

Louisiana

2018 Issue 3



8

From the Call Center to
the Garden Center



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from the desk of

David Frey



Welcome to another edition of our damage prevention magazine. I appreciate the positive comments we've received about the magazine from our readers and I especially want to thank those companies who support our efforts by advertising in the Louisiana 811 Magazine. If you've made a commitment to support our damage prevention efforts by advertising, you've been a tremendous help. If you are advertising to reach a very targeted audience interested in your products or services, you've chosen the right vehicle.

It has been a very busy year for us. One of the events Louisiana 811 was proud to be part of was 811 Day at the Baby Cakes ball game on August 11. More than 4,000 folks attended the game.

We had a great time spreading the "call before you dig" and "dig safely" message. Chairman of the Louisiana 811 Board, James Martarona threw the first pitch of the game to start the evening and it was clearly a strike from where I stood. Working together to raise the awareness of calling before you dig is vitally important to all of us. Look for photos inside this issue and a special thanks to our sponsors and workers who helped make this a special day for all of us.

Let me remind our ITIC users that a conversion process that would allow both ITIC and NextGen to run side-by-side has been designed. That way excavators can use the old product until they are comfortable with the new one.

There are a number of benefits to our members and excavators to be gained by completing the conversion to NextGen. More consistent tickets, decreased over-notification and better information for locators are just a few. To learn more about this exciting feature you can contact thelma@laonecall.com.

Brent Saltzman and Jeff Morrison continue to work hard spreading the damage prevention message across Louisiana from top to bottom. If your organization has need of safety meetings, tailgate meetings to discuss the Dig Law or perhaps you need to find out how better to take advantage of the many features and services of Louisiana 811, just give one of them a call.

We look forward to the opportunity to help our members and interested stakeholders in Louisiana protect our buried utilities and to keep our communities a safer place to live and work.

Thanks for all you do and let us know how we can help you keep your community a safer place to live and work.

*David Frey
Executive Director
Louisiana 811*



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Letters, comments, and articles are encouraged and can be submitted to:

Louisiana 811

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**New Orleans Area Utility Coordinating Council
New Orleans Digger's Night Out Program**
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Electric Co-op Breaks Safety Records and Shares Its Secrets

By Billy Gibson
Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives

It's not every day that an auditorium full of general managers gets taken to task.

But Kenny Marvin had a strong message to deliver to top executives at the recent annual meeting of the Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives in Baton Rouge.

Marvin, a field rep for Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange, spoke directly to the managers during his spirited presentation on the importance of safety: "Managers, you need to listen to what I'm telling you – if you're not personally attending your organization's safety meetings, you should be. That's your job. It's that important."

For Joe Ticheli, general manager of Houma-based South Louisiana Electric Cooperative Association (SLECA) Marvin was singing to the choir.

Ticheli, who was hired as safety director at SLECA in 2000 and became GM in 2011, makes it a priority to attend all safety meetings, including those gatherings of the co-op's two employee safety committees.

The reason is simple: "My presence at those meetings is paramount in sending the clear and unambiguous message to our employees that safety is critical," Ticheli said.

The proof is in the figurative pudding.

As of the end of July, SLECA hasn't recorded a lost-time accident since December of 1996. For those who are counting, that's 3,589,304 million work hours.

This is not an insignificant sum under any circumstances, but it is especially impressive considering that the track record includes literally dozens of tropical storms and hurricanes that have swept through the Louisiana coast over the past two decades, including Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Gustav, Ike and others.

And the tally includes emergency line work performed both at home and away, such as when SLECA sent a crew to assist fellow cooperatives in Florida after Hurricane Irma last year and a fellow Louisiana co-op on the southwest side of the state after Hurricane Harvey.

What's more, SLECA's outstanding safety record also includes the average 700,000 miles the co-op's linemen drive each year.

According to Operations Superintendent Matt Peters, a successful operations program like SLECA's doesn't happen by accident, so to speak. It takes everyone involved in the organization to play a substantial role in making sure effective policies are in place and every guideline is followed from the warehouse to the field.

"We don't take shortcuts. If it takes an extra 15 or 20 minutes to do the job right, that's what we do," Peters said. "We stress ground-to-ground, lock-to-lock on every job, every day. I know it's hard for our linemen sometimes, but it's important to achieve the highest goal we have, and that is to go back home at the end of every day to the people who love us."

Peters also noted SLECA's involvement in the Louisiana Lineman Training Program administered at the statewide office in Baton Rouge.

During the four-year program, linemen learn the latest procedures and skills necessary to carry out their work assignments safely, but they also collaborate and interact with other cooperative linemen and superintendents from throughout the state.

Mike Bergeaux, director of safety and loss control at the statewide association, commended SLECA on the cooperative's success.

"When we talk about the amazing work SLECA has done, sometimes

people can hardly believe it. But it's really a testimony as to how committed everybody in the organization is to doing things the right way each and every day, from the inside employees to the linemen who are out working on the poles and lines. My hat's off to them," Bergeaux said.

He noted that SLECA is a multiple past recipient of the annual Statewide Safety Trophy, including 2017. The cooperative was also the first in the state to participate in the national safety accreditation program.

Ticheli acknowledged that it can be difficult to sustain success over a long period of time when it comes to preventing lost-time accidents. Negative influences such as overconfidence, inattentiveness and complacency can sometimes set in.

But SLECA has also had to contend with another unexpected challenge: a depressed local economy.

Marc Caldwell is branch manager of SLECA's Amelia office, an outpost that was created to serve an area that was once teeming with oil and gas businesses. But recent years have seen a severe downturn in economic activity in the Amelia and Morgan city region.

And along with that comes a strong temptation to cut corners.

Caldwell said that hasn't been the case with SLECA's board and management.

"Safety is often one of the first things many managers look at when they need to shore up the budget, especially in tough economic times," Caldwell said. "But we've been very fortunate that our board hasn't done that. They back us 100 percent and give us everything we need to do our work. They're amazing with the amount of unwavering support they give us."

SLECA board president, Alexander Doyle, confirmed that board members are in complete agreement that safety should never be shortchanged.

"It doesn't ever really come up in our discussions and deliberations," Doyle said. "We're all on the same page. There's just too much at stake. Nothing is more important than our employees being able to return to their families at the end of their workday. They do an incredible job and we want to do whatever we can to keep them free from harm."

Another part of the budget that doesn't get cut, according to Ticheli, is rights-of-way. Maintaining the proper ROW clearances is necessary to protect not only the line crews but members and the general public as well.

"When it comes to safety, our obligation goes beyond just our employees. We have to make sure we have a vigorous right-of-way program and do everything we can to reduce the risk of our members being harmed as well," Ticheli said.

Peters noted that another aspect of safe operations is working with reliable and competent partners such as Louisiana 811. Part of SLECA's service territory is within a 45-minute drive of New Orleans, which means a lot of subdivision construction. And that means lots of underground work. The co-op has 117 miles of primary underground service and 245 miles of secondary service.

He estimated that the cooperative completes an average of 50-60 "Dottie tickets" each day.

"Anyone who has done underground electric work knows how potentially dangerous it can be," he said. "Electricity wants to go to the ground and that's right where you're working. You're just so close in proximity to it and you can't physically see the entire system. Your mapping has to be precise and up-to-date. Louisiana 811 has always been a great partner in helping us get our work done safely and efficiently."

And for members of the public, he added, "There's no reason any of our members shouldn't call 811 when they have a project that requires digging. It's simple, it's free and it's the law." 

SLECA's 10 Step Safety Program

1. Set Safety as a Top Priority
2. Lead by Example
3. Implement a Reporting System
4. Training
6. Conduct Inspections
7. Hazard Control
8. Hazard Recognition
9. Address all Accidents or Near Misses
10. Make Improvement



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From the Call Center to the Garden Center

Louisiana 811 brings their damage prevention message to national retailer

By Michael Downes
Staff Writer



Louisiana 811’s continued initiative to team up with area retail and rental companies has reached a new milestone as ten The Home Depot locations have agreed to partner with LA811 to help remind their customers about the importance of calling 811 before they dig.

Brent Saltzman, damage prevention manager with Louisiana 811, knew that Georgia811 been in touch with the corporate office of the Atlanta-based retail giant in an effort to add an informative 811 wrap around the trunk of trees sold in their Garden Center. The Home Depot was on board with the outreach effort and one thing led to another; ten Louisiana stores were included in the tree wrap initiative, as well as others across the country.

The tree wraps were well received by The Home Depot’s Kayla Johnson, operations assistant store manager for Store 357 on Coursey Blvd in Baton Rouge. She helped bring the two organizations together, united by the common goal of protecting the public. One of Kayla’s roles is safety and security of the store and its employees, so it was a natural fit.

While she hasn’t personally been in a situation that requires calling in a locate request — she lives in an apartment — as a safety-oriented employee, she understands the importance of preventing deadly utility strikes.

“With our customers’ safety being the top priority in our store, the 811 partnership helps to keep our customers safe at home,” she said.

Kayla said The Home Depot sold more than 2500 trees and rosebushes this year just at her location. That means the damage prevention message could reach at least 2500 new people this fall as those plants are installed throughout the area.

Many homeowners know to call 811 for trenching or other major construction projects, but there are a lot of folks who may not realize planting trees also requires a locate request.

Louisiana law requires anybody doing any kind of digging to call in a locate request at least 48 hours before work begins. That includes not just trees, but also fences and mailbox posts, sprinkler systems and even some fire pits.

Some homeowners may think they know where all the utilities are located on their property, but new construction, erosion or zig-zags in the line may mean there are unknown dangers lurking just below the surface. Everybody is required to call before they dig, regardless of how sure they are about what utilities may cross their yard.

After Kayla agreed to add a wrap to the trees, Brent asked about the next phase of his public awareness campaign.

“I asked if I could hang a banner in her Garden Center, and Kayla was more than willing to do that. In fact, she asked if we could provide banners for all ten stores in her district — we jumped at that opportunity. She even asked if there was anything she and her employees could hand out to customers at checkout. We will provide that literature, as well,” Brent said.

During peak times, Kayla said her store serves 20,000 customers per week, providing a lot of exposure to the damage prevention message. Adding banners to home improvement stores like this one increases the chance that the damage prevention message reaches a new audience, and this strategy has been used by One Call Centers in other states.

Leaders at Louisiana 811 hope the partnership with The Home Depot proves to be a success and encourages other retailers to get on board as well. Several commercial equipment rental facilities throughout the state also promote 811 with banners and even stickers on digging tools. It’s all part of the group’s plan to reach the excavating public where they are.

“I wish everyone was so willing to help spread the message as Kayla. She was a pleasure to work with and went above and beyond my expectations,” he said. 

Brent's observation



Louisiana

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Working around underground power lines can be extremely dangerous. That's why it's so important to contact 811 prior to any excavation project. But just as important as calling or clicking 811 is to respect those marks and dig with care avoiding using mechanized equipment within the tolerance zone. A personal story I'd like to share about working around this particular underground utility comes to mind.

When I built my home more than 16 years ago, I personally witnessed several of the underground utilities being installed. Our lot didn't have a single tree on it so my wife and I decided to plant five crepe myrtle trees along our property line. Being in damage prevention – and having learned from a prior incident – I called in my locate request. Keep in mind I had the five crepe myrtle trees lined up where I wanted to plant them and they were contained in buckets.

I waited patiently for the mark-by time and was fairly certain the locations I had in mind to plant these trees were not in conflict with any underground utilities. Much to my amazement, I walked out to view the markings on the ground a few days later and found that the underground electric line ran directly in the path of the proposed excavation. As a matter of fact, several of the buckets containing the trees were painted red indicating the power line was below! Wow, was I surprised! I was very confident my electric line took a different route between the transformer and my meter. Needless to say, it could've been disastrous if I had started digging without a valid locate request.

The point of the story is to NEVER assume you know where underground utilities are located. And never assume that the utilities are buried deep even if you're digging down a couple of feet or so.

Take the time and do what's right. Call or click 811, wait for the mark-by time, respect the marks and dig with care. You'll be glad you did! 

Operational Questions

The four following bulleted actions may only be performed by the Louisiana One Call Operations Department.

- To file a locate request for underground or submerged utilities to be marked, submit a second request, update a ticket or cancel a ticket, please dial 811 or 1-800-272-3020 to speak to an operator directly.
- **Emergency Tickets** - As per the Dig Law, **Emergency** locate request must be taken by voice. Please dial 811 or 1-800-272-3020 to speak to an operator directly.
- To perform a Ticket Search click onto the Locate Request tab on the home screen and scroll down to Ticket Search.
- For issues such as logging onto ISITE, ITIC or NEXTGEN, submitting locate request online, User ID (passwords, usernames), submitting a second request, updating a locate request, canceling a locate request or

any other Operational related question, please speak to an operator directly by dialing 811 or 1-800-272-3020 or click lalead@occinc.com.

Administrative Questions

- To request help with Administrative Services such as updating the contact information for your company (owner/operator members only), questions related to meetings (Calendar of Events), to recommend improvements or even to submit compliments, click www.laonecall.com/helpdesk2/cust_reportproblem.asp
- We will forward your message to the person responsible for the issues you describe. You will receive an automated email reply when we receive your message, and then you will receive another email describing the action taken in response to your notification.

Enforcement Issues

For questions involving enforcement

issues, please be familiar with the "Dig Law" (Louisiana Underground Utilities and Facilities Damage Prevention Law) in order to determine which, if any, issues need to be addressed regarding enforcement.

- In 2017, Governor John Bel Edwards signed legislation granting authority of the Commissioner of Conservation to enforce Louisiana's Dig Law (RS 40:1749:11-27) on regulated pipeline right of ways. The Commissioner of Conservation Damage Prevention Program webpage can be viewed at: www.dnr.louisiana.gov/index.cfm/page/1513
- The enforcement program is complaint based. For complaints, concerning excavating without a One Call Ticket, unsafe digging practices, mismarking or no marks, the toll free contact number is 1-833-726-0410. Complaints can also be mailed to: PipelineInspectors@la.gov 

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Louisiana 811 and 8-1-1

August 11 (8/11) was a special night at the Baby Cakes ballpark for Louisiana 811 and baseball fans of all ages. To promote safe digging, Louisiana 811 signed on to be the Baby Cakes game sponsor. Shell Pipeline, Marathon

Pipeline, Atmos and Entergy supported the event with safe digging displays, giveaways, hosted suites and free tickets. Burnie & Earl from Kid Energy also participated in helping make the night special for adults and children.

Louisiana 811 provided a Baby Cakes cap for the first 1000 fans entering the stadium. Public address announcement throughout the game and video board messages reminded fans of the importance of calling before digging.



Shell Pipeline employees, Tina Brignac, Crystal Guillot, Shelley Piehet, and Barbara Braud greet fans at the Shell Pipeline hospitality suite.



Thelma Coleman, Louisiana 811, gets a "thumbs up" from the Baby Cakes mascot.



Burnie and Earl with a Baby Cakes fan.



Greg Smith, Operations Manager for Shell Pipeline, speaking on the Baby Cakes radio network about the 811 safe digging message.

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Day at the Park

"It was a fun night," said Brent Saltzman, Manager of Damage Prevention, Louisiana 811. "And Louisiana 811 was able to promote safe digging in a wide variety of mediums associated with the game sponsorship." 



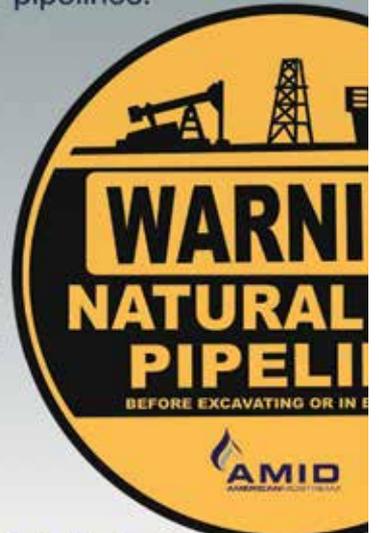
Marathon Pipeline employees challenging Baby Cakes fans with their Spin & Win game.

American Midstream is committed to conducting our operations with a primary focus on protecting the safety of those living or working near our pipelines.



Know what's below.
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In case of an emergency
call 800.926.4352



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Even after all these years of flying across the country, I'm still fascinated by the millions of city lights that appear on the horizon about the same time as we're told to put our seats and trays in the locked and upright position.

While I enjoy the lights and the conveniences electricity brings to us, perhaps because I live and work in the underground industry, I can't help but think of the thousands of hard-working folks and the millions of miles of power lines across the country.

I read the other day that the U.S. electrical grid is the largest interconnected machine on Earth. It

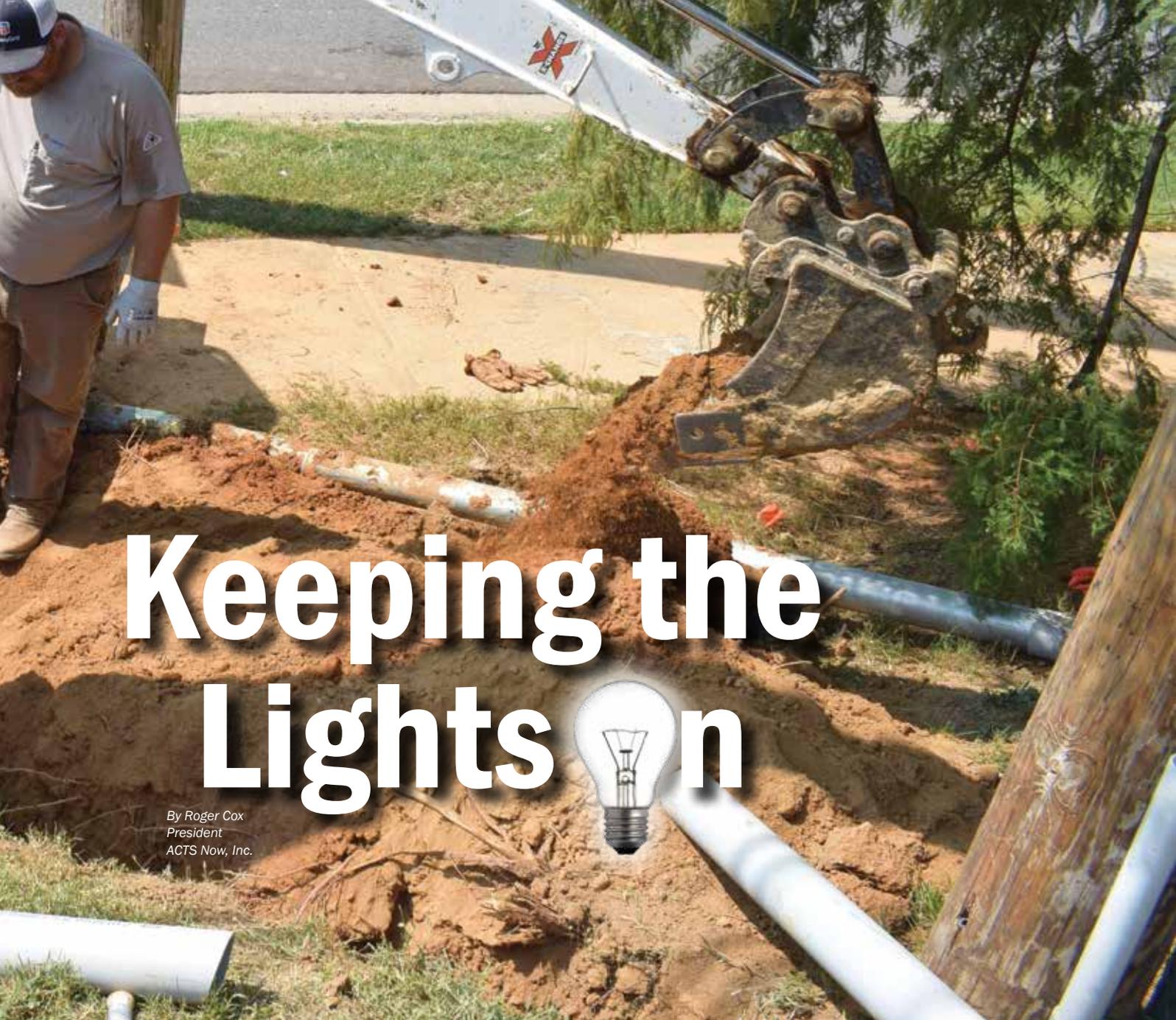
consists of more than 450,000 miles of high-voltage transmission lines and 5.5 million miles of local distribution lines, linking thousands of generating plants to factories, homes and businesses.

This power grid was built over a hundred years ago and a lot of the current infrastructure is over fifty years old. The current grid is vulnerable to weather, natural disasters, Electro-Magnetic Pulse (EMP) weapons, and cyber-attack.

While most of that is beyond the average person's pay grade, what is within our control (for the most part) is how we decide to excavate near the ever-growing number of underground utility lines, especially power lines.

Really, the beauty of keeping utility lines safe and in proper working order is they allow us to live our lives seamlessly. And when there's an outage, it's pretty inconvenient, sometimes for tens, hundreds or even thousands of users. Even if it's simply not being able to watch the show you love, or because you have to drink room temperature water instead of ice cold water from the fridge. But the greatest concern is not the inconvenience, nor even the outage; it is the attack on safety for the general public and for the workers at the job site.

Because many utility lines are buried underground, it's easy to forget they are there and that they really are the



Keeping the Lights On

By Roger Cox
President
ACTS Now, Inc.

framework of our lives. That's why we have to be so careful about digging anywhere. Until we have underground utilities located and identified by the utility or its locating representative, we don't know what's under the ground nor what might be disrupted. It's important to know the risks and how to avoid getting injured from accidental contact with these buried lines. The most obvious and unfortunate cost of contact with power lines or gas pipelines is injury or death

And that's like playing Russian Roulette, except with two bullets in the gun... probably not a good decision.

Of course, the way to get the underground utilities located and

identified is to contact 811 before you dig. You are a professional excavator. Let the professionals at the 811 center get in touch with the right personnel at the utility company. By doing so, the utility company can send a professional to locate the approximate location of the underground line before you get there. Not only can that save you time and money, but can be the difference maker as to whether you or your employees get the opportunity to go home after the job.

Yes sir, we all owe our friends at the electric cooperatives, publicly-owned and privately-owned power companies a debt of gratitude for keeping the current flowing in the most adverse

weather conditions. They band together to ensure every home and every business is safe, warm in the winter time and cool in the summer time. Protecting their underground infrastructure is serious business with them because they know the potential consequences of accidental contact with their utility lines.

Let's do our part in helping them keep the lights on by contacting 811 before we dig and we give them the chance to help us remain safe until we move safely away from the danger of digging into their buried lines.

It's up to you! 

Damaged, but not by digging

Electrical fires linked to underground lines damaged by home repairs

By Michael Downes
Staff Writer

A relatively obscure cause has recently been linked to several house fires in north Texas in the last year. With incidents on the rise, experts encourage caution and special notification to 811 when leveling the foundation of a house.

It's not unusual for slab-on-grade houses to settle over the course of years in many parts of the country, and there are numerous companies that handle the repairs.

Several methods are in use today, but the typical process involves digging holes around the foundation of the house and inserting special jacks under the foundation that bring the house back to the correct level. Of course, digging these holes requires a call to 811 and a waiting period before work can begin.

But until recently, few people thought much about the damage to underground facilities that can occur not just when excavating around the foundation of a home, but also when the house is actually raised.

Mickey Vassey, power quality investigator with electric and gas provider CoServ, said he has seen at least a dozen incidents in the last year where houses and/or facilities were damaged as a result of foundation leveling. He recently put together a presentation for a damage prevention council in his area to raise awareness of this serious issue.

Mickey typically gets called out when a customer has an issue with a facility or a power issue other than an outage.

"What I do is a high level of troubleshooting," he said. "I'm on the ground with the customer to help find out what is wrong. Over time, north Texas has grown so much that electricians are focused on new installations, and the art of troubleshooting has kind of gone by the wayside. When our member customers need help, they look to us beyond just turning on the power."

Mickey also investigates when a customer claims the electric company



caused damage to their home, business or equipment. It was during those investigations that he began to notice a trend — several houses that suffered electrical fires recently had foundation work performed.

“Last year, I saw maybe a dozen foundation repairs that caused damage to homes one way or another, sometimes quite catastrophic — in some cases the house burned down,” Mickey said. “One house had foundation work that caused it and two other houses to burn in a cul-de-sac.”

Mickey said that during investigations he’s seen several instances when a house gets jacked up, it causes a wire to pull out of a lug in the meter socket, causing a short. But sometimes the issues are more complicated.

“The foundation repair that caused the three house fires on one cul-de-sac pulled the energized conductor loose and down into the ground going into the house,” he said. “Since everything is connected to ground, and the ground is ultimately connected through water lines back to the city main, that’s how it got to the other two homes. The plumbing got hot and charred the wood, which caused the fires.”

Surprisingly, the damage doesn’t always happen while the foundation work is underway — the hazard can linger undetected for months.

“We had an incident last year where the house had been leveled and the contractor had been finished for about three months. They did the work during a dry season. During the next big rain the ground got saturated, causing the ground to swell and the house to raise up a little more — and that was the straw that broke the camel’s back. It caused damage to the customer’s appliances.”

Mickey thinks this problem is more widespread and common than one might expect, given that not every incident is investigated to its end. If a customer doesn’t make a claim that CoServ is responsible for an incident, his investigations are typically wrapped up quickly, so there are likely dozens of other incidents that have gone undetected.

“We have an outside contractor that comes in and gives us expert forensic assistance on certain cases, so we’ve learned a lot more about this. I’m sure we have had a bunch of these in the

past that we didn’t know about. I’m surprised that there’s not more talk about this problem,” Mickey said. “It seems like a rash of these have happened in the last year.”

Since this problem is relatively new to the 811 community and electrical companies, Mickey wasn’t sure of a fail-safe procedure that would prevent this sort of disaster from happening. But he did say that communication will be key to the success of future initiatives.

One of the things he mentioned to 811 during a recent damage prevention council meeting was to consider adding information about foundation repairs to future tickets, alerting utility owner/operators that this type of work would be done.

“If a contractor would contact us ahead of time, we’d roll a truck out with one of our design engineers — just like we do when a customer wants new service or an upgrade,” he said. “We will look at it and put into play countermeasures to allow them to do what they need to do without any hazard or danger. Any utility would be happy to do that.”

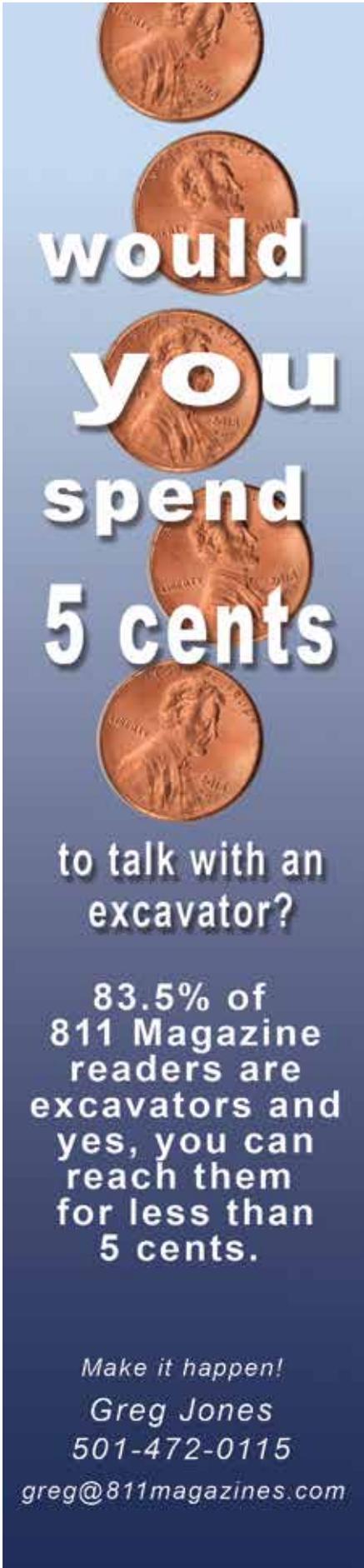
Some of the less-reputable foundation repair companies will ask the homeowner to call 811 to report the digging activity, rather than handling the ticket request themselves, which also complicates things, according to Mickey. And many of the foundation repair contracts that homeowners sign have small print that absolves the contractor of any damage that may arise from their work — including instances where electric lines were damaged and caused fires.

He also mentioned that it’s likely that not many leveling contractors are aware that this problem can occur, as it’s certainly not something that happens on every job.

“There may be foundation people out there who only know this is going on because they’ve experienced it themselves. If they’ve never been faced with this, they might not know,” he said.

If you’re a homeowner having this type of work done, make sure your contractor is aware that they are responsible for submitting a ticket to 811 before they dig and request that they also contact the electric company to ensure this type of damage doesn’t occur.

Oh, and always read the fine print. 



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Working Together

By Roger Cox
President
ACTS Now, Inc.

One of the greatest discoveries a man makes, one of his greatest surprises is to find he can do what he was afraid he couldn't do.

It is not uncommon to hear someone conclude a conversation by saying "that won't work here." And the reason given for this impossible task is that there is someone or some organization that simply refuses to cooperate.

So what will work? It's about building relationships, and not about appointing committees, and for the most part maintaining these relationships are oft times harder than building them.

Of course, we are referring to a relationship where individuals come together for common goals. One that is not abusive toward any position held. One that listens to ideas with the purpose of better understanding the perspectives of all involved. A relationship where everyone is a winner because those involved are committed to each other, not only around the table, but to those who didn't even know there was a meeting.

Compliance issues may bring folks together, but commitment to a common goal will keep them working together so as to be successful. So is it possible to achieve such a relationship with the

great diversity that all stakeholders bring to the table? And of course the answer is yes, it is absolutely possible.

It begins with trust. You can have a committee without trust, but you can't have a meaningful relationship without trust. Think about the groups, committees, or boards to which you belong. If there is someone in that committee that you just can't trust, could the problem be you? If you aren't willing to trust one another, any perceived success will be short lived.

The next critical step in maintaining the relationship is good old fashion honesty and integrity. If it needs said, say it, but say it with kindness. How we say what we say is more important than what we say. Folks will soon forget what you said, but will always remember how you made them feel when you said it. Find someone who can mediate or facilitate the issue so as not to tear down what's already established.

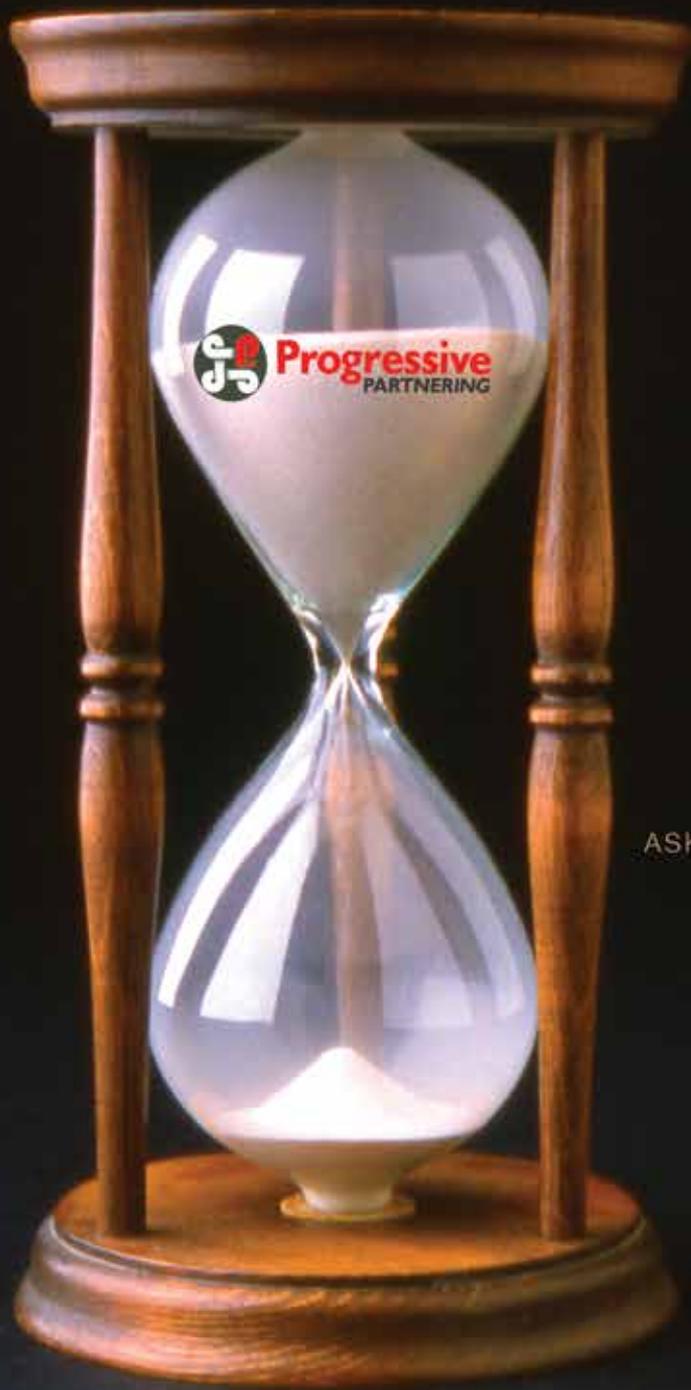
One of the most vital qualities for a strong and meaningful relationship, for bringing all stakeholders together, even those who may not agree with you is the ability to listen with all your heart. This kind of relationship requires that our listening goes beyond just words. We must connect emotionally with others to accomplish what you are

unable to accomplish alone. Listening intently to what the person is not saying is just as important as listening to what is being said. Rather than get frustrated at the tone of voice being used, try to understand why they struggle so getting their message across. We want people not only to hear what we say, but also to feel what we feel.

If we understand this to be true, then how much more important is it that each of us set the example for creating the environment that allows all of our stakeholders to be winners in keeping our state a safer place to live and work.

Recently, enforcement legislation was passed. That was a tremendous milestone. That's a great start. Next comes the appointments to the enforcement board and rules for the board to operate. Then determining the specifics of penalties and plan to implement education, training and civil penalties. Everything after the passage of the law falls under the category of "how effective do we want our program to be."

The best program in the country is not about rules, it's about effectiveness and it could very well start right here at home. Come on Louisiana. If not us... who? If not now... when? 🚓



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Line Locator Safety

By 811 Staff Writer

Line Locator Safety: no one talks about it. Instead, we focus on excavation safety because our whole purpose at Louisiana 811 is to prevent damages to underground facilities. But facility locating can be very dangerous. Locators, for short, often encounter the most hazards at dig sites, especially at emergency locate request sites.

The locator is summoned to emergency dig sites to mark underground facilities in an area where there is currently an emergency situation. Locators must approach the emergency area with extreme caution. While the sky is not falling, power or telephone poles could be! They might also be driving into explosive atmospheres or the ground could be collapsing around them.

Here are 10 circumstances locators face every day, not related to an emergency situation:

1. Confined spaces
2. Threats to the eye
3. Climate and weather fluctuations
4. Dog bites
5. Punctures and foot trauma
6. Poison Ivy and other skin threats
7. Insect Bites and stings
8. Walking, lifting, bending and squatting
9. Slips, trips and falls
10. Time on the road

Taxi drivers travel to many different locations every day, picking up and dropping off people, and it is a stressful job. Locators sometimes visit 30-50 different dig sites in one day and they are not picking up and dropping off people. They must get to the dig site, park safely, avoid the 10 hazards listed above, review their mapping systems,

safely connect their equipment, avoid traffic, actually determine the location of the underground facility with the signal from the machine coupled with their knowledge, skill and abilities and then mark the location with either paint, flags stakes or whiskers. Whew! That's a lot to accomplish for just one dig site. These locators do this every day, dig site after dig site. I'd bet if someone followed one of them around with a camera, we would see many more threats I have not even mentioned.

The excavating community and the underground facility owners themselves seem to underappreciate locators as a whole, and very few people are thankful for what they do. Locators are the front line of defense against utility damages and their job is not easy. So, the next time you see a locator at your job site, help him to be safe, and by all means, thank him for his damage prevention efforts. 



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The advertisement features a background image of a worker in a red jacket and yellow safety vest. On the right, there is a yellow and red Shell logo and a yellow and red pipeline marker. The text is overlaid on a white background.



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Insurance Prices - Higher or Lower?

You Do Make the Difference

By Virginia Reames
The Policy Center, Inc.
Jackson, MS



Besides calling your agent now and then or open your bills, how much time do you spend thinking about insurance? I thought so — but take a moment now and let's see if you can save yourself some money. First, let's see how rates get established.

It doesn't matter whether it is commercial or personal, certain things are rate escalators — teenaged drivers (surprised?), high powered vehicles, houses made entirely of wood...out in the country with no fire hydrants nearby. Let's put that all-wood house right across the street from say, the Gulf of Mexico. I could have said "oceanfront" but the Gulf acts up every year, much more than the Atlantic seaboard. If you are someone who pays out claims and sets rates, remember you are also supposed to make a profit—would you charge more for the guy on the coast than a guy in, say, Memphis or Albuquerque?

Why?

Oh, a storm like Katrina wouldn't get it probably. Right.

Now how about fire: is a wood house/building more likely to burn all the way down than, say, a brick or stone building? In the country or right in town? How about a sprinkler system? What if the building/house is old — how are those electrical wires holding up? Are the values in the area going down — or up? (Yes, there are arson fires, unfortunately.)

Then, of course, there's the concept that no insurance company wants to write

ALL the buildings in an area/town. If a tornado outbreak occurs — and has — a company could get wiped out in 5 minutes!

Yes, we once had an entire town wiped out by a tornado and paid out a claim for \$10 MILLION — in one check. The all-wood building had been donated to the city. It was ginormous — even had railroad tracks end to end so the products the company manufactured could be loaded right onto the cars.

When the tornado left — the entire building was a pile of matchsticks... OK, lumber — snapped and broken. This building was in mid-state Mississippi. No one could possibly argue wind vs rainwater OR seawater (didn't have any). In other words, flood couldn't be claimed, so a check was issued. Had the company insured everything, imagine what could have happened. Even reinsurance was involved.

Now that company's reinsurance probably says, "NO wooden buildings of high value." You can't predict a tornado, there may be three this year or none for 20 years. This means any company that they write the reinsurance for (reinsurance is insurance for insurance companies) can't write "high value wooden buildings."

If you think about "why" rates are what they are, you begin to see how you can cut down on your premiums.

Auto insurance makes it really clear: age, age of vehicle, description of vehicle, cost of vehicle. So which vehicle will you be insuring:

A) Red Mustang, rims, convertible — 25 y/o driver - \$33,000 new

B) Four door Jeep Cherokee — 55 y/o driver - \$38,000 new

Which of these cars do you think will cost more to insure?

Today's vehicles are almost driverless in some areas. And in some cases, they ARE driverless. The computer "driver" is the "heart" and "brain" of the vehicle. They are also seriously expensive to repair/replace. And, since the vehicle is nearly useless without it, this can explain why the company will often "total" a vehicle, rather than repair it.

Yes, the company often will raise rates after a claim or two; they are not going to recoup their losses/expenses this way. If you had a \$150,000 house burn down, how long will it take for that 20% rate increase of the original \$900 premium to refund after the loss? Actually, those losses are spread out over a wide number of homes in your vicinity - homes of the same type as yours. Companies have had decades of rate "balancing" in each type of locale—coastal, tornado areas, snow & ice area, dust storms, etc. This experience goes into the process of paying claims and making a reasonable profit - and this is what your state's Insurance Commissioner is charged with enforcing — enough premiums to pay claims and make a reasonable profit.

If you are "insurance aware" when you purchase a home, lot or vehicle, you can make choices that can save you some \$\$ year after year! 



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- Andrea Stainback, CenturyLink, 7-time attendee

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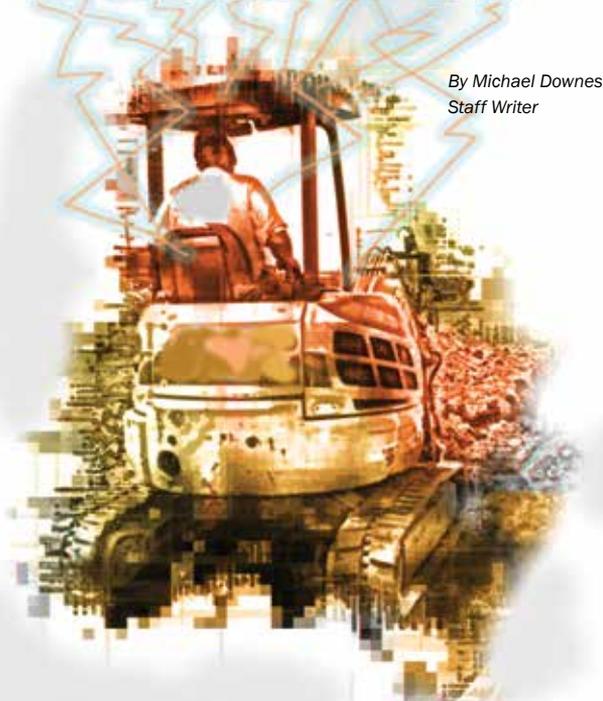
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How a typical day at work can turn DEADLY!



By Michael Downes
Staff Writer

In the damage prevention industry, we constantly talk about the importance of calling 811 before you dig, respecting locating lines and thinking about safety at every step. But even mundane job sites can turn into accident scenes in minutes, especially when working around high-voltage electricity.

Recently at the Arkansas 811 Damage Prevention Summit, an electric system damage prevention manager told the participants that special care should be taken around electrical systems, both buried and aerial.

“Electrical arcs can produce some of the highest temperatures known to occur on Earth,” he said. “They can reach up to 35,000 degrees (Fahrenheit), which is three-and-a-half times the temperature of the surface of the sun.”

During the presentation, he described two real-life situations where that awesome energy came in direct contact with workers resulting in serious injury — and even a death — that he hopes could be prevented in the future by communication and being acutely aware of your surroundings.

Scenario one

The more complicated a job is, the more the likelihood for hazards increases. One example he used to illustrate that concept involved extensive construction that took place in a complex 6-lane intersection in a major metropolitan area that included bus lanes in the median, multiple traffic control signals, signs facing in all directions and walkway crossings.

“This job involved pulling up and resurfacing almost every surface of the intersection,” the presenter said. “There was

every type of underground facility crisscrossing the area. Most were very old, some were very deep and others were directly under the sidewalks.”

On a scene as complicated and as long-term as this, one locate request before work begins isn’t enough to keep everybody safe.

“Multiple locates were being called in, so utilities had locators visiting the area at least every week to refresh marks or re-mark after the top surface was removed,” he said.

Heavy earthmoving equipment was employed to reshape this intersection, and multiple layers of concrete needed to be jack-hammered to be removed.

On the day of the accident, two workers were jack-hammering concrete in a fairly deep hole when tragedy struck. They had no idea that a major hazard existed just a few inches below their boots.

“The workers jack-hammered through a concrete duct bank into an 8,000-volt primary electrical line,” he explained. “One was significantly burned, the other escaped with less serious injuries.”

The extreme heat generated in a high-voltage arc causes the surrounding air to expand so quickly that it can result in a kind of explosion, especially in confined areas. Witnesses reported that one of the workers was physically blown out of the hole when the arc occurred.

Work stopped, investigations began and lawyers were called in.

Ultimately, the workers were unaware that they had been standing over an electrical facility that had been located, but the marks were covered by construction dirt and dust and were no longer visible. Additionally, several workers had not been trained regarding these marks and so were unfamiliar with their meaning and importance. It’s imperative that foremen and workers understand the marks and keep an eye out for these critical safety warnings on the job site. If you don’t see marks where you are, that may mean hazards lurk below you.

Scenario 2

Damage prevention typically focuses on what’s happening beneath our feet. A great deal of our attention is focused down, but it is always a good practice to look up for hazards as well.

Locating marks are usually seen at ground level — on streets and sidewalks, on lawns and rights-of-way. We familiarize ourselves with those marks before and during each job, but hazards, especially around electricity, can come at you from any angle.

The presenter’s second scenario is a story about a seasoned locator who sadly didn’t live to recount his encounter with high-voltage electricity.

“A typical summer storm came through the area, causing minor damage to overhead lines and scattered outages,” he said. “A utility worker spotted damage to some poles and a sagging energized line and called in an emergency locate request. A second repair crew was on their way to replace the damaged poles.”

The first locator on the scene, who had decades of experience, arrived to find himself alone on the site. A second locator arrived moments later and watched the following scene unfold.

“The first locator removed the locating equipment from his truck, and began marking the facilities near the damaged pole,” according to the presenter. “If he’d looked up, he might have noticed that the sagging energized line was getting lower and lower. His body contacted the line — probably without even knowing it was there.”

The second locator reported seeing an arc and hearing an electrical buzzing noise. He heard victim call out briefly before falling to the ground.

The second locator called 911, but first responders were unable to save the man.

Better communication and tightened situational awareness may have prevented this tragedy. Hazards should always be noted on locate tickets. Not only sagging electrical lines, but gas leaks, bad dogs, etc. The more the locator knows about these issues, the better the chance he has at mitigating them and completing the job safely.

Or if the locator made a habit of checking and re-checking his surroundings — particularly during a storm — he might have noticed the sagging line.

Working safely around electricity means keeping your eyes and ears out for hazards at all times. The best practice is to treat all electric power equipment as if it is energized, particularly downed or sagging power lines.

It takes only seconds for the mundane to turn morbid. 🚒



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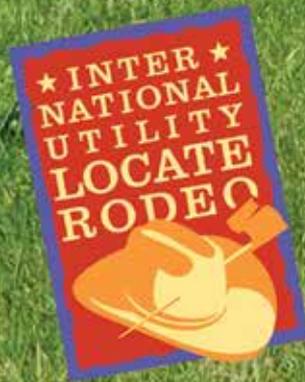
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Louisiana 811

The Mission

The mission of Louisiana 811 is to protect our members' facilities, the public, and the environment by providing excellent damage prevention services to all stakeholders in an effective manner.

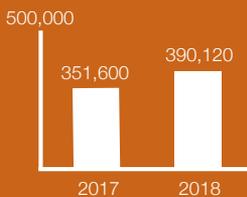
The Vision

The vision of the leadership of Louisiana 811 is to be a pre-eminent one call center by staying on the leading edge of damage prevention technology through innovation and customer service.

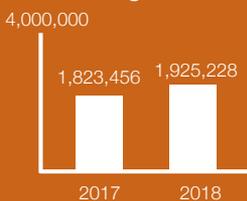
Call Center Operations

Year to Date
July 2018

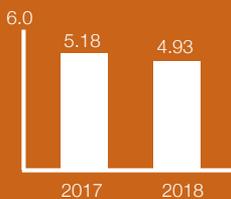
Tickets Processed



Messages Sent



Call Ratio



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Manager, Damage Prevention Louisiana One Call

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sudoku puzzle

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	1	4			9			7
	7	3			4		8	
	4	7			6	1		9
9			3	7	1			2
1						8		
	8		5	1		4	6	
3	2		9			7	1	
	5			6				

Fill in the grid with the numbers 1 through 9 so every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9 without repeating any of the numbers. Solution is on page 28.



I ran into both of my regular readers on a side street in Baton Rouge a couple of weeks ago and was asked about my old friend and everyday hero Dillard. They said, "Tell us another story about Dillard." It has always been easy to tell stories about my friend, partly because he was a legendary story-teller. I was immediately reminded of days long past...back in the fifties down a long single lane dirt road in southwest Arkansas that dead-ended at Dillard's cabin at the edge of the big woods.

This hot summer day found me sitting on his front porch leaning against one of the cedar porch columns. I waited patiently for Dillard to pour himself a cup of coffee and settle into his old rocking chair on the front porch. Finally, he walked out of the house with his coffee. He stretched real big as he stepped on the porch. He had the look of a king about to be coronated. He paused and stared at the rocking chair. He moved it slightly and slowly sat down. He allowed it was important for a man of his breeding and years to rock with the grain so as not work himself to death rocking uphill.

I didn't rightly know how old he was, I would have guessed something in the range of Methuselah, but it didn't really matter. All I really knew from my 6-year-old orphan kid perspective was that he had a head full of sense and somehow found the time to teach me the important things of life that grade school just wasn't equipped to handle.

I guess that's part of what I remember most about this great story-teller. He

not only had time to listen to where you wanted to go, but he had the ability to help you get there. I think we'd be a lot further in our damage prevention efforts today if we had more people with such ability.

The afternoon passed quickly on the front porch. I'll admit the warm cookies helped along with the half cup of coffee that Dillard snuck to me. "Now don't tell Miss Beulah about the coffee," he reminded me, knowing it wasn't allowed at home.

It was getting over in the shank of the evening and he said, "Perhaps I should walk you home...it is getting dark." I thought that was a great idea, plus we might run upon a critter or something that I could learn more about. It was about that time when we walked upon the remains of a lost civilization. Or that's what Dillard told me when I asked him about several piles of rocks that looked odd to me there in the woods. The rocks served as markers for the tribe, so that hundreds of years later people would remember them.

Apparently, the entire population was almost wiped out by the blizzard of '09 and only 5 members of the tribe escaped with their lives. How they found their way to the big woods between Dillard's home place and my Uncle and Auntie's will likely remain a mystery 'til the Lord returns in the clouds.

Dillard told me as we looked at the markers that they had died one at a time and as they died the remaining tribe members buried them there in the

lost cemetery and put that pile of rocks at the head of the grave so that some day a scouting party like us could find them and tell the world about the lost tribe of Eglafs. I asked him who buried the last one when he died and who put the rocks at the head of his grave? He figured it must have been a band of foreigners from Texas that had traveled through the country during the summer of '28.

We then heard the voice of my Aunt Beulah hollering my name through the woods. "Rah-joe!!" rang out the second time and I knew that the scouting party was coming to an end. I gave Dillard a quick hug and said, "I'll see you tomorrow, ok?" and ran through the woods to reassure my Auntie that no lion or tiger had eaten me alive. I could hardly wait to tell her about the Eglafs. I faithfully told her the tragic story of the lost tribe and the meaning of the 5 sacred piles of rocks.

"Good gracious honey," she said. "Your Uncle Alva hauled those rocks from our yard when we were building our home and he hauled them in that old wagon that sits behind the barn. There is nothing sacred about those old rock piles."

"Yes, there is!" says I, protecting the legacy of the Eglafs.

And that's when I learned that some uninformed grownups will rain on your parade.

Besides, only the rocks knew for sure... and I was going to believe Dillard because he had the best story! 🏠

the **Jacobi** P E R S P E C T I V E

by John Jacobi

Power

As used in this theme of this quarter's issue, power is a noun and is the production, movement and application of energy. Power – more specifically electricity – is the core of modern civilization. Can you imagine living without electricity? No phones; no radio; no television; no newspapers; no air conditioning; no real refrigerators; no sewer and water systems; no planes, trains or automobiles; no modern medicines; no modern hospitals; no grocery stores; no computers or calculators; . . . the list is endless.

Power requires infrastructure: Power plants, electrical lines, pipelines, roads and highways; substations. Underdeveloped countries do not have much, if any, infrastructure. Developed countries that have well developed infrastructure suffer terribly when natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, monsoons and volcanos destroy infrastructure.

Humans who survive a natural disaster may still perish because of injuries, because of illness and because of starvation if infrastructure cannot be restored quickly enough to save them.

There is no such thing as a free lunch.

Energy (the ability to do work) is inherently dangerous. Electricity can kill in many ways. Hydrocarbons (oil & natural gas) can kill in many ways. Construction, operation and maintenance of the infrastructure necessary to safely harness energy is also inherently dangerous.

Manufacturing the equipment required for the infrastructure (wires, switches, transformers, connectors, pipes, valves, fittings, compressors, pumps, etc.) is inherently dangerous.

There
are three
things in
life that
can get
you in
trouble

How safe is safe? (With "safe" being defined as secure from threat of danger, harm, or loss.) Remember Murphy's Law? Whatever can go wrong, will go wrong! And many people believe Murphy was an optimist. I, for one, do not believe we live in a risk-free society. It can be dangerous just to get out of bed in the morning. That said, my tolerance for risk is probably higher than some people's tolerance for risk. But that does not mean that I don't do things to minimize risk.

There are at least three things in life that can get you in trouble: things you don't know you don't know; things you know but choose to ignore; and things you think you know but you really don't. The first and third are a matter of knowledge and education. The second is simply stupid. If you ignore a threat that you recognize, you are simply stupid. In the words of Ron White (a comedian), "You can't fix stupid!"

But back to power. There are definitions of power not related directly to energy: The ability to do something or act in a particular way or the capacity or ability to direct or influence the behavior of others.

We all have, to some degree, this other kind of power. Don't be stupid. Use the power you have to protect yourself and the others around you. Be as safe as you can be!! 

John Jacobi retired from PHMSA.
For questions or comments, email:
jjacobi@sbcglobal.net

sudoku puzzle solution

6	9	5	1	8	7	3	2	4
8	1	4	2	3	9	6	5	7
2	7	3	6	5	4	9	8	1
5	4	7	8	2	6	1	3	9
9	6	8	3	7	1	5	4	2
1	3	2	4	9	5	8	7	6
7	8	9	5	1	2	4	6	3
3	2	6	9	4	8	7	1	5
4	5	1	7	6	3	2	9	8

DON'T ignore me.

What? You don't think that you should pay attention to a little yellow flag? Well, I'm the best thing to keep your crew safe. Call 811 before digging, and Atmos Energy will plant me and my pals wherever natural gas lines are buried. Trust me, you'd rather have us get your attention than a natural gas line.



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