



ASSOCIATION OF
AMERICAN RAILROADS



NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Warner Bros urged to take action to prevent rail suicides;
Hotline number should be included on movie, DVD**

American freight railroads have joined with one of the nation's leading suicide prevention groups in urging Warner Bros. to help prevent suicides on the railroad tracks. A new movie scheduled for release by the studio today, *Rails and Ties*, portrays the heartbreaking story of a woman who dies by suicide on railroad tracks.

Tragically, incidents like the one portrayed in the movie occur all too often. The leading cause of railroad accidents occurs simply because many people don't understand the inherent dangers of being on or around railroad tracks, including the fact that it takes a freight train more than a mile to come to a complete stop.

Many of these railroad accidents are, unfortunately, suicide attempts. Jerry Reed, executive director of the Suicide Prevention Action Network USA (SPAN USA), notes that 60 to 90 percent of all suicides are associated with a mental illness and/or substance use disorder. Sadly, two-thirds of people with mental disorders do not seek treatment.

There is a national hotline (1-800-273-TALK) for those who struggle with mental health concerns, Reed said. Warner Bros. can provide a great service to the public by displaying the national suicide hotline phone number as part of the introduction to the movie now in theaters and as the movie goes to DVD.

It is also important that the general population know the warning signs of suicide. If noticed, a friend, family member or coworker can take that person to a professional who can help.

As demonstrated by the story in *Rails and Ties*, rail suicides can leave families, communities and rail employees devastated by the loss.

We all have a role to play to support prevention, encourage those who struggle with mental illness to seek help, and provide support for those left behind after a suicide occurs, said Edward R. Hamberger, president and CEO of the Association of American Railroads. The railroad industry and the suicide prevention community are working together to reduce the number of suicides not only on the railroads, but across the nation.

Suicide is a national public health problem that results in 32,000 deaths annually.

Many suicides are preventable if we all do our part, Reed added. We can do that by eliminating barriers for access to care, removing the stigma surrounding mental health issues, supporting prevention and early detection, and supporting research and treatment for mental illness and substance use disorders.

1-800-273-TALK is the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, a 24-hour toll-free suicide prevention service available to anyone in crisis.

(To view a letter sent to Warner Bros, visit www.aar.org/AAR_SPAN_LTR_TO_WB_RT.pdf)