

Enthusiasm Grows During Second Industry Safety Week

by Ray Lapierre

National Elevator Escalator Safety Awareness Week (Safety Week) November 5-11, 1995 was marked by increases in the number, size and diversity of activities and events throughout the U.S. The Elevator Escalator Safety Foundation selected the early weeks of November to reach the riding public prior to the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, when parents and children use elevators and escalators extensively. This time frame also allowed the simultaneous participation of U.S. public schools through implementation of the Safe-T Rider© Program in second grade classrooms. Over 150,000 second graders, nationwide, learned about elevator and escalator safety and took the message home to another 75,000 adults and siblings.

Although the number of riders reached is difficult to estimate, indications are that the message, again, went out to millions of riders. In addition, many groups have involved local and state governments, and the user community to a larger extent than last year. The 1994 effort was a learning experience for many groups, leading to bigger programs in 1995 as shown in the following promotions held during Safety Week.

Boston, Massachusetts

The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (known as the "T" in the Boston area) and Millar Elevator Service Co. developed their second annual campaign to educate "T" customers on the safe use of escalators and elevators the campaign being appropriately held during Safety Week. Millar's Greg Laufersweiler and Jim Ludwig teamed with the Rita Bartolomeu, "T"'s safety information analyst, and Mike Foley, "T" safety program coordinator for the celebration. Four stations were targeted: the Aquarium, Downtown Crossing, Government Center and Harvard Square. Members of the "T" Safety Department and Millar answered questions, showed the Safe-T Rider© video and handed out 25,000 leaflets dealing with escalator and elevator safety. The number of leaflets disseminated was double that of last year. Audio messages were played throughout the system stations. As a long-term reminder, permanent posters were placed on display in close proximity to escalators throughout the entire metro system. The posters covered a wide range of hints, intended to promote safe escalator use among the "T"'s 600,000 daily riders.

Chattanooga, Tennessee

Martha Hulgán, vice president of Elevator Maintenance and Repair Company and a long-time supporter and volunteer for the Foundation, kicked off a Safety Week celebration in Chattanooga with a program in the schools and the stationing of Safe-T Rider© in Hamilton Place Mall where coloring books and stickers were passed out. The

Chattanooga Free Press (circulation 115,000) covered the event and ran a story urging caution on the part of parents and children.

Denver, Colorado

During Safety Week, Denver volunteers instructed at 20 different schools, marking the second year of the union-led program. Denver Local #25 of the International Union of Elevator Constructors and Denver-area elevator company volunteers reached over 1,700 Colorado second graders, and they have not stopped! By the end of the 1995/96 school year, they plan to reach another 1,300. Additionally, Schindler Elevator Corp.'s Russell Holt, who also served as project coordinator, managed to conduct a senior safety program during a very busy week for the industry in Colorado.

Fifty-three constructors from nine area companies participated: Amtech Elevator, Centric Elevator, Colorado Elevator, Dover Elevator Systems, Inc., Millar Elevator Service Co., Montgomery KONE Inc., Otis Elevator Co., Schindler Elevator Corp. and U.S. Elevator Corp. All company employees involved in the program were allowed two hours of wages as compensation for the time spent presenting the program. The employees volunteered their time to train and enlist the schools.

Local area companies Schindler, Montgomery KONE Inc., Dover Elevator Systems, Inc. and Local 25 provided financial assistance for the Local to obtain a Safe-T Rider© costume on permanent lease. Safe-T Rider© made numerous appearances in the schools during the week as well. As the number of children reached escalated, the number of volunteers and participating companies increased.

Lebanon, Ohio

Once again, local second and third graders visited the Lebanon headquarters of Fujitec America elevator manufacturer and service provider during National Elevator Escalator Safety Awareness Week, November 5-11th. Lori Ward, marketing communications manager for Fujitec, and the company staff hosted students from Cincinnati Country Day School, South Lebanon Elementary and Holbrook Elementary in Lebanon. Fujitec volunteers taught students about the history and safety features of the equipment, presented the Safe-T Rider© video and led students on a tour of Fujitec's 15-story R&D tower, which houses four elevators and one escalator. There, Safe-T Rider©, alias Engineer Matt Graham, demonstrated equipment safety tips for the visitors. Graham and 30 Fujitec volunteers greeted 235 students in the field trip to the facility. "Fujitec America's participation in Safety Week and the 210-foot R&D tower stand as a symbol of the company's ongoing commitment to passenger safety and comfort, as well as product durability and reliability," commented Ward.

New Haven, Connecticut

Connecticut Governor John J. Roland proclaimed the week of November 5-11th as National Elevator Escalator Safety Awareness Week, kicking off another highly

successful Safety Week in that area. The New Haven School participated in the Safe-T Rider© program again this year. Connecticut Elevator's Laura Whaley and Eastern Elevator's Paul Farnsworth were active in local schools and area malls. At Connecticut Post Mall in Milford, volunteers from several area companies were on hand for the entire Safety Week. They had an excellent booth location with a three-stop, glass enclosed elevator to one side and escalators directly in front. Ample evidence existed that the public needed the exposure to the safety rules. Whaley commented, "It amazes me the way the public takes the escalators for granted. One of the problems we noticed was that children are dropped off at the mall to spend the day with no adult supervision. They ride up and down for fun."

Volunteers handed out coloring books and stickers and spoke with hundreds of shoppers, who were impressed with the effort to promote safety on escalators and elevators. The display included an operational scale model of an escalator, provided by Schindler Elevator Corp., and a scale model of a traction elevator from Otis Elevator Co. Children and adults were fascinated by the models. All had the opportunity to view the Safe-T Rider© video and the Schindler video "Ups & Downs," both very well done and informative. Again, there was a great deal of support from committee members. Whaley concluded, "I had a great deal of help. I could not ask for a better group of people! We are committed to providing information to the public that is productive, entertaining and a valuable learning experience for adults and children. If we prevent one child or adult from needless injury, it is well worth the effort."

New York City, New York

The state and local governments in New York set the spotlight on industry safety and Safety Week, with proclamations from the governor, the mayor of New York City and the New York City (NYC) Transit. Governor George Pataki, Mayor Richard Guiliani and Transit President Allen F. Kiepper all signed proclamations declaring Safety Week in the Empire State. Tina Drummond, of Adams Elevator Equipment Co., was instrumental in obtaining the proclamations from the governor and the mayor, much to the delight of her boss Nick Kassetas, who is also Elevator Conference of New York (ECNY) president.

The New York celebrations were part of the ongoing program and partnership with NYC Transit that highlights safe use of short-range vertical transportation by the general public. The committee, led by ECNY Safety Week Chairman William McLean, of the NYC Transit, arranged for information booths in four Transit locations and at NBC's Rockefeller Center, showcasing industry equipment used in high-rise buildings and large complexes. Display booths were showcased at Jamaica Center, Grand Central Station, 34th & 6th Avenue Station and Borough Hall Station. Visitors were given an ECNY packet consisting of several safety items, including rules, bookmarks, coloring books and stickers. Over 8,000 were handed out to subway riders, eight times the number handed out during last year's celebration. The displays also offered the public an opportunity to better understand the operation of elevators and escalators, through continuous showing of safety videos. The Transit's Staci Williams and Sealeze Company's Nicole Alasio appeared as Safe-T Rider© in several locations, encouraging passersby to take and read

the information. One measure of success: the lack of brochures and materials picked up by the cleaning crews, a regular occurrence for most handouts. The Foundation and ECNY received numerous calls from the public, a Parent-Teacher Association president and teachers requesting Safe-T Rider© and other materials for their children, and participation information. Kassetas commented, "The NYC Transit and ECNY are sponsoring Safety Week because we want people to understand the need to practice safe riding skills when using the equipment."

ECNY also held its monthly meeting in Rockefeller Center, as guest of James Farmer, of NBC's building management staff. Attendees viewed, on giant screen TV, the 6 o'clock newscast segment on escalator safety, shot earlier during the Safety Week campaign in the NBC Building. The local NBC anchor, airing the safety segment, stated he did not realize the scope and importance of this safety campaign. Safe-T Rider© was also interviewed regarding Safety Week at the close of the NBC Saturday Today program, as well as during a CNBC news program. The combined television exposure was the first significant coverage in the NYC area, enabling the industry's safety message to reach millions of riders far beyond New York City.

Summary

Whether these events were large or small, each sponsored celebration during Safety Week helped bring an important safety message to many riders, building an awareness among millions of Americans of how to use the industry's equipment properly and safely. Participants should be congratulated for their dedication and execution of their plans.

It's not too early to start planning for the 1996 celebration, which will be held the week of November 10-16th (delayed in deference to the national election). A Safety Week Planning Guide and a wide range of educational materials are available from the Foundation at a nominal cost. The suggestions, ideas and comments from event organizers relate to publicity and setting up an effective event. Next year, the program will also be available to the Canadian industry, for a northern celebration. For more information, please call the Foundation at 1-800-949-6442.