



**Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit
Safety Education School Outreach Program**

October 26, 2016

BACKGROUND

At Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit (SMART), safety is our top priority. SMART has an extensive community outreach rail safety program. SMART's rail safety outreach includes meeting with businesses, schools, community groups, and residents along the 43-mile initial alignment. It also includes working closely with local and regional media, safety campaigns using social media, and safety advertising in both English and Spanish to reach the broadest audience possible.

An integral part of SMART's safety outreach efforts is its Rail Safety Education School Outreach Program for students in grades K-12. SMART has developed age-appropriate presentations and safety education materials for three levels: Kindergarten through grade 5; grades 6 through 8; and grades 9 through 12.

SMART produces rail safety posters, coloring sheets, and activity books to help underscore its safety messaging for students of all ages. SMART also provides safety flashers for students' bikes and backpacks, and has received a grant for bike safety helmets, which are incorporated into its student safety outreach program.

Since 2012, SMART has also been partnering with Operation Lifesaver, a national nonprofit rail safety education organization, on a variety of programs from national rail safety campaigns to Bike Safety Rodeos to a theater group presenting plays centering on rail safety for elementary school students.

In 2015, SMART also launched a rail safety website: www.BeTrackSmart.org that provides rail safety tips, resources, and materials in English and Spanish for all ages.

Today, SMART's rail safety program is thriving, with more than 25,000 students reached from fall of 2015 through October of 2016. SMART's partnership with schools is crucial to keeping our children safe, aware and well-informed.

SCHOOL SAFETY PRESENTATIONS

Year	PRESENTATIONS			ATTENDEES		
	SONOMA	MARIN	TOTALS	SONOMA	MARIN	TOTAL
Fall of 2015	8	15	23	2,292	7,361	9,653
2016	17	25	42	6,345	9,729	16,074
			65			25,727

RAIL SAFETY MATTERS

Safety around trains and tracks is a growing national concern. SMART's initial 43-mile corridor includes more than 60 at-grade railroad crossings. Sonoma and Marin counties have not seen passenger train service for more than 50 years. Many people, including children, have become accustomed to using railroad tracks as a path of travel, or playing on or near the tracks. Walking on railroad tracks is not only dangerous, it is illegal. Motorists also continue to stop their vehicles on the railroad tracks, creating additional safety concerns. Stopping on the tracks is dangerous and illegal, even if no train is visible.

California leads the nation in fatalities involving railroad crossings and on railroad tracks. In 2015 alone, 98 people were killed in California and 47 injured while walking on railroad tracks, according to the Federal Railroad Administration. In addition, 32 people were killed in collisions at railroad crossings.



SMART outreach team member Libby Dippel talks about rail safety with Pleasant Valley Elementary School students in Novato.

OPERATION LIFESAVER

SMART partners with Operation Lifesaver—a national nonprofit public safety education organization dedicated to reducing the number of collisions, injuries and fatalities at rail crossings—to present age-appropriate programming for students. Messaging is carefully reviewed and presenters go through a training program provided by Operation Lifesaver.

The Operation Lifesaver network of volunteers deliver rail safety education in all 50 states. Operation Lifesaver’s national public awareness safety campaign, “See Tracks? Think Train!” focuses on changing people’s behavior around railroad tracks and crossings.

SMART, in conjunction with Operation Lifesaver, also produces rail safety brochures, posters and materials in both English and Spanish.

In addition, Operation Lifesaver offers educational resources, including rail safety lesson plans by grade level, classroom award certificates, and rail safety videos tailored for students. Visit <https://oli.org/education-resources>



SMART produces age-appropriate rail safety posters, activity books and coloring sheets in English and in Spanish.



CONNECT WITH US

Interested in a presentation for your school?

Contact SMART's outreach team at (707) 794-3077, or email Libby Dippel at edippel@SonomaMarinTrain.org

You can also connect with us on:

Facebook: www.facebook.com/SonomaMarinTrain

Twitter: www.twitter.com/SmartTrain

Instagram: www.instagram.com/SonomaMarinTrain