

Little Obie to bring railroad safety awareness to University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Contacts:

Tim Gress, Managing Director, Rail Transportation and Engineering Center (RailTEC), (217) 244-7158, tgress@illinois.edu

Eric Graf, CN Police Department, (708) 259-8875, eric.graf@cn.ca

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Educating the public about railway safety will be the aim of CN Railroad (CN) when they bring a miniature train, known as Little Obie, to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign campus next month.

The locomotive's appearance is part of the 2014 Global Level Crossing Safety and Trespass Prevention Symposium being held at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign on August 4-5, 2014. The locomotive, which has a connected flatcar and caboose, will be offering short rides around Bardeen Quad while CN representatives talk about the dangers of trespassing on railway property and the importance of safety at crossings.

Little Obie is a frequent attraction at schools, churches and communities to promote railway safety, said Timothy Gress, Managing Director of the Rail Transportation and Engineering Center at the university. Everyone is welcome to ride the train and learn about rail hazards, although children are the primary audience.

"CN is concerned about the number of fatalities and accidents associated with crossings," Gress said. "They want to educate kids early on about the hazards of playing near railroad tracks and railroad crossings."

Free rides on Little Obie will be offered to the public and symposium participants on August 4 from 2– 4 p.m. and August 5 from 5– 7 p.m. The train will load on Green Street between Wright Street and Mathews Avenue (across from the Illini Union). More information about Little Obie can be found at www.cn.ca/layouts/CN/Obie/01/en.htm. An overview of the symposium can be found at ict.uiuc.edu/railroad/GLXS/overview.php.

Writer: Kristina Shidlauski, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign