



Sunflower State Signal

Official Publication of Kansas Operation Lifesaver, Inc.

Coordinator's Corner



This quarter has been a rollercoaster of emotions for me. We have our final incident totals from the FRA for 2022 (pg 3) and we had the lowest number of incidents we have ever seen in KS. A 36% drop! With a 75% decrease in fatalities! 4 total last year.

Our ticket raffle is off to a great start and our Facebook page is gaining followers daily. Our posts are being seen by more people than ever. We have had amazing response at events across the State. Trained Law Enforcement officers from 9 agencies in RISC. We are rocking it!!

Then the incidents start and the video from Emporia's bike race arrives, and I am reminded our work is never done. Thank you all, for continuing to educate everyone you meet and for continuing to fight the good fight! We are making a difference!!!

Jessica Mays

jmays@kscapitol.com



this issue

FRA Grants **P.2**

OLAV Information **P.3**

KS OL Out & About **P.4**

In the News

Railroad safety seems to be everywhere in the news lately, but there are a couple of articles OLAVs should be aware of. The first is a story by ProPublica, "[As Rail Profits Soar, Blocked Crossings Force Kids to Crawl Under Trains to Get to School](#)" While this story focuses on Indiana we know that we have seen similar situations in Wichita.

The FRA advises anyone who sees a blocked crossing with a train sitting for more than 10 minutes to either call the number on the ENS sign or call the non-emergency number for local law enforcement so they can reroute any emergency vehicles. Then report the blocking on the [FRA blocked Crossing Web Portal](#). FRA Administrator Ronald L. Batory said. "FRA expects that collecting this data will help us identify where chronic problems exist and better assess the underlying causes and overall impacts of blocked crossings -- locally, regionally and nationwide."

The second article is from the Kansas Reflector "[Kansas faces grim spike in train-pedestrian deaths. We can do more than label victims 'trespassers'](#)" While the headline is a bit misleading, Lyon County and particularly Emporia have continued an upward trend in incidents and are now one of KS OL's target counties.

A video has been posted online of Emporia's 6/3/23 Unbound Gravel, a bike race over 4,000 riders from 26 countries participate. This video shows dozens of cyclists lead by a police escort going around crossing gates. KS OL Board and Committee will be viewing the video at the June 8th Board & Committee Meetings.

Reminder that Operation Lifesaver can only speak to the rail safety message **with any rail-related news story. OLI's guidance is to not comment and instead** always refer back to the rail safety message.



Board of Directors

Matt Vogt, President
Kansas Peace Officers' Association

Mike Foster, Vice President
Member at-Large

Mark Wasko
UP Representative, Secretary

Adrian Hertog, Treasurer
BNSF Railway Proxy

Shawn Hennes
KS Dept of Transportation

Candice Breshears
Kansas Highway Patrol

Loren Bradford
Shortline Representative

Norbert Angell
Member-at-Large

Ross Boelling
Member-at-Large

Debbie Romine
Member-at-Large

Amber Brown
Member-at-Large

Kansas Recipients Receive \$27.4 Million from FRA Railroad Crossing Elimination Grants

<p>Emporia</p>	<p>Corridor Improvement Project Involving 15 Street Crossings with BNSF Railroad within City of Emporia</p>	<p>The proposed planning project will conduct a corridor study to evaluate solutions to eliminate 12 at-grade crossings along a two-mile section of BNSF's Emporia Subdivision. This corridor averages 82 daily train crossing events, with trains averaging 8,000 feet in length. BNSF will partner in this study. The City of Emporia and BNSF will contribute a 50 percent non-Federal match. This project qualifies for the statutory set-aside for Planning projects.</p>	<p>\$601,000</p>
<p>Wellington</p>	<p>Grade Crossing Closures and Construction of Grade-Separated Highway Overpass on the BNSF Southern Transcon main line</p>	<p>The proposed project will fund project development, final design, and construction for the elimination of all six grade crossings along the BNSF Railway in the City of Wellington, Kansas, thus creating a 'sealed corridor' with no train-vehicle interaction or exposure. This busy route carries approximately 96 trains daily, and currently trains occupy crossings approximately 30-40 percent of the day. The project would close six grade crossings and construct a grade-separated highway overpass with pedestrian accommodations. The City of Wellington and BNSF Railway will contribute a 36 percent non-Federal match.</p>	<p>\$8,864,725</p>
<p>Olathe</p>	<p>119th Street, Woodland to Northgate - BNSF Separation and Crossing Elimination Safety Improvement Project</p>	<p>This project will support construction activities to eliminate an at-grade crossing at Woodland Road and Northgate Street and build a road overpass (with pedestrian sidewalk) that will span over BNSF Railway's rail line. The project will provide a safer route to schools and neighborhoods, a direct bike/pedestrian connection to a trail system, and a direct connection to I-35 and KS State Highway 7. The City of Olathe and the Johnson County Assistance Road System fund will contribute a 53percent non-Federal match.</p>	<p>\$17,987,495</p>





Kansas Incidents 2022 FINAL

Trespassing Incidents
5 injuries

Crossings Incidents
29

Injuries: 7
Fatality: 4

Total Incidents
34

Fatalities: 4
Injuries: 12

2021

Trespassing Incidents
14

Fatalities: 11
Injuries: 3

Crossings Incidents
35

Fatalities: 5
Injuries: 10

Total Incidents
49

Fatalities: 16
Injuries: 12

#STOPTrackTragedies O.K. to Use Now

OLI has decided to reactivate the #STOPTrackTragedies hashtag and safety messaging. They have also made it the unifying theme for the 2023 Rail Safety Week.



Rail Safety Week Schedule Released

September 18 - 24

Unifying Theme: "STOP TRACK TRAGEDIES"

DAY/DATE	THEME	AUDIENCES
Monday, 9/18	#STOPTrackTragedies	News Media, Government Officials, OLI Partners, General Public
Tuesday, 9/19	Operation Clear Track: Law Enforcement, First Responder Partnerships	Law Enforcement and First Responders
Wednesday, 9/20	Crossing Safety	General Public, Mature Drivers, Shift Workers, Professional Drivers, School Bus Drivers, New Drivers, Outdoor Enthusiasts, People Experiencing Homelessness, Transit Users, Farmers, Risk Takers, Those Working Near Tracks
Thursday, 9/21	Transit Safety Thursday & Professional Driver Safety	Transit and Commuter Riders, Professional Drivers, School Bus Drivers
Friday, 9/22	Volunteer to #STOPTrackTragedies & Wear Red for Rail Safety	All Audiences
Saturday, 9/23	Trespass Prevention	General Public, Pedestrians, Cyclists, Joggers, Outdoor Enthusiasts, College Students, People Experiencing Homelessness, Risk Takers, Those Working Near Tracks
Sunday, 9/24	No Photo/Video/Selfie is Worth the Risk	Photographers (Professional and Amateur), Social Media Influencers

Keep up to date on Rail Safety Week News Here!

<https://oli.org/about-us/public-awareness-campaigns/rail-safety-week>

UP COMING EVENTS

June 8th, 1:00 - 3:00: KS OL Board & Committee Meeting, Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library, Perkins Room, 201 [1515 SW 10th Ave, Topeka, KS 66604](https://www.topeka-shawnee.org/1515-SW-10th-Ave)

July 15-16: [Amelia Earhart Festival](https://www.ameliaparkfestival.com/), Atchison, KS

August 10th, 1:00 - 3:00: KS OL Board & Committee Meeting, Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library, Perkins Room, 201 [1515 SW 10th Ave, Topeka, KS 66604](https://www.topeka-shawnee.org/1515-SW-10th-Ave)

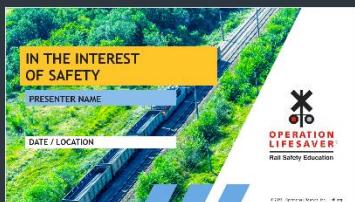
November 9th, 11:00 - 3:00: KS OL Board & Committee Meeting (lunch provided), Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library, Perkins Room, 201 [1515 SW 10th Ave, Topeka, KS 66604](https://www.topeka-shawnee.org/1515-SW-10th-Ave)



Taylor Swift Tickets

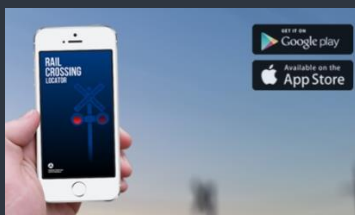
OLAV Materials

Everyone should have received new materials in the mail from OLI. As a reminder, all old presentation materials will expire on June 30th. If you did not receive your new OLAV manual, please let me know. You can download the new slide presentation and you can find OLAV materials at OLI.org/community/education-materials



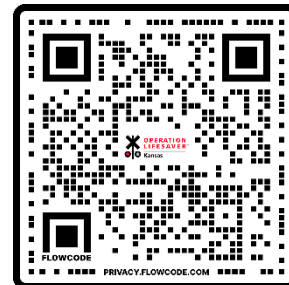
Rail Crossing Locator App

The app allows users to locate crossings by U.S. DOT Crossing ID number, address, or geo-location. [Link to FRA for more info.](#)



KS OL is raffling a pair of Taylor Swift Concert tickets to her July 7th performance at GEHA Field at Arrowhead Stadium in Kansas City. While Board Members and their immediate family are excluded from winning, OLAVs and their family and friends can win. Each entry is \$20 and a winner will be chosen by random electronic selection on June 23rd at 8 pm.

Also, if this is new news to you, please go like our [Facebook page.](#)



Link to raffle

KS OL OUT & ABOUT:



Adrian at Shultz Driving School, Olathe



John at Behind the Wheel Driver Education, Overland Park



Adrian at Buckle Up Driving School, Lawrence



In Spire KC Driving School



26 Law Enforcement Officers from 9 agencies attended a Railroad Investigation and Safety Course in Olathe, KS



Winners of the first pair of Taylor Swift Tickets



700+ turned out for Free Train Day and Taylor Swift ticket giveaway at Gage Park in Topeka