

This is the official newsletter of **Utah Operation Lifesaver (Utah OL)**, a nonprofit public safety education and awareness organization dedicated to eliminating collisions, fatalities and injuries at highway-rail grade crossings and trespassing on railroad tracks.

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Executive Director's Message – Utah Operation Lifesaver 2022 & 2023 Awards

This quarterly message is about the people and safety partners that made 2022 and 2023 successful years. Utah OL was able to hold its Annual Appreciation and Awards Dinner once again to recognize our outstanding volunteers. The Annual Appreciation and Awards Dinner was held on Monday, May 13, 2024, at the Gathering Place at Gardner Village in West Jordan. I would also like to recognize and thank our wonderful safety partners. Without their financial and in-kind support, we would not have a rail safety education program in Utah. The following safety partners are recognized for their support during 2022 and 2023.

2022 and 2023 Utah Operation Lifesaver Safety Partners

Gold Spike Safety Partners (\$20,000 and above)

- Utah Department of Transportation
- Utah Highway Safety Office
- Utah State Board of Education
- Utah Transit Authority

Silver Spike Safety Partners (\$10,000 to \$19,999)

- None

Iron Spike Safety Partners (\$1,000 to \$9,999)

- Genesee & Wyoming (Utah Railway and Salt Lake City Southern Railroad)

Laurelwood Tie Safety Partners (\$100 to \$999)

- Safety Awareness for Everyone (S.A.F.E.)
- Utah Trucking Association

The **Outstanding Media Award** is given to an individual or organization that has reported a story, either in print, radio, or television about safety at highway-rail grade crossings, or trespass prevention on railroad property, or about Utah Operation Lifesaver's mission

The 2022 Outstanding Media Award went to **Michael Locklear**, KSL TV for a story that aired on Sunday, July 31, 2022. The story featured interviews with Craig Bolerjack, Utah Operation Board of Director's member, and Carl Arky, Utah Transit Authority, discussing rail safety after another fatality at a railroad crossing. Congratulations to Michael Locklear for his story on rail safety! The story can be found at the

following link: [Rail safety experts encourage life-saving conversation after another deadly accident | KSL.com](#)

The 2023 Outstanding Media Award went to **Katija Stjepovick**, KSL TV for a story that aired on Monday, September 18, 2023. The story featured an interview with Vern Keeslar, Utah Operation Executive Director, and covered the press conference kicking off Utah Rail Safety Week. Congratulations to Katija Stjepovick for her story on Utah Rail Safety Week! The story can be found at the following link: [Utah law enforcement stepping up rail safety precautions \(youtube.com\)](#)

The following is a list of awards recognizing the great work of our safety partner presenters and volunteer presenters for Utah OL during 2022 and 2023.

The **Safety Partner Presenter of the Year Awards** are given to presenters whose employers provide time for the presenters to participate in the Utah Operation Lifesaver program while on company time. Safety partner presenters demonstrate high activity in the program by the number of presentations given, booths worked, or other involvement with Utah Operation Lifesaver.

The 2022 Safety Partner Presenter of the Year is **Kent Muhlestein**, Utah Transit

Authority. He gave 44 presentations to 876 people.

The 2022 Safety Partner Presenter of the Year 1st Runner-up was **Travis Shingleton and Travis King**, Utah Transit Authority. They gave 24 presentations each to 1,403 people.

The 2022 Safety Partner Presenter of the Year 2nd Runner-up was **Sheldon Shaw**, Utah Transit Authority and **Jim Golden**, Utah Department of Transportation. They gave 19 presentations each to 1,769 people.

The 2023 Safety Partner Presenter of the Year was **Kent Muhlestein**, Utah Transit Authority. He gave 53 presentations to 1,239 people.

The 2023 Safety Partner Presenter of the Year 1st Runner-up was **Sheldon Shaw**, Utah Transit Authority. He gave 37 presentations to 1,383 people.

The 2023 Safety Partner Presenter of the Year 2nd Runner-up was **Travis Shingleton**, Utah Transit Authority. He gave 35 presentations to 1,415 people.

The **Volunteer Presenters of the Year Awards** are given to presenters who are true volunteers, not being compensated for their time, and have demonstrated high activity in the Utah Operation Lifesaver program. This high activity is demonstrated through one's activity in the number of presentations given, booths worked, or other involvement with the Utah Operation Lifesaver.

The 2022 Volunteer Presenter of the Year was **Kent Holbrook**. He gave 45 presentations to 1,144 people.

The 2022 Volunteer Presenter of the Year 1st Runner-up was **Ed Buchanan**. He gave 39 presentations to 1,120 people.

The 2022 Volunteer Presenter of the Year 2nd Runner-up was **Martin Cocker**. He gave 21 presentations to 516 people.

The 2023 Volunteer Presenter of the Year was **Kent Holbrook**. He gave 50 presentations to 1,450 people.

The 2023 Volunteer Presenter of the Year 1st Runner-up was **Ed Buchanan**. He gave 31 presentations to 914 people.

The 2023 Volunteer Presenter of the Year 2nd Runner-up was **Kathy Bessinger** and **Martin Cocker**. They gave 12 presentations each to 1,040 people.

The **Executive Director's Award of Excellence** is given to an individual or an organization that has demonstrated excellence in participating in or supporting the Utah Operation Lifesaver program through activity, in-kind support, and/or financial contributions.

The 2022 Executive Director's Award of Excellence was awarded to **Utah Railway**. The Utah Railway, a subsidiary of Genesee & Wyoming, has been a safety partner since 2011. They have been represented on the Utah Operation Lifesaver Board of Directors since 2011 as well. Their current General Manager, Jake Harrison, serves as Board Secretary/Treasurer. Thanks Utah Railway for your participation in Utah Operation Lifesaver, and your dedication to rail safety education in Utah!

The 2023 Executive Director's Award of Excellence was awarded to **Sheldon Shaw**, Utah Transit Authority. Sheldon is the Director of Safety and Security for Utah Transit Authority. He has supported rail safety education in Utah at the Utah Transit Authority for the past 16 years. Sheldon serves as Chair of the Board of Directors for Utah Operation Lifesaver and presents to a variety of audiences. He is a veteran of the U.S. Navy and served 20 years for our country. Thanks Sheldon for your leadership, mentorship, and friendship and your dedication to rail safety education in Utah!



From left to right: Utah Transit Authority (UTA) Executive Director Jay Fox, Travis Shingleton and Travis King of UTA, Jim Golden of the Utah Department of Transportation, Sheldon Shaw and Kent Muhlestein of UTA.



From left to right: Volunteer Presenter of the Year Kent Holbrook, Volunteer Presenter of the Year 1st Runner-up Ed Buchanan, and Volunteer Presenter of the Year 2nd Runner-up Martin Cocker.