Norfolk Southern Grade Crossing Safety: 98th Annual Purdue Road School
Norfolk Southern
Grade Crossing Safety Group

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Norfolk Southern is extremely concerned about the exposure of vehicle/train collisions. We are working with State and National Operation Lifesaver programs in an effort to reduce these exposures. Operation Lifesaver is built upon three key elements; Education of drivers regarding the dangers at highway/rail intersections, Enforcement of existing highway laws, and Engineering of the crossing.

**EDUCATION**

**ENFORCEMENT**

**ENGINEERING**

In our proactive safety program we are attempting to reduce exposure by consolidation of redundant at-grade crossings and it is against the national trend to open any new crossings unless other crossings are closed that would mitigate the impact of the new crossing.
Federal Railroad and Federal Highway Administrations set a goal to consolidate 25% of the nation’s highway/rail crossings. This would be done by the consolidation of redundant crossings. (Crossings within a couple hundred feet of each other) and crossings deemed to be a cut through or short cut.
Did You Know?

• Approx. 240,000 Public and Private Crossing In United States.

• Several hundred persons are killed or injured each year at highway-rail grade crossings.

• On Norfolk Southern in IN in 2011, 43 incidents and thus far in 2012 there have already been 11 YTD.
On Norfolk Southern we have an average of 2 crossings per track mile. We also have approximately 26,000 at-grade crossings on our 22 state system (16,000 Public & 10,000 Private).

When we look to consolidate crossings we look at in from a “Safety Corridor” approach. (Close one upgrade another) or consolidate crossings that are only used as cut-through or short cuts.
Working With Public Crossings

- This process involves working with various local, state and federal officials
- County Commissioners, City Council, Mayors, City/County Engineers, Planners and DOT Officials
Benefits Of Consolidation

- Fewer Intersections
- Elimination of Vehicle Train Collisions
- Redirection of Limited Resources to crossings which have greater public need
- Reduction of Maintenance Cost
- Less Noise
Terms such as “crossing closure” and “crossing elimination” have two shortcomings:

- They convey an incomplete image of what is involved in closing a crossing; and
- They generate connotations of something being taken away.

Crossing consolidation more positively characterizes projects that reduce the number of crossings and reroute traffic to adjacent crossings.

“Crossing Consolidation”
Consolidation Selection Process

- Crossing – Redundant, Unused Private, Unpaved road, etc.
- Alternate Access Readily Available
- Effect on Emergency Services, School Bus Routes, Businesses, etc.
- Crossing geometrics
Consolidation Selection Process

- Any Crossing without AWD
- Crossings with 4 or more trains crossings per day
- History – Crashes, Near Misses, Trespass, Gate Breakage, etc.
We get asked why close this one if we have not had any collisions. Approximately 85% of our collisions occur where there has not been a collision ever or within the past 6/7 years. We try to reduce collisions by reducing the exposure. By reducing the number of crossings you reduce the number of opportunities that a train and car can have a collision.
The approach to working with private crossings is designed to balance the goal of reducing the number of at-grade crossings on the Norfolk Southern system with the need to address the rights of those affected by crossing closures.
The following are indicators of rights to a private crossing:

- the property owner has no alternative access to public roadways;
- the crossing has been actively used by the property owner for a significant period of time;
- the crossing is known to be an active farm crossing; or
- the property owner claims that rights to the crossing were reserved in the railroad’s source deed, or otherwise claims that rights were granted to the property owner.
Project Site Documentation Checklist

**Photograph & Document:**

- **Photograph:**
  - DOT #
  - Facing North, East, South, and West

- **Document:**
  - Crossing Owner Contact Information (City Official or Individual)
    - Address (Closest Street)
    - Zip Code
    - Phone Number
Negotiation & Incentives for Consolidation Projects
Progression of a Crossing Consolidation Project
First Train Through After Consolidation
The End Product of the Consolidation Process
Common Sense Consolidation
Aesthetical Enhancement
Railroad Crossing Safety in Michigan