

Volume  
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# Sunflower State Signal

Official Publication of Kansas Operation Lifesaver, Inc.

## Coordinator's Corner



50 YEARS!!! This is a milestone! KS OL has lots of fun instore to celebrate! We have a new logo, ordered challenge coins, lapel pins, key chains, and are planning a big bash in September to celebrate not only KS OL but all of you!

We know KS OL is built on the dedication and time our volunteers commit to spreading the rail safety message. Without you we know that our incident rates would be higher. We saw this during 2020. Volunteers nationwide were told to stay home, and numbers nationwide jumped.

When I look at the 90% reduction in highway rail crossing incidents, I know that while gated crossings, and all of the bells and whistles contribute to the decrease, I know, what we do, the message we spread, and the awareness we bring is a large contributing factor in this decrease. Let's keep working until we are at zero!

*Jessica Mays*

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## CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

Kansas Operation Lifesaver (KS OL) began in 1974 as the third Operation Lifesaver organization in the country! two years after the first OL program began in Idaho by two dedicated



**OPERATION  
LIFESAVER®**

**Kansas**

**1974-2024**

Union Pacific employees (UP RR) who were concerned

that railroad collisions had reached an all-time high of 12,000 annually. The first OL program was a six-week public awareness demonstration including: UP, Idaho State officials and law enforcement in 1972. Idaho saw a 43% drop in incidents the following year.

Nebraska was next to join the OL team, followed shortly the states of by Kansas and Georgia. In the last 50 years the wording may have changed but KS OL has maintained the same primary mission: to reduce collisions, fatalities and injuries at highway-rail at-grade crossings and trespassing on or near railroad tracks or on trestles through education. In 2002 KS OL became an Incorporated entity and began operation as a nonprofit 501(c)3 under the Kansas Department of Education (KDOT) umbrella. In 2013 due to statewide budget cuts KS OL became its own entity ungoverned by the rules of state politics. 2013 was also the year that KS OL joined 46 other states and officially joined under the banner of Operation Lifesaver (OLI).

Since its inception KS OL has seen an enormous decrease in incidents across the state. While we only have data back to 1975 since then Kansas has seen a decrease of over 90% in highway rail crossing incidents and since 2017 a 65% decrease in trespassing incidents.



## Board of Directors

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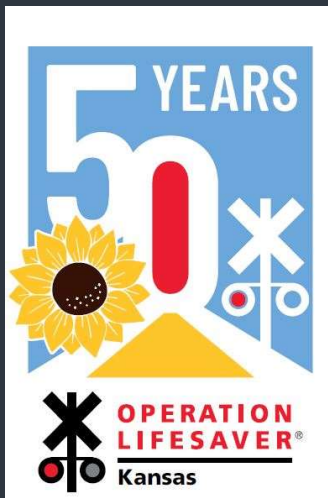
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# Rail Safety Week Renamed See Tracks? Think Train! Week

ST3 WEEK SEPTEMBER 23-29, 2024

Rail Safety Week is being renamed and rebranded to See Tracks? Think Train!® Week (ST3Week for Short). Mark your calendars for a wonderful week of concentrated #RailSafetyEducation messaging. Confirmed dates for the annual observance are Sept. 23-29, 2024.

See Tracks? Think Train!® is already branded to OLI and is a registered OLI trademark, which will help ensure it is not used in ways that do not align with OLI's mission and goals. More importantly, the new name better represents what the observance is all about – preventing railroad crossing and trespass incidents and concentrating public attention on the need for rail safety education.

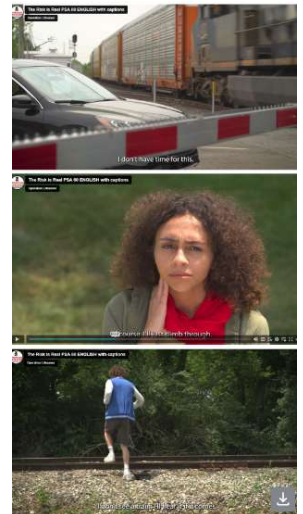


## Two New PSAs from OLI

### Are You a Risk Taker?

[The Risk is Real](#) PSA – available in English and Spanish in 60, 30, and 20 second spots targets messaging to people who think they will beat the odds and those who don't realize their choices are risky, urging them to make safe choices around railroad tracks and trains.

The 60-second PSA highlights three risk takers and dangers they face: an impatient driver who attempts to drive around lowered gates, a woman climbing through a train car, and an athlete taking a shortcut across tracks.



### Choose Safety First

[Choose Safety First](#) PSA- available as video and audio only in English and Spanish in 70, 30, and 17 second spots. Targets messaging to workers whose jobs may bring them near railroad tracks and trains.

The PSA shows workers in three rail-related scenarios: a landscaping crew member mowing grass near railroad tracks, a worker whose vehicle stalls on the tracks and a surveyor attempting to get a specific line of sight. All three vignettes are included in the 70-second PSA; three shorter versions show individual scenarios.





## Kansas Incidents 2023 FINAL

Trespassing Incidents

**19**

Injuries: 6

Fatality: 13

Crossings Incidents

**36**

Injuries: 14

Fatality: 10

## Total Incidents

**55**

Fatalities: 20

Injuries: 23

+ one suicide

## 2022

Trespassing Incidents

**5 injuries**

Crossings Incidents

**39**

Injuries: 7

Fatality: 4

## Total Incidents

**44**

Fatalities: 4

Injuries: 12

## KS OL OUT & ABOUT:



Progressive Agriculture Safety Day, Caldwell



Behind the Wheel Driving School,



Midwest Driving School, Lawrence



RISC Course, Osage County Sheriff's Office



Valley Center Police Department, RISC Class



Easter Fest, Topeka

Check out OLI's newest *What Should I Do?* lesson plan **only available to SCs and OLAVs** in the OLAV Resources areas of the OL Community. The lesson plan highlights the Emergency Notification System sign. Learning objectives include:

- Identifying the ENS sign and its components.
- Learning when you should use the sign and how to use it.

REPORT PROBLEM  
OR EMERGENCY  
1-800-XXX-XXXX  
X-ING 836 597 H  
XYZ RAILROAD

## UP COMING EVENTS

**April 16-17: KDOT Safety Conference:** Topeka

**May 9th, 2:00 – 4:00:** KS OL Board & Committee Meeting  
Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library, Menninger Room 206  
[1515 SW 10th Ave, Topeka, KS 66604](#)

**August 8th, 1:00 – 3:00:** KS OL Board & Committee Meeting  
Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library, Hughes Room 205  
[1515 SW 10th Ave, Topeka, KS 66604](#)

**November 14th,** KS OL Board & Committee Meeting: TBD

**Save the Date:** See Tracks? Think Train Week: September 23-29, 2024