



# Staying On Track

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## “Don't Start Dashing... Till The Lights Stop Flashing”



**OPERATION LIFESAVER®**  
Illinois

On November 23, 2010 the Elmhurst Police Department kicked off a new phase of Education, Engineering and Enforcement along the railroad tracks in their community. The name of the program is, “Don't Start Dashing... Till The Lights Stop Flashing”.

Over the last 16 years, members of the Elmhurst Police Department have had great success altering the behavior of citizens and commuters around the tracks through the use of classes, enforcement projects, public service videos, median cones, warning signs and many other approaches. After suffering annual collisions and fatalities for years, they have now gone 16 years with only one fatal collision and 12 years without any. The only behavior that has remained the same has been a person's almost automatic reaction to start crossing the tracks as soon as the gates start to rise. The goal of this project is to address that particular human behavior.

The implementation of this

project would come in several different phases.

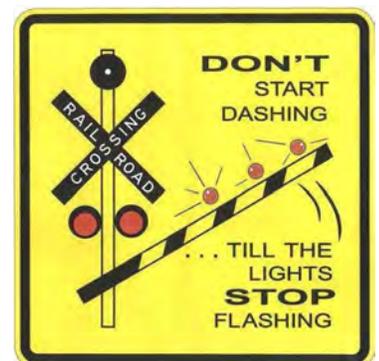
In mid summer 2010 a logo was designed with the help of Lourdes Beard of the DuPage Railroad Safety Council. The logo was originally introduced during the DuPage Railroad Safety Council's 2010 Safety Conference.

The design was then forwarded to Ralph Westendorf of the Elmhurst Public Works Sign Shop. He created metal warning signs to be posted around the downtown train station. (See insert below)

On November 23, after all the signs were posted, the educational phase began. Officers had designed yellow flyers that included the logo and a narrative that was very short and to the point so that people would read the information rather than just discarding it. These flyers explained the law and the requirement that a person cannot enter onto a grade crossing until the gate is completely up, and all flashing lights and bells are off. Over 1000 flyers were handed out by

Officers of the Elmhurst, Union Pacific and Canadian National Police.

The next phase will include enforcement using warning and arrest tickets. A public service video is also in production covering the concept of waiting for the lights and bells to be off before proceeding. The final phase will include coupons that have been obtained from local Elmhurst businesses. Participating businesses are, Fontano's Subs, York Theater, Smoothie Factory and Cold Stone Creamery. Positive Re-Enforcement tickets will be issued to those individuals that follow the “Don't Start Dashing... Till The Lights Stop Flashing” message.



## Regional Conference Coming to a City Near You



2007 Region 4 Conference was held in Duluth, MN

During our last ILOL quarterly meeting we discussed the idea of having a Regional Conference somewhere in Region 4 during 2011. There was such a positive response to the idea that Chip Pew and members of the ILOL Board brought the idea to the other State Coordinators during a conference call in Early November. After discussing the idea the consensus was that the endeavor would definitely

be worth the effort to put it together. The goal is to provide valuable worthwhile training at a location that is centrally located, and easily accessible, all at a reasonable price. Several different locations were discussed, Chicago, Milwaukee, Madison, Minneapolis and the Wisconsin Dells. A couple of the locations were eliminated early on because of the high cost of lodging, poor internal

transportation or the fact that the location was not accessible by train.

So mark your calendars for September 13-15, 2011 to attend the Region 4 Operation Lifesaver Regional Conference. We have committees working on Lodging, Curriculum, Transportation, Meals and Entertainment. If you are willing to assist on one of the committees please call or e-mail Chip Pew to volunteer.

## BNSF Closes Record Number of Crossings, "5000"

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*"We have learned over time that one of the best ways to address grade crossing safety is to reduce the number of at-grade crossings."*

Officials from the city of Sioux Falls, the state of South Dakota and BNSF Railway celebrated the closure of the 5,000th grade crossing on BNSF's rail network, setting a new national record for grade crossing closures and safety improvement. At a ceremony near the crossing and in view of the new 69th Street overpass currently under construction, officials watched as railroad crews pulled out the old crossing surface that allowed vehicles to cross the railroad tracks on 69th Street in Sioux Falls. Removing the surface was the last step to permanently closing the 69th Street crossing and to eliminating the opportunity for any future grade crossing collisions.

"Safety is a top priority at BNSF," said Lyn Hartley, BNSF Director of Public Projects. "We have learned over time that one of the best ways to address grade crossing safety is to reduce the number of at-grade crossings. To the great credit of Sioux Falls city leaders, they recognized that the ideal solution between trains and motorists was to close this crossing and build the 69th Street overpass." Sioux Falls Mayor Mike Huether said, "We are a forward thinking city in Sioux Falls always looking for opportunities to grow. However, public safety always remains as our primary goal in our quest to have the highest quality of life possible. This provides

us a safer, more efficient way for vehicles to cross the tracks." BNSF has worked cooperatively with states and communities across its 28-state network to close 5,000 crossings since the BNSF crossing closure program began in 2000. Combined with other safety initiatives, the grade crossing closure program has helped to reduce grade crossing collisions on BNSF's 32,000 mile network by 70 percent since 1995. BNSF has one of the lowest highway-railroad grade crossing collision rates in the rail industry and continues to work with the states and communities it serves to further improve grade crossing safety.

*BNSF News Release*



## **Union Pacific Railroad's** **“Great Excursion Adventure – You Can Route the Steam”**

Railroad fans can vote early, vote often and are encouraged to rally friends and family to do the same starting today as part of Union Pacific's Great Excursion Adventure-You Route the Steam contest. Union Pacific will bring its popular and legendary steam locomotive to the cities along the route garnering the most votes.

Five individuals who score the most contest “points” will win two tickets each for a special leg of the excursion, as well as lodging and air fare.

The person with the most points will be awarded the title of “Honorary Engineer” and given the opportunity to ride in the locomotive cab.

Route and individual winners will be announced January 18, 2011.

Here is how the contest works. Participants go to;

[www.upexcursion.com](http://www.upexcursion.com) <<http://www.upexcursion.com>

November 9 through December 6 and nominate their hometowns for a 2011 steam locomotive excursion. Starting December 7, Union Pacific's “steam team” will tally the votes and chart potential excursions based on votes, the ability of the steam equipment to visit specific locations, scheduled railroad maintenance programs and other factors. Potential excursion routes will be narrowed to four finalists and contest participants will vote January 4-17, 2011, for their favorite routes. One of Union Pacific's legendary and rare steam

locomotives will travel the route with the most votes.

Points for individual prizes can be earned in two ways.

By voting for their favorite route at;

[www.upexcursion.com](http://www.upexcursion.com) <<http://www.upexcursion.com>

participants earn a point each day they vote but can cast just one vote daily.

By sharing with friends and followers via Facebook and Twitter, participants will gain a referral point for every new verified participant who votes as a direct result of clicking on a referral link they share.

The timing of the excursion will be based on the location of the winning route. Complete rules and restrictions for Union Pacific's Great Excursion Adventure - You Route the Steam are published at;

[www.upexcursion.com](http://www.upexcursion.com) <<http://www.upexcursion.com>

### **The Two Contenders;**

Union Pacific Steam Locomotive No. 844

[http://www.up.com/aboutup/special\\_trains/steam/locomotives/844.shtml](http://www.up.com/aboutup/special_trains/steam/locomotives/844.shtml)

Union Pacific Challenger No. 3985

[http://www.up.com/aboutup/special\\_trains/steam/locomotives/3985.shtml](http://www.up.com/aboutup/special_trains/steam/locomotives/3985.shtml)



Union Pacific Steam Locomotive No. 844

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### ***Union Pacific Steam Locomotive No. 3985***





*Crossing signals in Japan are yellow and black as opposed to red and white as they are in the United States.*



*“Crossing that is Never Open”, at Soujiji, near Yokohama, Japan.*

## East Meets West During Rail Safety Symposium

The 11<sup>th</sup> Global Level Crossing Symposium was held in Tokyo, Japan October 26<sup>th</sup> through the 29<sup>th</sup>.

There were approximately 110 attendees from all over the world, however, just three Americans attended: Steve Laffey (ICC), Reilly McCarren (Operation Lifesaver) and Suzanne Horton (Volpe/US DOT). Mr. Laffey made a presentation on the Effectiveness of Illinois Rail Safety Education and Enforcement Programs to Improve Safety at Level Crossings. Mr. McCarren presented a paper on OL’s Rail Safety Education Programs and Ms. Horton presented a paper on the Success Factors that have lead to the great reduction in highway-rail crossing collisions in the United States since the 90s.

The final day of the Symposium included a field trip to Japan’s East Tokyo Training Center, as well as to the “*Crossing that is Never Open*” at Soujiji, near Yokohama. The crossing is named as such because it is a location where five heavily used double-track main lines all cross a moderately used residential street pictured below. The crossings are manually closed during the afternoon and morning travel peaks and are then in use by rail traffic for about 50 minutes of each hour. There is an adjacent pedestrian bridge, however, there is no way to build a vehicle grade separation.

Japan’s level crossing warning devices are generally smaller and are yellow/black in appearance, as opposed to the red/white we see in the USA. Many level crossings in Japan are equipped with laser obstacle detection devices to sense the presence of an obstacle, such as an auto, blocking a crossing. If an obstacle is detected, a warning is sent to the train so that the operator may stop in time to avoid a collision. Another very unique feature at many Japanese level crossings is the installation of a “panic button” that a pedestrian can push that also activates a warning signal informing the train to

stop. Additional information concerning the Symposium is at: <http://www.level-crossing.org/Level-Crossing-2010.html>.

After the Tokyo event, Mr. McCarren and Mr. Laffey, along with Eric Cheng, Chief Railroad Engineer for the Utah Dept. of Transportation, and a Utah OL Board member, visited Taiwan. Our trip was organized by Professor Shou-Ren Hu of the National Cheng Kung University in Tainan. The highlight of our trip was an excursion on the Taiwan Railway Administration’s (TRA) “Old Mountain” line that is currently out-of-service. Mr. Jhy Pin Lin of the TRA arranged for the four of us to travel via “Trolley” locomotive up into the hills to get a first hand view of the countryside.

As we approached one of the stations, we encountered an informal Operation Lifesaver type of event in action where kids were being treated to a miniature train ride over a level crossing. Taiwan’s level crossings also use yellow/black markings, as in Japan. While in Taiwan, we also inspected a problematic level crossing in Sheithien, similar to the Soujiji level crossing in Yokohama. The TRA prefers to use cantilevers with highly visible LED signs at complex level crossings. Pictured on Page 6, center is our host, Professor Hu, Laffey, McCarren, Cheng and Lin from left to right.

Something else of interest is that level crossings in both Japan and Taiwan also indicate the direction of travel that the approaching train is traveling. Both the Symposium and the visit to Taiwan were truly once in a lifetime opportunities to visit and expand horizons, both professionally and personally. The very intense use of Japan’s and Taiwan’s rail networks, including the world famous Shinkansen Bullet trains, must be experienced first hand.

(More Pictures bottom of Page 6)

## “Meet a Presenter” ILOL Presenter Mike McGill

Mike McGill is a Locomotive Engineer with over 12 years of service with the Union Pacific Railroad. Mike and his wife Jene Ann (Kirby) McGill live in Dexter, Missouri. Kirby is a Communications Supervisor for Stoddard County Ambulance Service.

Mike's hobbies include working on and enjoying his Mini Cooper, model railroading and reading. Prior to becoming a railroad engineer Mike worked as an EMT and a Police Officer. In those capacities he had the unfortunate opportunity to assist with and investigate railroad involved collisions and experience the aftermath of vehicle vs. train and pedestrian vs. train incidents. The devastation he had to endure was the reason Mike was drawn to Operation Lifesaver and wanting to do something to prevent these needless tragedies.

The most rewarding experiences that Mike has been involved in have been the Operation Lifesaver Trains that he has taught on in southern Illinois. He has also enjoyed his time working with Emergency Services and being put in a position to educate and stress the importance of railroad crossing safety.

Although Operation Lifesaver gives a presenter curriculum for many different age groups and work groups, Mike's favorite audience to teach is Driver's Education. He has had the opportunity to teach driver's education in both a High School setting and for classes held at Professional Driving Schools and Mike really feels this is the place that he has the most effect.



ILOL Presenter Mike McGill of Dexter, MO

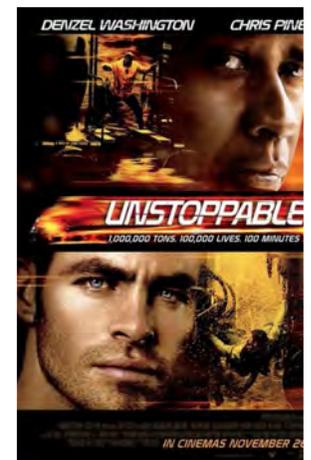
## “Unstoppable” Based on a True Story ?

After working on railroad safety, being a part of Operation Lifesaver and having so many friends who work on railroads, when I saw the trailers for the new movie “Unstoppable” with Denzel Washington, I of course had to go see it.

As the movie started I was surprised to learn that “Unstoppable” was inspired by actual events. I didn't remember seeing news coverage of such an incident but I stayed open minded because I love true stories. After the first 15 to 20 minutes of building the foundation of the two lead characters the action begins and doesn't stop until the end. It really keeps you tense throughout the movie with collisions and close calls. There are a couple of things that only a true railroader would notice as mistakes, such as gates half way down as the train goes through a crossing, the OL Presenter uses “Stop,

Look and Listen” instead of “Look, Listen and Live”, but all in all the details are good.

I love action films and this one was non-stop action. By the end of the movie I was tired from being tensed up through the entire movie. For those who have not seen the previews, the basis of the story is a runaway train that is at full throttle heading for a populated city, pulling cars containing hazardous materials. With today's technology I didn't think this was possible. I thought without an engineer the train would eventually go to idle and stop. It is based on events that took place in early 2001 in Ohio, where a CSX train ran without an engineer for 2 hours before it could be stopped. If you like action movies I would definitely recommend this movie. **Review by; J. Kveton**



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

or

[www.icc.illinois.gov/LOL](http://www.icc.illinois.gov/LOL)

## Illinois Operation Lifesaver 2011 Meeting Schedule

The 2011 ILOL meeting schedule will be much like the schedule in past years. North meetings will be held at the Elmhurst Police Department in Elmhurst IL and south meetings will be held at the Municipal West Training Building in Mount Vernon IL. The dates for the quarterly meetings and board meetings will

be discussed and set during the year end meeting on December 14, 2010. Dates will be listed in the first quarter Newsletter of 2011 and sent out by Chip Pew through e-mail after the dates are set.

There are two presenter classes already scheduled for the first portion of

2011. The first will be held on January 11, 2011 in southern Illinois near Mount Vernon, (final location to be set). The second will be at the Elmhurst Police Department on January 25, 2011. Those interested in attending either training class should contact Chip Pew.

### **Contacting Your Illinois Operation Lifesaver Board By Email**

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### **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)



**More Pictures From "East Meets West During Rail Safety Symposium"**