

# Nebraska Operation Lifesaver's 2022 Whistle-Stop Tour Day Five

Nebraska Operation Lifesaver checked in at the beautiful Grand Weaver Hotel in Falls City, Nebraska where we would stay and hold our meetings..



Operation Lifesaver is celebrating its 50th year providing rail safety messages Nebraska Operation Lifesaver is pleased to announce as part of that celebration our 20 County Whistle-Stop Tour to meet with key representatives from the counties with the highest fatalities and injuries.

The mission of this tour is to brainstorm the needs in each County to prevent train related incidents. The Safety Teams will consist of:

1. The Mayor of the County Seat
2. The Police Chief (or representative)
3. The Fire Chief
4. The Sheriff
5. State Senator
6. Emergency Management Director/Manager
7. Nebraska Operation Lifesaver
8. McGruff the National Crime Dog will be accompanying our Whistle-Stop Tour.

Our goal at Falls City will be to have great problem solving and partnership building to ensure that ALL Nebraskans stay safe around trains and railroad tracks. At each community, we need your help and leadership and I hope we can count on each of the 20 counties' support.

Falls City was almost fully represented - the Police Chief sent Patrick to represent their office, (the Fire Department had advised me that they were fire only not rescue), emergency management, Rick Varas County Commissioner, Tom Hillyard a retired Union Pacific Conductor that is the Southeast Nebraska Operation Lifesaver Coordinator, Deb Ashworth - State Coordinator for Nebraska Operation Lifesaver and McGruff the National Crime Dog and his wife.



Brainstorming Session with Falls City team



McGruff the National Crime Dog meets Rick Varas the County Commissioner



Some of the highlights that the team determined for their mission on reducing train related incidents was to educate the public and enforcement (deterrence) utilizing law enforcement. Sheriff Hardisty stated that when they apprehend a trespasser they contact the Railroad Police to determine what they want done with the trespasser.

Everyone agreed that there was not a blocked crossing issue with train cars, but rather gates being down and no train which causes traffic congestion and driver concerns. They would like to see some Officer on a Train exercises in the community that would help with law enforcement.

Driver's education is held in the spring or summer months and everyone on the team agreed that Railroad Safety curriculum should be included in the class. Tom stated that he may not always be available for these classes and they discussed volunteers in the community. Several volunteer ideas were discussed utilizing Falls City residents. The Sheriff and Police Departments would ask if anyone in their departments would be interested in volunteering as well.

Note: Full notes will be available at the State Committee Meeting in November. Hope you can come!

Nebraska Operation Lifesaver held a safety presentation for SENCA (Southeast Nebraska Community Action Head Start at 320 West 14th Street in Falls City.





The students were so well behaved and loved their Sly Fox and Birdie coloring books.



McGruff the National Crime Dog was the icing on the cake after the rail safety lessons were given!

Falls City was such a delightful community:



Downtown was charming along with the artwork in different areas of the downtown area.

The Falls City meeting was a success and was a great template for us to follow at our next County brainstorming meetings. Nebraska Operation Lifesaver has been able to make some great networking opportunities and some go-to safety partners.