

Louisiana



2020 Issue 1

8 1 1 M A G A Z I N E S



Pipeline Safety



307





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Crimson Gulf was established in June 2012 with the acquisition of offshore pipelines located in the Gulf of Mexico. The pipelines are operated from offices in Gray, LA. The Louisiana pipeline network, which traverses approximately 800 miles, is comprised of 10 pipeline systems connecting to more than 100 offshore oil platforms located on the outer continental shelf of the Gulf.

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- Safety and regulatory compliance is the driving force behind Crimson's operations and day-to-day business - the company consistently meets or exceeds all local, state and federal regulations.
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 - Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement
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from the desk of

Brent Saltzman

Have you ever heard that change is inevitable? Well, there has been a recent change at our center – our own David Frey, executive director, has retired after serving seven years in that capacity and serving 32 years at Louisiana 811. David was instrumental in drafting the language for our current Dig Law and has been a true advocate for damage prevention for decades. Anyone who knows David personally has much appreciation for his passion of our program and knowledge of our industry. We certainly wish David the very best in his retirement and we'll definitely miss him.

Our board of directors was very proactive in addressing David's retirement by naming me as the interim executive director. What our stakeholders can expect during this transition stage is we'll continue providing excellent damage prevention services to you and the process of naming a permanent replacement will be as seamless as possible.

I am truly humbled by this appointment and extremely excited to accept this responsibility. I'm taking my role very seriously and intend to do my best each and every day. Our board has entrusted me to lead this organization in a professional manner until a permanent replacement has been chosen. I sincerely hope, as my predecessor did, that you will reach out to me should you have any issues with our program because I value your feedback. You can rest assured that we at Louisiana 811 want to do our absolute best to fulfill our duty as your 811 center.

In closing, let me state that the future is bright for Louisiana 811. Our board and staff are continually looking for ways to improve our organization. We'll continue to strive to be a prominent leader in damage prevention through innovation, education and technology. It's what you have expected of us in the past and what you can expect in the future.

Until next time, please be safe out there. Someone is depending on you to come home at the end of the day!

Brent Saltzman
Interim Executive Director
Louisiana 811

Louisiana 811

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Louisiana 811

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www.lfbf.org

Louisiana Associated General Contractors

Summer Conference
07/08/20 - 07/12/20
Sandestin Hilton, Sandestin, FL
www.lagc.org

Louisiana Rural Water Association

Annual Training & Technical Conference
07/13/20 - 7/16/20
Lake Charles Convention Center
www.lrwa.org

Louisiana Gas Association

191/192 & 195 Pipeline Safety Conference
07/27/20 - 07/30/20
Hilton Riverside, New Orleans
www.louisianagasassociation.org

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North Shore Utility Council

North Shore Digger's Night Out Program
6/11/2020
Castine Center, Mandeville

Paradigm/LA811

Houma Digger's Night Out Program
08/04/20
Houma Civic Center, Houma

Caddo/Bossier

Shreveport Digger's Night Out Program
8/27/2020
Bossier Civic Center, Bossier City

David Frey Announces Retirement

Three Decades of Service to Louisiana One Call

To Louisiana One Call Members and Stakeholders:

For nearly 33 years, it has been my privilege and pleasure to have served Louisiana One Call members and stakeholders.



My fondest memories will be of the lasting relationships that have been created, the progress made in strengthening the dig law, and working together to provide first-class member services while building one of the nation's most cost-efficient and effective One Call Programs.

I thank our board of directors for the opportunity to lead the organization all of these years. I look back with pride at my role here, secure in the knowledge that every decision during this time was made in the best long-term interest of the organization, our members and our stakeholders.

The time has come for me to enter into the next chapter of my life. Retirement has been on my mind for the past couple of years, yet it is with mixed emotions that I submit my notice of retirement, effective February 14, 2020.

I take great satisfaction in knowing that our program is first class and that the board and staff will take this program to the next level.

I sincerely wish you and Louisiana 811 the very best.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Frey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David Frey
Executive Director
Louisiana One Call



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WE POWER LIFESM

Updated Excavation Equipment to Watch in 2020

By Michael Downes
811 Magazines

As safer digging techniques become more common across the excavation spectrum, manufacturers are taking notice. Today's horizontal drilling rigs and vacuum excavation setups are a far cry from the first generations that came out decades ago.

For a look into what's new in Louisiana excavation equipment, we checked in with Charlie Gauthier, sales representative for Southwest Louisiana for Ditch Witch of South Louisiana, and Don Armstrong, branch manager at Vermeer Texas-Louisiana to see what they're excited about this year.



First up is Ditch Witch's offerings.

"We always have something new to talk about. We carry the full line of products and sell other brands under Charles Machine works, including American Augers, Hammerhead and Subsite," Charlie said.

He said sales of hydro excavation equipment is strong, following a years-long trend of contractors moving toward safer excavation methods. With congested easements, contractors can cut downtime and increase profits with the right equipment.

"We came out with a new line of vacuum excavation equipment. The HX. It's grown by leaps and bounds," he said.

Charlie said most of Ditch Witch's innovation is customer-driven and based on focus groups worldwide. One request was to lower the profile of their vac trucks, relative to the last generation, the FX series. With the new HX series, saddle tanks are employed to lower the elevation of the unit, allowing for better clearance under obstructions and a lower center of gravity.

"We have the best in industry filtration, filtering air and debris to protect the blower and engine from contaminants. That's exclusive to Ditch Witch," he said. "And there's a new hose storage design. Instead of wrapping the hose, they're stored in steel tubes on the trailer. It's a neat and clean way to store the hoses. And we increased the fuel storage so you can run all day long now. And the doors lift off on the power pack for ease of serviceability."

Charlie said the HX line was introduced in early 2019, and sales are “through the roof” and feedback is excellent. Many customers have been able to try the new equipment before a purchase, as Ditch Witch of South Louisiana offers a fleet of low-hours equipment available for rent and sells the rental units once they reach about 30-40 hours.



The other big name in vacuum excavation and horizontal drilling is Vermeer. Don, with Vermeer Texas-Louisiana, said they carry the company’s full range of equipment, including trenching, vacuum rigs, directional drilling rigs and tree equipment, but that their biggest sellers are typically drilling and vac systems.

He said Vermeer introduced several new products toward the end of 2019, each with improvements on the previous generation, and the addition of vac trucks to the line.

“We’ve always sold vac trailers, but we are just getting into vac trucks,” Don said. “The truck-mounted version offers different functions. With the trailer-mounted systems, all you can do is vacuum and locate utilities. The trucks have a jet system to clean out culvert pipes and other functions.”

He said the systems offer both air and water jet options, and that the new trucks have been popular with municipalities, but that their traditional vac trailers remain popular across the board.

“Every contractor should have a vac trailer, if for no other reason than for potholing utilities,” he said. “So many jobs are requiring potholing rather than manual digging now.”

Don said Vermeer is always innovating their offerings, particularly with Vactron or McLaughlin equipment.

“They’re always improving the directional drills,” he said. “The locating packages are more user-friendly. There are two types on the rig — one to locate utilities, and one for the operator to locate the drill head as they’re drilling. This generation is much easier for the guys to use them. And they have GPS as well, so it’s easy to mark bores with GPS coordinates. It’s so simple compared to what it used to be.”

Don said compared to when they first came out in 1992, the company’s directional drill rigs are unbelievably more advanced and easier to use.

“Back then, you had to be a mechanic and pretty smart to run a drill rig. Now I tell people that anybody run our rigs with the proper training. They’re so simplified,” he said.

Vermeer offers training classes to go with their new equipment sales, and always go out for the first three days to train the crews on the new systems. And if a crew quits or new employees are brought on board, Vermeer will provide a new training session. 



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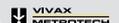
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2020 Louisiana Summit

Attendees, sponsors and exhibitors proclaim the 2020 Louisiana Summit a success! This year's Damage Prevention Summit enjoyed a whopping 13% increase in attendance over last year's crowd. Feedback from attendees tells us the sessions were excellent as they were exposed to most everything from new rules to new technology.

Many thanks to all our sponsors and exhibitors who make it possible for stakeholders to get together and talk about what we have in common. We all want to protect our underground infrastructure and given the opportunity to learn from one another's unique perspectives makes it easier to understand what's at stake.

Topgolf provided another great networking opportunity. We appreciate the leadership of Dave Gex, Atmos, for making sure everything goes smoothly and that the participants had the chance to network while having a great time.

This year's locate rodeo competition was the largest group to date. A special thanks to BrandiLynn Schmitt, Entergy, for spearheading this event. She got everyone



CONTINUED ON PAGE 18



2020 Locate Rodeo Winners (left to right): Daniel Brooks, DEMCO, Rodeo Organizer, Eddie Sykes, BHA Inc. 1st place Power, Perry Smith, SJB Group, 2nd place Overall, Stacy Ehrman, USIC, 1st place Telecom, Jerry Hood, Heath Consultants, 1st place Gas and Overall Champion, Jacob Freeman, USIC, 1st place Locate from hell, Jeff Morrison, LA 811, Rodeo Organizer, BrandiLynn Schmitt, Rodeo Organizer

Awards at the Summit..



Vic Weston presents the 2020 Vic Weston Award to Thelma Coleman, a damage prevention champion committed to advancing our industry.



Brent Saltzman, Louisiana 811, presents the 2019 Locator of the year Large Company Award to Raymond Sonnier, Atmos.



Brent Saltzman, Louisiana 811, presents the 2019 Locator of the year Small Company Award to Dennis Washington, Desoto Parish Waterworks, District 1.



Brent Saltzman, Louisiana 811, presents the 2019 Locator of the year Contract Locator Award to Stacey Ehrman, USIC.



Pipeline S

Pipelines are the energy lifelines of many of our daily activities, from driving our children to school and heating our homes, to buying groceries at the store delivered by trucks that run on diesel.

The U.S. has the largest network of energy pipelines of any nation in the world. There are more than 200,000 miles of oil pipelines and 300,000 miles of natural gas pipelines all across the country. These lines are tucked under our

streets, through neighborhoods and communities, and traveling below farmland, forests and deserts. Since Americans consume more than 700 million gallons of petroleum products per day, pipelines are an essential component of our

safety

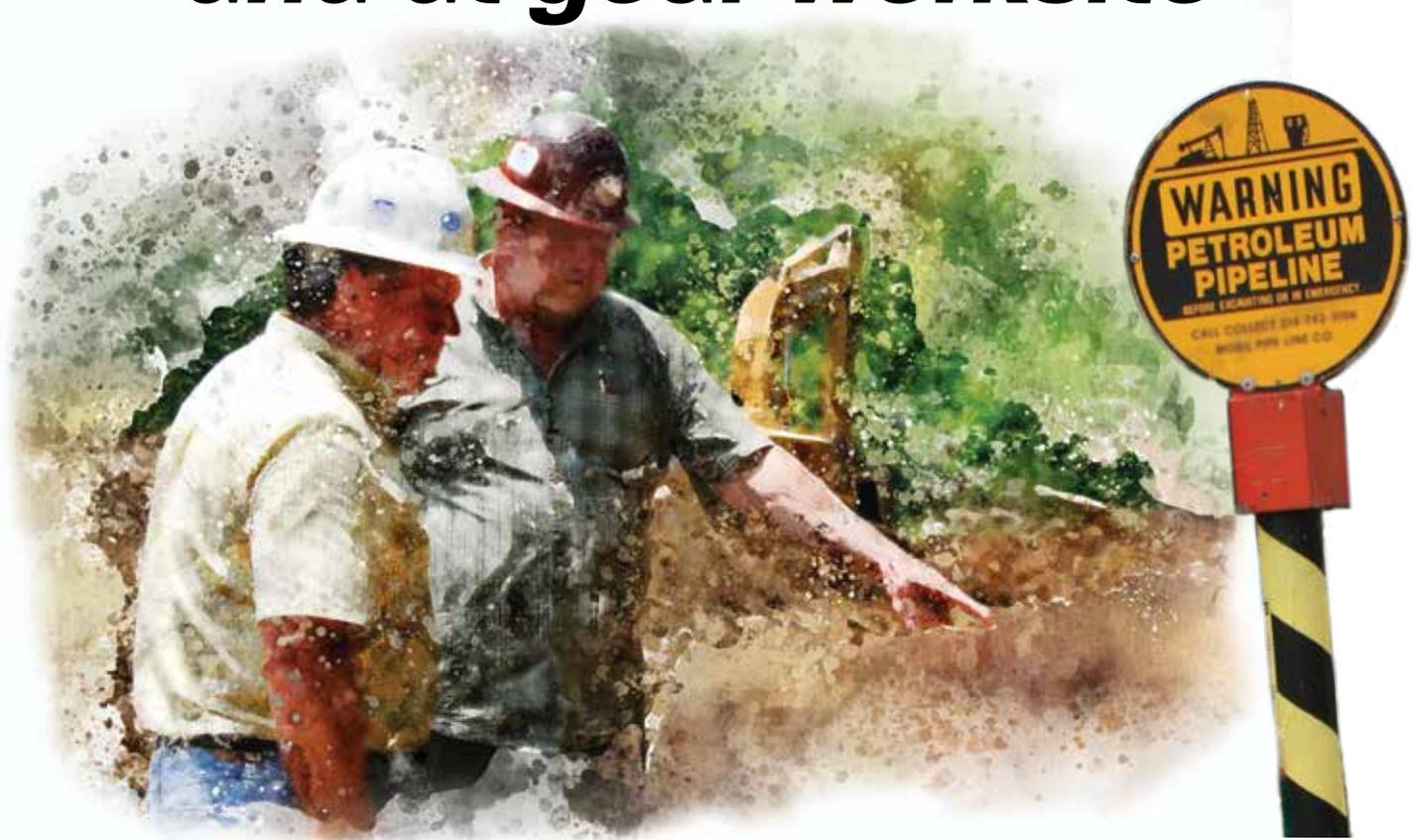


nation's infrastructure. Without them our roads and highways would be overrun with trucks trying to meet this demand. According to National Transportation Safety Board statistics, pipelines are the safest, most reliable manner for

transporting crude oil and other liquid petroleum products. Pipeline owners and operators are ever mindful of the safety of those around them and they strictly follow proven safety procedures.

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Be aware of pipeline markers *in your neighborhood and at your worksite*



Many pipeline companies regularly inspect their rights-of-way using air, foot or vehicle patrols. These trained inspectors look for potential danger to pipelines such as construction activity or signs of gas or liquid leaks. These inspections along their pipeline routes are to ensure the security and integrity of their lines.

Pipeline companies keep in touch on a regular basis with emergency officials and work with local emergency responders along pipeline rights-of-way in case of an emergency, sometimes even training with fire departments or hazardous materials units. Even though a leak or spill is extremely unlikely, pipeline companies provide information like that which you will find on the following pages that will prepare you in the event that it does occur. Their hope is to continue to be a quiet

neighbor and provide you with this important information to help if you suspect a problem in your area. Pipeline companies take the safe operation of their infrastructure seriously, which includes protecting your family, your property and the environment. Because of this diligence, incidents are very rare.

For your safety, pipelines are marked by above ground signs to provide an indication of their presence, approximate location, material carried and the name and contact information of the company that operates the pipeline. Markers may be anywhere along the right-of-way (a strip of land usually about 25 to 150 feet wide that contains a pipeline) or directly over the pipeline itself. These markers are generally yellow, black and red in color. The pipeline may not follow a straight course between markers. While markers

are helpful in locating pipelines, they do not provide information such as how many pipelines are below or the depth of the lines. The primary function of these markers is to identify the location of the pipeline generally as an alert to those who might be working along the pipeline corridor for another utility or during the construction of homes or businesses nearby. You should be aware of any pipeline markers in your neighborhood. As the saying goes, "Know your neighbors." Write down the name and phone numbers appearing on the pipeline markers in case of emergency.

Pipeline markers are important for the safety of the general public. It is a federal crime for any person to willfully deface, damage, remove or destroy any pipeline signs or right-of-way marker.

What to do if a Pipeline is Damaged or Disturbed

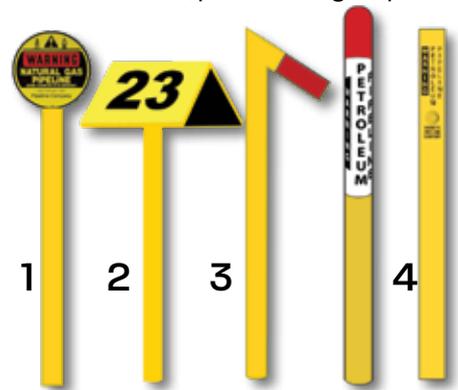
One of the greatest single challenges to safe pipeline operations is the accidental damage caused by excavation, construction, farming activities, or even homeowner construction and maintenance. Before you dig or excavate, contact the One-Call Center by simply dialing 811 from anywhere in the United States. Please call before you start your project, whether landscaping, building fences or performing a major construction project. Pipeline companies and other utilities will mark the location of their lines at no cost to you. Pipeline and utility markers may not show the exact location of the buried lines. When excavating near pipelines, many companies will require that they have a pipeline company representative onsite to inspect and protect the underground pipeline. Failure to call 811 before excavation is the leading cause of damages to buried pipelines. One simple call can help keep you out of harm's way.

Even if you cause what appears to be only minor damage to the pipeline, immediately notify the pipeline company. A gouge, scrape, dent or crease to the pipe or coating may cause a future rupture or leak. It is critical that a cut or broken tracer wire be repaired. It is imperative that the pipeline owner inspects and repairs any damage to the line or related apparatus. Many states have laws requiring damages to be reported to the facility owner and/or the One-Call center by dialing 811. Do not attempt to make the repairs to the line yourself. If a line is ruptured or leaking call 911. Contact the pipeline company as quickly as possible. Pipeline marker signs show the pipeline company's name, emergency telephone number and pipeline contents.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

Look for these signs

1. Located near roads, railroads and along the pipeline right-of-way
2. Marker for pipeline patrol planes
3. Pipeline casing vent
4. Painted metal, plastic or fiberglass posts



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So what exactly do all these pipelines transport?

There is a wide range of products traveling through the thousands of miles of pipelines, everything from gas for your car to oxygen for hospitals. Many of these products can be highly flammable, harmful if inhaled, cause eye or skin irritation or possibly cause difficulty breathing. Some of the materials could cause environmental damage. Because of these potential hazards, it is important for our neighbors to be able to recognize a pipeline leak.

Recognizing a pipeline leak

Using your sense of sight, smell and sound will help you in recognizing a suspected leak.

see

- A dense, white cloud or fog over a pipeline
- Discolored vegetation surrounding the pipeline
- Bubbling in water or creeks or an oily sheen on water
- Frozen ground in warm weather
- Dirt blowing up from the ground

smell

An unusual smell or gaseous odor will sometimes accompany a pipeline leak.

hear

An unusual noise coming from the pipeline, such as a hissing or roaring sound, may be a sign of a leak.

What **TO DO** If You Suspect a Leak

Immediately leave the area.

If possible turn off any equipment being used in or near the suspected leak. Abandon any equipment being used and move upwind from the suspected leak.

From a safe location, call 911 or your local emergency response number and the pipeline company. Call collect, if needed, and give your name, phone number, description of the leak and its location.

Warn others to stay away when possible.

What **NOT TO DO** If You Suspect a Leak

Do not touch, breathe or make contact with the leaking liquids or gas. Stay upwind if possible.

Do not light a match, start an engine, use a telephone, turn on or off any type of electrical switch such as a light, garage door opener, etc. or do anything that may create static or a spark.

Do not attempt to extinguish any pipeline fire that may start.

Do not drive into a leak or vapor cloud area. Automobile engines may ignite the vapors.

Do not attempt to operate valves.

Pipeline Operator's Actions during an Emergency

In the unlikely event of an accident or leak, the pipeline operator who is notified will immediately dispatch personnel to the site to help handle the emergency and to provide information to public safety officials to assist in their response to the emergency. Pipeline technicians will also take quick action such as starting and stopping pumps or compressors, closing and opening valves, and similar steps to minimize the impact of the situation. These responders are heavily trained throughout the year to ensure their neighborhood is returned to its well-being.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 17

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.



Know what's **below.**
Call before you dig.



Public Awareness Powered Through PARTNERSHIPS

by Melissa Hancock
811 Magazines

Louisiana 811 is only as powerful as its partnerships and only as effective as its collaborative efforts. Getting the word out about damage prevention is not a one man show and it is through beautiful working relationships with Louisiana businesses that a commitment to safety is highlighted.

One such Louisiana business is Vivid Graphics, with branches in both Baton Rouge and New Orleans. Vivid Graphics and Louisiana 811 have been working together since Vivid Graphics opened a little over 20 years ago. With one of their specialties being signage, Vivid Graphic seeks out help from Louisiana 811 on a daily basis. Senior Account Executive, Josh Ellzey (who has been with the company thirteen of those twenty years) explains, “We do a lot of real estate development signage—which is the signage to let people know, ‘Hey, there’s a new subdivision going up, there are new houses being built, or there’s a new development being constructed.’ We have to dig so many feet in the ground to put in our signposts for more of the temporary signage, but we also do permanent signage that requires digging as well. So, on a daily basis we are using the Louisiana811.com website.”

Josh further explains how the new interface has made their work even easier. “Before we would have to call and speak to someone, but now that they have the interface online we are able to go and mark the site and the servitude where we are going to be digging and within 24 to 48 hours we get notified that the site has been

marked. It just allows us to avoid any major issues with digging.”

While Vivid Ink has utilized Louisiana 811’s valuable service over the years, it has gone both ways. With the motto, “Graphics Made Simple!” Vivid Ink offers a broad range of services—from simple business cards to complex vehicle wraps, and Louisiana 811 has benefited from the work of Vivid Ink as well. “We have printed banners for them that say, ‘Call Before You Dig’ and have some graphic that shows excavating equipment or the shovel logo. We have printed a lot of graphics for them over the years,” says Josh.

Vivid Ink is often called upon to spread the “Call Before You Dig” message to their own clients, many of whom are not aware of the necessity. So Vivid Ink finds itself not only in the role of excavator utilizing LA811’s services, but also as liaison, sharing the important message with their own clients, and finally utilizing their company’s purpose in the printing of banners for Louisiana 811 to help promote the important message of damage prevention.

Another business that has roots in Louisiana and a flourishing partnership with Louisiana 811 is Kenetica Partners, LLC. “Kinetica owns and operates over 1800 miles of natural gas transmission and gathering pipelines. “Our pipelines span the Louisiana Gulf Coast from Cameron Parish to Plaquemines Parish. Enroute, Kinetica owns six onshore facilities: Johnson Bayou, Patterson, Pecan Island, Cocodrie, Leeville and Port Sulphur providing separation and dehydration services along with

natural gas processing,” explains Nicole Leveridge, manager of safety, training and community relations.

Nicole has been with Kenetica for a little over four and a half years, nearly half of the ten-year-old company’s existence, and shares a little about the relationship between Kenetica and Louisiana 811. “Kinetica is committed to conducting its business in a manner which protects the environment, the health and safety of its employees, customers, contractors and the communities in which it operates. It’s through supporting this commitment, the partnership between Louisiana 811 and Kinetica was formed. Louisiana 811 is an integral part of Kinetica’s public awareness program. Kinetica and Louisiana 811 have a mutually supportive relationship.”

In Nicole’s role with community relations, she has been involved in a variety of outreach events. “We work together to spread awareness through events such as: liaison meetings to educate excavators, Coastal and Marine Operator (CAMO) events, Diggers Night Out events, industry events, mail outreach and much more.”

“Louisiana 811 has been highly successful in spreading the damage prevention message,” praises Nicole, but not without adding her and Kinetica’s commitment to the cause and in doing so demonstrating a unity in purpose when she adds: “Kinetica and Louisiana 811 ask that you please ‘Call 811 before you dig.’” With working relationships such as these, Louisiana 811 will continue to thrive and succeed. 

High Consequence Areas In accordance with federal regulations, some areas near pipelines have been designated as High Consequence Areas. For these areas, supplemental hazard assessment and prevention programs known as Integrity Management Programs have been developed. If a pipeline operator has High Consequence Areas, information about these plans may be available through their company's website or by contacting the operator's corporate offices.

There is a wide range of products traveling through the thousands of miles of pipelines, everything from gas for your car to oxygen for hospitals. Many of these products can be highly flammable, harmful if inhaled, cause eye or skin irritation or possibly cause difficulty breathing. Some of the materials could cause environmental damage. Because of these potential hazards, it is important for our neighbors to be able to recognize a pipeline leak.

Can Owners Build or Dig on a Right-Of-Way? Pipeline rights-of-way must be kept free from structures and other obstructions to provide access to the pipeline for maintenance, as well as in the event of an emergency. If a pipeline crosses your property, please do not plant trees or large shrubs on the right-of-way. Do not dig, build, store or place anything on or near the rights-of-way without first having the pipeline company's personnel mark the pipeline or stake the rights-of-way and explain the company's construction and easement requirements to you.

We Need Your Help The nation's infrastructures, including pipelines, are a matter of national security. If you witness suspicious activity on a pipeline right-of-way, please report it to the appropriate authorities as soon as possible, or you may call the pipeline operator's numbers. Threat advisories may be found at the Department of Homeland Security's website www.dhs.gov/dhspublic.

National Pipeline Mapping System For information about pipelines operating in your area, you may contact the National Pipeline Mapping System (NPMS). This database of pipeline operators and the location of their lines was designed for the public to have access to contact information for pipeline companies operating in your area. This information can be found at www.npms.phmsa.dot.gov. Visit www.phmsa.dot.gov/about-phmsa/offices/office-pipeline-safety for more information. For information on safe excavation, go online and visit www.commongroundalliance.com.

Awareness is the key to preventing pipeline accidents. You can contribute to the safety and security of your neighborhood by knowing where pipelines are, and knowing how to recognize unauthorized activity or signs of a leak, as well as how to respond in the case of a pipeline accident. Pipeline companies continue to strive to be good neighbors, and just like any good neighborhood watch program, neighbors look out for each other. Join in with the pipeline companies to keep our families safe. 



SAFETY IS OUR FIRST PRIORITY

PREVENTING PIPELINE ACCIDENTS IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY.

Our Community. Our Safety. Call 811 before you dig!
Visit www.shell.us/pipeline or www.call811.com

 Know what's below.
Call before you dig.

The advertisement features a background image of a worker in a yellow safety vest and orange jacket. On the right side, there is a large red and yellow Shell logo. Below the logo is a yellow square. At the bottom right, a yellow and red pipeline marker is visible. The text is overlaid on a white rectangular area.



involved in bringing it together and making it work. The GASTEC facility was great.

Competitors included representatives from Atmos Energy, BHA Inc, Entergy Gas, Health Consultants, SJB Group LLC, USIC, with 23 participants competing in a total of 46 separate events Thanks to Gastec and the LGA for making their fabulous facility available to the competitors and crews working the event. It couldn't have been better. A shout out to Kevin Landry, Atmos, and team for cooking up some great food and providing a little heat outside. It was surely a cold day! Congratulations to Jerry Hood, Heath Consultants, 1st place in the gas division and for winning the overall championship. Jerry will represent Louisiana at the International Locate Rodeo later this year, held again in Missouri. 

Special Thanks to Our Summit Sponsors

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KorTerra

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Pipeline safety is a shared responsibility

Excavators

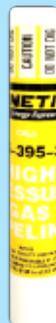
Louisiana 811, Call Before You Dig



Kinetica Partners, LLC

FAST FACTS

- There are over 2.5 million miles of pipelines in the US according to the Pipeline & Hazardous Materials Safety Administration.
- GulfSafe reports 35,000 miles of pipeline just in the Gulf of Mexico.
- Every six minutes an underground utility line is damaged by someone who did not call 811 before digging, according to CGA's DIRT report.
- Louisiana State Law requires contacting the 811 at least 2 full business days prior to a planned excavation.
- According to Louisiana State Law, an "excavation" means any operation causing movement or removal of earth, rock, or other materials in or on the ground or submerged in a marine environment that could reasonably result in damage to underground or submerged utilities or facilities by the use of powered or mechanical or manual means, including but not limited to pile driving, digging, blasting, augering, boring, back filling, dredging, compaction, plowing-in, trenching, ditching, tunneling, land-leveling, grading, and mechanical probing.



STEPS YOU MUST TAKE:

- Call 811 at least two full business days before excavating.
- Wait until all buried utilities are marked with paint and/or flags.
- Dig and Excavate Safely, within the parameters of the One Call ticket.



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

Happy 2020!

by John Jacobi

A lot happened last year – but it was a relatively safe year for pipelines. The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) only investigated two pipeline accidents: First, a 2-inch natural gas main at the connection to a 4-inch main (both plastic) was damaged by a third-party excavator installing a fiberoptic cable in San Francisco. The leak caught fire but there were no injuries. There was an evacuation and service to several hundred customers was temporarily curtailed. Second, a 30-inch-diameter natural gas transmission pipeline ruptured and caught fire about 35 miles southwest of Lexington, Kentucky on August 1st. One person was killed,

6 people were hospitalized and 75 residents evacuated. This particular line had an electric flash-welded seam and was coated with coal tar but, as of January 1, 2020, NTSB had not released any preliminary findings.

Obviously, there were many other pipeline accidents in 2019. I chose these two because they were the two picked by the NTSB. Both could have been much worse. That said, the loss of even one life is something that should never be condoned. What do these two accidents have in common? One was relatively small diameter plastic pipe in a city, the other was large diameter steel pipe in a relatively rural area. The only

common elements (at least as far as we know now) are that both involved natural gas and both resulted in fires. One other common element: **NOBODY** – and I do mean **NOBODY** – is happy that these events occurred.

The NTSB the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) will complete their investigations and identify one or more root causes for each accident (PHMSA has a lot more than two pipeline incidents that they are investigating) and eventually, final reports will be

issued. New regulations may or may not result.

Investigations take time. Investigators want to get it “right” and try to avoid future accidents. Guess what? We ALL make mistakes. We say or do things that, if we had it to do over again, we probably would not. The same goes for things we did not do.

The bottom line – try to do things so that you would not feel uncomfortable explaining what happened to a jury or - even worse - to your mother!!

One nit to pick with PHMSA: About this time last year, PHMSA removed all the inspection protocols from its web site and switched, for all practical purposes, to what had been termed an “integrated inspection” (IA) process. I have been involved in a number of these “new” IA exercises over the past year. In my personal opinion, PHMSA missed the boat with this decision. The IA process is a LOT more work for both the inspectors and the pipeline operators. I have not seen any meaningful improvement in the outcomes of the inspections. Just my two cents.

With respect to rulemakings, the Hazardous Liquid Rulemaking and the first portion of the Gas “Mega Rule” were published. Both take effect next July 1st. There is more to come regarding the Gas Mega Rule. I do not envy the Gas Pipeline Advisory Committee (GPAC) or PHMSA.

Finally, with respect to reauthorization, rest assured that there will be hearings, PHMSA will be reauthorized and that pipelines will continue to be regulated by PHMSA and PHMSA's state partners.

Until next time, be safe out there!! 

*John Jacobi retired from PHMSA.
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