

# d/p-PRO™

SPRING 2021 • VOLUME 12 • NUMBER 1

Saving Lives Through Education



SEE PAGE 20!

# WHEN TIMING IS OF THE Essence

## ISSUE SPOTLIGHT:

- // Ready, Respond, Recover
- // The Importance of Telecom Damage Prevention

## PLUS:

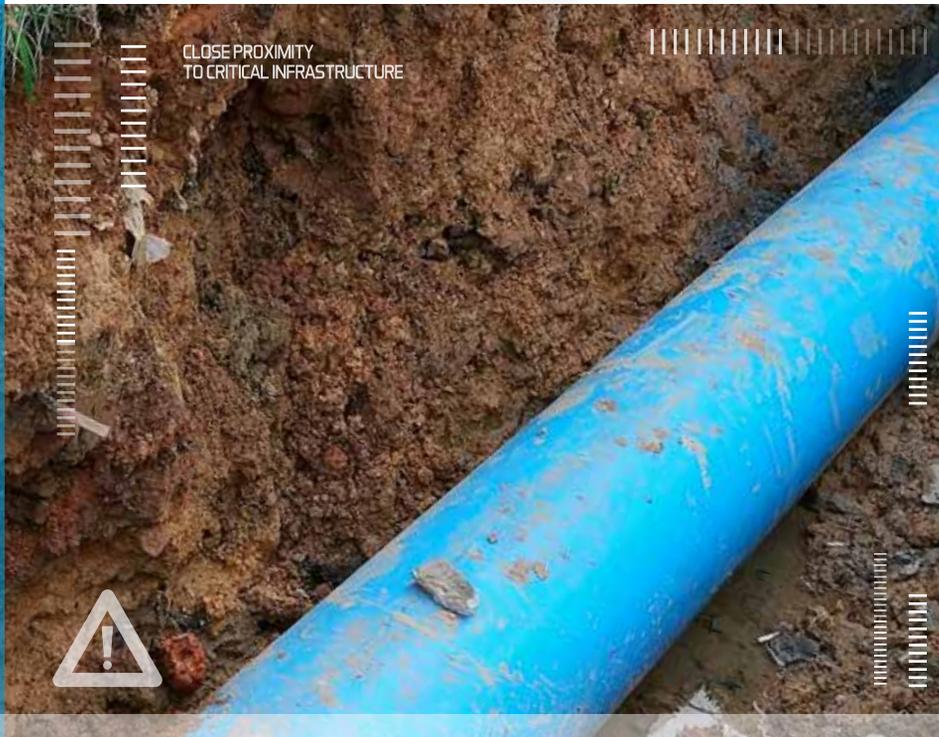
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*The Locator's Role in  
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# Industry Appeal Survey

**THANK YOU** in advance for participating in this survey. The research contributes to the development of our education, live events, magazine content and, ideally, challenges all stakeholders to expand their knowledge base and increase efforts to save lives.

Complete this survey to be entered in a drawing to receive a FREE Yeti mug. Results will be published in a future issue of dp-PRO. Both the survey and results (once available) are available on dp-PRO.com.

*Our thanks to PelicanCorp for helping to underwrite the cost of this research. Individual responses are not shared with the underwriter or sold in any way. Infrastructure Resources employees assisting with research will have access to responses as needed.*

## 1. Which statement best describes your involvement in recruiting and hiring new employees?

- I am instrumental in creating recruitment and hiring plans and/or policies
- I am instrumental in executing recruitment and hiring processes
- I am affected by company decisions regarding recruitment and hiring

## 2. In the past twelve months, has your company had difficulties attracting new recruits? (check all that apply)

- Yes, entry-level
- Yes, experienced, supervisory
- Yes, field personnel
- Yes, office personnel
- No

## 3. In your experience, which positions are hardest for your company to fill? (check all that apply)

- Field Operations (entry-level)
- Field Operations (experienced, supervisory)
- Field Operations (management)
- Office Personnel (entry-level)
- Office Personnel (experienced, supervisory)
- Office Personnel (management)
- N/A

## 4. Is your company losing business due to its inability to fill roles?

- Yes
- No

## 5. Are you carrying a heavier workload due to your company's inability to fill roles?

- Yes
- No

## 6. Has your company increased pay and/or benefits in an effort to attract qualified candidates to the industry?

- Yes
- No

## 7. Has your company decreased qualifying criteria in an effort to attract candidates to the industry?

- Yes
- No

## 8. Which of these factors contribute to the shortage of young recruits to the industry? (check all that apply)

- Associated with the use of fossil fuels
- Industry growth
- Lack of interest/motivation
- Poor salary/benefits
- No opportunities for advancement
- Not seen as a desirable career option

## 9. Which of these do you believe is most likely to attract young recruits to the industry? (check all that apply)

- Company sponsored training
- Flexible schedules
- Increased benefits
- Increased salary
- Increased focus on renewable energy

## 10. How do you currently recruit new hires? (check all that apply)

- Referrals
- Company website
- Online jobsites
- Social Media
- Job fairs
- Recruiter
- School career offices

## 11. What category best describes the type of work your company does?

- Engineering
- Excavating
- Facility Owner
- GIS/Mapping
- Gov't/Regulatory
- Locating
- Notification Center

## 12. Where do you work?

- USA
- Canada
- Other

After completing this survey, **snap a pic and email it to [info@emailir.com](mailto:info@emailir.com)** or visit [dp-PRO.com/surveys](http://dp-PRO.com/surveys) to complete it online.



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# HOT #TAGS



**#KnowWhatsBelow**



**#KnowWhatsBelow**

## WHAT'S TRENDING



Follow these companies on Facebook



**Women in Utilities**, A podcast by *Madhavi Shankarling*  
 A monthly podcast to showcase women who work in energy and utilities. Their stories, their advice and their perspective on the future of the industry. The first episode features Dr. Lindsay Jenkins, Vice President of Strategy and Technical Operations at Urbint.



**The NE Ohio Regional Sewer District Twitter and TikTok accounts**

Really, we promise. The sewer district serving Northeast Ohio has amassed over 12,000 followers on Twitter, and we can see why. Visit the budding sewer influencers at @neorsd to see an endless stream of infrastructure memes.





# SOCIAL INITIATIVE

## #MoveOverSlowDown

When you see first responders, working vehicles, and other emergency workers stopped on the side of the road with alternately flashing lights on, please #MoveOverSlowDown. We all play a vital part in keeping each other safe at roadway incidents.



# WHAT DO YOU THINK?

### This issue's question:

There are predictions that this Spring will be an abnormally busy dig season – Will that prediction come true?

- A) YES
- B) No, it will be less busy
- C) No, it will remain the same as previous years

To answer click **HERE**

<https://dp-pro.com/survey/>



## Louisiana Pipeliners Association

The LOUISIANA PIPELINERS ASSOCIATION is a non-political and non-profit corporation formed in 1996 for the purpose of promoting all aspects of the pipeline industry in Louisiana.

<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/4270364/> DP

# NEWS

## SOUTH CAROLINA INVESTS \$50M IN BROADBAND EXPANSION

South Carolina has invested \$50 million in federal COVID-19 relief funds in broadband expansion, providing mobile internet access to 92,000 student households and expanding broadband service to more than 25,000 homes, businesses and schools.

Broadband supports several functions that increasingly have become indispensable during the COVID-19 pandemic, including digital learning, digital commerce, work-from-home and telehealth services. The South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff (ORS) provided \$20 million in funding to procure more than 92,000 mobile hotspots and pay for monthly internet services for households with K-12 or college/university students under the poverty line. An additional \$29.7 million was allocated to infrastructure to build out broadband into some 550 target areas in the state that were underserved..



## Sunstate Acquires CASCADE

Sunstate Equipment Co. signed an agreement in November (2020) to acquire Cascade Shoring and Cascade Trench Safety. Cascade's business entities include rental branches in Portland and Seattle.

The acquisition marks the entry of Sunstate Equipment's Trench Safety Division into the Pacific Northwest. Sunstate's growth in the northwest has mirrored similar growth into new markets in the southeast – Georgia, Florida, North Carolina. In 2019, Sunstate also entered the specialized services niche of underground and confined space safety with the addition of its Trench Safety Division, which currently operates in Georgia, Oklahoma and Texas.

Sunstate has been in business for 43 years and was founded by Mike Watts, 2010 ARA Hall of Fame inductee.

## VIRGINIA GAS LEAK EXPLOSION

A gas leak explosion in Springfield, Virginia in February resulted in three Washington Gas employees being injured and two vehicles catching fire. Utility crews using a backhoe caused the gas line to explode. A Washington Gas crew had been excavating an underground gas line in the street when the line caught fire.

"The fire was being fed from a free-flowing, six-inch gas line," Fairfax County Fire Department said in a statement. Officials determined the fire was an accident and damages were estimated at approximately \$250,000.

## Jim Anspach Joins ProStar

ProStar Holdings, Inc. announced in January that Jim Anspach, a global expert in Subsurface Utility Engineering (SUE), has been named Chair of the company's Technology Advisory Board as well as a subject matter expert on the development of ProStar's Solution.

Anspach has more than 40 years of global experience in the utility engineering industry. He was a founding governor and President of the American Society of Civil Engineer's Utility Engineering & Surveying Institute (UESI).

"I am very pleased that Jim has joined ProStar and will Chair our Technology Advisory Board and also serve as a subject matter expert on SUE matters," said Page Tucker, CEO of ProStar. "Jim is not only a great addition to our company in terms of guiding our development and ensuring we adhere to industry standards, but he also brings a tremendous amount of credibility and visibility to ProStar."

ProStar specializes in the development of Precision Mapping Solutions. ProStar's Solution is designed to improve the business operations of any industry that requires the precise location of sub-surface infrastructure including utility, gas & oil, construction, engineering & surveying, 811 and contract locating.

# IN MEMORIAM

## LOSS FOR THE INDUSTRY:

### GINA MEEHAN-TAYLOR; PUBLIC AWARENESS SUPERVISOR, AMEREN ILLINOIS, 1963-2020

Gina Meehan-Taylor passed away on December 1, 2020. Gina worked with Ameren Illinois for 32 years and was widely respected within the company and the utility industry for her passionate advocacy for natural gas safety.

As Supervisor of Ameren's Gas Public Awareness Program, Gina worked throughout Illinois and nationally to advance the message of pipeline safety and damage prevention with customers, as well as with fire departments, police, public officials, and excavators.

Donations in Gina's memory may be made to the Alzheimer's Association or the Invictus Woods Sober Living Home in Peoria, Illinois.



## FATHER OF FIBER OPTICS:

### DR. NARINDER SINGH KAPANY, 1926-2020

Dr. Kapany, who coined the term "fiber optics" in an article in Scientific American magazine in 1960 died in December. Kapany was the first person to demonstrate how to use fiber optics in bundles to transmit light.

More than a scientist, Dr. Kapany specialized in the processes of innovation and the management of technology and technology transfer. Kapany published over 100 scientific papers and four books on optoelectronics and entrepreneurship.

Fortune named him one of seven 'Unsung Heroes' in their 'Businessmen of the Century' issue in 1999. He was awarded India's second highest civilian award, the Padma Vibhushan, posthumously in 2021.



## BEN MONTOYA:

### LEAD SAFELY... OTHERS WILL FOLLOW 1975-2021

Ben Montoya provided hours of training through his company, Tri-State Safety Services, to help advance safety. A military veteran with an infectious smile and a personality that lit up the room, Ben loved everything about teaching people to be safe and tried to make it fun. Highly respected by all who knew him, Ben was well-versed in training, accident/incident investigations, safety meetings and audits, and FMCSA DOT annual inspections.

Ben lost his battle to COVID-19 a month after his diagnosis. He will be dearly missed. Donations in Ben's memory may be made to the Woof Pet Rescue in Woodward, OK, the Beaver Creek Fire Department, or St. Jude's Hospital.



## Dig Safe Laws Continue to Promote Safety and Best Practices

In September 2019, in Farmington, Maine, a damaged and leaking underground propane line fueled a deadly explosion. This tragedy motivated Main's legislature to enact changes to the state's Dig Safe Law, which was signed into law by Governor Janet Mills in March of 2020. The new regulations have convinced many propane marketers of the benefits of locating, marking and avoiding underground lines.

In July of 2020, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis signed HB 1095 into law, amending the Underground Facility Damage Prevention and Safety Act. "The revised law establishes new noncriminal violations, enhanced penalties, more enforcement entities and incident reporting requirements," said Wendy Schaefer of Sunshine 811. Since then, some propane operators in Florida have voluntarily joined the 811 system.

New laws like these in Maine and Florida are focusing on safety solutions such as best practices and using the right equipment. "Locates are an important part of our business culture," explained Peter Dawson, general manager of Blossman Gas (Orlando). "It's not just about the safety of our customers, the employees and the environment; it also helps to set your business apart. Locating existing lines shows the customer that you are a professional and have the right equipment for the job." 

## READER RESPONSE

### Natural Gas Transporter Uses Geofencing to Share Safe Digging Message, by Casey Stempien (Winter, 2020)

"It's effective. Alberta One-Call Corporation has also taken advantage of geofencing to achieve target messaging. Given the high number of social media followers we've attracted and kept, namely our Twitter profile (@AlbertaOneCall), #geofencing has become a useful tool." - *Mike Sullivan, President, Alberta One-Call Corporation*

### Association Spotlight: Nulca New Zealand, by Elle Archer (Winter, 2020)

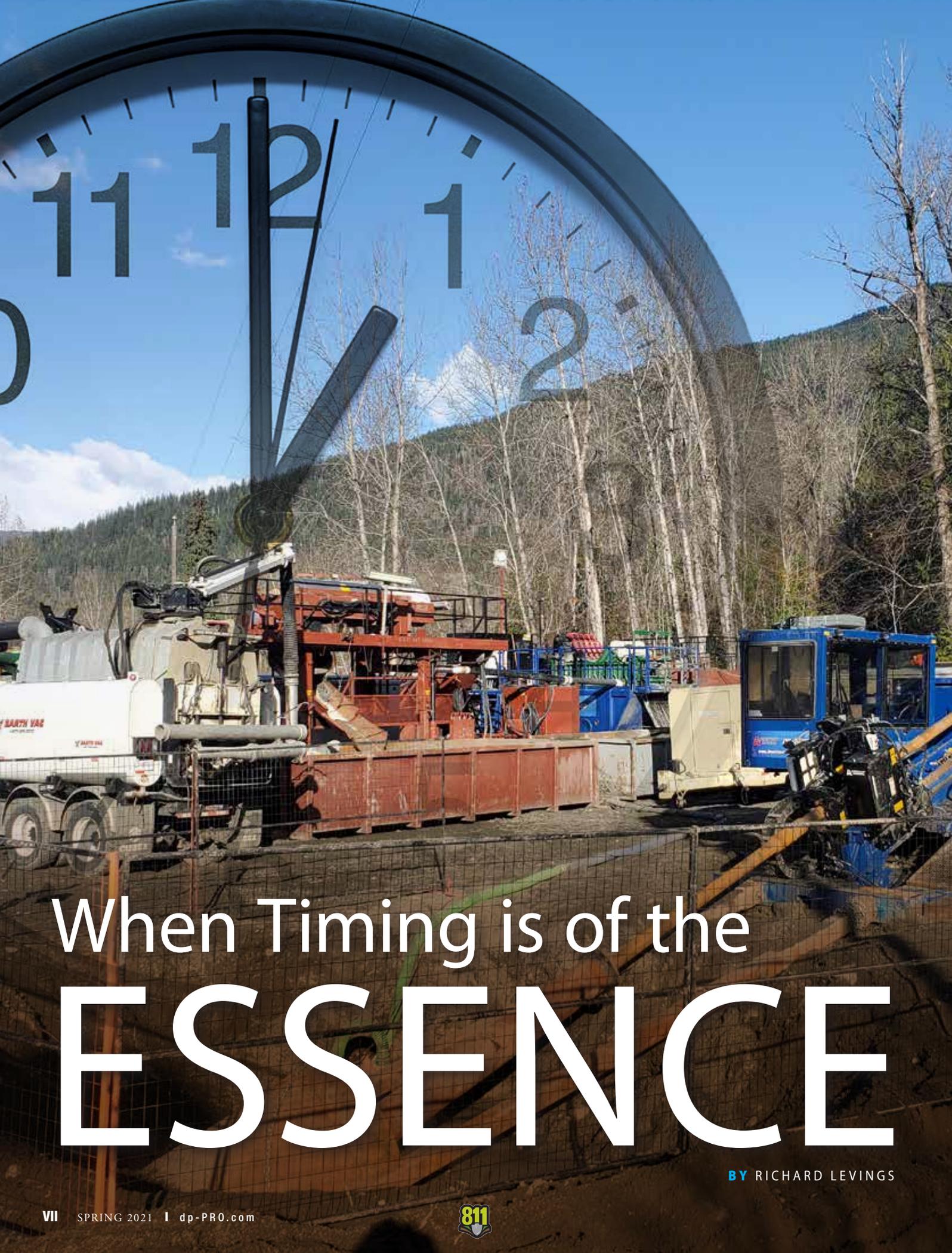
"Thank you for highlighting our narrative and the shared purpose initiative – cheers from Aotearoa New Zealand." - *Elle Archer, Executive Director, Nulca New Zealand*

"Brilliant! Thanks for sharing!" - *Goldie B, PM – Geotechnics Ltd. beforeUdig Certified Locator. Secretary, Nucla New Zealand*

"Great stuff, we really need to get this sorted." - *Shane Strode-Penny, Technical Specialist Construction, WorkSafe New Zealand*

### Montana Mandates the Submission of Accurate As-Builts by Utility Owners, by Geoff Zeiss (Winter, 2020)





# When Timing is of the ESSENCE

BY RICHARD LEVINGS



## WHEN TRYING TO BEAT THE CANADIAN WINTER, RELIABLE EQUIPMENT AND EFFECTIVE PLANNING HELP TO COMPLETE A CHALLENGING WATERLINE REPLACEMENT PROJECT.

Due to the frequent early onset of winter, underground construction projects in the Canadian Rocky Mountains are often cut short. For many contractors, the combination of working against winter's arrival and the difficult ground conditions that come with the terrain is enough to deter them from even bidding on a project.

However, when Paladin Crossings Inc. saw these challenges in a waterline replacement project located in Revelstoke, British Columbia, their prior experience working in similar harsh conditions gave them the confidence they needed to get the job done.

"Ground conditions were extremely challenging," said Jarrod MacKenzie, president of Paladin Crossings. "I know a lot of companies don't like taking that risk, but as long as we planned accordingly, we were comfortable and confident in taking on a project like this."

### The Importance of Planning

With a project that began in the fall of 2019, Paladin Crossings, a full-service project management company specializing in trenchless construction, knew that investing time in planning and choosing the right equipment were imperative to its success.

"We had to travel 10 to 12 hours from our yard to the project location before boots could even hit the ground," MacKenzie said. "If anything were to break down, it would jeopardize the project and any downtime would cost us money."



MacKenzie and his team spent three-plus weeks planning exactly how, and how long it would take, to get equipment to the jobsite. They had to load the equipment onto special trailers, which could only travel six hours a day to avoid high-traffic areas. In addition, all equip-

ment loads had to be regulated to meet the specific height and weight restrictions of roads through the mountains. Ultimately, it took Paladin Crossings four days to get equipment to the jobsite.

### A High-Risk Jobsite

The Paladin crew arrived onsite in Revelstoke in October to replace and upgrade a waterline, which was exposed in a riverbed due to high run off from the previous winter. With winter conditions fast approaching, the new crossing needed to be installed before snowfall and spring break-up, when the melting snow causes the ground to become soft, muddy, and unstable.

When the Paladin Crossings crew bid on this job, it was a "no hole, no pay" operation, and drilling through difficult ground conditions with unreliable equipment could cause the hole to collapse if breakdowns occurred. This would mean starting over with an entirely new bore, spending extra time and money on the jobsite.

"If our equipment broke down, the integrity of the hole would be jeopardized," MacKenzie said. "That's why planning for a jobsite like Revelstoke requires durable, reliable equipment."

### Reducing Downtime with a Durable Solution

MacKenzie and his crew chose equipment integral to supporting fluid management and creating the proper mud mixes needed to secure the hole, minimizing the potential for costly errors.

"We had American Augers equipment out there with us for three weeks," MacKenzie said. "I could tell it was built to last, and I felt we could actually depend on these machines if we were to get into a pickle."

While Paladin Crossings' experience working in isolated areas with unconsolidated materials was an asset on a project like Revelstoke, investing their time in planning and choosing the right equipment was what helped make the project a success. The crew was able to beat winter's arrival as they finished just three weeks after they arrived.

"The customer was expecting a lot of trouble with this crossing," MacKenzie said. "But we made it look easy. From my experience, durability and reliability do a lot for projects when timing is of the essence." 

# KNOWING WHAT'S BELOW WITH A **PASSION** TO SERVE, DEDICATION TO **SAFETY**, AND A “BIT” OF ARTIFICIAL **INTELLIGENCE!**

BY SCOTT CRAWFORD



Virginia811 embraces its role within damage prevention and the protection of underground utilities with a “passion to serve, dedication to safety.” This, in short, is Virginia811’s mantra, its mission, its core. Striving to provide exceptional service with a relentless pursuit to produce high quality, accurate, locate requests, the Notification Center is driven to protect life and property by ensuring information is conveyed from those excavating in Virginia to potentially affected utility members so they can mark underground utilities to mitigate the risk of accidents. We, as a team, are proud of this work and find it incredibly fulfilling.

One important way Virginia811 improves service is through Ticket Entry software for professional excavators. Through this service, excavators can avoid the time of calling 811 and simply create their locate requests online through a Web Ticket Entry (WTE) platform. Virginia 811 recently launched the Virginia811 Academy, an online learning platform that allows potential WTE users the ability to train on the ticket entry software at their convenience before setting up an online WTE account. This eliminates the previous need to sit through live training sessions, either in person or through video conferencing, although those options are still available for those not comfortable with online learning tools.

Service is only half of our mantra! With over 600,000 WTE tickets processed annually, Virginia811 wants to ensure these tickets are accurate and clearly convey the information locators need to accurately mark utilities. With such a large number of WTE tickets, Virginia811 directs resources toward auditing about 35% of these tickets. In 2019, Virginia811 was awarded a PHMSA Grant to partner with the Statistical Applications and Innovations Group (SAIG) at Virginia Tech to develop artificial intelligence to improve auditing efforts. This project was a huge success!

Analyzing over 1.3 million WTE locate requests, SAIG was able to create an algorithm that accounts for relationships between variables within tickets that can suggest

varying degrees of erroneous information. The result is an artificial intelligence model that can audit 100% of WTE tickets every 30 minutes. This allows, in near real time, directing of tickets identified as potentially containing errors to human auditors who can verify the accuracy of the ticket and, if inaccurate, contact the WTE user to correct concerns. Human auditors still review roughly 35% of the WTE tickets, but with the assistance of AI, the tickets they audit contain a higher probability of needing corrective action than relying on strictly random auditing as in the past. This greatly enhances overall QA/QC efforts, ensuring both service and safety are maintained.

Ultimately, Virginia811, or any notification center, can only play a role in safety if those engaging in excavation activities contact them to obtain a locate request ticket. We must all be diligent and vigilant, never cutting corners. The only way to truly know what is below, and safely excavate, is by contacting the One Call center, whether over the phone or online. Stay safe – and use the free services 811 offers. **DP**





We all have different aspects of our personality that come out in different situations. You are very different at the bar with your friends than you are in the sales meeting with your boss. Or at least I hope so. You do not want to be the executive at home when you're supposed to be the lover; or bring the negotiator to the daycare center.

Sometimes we can see people change before our eyes and wonder what happened. How did the conversation turn so quickly to vulnerable or angry? Or maybe you have even said to yourself, "I can't believe I said that!" Or "I hate when I act like that."

In those situations, you have changed ego states. Ego states are formed in childhood as part of our development. There are certain states we all share, like the Comedian and the Rebel. To what extent it gets developed varies from person to person. If you remember Chandler Bing from Friends, his go-to was humor. Anytime he was faced with a stressful situation, he would become a jokester.

We develop these states as ways to adapt and build resilience to situations around us. We all have many parts. I have a main part, called Capricorn, who keeps me on task, but can also be too strict and a workaholic. I have had to balance out that part with other parts of myself. We can have up to 50 ego states. Normally only 10 to 15 are executive (in charge) at any given time. Only one state can be in charge at one time, and we can switch pretty quickly. Usually, the right state is out for the job, but sometimes a different one gets a little too enthusiastic and wants to take over. We see this when we bring the Executive home and snap at the kids for spilling the milk, when our Nurturer should be the one there.

Here is a classic example of ego states switching: You are hungry, so your Happy Pig comes out and demands ice cream. Your Manager says, "Hey we agreed to not eat ice cream, we are trying to lose weight." Your Shameful Kid comes out and feels bad, then your Judge comes out and says, "See I knew you couldn't do it." Finally, your Rebel comes out and says, "Screw you all, we're having ice cream!" It can switch that fast.

Another issue would be having two different ego states in conflict. For example, one wants

to sleep and the other one wants to go through your to-do list over and over again. Once you have identified your ego states and what their jobs are, you can actually negotiate with them as you would negotiate between two people. This is easier with a coach, but you can certainly do it within yourself. To work with your ego states, map out who they are and what they do. Then decide what part of you needs to be brought forward for each situation.

The easiest way to change ego states is to come from a neutral place of "self." Self is who you are when you are just present, like during meditation. In that neutral state you get to choose who you want to be. It is like a paper doll; you get to choose what outfit she is going to wear. If you can stay in your calm, kind, patient self, you can then choose who you want to be when the need arises. I hope you can find ways to use these states to bring your best you forward. 

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*Dr. Kathy Gruver is an award-winning author, professional speaker, and former actor with over 30 years of experience in mind/body medicine and human behavior. Dr. Gruver is a speaker at the Global Excavation Safety Conference VIRTUAL. Learn more at [globalescvirtual.com/education](http://globalescvirtual.com/education).*

# Miss Utility Recognizes Outstanding Contractors in Maryland and Washington, D.C.

• BY DORA PARKS •

Miss Utility of Maryland/District One Call recently recognized the winners of the 2019-2020 Dig Smart Awards. Miss Utility's annual Dig Smart Awards was established more than 20 years ago to promote underground utility safety and recognize contractors who steadily work toward damage prevention. The award program is sponsored by MD/DC subscribers and supported by the Board of Directors. The Dig Smart Awards program is a self-nomination process; a committee of damage



prevention stakeholder representatives review entries based on entry criteria response to select one winner for Maryland and one for Washington, D.C. Companies winning a Dig Smart Award at least three times in the past are eligible for the Excellence Award.



The 2019-2020 Dig Smart Award winners include: **Gaines and Company (Maryland)**, **Flippo Construction Company, Inc. (Washington, D.C.)**, and **Anchor Construction Corporation (Excellence Award)**.

Each year, the Dig Smart Award winners receive a beautiful acrylic plaque with an embedded shovel and recognition by peers as leaders in damage prevention at the Greater Chesapeake Damage Prevention Training Conference (GCDPTC), taking place in Ocean City, Md., in October. The winners also receive two complimentary packages to the conference, including registration, meals and two nights of hotel accommodations.

Although the 2020 GCDPTC was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the traditional awards presentation could not take place, members of Miss Utility's Awards Committee were able to safely visit each winning company at their workplaces this past fall to present them with their plaques. Each winner will receive their complimentary conference packages to the 2021 GCDPTC this upcoming October, where they will be recognized in front of their industry peers. **DP**

## DIRT FACTS CGA

EXCERPTED FROM THE 2019 DIRT ANNUAL REPORT

### Reported Damages by Root Cause (Top 5)

- 1. NO NOTIFICATION MADE TO ONE CALL/ 811 - 29.10%**
- 2. EXCAVATION FAILED TO MAINTAIN CLEARANCE AFTER VERIFYING MARKS - 16.70%**
- 3. FACILITY MARKED INACCURATELY DUE TO LOCATOR ERROR - 10.5%**
- 4. EXCAVATOR DUG BEFORE VALID START DATE/TIME - 9.75%**
- 5. FACILITY MARKED INACCURATELY DUE TO ABANDONED FACILITY - 7.29%**

WANT TO KNOW MORE? THIS INFORMATION WAS EXCERPTED FROM THE 2019 DIRT ANNUAL REPORT. ACCESS THE ENTIRE REPORT AT [CGA-DIRT.COM](http://CGA-DIRT.COM).





# Calendar of Events

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many events have rescheduled or transitioned to a virtual event. Be sure to verify the status of all events you are planning to attend.

## March 2021

- 1-5 (V) NSC Congress & Expo
- 2,3 Minnesota Rural Electric Association Annual Meeting and Trade Show (St. Paul, MN)  
(V) 2021 TechAdvantage
- 4 (V) NTCA The Rural Broadband Association 2021 RTIME
- 5-10 PCCA 76th Annual Convention (Naples, FL)
- 8 (V) AWWA: Women's Day Webinar
- 8-12 API 2021 Spring Committee on Petroleum Measurement Standards Meeting (Dallas, TX)  
(V) Electrical Safety Workshop
- 9-11 (V) World of Asphalt
- 10-12 Australasian Oil & Gas Exhibition & Conference (Perth, Australia) Tennessee Damage Prevention Summit (Franklin, TN)
- 15-17 2021 Minnesota Telecom Alliance Annual Convention & Trade Show (Minneapolis, MN)
- 15-18 16th Pipeline Technology Conference (Berlin, Germany) – HYBRID
- 22-24 Agricultural Safety & Health Council of America North American Agricultural Safety Summit
- 22-26 Nevada Rural Water Association Training & Technical Conference (Sparks, NV)
- 22-28 **Damage Prevention Week (DamagePreventionWeek.com)**
- 22 (V) Damage Investigation and Claims Resolution (DamagePreventionWeek.com)
- 22,23 (V) Global GPR Congress (GPR Congress.com)
- 23,24 (V) CBSA Leading Practices on Cross Bore Safety Course
- 23-26 New Zealand Planning Institute Conference (Nelson, New Zealand)
- 24 (V) Utility Locating with GPR (Damage PreventionWeek.com)
- 25 (V) CAMO Safety, Security and Emergency Response Workshop (DamagePreventionWeek.com)
- 25 (V) Locating Theory Demystified! (Damage PreventionWeek.com)
- 26 (V) Utility Locator Skills Enhancement (Damage PreventionWeek.com)
- 28 2021 Telecom Executive Forum (St. Petersburg, FL)
- 28-31 (V) NASTT No-DIG Show
- 29,30 (V) APPA Engineering & Operations Conference
- 29-Apr 1 Texas Water 2021 (Austin, TX)
- 30-Apr 2 Wisconsin Rural Water Association 2021 Annual Conference (La Crosse, WI)

## April 2021

- 6-8 (V) 2021 Global Excavation Safety Conference VIRTUAL (GlobalIESCVirtual.com)

- 7-9 FUCC Spring Meeting (Ocala, FL)
- 11-13 2021 Canadian Independent Telecommunications Association (Niagara Falls, Ontario)
- 12,13 Louisiana Ground Water Association Convention and Trade Show (Marksville, LA)
- 12-14 Solar Electric Power Alliance Utility Conference (Phoenix, AZ)
- 15,16 (V) WesternEnergy Institute Claims + Damage Recovery
- 19-21 (V) WesternEnergy Institute Operations Conference
- 19-21 DCA 2021 Safety Congress (Grapevine, TX)
- 19-22 Broadband Communities Summit (Houston, TX)
- 19-25 **Locator Safety & Appreciation Week (LocatorSafety.com)**
- 21 (V) PA811 Safety Day Conference

## May 2021

- 13 PA811 Safety Day Conference (Pittsburgh, PA)
- 16-20 Pipe Line Contractors Association of Canada (Victoria, British Columbia)
- 17-20 Mountain Connect Broadband Development Conference (Keystone, CO)
- 18-20 Underground Construction Technology International (Nashville, TN)
- 20 PA Safety Day Conference (Drexel Hill, PA)
- 23-26 NECA Safety Professionals Conference (Nashville, TN)
- 24-26 Alaska Telecom Association 2021 Annual Meeting (Fairbanks, AK)
- 24-26 Fiber Connect LATAM 2021 (Lima, Peru)
- 24-28 SGA Southwest Regional Gas Conference & Expo (San Marcos, TX)

## Rescheduled Events

- June 15 PA Safety Day Conference (Allentown, PA)
- June 17 PA Safety Day Conference (Harrisburg, PA)
- Sept 28 PA Safety Day Conference (Erie, PA)

[https://www.pa1call.org/pa811/Public/POCS\\_Content/Event/PA\\_Safety\\_Day/SafetyDays.aspx](https://www.pa1call.org/pa811/Public/POCS_Content/Event/PA_Safety_Day/SafetyDays.aspx)

## Abstract Submissions Now Being Accepted:

[IR-SavingLives.com/submissions/](https://www.ir-savinglives.com/submissions/)

- September 8, 15, 22, 29 (V) Electric Safety Seminar Series
- October 5, 12, 19, 26 (V) Utility Coordination Seminar Series
- March 1-3, 2022 Global Excavation Safety Conference LIVE (Phoenix, AZ)

To include your event in an upcoming Calendar of Events schedule, email [karin@IR-SavingLives.com](mailto:karin@IR-SavingLives.com). 

FROM THE  
PUBLISHER



BY SCOTT LANDES

Connect  
with us at...  
**IR-SavingLives.com**

**N**ames carry power. When we hear a name, we often make assumptions about that person or company or brand. Don't believe me? Imagine a man named "Spike." Now imagine a man named "Eugene." How different are these two men in your mind? A name identifies you, but more importantly, it is your public face. It tells customers who you are and what you do.

Email domains and URLs work the same way. A good domain is memorable and, hopefully, helps your audience connect with your message. Good domains also match the company web address, creating consistent branding and helping people find you online.

For years, Infrastructure Resources, producers of *dp-PRO*, have used the domain, @emailIR.com. It has been simple, utilitarian, and those who know us have likely gotten used to contacting us this way. But as we start new initiatives and create new relationships into 2021, we want a domain that aligns with our website, our branding, and our purpose.

At Infrastructure Resources, our purpose – our passion – is saving lives through education. But we haven't done a very good job of letting you know about everything we do to help you achieve safety. From this publication to our live and virtual events to our new Excavation Safety Alliance membership program (see page 10 to learn more), we have more than a dozen different initiatives all designed to provide the education and training you need to stay safe. Many of them are FREE.

- Global Excavation Safety Conference LIVE  
**GlobalExcavationSafetyConference.com**
- Global Excavation Safety Conference VIRTUAL  
**GlobalESCVirtual.com**
- dp-PRO Magazine  
**dp-PRO.com**
- dp-PRO e-Learning  
**dp-PRO.com/education**
- Damage Prevention Week  
**DamagePreventionWeek.com**
- Excavation Safety Guide  
**ExcavationSafetyGuide.com**
- Global Locate Masters  
**GlobalLocateMasters.com**
- Pipeline Ag Safety Alliance  
**PipelineAgSafetyAlliance.com**
- Emerging Damage Prevention Leaders  
**linkedin.com/groups/10469344**
- Locator Safety & Appreciation Week  
**LocatorSafety.com**
- Oceania Damage Prevention Conference  
**OceaniaDPC.com**
- Excavation Safety Alliance  
**ExcavationSafetyAlliance.com**

We've changed our URL so that it resonates better with who we are and makes it easier to find: IR-SavingLives.com. I encourage you to visit our website to learn more about Infrastructure Resources and each of these initiatives. While each of our initiatives maintains its own website, this is a very easy way to get a broad overview of what we offer and easily travel between sites.

If you care about damage prevention and excavation safety (and since you are reading this, I assume you probably do), we know that you will find information here that you need to help you protect yourself, your workers, our buried utilities, our communities, and our environment.

We've also changed our domain to match. So, if you are a regular user or contributor, you'll notice a change in the emails you receive from us here at Infrastructure Resources. Be sure to talk to your IT department to ensure this domain is added to your safe senders list so you don't miss any communications from us. Don't worry, the email(s) you have on file will continue to work, but I encourage you to reach out to any of us on the IR team at our new "home."

Scott Landes, *CEO*,  
**Scott@IR-SavingLives.com**

Michele Moe, *Managing Director*,  
**Michele@IR-SavingLives.com**

Vicki Husome, *Partnership Manager*,  
**Vicki@IR-SavingLives.com**

Jerilyn Foster, *Office Administrator*,  
**Jerilyn@IR-SavingLives.com**

Karin Strub,  
*Communications Manager*,  
**Karin@IR-SavingLives.com**

Levi Mills, *Marketing*,  
**Levi@IR-SavingLives.com**

Valerie Mendoza, *Event Planner*,  
**Valerie@IR-SavingLives.com**

Whitney Price, *Special Projects*,  
**Whitney@IR-SavingLives.com**

Heather Tobias, *Accounting*,  
**Heather@IR-SavingLives.com** 



Volume 12, Number 1  
**SPRING 2021**

**PUBLISHER**  
Scott Landes • Scott@IR-SavingLives.com

**EDITOR IN CHIEF**  
Michele Moe • Michele@IR-SavingLives.com

**MANAGING EDITOR**  
(SUBSCRIPTIONS)  
Karin Strub • Karin@IR-SavingLives.com

**AD SALES**  
Vicki Husome • Vicki@IR-SavingLives.com

**CREATIVE DIRECTOR**  
Brett Link  
Brett@MyHappyPlaceDesignStudio.com

**PUBLISHING CONSULTANT**  
Dick Hendricks • jdhendricks@comcast.net

**CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS**

Marcos Bernal  
Richard Broome  
Corey Capasso  
Scott Crawford  
Laura Dale  
John W. Dubbs III  
Dr. Kathy Gruver  
Kelley Heinz  
Lindsay Jenkins  
Christopher Koch  
Jason Kouba  
Richard Levings  
Levi Mills  
Brian Morehouse  
Dora Parks  
Michelle Petrusovich  
Roger Sampson  
Alexander Smith  
Eric Sullivan  
Chris Stovall  
Monica Wofford

Published Five Times a Year by  
Infrastructure Resources, LLC  
4200 W Old Shakopee Road,  
Suite 103  
Bloomington MN 55437  
Phone: 866-279-7755  
Fax: 952-703-7022

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• STAFF REPORT •

# Kelley Heinz

*A Damage Prevention Hero Who goes Above and Beyond her Responsibilities to Promote Safety and Damage Prevention Outreach!*

IF YOU READ THE ARTICLE, *READY, RESPOND, RECOVER: DAMAGE PREVENTION BEST PRACTICES FOLLOWING A DISASTER*, BEGINNING ON PAGE 16, YOU WILL UNDERSTAND WHY THIS ISSUE'S HERO WAS NOMINATED. KELLEY HEINZ IS THE BRAINCHILD BEHIND THE 3R PROGRAM.

Kelley brings more than 20 years of experience to her current role as Damage Prevention Manager and Claims Investigator with ComEd. She has served as an active member of JULIE's Public Education Committee for more than five years.

An excellent speaker who is dedicated to damage prevention and safety, Kelley has written powerful

**“We are fortunate to have an enthusiastic Damage Prevention Hero who is willing to go above and beyond to ensure the safety of professional excavators and homeowners, and to protect underground utilities in the state of Illinois.”**

articles for *dp-PRO* and is a highly rated speaker at the Global Excavation Safety Conference. These contributions to safety and damage prevention outreach require extra work above and beyond her normal ComEd responsibilities; Kelley is passionately committed to these initiatives.

Kelley is a leader in our industry and role model for damage prevention professionals in Illinois, including leading a campaign to have 811/Call Before

You Dig decals represented on all ComEd vehicles.

According to Kevin Chmura, Director of Public Relations, JULIE, Inc., who has worked closely with Kelley for more than 10 years, “We are fortunate to have an enthusiastic Damage Prevention Hero who is willing to go above and beyond to ensure the safety of professional excavators and homeowners, and to protect underground utilities in the state of Illinois. I am thankful to work with her as a partner in damage prevention.”



With a focus on outcomes and solutions rather than just what has been done in the past, Kelley is a respected leader in the industry who stands by her word. She has proven herself to always be willing to



make the time to contribute if it can have a positive impact on safety and education.

Chmura's description of Kelley's attributes closely aligns to the terms we use to describe our Damage Prevention Heroes -

**DETERMINED. COMMITTED. PROACTIVE. RESULTS-DRIVEN. INSPIRING.** 



# Stake of Play: The UK's Safe Digging Industry

• RICHARD BROOME •

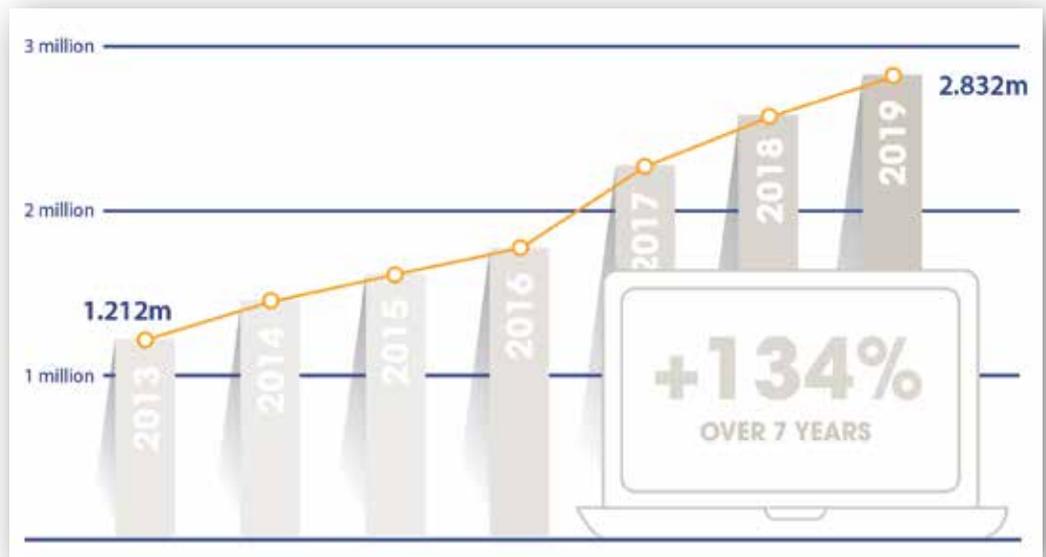
**LINESEARCHBEFOREUDIG (LSBUD)** provides the location of underground pipes and cables across the UK, helping to protect such infrastructure from accidental third-party damage and keep workers safe. Members benefit from the “safety of the herd” effect – the more asset owners who share their information through LSBUD, the more inquiries every utility company receives.

- **10,000 strikes** – 0.36 percent strike rate (over 99 percent of excavations take place without incident)
- **50,000 strikes** – 1.79 percent strike rate (over 98 percent of excavations take place without incident)
- **100,000 strikes** – 3.57 percent strike rate (over 96 percent of excavations take place without incident)

## The Geospatial Commission

The UK government’s Geospatial Commission launched its National Underground Asset Register (NUAR) pilot trials in 2019. It has been positioned to make gathering asset data for a work site easier to improve safety and drive efficiencies, a worthy cause, and one LSBUD has been addressing for decades. The problem is that the Commission has distorted the narrative when it comes to the safe digging industry, unfairly inferring it to be a disjointed, uncollaborative community.

Rather than build on existing success stories or make a real difference by improving the quality of asset data held by organizations, the Commission is aiming to recreate a community that is already established through LSBUD. More than 90 organizations share location data collaboratively with LSBUD (over one million km of networks) and just last year, over 130,000 users contributed to over three million searches.



More people are using LSBUD to search before digging than ever before.

## Search Before You Dig

With four million “digging projects” every year across the UK, we know over 71 percent of excavations are preceded by an LSBUD search. The safe digging industry is performing well, and things continue to improve. The industry is far from broken as the Geospatial Commission would like people to believe.

## Asset Strikes

Reporting of damages does need major focus. Without regulation it is difficult to know exactly how many strikes are incurred each year, what caused them, or how much they cost.

We can make a pretty good prediction on what the UK’s asset strike rate is. It is often said that the UK receives around 60,000 strikes each year. I don’t believe this is accurate, but even if it is, what does that mean? Based on the number of LSBUD search inquiries made annually, you get the following strike/inquiry ratios:

Clearly, the Geospatial Commission’s message is very misleading when it says that the entire safe digging industry is broken. To justify spending for its NUAR, it is painting a bad picture of the industry and ignoring

platforms that already provide the service it is trying to develop, all at the expense of taxpayer’s money.

## The Safe Digging Industry is Performing Well

What needs to happen is education, education, education. It is a simple concept but difficult to achieve. Rather than vast sums of money being allocated to the NUAR, the safe digging industry will benefit more from sustained efforts to raise awareness among all asset providers on the benefits of sharing the location of their networks. Plus, it is critical to keep reminding people how vital it is to search before you dig.

LSBUD’s free, collaborative portal is proven to work and asset-owning members are very happy with the service. The only way it can get better is by continuing to increase people’s knowledge of best practice when it comes to gathering all underground infrastructure information through one platform. **DP**

*Richard Broome, Managing Director at LSBUD, the UK’s leading online safe digging search resource. Learn more about LSBUD at [lsbud.co.uk](http://lsbud.co.uk).*

— INTRODUCING —

# Excavation Safety Alliance



It is with great excitement that Infrastructure Resources (IR) announces the launch of Excavation Safety Alliance (ESA), a new membership program for the excavation industry.

If there was one positive to pull from an otherwise difficult year, it is that 2020 forced us to pause and think deeply about who IR is as a company. How are our many initiatives serving the industry? Are we living up to our own standards? How can we better help industry stakeholders?

We have a core value at IR, and we consider it in every decision we make, especially the difficult ones: Saving Lives through Education.

This simple phrase has been incredibly powerful in re-centering everything that we do. 2020 challenged our ability to execute our educational initiatives due to live conference cancellations, and it challenged us personally to find new, innovative ways to fulfill that core value. From this challenge sprang the idea for Excavation Safety Alliance, an entirely new format for consuming and participating in excavation education.

## How ESA Works

Excavation Safety Alliance is a tier-based membership program, where different levels and types of content are made available based on membership tiers. ESA members are granted access to a treasure trove of excavation content, become a part of the ESA Community forum, and receive exclusive discounts. New content is added continuously, so there is new content to view regularly.

Becoming an ESA member is as easy as visiting [ExcavationSafetyAlliance.com](http://ExcavationSafetyAlliance.com). The platform is inclusive to everyone in the industry. The entry level membership, Essential, is completely free, but the Standard Tier membership is now available with a FREE 14-day trial.

## Content and the Value

There is a full year of new content in development for ESA, and here is what you can expect right out of the gate.

- **Live Town Halls** - Join leaders in the industry as they brainstorm solutions for a rotating list of hot topics.
- **On-Demand Conference Sessions** - Miss a conference or session, or just want to re-watch a session you loved? Find recorded sessions from Infrastructure Resources live and virtual conferences on ESA.
- **Interviews with Industry Leaders** - We pick the brains of leaders on the cutting edge of their fields and give them the opportunity to share their work with members.
- **ESA Community** - The ESA community forum is the central hub for industry collaboration, and it is available exclusively to ESA members. Lend your voice to topics in your area of expertise, find job listings, and network on ESA Community.
- **ESA Podcast** - Free for members and non-members alike, the ESA podcast helps you bring excavation content with you on-the-go.

- **Video Content from Around the Industry** - We've scoured the internet for the video content being produced by excavation safety educators and curated it for ESA members.
- **Discounts** - An ESA membership goes beyond the confines of the website experience. Members, depending on membership tier, are granted discounts on industry events and publications.

We are proud of the content available on ESA, and excited about the future of the platform. New content is scheduled for release throughout the year, and ESA members will continue to add value to the site.

## The End Goal: A Community Driven Platform

Progress in excavation safety has always come from collaboration — Individuals, organizations, committees, and companies sharing ideas that drive meaningful change. We are incredibly proud of our live and virtual conferences, but the secret to their success has never been our organization or planning. The speakers, attendees, and panel members that bring their unique ideas and personal experiences to these incredible industry events create the value. The same is true for ESA.

Becoming an ESA member means joining a community of like-minded professionals dedicated to the continued safety of the infrastructure we all rely on. ESA members inspire the content on the site, and their behaviors, their needs, and their input shape the future of the platform.

## Try it for FREE with a Standard Trial

The first 14 days of a Standard ESA membership are on us. Visit [ExcavationSafetyAlliance.com](http://ExcavationSafetyAlliance.com) to claim a 14-day trial of the Standard Tier ESA membership. After the first 14 days, a Standard Membership is only \$20/month, with discounts for annual membership.

We look forward to seeing you and your ideas at [ExcavationSafetyAlliance.com](http://ExcavationSafetyAlliance.com). For more information, contact Whitney at [Whitney@IR-SavingLives.com](mailto:Whitney@IR-SavingLives.com). 



## A virtual community unlike anything you have experienced before!

A membership program actively engaged in creating damage prevention solutions through content, community, and events.

### CONTENT

ESA hosts hundreds of hours of training videos, courses, and written material from across the industry. We are collecting, creating, and curating content for a learning experience unlike any other currently available.

### COMMUNITY

ESA is the gathering place for utility safety professionals. ESA forums provide a space for open discussion across the industry, making it perfect for presenting new ideas, tackling old problems, and creating collaborative solutions.

### EVENTS

On-demand and scheduled ESA Virtual Events are available to expand your industry knowledge and enhance your job skills. Exclusive discounts available to members.

Create an ESA account today to receive exclusive offers and early access to content.

**[ExcavationSafetyAlliance.com](https://ExcavationSafetyAlliance.com)**



# Readership Survey

Here at **dp-PRO**, we always strive to provide content that is educational, informational and topical. We would like to know what makes **dp-PRO** your industry resource for damage prevention; and how we can continue to improve.



After completing this survey, snap a pic and email it to [info@IR-SavingLives.com](mailto:info@IR-SavingLives.com)

1. How many of the last four issues have you read?

- Four
- Three
- Two
- This issue only

2. I prefer to read **dp-PRO**

- Print
- Digital
- Both

3. Including you, how many people typically read your copy of the **dp-PRO**?

- Just me
- 2-3
- 4 or more

4. How would you rate the overall quality of the **dp-PRO** content?

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Average
- Poor

5. Have you ever implemented change at work based on what you learned in the **dp-PRO**?

- Yes
- No

6. How frequently do you visit the **dp-PRO** website?

- 1-3 times per week
- 1-3 times per month
- Less than once per month
- Never

7. Have you ever responded to or researched a company based on their ad in the **dp-PRO**?

- Yes
- No

8. My favorite part(s) of the **dp-PRO** is:

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9. I would like to see more articles on:

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10. Is there anything else you would like to share?

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### CONTACT DETAILS

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact me by: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Complete this survey, or any of our industry surveys, online at [dp-pro.com/survey](http://dp-pro.com/survey).



# NEWS

## VIRGINIA811 LAUNCHES NEW ONLINE TRAINING SITE

Richmond, VA (WWBT) – Virginia811 recently launched a new online training program designed to leverage online learning technology in order to educate partners about damage prevention and best practices.

The “Academy” contains several educational videos and other online tools to teach professional excavators how to accurately enter underground utility location requests using Virginia811’s Web Ticket Entry platform. Excavators can choose one of three training methods to best match their learning style:

- Self-guided online videos with modules
- Self-guided courses designed for learners who prefer reading and written instruction
- Virtual, instructor-led courses with a qualified trainer

Professional excavators will no longer be required to take in-person or live, virtual training sessions and can opt to take the Virginia811 Academy’s online resources to become qualified to enter their own requests online as opposed to calling 811. For more information about the training program, reach out to Natalie Soucie, Head of Marketing and Communications at [nsoucie@va811.com](mailto:nsoucie@va811.com).



## Blood Hound, Inc. Acquires Subsurface Utility Imaging

Blood Hound, Inc., an affiliate company of USIC, LLC, announced in January the acquisition of Subsurface Utility Imaging (SUI). Blood Hound provides private utility locating services throughout the eastern and southwestern U.S.

The acquisition of SUI, which is headquartered in Utica, NY and provides underground utility locating, concrete imaging, and pipeline inspection services, expands Blood Hound’s service offerings in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic Region to include manhole inspections, closed circuit television inspections and smoke testing of pipes.

## IN MEMORIAM

Please visit our digital edition ([dp-pro.com/current-issue](http://dp-pro.com/current-issue)) Industry News Xtra for remembrances of three industry veterans: Gina Meehan-Taylor, Ben Montoya and Dr. Narinder Singh Kapany.

## GOLD SHOVEL ASSOCIATION EXPANDS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Gold Shovel Association (GSA) added six new members to their Board of Directors in November, 2020, increasing its board from nine to 15 and creating a more diverse and inclusive representation of the industries they serve. GSA also elected their new officers:

- Josh Hinrichs, President ELM Companies (Board Chair)
- Cheryl Campbell, Retired utility senior executive (Board Vice Chair)
- Mike Kemper, Executive VP Mears Group, Inc. (Board Treasurer)
- Peter Kenny, VP Construction Pacific Gas and Electric Company (Board Secretary)

“Josh’s election as chair presents a unique industry opportunity because of his close connections with Common Ground Alliance (CGA), NULCA and other industry associations,” said Luke Litteken, GSA’s outgoing board chair.

The following members will all serve three-year terms:

- John Janchar, President Telecommunications Division, Black and Veatch
- Brian Weisker, Senior VP/COO Natural Gas Business Unit, Duke Energy
- Mary Palkovich, VP Gas Advocacy, Consumers Energy
- Tracy Townsend, VP Construction, Compliance and Safety, Washington Gas
- Bret Weiss, President and CEO, WSB
- Robert Locke, VP Distribution Operations Dominion Virginia Power, Dominion Energy



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## Champion



Arizona 811 is a nonprofit communication center, which performs excavation notification services and stakeholder education that promote the safety and welfare of the community by protecting underground facilities from damage. Call 811 or click [Arizona811.com](http://Arizona811.com) at least two working days before you dig.



The mission of Indiana 811 is to lead Indiana in promoting safety and preventing damage to underground facilities by providing excellent coordination and notification services at a reasonable cost. Indiana 811 and Kentucky 811 are part of Underground Safety Alliance. In 2020, Indiana 811 processed approximately 1.4 million tickets.



The mission of Kentucky 811 is to lead Kentucky in promoting safety and preventing damage to underground facilities by providing excellent coordination and notification services at a reasonable cost. Kentucky 811 and Indiana 811 are part of Underground Safety Alliance. In 2020, Kentucky 811 processed approximately 520,000 tickets.



KorTerra is the leading provider of damage prevention software, protecting billions of dollars in underground infrastructure. For over 30 years, KorTerra has helped mitigate risk and ensured personnel safety by providing secure platforms for processing 811 locate tickets, tracking damages, and more.



As the country's first state-wide notification center, MISS DIG 811 has helped keep Michigan safe for over 50 years. Looking forward, we will continue to reach our communities by utilizing advancing technologies, grassroots efforts, and consistent engagement to decrease damages across the state.



Missouri One Call System is THE go-to source for all things damage prevention in Missouri. The mission of Missouri One Call is to enhance public safety and prevent damages to underground infrastructure. Using innovative approaches and time tested awareness and education strategies, Missouri One Call serves as a comprehensive resource for damage prevention stakeholders throughout Missouri and beyond.

## Quality Damage Prevention Education





OKIE811, Oklahoma's One-Call System, is the liaison between excavators and underground facility owners/operators in the state of Oklahoma. We are available 24/7/365. Excavators call 811 or visit our website to submit a web ticket prior to starting your excavation project. This is a FREE SERVICE!



Our mission is to protect the buried assets that power our everyday lives. Since 1990, Rhino Marking & Protection Systems has been the industry leader in damage prevention. We have over 30 million products installed across the globe protecting underground utilities.



Pennsylvania One Call System Inc. is a non-profit service company dedicated to minimizing utility service interruptions, reducing on-the-job injuries and deaths, promoting a higher level of public safety and protecting the environment, available 24 hours per day, every day of the year.

**Leader**

**Advocate**



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Contact Jerilyn Foster for more information.  
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 Jerilyn@emailir.com

## Ready, Respond, Recover

### *Damage Prevention Best Practices Following a Disaster*

BY KELLEY HEINZ

When it comes to damage prevention following a disaster, *Ready, Respond, Recover* is an easy way to think about what needs to be done to be successful in safe and rapid restoration. The best defense is a good offense, and the first step is always preparation. It is imperative that an electric utility have a business continuity and crisis management plan that has been designed, implemented, and tested to ensure proper execution in a time of disaster. An automated mass emergency notification system is critical to assemble leadership, mobilize response teams and deliver messages to employees, contractors and customers through email, text messages and cell phones, assuming telecommunications services are still available. If not, Wireless Priority Service or Satellite Broadband Services would be necessary to communicate with teams. The team of emergency responders should be pre-trained and well versed on all processes and procedures well before an event occurs. This prevents the need for on-the-spot training for maps, clearances, lock out/tag out, etc. needed to work safely.

A large part of being ready is mitigation. Regularly scheduled patrol of overhead infrastructure as well as a robust vegetation management program reduces the likelihood of wires down due to tree contact, broken limbs, and uprooted trees. Also, where possible, aged underground infrastructure should be replaced at the end of its lifespan to reduce the likelihood of an unscheduled outage as old equipment with multiple repaired faults may pose a risk for increased outages during heat-related events.

Once the threat of the disaster has passed, assessment of the infrastructure is needed. Are there pockets of damage or is it more widespread? Do we need to de-energize circuits before work can safely begin? Do we need to remove debris before rebuilding and restoration can start? This information provides us a guide



## **Ready Respond Recover**

as to which emergency responders need to be called in first. The more information, the better the response.

After assessment of the damage, begin to respond and dispatch much needed emergency personnel to the areas that can provide the safest and quickest path to restoration. Most disaster events are severe storms, high wind, ice, etc. After lines are de-energized for safety, send in tree crews and circuit patrollers first to remove debris so equipment can be accessed, and the damage assessed. Begin at the substation and work the mainline downstream resetting poles and re-hanging wire until the circuit is complete and can be re-energized. This is followed by tap fuses off the main and finally services. During this time, it is important that coordination occur between the One Call System, the utility, its contractors and locators. This is a critical time, and some areas may contain hazards. Load is most likely out of configuration so communication between the crew and locator is needed so that locators are briefed on hazards and are not locating in areas where they don't need to be, and crews aren't digging where there are no marks. Joint Operation Centers that contain members of the municipality, the utility, etc., can help advise on access points or trouble areas and can also assist in getting word out to their constituents, especially about hazards on downed wires.

Even though customers are anxious to get their power back on, it must be done safely. This includes ensuring no excavation begins without notifying the One Call and all crews working know and understand the state's One Call laws. Training up front is important, but some events require mutual assistance from neighboring states. Not all One Call laws are the same so the restoration crews, as excavators, must be brought up to speed on requirements such as the waiting period and tolerance zone. State laws should provide contractors the ability to dig on the same ticket as the utility during large-scale disaster events. This helps reduce the redundancy of calling in the same ticket by multiple excavation crews and overloading the One Call system. If the same work is being done at the same location, it should be considered a valid dig ticket for whomever is doing the work. This also prevents the locator from getting bogged down with duplicate tickets. Check with your local One Call to determine what your state allows.

During restoration, care must be taken to protect the existing underground infrastructure. The last thing an excavator needs is to hit a gas main while attempting to install a pole, so the crew should know the dig number and the extent of the work called in. They must only work in the areas outlined on the ticket and only perform the work advised on the ticket. They should not be trenching in a service when they called in to set a pole.

## “The last thing an excavator needs is to hit a gas main while attempting to install a pole, so the crew should know the dig number and the extent of the work called in.”

Helpful tools like smartphone apps from locate vendors can provide the excavator access to view the ticket as well as confirm the locate has been completed and which utilities have been marked. This makes it easier to schedule crews to each location when there is confirmation that the locate is complete and allows crews to remain productive rather than waiting on a locate.

Positive Response is used in some states and produces the same outcome of ensuring crews are sent to locations where the locate is complete. Once the area is located, the crew must dig by hand carefully and prudently to expose any marked utilities within the tolerance zone. During storms, vacuum excavation is always a good tool and can safely excavate in congested areas quickly when multiple utilities are present or when imminent danger is present requiring immediate excavation. This reduces time need-

ed to hand dig with a shovel and when properly used, helps to prevent damage to other utilities. The crews should also know when and how to contact the One Call system in case they need marks verified or confirmed.

When it comes to damage prevention best practices after a disaster, the main points to remember are *Ready, Respond, Recover*. Always consider the actual business plan before discussing the damage prevention plan. While in the response and recovery process, coordinate between the utility and the municipality to help determine areas of concern or pockets of minor or major damage. Open the lines of communication between the crew and the locator to advise of hazards in the field and to aid in the confirmation of existing infrastructure. The execution of the work is where the most exposure for damage lies. Use tools such as vacuum excavation in

areas of congestion. Excavators should always work with marks on the ground and prudently dig within the tolerance zone. Digging to the depth of the excavation, not using mechanized equipment in the tolerance zone, and visually identifying the line have always been best practices of safe excavation.

*Ready, Respond, Recover* is a good starting point when developing a damage prevention plan following a disaster. It is important to understand that damage prevention is a shared responsibility and when we all understand our role and the impact it has on the process, we have a much better opportunity to get the service restored for our customers in a timely and, most importantly, safe manner. **DP**

*Kelley Heinz is Senior Claims Case Manager/Damage Prevention at ComEd. She can be reached at kelley.heinz@comed.com.*

April 19-25, 2021

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## Five Fiber Outages Prove the Importance of Telecom Damage Prevention

BY COREY CAPASSO

Damages to gas utilities tend to get the lion's share of media coverage and, therefore, tend to be what comes to mind when you think of excavation accidents. But, surprisingly, gas facilities are actually only the second-most damaged critical underground asset; telecommunications lines are first, and the numbers aren't even close.

According to the 2019 CGA DIRT Report, nearly 205,000 underground telecommunications facilities were damaged in 2019. That number is more than natural gas, electric, and water and sewer facilities combined!

The direct and indirect costs to repair damaged facilities can be steep. One study found that \$330,000 in traffic disruption costs alone could be attributed to a single damaged telecommunications facility. The facility was located at a major arterial road and took 23 days to repair.

Money isn't the only consequence of damaged telecommunications facilities. Read on to discover the repercussions of five recent telecommunications outages caused by excavation accidents.

### 1. A CUT CABLE DISRUPTS THE ELECTION PROCESS.

A contractor working on a sewer installation project cut an unmarked fiber optic cable in Chester, Va., on Tuesday, October 13, 2020, the last day Virginia residents could register to vote in the November general election. The strike shut down Virginia's voter registration system for more than five hours and affected online services provided by the state Department of Motor Vehicles and Department of Health, among other agencies.

The outage prompted a coalition of voter advocacy groups to file a federal lawsuit to extend the registration deadline. A federal court granted an

extension order the next day, but the ordeal perturbed many and even prompted some to question whether a strike during a hotly contested presidential race was truly accidental.

### 2. A FIBER DAMAGE TAKES AN ENTIRE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT OFFLINE.

Just one week after Virginia's voter registration system went down, the Arlington County School District closed for distance learning after a third party cut a fiber optic cable. The district, which opted for online-only instruction for the beginning of the 2020-2021 academic year because of the COVID-19 pandemic, experienced a complete loss of internet service, forcing it to cancel a full day of classes for nearly 27,000 students in pre-K through grade 12.

Although missing a day of school usually isn't a big deal in a typical year, it's problematic this academic year because students in fully remote environments already have higher absenteeism and complete less work than students in face-to-face classrooms, according to a report from the research organization RAND Corporation.

### 3. A COUNTY CALLS 911 AND NOBODY ANSWERS, DUE TO AN EXCAVATION DAMAGE.

In 2019, a Missouri county 911 call center lost service when an excavator damaged a fiber optic line that serves the center. Although incoming calls were eventually rerouted to another 911 center about 14 miles away, there was a brief window when anyone calling 911 in the county got a busy signal.

This isn't the first instance of a cut cable disrupting 911 service. A similar incident prevented people in one Tennessee county from calling 911 on their cell phones earlier that same year. And in 2020, a cut cable interrupted 911

services for about 100 customers in a city in Washington state.

It goes without saying that the consequences of someone not being able to connect with 911, or experiencing delays in emergency response because their call has been re-routed to a different center, can be deadly.

### 4. A SEVERED CABLE SHUTS DOWN THE LOCAL JUSTICE SYSTEM.

Government services in an Indiana county ground to a halt for an afternoon in 2019 after a construction crew partially severed a fiber optic cable. Service was disrupted at the county courthouse, the county jail and sheriff's department, the county government office building, and the court services building, prompting some courthouse offices to send their workers home early.

The judicial process is slow and challenging in the best of times. Any disruption in the process can have ripple effects for weeks and cause delays that impact a huge number of people, including defendants and their families.

### 5. CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY SHUTS DOWN ONE CALL CENTER.

On April 21, 2020, a damage occurred to an underground fiber line causing significant outages in the Denver area, including the Colorado One Call center. The underground fiber damage was caused by construction activity.

Because service to the One Call center was restricted due to this damage, timely completion of location request tickets was endangered, causing delays for other excavation projects in Colorado.

### DAMAGE PREVENTION SOLUTIONS FOR TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMPANIES

Damage prevention programs can help telecom-



“As fiber networks become larger and more complex than ever with the ongoing deployment of 5G, it’s critical for telecommunications providers to leverage damage prevention technology to protect their investment.”

munications companies prevent excavation accidents that damage their underground facilities. A few elements of effective damage prevention programs, according to PHMSA, include:

- Enhanced communication and collaboration with all those involved in the excavation process, including One Call centers, underground facility owners, and excavators.
- Partnership in 811 Call Before You Dig campaigns intended to raise awareness of the 811

process among homeowners and contractors.

- Use of technology such as damage prevention software and data analysis to measure and improve program effectiveness.

As fiber networks become larger and more complex than ever with the ongoing deployment of 5G, it’s critical for telecommunications providers to leverage damage prevention technology to protect their investment. Every damage sustained requires an expensive repair, and the

indirect costs of a damage can be much greater.

By investing in damage prevention, telecommunications companies can better anticipate and prevent damages to their expanding network of underground facilities, thereby reducing the direct and indirect costs associated with damages. **DP**

*Corey Capasso is Founder and CEO of Urbint. Visit [urbint.com](http://urbint.com) to learn more about their commitment to damage prevention and worker safety.*

## SAFETY VIDEO

The video contains valuable information about Pipeline Safety:

- Damage Prevention
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- Hazards of a Release
- Emergency Response
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An exceptional video covering the potential dangers and safety precautions related to living and working around buried infrastructure.

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The video is accessible at [vimeo.com/114175332](https://vimeo.com/114175332), on YouTube or at the Pipeline Association’s website: [www.pipelineawareness.org](http://www.pipelineawareness.org)



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10:00 am – 10:45 am | 1:00 pm – 1:45 pm

### Thursday, April 8

10:00 am – 10:45 am | 2:00 pm – 2:45 pm

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*Tony Thornton, Executive Director, American Fence Association*

## All Models are Wrong, Some Models are Useful: Creating 3D Models of Utility Infrastructure

*Phil Meis, Owner, Utility Mapping Services, Inc.*

*Lawrence Arcand, P.Eng, PE, President, 4Sight Utility Engineers*



## Buried Alive: A Survivor's Story

*Joe Tantarelli, Senior Safety Consultant, SafeStart®*

## Colorado's New Design Ticket Success Stories

*Andrew Sylvest, SUE Practice Leader, Lamb-Star Engineering*

*Jim Anspach, P.G.(r), Dist.M.ASCE,*

*Utility Engineering Subject Matter Expert*



## Con Edison's Work Coordination Efforts in New York City

*Brian Yee-Chan, Project Manager, Cross Commodity Work Coordination, Con Edison*

*Nathalie Ramos, Project Specialist, Con Edison*

## Damage Prevention Awareness for Homeowners in the Time of Pandemic: Lessons Learned

*Michelle Petrusevich, MA, Public Safety Manager, FortisBC*

*Laura Dale, Director, Preventable – The Community Against Preventable Injuries*

## Damage Prevention Patrollers

*Daniel FitzPatrick, Damage Prevention Field Operations Planner, Orange and Rockland Utilities*

## De-Escalation

*James Willis, M.Sc, CMAS, CHS-I, President, InDev Specialists, Inc.*

## Education vs. Training

*John Brix, Motivational Safety Speaker*

## Excavation Safety: Protecting Workers. Protecting Utilities.

*Joe Wise, Region Customer Training Manager, United Rentals*

## How Great Boards Add Value to Organizations

*Lyn McDonnell, C. Dir CMC, President, The Accountability Group*

## How to Create a Successful Statewide DPC Program

*John Sparks, Director of Damage Prevention, Texas 811*

*Marty Mead, Director of Damage Prevention, Colorado 811*

## How Does AI Improve Accuracy of Underground Locates?

*Denis Courchesne, President / CEO, Info-Excavation*

## Implementation of the ASCE "Utility As-Built Standard" in Montana and Colorado

*Phil Meis, Owner, Utility Mapping Services, Inc.*

*Eric Berkowitz, Project Director, GEO.works International, Inc.*



## Innovations Target Reducing Underground Utility Damage During Construction

Geoff Zeiss, Principal, Between the Poles



## INPA Audits

Kelli Martin, Damage Prevention Liaison Manager, Indiana 811

## Integration of High-Speed 3D GPR Array Data, a Robust Tool for the New ASCE 38 3D Standard for Subsurface Utility Engineering

Matthew Wolf, President, ImpulseRadar

Clifford Meis, P.E., Project Engineering, Utility Mapping Services, Inc.



## Interpreting GPR Data for Utility Locating

Darrell Lee, Product Manager, Sensors & Software

## Just be Yourself, but Who the Hell is That? Using Ego States for Optimal Performance

Dr. Kathy Gruver, Speaker, Author, Coach

## Keys to Transforming Organizational Performance

Dr. Devin Bennett, Associate, LPS, Inc.

## Lone Worker Security: Stay Safe in a Violent World

Carol Dodgen, Owner, Dodgen Security

## Look Up and Live Powerline Safety Tool - Queensland Australia

Glen "Cookie" Cook, Principal Community Safety Specialist, Energy Queensland

## Online Locate Requests vs Phone Submissions: Why Go Virtual, and is it Safer?

Josef Rosenberg, Contact Centre Manager, Alberta One-Call Corporation

## Paying Attention Could Make All the Difference

James Willis, M.Sc, CMAS, CHS-I, President, InDev Specialists, Inc.

## PHMSA Funded Project: Improved Tools to Locate Buried Pipelines in Congested Underground

Santosh Saride, Vice President Strategy & Business Development, PRISUM Technologies

## Preventing Electric Utility Damage

Kelley Heinz, Damage Prevention/Claims Investigator, ComEd

## Protecting Pipelines from Encroachments: Legal Strategies and Litigation Update

John Wilburn, Partner, McGuireWoods

Richard Holzheimer, Partner, McGuireWoods

## Reducing the Consequences of Gas Line Damage

David Heldenbrand, PE, CFI, President, Bison Engineering

Daniel Saavedra, Forensic Civil Engineer, Bison Engineering

## Remote Sensing Subsurface Mapping at Unprecedented Scale Resulting in Reduction of Time, Costs, and Utility Strikes

Raz Ezra, Director of Business Development, 4M Analytics

## Resilient Coastal Design in an Uncertain Future

Drew Markewicz, PE, PMP, Sr Project Manager,

Director of Highways and Utilities, NV5



## Standardized Ticket Formats

Sher Kirk, Operations Director, Alberta One-Call Corporation

## Say What?! Communicate Your Message to Anyone!

Dr. Kathy Gruver, Speaker, Author, Coach

## Stress Management

Dr. Kathy Gruver, Speaker, Author, Coach

## Subsurface Utility Engineering for Municipalities: Prequalification Criteria and Scope of Work Guide

Corey Biddle, Business Development Manager, T2 Utility Engineers

Jim Anspach, P.G.(r), Dist.M.ASCE, Utility Engineering Subject Matter Expert



## The Day We Will Remember

Ricky Rollins, Motivational Safety Speaker

## The Power of Don't: Communication and Leadership Excellence

John Brix, Motivational Safety Speaker

## The Power of Safety First

Cliff Meidl, President, Cliff Meidle Enterprises, LLC

## The Six Pillars of Utility Engineering

Cesar Quiroga, Ph.D., P.E., F.ASCE, Senior Research Engineer

and Manager, Texas A&M Transportation Institute



## The Use and Effects of a Standard Damage Prevention Safety Management System

Mel Christopher, Executive Director, Gold Shovel Standard

## Two Confined Space Standards. Which One is for You?

Bruce Magee, Regional Product Development Manager, United Rentals

## Underground Damages Case Study: Use of Comprehensive Data Analysis

Louis Panzer, Executive Director, NC811

## Using the Leading Practices for Cross Bore Risk Reduction

Mark Bruce, President, Cross Bore Safety Association

## Unsafe Digging Leaves Everlasting Impact

Coral Lukaniuk, P.Eng., Principal, coRoc Solutions

# World-Class Education at Your Fingertips

## Benefits of a Virtual Event

- Whether at your desk, in your car, at your favorite coffee house, or even curled up on the sofa, you can attend from anywhere you have internet access!
- Live Q&A on a variety of sessions allow for the same interaction with presenters and other delegates you find at live events.
- On-demand sessions ensure you can access the sessions you want, when you want.
- With sessions available 60 days post-event, you have the opportunity to participate in more sessions than ever before!
- With chat rooms, scheduled networking events, and live chat features, you can talk with colleagues continually to share insights and observations.
- With no travel costs, company budgets can allow for more coworkers to participate.

## Tips to Get the Most Out of Your Virtual Experience

- Watch the orientation video so you know how to navigate the event platform.
- Prioritize the time to be truly present in the experience, engaging with the sessions and presenters.
- Use chat and other networking tools regularly to connect with other attendees and build your network.
- Take advantage of dedicated Sponsor Resource hours to participate in tech talks, product demonstrations, or other activities.
- When visiting showrooms, watch videos, download collateral and even chat with company representatives.
- Find a comfortable space and minimize distractions. Take notes and don't "multi-task".
- Study the agenda and create your schedule so it is easier to stay on track.
- Attending networking activities is critical to creating insights and raising your excitement and enthusiasm. Participate fully!

## Who Should Attend?

- Stakeholders who need this valuable education but have limited travel budgets.
- Stakeholders restricted from travel by company health related travel bans.
- People who want to broaden their global network and learn from others.

## Agenda (All times CST)

### Tuesday, April 6

8:00 am – 8:45 am	Networking Breakfast
10:00 am – 10:45 am	Scheduled Tech Talks and Demos
12:00 pm – 12:45 pm	Networking Lunch
3:00 pm – 3:45 pm	Scheduled Tech Talks and Demos
4:00 pm – 4:45 pm	Networking Chat

### Wednesday, April 7

8:00 am – 8:45 am	Networking Breakfast
10:00 am – 10:45 am	Scheduled Tech Talks and Demos
12:00 pm – 12:45 pm	Networking Lunch
1:00 pm – 1:45 pm	Scheduled Tech Talks and Demos
4:00 pm – 4:45 pm	Networking Chat

### Thursday, April 8

8:00 am – 8:45 am	Networking Breakfast
10:00 am – 10:45 am	Scheduled Tech Talks and Demos
12:00 pm – 12:45 pm	Networking Lunch
2:00 pm – 2:45 pm	Scheduled Tech Talks and Demos
4:00 pm – 4:45 pm	Networking Chat



# Networking

Networking is taken to a whole new level as you connect with colleagues for relaxed, small-room discussions on a variety of topics. You pick the conversation you want to join. Each day closes with a selection of fun and casual happy hour engagements moderated by a variety of exhibitors and industry professionals.

## Breakfast and Lunch Networking:

Bring your meal and join a small room conversation based on one topic of importance to the damage prevention/excavation safety community. Add your voice to the conversation!

## End-of-Day Networking:

Bring your happy hour drink of choice and participate in laid back, fun conversations or activities between colleagues.



Visit our Sponsor Showroom during DEDICATED SPONSOR SHOWROOM HOURS to participate in tech talks or product demos designed specifically to help you improve your damage prevention performance! While you're there, take advantage of the opportunity to watch videos, download collateral, or chat with staff on how they can help you!



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**N**o one wakes up expecting to hit a utility line when digging around their yard, but if they do – it could have serious consequences.

In British Columbia, Canadian homeowners contribute to over 30% of incidents related to natural gas line damages. One incident is too many and industry stakeholders are determined to come up with creative solutions to eliminate ground disturbance damages. How do we, as an industry, encourage homeowners to care about utility line damage prevention? Homeowners are a unique audience for damage prevention conversations as, unlike industry professionals, homeowners do not share the same reasons for protecting underground infrastructure. For ground disturbance prevention messaging to work, homeowners need clear messages that link their behavior to prevention efforts that they understand and care about.

Common methods employed by ground-invested industries include holistic interventions blending enforcement and behavior change campaigns. Unfortunately, few interventions focus on the latter. It was for this reason that a group of industry leaders in British Columbia

of COVID-19 spring lock-down. The campaign was postponed to October 2020 to ensure that the messages were well-received by British Columbians experiencing COVID-19 messaging fatigue.

As the pandemic unfolded, more British Columbians stayed home, freeing up time to repurpose their outdoor spaces. Fences were built, gardens were dug, and patio decks were laid, all of which require excavations and ground disturbances.

The messaging suggests the importance of planning ahead and taking the time to submit a locate request to BC 1 Call to ensure not only the homeowner's safety but also the safety of neigh-

# SOCIAL MARKETING FOR DAMAGE PREVENTION: THE CLICK OR CALL BEFORE YOU DIG PARTNERSHIP CAMPAIGN

BY MICHELLE PETRUSEVICH AND LAURA DALE



(FortisBC, BC 1 Call, BC Common Ground Alliance, BC Oil and Gas Commission, TC Energy, and WorkSafeBC) came together to rethink the way homeowners engage with ground disturbance information. Through a partnership with the Community Against Preventable Injuries (a not-for-profit social marketing firm focused on injury prevention) a campaign was developed to address the common underlying attitude that contributes to both injury and damage prevention: *It won't happen to me.*

The goal of this joint initiative was to educate homeowners, the general public and contractors about the potential dangers associated with damaging underground utility lines when digging during gardening, landscaping, or renovations. Ultimately, we wanted to ensure that British Columbians were aware that before they break ground, they need to contact BC 1 Call. Shifting attitudes requires investment. The month-long campaign ran using a variety of creative elements including 15-second spots aired on TV and digital, website banners to direct people to the BC 1 Call website, and mobile banners leveraging Preventable's evidence-based strategies to engage adults on their own terms.

## Lessons Learned

2020 was unlike any year before, which resulted in major campaign modifications and pivots along the way. The campaign was originally planned for April 2020, squarely in the middle

of neighbors and first responders in case of a damage. "You do not want to be that neighbor who damages a utility line because you did not place the One Call," said a spokesperson for the campaign. "This takes the utility crews away from performing important routine maintenance and first responders from responding to other emergencies. These incidents are 100% preventable."

The campaign was successful owing to the collaboration between mission-aligned partners all committed to injury and ground-disturbance damage prevention. Homeowners are a unique audience requiring carefully crafted messages to raise awareness about the importance of underground utility damage prevention. We are excited to continue our journey to shift the narrative towards injury prevention as a method to connect meaningfully with homeowners. **DP**

## What is Coordinate PA?

Coordinate PA is the web application developed to help maximize the benefits of shared costs and project coordination to prevent damage to underground facilities. Coordinate PA enables users to add and/or import existing projects, coordinate opportunities with others who want to collaborate, share project communications with designated contacts, and notify facility owners at any stage of a project. When transitioning a project from planning and design to construction phase, complex project tickets can be created, and communications continue through to the conclusion of the project.

## Why Use Coordinate PA?

Virtual communication has recently become an essential part of daily business. Many of the normal in-person meetings and hand-to-hand site plan exchanges have been put on hold in the interest of public safety. Coordinate PA offers a secure repository where users can plan, share, and store all the information necessary to safely execute a project from start to finish, anywhere, any time. Ask yourself, are you tired of utility companies replacing mains and services under your freshly paved roadway that took you two years to budget, plan, and complete? Did you enter that paving project in Coordinate PA and announce to all the facility owners in the area that you were planning on doing so? Why not? Did they enter their main and services project? Did your plans overlap? We no longer have a reason to run into this scenario; planning can happen for a project large or small with just a few clicks. Rather than scrambling to find funds to repave that roadway, maybe you save money by sharing the restoration costs because you worked on both projects at the same time.



# Coordinate PA

## When Should You Use Coordinate PA?

Coordinate PA can be used for almost all projects but especially when your project is complex. We like to use the “DISC” method to help determine if a project is complex:

- **DURATION:**

How long will the project take? A month, a year, maybe more?

- **IMPACT:**

Will the work impact the public or underground facilities?

- **SIZE:**

Is the project over 1,000 feet or intersection to intersection (whichever is greater)?

- **COMPLEXITY:**

Is this multiple sites or streets?

If the answer is “yes” to any of those questions, your project is probably complex, and you should use Coordinate PA to begin a plan and enter the dig notifications. If you need a pre-construction meeting before your project kicks off, use Coordinate PA to schedule the meeting, collect the meeting minutes, create the locate schedule and document attendance. If you want to attach plans or maps to your project or send messages to multiple parties, you can do so in Coordinate PA as well.

## Where and How Can You Use Coordinate PA?

Anywhere, anytime at [pa1call.org/coordinatepa](http://pa1call.org/coordinatepa). Since Coordinate PA is web-based, you can enter projects from anywhere you have an internet connection. Multiple companies already utilize Coordinate PA from long distances and even out-of-state to schedule and plan their projects virtually, saving them time and money on travel and lodging costs. 

*Marcos Bernal is a Senior Damage Prevention Liaison with Pennsylvania 811. If you conduct business in Pennsylvania, learn more at [pa1call.org](http://pa1call.org) or sign up for a free web account and request access to Coordinate PA.*

BY MARCOS BERNAL

What,  
Why,  
When,  
Where  
and  
How?

# MARCH 22-28

## **DAMAGE PREVENTION WEEK™** *Online, Worldwide*

A yearly forum focused on reducing damages and improving excavation safety. Leaders within the industry gather to bring education and training to the industry designed to improve damage prevention efforts, facilitate open discussions and improve safety in the excavating community. With events developed by industry experts, this is the best way to expand your knowledge and expertise.



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# **DAMAGE** **Prevention Week™**

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Tuesday, March 22 | 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm CST  
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Bringing together new and experienced GPR users from the academic and private sector to benefit the industry via a forum promoting open discussion and continuous learning through shared ideas and experience.



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## **Leading Practices on Cross Bore Safety Course**

Tuesday, March 23  
2:30 pm - 5:00 pm CST  
Wednesday, March 24  
2:30 pm - 5:00 pm CST

Learn how to prevent cross bores to save money and save lives! Created by CBSA, this course covers a wide variety of cross bore safety topics including standards, guidelines and best practices in cross bore safety.

**Earn 5 Credit Hours**

**\$295**



## **Safety, Security and Emergency Response Workshop**

Thursday, March 25 | 9:00 am - 11:30 am CST

Join CAMO (Coastal and Marine Operators) as they explore the issues and challenges in preventing spills, releases and damage to underwater pipelines and utilities which negatively impact the environment and public safety.



**Register now.**  
**Space is limited.** **FREE**



## Utility Locating with GPR

March 24 | 8:00 am - 1:00 pm CST

Presenter: Troy De Souza

This training course meets the Nulca “Competencies for the GPR Technician” curriculum. The objective is to ensure that the user demonstrates knowledge, skill, and understanding in applying GPR safely and professionally to locate utilities.

Topics include GPR theory, factors affecting target detection, how GPR compliments traditional EM locating, application of Line Scan and Grid Scans, data interpretation, and case studies.

## Utility Locator Skills Enhancement

March 26 | 8:00 am - 4:00 pm CST

Presenter: Bob Nighswonger

This workshop was designed to challenge and expand the knowledge base of even the most seasoned of pros on the art of underground line locating and marking. This training workshop begins with a live classroom training session with comprehensive animated slide presentations, lively discussions, and a supporting workbook loaded with reference materials and classroom activities.

**The workshop is approved for 8 contact hours for CWEA certificate holders for credit toward the continuing education requirement for re-certification.**

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## Damage Investigation & Claims Resolution

March 22 | 8:00 am - 12:00 pm CST

Presenter: Ron Peterson

This workshop focuses on the required elements of a successful damage investigation. Setting the stage for a valid root cause investigation and following standard investigative procedures are vital to an effective analysis of a damage. Topics covered include asset protection, revenue/loss recovery, ethics and other ingredients needed to perform accurate and timely root cause investigations.

**\$195**

## Locating Theory Demystified!

March 25 | 2:00 pm - 5:00 pm CST

Presenter: Christopher Koch

Have you ever looked at someone locating and wondered what the heck is going on? Whether you are a locator, work with locating personnel, or are just curious about locating, you will benefit from seeing and using the latest in locating technology as accurate locating is crucial to damage prevention. This workshop explores the principles of locating and the role locating plays in safe excavation.

**\$95**



# how leading utilities are **reducing** underground infrastructure damages

BY DR. LINDSAY JENKINS

**I come from** a family of excavators

and have spent much of my career working with infrastructure owners and operators. If there is one thing I've learned over the years, it's that both sides lose when critical underground infrastructure is damaged.

Unfortunately, the 2019 DIRT Report shows damages to buried infrastructure are on the rise for the fifth consecutive year. In the U.S. alone, total damages increased 4.5 percent year-over-year, costing an estimated \$30 billion.

Although damages are on the rise, leading utilities such as Southern Company Gas and Puget Sound Energy have reduced their damages. At the recent Urbint Anticipate conference, I spoke with damage prevention leaders at these companies about what makes their programs successful.

## Data-Driven Damage Prevention Decisions

Utilities have a limited number of workers they can dispatch to ensure safe digging. Many still rely heavily on rules-of-thumb and gut feel to decide where to intervene, but Southern Company Gas has taken a data-driven approach.

Instead of relying upon recognition of risky excavators or work types, Southern Company relies on a software that uses AI models trained from previous damage data to assign risk scores to 811 tickets, enabling the utility to easily see where damage is likely to occur so they can intervene on the riskiest excavations. "It can't be heuristics or who makes the best argument," said Emeka Igwilo, Chief Data Officer and Vice President of Operations Support. "It has to be based on data."

## Reevaluating Call-Before-You-Dig Campaigns

According to the 2019 DIRT Report, "no call-ins" is the largest individual damage root cause. This might suggest a need for increased call-before-you-dig campaigning to some, but Erika Hunter, Damage Prevention Program Supervisor at Puget Sound Energy, said she's seen success by reevaluating the messaging of existing campaigns.

Hunter, who serves as the gas chair on the Washington 811 board, said updating overall messaging was key to increasing homeowner call-ins in the state. "We [asked] homeowners, 'What would make you call?' It wasn't that their house could blow up. It was that they were going to get a bill," Hunter said. "We're creating a new ad campaign that is focused on the monetary consequences of [unsafe digging]."

## A "Golden Record of Assets"

A few decades ago, utilities could rely on workers to pass down important information about their underground infrastructure.

"A senior operator would have someone apprentice with them for years, and they'd pass along this tribal information," Igwilo said. Although fragmentary, this unofficial knowledge sharing helped protect underground infrastructure from damages.

This type of knowledge sharing does not exist today, which is why Igwilo said Southern Company is creating a "golden record of assets." The purpose of this repository of information is to pass important information about Southern's underground infrastructure from employee to employee. "We need to aggregate all that information so decision makers can make decisions that are data-based," Igwilo said. "Going forward, there must be a standard of data collection to make sure we're not further exacerbating the problem."

## Intervening on Risky Digs

Using software which, in part, analyzes historical data to identify excavators that are most likely to cause damages, Puget Sound Energy found the majority of their damages were coming from just a few excavators. So, the company began sending representatives to job sites to oversee high-risk digs.

"Excavators didn't even want to see us when we showed up," Hunter said, but the utility persisted and won over the excavators with results. "Now, they don't have damages, so it's proving our intervention works." 

*Dr. Lindsay Jenkins is VP of Strategy and Technical Operations at Urbint, developers of the Urbint Lens for Damage Prevention. Learn more at [Urbint.com](http://Urbint.com).*



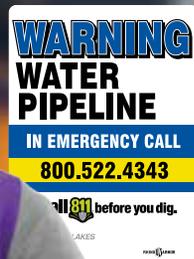
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## Leveraging Artificial Intelligence in Utility Conflict Avoidance

**THE BUILT WORLD** presents those of us involved in utility conflict avoidance with copious challenges, and utilities and services contractors alike are, these days, actively looking for new solutions and new technologies. All too often, incidents of near-misses, accidents, or unnecessarily high risks could have been avoided had stakeholders been given access to more data. The following question often arises: “how do we get the most out of our data, find the insights, and see the results in a simple format that’s easy to understand?” Traditionally, this would involve high costs, a significant work force, and lots of time. But what if we started leveraging emerging Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies to solve our data problems in underground construction?

One area experiencing explosive growth in the last year is AI, also referred to as Machine Learning (ML). AI/ML providers have increasingly demonstrated positive business results for utility owners, services companies, and consulting engineers in underground construction damage prevention use cases.

### 811 Ticketing Analytics & Risk Assessment

Several damage prevention stakeholders in the U.S. are turning to emerging data science practices powered by AI to quickly analyze hundreds of variables surrounding 811 tickets. This includes work types, historical contractor and permitting data, GIS map layers, and even weather patterns, for early detection of which excavation sites are most damage prone, and which factors in the built and natural environment might affect the precision of utility locates.

The ongoing use of AI and cloud computing to monitor and process so many various datasets can lead to insights that drive for better predictability. It can also provide useful decision tools for the individuals needing to enforce safe digging practices, and also determine where bad actors may be attempting to subvert local regulations.

### Cross Bore Safety Assurance Audits & Inspection Support

In the case of cross bore safety, a “cross bore” is defined as the intersection of one utility pipeline through another, such as a gas pipeline installed through a sewer. One U.S.-based company has been leveraging AI Computer Vision technology (similarly used in facial recognition, traffic cameras, and medical scans) to automatically detect various pipeline defects, construction features, and conditions in sewer CCTV inspection data. The intention is to achieve a higher degree of accuracy than currently available with manual inspection and data review methods. As capabilities have progressed beyond proof-of-concept pilots, the

prospect of Automatic Defect Recognition (ADR) technology has also been warmly embraced by industry organizations in the U.S., such as NASSCO (National Association of Sewer Service Companies) who have long been committed to elevating the level of quality and consistency in sewer condition assessments. It is also being implemented by diverse groups of industry stakeholders, ranging from sewer agencies and contractors large and small, to consulting engineers.

A recently-completed study in a use case involving review of CCTV cross bore sewer inspection data found an AI-assisted process yielded a 70% savings of manual workforce hours in QA/QC reviews. Other studies have also shown a nearly 2x increase in CCTV inspection productivity. The underground construction industry is now keen to examine possibilities in even more beneficial use cases for AI.

Whether it’s a discussion of where ADR in CCTV inspections can also provide opportunities for gas utilities to expand co-operative partnerships with sewer asset owners by cost-effectively providing sewer agencies with data to drive smarter sewer operations and capital budget management, or additional insights and decisions that support products relating to utility locating, excavation permitting, and overall conflict avoidance, we are seeing AI illuminate a path forward as we navigate through an otherwise hidden world. **DP**

*Eric Sullivan is Director of Business Development with SewerAI. He can be reached at [esullivan@sewerai.com](mailto:esullivan@sewerai.com).*



# COMPLAINTS

## THE LOCATOR'S ROLE IN ENFORCEMENT

BY JASON KOUBA

Since July of 2015, Tennessee law has included enforcement which allows individuals to file a complaint through the Tennessee Public Utility Commission (TPUC) if they feel someone is in violation of the Underground Utility Damage Prevention Act. So, what does this mean to the locating world? I talked to a couple of individuals in contract locating to see how enforcement affected them and if they were seeing noticeable improvements in damage prevention from excavators.

The first thing I asked was, "How are contract locate companies handling enforcement?" Jeff Smith, with Heath Consultants, said that, for the most part, their customers were the ones filing complaints when individuals were believed to be in violation of the law. Locators, as contractors, may not want to file a complaint that could cause an alleged violator to become upset with their utility client. It is the safer move and may even be mandated by internal policy. But considering the important role that utility locators play in damage prevention, it begs the question: Can the locating community make a bigger impact on enforcement?

I asked Jeff what the locating community could do to promote the success of the state enforcement programs and his answer was simple, "Be more involved." Many locators may not know that they are able to file complaints just like a contractor, utility or homeowner can. Maybe they are not familiar with the process of filing a complaint or believe it may be too cumbersome. The fear may exist that the locator must work with the contractors day in and day out and they do not want to harm relationships they have spent years building. While these concerns are valid, if we want to make a difference in damage prevention, we also need to point out violations and actively work to correct them.

I also had an opportunity to talk with Earl Bolin with USIC. Earl is on the Underground Utility Damage Enforcement Board representing contract locators. I asked if he felt that having enforcement in Tennessee has had a positive impact in preventing damage to underground facilities and how USIC was handling the filing of complaints. He stated that they are determining the specifics of their process over time as the enforcement program develops, but for now they do file complaints – primarily for false emergencies. Previously, there was not much you could do as a locator to prevent these from

being called in. Now with enforcement, a locator can file a complaint if they receive an emergency ticket and upon arrival determine that it does not meet the legal criteria of an emergency excavation, which Tennessee law defines as an immediate threat to life, health or property, including restoration of services.

Keep in mind, complaints can be turned in by anyone and against anyone that is in violation of the dig law. This means if a locate request is not responded to within 72 hours as required by the law, a complaint can also be filed against the locator for being in violation.

Ultimately, it takes all parties involved doing the right things and working together to truly make a difference in reducing the number of damages to underground facilities. Enforcement is there for accountability, not to point fingers and pass blame. If used correctly, enforcement can promote the awareness and use of safe digging practices by further educating contractors, utilities, locators and even homeowners on the current dig law and their responsibilities each of them carry on each and every excavation. **DP**

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*Jason Kouba is a Damage Prevention Liaison with Tennessee 811. He can be reached at [jkouba@tennessee811.com](mailto:jkouba@tennessee811.com).*

# How we moved our Entire Work Force from the Office to Home Almost Overnight.

## • PART II • WORKING IN THE PANDEMIC

BY CHRIS STOVALL



When I wrote about our move to working from home in the last issue (Winter, Part 1), our entire company had been working from home since the spring of 2020. I reported everything was going well as far as our operations and technology. I shared some of the technologies, applications, and management practices we were using to maintain a successful operation. We continue to have success in those areas.

There was, and still is, one major area we are keeping an eye on as we come up on a year of working from home - the mental health of our staff. In the previous article, I mentioned that for 40% of our staff, working from home was familiar territory, they had been doing it, and doing it successfully, for years. For 60% of our staff, this was new territory.

For those of us that were new to this, we saw it as temporary. I have personally had many Zoom calls with people both in and outside our company where the person on the other side of the camera was set up to work at the kitchen table, or the living room, or the back patio. We were all doing our best to get work done from our homes. In fact, those of us making the move had to make a distinction between telecommuting and “working from home”. We were having a very different experience than those who had dedicated office space and routines for telecommuting.

There have been various reports on the impact COVID-19 and working from home has had on the mental health of our nation. Many reports, including reports from the CDC, show that somewhere between 40% and 55% of adults are struggling with mental health and substance abuse issues. We have done our own internal surveys and there has been a rise in loneliness and feelings of being disconnected. While I would in no way insinuate that we have solved the challenge, we have had some successes with resources we have made available to our staff.

One of the areas we identified and communicated early on is our Employee Assistance Program which is a great resource for employees with access to counseling and therapy among other things. We have a Learning Management System that makes continuing education available to our staff, many of whom are taking full advantage of the offering. We

continue to stay connected by using video in most of our communications. We are also continuing the practice of holding regular team building events, many of which are virtual. We are encouraging our team members to take regular breaks, have a separate and dedicated workspace, and to try their best to follow a regular work routine. We are also working closely with the Center for Brain Health in Dallas, to provide regular virtual workshops for all employees. These workshops are provided by brain health professionals and include topics around stress management, resilience, goal setting, and emotional regulation.

Follow-up surveys and conversations indicate that all these resources and practices are having a positive impact. One final area we are working on presently is wellness, which for us is including healthy eating habits and exercise.

One thing I have learned through this process is the strength of the human spirit. We continue to find ways to hold on to the most important things in life. Though we have our challenges, we continue to see the best of us adapting, helping others, and serving in ways that make things better for everyone. We will persevere. 

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*Chris Stovall is President & CEO of Texas 811. He can be reached at [ChrisStovall@Texas811.org](mailto:ChrisStovall@Texas811.org).*

# Tailgate Wraps Share an Important Message

• BRIAN MOREHOUSE •



**WE ARE ALL LOOKING** for creative ways to share the message to our communities about 811. At NC811, our Education Team focuses on how we can promote the 811 message for the greatest return on investment. How many times does a message need to be heard? Many experts refer to the “Rule of 7,” which suggests consumers need to hear a message seven times before they will consider acting.

NC811 has seen great success over the years with our billboard campaigns. Teaming up with stakeholders each year, we place 40 billboards throughout the state, earning over 111 million impressions. When callers are surveyed on how they heard about 811, billboards are ranked right below “just knew to call” and “hearing the message from contractors and locators.” The data tells a story which led us to believe rolling billboards could be equally effective.

NC811 purchased and wrapped three fleet cars, allowing liaisons to share the 811 message while traveling to meetings and education opportunities. Industry research shows that on average, the message would have 50,000-70,000 impressions daily. Having three fleet vehicles, each on the road for at least 156 days a year, could potentially provide us 32.7 million impressions annually.

The great return on investment led us to apply for and receive a One Call Grant through PHMSA that promoted public awareness of 811 through

truck tailgates. We did not want just any tailgate, we wanted tailgates with a 3–7-year lifespan that would prove to be a great return on investment at less than \$225 for each tailgate wrap.

We created a grant campaign allowing for 10 wraps in four regions totaling 40 statewide. Our focus was around municipalities, rural water corporations, water & sewer authorities, and cable/telephone cooperatives. Those meeting the qualifications could apply for up to two tailgate wraps per entity. At the end of the campaign, we selected the winners and got to work finalizing the installation of the wraps. The winners chose their preferred vendor, and we covered the cost. A win-win for all of us. In fact, several entities covered their own cost to have additional truck tailgates wrapped.

In the wake of COVID-19 and the unknown, the tailgate wrap campaign has proven to be a huge success, estimating over 349.4 million impressions annually and up to 1.7 billion potential impressions over a span of five years. As you might guess, we will continue our campaign in 2021 looking for more tailgates to wrap as rolling billboards. If you are eager to share in our success, contact us to learn more about the campaign. We would love to impart our knowledge for the sake of protecting the ones we love. **DP**

*Brian Morehouse is an Education Liaison with NC 811. He can be reached at [bmorehouse@nc811.org](mailto:bmorehouse@nc811.org).*

# The Unveiling of New York 811's New VR-X-SIM

• BY ROGER SAMPSON •



## Ready for Reveal

Throughout the winter I've had the pleasure of revealing aspects of New York 811's new VR-X-SIM, an immersive virtual reality (VR) tool with the potential to revolutionize the way we think about damage prevention education, damage investigation, and how we train excavators. After years of hard work alongside our partners, UTTO and IPEG, we're finally ready to reveal the machine this spring! But before we do, I wanted to talk a little about the how the VR-X-SIM came to be, and why the process is so important to future innovation in damage prevention.

## Where it Began

The idea for the VR-X-SIM, or at least the concept of a system for replicable excavation scenario training, is not new. In fact, over a decade ago I had the idea to create a "Safety Town" for excavator training. For a variety of reasons, the "Safety Town" method was not as viable as I had hoped, but the idea remained: What if we could create a tool that replicated a job site in such detail that we were able to manipulate and measure individual variables and their effects on damages?

The idea was put on the backburner for a while. Scaling a physical replication of the excavation process and its near-endless factors seemed out of reach. As time passed, though, technology caught up to the vision. The two collided when I saw what UTTO was doing in utility locating. By integrating their technology with existing locate technician processes, an untapped well of data was suddenly available – data that was there all along but could finally be captured and used to improve safety and efficiency! That core concept, collecting data points from as many parts of a process as possible, could be transferred to the entire excavation process with VR-X-SIM.

## Challenges

It is easy for me to get caught up in the endless possibilities of the simulator, but I think it is important to note that the road from inspiration to finished product was far from straight. First, and maybe most obvious to fellow One Call readers, this initiative was naturally expensive. It is brand-new technology being originated and customized for the needs of the industry. Luckily, the NY811 Board of Directors saw the potential in the concept and its impact on the industry and voted in favor of funding.

Second, like any damage prevention initiative, there were questions about whether the simulator could truly move the needle in the industry. That is the point after all: To effect real change that protects buried infrastructure and the people who rely on it. To this point, we believe in the idea and its potential so strongly that NY811 has filed a patent on it. We believe that virtual reality, and eventually augmented reality, will play a critical role in the future of damage prevention. We are investing accordingly.

## Lessons Learned

Despite the loftiness of the idea and the expense of executing it, together with UTTO and IPEG, NY811 has managed to complete the VR-X-SIM to our original vision. It took perseverance, constant collaboration, and, most importantly, a collective shared vision of a massive technological leap forward for the industry. We believe it is a positive example of what can happen when the industry collaborates with innovative technologies.

## The Full Reveal

Join us in an unveiling of the VR-X-SIM on Friday, April 23, 12:00 pm CST at [ExcavationSafetyAlliance.com](http://ExcavationSafetyAlliance.com) for a glimpse of the exciting future of excavation safety! 

# Miss Utility Recognizes Locate Technicians in 17th Annual Locator Achievement Awards

• BY DORA PARKS, MISS UTILITY OF MARYLAND/DISTRICT ONE CALL •

**MISS UTILITY** of Maryland/District One Call recently recognized 60 outstanding locate technicians for their dedication to damage prevention and exemplary performance with zero safety violations in 2019 through the 17th Annual Locator Achievement Awards. Typically, award recipients are recognized during a celebration at a minor league baseball game, but as holding the traditional celebration was not possible in 2020, Miss Utility came up with a new way to recognize the winning locate technicians for their hard work and commitment to safety.

Each winner received a “goodie bag” containing a custom-embroidered jacket, 811 logo t-shirt, awards certificate, Miss Utility baseball cap, pen, and a \$100 restaurant gift card for them to enjoy a meal with their families in lieu of the canceled banquet.

Miss Utility’s annual Locator Achievement Award program aims to increase appreciation for the locating profession and improve perceptions of the profession overall by recognizing locate technicians for their essential role and commitment to the damage prevention process. **DP**



Diamantie Sturdivant, UtiliQuest



Cody Turner, Pro Comm



Chauncey Clifton, OCC



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The RTK-Pro receiver is the first to add RTK GNSS accuracy to a utility locator. With a 4G LTE cellular module, the operator can connect to the NTRIP RTK caster providing RTCM 3 corrections. The operator can now collect utility location data and the utility's geographical location with survey-grade accuracy.



Conducting a thorough damage investigation requires several steps including filling out damage forms, creating sketches of the scene, interviewing witnesses, and assessing damages. Photos of the scene will often determine who is liable for the damage, so it is imperative to utilize the best damage investigation tool to document the damage and help prove your case.

The Rhino HITKit +2 is the recognized industry-standard damage investigation tool. It provides posts that are legible from 360° and includes a rigid ruler with numbers that can be clearly read from a distance.

“One of the biggest problems with damage pictures is the lack of perspective and measurements. The Hit Kit+2 provides the best tools to solve these problems. This kit should be mandatory for all damage investigators.”

Ron Peterson  
Director, National Utility Contractors Association (Nulca)



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BY MONICA WOFFORD, CSP

# ONE Ringy-Dingy!

**I**t just never stops! The phone rings, the spam calls continue, a person walks in your office, and the list grows longer by the minute. If you Google “Lily Tomlin Telephone Operator” or remember the vignette, you might think our whole world has become one big comedic skit about not just how much the phone rings, but everything we’re expected to do, hear, and accomplish daily. “Overwhelmed” might well be the mantra of this new year, second only to the word “unprecedented.”

But how do you stop it? Or perhaps the better question is, “What do you do about it and how do you preserve your sanity?” Being overwhelmed has become a state of working and, yes, normal. The toll this takes has yet to be measured and (with an ounce of sarcasm) until the impact is seen as drastic and can be remedied by one small pill or a doctor visit, you’re not likely to see any readily available solutions. So, in the spirit of preventing your need for imminent bail money if that phone rings one more time or one more person says, “gotta sec?,” let’s talk about some solutions.

## Get Back Your Seven Minutes

Interruptions are normal and if you are a leader of team members, they need you on occasion. What you might not need is the revolving door of each one of them, one at a time, calling, asking, or popping into your office with a request or question. Here’s why: Each time you get in the flow of working on a project, even a minimal interruption that forces you to shift your attention, will break that momentum. On average, it takes seven minutes to regain said momentum and usually far longer if you get pulled into another task for which they are asking for your assistance. Let’s keep it simple. You might be overwhelmed because in the span of a six-hour day, you are interrupted ten times. Ten times seven is 70. Seventy minutes of unproductive time figuring out where you left off in what you were doing before you were interrupted. Add in lunch, casual chit chat, and an hour-long Zoom meeting, and you’ve actually only had two and a half hours to complete your list of 50 items. Get back your seven minutes!

## Focus on Your Top Six Priorities

Does your list really need to have that many things on it? Are they all really top priority and need your attention right this minute? “No” and “no” are the right answers, but highly driven people will say “yes” and “yes” to both questions.

Limit what you are trying to get done or focus on just six items. Six items go on your “to-do” list and until those six get done, nothing else

matters. It takes discipline. It is not easy. But have you ever had to stay extra late at the job site or office because this one item had to be done TODAY and you “just didn’t have time” but still have to do it, instead of whatever you do in your personal life? Right about now, those top six are sounding better by the minute.

## Keep the Ideas to a Minimum

No matter what your top six items are, there is always some pesky innovative nugget of brilliance, or what some might call an idea, that creeps in mid-accomplishment. Hold onto it and that idea moment can turn into three bags of Goodwill goodies, alphabetized spices, and a desk propped up on milk crates at which you’re now standing.

Don’t do it! Keep the ideas flowing but keep your focus on them to a minimum. Add a white board to the wall or a Post-It pad in the passenger seat and jot those ideas down as they enter. Save them to focus on later and keep going with your current momentum. Most time management courses will tell you to have only one list, but the part often left to assumption is it is one list on which to focus. Consider this permission to have more than one list and ideas for March, think about next month’s Newsletter and talk with Bob or find Bob’s replacement. They can all go on the one list from which you pull your six tasks that will deserve tomorrow’s focus.

We all know that in the last year it is more than mere phone calls that are creating the feelings of being completely overloaded, overwhelmed, and just done. The stress of the changes, plus the fear, along with worry, possible illness, homeschooling, virtual world living, the safety of loved ones, and the scarcity of freaking toilet paper, has all had a compound effect, not unlike interest on a long-term investment. One more ringy-dingy might simply send your rage into action but remember this: it took a year to get to this point with one more post or anchor comment added to the mix. It won’t take a year to undo the effect, but one change to the list or one shift in focus on a regular basis just might do the trick. **DP**

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*Monica Wofford, CSP is a leadership development specialist, keynote speaker, and executive coach. For more information on her books, training firm, or coaching services, call 866-382-0121, or go to [ContagiousCompanies.com](http://ContagiousCompanies.com).*

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THIS COLUMN EXPLORES TIPS AND TECHNIQUES TO IMPROVE YOUR ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE WITH CO-WORKERS, CUSTOMERS AND INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDERS.





BY ALEXANDER SMITH  
AND JOHN W. DUBBS III

# Can Nonprofits Engage in Political Activity?

## Protecting the Tax-Exempt Status of 501(c)(6) and 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Organizations

**M**any nonprofit organizations watched with great interest as this election season played out, and some may choose in the future to take a more active role in the political process. Some will also become involved with legislation. It is important for nonprofits to remember that engaging in certain political activities could impact their tax-exempt status.

The specific political activities a nonprofit is allowed to engage in depend upon the type of the nonprofit entity. Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c) identifies 29 types of entities that are eligible for nonprofit status. Nonprofits should be particularly aware of the rules that apply to their specific type of nonprofit. In particular, the rules governing political activity differ significantly between the two more common types of nonprofits interacting with the damage prevention industry, 501(c)(3) charitable organizations and 501(c)(6) business leagues.

### Lobbying

One key difference between 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(6) nonprofits involves the limitation placed on lobbying. Lobbying occurs when a nonprofit contacts members of a legislative body for the purpose of proposing, supporting, or opposing legislation; urges the public to contact members of a legislative body to do the same; advocates for the adoption or rejection of legislation; or communicates with the general public and reflects a view on a ballot initiative. As a default rule, 501(c)(3) nonprofits may engage in lobbying so long as such activities are not substantial in relation to their overall activities. Alternatively, a 501(c)(3) can elect to measure its lobbying activities under an "expenditure test" whereby the nonprofit is given a limit on its lobbying expenditures based on the nonprofit's annual expenditures. These rules do not apply to a 501(c)(6) nonprofit, which may engage in unlimited lobbying in furtherance of their exempt purposes.

### Political Campaign Intervention

The IRS places greater restriction on a nonprofit's ability to engage in political campaign intervention. Political campaign intervention includes activities that favor or oppose one or more political candidates, including endorsements, contributions to political campaign funds and public statements in favor of or in opposition to a candidate. 501(c)(3) nonprofits are prohibited from engaging in political campaign intervention. In contrast, a 501(c)(6) nonprofit may engage in political campaign intervention provided that such intervention does not constitute the organization's primary activity.

### Notice and Taxes

A 501(c)(6) nonprofit that chooses to engage in certain political activities must provide notice of the amounts of membership dues allocable to these political expenditures. This includes expenditures paid or incurred in connection with influencing legislation; participating or intervening in any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office; attempting to influence the general public with respect to elections, legislative matters, or referendums; and any direct communication with an executive branch official in an attempt to influence the official's actions or positions. If the nonprofit fails to provide the required notice, the nonprofit must pay a tax on these expenditures. This notice and tax requirement does not apply to a 501(c)(3) nonprofit.

### Voter Education and Registration

Low-risk political activities that a nonprofit may engage in include voter education and registration programs. Both 501(c)(3) and (c)(6) nonprofits are permitted to carry out voter education and registration activities, so long as these activities are carried out in a non-partisan manner. This may include holding public forums or the publishing of voter education guides. If a 501(c)(3) nonprofit engages in these activities, the nonprofit should be certain that its content is broad, neutral, and inclusive, as to avoid the appearance of engaging in political campaign activity.

### Conclusion

Nonprofits should be mindful of IRS rules governing their organization's ability to engage in political activities and the risk that non-compliance presents to their tax-exempt status. In addition to these rules, nonprofits should also be aware that state tax regulations and campaign finance laws may further limit their ability to engage in political activity. **DP**

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*Alexander Smith is a corporate law associate with Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP. John W. Dubbs III is a corporate and tax law partner with Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP, with substantial experience in matters related to nonprofit taxation.*

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THIS ARTICLE IS INTENDED ONLY FOR THE GENERAL INFORMATION OF THE READER. ANY NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION WITH A SPECIFIC ISSUE IS ENCOURAGED TO DISCUSS WITH THEIR COUNSEL OR OTHER TAX ADVISOR.

## LOCATING



BY CHRISTOPHER KOCH

# Buckle Up

**T**he CGA Best Practices includes an unusual item within Chapter Four, the section dealing with Locating and Marking. Number 17 among the Best Practices is “Forecasting/Planning for Predictable Workload Fluctuations.” The Practice Statement immediately following that heading reads, “A plan is developed for managing unpredictable fluctuations.”

Notice the juxtaposition of the words “predictable” and “unpredictable”. I guess what the committee was saying was you can predict that things will be unpredictable. Be ready.

The last sentence of the practice includes the words “the practice does not limit the number of One Call requests from excavators.” That is unambiguous. Excavators are going to call in as much as they want, and you are statutorily required to serve them. Figure it out.

I have written before including in “*White Lines and Whoppers*” (Winter, 2017) about the challenges this poses for the locating industry and how our excavating partners can help us provide the highest level of service to them – including the judicious use of white lining and the need to be economical with locating requests, ensuring you take only what you need to preserve resources for other excavator stakeholders.

That said, I am buckling in for a wild ride in 2021. Last February, I was anticipating a busier than usual construction season due to subjective observations of the world around me. I’m in the upper Midwest and 2019’s weather had been hard on excavators which seemed to have created a small backlog of projects. The stock market was surging, and I was having a lot of conversations with contractors who were bracing for an unusually busy 2020.

Then came the pandemic. Shutdowns were ordered and projects were cancelled or delayed. Like many small businesses, my locating firm limped through early 2020 assisted by PPP. Second quarter revenue was down by over a third from the previous year. Late in the season, as work began to pick up again, there were obvious changes brought on by COVID-19. Homeowner-driven work was way up. People trapped at home were using vacation money to build decks, dig swimming pools, and buy landscaping. Drive through testing stations springing up in parking lots meant the driving of stakes for tents, as did weddings and graduations suddenly moved outdoors. By year end, it seemed that locating, at least for my company, was back on track.

Now President Biden is pushing forward with an almost two trillion-



dollar stimulus package including direct payment to individuals and families as well as funds earmarked for use by state and local governments. That is a staggering amount of money. Larry Summers, U.S. Treasury Secretary under President Clinton and a top economic adviser to President Obama, recently wrote in an Op-Ed to the *Washington Post*, “Stimulus measures of the magnitude contemplated are steps into the unknown.” Which brings us back to 4.17 – and planning for unpredictable workload fluctuations.

Last Friday I met a drilling contractor onsite. As usual, the topic turned to COVID-19 and how it impacted our businesses in 2020. After reflecting on the shutdowns and deferred work caused by the pandemic, he revealed that December 2020 and January 2021 had been his busiest in history. I noted that my own company, although not yet setting records, had enjoyed an unusually busy January.

Regardless of what the long-term future brings, Washington is about to turn on the money tap and I am buckling up for a very hectic 2021. After last year’s early doldrums, I wouldn’t mind a little fluctuation in my workload. **DP**

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**Christopher Koch is a training consultant and President of ZoneOne Locating. He is past president of Nulca and worked on both the 2009 and 2015 revisions to the Nulca Professional Competency Standard. He can be reached by email at [Christopherkoch@live.com](mailto:Christopherkoch@live.com) or on Twitter @kochauthor.**

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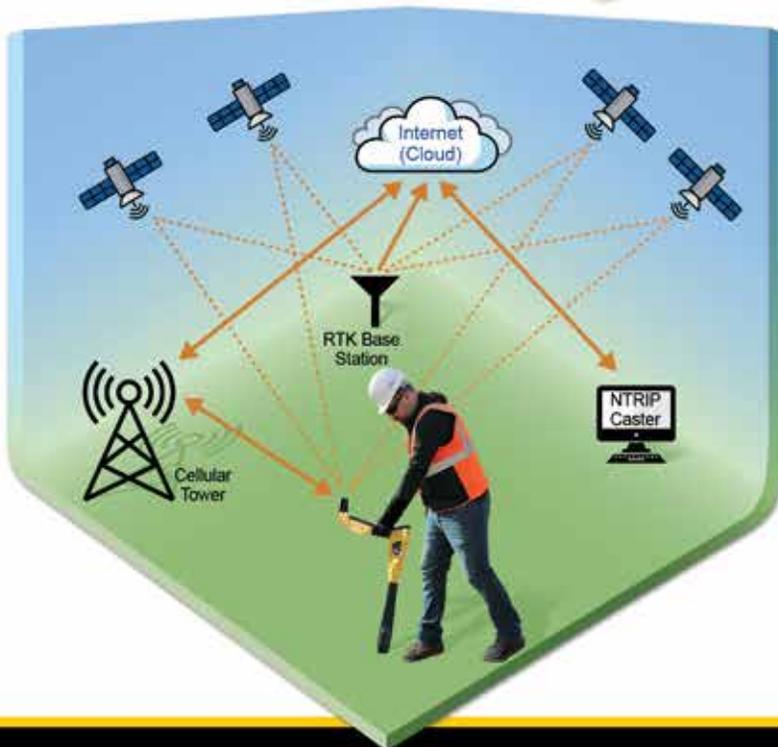
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