Pedestrian Rail Safety Symposium
Speaker and Session Leaders Bios

Michael K. Bennett, HazMat Inspector, Federal Railroad Administration
Michael Bennett began his railroad career in 1968 with the Rock Island Railroad on a traveling signal gang and eventually became a dispatcher. He joined Metra in 1979 and held positions of Safety & Rules Examiner, Senior Trainmaster, Assistant Superintendent and retired as Senior Manager of Communications overseeing the GPS Center.

Bennett joined the Federal Railroad Administration in February 2007 as Grade Crossing Manager and was promoted to Hazardous Materials Inspector in May 2009.

Joseph Buerger, Chief of Police, City of Lake Forest, IL
Chief Buerger has worked for The City of Lake Forest for 23 years and has been Chief for the last 3 ½ years. He started out as a patrolman and has been assigned to various positions throughout the department, including Accident Investigator, Field Training Officer, Sergeant, Commander, and Deputy. He is a member of the board for the Northern Illinois Regional Crime Lab, and the Lake County Metropolitan Enforcement Group. He is a member of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Lake County Chiefs of Police Association and the FBI National Academy Associates.

Chief Buerger has a Bachelors Degree in Public Administration from Roosevelt University, and a Master Degree in Law Enforcement from Western Illinois University. He attended the 207th Session of the FBI National Academy in Quantico Virginia.

Norman Carlson, Chairman, Carlson Consulting International, LLC
Norman Carlson retired from Arthur Andersen in 2000 after a 34-year career with the Firm. From 1990 to 2000 he was the Worldwide Managing Partner of the Transportation Industry Practices. Since 2000, Norm has served as an executive in short-term assignments including being Chairman at the Board of RailWorks during its successful bankruptcy reorganization. In addition to charitable and railroad-related activities, he is a member of the Business Advisory Committee of the Transportation Center at Northwestern University and Moderator of the Center’s Sandhouse Gang, the monthly railroad industry discussion group.

Clarke L. Caywood, Professor, Integrated Marketing Communications, Medill School of Journalism, Northwestern University
Clarke Caywood is Professor of Integrated Marketing Communications and Director of the Graduate Program in Public Relations in the Medill Graduate School, at Northwestern University. Professor Caywood teaches graduate classes in crisis management, media planning, communications management, marketing and public relations. Dr. Caywood has published numerous articles and book chapters on advertising and marketing, as well as research on values in contemporary advertising and integrated marketing communications. He is a leading speaker on the use of databases for media and print tracking for public relations and marketing.

Professor Caywood is editor of the best selling Handbook of Strategic Public Relations & Integrated Communications (McGraw Hill, 1997). He is author of a chapter on public relations for the book Kellogg on Advertising and Media, 2009. He was named by PRWeek as one of the most influential 100 PR people of the 20th century (PRWeek, October 18, 1999) and one of the top 10 outstanding educators in 2000 (PRWeek, February 7, 2000). He was named Educator of the Year by the Public Relations Society of America in 2002-2003. He is a board member of the global disaster relief organization, Adimatrix.org; a former members of the policy staff of a former Wisconsin Governor and Wisconsin Attorney General. He serves as political expert for ABC-TV WLS in Chicago. Caywood received his PhD in Business and Journalism-Mass Communications, from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.
James J. Cowhey, Jr., Mayor, City of Lake Forest, IL
James J. Cowhey, Jr. became Mayor of The City of Lake Forest on May 4, 2009. Prior to taking office, he was Fourth Ward Alderman for six years from May 2000 to May 2006. During this time he served as Chairman of the Public Works Committee and as a member of the Finance Committee. As Alderman he also served on a number of ad hoc committees, including the Water Plant Committee, Rt. 60 Planning and Acquisition Committees, Municipal Services Committee, Sewer Improvement Committee and Street Light Committee.

Mr. Cowhey is President of Land and Lakes, an Illinois-based real estate, construction and environmental services firm. He is a graduate of John Carroll University and received his MBA from Northwestern University. With his wife Lisa and three children, the Cowheys have been active members of the Lake Forest community for over 14 years.

Bret Johnson, Associate Director, The Transportation Center, Northwestern University
Johnson is the Associate Director of the Transportation Center, a position he assumed in July, 2009. He has been the Director the Center for the Commercialization of Innovative Transportation Technology, a USDOT funded University Transportation Center, since 2007. He previously served as Director for the Homeland Security Innovation and Entrepreneurship Center and as Assistant Director for the Illinois Technology Enterprise Center (ITEC) at Northwestern, both technology-based economic development programs funded by the State of Illinois. Prior to joining Northwestern, Bret held engineering and project management positions at 3COM, Northrop-Grumman, and GE Astrosepace. He received an M.A. in Science, Technology and Public Policy from The George Washington University, an M.S. in Aeronautics and Astronautics from Stanford University, and a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

Emily R. Kushto, PhD Candidate, McCormick School of Engineering, Northwestern University
Emily Kushto is a fourth year Ph.D. student in Transportation Engineering at Northwestern University where her current research is focused on the adaptive management of stakeholder impacts during roadway construction. Emily’s research has been presented at the Annual Inter-University Symposium on Infrastructure Management and at Transportation Research Board meetings. Emily is the recipient of various awards including the Dwight David Eisenhower Transportation Fellowship and the Institute of Transportation Engineers Illinois Section Scholarship.

Prior to entering Northwestern, Emily worked as a senior civil engineer for the rehabilitation of Wacker Drive in Chicago, the design and building of the World Trade Center Transportation Hub in New York City, and the design and building of Metro-North Railroad and Long Island Railroad projects in New York. Emily received a BS degree in Civil Engineering at Bucknell University and a Master’s degree in Transportation at the Illinois Institute of Technology. She is a licensed professional engineer (PE) in New York and Illinois.

Reilly McCarren, Chair, Operation LifeSaver
Reilly McCarren is the National Chair of Operation LifeSaver. He is also Co-CEO, Partners Rail Group, Owner and Chairman of the Arkansas & Missouri Railroad; Former President, Wisconsin Central Railroad; and represents the American Association of Short Line and Regional Railroads. McCarren holds a BS and MS in Civil Engineering (Transportation Systems Analysis) from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Operation Lifesaver is a non-profit, international continuing public education program first established in 1972 to end collisions, deaths and injuries at places where roadways cross train tracks, and on railroad rights-of-way. Operation Lifesaver programs are sponsored cooperatively by federal, state, and local government agencies; highway safety organizations, and the nation’s railroads.

Ian Savage, Assistant Chair, Department of Economics; Professor of Transportation, The Transportation Center, Northwestern University
Ian Savage has been a member of the faculty of both the Department of Economics and the Transportation Center at Northwestern University since 1986. His research has been concentrated in two areas: urban public transportation, and transportation safety. He has published widely on the economics of transit finances and operations and, more specifically, the impacts of competition and privatization. During the past twenty years, he has conducted research into the safety performance, and the effectiveness of safety regulations, in most modes of transportation – with particular emphasis on the trucking and railroad industries.