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One of the more created displays at Maine school bus conferences was in Farmington staffed by Maine O/L's Dick Clark.

Hundreds of school bus drivers throughout central and southern Maine were greeted by Operation Lifesaver volunteers during spring school vacation as they attended workshops sponsored by the Maine Association of Pupil Transportation. Our members handed out bright yellow key chains and school bus driver rail safety tips. Drivers were also made aware of Operation Lifesaver's online game for school bus drivers available at the O/L national website at www.oli.org. Workshops were held in South Berwick, Gray, Farmington, and Hinckley. In June, two more driver meetings will take place in Harrington (Washington County) and Fort Kent (Aroostook County).

Maine Operation Lifesaver was represented at the Maine Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association conference held earlier this spring in Portland. Our

volunteers agree driver education students are among the most important groups to be targeted for rail safety. New contacts were made at the gathering. Furthermore, a link to the driver ed "Imagine" video is now featured on MEDTSEA's website homepage at www.medtsea.org.

In the unlikely event of a train-vehicle collision, a trespasser incident, or even a derailment or other emergency aboard a train, emergency responders are *not* the first to be called. The first person is the 911 dispatcher taking the call. Already this year, 75 dispatchers in southern Maine have been trained by Maine Operation Lifesaver presenters



Thirty-five emergency dispatchers spent a half day in Topsham learning more about how to deal with a rail emergency.

Sonia Moeller (communications supervisor with the Brunswick Police Department) and Mike Grizkewitsch with the Federal Railroad Administration, who is working on a rail safety program for emergency communications specialists nationwide. The course will improve dispatchers' knowledge, skills and abilities regarding response, access to a scene blocked by the train, hazardous materials, accessing victims and vehicles with emergency equipment, traffic congestion, locating railroad personnel, railroad documents, railroad resources available, current technology, and mechanical, electrical, and fire hazards.

State coordinators from around the country met for a conference in Chicago in February with Maine Operation Lifesaver represented by Fred Hirsch. Many of the workshops focused on the big transition this year from presenter to authorized volunteer for

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those associated with the organization. In the simplest of explanations, he told volunteers back in Maine that they will become more like facilitators -- drawing answers from audiences rather than presenting them with rail safety facts. Beginning this summer, the online application and training, will be available for current presenters to take. Fred has reviewed the application and says it includes many of the questions and answers presenters are already familiar with, and adds sections of the training are entertaining. Among other items he reported on: Federal Highway Administration funds to the national office are being restored; there will no longer be a minimum number of presentations required; volunteers will still be insured through the national office; and that new president Joyce Rose envisioned three goals including a rebranding of OLI to make it more recognizable, increased efforts towards passenger rail and transit, and increasing the O/L audience.



Maine Operation Lifesaver's Fred Hirsch posing with (from left) OLI Vice-President Wende Corcoran, administrative assistant Jayzel Lizares, and President Joyce Rose at state coordinator conference.

Briefly...

- The Maine Transportation Safety Coalition has launched a website for teen drivers and Maine O/L is recognized with links to both our website and to the driver ed video "Imagine." The site is at www.themts.org/teendrivers.
- Elected to two-year terms to the Maine O/L's board of directors were Jason Birkel; Maurice Fortin was reelected and voted chair. Fred Hirsch was re-appointed as state coordinator.
- We lost a colleague earlier this year when Wade Richardson of Plymouth passed away. Wade was a Federal Railroad Administration safety inspector and until a few years ago was active with Maine O/L.



You can't tell from this picture, but these are new G-scale freight cars which will enhance Operation Lifesaver displays.

Volunteer Dick Clark discovered that when he brought a couple of his giant G-scale cars with him to Operation Lifesaver displays, it attracted attention from visitors across the room. They wandered over to look at these big model railcars and discovered more about rail safety. As a result of the success Dick has found when showcasing his own G-scale models, four similar cars have been purchased by Maine O/L for future exhibits. The three boxcars and a coal hopper will be divided between the Bangor and Auburn equipment and material sites and proudly displayed at future events.

Where we've been January 1 – April 23
 Falmouth, Auburn, Brunswick, Augusta, Bangor, Topsham, Freeport, South Paris, Hermon, Portland, Fairfield, Newport, Kennebunk, Skowhegan, Cumberland, Bar Harbor, Blue Hill, Oakland, Scarborough, Old Orchard Beach, Cumberland, Westbrook, Oakland, Belfast, Hinckley, Farmington, South Berwick.

Reminder:
Operation Lifesaver Region 1
conference: Tuesday – Wednesday,
September 17-18, 2013
Mystic Hilton, Connecticut