year 2012 began a year of transition in many respects at Operation Lifesaver's national office. One of the differences will be a new name for volunteers – from certified presenters to Operation Lifesaver Authorized Volunteers, or OLAVs. More on the transition will unfold in 2013.



Olives given out to new 'OLAVs' at annual meeting.

Facebook? Why Facebook?

With most Maine Operation Lifesaver members showing at least a little gray, it's hard to find many Facebook subscribers – something their children or grandchildren are more accustomed to taking up. However, social media is the way to go today and Maine O/L in 2012 added a Facebook page to its arsenal of education tools. Our page includes recent news, recently-released education videos, photos of blatant examples of trespassing and near-collisions in Maine, and comments from those who follow the page. Facebook can send out the message instantly to a vastly larger audience. It also targets a younger audience – prime candidates for being taught why railroad trespassing and ignoring signals at rail crossings are so dangerous.

Events/Exhibits where Maine Operation Lifesaver participated in 2012

Brewer High School Health Fair
Lions Train Show, Augusta
Sanford Train Show
Maine Driver Ed and Traffic Safety Assn., Bangor
Topsham Train Show
YMCA Safety Fair, Bangor
Maine Driver Education Association Conference, Augusta
Medomak Valley High School Cruise-In, Waldoboro
National Train Day, Bangor & Brunswick
Maine Discovery Museum, Bangor

Penobscot County EMA Expo, Brewer
Bowdoin College Store, Brunswick
West Paris Old Home Days
Leonard Middle School Safety Fair, Old Town
American Public Works Association, Skowhegan
Brunswick Downtown Sidewalk Sale
Bangor Mall
Great Falls Model RR Club
Save the Depot, Greenville
American Folk Festival, Bangor

United New Auburn Association
Touch-A-Truck Event, Bangor
Eastern Maine Model RR Club Show, Brewer
Maine Health/Safety Conference, Augusta
Brunswick Fire Department

Those Reached Through O/L Presentations...

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Driver education students	314	213	206	534	666	1101
Professional drivers	200	66	0	36	5	274
Law enforcement, first responders	101	123	510	297	233	424
School bus drivers	141	277	70	437	273	151
Students (preschool-12)	1038	2376	1487	1236	3023	5240
ATV, snowmobile, hunter safety	0	969	35	706	485	0
Civic groups, others	338	212	231	200	350	649
TOTALS	2132	4236	2539	3446	5035	7839

Law Enforcement "Trained" On Rail Trespassing



A rail trip in October for the benefit of local law enforcement was one of the highlights of last year. A Maine Eastern Railroad train picked up nearly two dozen individuals representing local police, county sheriffs and deputies, and state troopers at Wiscasset and rode the train to Brunswick. On the way, Federal

Railroad Administration trespass specialist Mike Grizkewitsch briefed guests on the importance of rail trespass enforcement. In Brunswick, discussion continued inside the station including comments from the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority's Brian Beeler. Some law enforcement (top left) await boarding the train, while others (bottom right) listen at the Brunswick station.



Operation Lifesaver Inc. Names New President

Joyce Rose took the helm at Operation Lifesaver's national office in December 2012, succeeding Helen Sramek who has led the organization since 2006. Rose has served on Capitol Hill for the past 25 years, most recently as staff director for the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's Subcommittee on Railroads and Hazardous Materials. Prior to that, she oversaw legislation authorizing Federal Transit Administration programs for the committee. During the coming months, Rose will be leading Operation Lifesaver's transition as more emphasis is placed on new technology and social media to spread the rail safety message. She will also work on maintaining and improving O/L's financial status which currently is comprised primarily by the Federal Railroad Administration and railroad partners.