

# Staying On Track

## State Coordinator

Chip Pew  
(312) 636-3034

## Illinois Operation Lifesaver Board of Directors:

- President, Ken Gilsdorf (419) 661-3049
- Vice President, Tom McNamara (312) 287-3468
- Secretary, Kym Zylke (847) 842-9100
- Treasurer, Jim Kveton (630) 530-6406
- Board Member, Gordon Bowe (847) 254-8640
- Board Member, Jean Maroney (312) 745-4534

## Individual Highlights:

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| The President | 2 |
| Reporting OL  | 2 |
| Classes       | 3 |
| PEERS         | 3 |
| New Orleans   | 4 |
| Statistics    | 5 |
| Email list    | 6 |



## ILOL to Update Web Page

Illinois Operation Lifesaver has had a web page for some time but not too many people are aware of it. With all the different events, activities and classes that have been held, especially in the last year, the ILOL web page has taken a back seat to other things. For those who didn't know about it, or have not seen it, it is part of the Illinois Commerce Commission's website. It can be found at [www.rrsafety.org](http://www.rrsafety.org) The

web page currently includes general incident statistics, safety information and a couple of charts dating back prior to 2006. The plan is to get the site current again, brighten it up, and maybe even make it interactive if that is possible. We also hope to have this monthly newsletter posted each time it is published. If there is anyone who has some creative ideas, knows about computers or websites and is willing to

give a little of their time to assist us in re-designing and re-building the Illinois Operation Lifesaver web page / website please contact a board member, Chip Pew or just send suggestions to this newsletter at [james.kveton@elmhurst.org](mailto:james.kveton@elmhurst.org)

As with the newsletter we will be looking for information to include, articles, pictures and other information and graphics that could be included in the web page.

By Jim Kveton

## Education / Enforcement Blitz in Southern Illinois

On Wed. October 14, 2009 employees of the Union Pacific Railroad along with members of the Illinois State Police, ICC Police and Mount Vernon Police teamed up to educate the public and enforce violations of railroad crossing gates, flashers and bells. ISP Trooper David Sneed explained to a local reporter at the event the dangers of trying to beat a train at a crossing. The project, which was held in Mount Vernon, included Jeff Smith, a conductor

with the Union Pacific Railroad, Chip Pew ILOL State Coordinator and Kevin Dawson a safety manager with the Union Pacific Railroad. Kevin Dawson is a recently trained Operation Lifesaver Presenter Trainer who had assisted in teaching Police Officers from the Illinois Commerce Commission Police Dept to be OL Presenters in early October. During an interview Dawson explained that the event was a way for Law

Enforcement to work hand in hand with the public to raise awareness. "We want them to learn from this so we don't have any incidents. We don't want any incidents in the community." A train conductor's most terrifying sight is seeing motorists trying to beat a train across the tracks. There were 15 citations and one warning issued during the event.

**Information based on an article by Stephen Rickerl, "For the Southern"**



Illinois OL Board President,  
Ken Gilsdorf

*"An Official OL Presentation must include at least 7 charts and at least 2 class participants. The new policies also require the use of a trespass and an ENS chart in every presentation."*

#### Emergency Notification System



## "Meet a Presenter" Board President Ken Gilsdorf

Ken Gilsdorf is a Supervisor in the Public Affairs and Safety Department of CSX Transportation. His area of responsibility covers the states of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio. Ken has been working in the railroad industry for 44 years, 32 of them as a Locomotive Engineer. He has been nationally certified as an instructor in Grade Crossing Collision Investigation and Rail

Safety for Emergency Responders. Ken is also a Hazardous Material Sentinel for CSX. Gilsdorf holds the title of Regional Trainer for OLI Region 4 along with Tammy Wagner.

Ken has been married to his wife Teresa for 36 years and they have a son and daughter. Teresa and Ken live in Walbridge, Ohio. His interests include golf and volunteering with the Boy

Scouts of America and Honor Flight.

Ken says, "I feel most rewarded through my work with CSX and OLI and all the communities that I cover". He is very thankful for the dedication of the Illinois OLI volunteers and how they help lower grade crossing and trespass incidents. Ken wanted to express his appreciation to all that help reduce injuries and fatalities along the tracks.

## Reporting Your OL Presentations

With the new OL curriculum on line, new presenter manuals available and almost everyone being updated with this new information a reminder is due to make sure everyone is using the new procedure for reporting their Operation Lifesaver Presentations. In years past all reports were either done by hand and mailed to either Kathy Leka or Steve Laffey at the ICC in Springfield or

they were done electronically and e-mailed to them. As of this year all reporting should be done on line through the OLI website at [www.oli.gov](http://www.oli.gov) All Illinois Presenters should have received instructions regarding this process including a hand out sheet on how to complete this procedure during an update training class they should have attended during the past 10

months. All Presenter Trainers, Presenters, GCCI Instructors and Volunteers can now report all classes, special events and training sessions in this manner. Also remember to submit your reports ASAP after an event and on the last page make sure that the report is also sent to Kathy Leka at the ICC in Springfield by including her e-mail address [kleka@icc.illinois.gov](mailto:kleka@icc.illinois.gov)

## The Year of the OLI Update "2009"

In 2009 OLI tasked all the states to update all Presenter Trainers and Presenters with the newly written update of the OLI curriculum. In 2009 Illinois' 4 Presenter Trainers and one Regional Trainer held 6 update classes along with 5 New

Presenter Courses throughout the state. During these classes there were 108 OL Presenters that were provided with new manuals and the information on the new OL policies and curriculum. There were also 49 New

Presenters trained this year. If you have been an OL Presenter and either have not been updated, or have not taught the required 4 annual presentations and need your certification updated contact Chip Pew for Information.

## PEERS to Hold Q & A Meeting In Elmhurst

Steve Laffey, Railroad Safety Specialist from the Illinois Commerce Commission will be holding an informational meeting for the PEERS Grant Program on February 2, 2010 at 10:00AM at the Elmhurst Police Department. All agencies, communities and police departments that have been awarded monies from PEERS Phase 6 should attend this meeting.

The purpose of the meeting is to familiarize new grantees with procedures and policies relating to reimbursement

and eligible types of expenses.

PEERS Grantees with previous experience will also be providing brief presentations highlighting their accomplishments and discussing any challenges or problems encountered.

Shown at Right is a list of all Grantees in Phase 6 of the PEERS Program. For more information on this program (including news about Phase 7) please check out the PEERS Website

<http://www.icc.illinois.gov/railroad/PEERS.aspx>

| Grantee                                | Amount      | Grantee                                 | Amount              |
|--|-------------|---|---------------------|
| Village of Alsip Police Dept.          | \$28,813.71 | Illinois Operation Lifesaver            | \$10,375.13         |
| Village of Arlington Heights           | \$14,016.40 | Keokuk Junction Railway Company         | \$3,691.63          |
| Village of Ashton                      | \$11,213.12 | Village of Lombard Police Department    | \$28,837.33         |
| Village of Barrington Police Dept.     | \$10,438.32 | City of Macomb                          | \$11,680.33         |
| City of Berwyn Police Dept.            | \$12,001.81 | Village of Manhattan Police Department  | \$3,720.99          |
| MetroLink Light Rail                   | \$16,900.43 | Metra                                   | \$11,680.33         |
| Village of Cary Police Dept.           | \$9,102.25  | Mokena Police Dept.                     | \$12,287.52         |
| Chicago Heights Police Dept.           | \$7,459.65  | City of Mount Vernon Fire Department    | \$2,953.50          |
| Cicero Youth Commission                | \$4,485.68  | City of Park Ridge Police Dept.         | \$11,500.00         |
| Clarendon Hills Police Department      | \$9,195.46  | Rockford Fire Dept.                     | \$19,214.64         |
| City of Des Plaines                    | \$28,837.73 | South Chicago Heights Police Dept.      | \$2,890.17          |
| Village of Downers Grove               | \$9,797.32  | Summit Police Department                | \$6,534.91          |
| Village of Elburn Police Department    | \$7,976.40  | Union Pacific Railroad Police           | \$4,800.68          |
| City of Elmhurst Police Department     | \$28,837.73 | Village of Villa Park Police Department | \$23,243.86         |
| Village of Evergreen Park Police Dept. | \$2,847.64  | City of West Chicago Police Department  | \$20,972.45         |
| Fairmont City Police Dept.             | \$21,607.83 | Village of Western Springs              | \$4,295.01          |
| Health World Of Barrington             | \$27,659.67 | Village of Wheeling Police Department   | \$22,380.72         |
| Highland Park Police Department        | \$10,341.99 | Wood Dale Police Dept.                  | \$4,781.00          |
| Village of Hinsdale Police Department  | \$7,489.00  | <b>Total Amount</b>                     | <b>\$474,862.34</b> |

## Upcoming Classes, Meetings and Conferences

The ILOL South Year End General Meeting will be held on December 1, 2009 at 10:00AM at the Municipal West Training Building, 200 Potomac Blvd., Mount Vernon. If you plan on attending please RSVP to Chip Pew at [cpew@icc.illinois.gov](mailto:cpew@icc.illinois.gov)

The ILOL North Year End Board Meeting will be held on December 15, 2009 at the Elmhurst City Hall, 209 North York Street, Elmhurst. The Board of Directors Meeting will be held from 8:30AM to 10:30AM, General Meeting will be held from 10:30AM to 12:00PM with

lunch provided following the meeting. If you plan on attending RSVP to Cmdr. Jim Kveton at [james.kveton@elmhurst.org](mailto:james.kveton@elmhurst.org)

DuPage Railroad Safety Council will be holding their next meeting at the DuPage County Board Room, 421 N. County Farm Rd., Wheaton on December 19, 2009 at 8:30AM. For more information contact Carole Messana at [carolemessana@ameritech.net](mailto:carolemessana@ameritech.net)

The class that was going to be held at Northern Illinois University either in December of January has

been postponed until further notice due to scheduling conflicts.

The Canadian National Railroad will be hosting their annual Presenter Training Class on February 16, 2009. This class will be a joint effort between Illinois and Indiana. This class is normally held in South Holland IL but this year will be held at The Tri Town Safety Village, Inc., 1350 Eagle Ridge Drive, Schererville, Indiana 46375 The class will be held February 16, 2010 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

---

***“For more information on upcoming classes or to sign up contact a board member or Chip Pew the State Coordinator.”***

## Chip Pew Needs Your Help Cleaning Up Data Base

*“Help to prevent grade crossing collisions,  
**Look, Listen and Live’***

*“Trespassing on railroad property is not only dangerous, it is Against the law,  
**Stay Off, Stay Away, Stay Alive’***

Last year OL developed an On Line Test for all Presenters to take in an attempt to clean up the data base of current OL Presenters. This did not work as well as expected. Now with the new On Line Process of reporting presentations it should eliminate the redundant presenter lists. In years past the State Coordinator had a list of current

presenters, ICC had a list and OLI had a list and none of the three lists matched. Chip Pew is now attempting to maintain the presenter list and the list of presentations that have been given. The list that is maintained in Springfield is again starting to stray away from the national list. For some reason we are finding that

the lists again don't match. Chip is in the process of trying to reconcile the lists and figure out what is causing the discrepancy. Chip may be calling you if your state data doesn't match national data. To help this process please report all presentations on line at [www.oli.org](http://www.oli.org) ASAP after you conduct any presentations.

## 2009 National Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Safety Training Conference

*Street Car on Canal Street Near the River Front in Downtown New Orleans*



*Steve Laffey of the ICC giving a presentation on the PEERS Program*



The Texas Transportation Institute held their 2009 National Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Safety Training Conference in New Orleans LA November 15-18, 2009 at the Hotel Monteleone. This year's conference had approximately 180 participants, with presenters from all corners of the industry, railroads, law enforcement, and local, state and federal governments. Participants came from all over the country, as far away as Washington DC, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Georgia, North Dakota, Utah, Massachusetts, and California. There were even participants from Canada and Denmark. The Conference started with a general session moderated by Steve Rop of TTI and included presentations by Sheriff Marlin Gusman, Plaquemines Parish President Billy Numgesser, Janice Williams of LDOT and Grady Cothen of the FRA.

Various break out session topics included Pedestrian Crossing Issues, Light Rail, Passive Crossing Issues, Enforcement, Trespassing, Model Corridors, Private Crossings, Complex Crossings and the Illinois PEERS Program.

During the session on Quiet Zones, Ron Ries of the FRA showed the audience statistics from locations throughout the country related to collisions before and

after Quiet Zones were implemented. Although in most categories the number of collisions were down after quiet zones were implemented, the percentage of change was so small it was statistically insignificant.

During the Trespass segment Cliff Stayton of the CSX Railroad discussed a very innovative program that was kicked off after the last OLI International conference. The program is called "Common Sense". It targets young adults through PSA type information over the computer, using pop ups and hand outs like drink coasters and pizza box stickers. The focus is pointing out that being safe around the railroad is "Common Sense".

On the final night of the conference during the banquet the career of Bill Browder was celebrated. Bill is currently working as the Director of Operations at the Association of American Railroads, but has had a long very successful career in railroading. There were many at the banquet that joined in the celebration and roasting of Bill who was awarded the Hoy A. Richards Career Achievement Award.

Jessica Franklin of TTI, the Conference Coordinator, did a wonderful job putting together a very successful and informative program.

## What Do the Numbers Say, Collision & Trespass Stats

Data is available for a wide range of railroad safety related statistics. Presented below is a summary of collisions at highway-rail crossings in Illinois and the USA and for trespassing incidents that occurred in Illinois and the USA between 2004 and 2008 and the year-to-date tally through August of 2009. For the 5-year period between 2004 and 2008, collisions in the USA declined by 23% and by 17% in Illinois. Trespassing incidents showed no change.

### Collisions at All Types of Crossings (Public, Private & Pedestrian)

| Year             | Illinois   |          |            | USA        |          |            |
|------------------|------------|----------|------------|------------|----------|------------|
|                  | Collisions | Injuries | Fatalities | Collisions | Injuries | Fatalities |
| 2004             | 179        | 74       | 27         | 3,078      | 1094     | 372        |
| 2005             | 181        | 82       | 33         | 3,056      | 1047     | 358        |
| 2006             | 175        | 62       | 25         | 2,934      | 1057     | 369        |
| 2007             | 158        | 68       | 28         | 2,741      | 1024     | 339        |
| 2008             | 148        | 53       | 28         | 2,373      | 927      | 289        |
| 2009 Thru August | 63         | 32       | 14         | 1,247      | 462      | 156        |

### Trespassing on Railroad Property

| Year             | Illinois |            |       | USA      |            |       |
|------------------|----------|------------|-------|----------|------------|-------|
|                  | Injuries | Fatalities | Total | Injuries | Fatalities | Total |
| 2004             | 30       | 47         | 77    | 405      | 478        | 883   |
| 2005             | 22       | 40         | 62    | 419      | 472        | 891   |
| 2006             | 28       | 44         | 72    | 473      | 514        | 987   |
| 2007             | 36       | 43         | 79    | 406      | 470        | 876   |
| 2008             | 27       | 51         | 78    | 425      | 458        | 883   |
| 2009 Thru August | 13       | 14         | 27    | 229      | 292        | 521   |

Note: Illinois Stats Include Suspected Suicides; USA Stats Do Not

Steve Laffey, Railroad Safety Specialist for the ICC

## 2009 RR Safety Education & Enforcement Workshop

On September 14, 2009 the Railroad Section of the ICC held a Railroad Safety Workshop in downtown Chicago at the James R. Thompson Center. Supporters of the workshop were Illinois Operation Lifesaver, DuPage Railroad Safety Council and the Illinois Commerce Commission. Registration started at 9:00AM and programs ran until 3:00PM. Speakers included Administrator Joseph

Szabo of the FRA, ICC Commissioner Erin-O'Connell-Diaz, Ron Ries of the FRA, John Blair and Chip Pew of the ICC, Jim Allen of IDOT, Dr. Lanny Wilson and, Dr. Barry Kaufman of the DuPage Railroad Safety Council, Prosecutors William Opal and William Belomonte, Mike Meyer of the UPRR Police and Jim Kveton of the Elmhurst Police. The main topic of the different programs was how to successfully

educate the public concerning railroad safety. Over 140 people attended the workshop from local governments, railroads, county governments, private business, private citizens and individuals that volunteer their time to help reduce railroad involved collisions. Steve Laffey of the ICC should be recognized for putting together such a worthwhile program, which was provided free to all participants.



## Illinois Operation Lifesaver

Billing Address  
P.O. Box 183  
Elmhurst, IL 60126

Coordinator  
580 Vine Ave.  
Highland Park, IL 60035

CHIP PEW PHONE:  
(312) 636-3034  
E-MAIL:  
cpew@icc.illinois.gov

ELMHURST PD FAX:  
(630) 941-1229

Operation Lifesaver Inc.

See us at:

[www.oli.org](http://www.oli.org)

**Left;** OL door wrap at Schaumburg Flyers game, **Center;** Faith Vascik at OL event, **Right;** Dianna Davies, Sheldon Soldwisch, Pat Mitchell at Ohio OLI Conference



### Contacting Your Illinois Operation Lifesaver Board By Email

Pres. Ken Gilsdorf,

[Ken\\_Gilsdorf@CSX.com](mailto:Ken_Gilsdorf@CSX.com)

V. Pres. Tom McNamara,

[macolsmetrarr5362@sbcglobal.net](mailto:macolsmetrarr5362@sbcglobal.net)

Secretary Kym Zylke,

[kzylke@healthworldoutreach.org](mailto:kzylke@healthworldoutreach.org)

Treasurer Jim Kveton,

[james.kveton@elmhurst.org](mailto:james.kveton@elmhurst.org)

Board Member Gordon Bowe,

[Gordo400ol@yahoo.com](mailto:Gordo400ol@yahoo.com)

Board Member Jean Maroney,

[jean.maroney@chicagopolice.org](mailto:jean.maroney@chicagopolice.org)

### Submitting Articles, Pictures or Information For The Newsletter

Illinois Operation Lifesaver is always looking for information, articles, and pictures to be added to and shared through our Newsletter. If you have any information about up coming

events, classes, conferences or anything else that would benefit other OL volunteers please forward them in by email. We also like to share in the successes of our volunteers

and OL at large, so include things we can celebrate also. We will include as many as we can. Forward all submissions to [james.kveton@elmhurst.org](mailto:james.kveton@elmhurst.org)

## Laughter at work with Operation Lifesaver/The Lighter Side By Tom McNamara

My first OL partner was Paul Mills, at one high school before we got started Paul went to the bathroom and when he washed his hands the sink splattered all over his light khaki pants and as he walked in to the classroom the teacher was introducing us, one student said who is Paul and who is Tom? I said Paul has the bladder problem.

At one school Sheldon and Gordon attended. A lady teacher met them in the hall and ask them if they were the speakers, they said yes and she said we have to hurry as class starts in 20 minutes. So they set up everything and notice there were only girls in this class. Gordon started the OL presentation. The teacher stops him after the first chart and says this is great stuff but when are you going to talk about sex! **Wrong Speaker, Wrong Room.**

When flying back from a Symposium in Jacksonville FL, I'm walking down the aisle of the airplane to go to the restroom. This plane must have about 30 or 40 OL presenters and trainers heading back to O Hare. I stopped to talk to Devin a presenter from New York and he said "Mac, how far do you think the plane can fly with that big crack in the ceiling?" Everyone on the plane looks up and when they realized there is no crack they all busted out laughing.

My Old boss Dennis Mogan said at Depot Blitzes' we needed to give out healthier food instead of the usual coffee & doughnuts. He suggested fruit and juice boxes. So the first blitz with his healthy handouts this well dressed man comes over and grabs a juice box and banana. He puts the straw in the juice box and proceeds to put it to his mouth. As he squeezes the box, grape juice squirts all the way down his three piece suit. As I am apologizing to the man he starts laughing and pulls out his phone. He calls his wife and tells her he did the same thing he yelled at his kids for the week before in the car.