

This is the official newsletter of **Operation Lifesaver Utah (OL Utah)**, a highway-rail grade crossing safety program and a railroad trespass prevention program. To unsubscribe to this newsletter, please contact Vern Keeslar at olut@digis.net or call 801-310-1035.

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State Coordinator's Message – South Jordan City Dedicates Monument to Victims of School Bus/Train Collision

Known as the worse school bus/train collision in American history, a school bus carrying 39 students en route to Jordan High School was hit by a northbound Denver & Rio Grande Western “Flying Ute” freight train killing 23 students and the driver on December 1, 1938. The 80-plus car freight train was traveling more than 50 miles per hour as it neared the crossing at 10200 South 400 West in South Jordan.

The driver had stopped and opened the door in front of the railroad tracks during a snowstorm with strong winds and almost zero visibility, resulting in the tragic collision of the train hitting the school bus at approximately 8:43 a.m. Some parents lost two children that day and the 15 survivors faced a lifetime of serious physical injuries and emotional scars. The devastation felt by all residents of the South Salt Lake Valley is impossible to describe in words alone. At the time, Jordan High School was the only high school serving the present day boundaries from the Cottonwood Canyons to 8400 west, and Point of the Mountain to 6400 South. The impact and tragic loss left no family untouched. Every South Jordan home had lost a son, daughter, niece, nephew, cousin or friend.



Monument at Heritage Park in South Jordan, UT on December 2, 2013.

Tragedy Draws National Attention

This school bus/train incident sent the community and the nation into mourning while various religious, charitable and governmental organizations rallied to support the area. Local and national media coverage brought an outpouring of sympathy for the victims and their families. Business and governmental investigations combed through massive amounts of data to determine what practical improvements could be made to avoid similar catastrophes. Countless generations have benefitted from railroad crossing laws and mechanical crossing arms. Often taken for granted is a mandatory requirement for bus drivers to not only stop at railroad crossings, but also to open their door and driver side window to look and listen for oncoming trains. Resulting from a disaster in this small Utah town, these national regulations are still in place today.

The monument dedication ceremony was held on Monday, December 2, 2013 in South Jordan City's Heritage Park. OL Utah ceremony attendees included volunteer Andrew Glad, who lost a cousin in the school bus/train collision, Phil Lavorgna, Walt Webster, and Vern Keeslar. A seven-minute video, narrated by KSL's Alex Cabrero, can be found at the following link: <http://www.galecenter.org/exhibits-busaccident.asp>

New OL Utah Area Coordinator

Mason Haycock has been appointed as the new Area 6 coordinator. He will cover the counties of Beaver, Garfield, Iron, Kane, Piute, San Juan, Washington, and Wayne. He replaces Jackie Hardman, who has recently become the Pupil Transportation Instruction and Certification Specialist with the Utah State Office of Education. Thanks to Jackie for serving as area coordinator and to Mason for accepting to serve again as an area coordinator.

OL Utah Booth Update

Operation Lifesaver Utah attended the following events for the fourth quarter of 2013:

- Clinton Safety Fair in Clinton on October 3, 2014.
- Wasatch Rails Model Train Show in Salt Lake City on November 1-3, 2013.
- Monticello Academy Safety Fair in West Valley City on November 7, 2013.

OL Utah Trains 19 UTA Police Officers

On Tuesday, November 19, 2013, Walt Webster and Kent Jorgenson trained 19 Utah Transit Authority (UTA) Police Officers. They are a welcomed addition to the OL Utah volunteers. Having more representatives from the law enforcement community will assist Operation Lifesaver in not only delivering our safety message, but also providing the third "E" of Operation Lifesaver – Enforcement.



Pictured above include UTA Police Officers Aymee Race, Preston Fenwick, Cassidy Eastman, Glen Williams, Gregg Olsen, Reid Felter, Chris Bitton, Travis Bellon, Brent Adamson, Bryan Kono, Keith Rogers, Ron Kendell, Kelly Owen, Lloyd Davis, Steve Rowland, Erik Bailey, Bryce Okland, John Holliday, Byron Camacho, and OL Utah trainers Walt Webster and Kent Jorgenson.