



Alaska Railroad Corporation Operation Lifesaver Alaska **NEWS RELEASE**

DATE: July 22, 2013
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Stephenie Wheeler, 265-2671, cell 382-3327
or Tim Sullivan, 265-2357, cell 223-7372

Alaska Rail Safety Awareness Week July 21-27, 2013 *Governor's Proclamation underscores Summer Rail Safety Campaign*

ANCHORAGE, Alaska – This week (July 21-27) is Alaska Rail Safety Awareness Week, according to proclamation Governor Sean Parnell signed recently. The proclamation underscores a summer rail safety public education campaign organized and funded by the Alaska Railroad (ARRC) and Operation Lifesaver Inc. (OLI). Kicked off in May, the “Track Wise: Summer Rail Safety Campaign” incorporates activities, signs and public service announcements (PSA) that encourage residents and visitors to stay safe around railroad tracks and crossings within rail belt communities. While infrequent, fatal accidents involving pedestrians, recreational vehicles and automobiles have occurred along the Alaska Railroad tracks in recent years. Nationally, according to the Federal Railroad Administration, nearly 1,960 highway-rail crossing collisions and 442 pedestrian rail trespass fatalities occurred in 2012.

The proclamation and campaign recognize the importance of public education in preventing vehicle and pedestrian accidents at highway-railroad crossings and other railroad property, and encourages all citizens to adopt rail safety practices. Residents and visitors alike may have already seen or heard some of the more noticeable campaign elements, including:

- Radio public service announcements (PSA) broadcast on Southcentral stations in July and August
- Rail safety signs at entrances to trails near the tracks in Anchorage, Mat-Su Valley and Fairbanks
- PSA notices published in the *Frontiersman* newspaper in July and August
- Rail safety signs on *People Mover* and *Valley Mover* public buses May through August
([photo attached](#))
- Rail safety decals on two locomotives ([photo attached](#))

Groups may request a rail safety presentation by contacting the OL-AK State Coordinator, Dwight West, at (907) 265-2691. More information is available at www.AlaskaRailroad.com > Corporation > Safety & Security > Operation Lifesaver. The Alaska Railroad underwrote about a third (36%) of the \$26,000 campaign, with about \$17,000 funded by an Operation Lifesaver grant.

- more -



Alaska Railroad / Operation Lifesaver Alaska **NEWS RELEASE**

July 22, 2013 • Rail Safety Week July 21-27 • Page 2 of 2

Executive Proclamation by Governor Sean Parnell

WHEREAS, due to Alaska's unique geography, Alaskan's rely on many methods of transportation to meet their freight and transport needs; and

WHEREAS, Alaska's railroads are a vital infrastructure for the state, offering passenger services to residents and visitors, as well as freight services to citizens and businesses; and

WHEREAS, safety programs and an informed public are important in preventing railroad accidents and fatalities; and

WHEREAS, collisions between trains and motor vehicles or pedestrians can be prevented by increased public awareness of the dangers at and around railroad property and proper procedures for crossing a railroad on foot or in a vehicle; and

WHEREAS, May through September are the busiest months for rail traffic in Alaska; and

WHEREAS, as Alaskans participate in summer activities, it is important to observe all signs and warnings near tracks and trains in order to reduce serious and sometimes-fatal accidents involving trains.

*NOW, THEREFORE, I, Sean Parnell, Governor of the State of Alaska, do hereby proclaim July 21-27, 2013 as: **Alaska Rail Safety Awareness Week***

In Alaska, and encourage all citizens to observe added caution as motorists or pedestrians near tracks or trains. Dated: July 11, 2013

For more information about the summer rail safety campaign, contact ARRC Corporate Communications Officer Stephenie Wheeler at (907) 265-2671 or External Affairs Manager Tim Sullivan at (907) 265-2357.

- end-



Eleven People Mover buses sport rail safety awareness signs in July and August. Both photos by Dwight West, Alaska Railroad.



Locomotive 4319 is one of two engines to sport rail safety decals. This is Fireweed crossing near the Parks/Glenn highway interchange.