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# Maine Operation Lifesaver Quarterly Newsletter

## May 2011



### Maine to Host 2011 O/L Regional Conference



Saco Ramada Inn and Conference Center

The Saco Ramada Inn and Conference Center has been chosen to host Operation Lifesaver's biennial regional conference to be held September 21-23. This fall's conference, which was last hosted by Maine eight years ago in Portland, was actually to be held in another of the eight states which make up the region. After the other state had to bow out, Maine Operation Lifesaver offered to host the event. Saco is in relative close proximity to the rest of New England and less than a day's drive from most of New York and New Jersey. Saco is near I-95, the Portland Jetport, and Amtrak which, by the way, generously offers free round trip coach seating for all volunteers heading to the conference. Presenters and associates will shortly receive a full agenda of workshops and speakers. Furthermore, as has been offered in the past, Maine O/L presenters will waive registration fees and one night's hotel cost thanks to a grant from O/L's national office. Maine Operation Lifesaver has sent 10 volunteers to past regional conferences in North Conway, New Hampshire and Burlington, Vermont and expects at least as many to attend this fall.

### Rail Safety Goals Set For 2011

Volunteers discussed 2011 goals for Maine Operation Lifesaver at a recent meeting. Among them: emphasis along the Portland-Brunswick corridor where Amtrak service begins in 2012; focus on schools along Maine's busiest corridor between S. Portland and the Berwicks; and motorcycle school education. Officials tell us two other goals are still on the drawing board and won't come to reality until at least next year, those being reopening rail on the Mountain Division and moving the Amtrak station to Portland's waterfront.



Portland-Brunswick corridor education underway. Mast Landing School students in Freeport pose with Maine railroad trading cards.

### Southern Maine Schools Targeted

Already underway this spring are rail safety presentations to hundreds of schoolchildren, primarily in grades 3-8 along Maine's busiest rail line between Portland and the Berwicks. Letters went out in March to principals at 25 elementary and middle schools requesting Maine Operation Lifesaver presenters visit students to talk about staying away from the tracks where trains are frequent and operate at up to 79 miles per hour. Most schools have not seen O/L volunteers in the nine years since the Downeaster began operating. Later this year, besides continuing to cover these schools, major rail safety education efforts will begin at schools between Falmouth and Brunswick where Amtrak will be debuting service in 2012.

### Boxcar Continues Rolling At Governor's

A G-scale model boxcar heralding Operation Lifesaver's "Look, Listen, and Live" slogan still plies the tracks high above diners at Governor's Restaurant in Old Town. The cars were donated at least 17 years ago by Maine Operation Lifesaver to five Governor's, all eateries which feature model layouts to entertain their clientele while they dine. It's not known if the cars are still being pulled by trains at the chain's other restaurants.



### Briefly...

- As noted in another story, a grant of \$1500 from Operation Lifesaver's national office has been won for turning our annual report in on time. Funds will be used to defray costs for presenters' attendance at the upcoming regional conference in Saco.
- Officers elected for two-year terms as directors this year include Gordon Riordon of Pan Am Railways, Norma Griffiths who was also elected as chair, and Fred Hirsch as state coordinator.
- Not all schools fully benefit from an Operation Lifesaver presentation, especially those with very young students. At the Blue Point School in Scarborough which instructs K-2 youngsters, Principal John Thurlow agreed to send home rail safety material with children. Maine O/L sent him a case of 250 Operation Lifesaver coloring books.
- Crashes between trains and vehicles in the U.S. were up 4.2 percent in 2010, totaling 2,004 according to Federal Railroad Administration preliminary figures. Those collisions resulted in 260 deaths and 810 injuries. Along railroad right of way, 382 individuals were killed, up 8.2 percent and 343 were injured, up 11 percent, as a result rail trespass incidents. The first uptick in figures comes following several years of declines.



**We stand ready to deliver the railroad safety message statewide.**

**E-mail: [info@maineol.org](mailto:info@maineol.org) or Call 207-945-6878**



### Where We've Been -- January 1 - April 16

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|---|--|---|-------------|
| Snowmobile Education Course, China        | Berwick Fire Dept.                                 | Sanford Train Show                        | Auburn Mall |
| Whitefield Lions Train Show, Augusta      | Bert's Driving School, Newport & Belfast           | Stockton Springs Fire Dept.               |             |
| Western Maine Driving School, S. Paris    | P & M Driving School, S. China                     | Ron Fox Driving School, Fairfield         |             |
| Northeast Technical Institute, Bangor     | Owl's Head Transportation Museum                   | Oxford Hills Driving Academy, S. Paris    |             |
| Hampden Fire Department                   | Biddeford Middle School                            | Mast Landing School Safety Fair, Freeport |             |
| Hunter Safety Course, Poland & Waterville | Bair's Driving School, Bangor, Hermon & Bar Harbor | Greene Public Works                       |             |